

Working the Crowd

How the service design mindset could lead to improved public participation in urban planning



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Foreword

When I first started this thesis, I was under the impression that users were not included in architectural processes. My own background in industrial and service design, both including users to a large extent, made me think that if only architects started using some of the service design tools meant to involve users, it would all be fine. The results would be more adapted to user behaviour and needs, and everyone would be better off. Like a knight on a white horse, I set out to save the users.

After initial research on the subject, I realised that there is no magic potion. Using service design tools would only mean yet another thing to tick off the long to-do list in the architectural process, but that would by no means guarantee that those experiencing the architecture would feel it was meant for them.

I also realised that users are often already involved in the processes, either through focus or reference groups in smaller projects, or en masse through public participation in urban planning. So why did I feel *I* wasn't involved? And why did I feel more included and understood in the, somewhat hyped, service design process?

There was a mystery to be solved.

Abstract

In Sweden, public participation has been a consideration in urban planning since the 1960's. However, many critical voices are raised against it (Rydberg Åkesson, 2012) and the public do not generally feel included (SKL, 2009a). In service design, involving users is one of the core principles (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). According to Sanders (2009), the mindset of a discipline is more important than the tools used. This thesis looks into the mindsets amongst service designers and public participation practitioners in order to find out if and how the service design mindset could help improve public participation.

It was found that there is a difference in the mindset of service designers and that of public participation practitioners, created by the two disciplines' different objectives. Service designers see the users as co-workers, reaching a result from working *with* the users, having what Liem and Sanders (2011) call a participatory mindset. Public participation practitioners are instead considering themselves working *for* the public, giving the public what it needs, indicating what Liem and Sanders (2011) call an expert mindset.

The processes of urban planning and service design are different, and it is therefore natural that there is a difference in mindsets. However, some aspects of the service design mindset could help improve the public participation process. Implementing the discipline's constant striving for a genuine understanding of their users could decrease the risk for hasty conclusions based on insubstantial knowledge. Seeing the public as active participants of the planning process, removing the step of Information from SKL's Participatory Steps, could make the public participation process clearer. Including both the public and the public participation practitioners along the entire process would ensure an end result based on the public's true interests. In addition to this, looking at the public participation process as a service and developing it accordingly could improve the architectural process by decreasing conflicts and help making the public feel more included.

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1. *Introduction*

“There is no separation between architecture and life.”

This sentence can be found in the preface of the book *Architecture Inside Out* (Franck & Lepori, 2000, p. 8). The authors continue (p. 8) by concluding that “[t]he future of architecture, and of ourselves, seems to be in finding out what we need and enjoy and who we are, rather than in making something that we have to adapt to and in being what we are forced to be.”

The fact that design means more than just appearance or aesthetics has long been accepted. Already in 1989, Klaus Krippendorff (p. 9) wrote his famous quote “[d]esign is making sense (of things)”, widening the practitioners’ common view of design. In 2006, he broadened the vision of the field even more when he claimed that design can be seen as a “...fundamental human right, the right to construct one’s own world, interact with fellow human beings in theirs, and to make contributions to the ecology of humanly accessible artifacts” (Krippendorff, 2006, p. 322).

In Sweden, this fundamental human right has been executed by the means of urban planning. Buildings and other facilities have long life spans and a great impact on the surroundings and on people’s lives and the public, the “users” of a city, are often consulted in urban planning projects (Henecke & Khan, 2002). Despite good intentions of a democratic process and a long tradition of public participation in Sweden, researchers (e.g. Henecke & Khan, 2002; Khakee, 2006; Rydberg Åkesson, 2012) claim that there are many difficulties with the process in urban planning, and contradicting opinions about it. Some of the common beliefs are that individuals use the process for their own benefit rather than the public’s, that the actual possibilities for the public to influence projects are limited, and that involving the public slows down the planning process and undermines the planners’ expertise (Rydberg Åkesson, 2012).

Cars and Thune Hedström (2006) criticise the consultation meetings held as participatory activities, saying that they are merely window dressing, an act for the sake of appearance, only to formally establish already made decisions. This statement is backed up by SKL, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting), representing “...the governmental, professional

and employer-related interests of Sweden’s 290 municipalities and 20 county councils” (SKL, 2009b). Their evaluations after performed public participation activities (SKL, 2009a) show that the participants have been hesitant towards whether there was an honest attempt at understanding behind the act, or if it was merely a way of gaining approval of already made decisions. The participants have also had a feeling of being manipulated into saying what the accommodator wanted to hear, and that their opinions have “...disappeared into a black hole” (free translation, SKL, 2009a, p. 24). In addition to this, not many members of the public take the chance to affect the process through attending the consultation meetings, and the meetings are often held late in the process when one or more suggested plans have already been issued (SKL, 2012a), leaving little room for changes.

This paints a rather dark image of public participation in urban planning. In other disciplines, such as service design, user involvement is seemingly well functioning. Service design is a young design discipline focusing on the functionality and form of services through a user perspective (Mager, 2009). Although the discipline is experiencing problems in certain areas, such as implementation (Ólafsdóttir, 2013), case studies are showing the user interaction to be successful (e.g. Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011; Moritz, 2005). Being user centred is one of the core principles in service design, and there are several tools and methods used to ensure this (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011).

There have been attempts to implement user-participatory tools into architectural process, but it has proven to be difficult (Sanders, 2009). According to Sanders (2009), architects and planners are often hesitant towards involving the users and even though participatory tools have been

used, the outcome of the exercises are not always considered in the end result. Therefore, Sanders (2009) draws the conclusion that participatory tools and methodologies themselves are not enough. Instead it is the mindset, defined by Sanders (2009, p. 57) as "...the established set of attitudes held by someone; one's frame of reference", of the architects and planners that is the most important factor in order to create a user-centred end result.

The contradictory opinions on public participation in urban planning indicate a split mindset: those in favour of public participation and those against it. If tools and methods are not what makes the user involvement successful, but rather the mindset, one can assume that the split mindset of public participation affects the process negatively, and could be the cause for the public's scepticism.

So, the difference between a celebrated service design process and a disputed public participation one could be caused by a difference in mindsets. But what is the mindset that makes the user involvement function well in service design? And how does the mindset of public participation practitioners differ from the service design mindset? These two questions leads up to the purpose of this thesis: finding out if and how the mindset of service design could lead to improved public participation in urban planning.

What is the mindset that makes the user involvement function well in service design?

How does the mindset of public participation practitioners differ from the service design mindset?

Could the service design mindset lead to improved public participation in urban planning, and in that case, how?

2. Methodology of the Study

The focus of this thesis has shifted several times, as I have gained new knowledge shedding light on problems I did not know of and proven other problems to be solved by other researchers already. One could say that my work has been much like the somewhat mythical design process, described by Stickdorn and Schneider (2011) as iterative and responsive to change. The work is based on qualitative research methods, emphasising “...words rather than the quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2012, p. 380), allowing me to get a deeper understanding of the research topic.

There might be a difference to what is actually happening within a company and what is described in company presentations, reports or on their websites. The work in this thesis has therefore been largely based on interviews with practitioners, in addition to what has been said in different publications. As the research has been aimed at understanding the mindsets of the disciplines, no details around specific cases or whether they have been successful or not have been covered. This thesis covers what the practitioners say and think – manifesting their mindset – about the public and the users, not what they do.

A few selected representatives for interviews were chosen as opposed to a vast number of people, in order to be able to spend more time with each interviewee and analyse their answers in depth. The interviews have been unstructured, described by Bryman (2012) as an informal questioning style, typically only aided by a list of topics to be covered rather than set questions to be answered, using open-ended questions allowing the interviewees to answer freely (Bryman, 2012). The interviews have been conducted this way in order to let the representatives express their own views and opinions on the subjects, and to avoid mistakenly projecting my own prejudices on the interviewees. All interviews have been recorded in order to be analysed at a later stage to not miss any important details and to further avoid projecting my own opinions on the interviews. As all interviews were held in Swedish, all citations have been translated to English.

To gain more specific knowledge about public participation in urban planning in Sweden, public participation in two Swedish cities, Gothenburg and Malmö, was studied. According to Wallén (1996), studying specific cases allows the researcher to gain deep knowledge of a process. However, there is no guarantee that the phenomena occurring in the

studied cases are common, or reappearing in other cases. As the empirical studies are largely based on interviews around specific cases it is important to point out that the mindsets described in this thesis are in no way representative for every individual working in either field, but should rather be viewed as an indication of what is going on within the fields and how some practitioners experience their work.

Gothenburg and Malmö were chosen as case studies because of their approach to public participation. Both cities are working actively with public participation, trying out new methods of involving the public, and are emphasising the importance of public participation in urban planning. In both cities, a representative for public participation, Manilla Shillingford in Gothenburg and Moa Björnson in Malmö, was interviewed. It was important to interview representatives who were not too established in the field. The mindset of a discipline is constantly evolving, and unestablished practitioners can be assumed to not be as set in their work routine as more established ones, and possibly have adapted less to the common mindset of the discipline. The service design field is both young and unestablished in itself (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011), which makes for a fair comparison.

A specific case for each city was selected to frame the interviews around. It was important to choose cases in which the project group seemingly had a more open mindset than the one allocated to public participation practitioners in literature, as the one presented in literature might not be used in practice, and might not represent the latest evolvement of the discipline's mindset. Comparing the mindset of those performing the selected cases to the ones presented in literature helps the thesis in pointing out the broadness of the field. This is particularly important while

talking about different mindsets, as no mindset could be identical to another.

In Gothenburg, the project *Centrala Ähstaden* (RiverCity Gothenburg) was chosen, because of its claims of making use of service design methods in addition to traditional public participation methods. A project group using methods from several different disciplines simultaneously can be assumed to have reflected over their own methods in previous projects and thus be more open to change than project groups using only traditional methods of public participation, indicating a mindset which is different from the traditionally presented. The fact that service design methods were used indicated a willingness of being more service oriented, which was an interesting aspect to look further in to, as it could mean that the mindset of the project group was more similar to that of service designers than traditionally. RiverCity Gothenburg is a well-documented project, with several published documents on their website covering the process. In addition to interviewing Shillingford these documents were read and reflected over to find out more about the process as well as understanding how the project group chose to present their work to the public as how one chooses to present oneself can reveal one's mindset.

In Malmö, the on-going project *Hållbar stadsomvandling Malmö – fokus Rosengård* (Sustainable city change Malmö – focus Rosengård) was chosen because of its approach to trying out new methods for public participation. Allowing oneself to, and being open about, testing new methods and evaluating continuously indicates a responsiveness to change, and thus a different mindset from the one presented in literature. As well as interviewing Björnson and studying published documents about the process, blog posts by Björnson and her colleagues were read and reflected over

in order to get a deeper understanding of the public participation process in Malmö and the presentation of it.

In addition to the thorough literature study of the service design field representatives from two major service design agencies in Sweden, Jenny Dannstedt from Doberman and Erik Widmark from Transformator Design, were interviewed. It was important to interview companies specifically focusing on service design and not just offering the service as one of many, to make sure the service design perspective and nothing else was captured. As the service design scene in Sweden is still very limited, the two largest companies were chosen, as they can be assumed to have the most experience of service design. It was important to interview people at different levels in order to get both the everyday perspective of user involvement as well as the collected perspective of a department. Therefore, interaction designer Dannstedt, often practising user-participatory activities, and service design director Widmark, the head of the service design department, were interviewed.

This thesis will first give the reader a foundation for understanding the disciplines discussed by introducing public participation and what public participation means in the context of urban planning as well as introducing service design and its core principles, describing the service design mindset. Thereafter, in Chapter 4, *Empirical Studies*, the different mindsets – the mindset allocated to public participation practitioners in literature, the mindset of unestablished public participation workers and the mindset of those focusing on user involvement within service design – will be investigated. How these mindsets relate to and differ from each other will then be analysed in Chapter 5, *Analysis*, and thereafter a conclusion will be presented in Chapter 6, *Conclusion*.

3. Theoretical Framework

In order to fully understand the mindsets in service design and public participation within urban planning, it is important to know more about public participation and service design and why the public and the users are treated as the same people in this thesis. It is only when these things have been explained that it is relevant to look into what the service design mindset could offer the public participation process in urban planning.

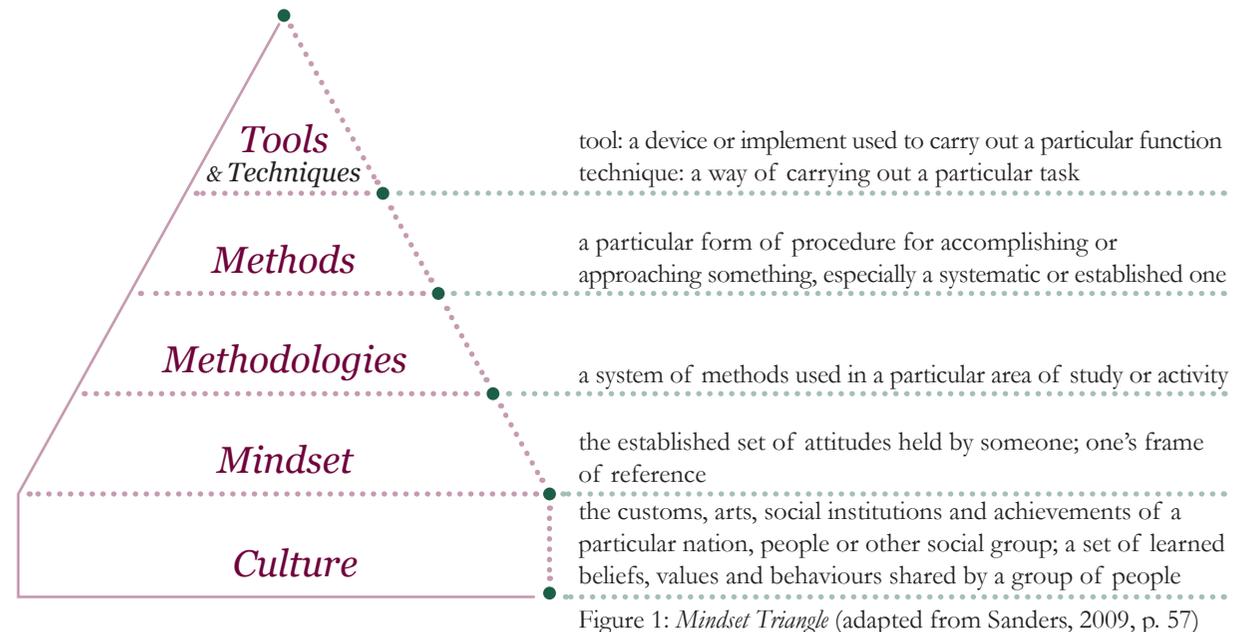
3.1 The Difference in Mindsets

Sanders (2009) illustrates a discipline by a triangle, placing the culture of a discipline as a foundation for a mindset, upon which methodologies, methods and tools rest. According to Sanders, the common culture of a discipline thus forms the mindset and the usage of any tools within the discipline is affected by this underlying mindset. As mentioned in the introduction, Sanders (2009, p. 57) defines a mindset as “...the established set of attitudes held by someone; one’s frame of reference”.

Knowing exactly a person’s set of attitudes or frame of reference would mean reading their mind, which is impossible. However, even though every practitioner within a discipline does not share the same mindset, the mindset of the said discipline can be established through finding patterns in what is being said about it and by practitioners of it. According to Liem and Sanders (2011) there are two main mindsets within design: the expert mindset and the participatory mindset. Designers with an expert mindset consider themselves the experts, designing *for* the users. Designers with a participatory mindset on the other hand see users as co-creators, working *with* them. Liem and Sanders’ division has formed a base for the view on mindsets in this thesis, but a broader definition of design mindsets has been used, not limited to two opposites but instead including multiple small variations. The mindsets have not been labelled and categorised, but have been allowed to form around a number of aspects.

In this thesis, Stickdorn and Schneider’s (2011) five core principles of service design have been used to illustrate the service design mindset represented in literature. The core principles will be described below, in 3.5.1, *The Core Principles of Service Design*. Within public participation there is no clear definition of the mindset. Therefore, literature

on the discourse around public participation, revealing the attitudes and frames of reference, has been investigated and interpreted in 4.1, *The Discourse of Public Participation*.



3.2 Public Participation

Community consultation, public consultation, stakeholder engagement and citizen dialogue are different terms used to refer to more or less the same thing: the act of consulting the people affected by the action at hand. In this thesis the term public participation will be used when people affected by the planning process are involved in urban planning projects, as it represents all participatory activities, not limited to the acts of consultation or dialogue, nor creating a division between people such as stakeholders or citizens.

SKL (2012b) claims that all Swedish municipalities and regions are making use of public participation in one way or another. According to SKL (2012a), the end result of a planning process is enhanced through comments and opinions from the public. Furthermore, they (SKL, 2012b) say that public participation is largely a mean for creating trust and understanding for the Swedish democratic system. Boverket (the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) and SKL have a great influence on the current discussion regarding public participation, and municipalities and regions are often referring to publications from these authorities in their visions for public participation (Rydberg Åkesson, 2012). Therefore, one can assume that Boverket and SKL also have great influence on the mindset of people working with public participation.

On their website, SKL (2010) lists a number of methods to use in public participation. More traditional ways of public participation, such as inviting the public to official meetings, are mixed with newer methods based on participation via Internet. SKL (2009a) encourages municipalities to use not only one method of public participation but instead a mix of methods is recommended in order to reach as many citizens as possible. Traditionally, public participation meetings have been held at sites where official authorities or politicians

feel at home. Therefore, many newer methods for public participation are aimed at getting in contact with the public on their own grounds. SKL (2011) has developed a model, as illustrated below, describing which tools to use in which part of the process. The model describes public participation as a repetitive process without a clear beginning or end.



Figure 2: *Tools Context* (adapted from SKL, 2011, p. 12)

However, later on in the same publication, the public participation process is described as a series of consecutive steps starting with planning the dialogue carefully, then executing the planned activities and ending with sharing the results, as illustrated below.

This leads to the conclusion that according to SKL each public participation programme should be carefully planned and executed, but that the insights from one programme might lead to the planning of the next.



Figure 3: *Public Participation Process* (based on SKL, 2011, pp. 17-18)

3.2.1 The Participatory Steps

One of the most important models issued by SKL (2009a) is a staircase for different levels of participation, hereafter referred to as the Participatory Steps, based on Arnstein's *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (1969). According to SKL (2009a), not every public participation activity demands the same level of public participation. Municipalities are encouraged to plan for and decide on which level of participation is best suited for each individual project and inform the public of what they can expect in terms of influence and level of participation. SKL's Participatory Steps is often referred to by municipalities (e.g. Björnson, 2013; Lindholm, 2010; Shillingford, 2013) as a guide when planning the participatory activities and one can therefore assume that many practitioners feel comfortable using it and basing decisions on the model. As it is so influential on the everyday work of public participation practitioners, it is probable that the model influences the mindset of these practitioners. SKL's Participatory Steps has thus been an important consideration for this thesis.

In order to fully understand SKL's Participatory Steps it is necessary to first introduce Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation upon which SKL's Participatory Steps is based.

Arnstein (1969, p. 216) says that “[t]here is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process.” Her ladder describes different levels of citizen participation, containing eight rungs: Manipulation, Therapy, Informing, Consultation, Placation, Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control. The ladder ranges from Manipulation and Therapy being a “... substitute for genuine participation” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217), through Informing, Consultation and Placation where the public “...lack the power to insure that their views will be

heeded by the powerful” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217) until the final rungs of Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control where the public has actual power.

According to Arnstein (1969, p. 217), “[t]he ladder juxtaposes powerless citizens with the powerful in order to highlight the fundamental divisions between them”, visualising in an accessible way the different levels of participation.

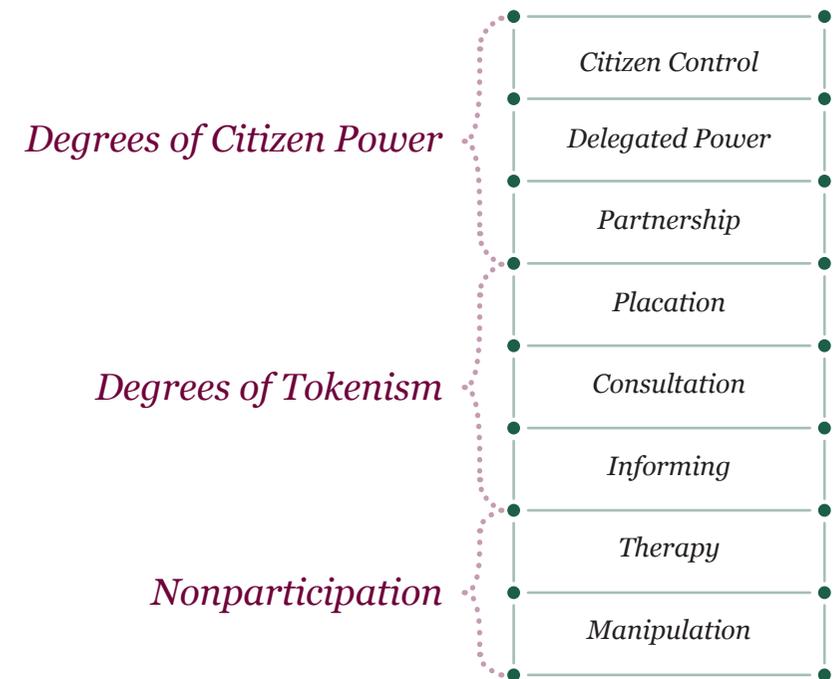


Figure 4: *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (adapted from Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

In SKL's modified model (2009a), made to fit the desired public participation in Sweden, the bottom two rungs from Arnstein's ladder (1969), Manipulation and Therapy, as well as the top rung, Citizen Control, have been removed. The remaining five rungs have been slightly adjusted. SKL's Participatory Steps (2009a) thus include the steps of Information, Consultation, Dialogue, Influence and Co-decision. These steps are similar to the middle rungs in Arnstein's ladder, but not completely corresponding.

The fact that the two lower rungs of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, Manipulation and Therapy, have been removed from SKL's revised version shows that SKL agrees with Arnstein, saying that these are forms of nonparticipation, and indicates an honest mindset towards the public; by no means should the public be manipulated or lured into something, but should instead at the very least be informed about what is going on. However, taking Cars and Thune Hedström's (2006) critique against the consultation meetings into account and looking at the steps from the user's perspective, this seems to imply that, although formally Arnstein's Therapy and Manipulation steps are excluded from SKL's Participatory Ladder, in reality they are still present, but have taken on the disguise of Consultation.

In addition to this, the top rung, Citizen Control, has also been removed, indicating a certain resistance against delegating too much power to the people. SKL's staircase is also presenting the different steps as equal: each project requires different levels of participation, but all steps are equally adequate to use. Arnstein, on the other hand, strives to reach the top rungs. Through the staircase SKL are setting up a frame for how public participation practitioners can view public participation, ranging from the public being a large mass of people needing to be informed to equals to

the public authorities, taking decisions in collaboration. As the model is so widely used and referred to, for a public participation practitioner to go outside of this frame, and either see the public as a group to manipulate into something or as the superior decision-making body, would be very difficult. The equal importance given to the different steps in SKL's staircase could also influence the mindset, preventing practitioners with a more similar view of participation to Arnstein to move up the ladder. The impact of SKL's Participatory Steps on public participation practitioners' mindset will be discussed further in Chapter 5, *Analysis*.

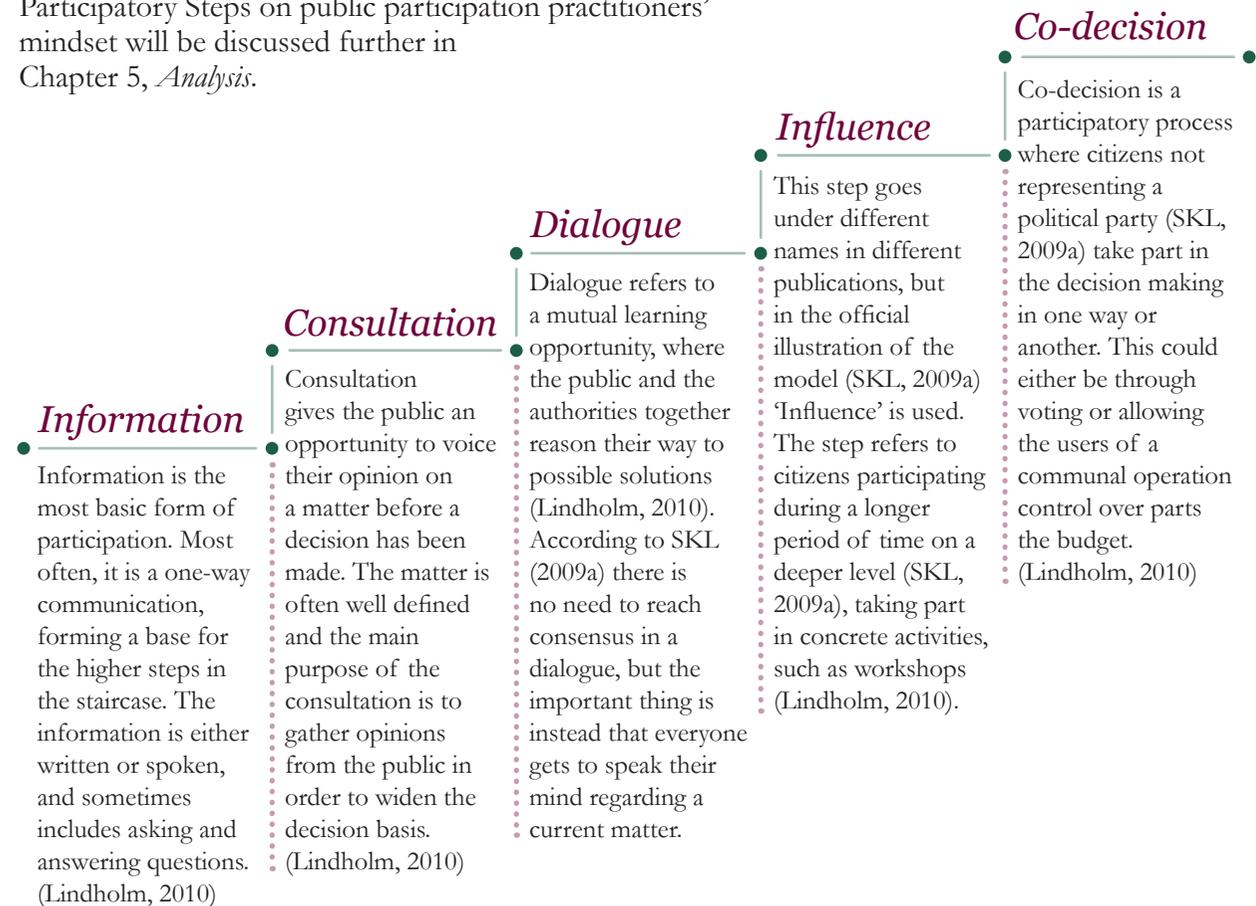


Figure 5: SKL's Participatory Steps (adapted from SKL, 2009a, p. 19)

3.3 Public Participation in Urban Planning

In Sweden, public participation in urban planning evolved in the late 1960's, when citizens formed protest groups against the extensive changes of built environments. These actions came as a response to *Miljonprogrammet* (the Million Programme), a governmental programme aimed at building a million new dwellings between 1965 and 1974, as well as the changes to city centres and the expansion of transportation systems at the expense of the existing environment. Urban planning was seen as a closed process, hard to access and influence for large parts of society. (Henecke & Khan, 2002) As a response to this, the public started to be included in the urban planning processes (Henecke & Khan, 2002) and in 1987 a new law, the Planning and Building Act (1987:10), regulating the urban planning process, was brought into force. The law demanded consultation with the public during the issuing of a programme for detailed development plans. Over the years the law has been revised several times, further emphasising the importance and clarifying the procedure of public participation (Henecke & Khan, 2002).

Urban planning is a broad field, practised by a range of professions. Encyclopædia Britannica (2013) explains this further: "Because urban planning draws upon engineering, architectural, and social and political concerns, it is variously a technical profession, an endeavour involving political will and public participation, and an academic discipline. Urban planning concerns itself with both the development of open land [...] and the revitalization of existing parts of the city, thereby involving goal setting, data collection and analysis, forecasting, design, strategic thinking, and public consultation." The phases of an urban planning project is therefore divided between different departments, or even companies, with different expertise. As a result, the people who perform the public participation activities might not be the ones proposing or executing a plan, which means that

the outcome of the activities must be escalated to the relevant people.

Traditionally, the public participation in urban planning have been done through consultation meetings where the municipality or local authority invites the public to take part of information, and leave comments or ideas on the on-going project. Many of the previously mentioned tools, illustrated in Figure 2, *Tools Context* (SKL, 2011), are also used for public participation in urban planning.

The history of urban planning shows the public as an angry mass, forming protest groups and demanding a change. Public participation can be seen as an act to calm the public and as the public is gradually getting more and more included, and thus calmer, the need to include it could be perceived as reduced. Cars and Thune Hedström's (2006) drastic statement, calling the consultation meetings window dressing, can be seen as an expression of frustration, realising the reduced significance given to public participation. The discourse of public participation, and what effect it has on the mindset of those practising it, will be discussed further in Chapter 4, *Empirical Studies* and Chapter 5, *Analysis*.

3.4 Service Design

Over the last decades, our economy has shifted towards a ‘service economy’, being greatly dependent on the service industry. This has led to services playing a central role for innovation and competitiveness. (Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011) With the service sector expanding so rapidly, it is no longer enough for companies to focus on product innovation, and research and development are faced with new challenges. As a response to this, service design emerged as a new design discipline in the early 1990’s. (Mager, 2007)

Service design is still a young and emerging discipline, and there is no common definition of exactly what it means (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, p. 29) call it “...an inter-disciplinary approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines. It is a new way of thinking as opposed to a new stand-alone academic discipline.” Mager (2009, p. 32) describes the service design education as “[a] holistic design education that puts emphasis on analytical, conceptual and social competencies and that integrates the urgent issues of service economy, ecological responsibility or even gender related issues into education.”

Service design is an iterative process, meaning that “...at every stage of a service design process, it might be necessary to take a step back or even start again from scratch” (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 124-126), allowing the project to adapt to the evolving client needs and generated research material. Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, p. 130) say that “[o]ne of the main features of service design thinking is that this approach is not about avoiding mistakes, but rather to explore as many as possible.”

A service design project cannot be done by one person. It requires collaboration and making use of knowledge from

many different disciplines and insights from users in one way or another (van Oosterom, 2012). Wetter Edman (2011, p. 18) describes service design by saying that “[i]n service design users and stakeholders are brought straight into the development through co-creational practices and inclusion of participatory design approaches.” Each service design project is different and there are no set rules for which tools should be used and when to use them, but instead a number of different tools have been put together in toolboxes, collections of tools to be used according to the designer’s choice (e.g. Moritz, 2005; Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011; Tassi, 2009).

“Service design helps to innovate (create new) or improve (existing) services to make them more useful, usable, desirable for clients and efficient as well as effective for organisations. It’s a new holistic, multi-disciplinary, integrative field.”

(Moritz, 2005, p. 6)

The tools used in service design are not exclusive to the discipline, but have also been covered in literature regarding other areas, such as business development (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), knowledge work (Brown et al., 2010) and business innovation (Adler et al., 2011), and often they borrow from or are inspired by tools or methods used in other research fields, such as ethnographic research (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011) or journalism (Widmark, 2013).

As mentioned above, it is not the tools or methodologies of a discipline that makes the user interaction successful, but rather the mindset of those practising them (Sanders, 2009). Therefore, the tools used in service design will not be described in this thesis. Instead, the mindset behind the usage of the tools is explained in the next section.

3.4.1 The Core Principles of Service Design

The current literature on service design is mostly written by practising service designers (e.g. Moritz, 2005; Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011), and is often aimed at selling the concept of the discipline. This is particularly evident in the introductions to the books, for example stating the discipline being an “...approach that offers great value for entrepreneurs and innovators” (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 12), helping to “...address some of the key challenges facing organisations today” (Moritz, 2005, p. 6). The mindset presented in literature, such as constantly pointing out the collaboration with other fields and the willingness to make mistakes, might not be the actual mindset of the service design discipline, but rather the mindset the practitioners think they ought to have, and want the discipline to be known for. Therefore, it is important to be critical towards how the mindset is presented when reading literature on service design.

However, it is still valuable to introduce the service design mindset as expressed by leading service designers. This mindset is especially explicit through the introduction of the discipline’s core principles of service design – User-centred, Co-creative, Sequencing, Evidencing and Holistic – in *This is Service Design Thinking* by Stickdorn and Schneider (2011). This model will be used as a base for the service design mindset in this thesis.

Describing all service designers as having the same mindset, as Stickdorn and Schneider (2011) indicates by presenting the five core principles, could be quite troublesome. None of the principles are exclusive to service design, but could also be found in other disciplines, and the principles alone say little about what is actually being done within service design. Furthermore, there are always variations within a discipline, and every member does not work by the same principles. However, the core principles do tell what service designers

are being taught to think, which is important when it comes to presenting their mindset. Being presented with what they are supposed to think and how they are supposed to act, naturally affects the service designers. Expressed simplified, the service designers could either try to live up to the ideals or break out of the mould.

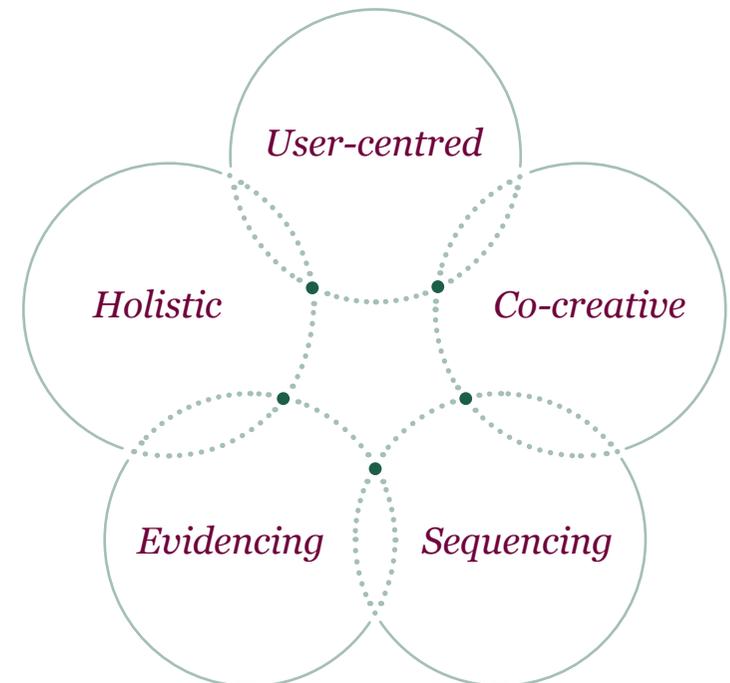


Figure 6: *The Core Principles of Service Design* (based on Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 34)

User-centred

“We need to put the user at the centre of the service design process”
(Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 36)

To create services that meet the user’s needs, service designers need more than just statistical and empirical data. They need a genuine understanding of the user’s motivation, habits, social context and culture. In order to get this, the service designer needs to be able to “...slip into the customer’s shoes and understand their individual service experience and their wider context.” (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 37)

Co-creative

“...we need to involve customers as well as all other stakeholders”
(Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 38)

For each service there are many customer groups all with their own needs and expectations. Gaining insights from and prototyping and testing the design with all these different people is vital to the design process in order to secure sustainable customer and employee satisfaction.

Sequencing

“...deconstruct service processes into single touchpoints and interactions”
(Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 40)

Each service has several steps: a pre-service period of getting in touch with the service, an actual service period where the customers experience the service, and a post-service period. The service is built up by several touchpoints: every moment a user is in contact with the service, either directly or indirectly. All these steps and touchpoints affect the overall experience of a service and need to be designed, prototyped and tested with the customers.

Evidencing

“...a better understanding of the work behind the scenes”
(Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 43)

When providing a service there are plenty of things being done in the background, such as cleaning a shop floor or housekeeping service in a hotel. Physical evidence of these underlying services, such as the folded toilet paper in a hotel, could increase the user’s appreciation of the service experience.

Holistic

“We see, hear, smell, touch and taste the physical manifestation of services”
(Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, p. 44)

When designing services the wider context of where the service takes place is important. There are always subconscious perceptions, alternative ways of experiencing the service or changes to the service over time which should be considered. In order to make sure all aspects are taken into account, the co-operation of different disciplines is necessary.

These five core principles represent different parts of service design, and together they can be seen as representative for the service design mindset. However, it is still important for this thesis to get another angle on the mindset, by hearing practising service designers talk about their everyday work, rather than selling a concept. This will be further discussed in Chapter 4, *Empirical Studies* and Chapter 5, *Analysis*.

3.5 The Public and the User

At first glance the words public and user seem to refer to completely different things. However, there is not one single definition of a user when talking about users in service design. Moritz (2005, p. 182) say that a user is “[t]he person that uses a product, system or service.” In a hospital, for example, this could mean many different people. The user could for example be a patient, a nurse, a doctor or a cleaner, a member of reception staff or a visitor. In other instances the user could also be the client, for example when designing an internal corporative system.

When it comes to participatory processes in Sweden there is a somewhat floating distinction between what is called citizen dialogue versus user dialogue. A citizen dialogue refers to matters concerning people in their role as citizens or inhabitants, such as a situation in a residential area or traffic planning. The user dialogue concerns people in the role as users of specific operations or services. In urban planning, both citizen dialogue and user dialogue can be used depending on the level of involvement and stage in the planning process. (Lindholt, 2010)

In both service design (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011) and urban planning (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013), other experts and stakeholders are also involved in the processes. This does not only refer to individual people, but could be representatives for companies or other institutions. As urban planning is not only concerning inhabitants or visitors, but also different actors within the city, these are often involved or consulted in the process as well. However, this thesis focuses on the end user, meaning the public in urban planning and the users in service design.

According to Khakee (2006) the planners’ view of the public has changed together with the change in society, going from

a more collective view of democracy, seeing the public as citizens, to a more individual view, seeing the public as users. Seen from a service design point of view, there would be no difference between the two when it comes to urban planning: the public would be the users of urban planning, meaning the people using the products, systems and services that urban planning provides.

When discussing mindsets in this thesis, the public participation practitioners’ mindset towards the public can therefore be compared to the service designers’ mindset towards the user. These mindsets will be investigated and discussed further in the next chapter, 4, *Empirical Studies*.

4. *Empirical Studies*

In this chapter the three different mindsets – the mindset allocated to public participation practitioners in literature, the mindset of unestablished public participation workers and the mindset of those focusing on user involvement within service design – will be investigated. How these mindsets relate to and differ from each other will then be analysed in Chapter 5, *Analysis*.

4.1 The Discourse of Public Participation

As there is no officially stated mindset in public participation, such as the core principles in service design, literature on public participation has been studied in order to find out what the mindset of practitioners of public participation is. The current discourse of public participation tells much about the mindset behind it. However, it also works in the opposite way, through greatly affecting the mindset. As commonly stated when talking about media exposure: what we see, hear and experience influence us in one way or another. Therefore, reviewing what the literature on public participation says is an important factor when finding out what the traditionally presented mindset of public participation practitioners is.

In publications from municipalities the benefits of public participation are often listed and divided into two parts: benefits from a democratic perspective and benefits from an efficiency perspective. From a democratic perspective public participation is said to bring an increased trust for public authorities and understanding of the complex processes behind decision-making as well as encouraging wider citizen engagement, such as joining a political party. From an efficiency perspective, it is said that public participation makes it easier to implement prioritised interventions as well as offer knowledge about the public's needs and wants, making sure that the supply better matches the demand. (Lindholm, 2010)

However, material published by municipalities and other authorities are often aimed at encouraging the use of public participation and can therefore not be seen as representative for the actual mindset of the ones performing the acts, but rather presenting an ideal picture of how the practitioners should act, think and behave. Therefore, it is important to look at what is being said about public participation outside

of the in-house published material. Rydberg Åkesson (2012) has researched the discourse of public participation in urban planning in Sweden. He concludes that despite the municipalities' emphasis on the benefits of public participation, there is a split view with many arguments both for and against it. Some of the arguments in Rydberg Åkesson's (2012) research are opposing opinions on the same topic, such as public participation forming a necessary complement to representative democracy on the one hand and them not being compatible on the other hand or arguments about the process becoming more or less efficient with public participation.

Rydberg Åkesson's research shows that there are two sides of the story. People have different opinions on what concepts like efficiency and representative democracy means. This split view of public participation brings an uncertainty about its effects, and can be assumed to put pressure on those practising it, trying to please both sides at the same time as trying to please the public. This is evident in for example the project RiverCity Gothenburg (Brorström, 2012), where the evaluation of the process shows planners experiencing the expectations from the public difficult to fulfil. This could potentially lead to a more negatively angled mindset towards public participation. Not knowing what is expected when practising public participation will naturally bring a certain hesitance towards doing it. By avoiding the subject of public participation the conflict is avoided, as there is no need to pick a side. Further, Khakee (2006) claims that the planner's mindset towards public participation is ambivalent, torn between efficiency and democracy. Henecke and Khan (2002) point out that there is a conflict between the two goals of having more efficient processes as well as a genuine public participation. They say that despite public participation most likely prolonging the planning process,

The planner's mindset towards public participation is ambivalent, torn between efficiency and democracy.

(Khakee, 2006)

this should be put in perspective to the total life span of the project. Compared to this, both the costs and the time related to public participation represent very small parts. Khakee's and Henecke and Khan's research shows a conflict within public participation. One can almost say that the practitioners' mindsets are divided into two camps: those prioritising efficiency, looking at the public as an unnecessary stakeholder, and those prioritising genuine participation, seeing the public influence as vital to the process.

Henecke and Khan (2002) also claim that even though public participation creates a situation where the public is given a legitimate right to influence the planning process, this right is in effect negated. The authors say that the public's influence is reactive, only allowed to share their opinions on pre-decided meetings and limited to details in the detailed development plans, which in turn have a limited influence on the actual building process, determined more by informal negotiations between the municipality and different commercial stakeholders. However, SKL (2012a) has recognised these problems, and are actively working on involving the public in an earlier stage of the planning process. This shows that authorities within public participation, such as SKL, are aware of the negative opinions. As mentioned earlier, SKL's work can be assumed to greatly influence the mindset of practitioners of public participation. The fact that SKL is highlighting problems with public participation, such as the reactive role of the public, could further affect the mindset of public participation practitioners: critics against public participation are building their case, this time through acknowledgement from an authority in the field. On the other hand, SKL offering solutions to the problems they highlight could also bring about a positive affect on the mindset, as one can see that someone is taking on responsibility for the problems and acting on them.

Henecke and Khan's (2002) and Rydberg Åkesson's (2012) research describe the discourse around public participation from the municipality or planner point of view. Nothing is however being said about the public themselves and what they feel about the public participation programmes, even though their negative view of the process is evident in for example SKL's (2009a) evaluations. While researching the architectural process behind libraries in Sweden, Lidman (2003) made the same observation, saying that the *usage* of the building of is great importance, but the actual *users* are less important. Furthermore, Lidman (free translation, 2003, p. 59) claims that "...the user is undoubtedly also sometimes an alibi for [the client's or architect's] own ideas." The fact that researchers are mostly focusing on the experience of planners or other practitioners of public participation, rather than the public itself, is characteristic for the mindset represented in literature. Although public participation brings democratic benefits, the effect it has on the planning process is seen as the most important factor.

In summary, one can say that the mindset represented in literature is a very split one. There are both arguments for and against public participation, and this might put unwelcome pressure on those practising it, affecting the mindset negatively and dividing the practitioners into two camps. Authorities such as SKL (2012a) recognise the negative comments, which could both lead to a more negatively or a more positively angled mindset amongst the practitioners. Most research (Henecke & Khan, 2002; Khakee, 2006; Rydberg Åkesson, 2012) has been done on the planner's or practitioner's view on public participation, further emphasising the view of the planning process being the most important factor in public participation and not the public itself. The mindset represented in literature will be further analysed and discussed in Chapter 5, *Analysis*.

"...the user is undoubtedly also sometimes an alibi for [the client's or architect's] own ideas."

(Lidman, 2003, p. 59)

4.2 Public Participation in Gothenburg and Malmö

Many cities are working actively with enhancing the process of public participation, often to avoid the negative effects described earlier in this thesis. Both Gothenburg and Malmö are currently trying out new methods for public participation, evaluating and adapting the methods along the way.

“In Malmö we have dared to try out new things without necessarily having it go through the entire organisation first,” says Moa Björnson (2013), process leader for public participation processes in Malmö. Manilla Shillingford, working with public participation in Gothenburg, also talks about trying out new methods, saying “...we are still in the beginning of this and we learn from each process” (Shillingford, 2013). The fact that trying new methods is a big part of both cities’ public participation processes tells much about their mindset. As mentioned earlier, trying out new methods and evaluating continuously, indicates an open mindset as well as a responsiveness to change. Admitting that they are not on the top of their game to start with but are actively working on getting there, learning from their mistakes, indicates a certain humility towards the work.

In both Malmö and Gothenburg SKL’s Participatory Steps is a widely used model (Björnson, 2013; Shillingford, 2013). According to Björnson (2013) it is important that everyone in the internal team is on the same step of the staircase. Once agreed which step they are on, the team knows what is expected from the participation, and misunderstandings can be avoided. Shillingford (2013) says that the Participatory Steps is a very important tool in the communication with the public, making sure they know what to expect from each activity. According to Shillingford (2013), if the people conducting the public participation activity are unclear when it comes to its purpose, there is a risk that the participants feel that they have been promised something

which is later on not fulfilled. Shillingford’s wish to not make false promises to the public indicates a certain sense of responsibility; it makes for a willingness to take the public seriously and value their opinions, seeing them as one of the clients in the process. Björnson (2013) says that the most interesting and giving processes are often placed on the higher steps of the staircase, Dialogue, Influence and Co-decision, where it is possible to reason more with the public, and have repeated participatory activities. As mentioned earlier, a model that is widely used and referred to can be assumed to have an influence on the mindset of those using it. The fact that Björnson chooses to place activities on the higher steps of the staircase indicates a willingness to include the public more in the process than the lowest requirements for public participation.

Both Björnson (2013) and Shillingford (2013) are working with target group analyses, as different projects concern different people. Yet, there is a dilemma related to this. The people who seek out and voluntarily participate in the public participation programmes or activities are not necessarily matching the target group. Both Björnson (2013) and Shillingford (2013) emphasise the reflection of their own work in this case. They are constantly analysing the segments of people they are already in contact with and are making special efforts to reach any missing segments of the target group. According to Shillingford (2013), it is important to adjust the methods used to the target group you are working with, making sure they appreciate and understand the methods. They both recognise the problem of non-representative participants mentioned in Rydberg Åkesson’s research (2012), but Björnson (2013) says that a full representation of all possible segments of the public might not be necessary in all projects. Instead, she says, what you want from public participation is to deepen your knowledge,

“In Malmö we have dared to try out new things without necessarily having it go through the entire organisation first.”

(Moa Björnson, 2013)

“We are still in the beginning of this and we learn from each process.”

(Manilla Shillingford, 2013)

and talking to engaged and interested people is a good way of doing this. To reflect on your own work and adapting the process as it goes along indicates, in the same way as trying out new methods do, a humble mindset. However, prioritising deepened knowledge over widened ditto shows decisiveness and a certainty in the role of a professional, making decisions that might not always be by the book, but are seen as most beneficial for the process.

Shillingford (2013) stresses the importance of involving the public in the very beginning of the planning process. She claims that traditionally, the public has not been let in on the process until after a number of important studies or sketches have been made and have therefore had a very limited possibility to affect the process, other than approving or disapproving of work already done. Shillingford (2013) says that if the public are not given the chance to share their opinions and affect the process in the beginning of it, "...it doesn't matter much what is presented in the end. You'll either love it or hate it, and there is not much more you can do about it" (Shillingford, 2013). Shillingford (2013) also states the importance of continuous use of public participation all through the process, saying that public participation is no quick fix. Björnson (2013) back this up, saying that it is crucial to not think it is enough to have a public participation activity during the initial work "...and then just tick it off the list" (Björnson, 2013), but rather conduct recurrent participation activities throughout the process. This shows that both Björnson and Shillingford see public participation as a necessary act throughout the planning process, indicating a positive mindset towards it.

Björnson (2013) and Shillingford (2013) both express concerns when it comes to reconnecting with the participants. After short-term activities the reconnection

is mostly aimed at informing the participants of what was said and how those insights will be or have been processed further. After more engaging activities, such as workshops, the public are often given a chance to comment on the material, giving their opinion on the results or pointing out misunderstood information.

“What the public said they wanted, once they got it, might not be what they actually wanted or they didn't understand the consequences of it.”

(Manilla Shillingford, 2013)

Björnson (2013) says that it is very important to reconnect with the participants as fast as possible, but the information you send out while reconnecting cannot be too vague. However, the processes are often performed over a long period of time and as a result of this participants sometimes feel that nothing is happening. Shillingford (2013) has noticed a certain frustration over this amongst the public. She says that in hindsight, if they had known what the ensuing process would look like, they would have worked differently with the reconnection during the RiverCity Gothenburg project. They are now adapting their working process according to this, introducing temporary arrangements as a way of working, to be able to show the public that things are actually happening shortly after the public participation activity.

According to Shillingford (2013), these temporary arrangements are not only there to please the public but also offer a way of testing functions and reactions. Shillingford (2013) says that "...you could have great arguments for why something should be this way or another, but the public might not react to it the way you wanted or thought they would. What the public said they wanted, once they got it, might not be what they actually wanted or they

didn't understand the consequences of it." According to Shillingford (2013), trying out something in small scale first, such as closing a street for car traffic before closing down the entire area, gives valuable insights. Shillingford (2013) continues, saying "[y]ou don't just do an all-encompassing change, like *'bam, here is a master plan'*." This statement once again shows her humble attitude towards the profession: not regarding oneself as someone allowed to do whatever they want, but instead as a person working for the public trying hard to give them what they need. However, indicating that the public does not know what it wants does show a certain trust in the own expertise, which in turn indicates what Liem and Sanders (2011) call an expert mindset.

In Malmö, Björnson (2013) has worked with a small group of girls in developing an activity area. The girls have taken part in the development and designing of the area, and the project reached "...quite a deep level of participation" (Björnson, 2013), landing at the Co-decision step of SKL's Participatory Steps. Björnson (2013) says there are benefits related to collaborating this closely with smaller groups of the public. The girls have been given great responsibility, having a real and tangible influence on the project. Allowing these young girls to take so much responsibility for what is happening with a certain area shows that Björnson trusts the public, and their specific knowledge of the local area.

Shillingford (2013) has noticed a certain pride amongst the participants after close collaborations, saying "...you don't always understand what effect co-creation and participation have on people. They become ambassadors for your work" (Shillingford, 2013). Allowing yourself to see and value benefits of the process outside of the expected ones could lead to an increased appreciation of the process, further influencing the mindset towards public participation positively.

Although emphasising the benefit of public participation for the public themselves, Björnson (2013) claims they use public participation just as much for their own sake. "It's about gaining insights to be able to create a better result", she says (Björnson, 2013). Further, Björnson (2013) says, it is important for municipalities to realise that public participation is not only a democratic process; the public is actually doing the municipality a favour by participating. Shillingford (2013) agrees, although still stressing the importance of keeping the public informed. She claims that closing the process, once you've gained the insight you need to keep developing the project internally, "...you probably haven't understood what participation means" (Shillingford, 2013).

According to Shillingford (2013), the participation activities should include more than just the public. Politicians and other local authorities need to be involved in the process in order to feel ownership of the result. During public participation programmes, Shillingford (2013) has encouraged everyone involved in the process to spend some time experiencing the public participation activities first hand, for example by joining a town square meeting. However, Shillingford says, the process should be lead by people trained in participatory processes as tools and methods might otherwise be misused; if the activities are not carefully planned, with a specific purpose, and performed by experienced practitioners, you will not know what to do with the information that comes out of them. According to Shillingford (2013) the planners and architects are there to learn, not to take responsibility for the process. Björnson (2013) also stresses the importance of involving those who will have to act on the input in the public participation, saying that even though she would be the one planning and leading the process, it is crucial she does not become "...some sort of representative for the public" (Björnson, 2013).

*"You don't just do an all-encompassing change, like **'bam, here is a master plan'**."*

(Manilla Shillingford, 2013)

"It's about gaining insights to be able to create a better result."

(Moa Björnson, 2013)

However, both Björnson (2013) and Shillingford (2013) are experiencing difficulties with opening up the public participation processes, saying that members of the public often comment other parts of the city, or make suggestions regarding other areas of development than the ones the particular participation activity is aimed at. According to Björnson (2013) it is sometimes quite difficult to share the insights to the concerned department, saying that "... this knowledge dispersion takes time, especially in a large municipality. Sometimes things fall between the cracks, and knowledge is lost along the way" (Björnson, 2013). Stressing the importance of including the ones actually implementing the insights from public participation and striving to share the knowledge to concerned departments proofs earlier statements of Björnson and Shillingford sharing a mindset which really believes in the benefits of public participation.

Despite trying to involve all stakeholders in the public participation process, Shillingford (2013) is still experiencing difficulties implementing the insights gained. She claims that much of the municipal work is done according to set processes, and changing those takes time and effort. "It's about behavioural change, and behavioural change doesn't just happen" she says (Shillingford, 2013). However, she claims that public participation is the right way to go to perform this change. Internally, they are working actively with implementing this change in the system. This shows that Shillingford has indeed experienced the split view of public participation within the field of urban planning, and despite actively trying to change the mindset of negative critics by involving them in the process, still experiences difficulties. Shillingford (2013) claims that using public participation, the planning process could be shortened by getting people together, discussing different issues and opening up the process. However, Shillingford (2013) also thinks it is

well worth it to have public participation, even if it would prolong the process, saying "[s]o what if it adds three months to the process? What is three months if it means you get a good result?" Björnson (2013) claims that you can only rationalise the public participation process to a certain extent, saying "...you need that personal contact and the time to talk and explain".

These two statements clearly state that if the mindset of public participation within urban planning is divided into two camps, those advocating efficiency and those advocating democracy through genuine public participation, both Björnson and Shillingford belong to the latter.

“So what if it adds three months to the process? What is three months if it means you get a good result?”

(Manilla Shillingford, 2013)

“You need that personal contact and the time to talk and explain.”

(Moa Björnson, 2013)

4.3 User Involvement in Service Design

As mentioned above, being user-centred is one of the core principles in service design, and a large part of forming the service design mindset. The designs are based on a genuine understanding of the user through authentic customer insights (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). However, gaining a genuine understanding and authentic insights is easier said than done. How can we know that this is something actually implemented in service design and not just something that is strived for or written about?

When asked about how the user is involved Jenny Dannstedt (2013), interaction designer at Doberman, a digital service design agency in Sweden, says that user involvement is their backbone. For her, doing a project without involving the user in one way or another would be almost impossible. Dannstedt (2013) says that the user is there all the way, from when the idea is born until the project is finalised. The fact that Dannstedt states this in the very beginning of the explanation, before even describing how the user is involved, shows that she agrees with the service design mindset presented in literature, seeing the users as crucial to the process. Dannstedt (2013) also points out that not only is the end user of a service involved in the process, but so are the people working behind the scenes providing the service, who are just as important. This indicates an open mindset, looking beyond the apparent answers to a question, instead striving to consider less obvious answers as well.

As mentioned above, there are many tools and methods aimed at involving the user within service design (e.g. Moritz, 2005; Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). However, Erik Widmark, head of the service design team at Transformator Design, a large service design agency in Sweden, says that the user involvement is not dependent on any single tool. The tools used are often the same as in other disciplines, such as

ethnography or journalism, but used in a different context. (Widmark, 2013) According to Widmark (2013), the important thing is rather user involvement in the design process as a whole. This shows that without explicitly saying so, Widmark is aware of the tools not being sufficient for a genuine user involvement. Instead, by talking about the design process as a whole, he indicates that there is more to the process than just a series of tools added together.

“User involvement is our backbone.”

(Jenny Dannstedt, 2013)

Why does the user want an apartment with natural light? Is it a status symbol? Is it a sign of being open-minded or having a sense of good taste?

In the beginning of a service design project, according to both Dannstedt (2013) and Widmark (2013), the questions are always very broad and open, allowing space for the user to explain and talk about whatever it is that they experience around the given topic. A lot of follow-up questions are asked, aimed at understanding why a person reacts the way they do, or say what they say. For example, Widmark (2013) says that if a user wishes for large windows and is asked why, they might say it is because they want a naturally light apartment but it is important to go deeper than this. *Why* does the user want an apartment with natural light? Is it a status symbol? Is it a sign of being open-minded or having a sense of good taste? According to Widmark (2013), if the service design team does not know the underlying motives or feelings for a certain wish, the service they develop might fulfil the wish but fail to appeal to the underlying motives leading to the users not being satisfied with the end result without necessarily knowing why. Always searching for the underlying motives or feelings shows that Widmark has a genuine urge to understand the user.

From the insights gained from observations and interviews, the service design team creates what Widmark (2013) call trigger material. These are early and crude sketches showing an idea of a service. This trigger material is shown to the users, allowing them to interact with it, comment on it and question it. It is important to keep the material rough in order to get people's honest opinion. If the material is too refined, the conversations usually revolve around that exact solution rather than the general idea. Widmark (2013) says that in this stage, when the users have something concrete to relate to, they are really creative and can come up with entirely new solutions that further refine the concept. This iterative process, having more and more specific questions and refined prototypes, then goes on until a solution has been developed. Allowing the users to interact with the early material and base the further work largely on their input indicates a trust in the users and a belief that the users themselves know best what it is that they want.

Dannstedt (2013) claims that testing ideas with the users is just as important as the initial understanding of their wishes and needs. She continues by saying that even though she has worked with user interaction for the last 15 years, there is so much to learn from each user test. Widmark (2013) backs this up, saying that even though Transformator Design has worked with many projects related to the banking industry, they never claim that they are experts in banking services. Instead, he says, "...the only thing we are experts in is understanding people and translate their needs to solutions" (Widmark, 2013). These two statements clearly show a humble attitude to the profession. Admitting that there is still much to learn, and not calling yourself an expert despite vast experience, indicates seeing yourself more as a tool helping the users get what they need than an all-knowing authority forcing your own expert opinions upon someone else.

Talking about co-creation with the users, Widmark (2013) says that there is more to it than just giving users a pen and paper. As Henry Ford is commonly quoted, "[i]f I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses", the users are not always able to envision the great innovations of the future, but would rather see better versions of what they already have. According to Widmark (2013), it is the designer's task to find ways of understanding the user, interpreting their vision of a better version, and translate that into the user's real needs and desires.

"The only thing we are experts in is understanding people and translate their needs to solutions."

(Erik Widmark, 2013)

"It's not about showing off, it's about collaboration."

(Jenny Dannstedt, 2013)

Dannstedt (2013) says that the work is "not about showing off, it's about collaboration", meaning that they are not trying to show what the agency is capable of delivering, but rather striving to reach a good result together with the users. This further emphasises the view upon oneself as the users' tool, helping them achieving what they need.

Widmark (2013) stresses the importance of not dividing the roles of the team, letting a researcher do the user research, a designer do the designing and so on. According to Widmark (2013), if the workload is too divided, a lot of the tacit, collective knowledge the team have built up will be lost in the handover between different departments or people. Also,

he claims, when the work is too divided, it is difficult for any single person to see the whole picture of a project, and the purpose of their own work is sometimes lost. This may be perceived as a less efficient way to work, but it is important, "...because when the same people follow the project all the way through you can ensure that the solution is based on profound knowledge of the end user" (Widmark, 2013).

This statement indicates two things. Firstly, it shows that Widmark has a genuine trust in the users' expertise. Further, the statement above tells us that Widmark agrees with the opinion that genuine public participation, or in this case user understanding, is more important than efficiency, placing himself in the same camp as Björnson and Shillingford.

"When the same people follow the project all the way through you can ensure that the solution is based on profound knowledge of the end user."

(Erik Widmark, 2013)

5. Analysis

How the different mindsets are expressed in literature and through interviews has been described above, but not how they relate to each other. This will be explained through answering the two questions stated in the introduction: What is the mindset that makes the user involvement function well in service design? And how does the mindset of public participation practitioners differ from the service design mindset? The answers to these questions will then be analysed, answering the purpose of the thesis: could the mindset of service design lead to improved public participation in urban planning, and in that case, how?

5.1 What is the mindset that makes the user involvement function well in service design?

In literature, the service design mindset is described through five core principles: user-centred, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing and holistic. If and how these core principles are evident in mindset towards users will be discussed in this section.

The fact that user-centred is stated as the first core principle clearly shows the importance users are given within service design. This importance is evident in the empirical studies, most explicitly by Dannstedt saying that the users are their backbone, and it being impossible going through a service design project without involving the users. Widmark stresses the importance of really understanding the user, not satisfied with hearing a simple explanation of why the user wants or needs something. He also mentions profound knowledge of the user as a vital source in order to create a good service fulfilling the user's needs. Both Dannstedt and Widmark thus show a genuine urge to involve the users as much as they possibly can into the process. The user's expertise, based on experiences, is trusted and sometimes even valued higher than the service designer's professional expertise. It is almost as if the service designers are looking up to the users, placing them and their experiences on a pedestal. This could be a result of the discourse of service design, constantly revolving around it being user centred.

The second core principle, co-creation, tells *how* the process is user centred. Through the empirical studies it is clear that the users are brought into the creative process all along and are a natural part of it. Widmark talks about co-creative tools, saying that just letting the users draw something will not move the process any further ahead. Instead, it is clear that the *co* in co-creation is very important. Widmark claims that by working with the users, interpreting their

wishes, letting them see work at an early stage and not being afraid of showing one's mistakes, entirely new solutions can be created. Widmark's way of collaborating with the users, acknowledging the user's knowledge as an expertise he is lacking, shows that he sees the user as someone he is working together *with*, rather than working *for*, indicating what Liem and Sanders (2011) call a participatory mindset.

Sequencing, the act of recognising that there are more steps or touchpoints to the process than one might initially think and actively seeking out these by involving the ones experiencing the service first hand – the users – once again shows a user-oriented mindset. Starting out a project by asking broad questions allowing the users to explain their own experiences around a given topic, as both Dannstedt and Widmark are doing, shows their willingness to base the work around the users' actual experience rather than their own perceived opinion on what the user might be experiencing.

Evidencing, the next core principle, is about the process behind the scenes of a service. Seeing the users behind the scenes as equally important to the process as the end users, as Dannstedt demonstrates by bringing them up, calls for a more thought-through end result, and indicates an open mindset striving to consider less obvious answers, as mentioned above.

The last core principle, holistic, can be seen as a fusion of the other principles, taking different aspects of the service into account, but it also adds a perspective to the process. Widmark saying that there is more to the process than just a set of tools shows a wider perspective of the service design process, indicating the collective tacit knowledge of the

service design team. Stressing the importance of the same team following through with the process all along, instead of dividing it up between different professions shows that he strives to keep the holistic perspective all through the process. Furthermore, emphasising the team having a common purpose corresponds with the holistic principle. Always looking at the bigger picture, and knowing what the final purpose of your task is, helps avoiding acting on hunches or promoting your own ideas rather than those best suited for the users.

The five core principles sum up the mindset towards the users quite well, but I think a parameter is missing: the humility. All through the empirical studies, a great humbleness towards the user is evident, showing respect for the users' needs and expertise, acknowledging the user as an equal. Dannstedt saying that she has much to learn even after 15 years of experience and Widmark refusing to claim expertise of anything else than understanding people are two very clear examples of this.

The humility is enhanced through certain methods, such as showing early and crude sketches to the users, letting them know you are not perfect from the start but instead working your way to finding out what it is they would prefer and need, but is also manifested in the service designers' personal approach to the users, such as the urge to genuinely understand the user, seeing oneself as the one with the lesser knowledge of the specific service experience.

In summary, the service design mindset seems to be what Liem and Sanders (2011) call a participatory mindset, manifested by working *with* the users. However, the service design mindset is also characterised by a genuine urge to understand the users, as well as humility.

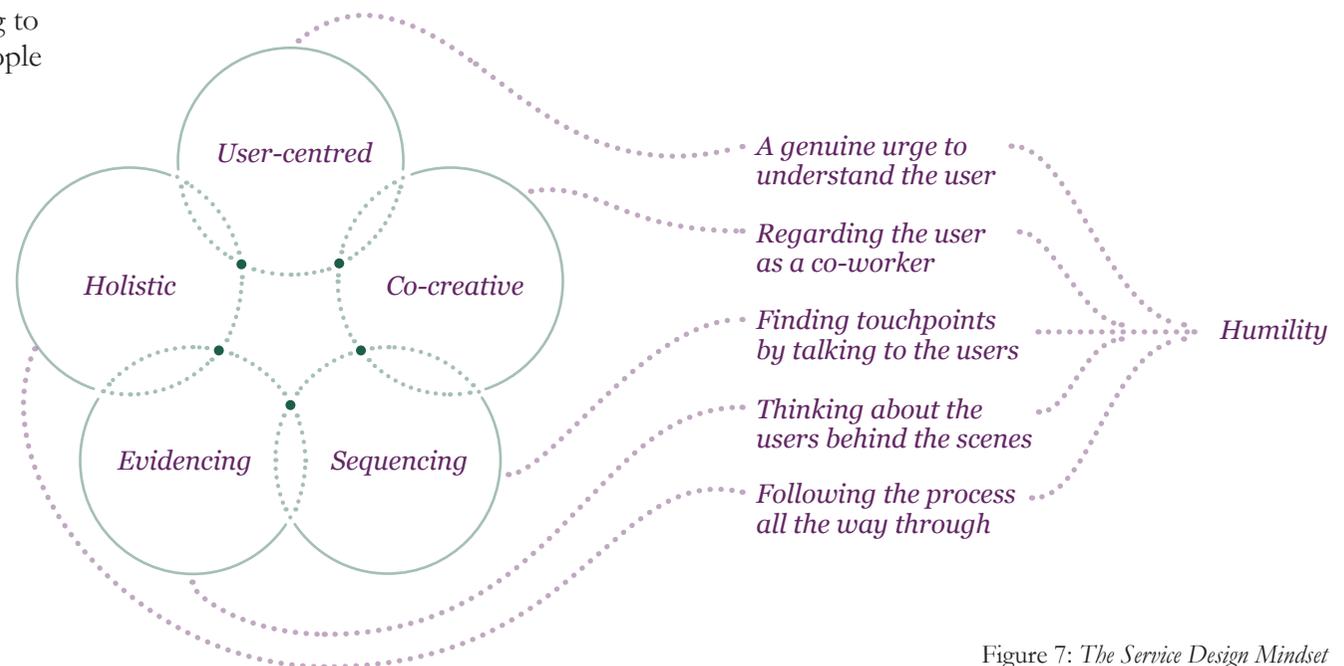


Figure 7: *The Service Design Mindset*

5.2 How does the mindset of public participation practitioners differ from the service design mindset?

At first glance, public participation seems picture perfect. It benefits the democratic process, increasing the public's trust for authorities and their understanding of the complex processes behind decision-making, encouraging a wider citizen engagement, as well as facilitating the implementation of prioritised interventions and making sure that the supply better matches the public's demand. However, researchers claim that there is a split view of public participation amongst the practitioners, and far from everyone agrees with the benefits listed above. This split view brings an uncertainty to those practising public participation, contradictory to service design, where most of the scarce literature available praise the discipline. Praise is strengthening the service design discipline as a selling concept, but could also be assumed to boost the confidence of the service designers.

Looking at the public participation practitioners' mindset through the five core principles of service design with the addition of humility, helps understanding the differences between the mindsets.

Starting with user-centred, the concept of public participation naturally brings that the public is participating in the process. However, many practitioners prioritise efficiency. Neither Björnson nor Shillingford agrees with this, saying that public participation should be allowed its necessary time. This corresponds with Widmark's view of efficiency as inferior to genuinely understanding the user. Both Shillingford and Widmark also talks about giving the people what they really need, but here an important difference can be noted. Shillingford says that members of the public does not always know what they want or does not understand the consequences of their wishes, indicating that she as a professional must act against their wishes from time to time,

in order to give the public what is best for them. Widmark on the other hand says that it is the service designer's job to understand the user, and if the user is not satisfied with the result, the service designer has failed their job. Shillingford thus shows an expert mindset, knowing better than the public what they need, whereas Widmark shows a participatory mindset, functioning as a tool to understand the user.

Moving on to co-creation, the second core principle of service design, public participation is not as evidently co-creative as service design. The Participatory Steps, widely used amongst practitioners, encourages information as the lowest step of participation. This potentially leads to the opinion that information is a participatory process. In service design however, just informing the users is never mentioned as a participatory activity. Instead, activities are aimed at understanding the user and observations where the users are not even aware of the service designers presence is sometimes used. From this, an important difference between the mindsets of participation within public participation and service design can be noted. Within public participation, the public is sometimes passive, merely acting as the recipient of information. Within service design, the user is always active, although sometimes not aware of their actions being noted. This difference in seeing the users as active or the public as passive tells us much about the underlying mindsets. Where service designers are always working together *with* the active user, public participation practitioners are rather working *for* the passive public, indicating a participatory mindset amongst service designers and an expert mindset amongst public participation practitioners. The difference is not a surprising one; public participation is partly done from a democratic perspective, making sure the public are allowed

to voice their opinion on matters concerning their local area, and service design aims at developing services that matches the user needs, thus depending on the user's expertise to pinpoint what those needs are.

Furthermore, in SKL's Participatory Steps, the top rung, citizen control, has been removed, and as mentioned above this indicates a resistance against delegating too much power to the people. On the other hand, Björnson demonstrates a willingness to move public participation activities higher up the staircase to gain a deepened knowledge from the public, indicating a change amongst public participation practitioners towards a larger trust in the public's expertise, more similar to the service designer's trust in the user's expertise.

Within public participation in urban planning, sequencing, the next core principle of service design, is much more evident. Looking at the public participation in itself as a service, Björnson and Shillingford point out difficulties with the touchpoint of reconnecting with the public. Both are actively trying to increase the experience of reconnection, partly by changing the touchpoint itself and partly by adding other touchpoints, such as temporary activities, before the reconnection. Recognising different touchpoints and trying to improve them corresponds well to the service design process. However, the reconnection with the public in public participation looks very different from the recurring contact with the users in service design. In public participation, reconnection is often about informing the public about how their opinions have been taken into account, whereas in service design, the team goes back and forth, reconnecting with the users constantly, until a final solution has been reached. This further emphasises the mindset stated above: service designers working *with* the users, developing a solution together through several interactions, and public participation

practitioners working *for* the public, hearing what they have to say, acting upon it and then telling the public what was done.

One can say that Shillingford has been working with evidencing, the fourth core principle of service design, by introducing temporary arrangements as a response to the feeling that nothing happened she noticed amongst the public. These temporary arrangements not only serve as evidence for the on-going process, but are also a way of trying new practises. This testing corresponds well with the service design mindset, constantly prototyping and iterating throughout the process, and could be a result of the use of service design methods in the project RiverCity Gothenburg.

The fifth core principle, holistic, is perhaps even more important in urban planning than in service design. Even though the participation activities only concern a certain area, the surrounding areas and what goes on within them has to be considered. Here, a large difference between the discipline of urban planning and the one of service design becomes especially clear. Service design most often concerns the design of *one specific service*, even though the ecosystem in which the service takes place is always considered. Urban planning most often concerns *a part of an urban environment* and it is thus crucial to take the rest of it into account. Björnson's and Shillingford's desire to include all concerned professionals in the public participation process is similar to Widmark's claim that the collective knowledge a team builds during a project can not be replaced by handovers between different professionals. Both Björnson and Shillingford also have a more holistic perspective of the planning process, stressing the importance of having public participation all along the process, as opposed to seeing it as something to tick off a list. This mindset corresponds with the one of service design where users are constantly involved in the process.

Another big difference between service design and urban planning related to the holistic core principle is the purpose of the disciplines. In service design, the purpose – to create a good service based on user needs – is quite clear, and stays the same throughout the process. In urban planning, however, each part has its own purpose. Public participation practitioners see the public interests as the most important factor and the purpose of the project as meeting those needs; planners might see making a thought-through plan as the purpose of their part, constructors want to build as efficiently as possible and so on. The discipline of urban planning in itself thus has multiple purposes, which makes handovers even more difficult. In service design, where different professions are also collaborating, this problem is largely aided by a core team of service designers involved from beginning to end.

The humility found within service design is also evident in statements by Björnson and Shillingford. Just like Dannstedt, Shillingford says that they learn from each process. Björnson's willingness to admit still being in the testing phase and not yet knowing the best procedure of public participation also shows this humility. Although recognising the public's expertise and right to speak, the humble attitude is not as absolute amongst public participation practitioners as amongst service designers. There is also a certain trust in one's own expertise as a professional, sometimes knowing what is best for the public. Björnson and Shillingford emphasising the importance of public participation over efficiency nevertheless shows respect for the public's importance to the process. This mindset is, however, not as evident in literature as in the statements by Björnson and Shillingford.

Summing up the differences between the mindsets, Liem and Sanders' (2011) division suits the mindsets quite well, where

service designers tend to have a more participatory mindset and public participation practitioners an expert mindset. However, the mindsets are overlapping to a large extent. The humility seen amongst service designers is evident amongst unestablished public participation practitioners, indicating more similar mindsets. There is also a division between the traditionally presented mindset and the mindset amongst unestablished public participation practitioners, where the unestablished practitioners show a larger trust in participatory activities, placing themselves more to the middle in the mindset division.

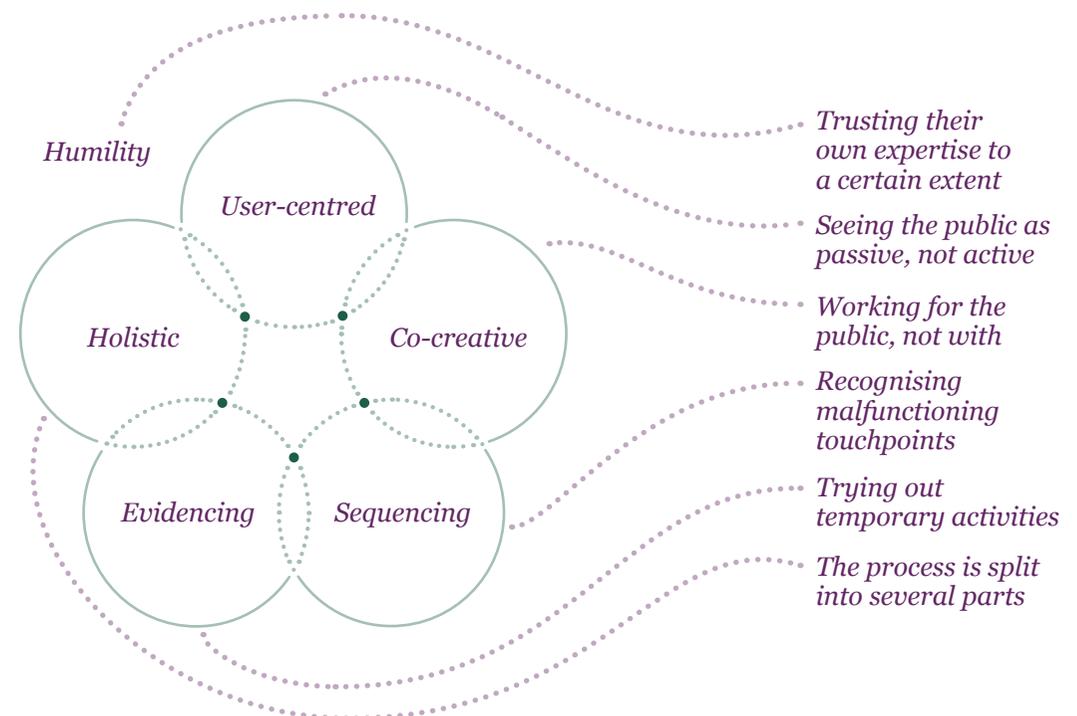


Figure 8: *The Public Participation Practitioner's Mindset*

5.3 *Could the mindset of service design lead to improved public participation in urban planning, and in that case, how?*

Service design and urban planning are two very different disciplines, with different tasks and objectives, and following exactly the same working processes would be impossible. Likewise, sharing an identical mindset towards the public and the user would be impossible. The public is involved to promote democracy as well as efficiency in the planning process, and the users are involved for the service team to understand their needs and thus create better services for them. It is only natural that employees of the state consider themselves as working *for* the public, and not *with* the public the way service designers do with users. However, there are certain aspects of the service design mindset that public participation practitioners could learn from, in order to reduce conflict around public participation and make the public feel more included.

The strive to really understand the users, deep down to the underlying motives of their needs, is evident in service design. Within public participation, it is often more important to get a representative outcome of opinions, gathering thoughts from as many people as possible. This is by no means unimportant, but instead of focusing on the quantity of participants, effort could be concentrated on analysing the target groups making sure all groups are represented by a few citizens. Focusing on fewer citizens and really involving them along the entire process, would create a more genuine understanding of their needs and wants. Simultaneously, the risk of drawing hasty conclusions from more insubstantial information, such as what they post on a website questionnaire or write on a note in a suggestion box, is reduced. This approach is already adopted by some public participation practitioners, but could be further emphasised and regarded as the main source of information rather than an added extra.

Public participation practitioners could also adopt the service design view of the public and user as active rather than passive. Information is a one-way communication, and although necessary and very important to the planning process, it is not participatory; thus grouping it with participatory processes in SKL's Participatory Steps risks creating confusion over what participation actually means. Seeing the public as active participants could make the process clearer and easier to understand for both the public and the professionals involved.

Although planners and architects are already involved in the public participation process, it could also be beneficial to the planning process to include public participation practitioners all along the planning process, just like service designers are present throughout the service design process. Both Björnson and Shillingford are emphasising the importance of looking on public participation as a continuous activity throughout the planning process, but are experiencing difficulties spreading it within the organisations. Furthermore, SKL's wish to learn from each public participation activity, illustrated in Figure 2, is in fact prevented by the process itself, illustrated in Figure 3. The people conducting the public participation activities are not there to see what effect the participation had on the process and the actual end result, and can thus only reflect on and change their own part of the process, unknowingly of any effect on the greater goal. By letting public participation practitioners be a part of the process until the built environment is finished, the holistic perspective can be kept throughout the process, the public participation process can be evolved to match the need for it and the risk of losing the tacit knowledge that is built up during the participatory activities is reduced. Letting the same person or people operate throughout the

process would also reduce the risk of knowledge loss in other handovers, such as between architects and contractors or constructors.

The holistic approach, taking the whole experience of a service into account when designing it, could further be emphasised in public participation by including the public all the way through the process, the same way users are involved in the service design process. Some public participation practitioners already practise this to various extents, but I believe it could be further developed by also letting users in on the process in the very late stages, close to the actual building of the urban environment. The level of engagement and participation will naturally be different in different parts of the process. In the beginning, the public might be able to affect the overall project, whereas in the end, they could only affect details, making sure their needs and wants have been correctly understood. This would “...ensure that the solution is based on profound knowledge of the end user”, as Widmark (2013) puts it, and increase the feeling of having been heard in the first place, enhancing the experience of the public participation process as well as the end result.

Lastly, as well as adopting aspects of the service design mindset, looking at public participation as a service in itself and develop it accordingly, using service design tools and methods, could be beneficial to the process. The problem experienced in public participation is not that it *is* being done, as there are clear benefits with the process stated by SKL, but rather *how* it is done. By looking at the public participation as a service, recognising the public as well as the planners, architects, municipality authorities, politicians and others involved as *users*, working to improve the service for all of them could affect the overall experience of public participation. This would most likely make the process

more efficient by reducing conflicts around it and more appreciated by the public by finding better ways to interact with them and letting them know things are being done even when they cannot see them.

Aspects of the service design mindset to adopt

.....

The genuine urge to understand the user

Regarding the public as active participants rather than passive recipients

Involving public participation practitioners in the entire process

Including the public throughout the process



6. *Conclusion*

In this thesis, the service design mindset and the mindset amongst public participation practitioners have been analysed and compared in order to find differences between them, and find out if and how the service design mindset could improve public participation.

It was found that there is a difference to the mindset of service designers and that of public participation practitioners. However, there is also a difference to the public participation practitioners' mindset represented in literature and that of unestablished public participation practitioners in reality, where the mindset represented in literature is even further away from the service design mindset. Summing up the differences between the mindsets, one can conclude that the different objectives of the processes create different mindsets. Public participation practitioners are working *for* the public, having what Liem and Sanders (2011) call an expert mindset, although not to the same extent amongst unestablished practitioners as literature on public participation would suggest. Service designers on the other hand, have a so-called participatory mindset (Liem & Sanders, 2011), working *with* the public.

Although the processes of urban planning and service design are very different, and should not strive to become one another, public participation practitioners could adopt some aspects of the service design mindset in order to improve the public participation process.

Within service design there is an urge to genuinely understand the users. Adopting this mindset towards the public would give a better understanding of the public's needs and wants, and the risk of drawing hasty conclusions based on insubstantial knowledge is reduced. Users in service design are seen as active participants of the process rather

than passive. Regarding the public as active participants, and removing the passive step of Information from SKL's Participatory Steps (2009a), would make the process clearer. Although public participation practitioners have come a long way by including planners, architects and other concerned professions in public participation activities, both the public and the public participation practitioners could follow the planning process through, ensuring that the end result is based on the public's interests.

Furthermore, looking at public participation itself as a service and developing it using service design tools and methods could affect the overall experience of public participation, making the process more efficient by reducing conflicts, and more appreciated by the public by finding better ways of keeping them involved.

Afterword

I am no knight, and I did not save any users on my white horse. As it turned out, the users do not need to be saved, but the mindset of those working with them could be changed. The service design mindset could indeed help improve public participation in urban planning, although it cannot be directly implemented into it. Merely being aware of your own mindset, much like service designers are aware and somewhat fostered into the same mindset by the literature on and culture of the discipline, forces you to think more about your actions. In turn, reflecting on your own actions makes you realise what is already good, and what can be done better.

Further research is needed on how the service design mindset is manifested in their tools, in order to find out if the adaptation and use of service design tools could further improve the public participation process.

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- Fig 6: *The Core Principles of Service Design*, illustration by Marie Hanås, based on Stickdorn, M. & Schneider, J., (2011), *This is Service Design Thinking*, Amsterdam: BIS Publishers, p. 34.
- Fig 7: *The Service Design Mindset*, illustration by Marie Hanås
- Fig 8: *The Public Participation Practitioner's Mindset*, illustration by Marie Hanås