



**Participation in the public sector:  
Using design and virtual workshops to  
involve immigrants in a co-creative process**

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The accelerating changes in our society are challenging the public sector and their approach to governance. There is a growing interest in public participation to innovate and create better public services and policies. Governments are searching for different ways to expand participation and leverage opportunities brought by technological developments in their processes. Design has been acknowledged as an appropriate collaborative approach to tackling complex social issues in the public sector. Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic the public sector has experienced virtual collaboration, and its benefits. The question that arises is how might design and virtual collaboration aid the public sector to increase public participation? The question that arises is how might design and virtual collaboration aid the public sector to increase public participation?

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the potential of design in the development of participatory processes in the public sector. The presented research-based development work aims to support the project initiated by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior to define long-term objectives for Finland's comprehensive migration policy. The objective of the thesis is twofold: First, to use design to co-create solutions that would improve participatory policy making together with immigrants and public servants and second, to design and implement virtual collaborative events to involve immigrants in a participatory process. The development work is based on a theoretical framework that lies at the intersection of design and public participation. Furthermore, the concepts of co-creation, virtual workshops and policy making are explored. The research-based development work is based on qualitative research, and it utilised service design methods like contextual interviews for gathering data. The qualitative data was then analysed using methods like affinity mapping. During analysis a deeper understanding of the problem was gained that led to the formulation of two development questions.

The result of the development work is an implemented process that involved public servants and immigrants at different stages of the design process using virtual workshops. An output of the process are three co-created prototypes of tools. Two of the tools aim to aid policy makers in designing participatory policy making processes and one to support immigrants providing key information on immigration policy making. Moreover, a proposal of a new visualisation of the design process is offered as an additional unexpected result of the development process.

The thesis critically explores the potential of participation and design to address complex issues that the public sector must deal with. The many barriers for actively involving citizens and public servants can be avoided and minimised by careful and intentional design of participatory process. Moreover, engaging public and citizen stakeholders in virtual workshops proved to be an effective and efficient alternative to traditional participatory methods in the public sector. The potential of virtual workshops and tools is discussed at the end alongside suggestions for increasing participation in the public sector.

Keywords: design, co-creation, public participation, participatory policy making, virtual workshops

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the thesis

In 1971 a conference was held in Manchester, England called Design participation. A year later a book was published out of papers submitted and presented at the conference. In the preface, Nigel Cross, the author of the book, stated that there is a need for citizen participation in decision making “if we are to arrest escalating problems of the man-made world.” (Cross 1972, cited in Sanders and Stappers 2008, 7). The speed at which technological, environmental, and social changes are happening today is still growing. Problems of a global nature are characterised by their complexity, and involve different policy domains, professional sectors, organisations, and political and administrative jurisdictions (Bason 2016, chap. 3).

One way to tackle societal issues is by creating better policies. Policies are a way how governments address societal issues (Bason 2016) by using policy instruments (e.g., legislation) to influence public behaviour (Howlett 2019). They are fundamental to public services as they delineate service requirements and shape service experiences (Howlett and Giest 2015). However, efficiency of public policies has been affected by public trust (OECD 2021b). In the OECD public governance review, Civic Space Scan of Finland (OECD 2021a), a poor trust in politicians and political parties is observed with the increasing division between decision makers and Finnish citizens. As a response to these changes, Finland recognized public participation as one of the key measures to improve trust, transparency, and social inclusion (OECD 2021a).

Policies, like any other aspect of our society, have been affected by globalisation and increased ‘networkization’ (Howlett 2019). Due to these changes new participatory and consultative approaches have been introduced to policy making (Howlett 2019), (service) design being one of the prominent ones (Bason 2016; Ministry of Finance 2020). Design has the potential to not only solve complicated but complex problems (Design Council 2021). Specifically, service design is increasingly present in the public sector, proving itself to be a useful discipline with its human-centred, experimental, and participatory qualities. Yet there are questions about the sustainability of its application and the unused potential it has to offer (Bason 2016).

The Finnish Roadmap for Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020) places public sector innovation as one of the three strategic development priorities. RDI is recognised as a solution to the new demands and challenges in the public sector and incentivises all ministries to develop regulations favouring research and innovation (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020). Like many other governments, the Finnish government also recognizes the new challenges and opportunities that the changing world is bringing. In the Finnish Strategy for Public Governance Renewal, they state that “administration must constantly seek new ways of acting, identify the most effective tools and strengthen capabilities” for social development and well-being (Ministry of Finance 2020). At the same time, they are aware that this implies fundamental changes of relationships between the government and people, the meaning of public power and the future of democracy. To meet the goals of governance, policies will “help identify needs for new solutions, ways of working and capabilities” (Ministry of Finance 2020).

Most of the goals imply increased collaboration or cooperation but specifically the second one focuses on policy to “expand opportunities to exert influence and encourage people to participate in policy preparation and decision-making” (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020, 9). Moreover, it is stated that various digital means will be used for participation. Five actions are listed to achieve the goal:

1. strengthening the co-creation process and openness in policy preparation with making impacts of participation visible,
2. full use of digitalisation to develop participation and exert influence,
3. strengthen the culture of participation and open dialogue,
4. strengthen service design capabilities, and
5. use understandable language.

Change in governance is needed and approaches that help navigate complexity are in growing demand. Since none of the complex challenges can be solved solely by governments, a new relationship between the public sector, private sector and citizens at large is needed. It seems though that the emphasis on innovation and strategic collaboration between governments and private actors is mostly incentivized because of economic growth and market competitiveness (Bason 2016 chap. 3). Still there are other collaborations that need to be established, particularly with citizens. Direct engagement, alignment and implementation of synergies is needed within the whole society. Public servants recognise this need and are searching for new ways to connect citizens to the public sector (OECD 2021a).

The recent pandemic has proven again that we live in a VUCA - volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world (Vuca-world 2022). Responses to COVID-19 measures clearly showed the importance of transparent communication, collaboration, and public trust. Existing societal challenges continue, and new disruptions are inevitable (Kaur M., Buisman H., Bekker A., McCulloch C. 2022, 9). The spread of COVID-19 virus has shown the importance of governments flexibility in crisis and how they play a key role in maintaining social prosperity. It has raised the topic of trust between citizens and public institutions (OECD 2021b). There is an increasing pressure and rising expectations of citizens towards governments due to many pressing challenges like global warming, demographic changes, and recently the energy crisis. The pandemic pushed governments beyond their established practices, for example remote work that had to be adopted throughout the public sector. Working remotely in the public sector proved that things can be done differently.

## 1.2 Case and context of the thesis

The case of this thesis is based on the development of Finland's comprehensive migration policy, a project initiated in 2021 by the Migration Department of the Ministry of the Interior. The new migration policy is rooted in the need for bringing together different operators. Immigration has been growing in Finland, has influenced its economic growth and will continue to do so with the expected rise of immigrants in the upcoming years. Migration policy has been recognized as having a big impact not only on immigrants but Finland as a whole. With the expected rise of crisis and conflicts, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Finland and Europe will continue to grow. Finland will therefore need to find ways to take care of its own needs and those that will seek a better life in Finland. (Ministry of the Interior 2021)

Finland aims to increase public participation and aims to put it at the centre of administration's activities (OECD 2021a). Even though participatory approaches are not legally binding and there are no institutional practices for participation, Finnish public institutions have been practising various forms of participation like round tables, advisory boards, public dialogues and working groups (OECD 2021a). Moreover, with the increased interest in digital participation, various Finnish public bodies are already using digital participatory methods like online chats with citizens, online discussions and social media. Even though digital participation is gaining traction in Finland it is usually linked to public debates, participatory platforms or other consultative formats for participation (Jäske 2018). However, research done by Jäske (2018) points out that consultative methods often have negative influence on the participants' perception of belonging. Moreover, Finland aims to move away from consultative participatory approaches that have been based on traditional



power structures and personal relationships and start including smaller and newer actors in participatory processes (OECD 2021a). Co-creation and workshops have been recognised as a suitable method for involving stakeholder representatives in activities of joint planning and problem solving (Ministry of Justice n.d.; OECD 2021a).

In this thesis the issue of public participation is explored through participatory immigration policy making. Migrations of people are as old as the beginning of humans, yet the context of these migrations is changing. Due to global crises like global warming and consequently extreme natural disasters, people do not move only to get an (economically) better life but move to have a life at all. According to the UN Refugee Agency (2022), 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced at the end of 2021 because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order (The UN Refugee Agency 2022). Council of Europe quoted Boris Altner naming “the 21st century ‘the age of migrants’” (European Council 2022). The last migration crisis in 2015 and now the recent move of refugees and asylum seekers from Ukraine (EU migration policy 2022) only confirm that migration of people within Europe and outside will continue in the future.

Migration policies are therefore key to how governments and other public organisations respond to the future migrations. Implementation of migration policies that “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people” is one of the Sustainable Development Goals parts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations Sustainable Development). The importance of involving marginalised and underrepresented groups has been recognised as an important aspect of public participation in Finland. (OECD 2021a).

The first step of forming a comprehensive migration policy is to learn from and bring together different stakeholders and migrants to engage them in a dialogue and other participatory activities that will affect the future of Finnish migration policy. In 2021, when the project began, a large survey, including many stakeholders was completed by the Migration Department, that helped create first guidelines for the project (Ministry of the Interior 2021). Mariana Salgado, a service designer at the Ministry of the Interior who is leading the project, invited service design students at Laurea University of Applied Sciences to develop new concepts and ideas on how immigrants could be included in policy making. The development case presented in this thesis is a result of responding to this invitation.

### 1.3 Purpose, aim and structure of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to support the development of participatory approaches and citizen participation in the public sector. It contributes to the policy development project by the Ministry of the Interior and Finnish ambitions to increase public participation in Finland (OECD 2021a). The aim is to aid the Ministry of the Interior (or any other public institution) in involving immigrants in policy making or any other participatory processes.

The questions that guided the development project, stem from the development target that was provided by the Ministry of the Interior to design immigrants' participation in policy making. The target was used as the foundation for formulating two development questions that this thesis aims to answer:

1. How might we use design to co-create solutions that will improve participation in immigration policy making with public servants and immigrants?
2. How might we design and utilise virtual workshops to engage immigrants in a participatory process?

The objective of the thesis is therefore twofold: to use design and design methods in the development process to co-create solutions and to design and implement virtual workshops as a way of engaging immigrants. To answer the questions and achieve the objective, a theoretical framework is created by examining key concepts and a development project is created which involves the design and implementation of a participatory process focusing on using virtual workshops as the core method for co-creating.

The knowledge base first examines design and co-creation as approaches to developing participatory processes. Next public participation and policy making are discussed with a special focus on immigrants' participation, challenges, and benefits of participation. Finally, workshops, virtual facilitation and designers' role in co-creative processes is explored. The development part of the thesis first presents the development approach used in the thesis and the process of the development work by looking at the design of the co-creative process and the design and delivery of virtual workshops. Next results of the development work are presented, specifically the design process, three virtual workshops and three prototypes of tools. Finally, an evaluation of the designed and implemented process, results and implications of the thesis is presented in the conclusions and discussion chapter.

## 2 Theoretical background

This chapter presents the knowledge base that serves as a foundation for the development work in the following chapter. Key concepts related to design, public participation, co-creation, policy making, and virtual workshops are explored.

### 2.1 Design (thinking) and solving complex problems

Design has been evolving and breaking the traditional boundaries of designing physical artefacts like products moving towards the design of activities, organised services, complex systems, and environments (Buchanan 1992). GK VanPatter (2009) argues that the evolution of design from Traditional Design (Design 1.0), product/service design (Design 2.0), organisational transformation design (Design 3.0) to social transformation design (Design 4.0) is a result of the changes happening in the world. The changes in the world are changing what designers face when design begins and how designers work. The level of complexity, number of stakeholders, scale of challenges and fuzziness of projects are increasing with each evolutionary level. Design activities and toolboxes are moving from predominantly creating to predominantly sensing. (VanPatter 2009)

This evolution is possible because design is a flexible activity that doesn't focus on a particular subject, rather it connects and integrates useful knowledge from other disciplines and sciences to solve problems at hand (Buchanan 1992). Because design has no special subject matter it can be applied to any area of human experience. Therefore, new forms of design are evolving like service design, systemic design (Design Council 2021) and social design (Kimbell and Julier 2012) each developing and expanding their methodology and toolkits adapted to their respective type of problem.

Having different levels or types of design might mislead someone into thinking that design is limited within each of the domains, but Buchanan (1992) argues that all these areas are interconnected, and true innovation comes from the repositioning of design between different areas. Similarly, VanPatter (2009) points out that crossovers happen between the four levels of design. It is this flexibility of moving between levels (VanPatter 2009) or signs, things, actions and thoughts (Buchanan 1992) that makes design such a successful and versatile approach to tackling different types of problems. Design Thinking tries to understand these unique and uncertain problems through attempts to change them and gain new knowledge in doing so (Tracey and Baaki 2013), that helps them advance the problem-solving process.

The versatility of design is evident as there is a growing popularisation of the term Design Thinking in non-design communities (Tschimmel 2012). Design Thinking (with capital D and T)

is associated with an interdisciplinary process that uses methods and tools for driving innovation in non-design problem-solving contexts like business or social innovation (Tschimmel 2012; Dorst 2011). It is often linked to wicked problems (Tschimmel 2012; Dorst 2011), problems that are ill-defined, involve many actors that might have opposing views and are constantly changing (Buchanan 1992).

Design enables one to approach processes where the end construct cannot be fully predicted in advance (Schon 1988). By moving from gathering data to sensemaking, from analysis to synthesis (Tracey and Baaki 2013), from abstract to concrete thinking, designers are producing information and knowledge (Kolko 2010). The movement between different ways of thinking and doing integrates learning experiences (Collier and Williams 2005) that are the source of inspiration and ideas for designing solutions (Buchanan, 1992).

The adoption in non-design fields created a demand to clearly define Design Thinking (Dorst 2011) in a simple way (Snowden 2015). Difficulties in defining elements and frameworks of design are as old as design is (Schon 1988). Design (Thinking) can be understood as a toolkit, methodology, innovation process, set of principles or a mindset that leads to specific cognitions and behaviours resulting in specific beliefs and culture of an organisation (Tschimmel 2012; Carlgren, L., Rauth, I. and Elmquist, M. 2016). This flexibility and openness to interpretation often confuses people and makes it difficult to understand that design is not merely application of sciences to objects and their appearance but a fundamental approach that is changing how we view human life (Buchanan 1992). Reducing it to a process or a methodology diminishes the potential that design brings with its approach to dealing with complex problems (Dorst 2011).

There are many ways designers help themselves in the process of solving complex problems. Design situations are always vague to some extent, therefore experienced designers approach the process intuitively (Dorst and Reymen 2004) and do not follow a predefined process or a set of methods and tools. Rather they shape each step to comply with the requirements of the context within which they are working (Schon 1988). Instead of directly targeting a stated problem, experienced designers usually start the process by exploring the wider context and issues around the problem (Dorst 2011). During the design process, a designer uses many methods (many of them adopted from other professions) and tools appropriate to the context. A design-specific part of the process is the use of sensemaking methods and tools that help a designer to capture and understand the phenomenon at hand so that the problem to be solved can be approached in a new way. (Dorst 2011).

Design (Thinking) differs from other problem-solving approaches by using abductive reasoning for creating frames or hypotheses (Dorst 2011). When dealing with complex problems it is not clear what needs to be done and how, only a desired result is known, usually described as

value (Dorst 2011). In these situations, designers must use their knowledge and abductive reasoning to set boundaries and select what things or relations are given attention by creating a frame (Dorst 2011; Schon 1988). A frame serves as a basis for creating hypotheses that can then be tested and validated in reality. As Dorst (2011) argues, a designer can use an existing frame of an organisation, transfer another existing frame that is not known to the organisation or develop a new frame. To create a new frame, the designer needs first to deconstruct the problem and propose new hypotheses by using sensemaking tools and abductive reasoning (Dorst 2011). Creating frames and imposing constraints moves the problem from a complex to a complicated one (Snowden 2015). In solving complex problems there is usually the need to create new frames as each wicked problem is unique (Buchanan 1992).

## 2.2 Design and co-creation

Carlgren et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive study to identify key characteristics of Design Thinking diversity was identified as one of them. Many scholars stress the importance of collaboration (Carlgren et al. 2016; Stickdorn, M., Hormess, M.E., Lawrence, A. and Schneider, J., 2018; Bason 2016) which is absent from classic design research. Designers used to be passive recipients of research data that they would use (together with understanding of technology) to generate ideas and eventually create a product (Sanders and Stappers 2012) yet when addressing complex problems designers cannot solve them on their own. These problems need to be solved collectively.

Co-creation has been largely discussed and researched in the context of business, marketing and design (Trischler, J., Pervan, S.J., Kelly, S.J. and Scott, D.R. 2017; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2002) describing the relationship between the organisation and the customer. In the context of design, co-creation is often associated with innovation and creation of new, better solutions (Ind 2013; Stickdorn 2018). It has also become a trend in marketing and brand development (Sanders and Stappers 2008). The term describes a shift from organisations being the key creators of value to including users and other stakeholders in participatory processes to create meaning together (Ind 2013; Sanders and Stappers 2008). The transitioning focus from products to services (and experiences) influenced the emergence of the idea of co-creation as the co-creation of value and co-production (Vargo and Lusch 2014, 144) or as participation and collaboration during a design process (Stickdorn 2018, 25).

Because co-creation is often viewed from the perspective of the organisation that wants to co-create to appropriate customers' competence there have been critiques that such co-creation exploits participants' time and intellect (Ind 2013). Co-creation can be seen as

handing-over responsibilities or decision-making to those included (Ind 2013), but as Stickdorn and Schneider (2011, 199) say, this is not necessarily the case. Rather co-creation can be a way for exploring multiple directions and points of view with an additional benefit of connecting participants, creating shared ownership, and thus facilitating future collaborations.

The terms co-creation, co-design and participatory design are often used interchangeably (Sanders 2012; Stickdorn and Schneider 2011; Stickdorn et al. 2018; Ind 2013; Bason 2016, Sanders and Stappers 2008; Sanders and Stappers 2012, 25). What they all have in common is the active involvement of those participating in the design process, not merely gathering insights or user feedback through observation and testing (Bason 2016, sec. 3). In VanPatter's (2009) four levels of design framework, co-creation or co-design gradually increases with each level. Nevertheless, that does not mean that traditional design of products/service design cannot be co-created. On the contrary, according to Eriksen (2012, 57), design solutions that are lived by people should be co-designed with stakeholders. No matter the subject matter or problem to be solved, design is moving from designing for towards designing with (Bason 2016; Eriksen 2012).

### **Designing for co-creation**

Co-Creation at all stages of the design development is a fairly new practice that can be understood either as a mindset, a method, or a tool. Co-creation can be applied within communities, inside companies and organisations, between companies and their partners or between organisations and people that they serve. (Sanders and Stappers 2012)

Design has adopted many of the tools, techniques, and methods from participatory design and from generative design research. Furthermore, any method can be used in a co-creative way (Stickdorn et al. 2018), but most importantly they can be used either with an expert mindset, where the designers see users as subjects or with a participatory mindset, where users are seen as partners or active co-creators (Sanders and Stappers 2012, 20). When thinking about participation from the user-centred approach, one needs to consider "not only their needs, but also their capabilities, their social networks and the cultural and economic conditions that motivate their active, intelligent, lasting participation." (Bason 2016, chap. 7)

When designing a participatory process there are many questions a designer needs to ask herself: what the purpose and goals of the process are, who needs to be involved and how, what level of participation is appropriate, what methods and tools are most appropriate, where does the process take place, etc. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 397-406). In order to examine

where, how, and why to involve participants in a design process, the overall participatory process needs to be defined.

Together with design, the design process evolved from analytical to a holistic approach and finally to creative problem solving (Tschimmel 2012). The key characteristic of a design process is the iteration (Tschimmel 2012; Stickdorn et al. 2018; Stickdorn and Schneider 2011; Dorst 2001) of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Dorst 2001) or problem definition and problem solution spaces (Buchanan 1992) by emphasising the importance of solving the right problem before solving it right.

A quick Google Search for 'design process' will offer results that suggest design processes that involve from 4-10 phases (Google Search n.d.). Design models are visualised either in a linear way, suggesting that the transition to the next phase happens when the previous is completed or in a circular way (Gibbons 2016), suggesting that the project 'goes in circles'. Sometimes there are arrows added to the linear process (HPI n.d.), trying to visualise the movement between different phases but again they suggest 'going back'. None of these visualisations or conceptualisations of the design process are objectively 'true' and it is up to the designer to assess which one is most appropriate for a given situation (Tschimmel 2012). However, when we are involving other people in a design process it is useful to have a visualisation of a process as a boundary object that helps communicate across different stakeholders and create a shared understanding (Stickdorn et al. 2018). It makes design more explicit and accessible which increases the applicability of the approach in organisations (Tschimmel 2012).

In this thesis the original Double Diamond from 2004 (Design Council 2019) is used to discuss the design of participatory processes. The Double Diamond is widely accepted for its simplicity and visual representation of the divergent and convergent phases in a process (Tschimmel 2012). The process evolved and in 2019 Design Council (2019) added key principles and design methods to the four phases and emphasised leadership and engagement as two fundamental elements of a design culture. The Double Diamond is often used in Service Design and design projects in general (Stickdorn et al. 2018).

The introduction of collaboration and co-creation in a design process, influences people's roles, with those formerly known as "end-users" now becoming acknowledged as participants and co-creators, experts of their own experience (Sanders and Stappers 2012, 25). Similarly, like in business, the government is traditionally viewed as the deliverer (provider) and the citizen as a recipient (consumer) (Bason 2016, chap. 3). If citizens are to be viewed as agents of their own change, then a participatory approach is required (Bason 2016, chap. 12).

### 2.3 Public participation

In this thesis the purpose of designing a participatory process is to co-create solutions that will increase immigrants' participation in policy making. Hence participation is examined in the context of the public sector and policy making.

Participation has many meanings in the context of the public sector, from economic participation to transforming power structures in society (Institute of development studies). It is a loose concept and has been interpreted differently throughout history either as a form of contribution, an organisation, empowerment (Karl 2002, 5) or a categorical term for citizen power (Arnstein 1969). It can involve few or many parties, poorly or highly empowered, for long or short periods of time, and on high- or low- stake issues (Bobbio 2018). A participatory process can be proposed top-down, for example by the government or any other public organisation or initiated bottom-up by a specific stakeholder group that wants to influence a particular public issue (Rietbergen-McCracken 2017, 1).

Even though there is interest in engaging citizens in decision-making there are different opinions on how and to which extent this should happen (OECD 2021a). The lack of a shared understanding of participation can cause confusion, clashing expectations or even manipulation, therefore types of participation need to be defined (White 1996, 7). According to some scholars (White 1996; Karl 2022) there are three key aspects that need to be defined when discussing participation: (1) Who is participating, (2) what is the intention of participation, and (3) what are the different levels of participation.

The third aspect is explored further by comparing four frameworks of participatory levels (Table 1). They can be described based on two criteria: the flow of information (one-way or two-way) and the level of influence or shared power in decision making. The low levels of participation are one-way information sharing and often give the appearance of participation where the participants don't have any power over the decisions that are being made. In the middle levels, information is shared one or two-way, but the influence is highly controlled and limited. In the top level of four frameworks, power for decision making is given to the participants described as empowerment. (White 1996; IAP2 2018; Karl 2002; Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001)

Arnstein (1969) adds two levels that are not defined as participation to emphasise there are apparent forms of participation that have no intention of involving others but actually want to cure or manipulate. All participatory frameworks that were compared assume that there is an external initiator to a participatory process (Karl 2002), therefore the top level of empowerment is always without an outside leader.



Communication	White (1996)	IAP (2018)	Karl (2002)	Arnstein (1969)	OECD (2001)	Power and influence
Two-way	Transformative	Empower	Partnership Empowerment	Citizen control		Full transfer of power
Two-way		Collaborative	Decision-making	Delegated power	Active participation	Shared power
Two-way	Representative	Involve	Cooperation and consensus-building	Partnership		Controlled influence
One or two-way	Instrumental	Consult	Consultation	Consultation Placation	Citizens' consultation	Selective influence
One-way	Nominal	Inform	Information sharing	Informing	Providing information	Apparent influence
One-way			Contribution	Manipulation Therapy		No participation

Table 1: Comparison of five frameworks for levels of public participation

A participatory process is not always used for the co-creation (Bobbio 2019) which is clear from the different levels of participation described above. The term 'active participation' is used in the framework proposed by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as the third level of involving citizens. It is the only top level of participation in the compared frameworks that doesn't give full power to participants. According to OECD (2001) active participation is least practiced compared to the first two levels and is more present at local levels of government in OECD member countries. In this thesis active participation refers to the top levels of participation where there is two-way communication with at least some shared power for decision making. Kaner S., Lind L., Toldi C., Fisk S., and Berger D. (2014) propose four core values for participatory decision making: Full participation, mutual understanding, inclusive solutions, and shared responsibility. These values can be transferred to any context of participatory decision-making and are further explored in the section 2.3.3 Challenges of participation.

### 2.3.1 Participation in policy making

Participation is needed when implementation is not easy and commitment from many stakeholders is needed (Kaner et al. 2014, 27), which is true for policies. Policies are complex, composed of policy goals and policy means, and affect many different stakeholders and communities at different levels (Howlett 2019). Due to increasing complexity and connectedness of our society and unpredictable policy environment, the classical approach to policy-making, based on rational problem-solving, comparing alternatives based on data and

choosing the best solution is limited in addressing (and solving) complex problems like climate change or poverty (Saguin and Cashore, 2022). New approaches to policy design are needed to deal with the wicked problems we are facing today. Moreover, there is an increasing demand by citizens for transparency, accountability from the governments and the opportunity for shaping policies (OECD 2001). Participation of those that will be affected by a policy brings “unique forms of expertise which should be integral to how the phenomenon is understood and ultimately addressed” (Binet, A., Gavin, V., Carroll, L. and Arcaya, M. 2019, introduction).

Public or citizen participation can also be understood as the foundation of democracy, a form of government that enables those who participate to influence over how, for example, information is shared, policies are set, or tax resources allocated (Arnstein 1969). Public participation influences how citizens perceive authorities, their decision making and shape their attitude towards democracy in general (OECD 2021b; White 1996, 6-11) argues that participation must be seen as political not only in its form and function but also how participation is presented to different stakeholders.

Political participation is a concept that has many views and definitions that range from the traditional understanding of voting and selection of government authorities, or the policies of governments (Conway 1985, 2) to a wider understanding that includes participating in political marches and printing of ideological journals (Verba 1978, 256). These definitions also differ depending on ideological foundations where parties that are non-social are more inclined to the traditional understanding of political participation and pro-social parties toward a more broad, open definition of the term (Adamson 2007). In this thesis, political participation is understood in the wider meaning, including expressing political beliefs or requests towards the government. Any kind of participation in policy making is therefore a form of political participation.

### **Policy cycle**

Participatory policy making is a general aim to facilitate inclusion of individuals in the design of policies using participatory methods (Rietbergen-McCracken 2017, 1). In addition, participatory methods can be used at different stages of the policy making process. The most used policy process or policy cycle (Howlett and Giest 2015; Capano and Pritoni 2020; Junginer 2013) is a five-step framework of agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making and policy evaluation.

The first stage of the policy cycle is agenda setting. It results in a list of issues that either arise from nongovernmental groups, are placed on the agenda by the government or by influential groups. The following stage is policy formulation. In this stage a policy community, actors that have some knowledge of the issue that allows them to comment and propose options to resolve it, further develops and drafts different policy proposals. Here policy tools are proposed. In the third, decision-making stage, a policy with maximised potential benefits and least cost or risk is chosen. The next stage is policy implementation in which policy is put into practice using government instruments defined in the policy formulation stage, for example through changing or creating public services. The fifth stage is policy evaluation. In this last stage of the policy cycle, implemented policies are assessed whether they are achieving the stated objectives and goals. This stage helps policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to change and adapt existing and future policies. (Howlett and Giest 2015, 289)

The policy cycle can also be divided into two parts: policy making or policy formulation and policy implementation (Howlett 2019). Although the artificial divide between designing and implementing and the oversimplification of the process is criticised by many (Howlett and Giest 2015; Bason 2016, chap. 4; Junginger 2013) its purpose is not to theoretically explain policy making but rather to be used as an analytical tool and a common alphabet (Capano and Pritoni 2020).

In the context of participation, it is useful to look at the policy cycle stages and how different levels of participation look like at each stage. OECD (2001) mapped some of the participatory methods in their three-stage model of policy making: design, implementation, and evaluation. In this thesis the five-stage policy cycle (Figure 1) is used to discuss the policy making process as there is an important distinction between agenda setting, policy formulation and decision-making in the context of participation.

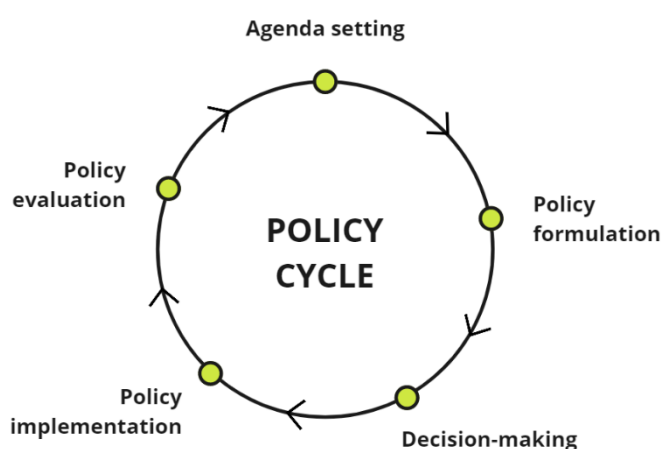


Figure 1: Policy cycle based on Howlett and Giest (2015)

### 2.3.2 Who is participating?

Defining who participates has been pointed out as a key question in participatory processes (White 1996; Karl 2002). In this thesis immigrants are addressed as a distinctive subgroup of citizens. Even though immigrants are defined as people that made a conscious decision to move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there and migrants are people who move from place to place (International rescue committee 2022; Anderson and Blinder 2019) in this thesis both terms are used interchangeably. Interestingly countries around the world have not yet accepted a shared legal definition of a migrant (Amnesty International 2022).

A stakeholder analysis is proposed to help identify who should be involved in the policy making process (Karl 2002, 6). Therefore, a further examination of immigrants as a stakeholder group is needed. Since immigrants are not a homogeneous group (EU Immigration Portal) it is important to understand the different contexts, backgrounds and subsequent needs and expectations they bring into a participatory process. The length of stay in a foreign country in this context is not important, the fact that the person is not in their home country when they are participating is.

Most commonly migrants are divided into subgroups (Figure 2) according to their intent of moving and their legal status. Council of Europe (European Council 2022) suggests the following categories: temporary labour migrants, highly skilled and business migrants, irregular, undocumented or unauthorised migrants, forced migrants (refugees, asylum seekers), family members and return migrants.



Figure 2: A screen capture from the EU Immigration Portal (n.d.) identifying different types of migration profiles in Finland.

Migrants are considered as a vulnerable group due to their foreign status when they move to another country. They usually don't know the local language, are not the citizens of that country, have limited rights, lack knowledge and ability to access public services and may be subject to discrimination or even become targets of hate and violence. (Council of Europe)

Further demographic characteristics like age (children, youth, adults, elderly) or gender (female, male, non-binary) can further divide these groups into subgroups. Each of these subgroups deals with their own specific challenges that need to be taken into consideration when involving them in a policy making process. However, when thinking about participation from the user-centred approach, one needs to consider "not only their needs, but also their capabilities, their social networks and the cultural and economic conditions that motivate their active, intelligent, lasting participation" (Bason 2016, chap. 7).

Immigrants and their families make up a growing group of people in many European countries, yet they are underrepresented in the democratic processes like policy making. Exclusion of significant groups in a society is incompatible with the notion of justice and democracy and can result in unsuccessful creation and implementation of policies. (Back and Soinen 1998)

Due to the increasing numbers of immigrants, countries are discussing how people of immigrant origin can be included in the public sector (Entzinger 1999). The importance of immigrant participation in European societies has been recognized by the Council of Europe, specifically in decision-making (Battaini-Dragoni 1999).

There is less attention given to the immigrants' political participation in policy-making even though an opportunity should be given to immigrants to voice their opinions on policies that concern them (IOM 2020). Political participation is criticised to be used as a tool for discursive othering, a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group, unless resident foreigners, naturalised citizens and their children are acknowledged as legitimate participants (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 215).

What can be observed in many European countries and around the world is the phenomenon of participation paradox. Immigrant's participation is viewed as a tool for integration and at the same time integration as a condition for participation (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 220). On one side countries promote and work towards immigrants' active participation and on the other side claims are made that countries' (nations/cultures) values need to be defended as immigrants might constitute undesirable change (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 214; Arnstein 1969, 216). Participation aimed at change is a common fear anywhere where there is a great desire for maintaining the status quo. Any kind of change, in general, is not desirable for those that benefit or are satisfied by the current situation. Same is true for the political

participation of immigrants (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 214). Because there are always different expectations or intentions from people involved in a participatory process, some level of conflict should be expected. Moreover, a lack of conflict should raise suspicions in a participatory process. Any participatory process inherently means change and change is difficult. (White 1996, 15)

### 2.3.3 Challenges of participatory policy making

There are many challenges associated with participation in general and specifically with participation in the public sector. Three that are presented here are in author's opinion the most difficult to overcome as they need a lot of time to overcome and are very complex in general. They are communication, trust, and power-relations.

Communication is challenging on many levels, the first and obvious one is the language barrier (IOM 2020). Not only do immigrants speak their own language, but there is also the professional language used by policymakers that can be unknown to non-policy makers. In addition, the same words that are used in different professions might be interpreted differently. (Halse 2014; Bason 2016) The second aspect of communication is self-expression. This is often highly constrained in participatory processes (Kaner et al. 2014) and if a statement is vague or poorly stated, people get annoyed and impatient. In the context of policy making, public servants are seen as authority figures which leads to the authority bias, the tendency to attribute greater accuracy to the opinion of an authority figure and be more influenced by that opinion. This in turn increases participants' self-censorship which reduces participation overall. What often happens is that those with the most articulate opinion end up talking most of the time. In such situations persuasion is often more common than dialogue. There is little effort in examining confronting opinions and typically people listen so they can get their turn to speak (Kaner et al. 2014, 25). However, for a successful participatory decision-making process, a mutual understanding and acceptance of all participants' needs, and goals needs to be established (Kaner et al. 2014, 24).

We can look at public officials and immigrants as two in-groups, a group to which they can identify with being a member and out-groups, a group to which they cannot identify with. Members of an in-group view members of the out-group as more homogenous and not being part of them can lead to discriminatory behaviour against the out-group (Chipchase 2017, 335). In the context of public servants and immigrants these judgements can invoke barriers to participation. Therefore, communication is of utmost importance to bridge any false assumptions either about public officials or immigrants.

Next, trust is key for creating a safe space in a participatory process (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Bovaird 2007, 852-853) and thus for successful active participation. Trust is built over time when someone does what they say. Trust always works both ways, so in participatory design, all those involved need to trust each other. A lack of trust can be seen in control, checking and monitoring individuals or activities (Bason 2016, chap. 17). The higher the sharing of power in decision-making the higher level of trust needs to be present from both the government and the citizens.

Finally, the key challenge in participatory policy making is power-relations. Policy making is not neutral (Karl 2002, 9). It is important to notice that governments (or any other public organisations) have the majority of power and influence on how the structures, space and other conditions are created in a participatory process (Rietbergen-McCracken 2017, 1). This already creates a power relation and thus, the influence of those participating is always controlled top-down. There are also other power relations within stakeholder groups or communities (Karl 2002, 9). Arnstein (1969) points out that participation without the redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless.

The models of participatory levels described in the previous sections have in common the gradual increase of shared power of decision making with the last level of participation being full empowerment (White 1996; IAP2 2018; Karl 2002; Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001).

Empowerment in itself can be understood as a power relationship (Cruikshank 1999). White (1996) claims that empowerment is based on a paternalistic understanding of how we are “helping” those we perceive to be in need of our help. When someone wants to empower an individual or a group of people, they are already in the position of power and imply that the other group is powerless, hence reinforcing existing power relations and an act of dominance (White 1996, 6). Even though there are participatory processes in place in the public sector, all opportunities and decisions are controlled by authorities. When professionals are placed in a position of power over others through their institutional position it undermines the activity of empowerment (Fernandes 2015).

Shared decision-making power is challenging for governments because it implies a loss of control and shifting dynamics between various actors as it puts the public sector as only one knowledgeable actor among many (Bason 2016, chap. 3). White (1996, 8, 13) argues that the only genuine form of participation is transformative, that is when citizens are fully empowered to make decisions and take actions. There is an opportunity for public servants to facilitate these new networks and instead of delivering services they could enable citizens to develop their own capabilities in dealing with various issues (Bason 2016, chap. 2).

### 2.3.4 Benefits of participatory policy making

Policies that were designed with people's needs in mind are more likely to be equitable and fair, especially when disadvantaged groups are included in the process. If done properly, participatory policy making can strengthen transparency and accountability from top-down and empower communities bottom-up. Furthermore, relationships between stakeholders improve with increased trust between the government and citizens due to transparency and citizen oversight (OECD 2001). Any participatory process increases common understanding which improves communication and overall collaboration (Veit and Wolfire 1998).

There are also political reasons for participation including gaining support, avoiding conflicts, reducing implementation pushbacks and overall, some level of compliance (Bobbio 2019). Another benefit is the buy-in from all stakeholders. Specifically in participatory processes where power, decision-making and responsibility are shared, success of implementation is greater and more effective (OECD 2001). Immigrants have a unique position with their first-hand experience of how immigration policies are reflected therefore getting their feedback and testing ideas early can decrease the risk of failure in policy implementation (Bason 2016, chap. 15) and compliance given that the public participated in the creation and design of policies (OECD 2001).

Moreover, political participation can promote social cohesion and immigrant integration in the society (IOM 2020). The self-transformative qualities of participation can positively affect the autonomy and thereby freedom of immigrants (Warren 1992).

## 2.4 Workshops as participatory events

Co-creation processes are often designed around a series of participatory events like meetings, sessions, seminars, or workshops that are key to bringing all stakeholders together, creating a shared understanding and ownership in a project (Eriksen 2012). Eva Brandt (2001, 122) describes this as an event-driven participatory approach to design where events are seen as "periods in time and space where the participants are engaged in problem solving, generating and evaluating ideas, etc. and where they worked together on a collaborative basis". Workshops are a format of these events where participants are actively involved to tackle challenges (Matti C., Martinez P., Bontoux L., Joval J., Spalazzi A. and Fernandez D. 2022). There are different workshop types and formats often associated with participation and creative problem-solving. In literature, workshops are discussed and researched from different perspectives including the purpose, structure, guidelines, design, facilitation or methodology (Eriksen 2012, 134; Brandt 2001; Matti et al. 2022; Stickdorn et al. 2018).



Workshops can be used as a method for collecting data (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 107), a collaborative session for co-creating prototypes (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 125, 126) or gathering feedback (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 412).

Workshops can have a closed format that is predefined or an open format which allows participants and facilitators to co-create its content. There are numerous variations of workshops as a method, for example future workshop (Visal 2006) or a series of workshops with predefined structure and activities, for example participatory patterns workshops (Mor, Y., Winters, N. and Steven, W. 2010). Since workshops are specially designed and taken out of the everyday context (Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017) they create an opportunity to think and create in new, sometimes unusual ways.

Although workshops offer a flexible format that can be adjusted to any context, there are some fundamental features that all workshops have in common: they are designed, limited in duration, topic focused with an expected outcome and highly participatory (Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017). Workshops are usually well designed, and thought-through which could be viewed as social engineering, "the practice of psychological manipulation to make the other person carry out a targeted activity or divulge information." (Chipchase 2017, 331). Like researchers, designers need to understand how they impact social dynamics in an environment. Even though researchers commonly aim to minimise the impact of their presence on those who they are interacting with, when co-creating, designers steer participants in a certain direction that aims to achieve a predefined goal. Therefore, designers need to be intentional about their manipulation and aware of their own impact.

What impacts people's decision-making was heavily researched by Kahneman (2012) who investigated human biases and how they influence decision making. For example, decisions can be affected by the way in which choices are presented, known as the framing effect (Kahneman 2012). The designer of a process should be aware of how they structure their activities and be intentional about their influence on the participants and consequently the outcomes of a workshop. For example, using warmups (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 400, 406) can increase psychological safety, improve the effectiveness of activities or points towards an important concept (e.g., the importance of failing). Another example of manipulation in workshops is timeboxing and making sure discussions don't get out of hand (Andersen, H.H., Belson I. and Ronex K. 2021). Allocation of time will influence the depth of output (Stickdorn et al. 2018) and is therefore a powerful facilitation tool to guide a conversation or an activity.

### 2.4.1 Virtual workshops

The internet has given a voice to people who previously weren't part of the conversation (Sanders and Stappers 2008). OECD (2001) in the report *Citizens as partners* recognizes information and communication technologies as an effective way to engage with citizens 'on-line'. New technologies and social media offer new platforms for civic engagement and potential for collaboration in the innovation process and even co-production of service delivery (Bason 2010, 27). Virtual events (meetings, workshops, training) have become the new normal since the COVID-19 pandemic even though they are not new and are a part of the overall trend towards virtual work. They have been recognised as an efficient way to work for global companies due to cost benefits and easier access to talent and experts. (Andersen et al. 2021)

Andersen et al. (2021) distinguish different types of virtual events (Table 2) based on their purpose, number of participants and the setting. Virtual workshops are one format of virtual events where the purpose is to do work, involves 4-20 people and is set fully online (all participants participate virtually). Compared to virtual meetings, they are highly interactive and demand high engagement from participants either by providing input or participating in various activities. Compared to physical workshops they allow participation of people from different physical locations without travelling which in turn offers greater flexibility in the number, duration and cadence of sessions. (Andersen et al. 2021)

Virtual workshops can often be more efficient than physical workshops because they need to be prepared and planned in much more detail to avoid misinterpretation or miscommunication. Therefore, facilitation is even more important in virtual meetings (Pullan 2021 chap. 2).

It is important to remove all barriers to participation, so all participants can actively engage in workshop activities. Barriers specific to virtual workshops include technological barriers (e.g., internet access), skill barriers (e.g., using digital tools), physical and social distance (e.g., no control over participants' environment, lack of spontaneous informal interactions). (Andersen et al. 2021).

Virtual event type	Virtual recurring meetings	Virtual workshops	Virtual training	Virtual large-scale events
<b>Duration (Breaks included)</b>	20 min - 90 min	30 min - 240 min	30 min - 150 min	60 min - All day
<b>Number of participants</b>	Around 10 (possible with 15-20)	4-20	4+ (depends on the content)	50+
<b>Setting</b>	Online / Hybrid	Online / Hybrid	Online / Hybrid / Synchronously / Asynchronously	Online
<b>Purpose</b>	Knowledge sharing, planning, or sharing the status of progress	Creating something new or generating ideas, get input	Build participants' knowledge and/or skills	Inform Co-Create Present
<b>Example</b>	Stand up meeting Steering committee meeting	Create a roadmap Plan an event	Leadership course	Hackathon Summit Strategic workshops
<b>Cadence</b>	Regular sessions	One time or multiple sessions	One time or multiple sessions	One time or multiple sessions
<b>Participants type</b>	Always the same, they know each other	Always the same / different every time / don't necessarily know each other	Always the same / different every time / don't necessarily know each other	Always the same / different every time / don't necessarily know each other

Table 2: Comparison of different event types (based on Andersen et al. 2021).

One of the biggest advantages and disadvantages of online participation is the number of people that can be involved in a co-creative process. Co-creative sessions are difficult to scale. Inviting a whole organisation to a co-creative workshop is not feasible for many reasons. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 279) When engaging participants from different locations, involving them online can take less time and other organisations' resources, however participants must have access and skills to use digital tools and participate (Matti et al. 2022). With more possible distractions (e.g., access to emails, phone calls) and ease of changing focus (e.g., being able to turn off the camera or microphone), keeping attention has been one of the main challenges of online participation (Matti et al. 2022; Pullan 2021). Facilitators must use different ways to stimulate attention and participation. Another key challenge is adapting to unprecedented situations. In an in-person workshop, the facilitator can quickly adjust an activity to fit the context. In an online environment this is much more

challenging as there are technical constraints that make it difficult to adapt. (Andersen et al. 2021)

Nevertheless, all these challenges can be avoided or managed by effectively designing a workshop session. Setting boundaries that help participants to stay focused but also enable creativity and openness are of important focus (Stickdorn et al. 2011, 198). To effectively design and deliver such sessions, some knowledge of facilitation is needed.

#### 2.4.2 Designers' role in co-creative processes

The transition from user-centred to co-creative design process is changing the roles of actors in the process, including designers (Dorst 2008). In the co-creative processes, the user becomes the expert of his or her experience and can generate and prototype ideas together with the guidance of a designer, who takes on the role of a facilitator. Designers' role then becomes to help a group of people achieve a predefined shared goal in a way that everyone has the equal opportunity to contribute (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 391).

If collaboration and co-creation are vital aspects of design thinking and a fundamental part of service design (Stickdorn et al. 2011, 39) then the designer needs to acquire facilitation skills and methods. The designer must use her facilitation knowledge, skills and experience to design and lead a process in which non-designers will be able to actively contribute. In contexts where stakeholders have different and sometimes conflicting agendas facilitation skills are especially needed. A thoughtfully designed and structured process can overcome some of the challenges of co-creation such as fear of saying the wrong thing or reluctance to disagree with superiors (Stickdorn and Schneider 2011, 198).

There are different opinions as to whether the facilitator leads only the process or does she work on the content of a session as well (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Kaner et al. 2014). Doyle and Straus (Kaner 2014) argue that the facilitator should be content and process neutral, meaning that she does not take a position on the issue at hand and does not favour or advocate for a particular kind of process. However, this line of responsibility is blurred in the context of designers facilitating a co-creative design process. In co-creative processes the designer can be in one or more of the following roles: expert (of design methods, tools), trainer (teaching how to use tools or a topic) and facilitator (managing the process and group) (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Bason 2016, chapt. 12; Sanders and Stappers 2012). This puts the designer at the crossroads of many different roles that can also be contradictory.

Further a designer in a co-creative project needs to design the process and then be able to analyse and interpret data gathered through co-creative activities. Skills for analysing

qualitative data are needed after co-creative processes. What will be the role of the designer if other stakeholders are co-creating solutions? Beyond visualisation skills, designers are trained in conducting creative processes, finding missing information and being able to make decisions using abduction (Sanders and Stappers 2008).

A team leader or internal facilitator will face the challenge of being seen as biased which can make their role as facilitator difficult (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 396). Facilitator is a person who helps a group of people to achieve a desired goal and makes the group work more effective (Kaner 2014, xx). Michael Doyle in the preface of the book *Facilitators guide to participatory decision making* (Kaner et al. 2014) distinguishes between a facilitator and a facilitative leader, the later having a leadership role with the awareness of a facilitator (Kaner 2014, xviii).

The facilitator needs to establish a safe psychological space where everyone can equally participate (Kaner et al. 2014; OECD 2021). The concept of psychological safety is key as it enables full and sincere participation of all members of the process. Often the fact that someone is participating in a participatory process might give the designer or facilitator of the process a false assumption that there is an existing shared understanding of the purpose of participation or that all participants have a similar interest in the participatory process. This is far from the reality as there are different interests from top-down and bottom-up (White 1996, 11) and assuming so can negatively impact the process, outcomes, and outputs of a participatory process. It is the facilitator's role to make sure there is alignment between all that are involved and that the needs of the individuals and group needs are met.

## 2.5 Concluding the findings of the theoretical framework

Theoretical framework in this thesis is built on interlacement of participation, policy making and design and concepts that connect them (Figure 3).

Policy making is recognised as a complex process that has been changing due to rapid changes in our society (Saguin and Cashore 2022; Howlett 2019). As the traditional ways of policy making are not successful any more in addressing societal issues, participation has been recognised as one way of effectively tackling complex social issues. Moreover, citizens demand transparency and an opportunity to shape future policies (OECD 2011) which incentivizes policymakers to involve them in the complex process that involves many stakeholders (Howlett 2019).

Public participation is a broad term and can span from apparent involvement to full transition of decision-making power to citizens (White 1996; IAP2 2018; Karl 2002; Arnstein 1969; OECD

2018). The opposing views on how and when citizens should participate in the public sector (OECD 2001), and the participation paradox (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 214; Arnstein 1969, 216) make public participation a complex issue that can be viewed as a wicked problem (Schon 1983; Buchanan 1992). There are many levels of participation and only some involve active participation or some degree of shared decision-making power (White 1996; Karl 2002; IAP2 2018; Arnstein 1989). Only when public organisations are willing to share their power, true participation can happen (White 1996; Arnstein 1969).

There are many benefits to participatory policy making including improved decision-making during the policy process, increased trust between the government and citizens and reduced implementation pushbacks (OECD 2001; Bobbie 2019). There are also equally many challenges to active involvement of citizens in policy making. The biggest barriers to participation are explicit and implicit power-relations. Policy making is inherently political and creates power relations that need to be taken into consideration and properly managed throughout a participatory process. To increase the benefits and minimise the challenges, those who are designing, and leading participatory processes need to be equipped with appropriate skills, knowledge, and tools to facilitate such processes.

Design is a flexible discipline that can be applied to any area of human experience (Buchanan 1992) including solving complex social problems or when designing participatory processes. A fundamental principle of design is co-creation (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Bason 2016). However, co-creation can only happen at 'higher' levels of participation where there is at least some power distributed in a way that the participants have some decision-making power. The role of the designer in a participatory is complex as she needs to act as a creative contributor and as a facilitator that balances and manages needs of the group and the shared goal of the process.



Figure 3: Visualisation of the theory base.

### 3 Development work

When design is used to tackle complex problems, designers cannot solve them by applying standard theories and techniques due to the specifics of the context in which the designers work (Tracey and Baaki 2013; Schon 1988; Dorst 2011). Rather framing, reflection-in-action, designers' knowledge and abductive reasoning help the designer to deal with uncertainty and uniqueness, typical for wicked problems (Schon 1983). Frames are novel propositions made by the designer using abductive reasoning that helps the designer move forward without complete information about the problem or solution (Dorst 2011; Schon 1983). Reflection-in-action helps the designer to learn from experience and apply gained knowledge during the design process (Schon 1983).

Various design processes are used to help understand how a design solution is created, but they often do not reflect the reality of the actual work done by designers. In hindsight, the process of a designer can look messy to an observer (e.g., client) because they did not go through the same mental process the designer went through during the process. Therefore, documenting and visualising the process, or involving stakeholders in the actual design process, can remove the mystical aura around design and show the value of the process and results (Kolko 2010).

This chapter describes and visualises the process of the development project and the methods that were used. The development project process is examined by using three different lenses: research-based development approaches based on qualitative research, service design and abductive reasoning. Finally, the design process of virtual workshops is presented.

#### 3.1 Constructive research

This thesis is considered research-based development work because of its practical context for workplace development (Moilanen T., Ojasalo K. and Ritalahti J. 2022). The author considers this development project as a constructive research work with additional elements from other development approaches, which is often the case for development work (Moilanen et al. 2022).

The constructive research approach is most appropriate when the goal of a project is to produce new knowledge and concrete output grounded in theory. In the constructive research process the theoretical knowledge presented at the beginning of this thesis served as the foundation for developing the following constructs: three workshops, three prototypes of tools and a proposal for a new visualisation of the design process. Even though constructive research projects aim to implement developed solutions, the only construct that was

implemented and evaluated during this development work were three virtual workshops. Limitations in stakeholder access made the author more of a support person and a facilitator in the learning process rather than a change agent that would have a strong influence on the environment in which she was working. Nevertheless, organisations' competencies partly increased by actively involving public servants from various Finnish ministries throughout the project. Inclusion of different parties is typical for constructive research, service design and action research. (Moilanen et al. 2020)

Multiple elements of the service design approach were used in the development project. First the service design process and methods were used. Specifically, the iterative approach was used in the development process having repeated data gathering, creating models, fast testing, analysing and redefining based on learning (Moilanen et al. 2022). Next, the project was focused on participants of the process (users) and making something that was easy to use, valuable and desirable. Visualisation and prototypes were key to this project as they were used to communicate, develop, and present ideas, also typical for the service design approach.

The process during the development work followed a design approach and abductive reasoning. In fact, constructive design research places designing a solution in the centre of development, as a means for creating new knowledge (Koskinen et al. 2012). In the following section the approach to the development project is presented with a special emphasis on abductive reasoning as the central way for reasoning in this development work (Kolko 2010; Tschimmel 2012; Lu 2012; Tschimmel 2012).

### 3.2 Development of the co-creative process

The development project followed a design process using service design methods. Even though the term service design implies that it is the 'design of services' it does not mean that its process, methodology and tools cannot be used in other domains of design (Erikson 2012; Buchanan 1992).

Design has been regarded as a problem-solving process (Dorst 2008; Dorst 2011; Schon 1988; Kolko 2010; Tracey and Baaki 2013) with two distinct phases of problem definition and problem solving (Buchanan 1992) where the problem first needs to be defined before it can be solved (Dorst 2011). However, in the development project, the problem space evolved throughout the process and the decision to design a co-creative process resulted from the co-evolution of the problem and solution space (Maher and Poon 1996). Problem solving triggers



problem setting (Schon 1988) and in fact, it is only in retrospect that the designer is able to identify at which point in the process a key concept began to emerge (Maher and Poon 1996).

Problem space and solution space gradually evolve by iterating analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Dorst 2011). The key part in the design process is synthesis (Dorst 2011; Schon 1988; Kolko 2010), used to integrate experiences and worldviews so that the produced and externalised interpretations, hypotheses, or ideas can then be further discussed, defined, tested or rejected in the larger process of synthesis (Kolko 2010, 17).

In this development work such hypotheses were created throughout the project which then evolved by applying new knowledge gained through research and designing. Hypotheses creation is a result of abductive reasoning, a logic of what might be (Kolko 2010, 20).

The hypotheses are constructed to explain an observation or to achieve a desired consequence (Lu 2012, 143) and can, compared to deductive and inductive reasoning, produce new knowledge (Kolko 2010; Lu 2012). The production of new knowledge happens by following a design intent and applying abductive reasoning together with design knowledge and constraints to propose a particular design concept or a hypothesis (Figure 4) (Lu 2012; O'Reilly 2016).

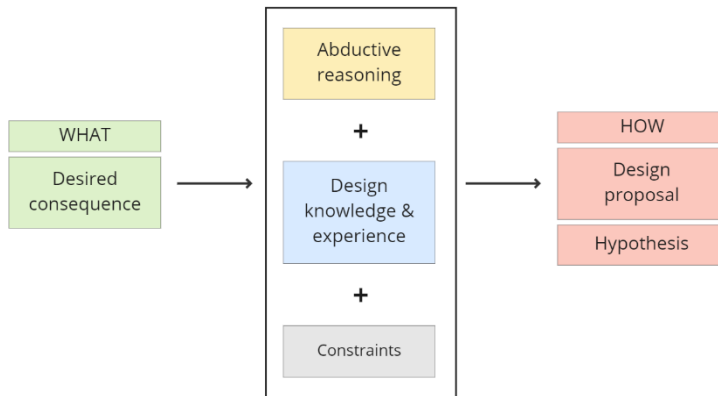


Figure 4: Visualisation of hypothesis creation using abductive reasoning, design knowledge and constraints based on Lu's description (2012).

The development of constructs in this thesis followed an iterative development of hypotheses that were evaluated throughout the process using knowledge gained from theoretical framework and empirical research and authors' experience. First data was gathered through qualitative research and then organised in different ways by making new connections through synthesis and abduction resulting in insights, themes, and patterns following a typical design process described by Kolko (2010). Qualitative data was gathered in forms of notes and quotes from interviews and then clustered based on common themes. Secondary observations

were written and then linked to identified themes that emerged. Then a hypothesis was formulated and evaluated. To increase confidence of a design proposal, Lu (2012) suggests applying abductive reasoning multiple times during the iterative process of design synthesis.

The reasoning during each iteration in the development work was done by applying design constraints (Lu 2012) like the time or technological constraints imposed by virtual participation as described by Andersen et al. (2021).

A visualisation of the hypothesis development process is offered in Figure 5. The first hypothesis (Adopt participatory methods by analysing best practices from other governments) was proposed by the client. After conducting interviews with various stakeholders and looking at literature on the topics of public participation and policy making, it was clear that there is not a lack of methods but rather inclusion of immigrants in developing solutions that is missing. Therefore, the second hypothesis was formed (Share and generate knowledge by bringing together cross-sectoral stakeholders from two different countries).

During the development of a participatory process and further interviews it was clear that there is a lack of direct interaction between immigrants and public servants. Due to time constraints and different contexts of the two countries, the author decided to reduce the number of stakeholders and focused only on public servants and immigrants from one country. To build on the insight that there is lack of involvement of immigrants in solutions for immigrants and authors' design expertise a new hypothesis was formed based on co-creation and design (Co-create solutions by involving Finnish public servants and immigrants in a design process). Throughout the development of the co-creative process, limitations of travel due to COVID-19 and literature review, the hypothesis changed two more times, first focusing on virtual workshops (Use virtual workshops to involve immigrants and public servants in a design process) and finally on co-creating tools that will improve immigrants' participation in policy making process.

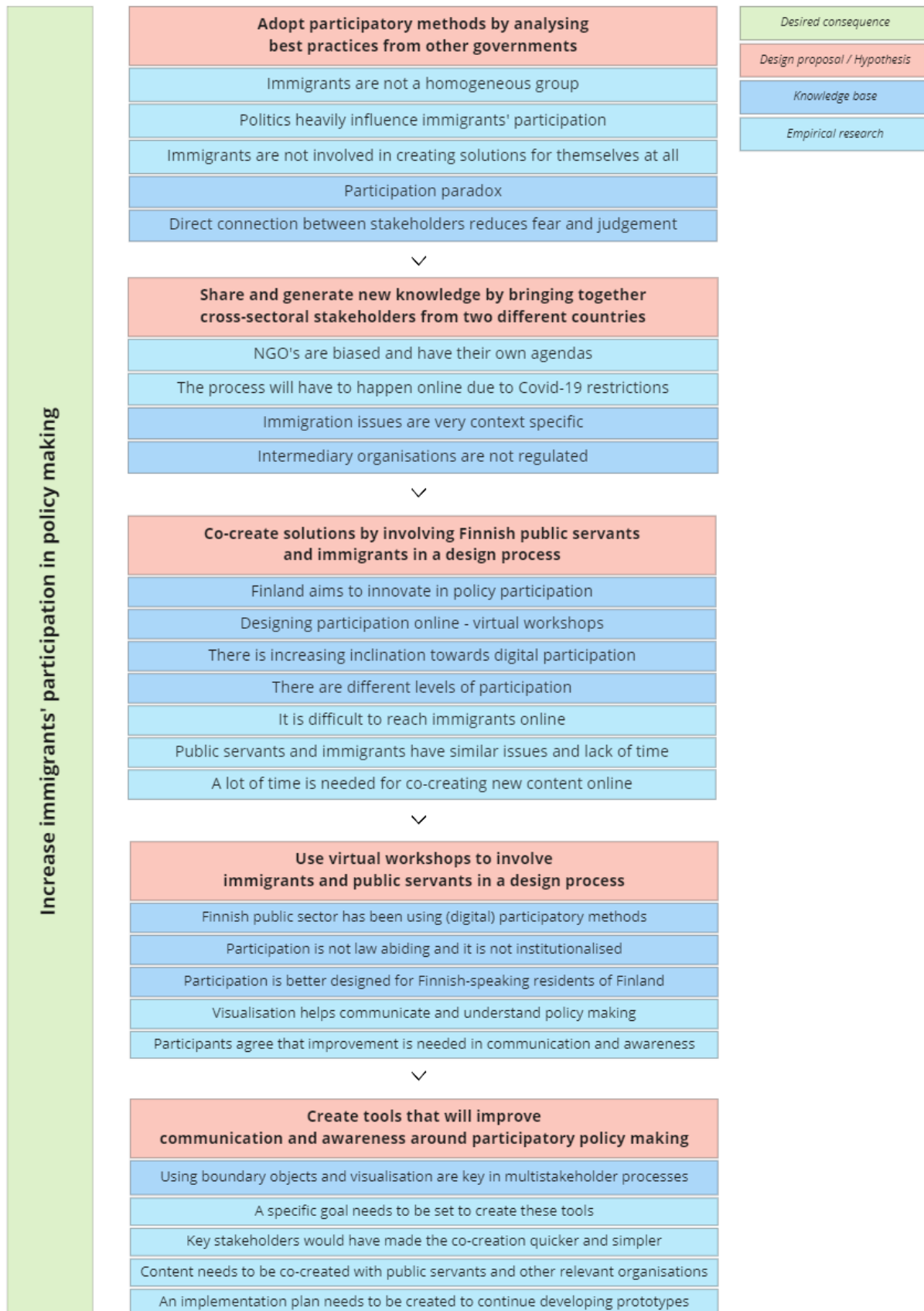


Figure 5: Hypotheses development throughout the design process.

To clarify the design, process the Double Diamond (Design Council 2019) is used to visualise the development process (Figure 6), chosen due to its simplicity and visualisation of divergent and convergent activities (Tschimmel 2012).

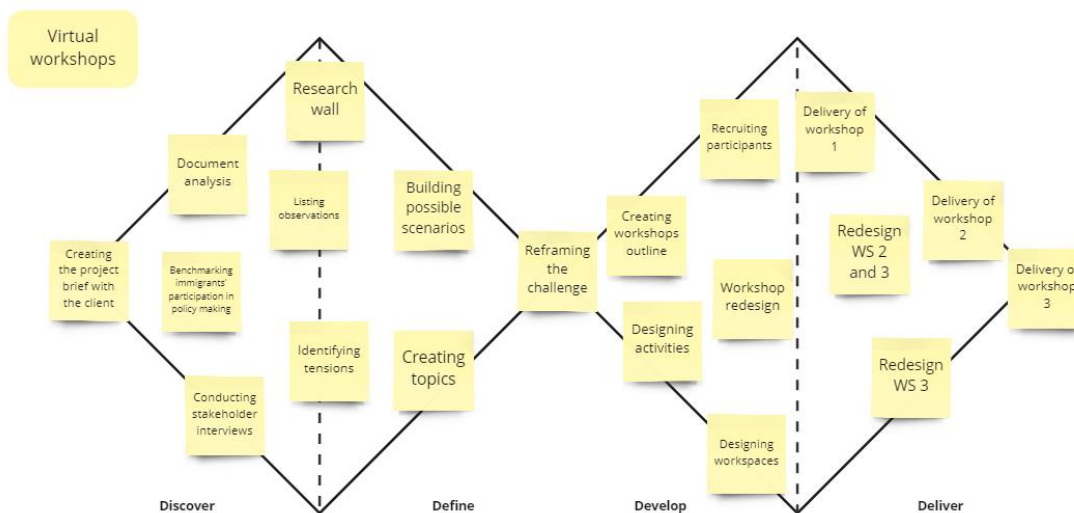


Figure 6: Activities of the development and delivery of virtual workshops mapped on the Double Diamond process (Design Council 2019).

The development project started by identifying a meaningful problem and a development target. The problem was observed by the Ministry of the Interior during the project of developing Finland's comprehensive migration policy. They identified the need to find new ways of directly involving immigrants in the policy making process which served as the basis for the development target: to find new ways of involving immigrants in policy making by investigating what other governments have done. Since the author of the thesis is Slovenian, it was decided that Slovenian best practices were to be explored and examined.

To acquire in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge on participatory immigration policy qualitative research was performed. The research activities included desktop research of existing studies, articles and government documents on the topic and a series of semi structured interviews (Appendix 1) with various stakeholders. The aim of the interviews was to search for examples where immigrants were successfully involved in policy making and identify key challenges.

The following individuals were interviewed:

- a public servant who designed a booklet on participatory policy making,
- a university professor specialised in public policy analysis,
- an immigrant who is working in the area of intercultural communication and is a consultant for immigration policies,
- an NGO representative who participated in the creation of a council for foreigners' integration where immigrants were part of the council,
- a designer and a therapist who worked on art projects that involved immigrants and their integration,
- a policymaker working at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and,
- a journalist-activist who has been working on various bottom-up projects that helped or involved asylum-seekers and immigrants.

During each interview the author made notes directly in Miro, adding them the research wall (Figure 7), a method that was used to collect all research data. Key words and quotes were organised using mind maps and other visualisations that helped the author create connections and uncover patterns in seemingly unrelated data sets or issues (Kolko 2010). Mind mapping was used to organise data based on different relations or similarities in different ways and then compared in possible groupings by creating themes. Organising data to create new meaning sensemaking is key to design synthesis, a process in which concepts are created without having complete understanding of a problem rather a hypothesis is generated based on observed phenomenon and prior experience (Lu 2012; Kolko 2010). Qualitative data was synthesised in formulated with the method of affinity diagramming that resulted in creating insights and tensions. By organising data in different ways, patterns emerged that were further explored. Usually through this process insights are created, realisations that were not readily seen or observed during data collection (Kolko 2010).



Figure 7: Research wall of data gathered during research activities using Miro.

Based on the observations, tensions and insights were formulated (Figure 8) out of which three themes emerged: Systemic changes, partnership, and know-how transfer. Topics were then put together in scenarios for further development: Systemic changes (option A), Immigrant and public partnership (option B) and knowledge and skills transfer (option C). During a feedback session with the representative of the Ministry of the Interior scenarios were assessed. Option A was evaluated as too complex to tackle given that there was lack of influence from the representative from the Ministry on systemic changes. The option C was less relevant for the Ministry of the Interior as they did not recognise this as a critical challenge. The chosen scenario was option B - a partnership between the servants, NGOs, and immigrants. Even though Ministry of the Interior has some established relationships with the two stakeholder groups, it was stated that it needs improvement and newly establish new ways of collaboration. At that point the scenario included a series of virtual workshops with stakeholder groups from Finland and Slovenia.



Figure 8: Insights and tensions formulated based on observations.

The development and implementation of virtual workshops was the first layer of the co-creative process with the second one being the co-creation of solutions to improve immigrants' participation in policy making. First the design and delivery of virtual workshops is described and then the process of co-creating solutions with public servants and immigrants.

### 3.3 Design and delivery of virtual workshops

There is little practical guidance on how to design and facilitate workshops from academic literature but mostly from non-academic literature. As a result, the workshops consisted of components developed by the author of the thesis that were based on designing virtual workshops (Andersen et al. 2021) facilitation theory (Kaner et al. 2014) and service design methodology and tools (Stickdorn et al. 2018) and combined with the authors' prior experience in designing similar events.

First part of designing the process was creating an overview (Figure 9) of all sessions with a timeline of activities divided into four groups: content preparation, process design, session organisation and session preparation. (1) Content preparation was about putting together research insights and other inputs, defining session goals and outcomes, setting questions to be answered during the workshop and defining target participants. (2) Process design involved choosing the appropriate format, methods and tools and designing core activities that would be done together with stakeholders. (3) Session's organisation included writing invitations, setting up the application process, identifying channels of communication, creating visuals, communicating with applicants and setting expectations. The last group of activities was the (4) session preparation of workshop materials, specifically digital workspace using an online whiteboard application.

#### Proposed next steps

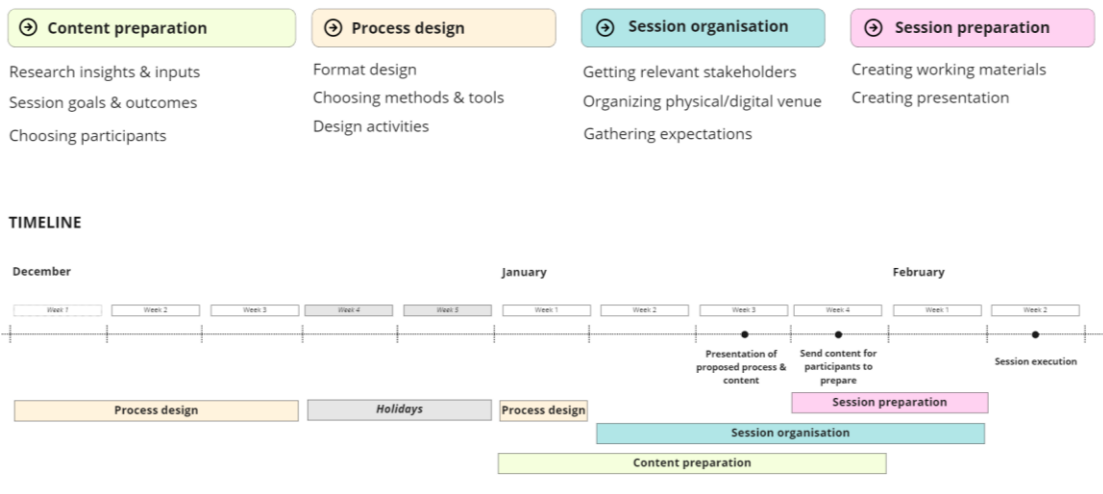


Figure 9: Proposed next steps that were presented to the representative from the Ministry of the interior.

## Content preparation

To design each of the workshops first the purpose and objectives were defined, followed by identifying key participants and questions that need to be answered during the event. The first workshop aimed at gathering information from the point of view of public servants and immigrants. The objective was to identify key challenges perceived by each stakeholder group and gain a deeper understanding of their experience with participation and policy making. The second workshop aimed at bringing the two stakeholder groups together. Finally, the third workshop was planned to develop concept ideas.

Through a process of designing and shaping workshops it became clear that it did not make sense to involve stakeholders from both countries. There are specifics to each country on how they approach immigration. Immigration is also different for each country. For example, in Slovenia there are not many immigrants from non-European countries and in Finland there are not many immigrants from the Balkans. Due to the specifics of each context, it was decided that only Finnish stakeholders will be involved in the process.

The initial plan (Table 3) was to have the first workshop to define challenges and generate possible ideas for solving, the second to prototype ideas and test them and the last one to share and evaluate the process and the results. However, after the delivery of the first workshop it was evident that with the lack of time, the remaining two workshops will not be appropriate for prototyping and evaluating prototypes. The content of the second and third workshop therefore changed throughout the process. Because there were three workshops, the delivery of the first two types of workshops also served as a way to gather insights and learn - similar to the discovery phase of gathering data. Like prototyping (Stickdorn et al. 2018), implementation could be viewed as a form of research. Here an overlap of the two diamonds happens, where the delivery of the workshop is at the same time in two different parts of the design process: implementation (deliver) and research (discover).

	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Initial plan	Define & Create	Prototype & Test	Share & Evaluate
Adjusted plan	Identify challenges	Evaluate ideas	Co-design solutions

Table 3: Initial and adjusted plan of three virtual workshops.



Each of the workshops was developed and implemented through an iterative process. The first two workshops were done with each stakeholder group separately to gather information and identify key pain points. The second session brought together public servants and immigrants to evaluate proposed ideas, add their own and prioritise those solutions that they believed would need to be further developed. Finally, the last virtual workshop was conducted with an immigrant where one of the ideas was co-designed. Based on the co-designing session three prototypes were further developed and sent for evaluation.

### **Process design**

The actual design of activities happened before each of the respective workshops, based on the information gathered from previous activities. The content of the second and third workshop therefore changed throughout the process. Each session was designed first by outlining the key possible activities and then adjusting them to the time constraints and the number of participants before the start of the session. When designing virtual workshops, it is important to over plan or even have multiple scenarios and be prepared that the session might turn out to be different than initially planned (Andersen et al. 2021).

After the programme was outlined, digital spaces were chosen. For this project Zoom was chosen as a video conferencing application and Miro as a virtual whiteboard. These two tools were chosen predominantly because of the authors' previous experience with it and their functionalities. Key functionalities of Zoom are to easily create breakout rooms, share music and view all participants equally in the 'gallery view' mode. Miro was chosen because it served as a place for the presentation and for participants to participate. It is a visual tool that offers participants to explore on their own if they wish to do so and provide a way to orientate where they are in the process (Andersen et al. 2021).

One of the key questions regarding tools was participants' familiarity with them. Having experience that most public sectors use MS Teams I was reluctant to use Zoom but on the other hand it offered some functionalities that were important for the successful delivery of the virtual workshops. A similar dilemma happened with Miro. As a very open and versatile tool, it can demand a steep learning curve from someone who hasn't used any similar tools before. On the other hand, it made it possible to have all content (presentation, instructions and workspaces) in one place. Even though I anticipated problems with using Miro I decided to take a risk. Usually, a pre-session is organised for participants to learn the tools (Andersen et al. 2021) but because of lack of participants' availability this was not possible. A workaround was to prepare detailed working spaces in a way that it would take minimal skills to interact with it and make the process more efficient (Andersen et al. 2021). Therefore, the only item

that participants needed to work with were sticky notes. This turned out to be useful and important due to time constraints, as there was no time spent for teaching participants how to use digital tools and more could be spent on content.

### **Organising sessions**

One of the key aspects of participation and co-creation is the decision on who to involve, when and how to engage them in a participatory process (White 1996, Karl 2022). Number of participants, level of involvement throughout the process and their decision-making power are just a few important factors when designing a co-creative process. (White 1996, Arnstein, Karl, International Association of Public Participation)

In the publication *Co-creation for Policy* (Matti et al. 2022), the authors suggest participation between four different stakeholders: policy makers, civil society, business/entrepreneurs, and academia. Co-creation between policy makers, business and academia is already widely practised, whereas the introduction of a fourth stakeholder group - civil society - demands a slightly different approach and mindset. Based on the input from the interviewee from the Finnish Ministry of Interior, two key stakeholder groups were chosen to be involved in the process: public servants and immigrants.

Recruiting participants from these two groups demanded individual approaches. In order to involve public officials, Mariana Salgado, the contact person from the Ministry of the Interior helped put together a list of potential public servants that were most likely to respond and participate. Mariana also contacted some of her colleagues herself to increase the likelihood of participation. Individual invitations were sent to all participants with the mention of the Laurea University and Ministry of the Interior to portray the legitimacy, credibility and importance of the workshop and project as a whole.

A total list of 9 public servants was made to whom an invitation was sent to participate in the workshops. In total five representatives of different governmental bodies participated: one from the Ministry of Justice (Department for Democracy and Public Law), one from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, and three from the Ministry of the Interior, two of them from the Immigration department.

To recruit immigrants a different approach was taken. First a questionnaire (Appendix 2) was created to gather some quantitative data including information about their nationality, occupation, family status, religious beliefs, prior experience of public participation, access to devices and for what purpose they use them, their skill levels of using various digital tools and their interest in participating in one of the workshops. All this different data was collected

with the aim to have a diverse group of participants included in the workshops. Also, the assumption was that if someone took the time to fill out a questionnaire, they were more likely to participate in other activities. A banner (Figure 10) with an invitation and a link to the questionnaire was posted on Facebook (Expat Finland, Expat Helsinki, Foreigners in Finland, Finland International) and LinkedIn (personal profile). A request to Moniheli, a network of organisations that work with immigrants, to send the invitation through their own channels was sent. Emails were also sent to Finnish expat groups, but the response was not always positive (Figure 11). Personal network was also used to get participants to the workshops.

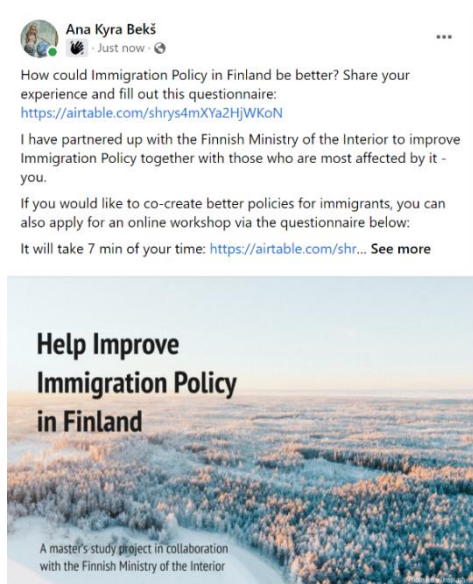


Figure 10: A screenshot of a social media post to invite immigrants to participate in a questionnaire.

From: E [redacted].com>  
 Sent: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 10:27:56 AM (UTC+01:00) Belgrade, Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague  
 To: Ana Kyra Bekš  
 Subject: RE: E [redacted] t

Hi Ana,  
 Thanks for your email. I've helped with similar things in the past and I'm afraid there was virtually no response. I'm currently on sick leave and my available work-time is really limited, so I won't be promoting your questionnaire. But best of luck with that, and your studies!  
 Cheers,  
 S [redacted]

Figure 11: A screenshot of a reply from a Finnish expat group representative.

The response to the questionnaire was in total 23 people out of which 10 applied for the co-creative workshops. Unfortunately, the initial plan to have a diverse group of immigrants was not possible as there was not enough interest to choose from. There was no further analysis done with the data gathered through the questionnaire as it was not relevant for the co-creative process. In the end six people participated in total during four workshops.

## Session preparation

The final step before each of the virtual workshops delivered was the design of workshop materials and a presentation used to facilitate the sessions. The presentation was merged with activities making it easy for participants to follow. Process of each session was broken down into slides or frames (Figure 12), as they are called in Miro. Frames were used to provide information and for doing activities during the session. The aim was to design them in a way that was easy to understand and interact with. In the next section, the process of co-creating solutions is described in more detail.

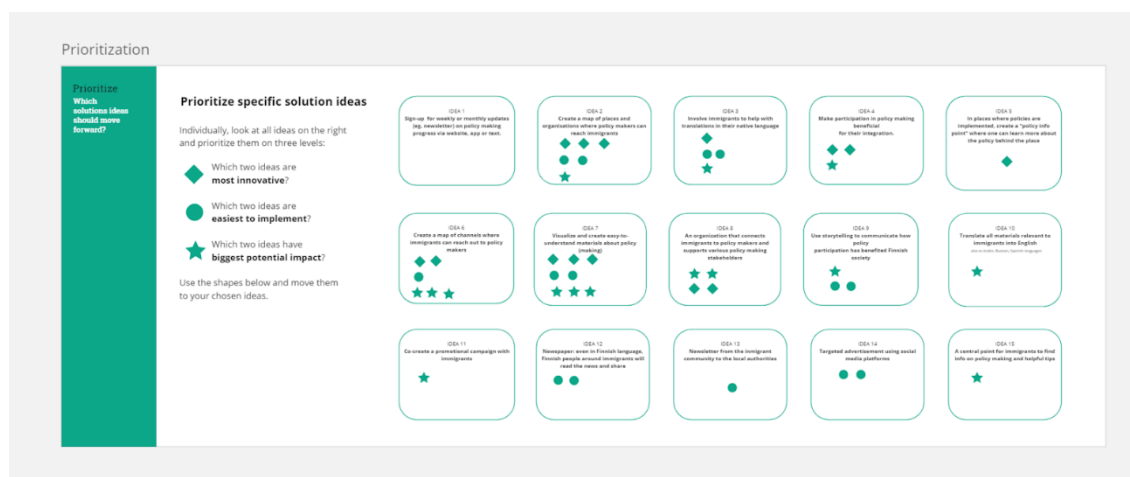


Figure 12: Example of a 'frame' in Miro that was used to prioritise ideas using dot voting.

### 3.4 Process of Co-creating solutions

The solutions development process went through the first three phases of the Double Diamond: discover, define, and develop (Figure 13).

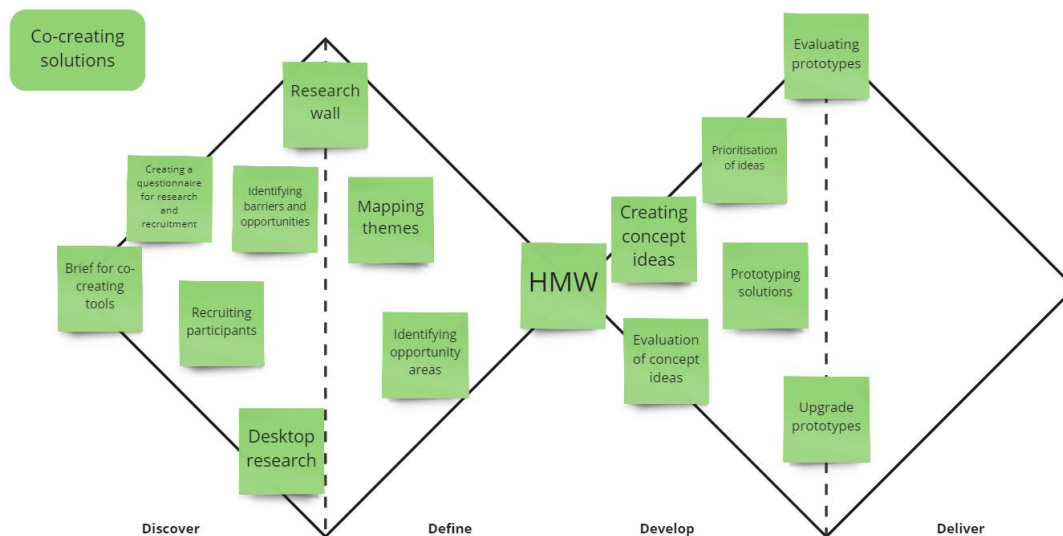


Figure 13: Activities for co-creating solutions mapped on the Double Diamond (Design Council 2019).

In the discovery phase, three exploratory workshops were conducted to identify barriers and opportunities for participatory immigration policy making. There were two types of exploratory workshops, one for public servants and one for immigrants. During the first, four participants from the public sector participated including representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Department for Democracy and Public Law, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, and Ministry of the Interior. During the second and third, four immigrants in total participated.

Public servants were invited to write down challenges and benefits of participatory immigration policy making, and immigrants were invited to form statements “I would participate in policy making if...” and “An obstacle for me to participate in policy making is...”. The author also made other notes during the discussions and conversations at the discovery workshops (Figure 14).

## Notes from workshops

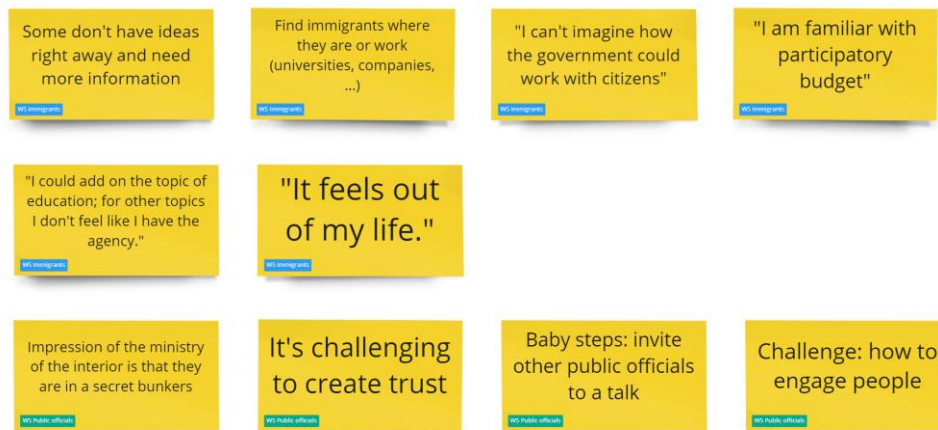


Figure 14: Notes from the discovery workshops.

In the define phase, statements from both stakeholder groups and authors' notes were joined and organised based on emerging themes using inductive reasoning. It was clear that there are themes that are common to both stakeholder groups only from different perspectives. E.g., both reported lack of time as one of the barriers to participatory policy making. Based on this observation, the author formulated statements about barriers from two different points of view that summarised data gathered through the workshop and the knowledge gained through previous research activities (semi structured interviews, desktop research). Six themes emerged: Awareness, Skills and knowledge, Resources, Motivation, Value and Trust. These were then reframed as questions using the How might we? formulation.

How might we? questions were used to step into develop phase to ideate. Ideas were then grouped into four solution concepts:

1. Spread the word and make sure it gets people engaged, inspired, and motivated,
2. Map key stakeholders and relevant information for easier navigation and access to information,
3. Improve communication and make information and content easily accessible to all immigrants, and
4. Connect various stakeholders into a network that supports all parties involved.

These solution concepts (with some specific ideas of solutions) were then presented during the evaluative workshop. Both public servants and immigrants were invited to discuss and evaluate the four solution concepts using the method PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting). The

method forces participants to make an effort in finding positive, negative, and interesting aspects of an idea, avoiding quick judgements or emotional reactions (De Bono n.d.). This activity was done in mixed pairs, public servants and immigrants evaluating concepts together. All participants were also invited to add their own specific ideas (in total 5 ideas were added by participants).

The last step in evaluation was voting and prioritisation of ideas. Dot-voting was used to evaluate ideas. Based on the method criticism (Anderson 2019), there were measures taken to make it as valid as possible, for example by making all ideas look exactly the same and by introducing three types of votes (most innovative, easiest to implement and biggest potential impact). Participants were invited to each place one vote per category on one or more ideas.

Three ideas were chosen for further development: Visualise easy-to-understand materials about policy (making), create a map of places and organisations where policy makers can reach immigrants, and create a map of channels where immigrants can reach out to policymakers. The author decided to use system maps as the basis for developing these solutions as they included all the relevant information: actors, channels and value exchanged.

The last activity of the session was a reflection where participants were invited to think about what they liked about the workshop, what they've learned and what they wished. The workshop was closed by showing next steps of the process and an invitation to participate in the following activities.

The final co-design workshop was designed to facilitate participants in the creation of a system map by formulating questions that would help define key information that needs to be on a map. Since there were two similar ideas, both about mapping, the co-designing workshop focused on creating a single map that would include key actors, channels and value being exchanged in form of information. The workshop began by reviewing the last session and stating the purpose and the goal of the workshop. The mapping was done using an online whiteboard using digital sticky notes, shapes, and arrows. To avoid any technical issues, the facilitator worked based on the instructions of the participant.

After the mapping, the participant was invited to add her own thoughts on what is still missing and who needs to be further involved in the evaluation of the prototypes. A short reflection was done at the end of the session.

Finally, based on the desired consequence (increase immigrants' participation in policy making), design knowledge and experience (all information gained through the workshop sessions, theoretical models that were examined, authors' previous design experience), constraints (lack of time, access to stakeholders) and abductive reasoning, a design proposal

was created: three posters as tools for public servants and immigrants. Posters were then developed by prototyping and testing. The first draft of prototypes was presented to the contact person from the Ministry of the Interior for feedback. Based on that, the prototypes were upgraded and all public servants and immigrants who had expressed interest in the project or have participated during the co-creative process were invited to share their feedback online. Feedback was anonymously given only by immigrants; public servants did not respond. There was no further development of the prototypes after.

### **Development process in hindsight**

The design activities of the design process previously mapped on two double diamonds and the process above is described in a linear way despite applying design activities of research, ideation, prototyping (Stickdorn et al. 2018) and implementation throughout the project iteratively and in parallel, typical for the double diamond process (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Design Council 2019; Tschimmel 2012). For example, during the development of the co-creative process more theoretical models were examined and included in the workshops. This activity would usually be categorised as a discovery activity, yet it was performed during the development phase.

With almost ten years of prior design experience, the author was able to navigate the process without a predefined structure but rather followed her own intuition on what methods to choose and when. According to Dorst (2008) this is typical for designers as years of experience enable the designer to sense patterns in design situations and respond intuitively right away. The actual process was much 'fuzzier' than illustrated before and without a clear path (Sanders and Stappers 2012). A better visual representation of the actual process can be done using the 'design squiggle' (Newman n.d.; Stickdorn et al. 2018). The squiggle (Figure 15) adequately represents the messiness at the beginning of a design process, specifically in the research and synthesis phase (Newman n.d.). The activities that were previously presented using two Double Diamonds using yellow and green colour are here put together in an approximate timeline. It is clear from the image that the activities of both processes, designing virtual workshops (yellow) and co-creating solutions (green) were done in parallel. It also shows that activities after a concept was created were more linear and simpler than at



the beginning of the process during the co-evolution of problem and solution space.

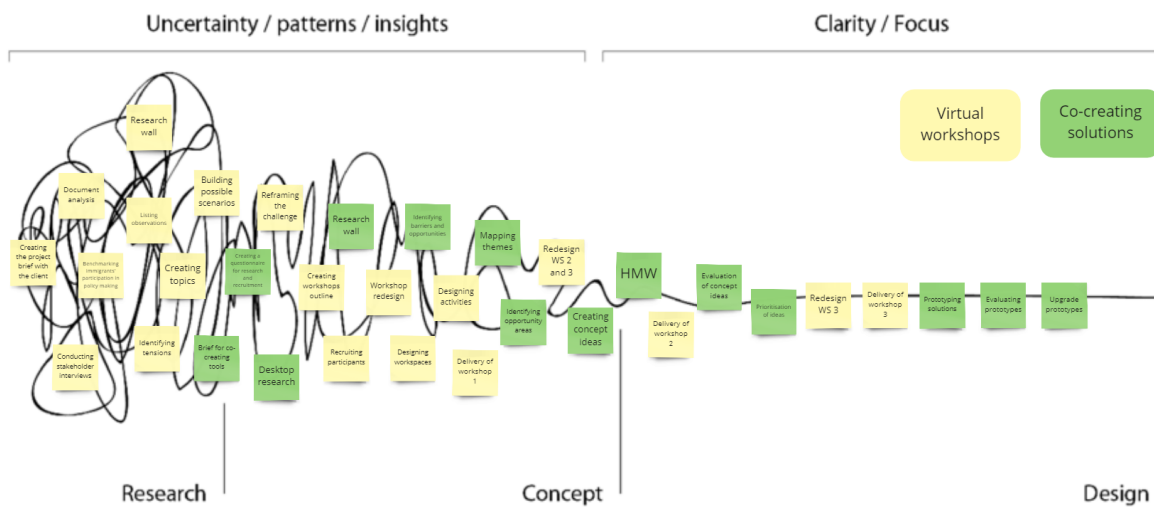


Figure 15: Visualisation of both design processes using the Design Squiggle (Norman n.d.).

## 4 Results

In this chapter, three results of the development work are presented: the design process, three virtual workshops and three prototypes that resulted from the co-creative process with public servants and immigrants. They are all practical constructs that can be further developed or used by policymakers or anyone else who aims to involve citizens in a participatory process. All results lean on theories and incorporate models presented in the knowledge base of this thesis.

### 4.1 The design process

The first construct as the result of the development work is a design process that was created throughout the co-evolution of the problem and solution space (Maher and Poon 1996). The co-creative process went through a design process that generally followed the logic of multiple 'diamonds' of the Double Diamond design process (Design Council 2019). In hindsight all activities are mapped on three diamonds (Figure 16) that do not represent specific phases (e.g., discover) but rather show the divergent and convergent nature of the process using various design methods, activities, and tools.

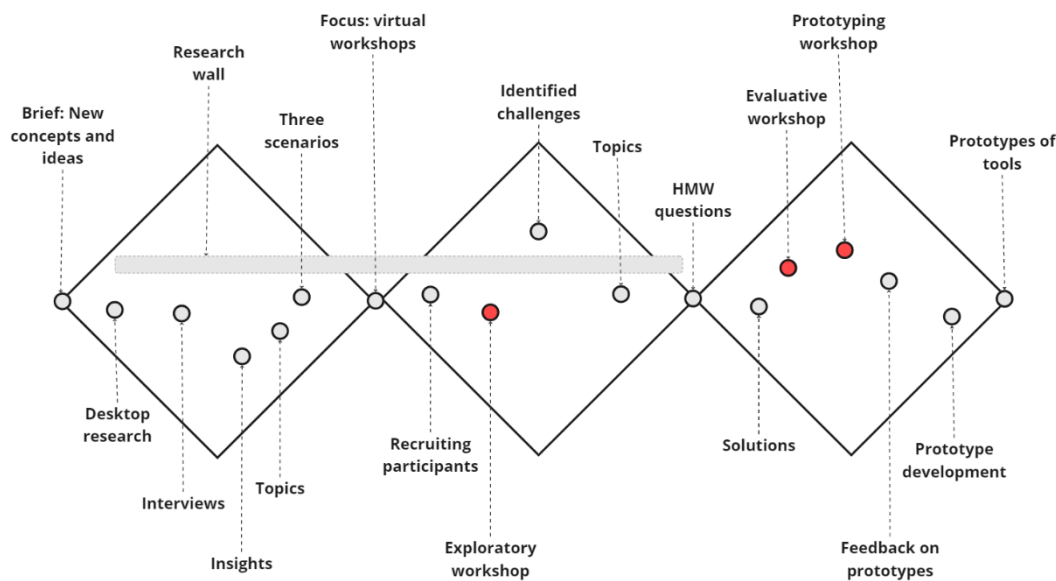


Figure 16: Key activities, methods and tools used during the development project.

The various simplifications of the design process can be accepted if design thinking is defined as a practice used by people without a professional background in design and not as an academic framework (Grönman and Lindfors 2021). The key aspect of any design process, regardless of the number of steps or activities performed in each step, is that it is iterative (Design Council 2016; Gibbons 2016; HPI n.d.; Lu 2012; Stickdorn et al. 2018; Maher and Poon 1996; Dorst 2001; Tschimmel 2012). This means that a process is repeated, and the outcomes of each iteration are used as a starting point for the next repetition of the process.

Based on the examination of three processes, the model of Human Centred Design by IDEO (IDEO 2015), the Design Thinking Model of the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI n.d.), Design Thinking 101 process by Nielsen Norman Group (Gibbons 2016) and the Double Diamond by Design Council (2019), it is clear that visualisations simplify the process in a linear or at partly iterative way either by drawing arrows that ‘go back’ to previous phases or visualising the process as a circle. With each iteration the designer’s professional knowledge is developed as they are solving the problem (Mumby 1989), therefore each repetition of the process is not going back to the start but rather moving on to the next level. This learning from experience or reflection-in-action is fundamental to design (Mumby 1989; Tracey and Baaki 2013; Dorst 2008). When looking at the designer as a learner, Kolb’s experiential learning theory can be useful to look at the designers’ process (Tracey and Baaki 2013).

In this view, design processes that are visualised as a sequence of phases in a linear way are misleading and can create wrong expectations (Buchanan 1992; Tschimmel 2012). Processes

presented in a circular way (Gibbons 2016) are better at conveying the iterative nature of the process. However, a cyclical process might suggest that the process runs in circles, ‘going back’ with every iteration. As that is not the case, a better visualisation is needed, something like a spiral presented in Brandt’s work (2001, 106) that implies iteration but also progress and co-evolution of the problem and solution space (Maher and Poon 1996).

The author proposes a new visualisation of the process with the work-in-progress name ‘Spiral loops’ design process (Figure 17). The process builds on the double diamond process where two diamonds are merged into one, keeping the divergent and convergent shape of each phase, indicated by arrows. Next the two axes between the four quadrants are not solid, suggesting that there is no hard division between the phases. Also, the axes expand beyond the middle diamond, visualising the evolution and expansion of the process during a design project. The spiral and the cadence of loops also indicate the speed at which a process usually takes place - at the beginning each phase is shorter, moving quickly and gaining confidence while as the project develops the movement between the phases becomes slower.

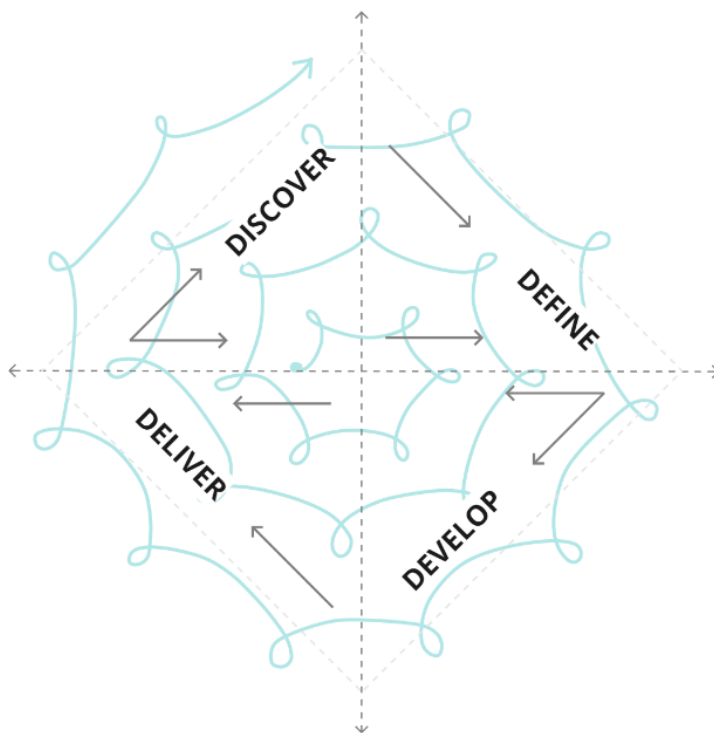


Figure 17: ‘Spiral loops’ design process visualisation proposed by the author.

The proposed ‘spiral loops process’ process aims to minimise the gap between the theoretical view on the process and the reality of the process put into practice. Its potential use and further development are discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

## 4.2 Virtual workshops

As part of the co-creative process, three types of virtual workshops were designed and delivered: exploratory, evaluative and co-design workshop. They all follow a similar core structure and share introductory and closing activities (Figure 18). The differences between workshops lay in the purpose and goal of each session and consequently the activities that are chosen for each one.

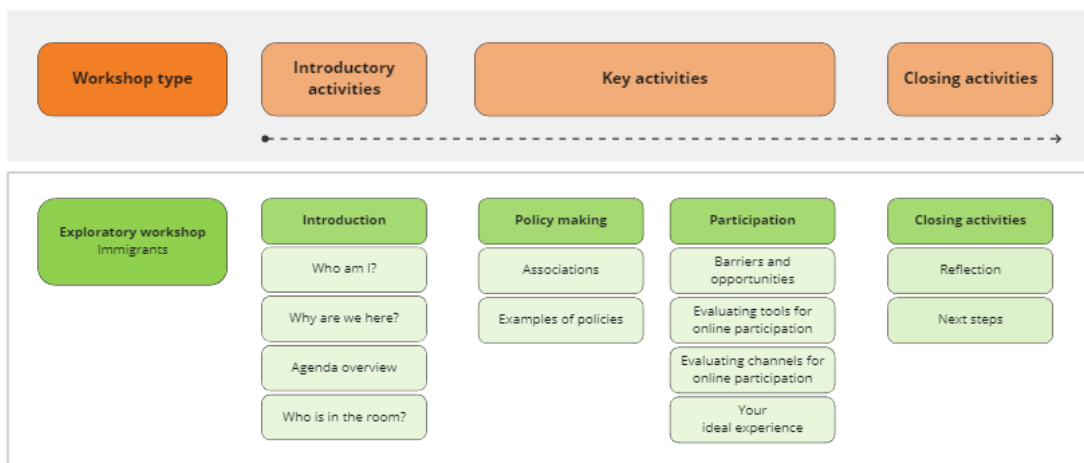


Figure 18: An example of a workshop activity outline with three sections that were common to all sessions. See Appendix 3 for full comparison.

The introductory activities include a short introduction of the facilitator, the context, and the purpose of the session, followed by introduction of the participants. Next the agenda with a timeline is presented. The key activities are different for each of the workshops and are summarised in the Table 4 and presented in detail in the following sections.

It is recommended that after the workshop participants evaluate and share their feedback on the session (Andresen et al. 2018). This was done for all workshops during closing activities. Participants were invited to offer structured feedback using the activity of I like, I learned, I wish (adapted from I like, I wish, What if (Hennesy 2018, 29).

In the following sections each type of workshop is presented in more detail.

Workshop no.	1	2	3	4
Type	Discovery	Discovery	Evaluative	Co-design
Participants	Immigrants	Public servants	Immigrants and public servants	Immigrants and public servants
Purpose	Identify needs and pains related to participation in policy making	Identify prior experience and understanding of participatory policy making	Evaluate and add idea concepts, prioritise ideas	Create content for solutions
Key activities	Identify opportunities and barriers to participation Evaluate digital channels for participation Create an ideal participatory journey	Identify benefits and challenges of participatory policy making Mapping experience with participatory approaches	Idea evaluation using PNI method Three-level dot voting	Systems mapping
Design process phase	Discover	Discover	Develop	Develop

Table 4: Overview of all virtual workshops.

#### 4.2.1 Exploratory workshops: Identifying challenges

Discovery workshop is used as a method of gathering data and getting a better understanding of the existing situation. Discovery workshops usually bring a range of relevant people (users, stakeholders, experts) together to discuss and clarify the challenge at hand (Bason 2016, chap. 15). Workshops as a research methodology are used in emerging and unpredictable studies to produce qualitative data that is reliable and valid. The designer is put into two roles as a researcher and facilitator. Due to its dual role a certain bias is expected and a balanced approach to equally paying attention to participants needs and the objective of the research - the workshop is needed. (Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017)

Two types of exploratory workshops were designed, one for public servants and one for immigrants. Both exploratory workshops share the same goal which is to identify key challenges and benefits of participatory immigration policy making, perceived by participants. The workshops are divided intentionally, having one with each stakeholder group to avoid self-censorship (Kaner et al. 2014), as there are expected power-relations between the two stakeholder groups (Karl 2002; Rietbergen-McCracken 2017; White 1996;

Cruikshank 1999). Both workshops share a similar structure with a slightly different focus. The difference is intentional because of two reasons: First, there is a different level of understanding of the policy-making process of each group, therefore the content had to be adjusted to the level of expertise and experience in policy-making. Second, there is a bigger focus on imaging potential future scenarios with immigrants.

The specifics of the two types of workshops are further described in the following part of this section.

### **Discovery workshop for public servants**

The focus of this workshop is to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation and participants' point of view on the topic. Two key activities are identifying key challenges for participatory immigration policy-making process and mapping of participatory methods using two frameworks: the participatory levels (IAP2 2018) and the policy cycle process (Howlett and Giest 2015).

Outputs of the workshop are:

- Identified challenges of participatory immigration policy making,
- perceived benefits of participatory immigration policy making,
- List of participatory methods and tools based on participatory levels,
- a list of online participatory methods they have tried and their experience with it.

After the short introduction of the purpose and goals for the session, participants are invited to share their expectations. Then a discussion is held to identify perceived barriers to participatory policy making and potential benefits it can bring. Next a short presentation on participatory levels is given with the invitation to map participants' experience with each one of them. To create shared understanding the policy cycle is presented. Finally, participants map all their previous experiences with different participatory methods during a policy making process.

The content generated by participants is later used to analyse and identify key barriers to immigrants' participation. When analysing data gathered through a workshop it is important to distinguish between two types of data: primary and secondary. Primary data is what is produced during the workshop by participants and secondary what is recollected retrospectively after the workshop. (Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017)

### Discovery workshop for immigrants

The focus of this workshop is to understand how immigrants understand policy and policy-making, to evaluate existing online participatory methods and imagine an ideal journey of them participating in immigration policy-making cycle.

Outputs of the workshop are:

- Barriers for participation in policy-making,
- opportunities for participation in policy-making,
- an analysis of smartphones and computers as tools for online participation,
- evaluation of online participatory methods or channels,
- an ideal journey of participation in policy-making cycle.

The session starts by a short introduction of the author and the purpose of the session, followed by introduction of all participants. Then participants are invited to share their associations with ‘immigration policy making’. This enables the designer to see what level of understanding there is among participants. A short presentation on the policy making process is given to make sure everyone has a common understanding of the topic. The following activity invites participants to identify obstacles and motivation to participate in policy making. Next, participants are invited to evaluate devices for online participation and various digital channels. Finally, participants are asked to create an ideal journey of their participation in policy making.

#### 4.2.2 Evaluative workshop: choosing ideas

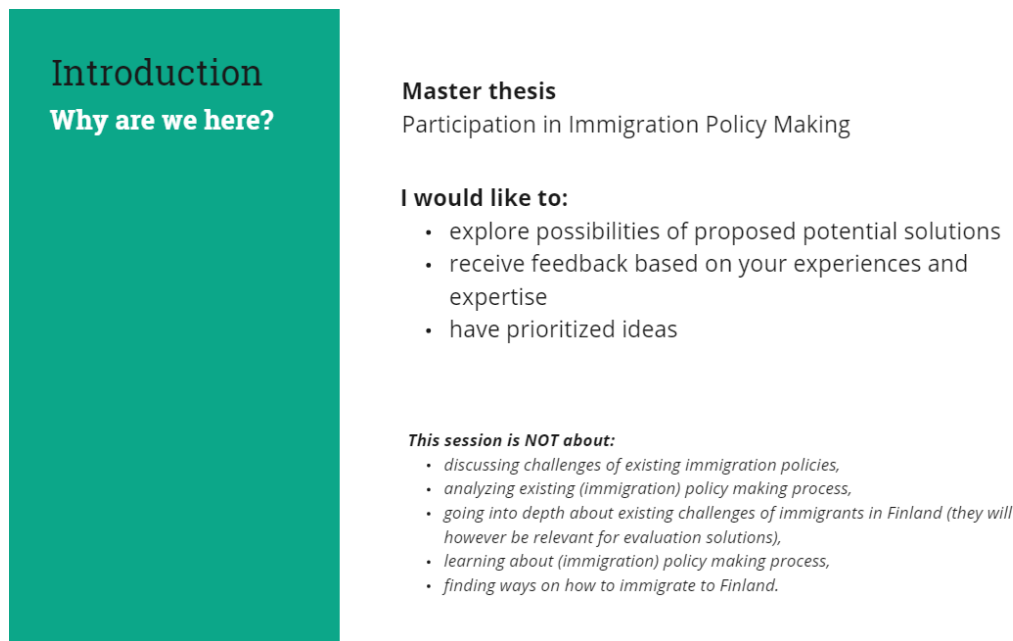
The purpose of the second workshop is for public servants and immigrants to meet, discuss, evaluate, and decide together on which ideas should be further developed.

Outputs of the workshop are:

- Additional ideas for improving immigrants’ participation in policy making,
- evaluation of concepts,
- prioritised ideas for further development.

At the beginning of the workshop expectations are set (Figure 19) by explicitly saying (and being written on the slides) what is expected at the end of the workshop and what the session is not about. Saying what is not part of the workshop is especially important if it is the first-

time immigrants and public servants meet as there is the potential that some might want to use the opportunity for their own agendas.



**Introduction**  
**Why are we here?**

**Master thesis**  
Participation in Immigration Policy Making

**I would like to:**

- explore possibilities of proposed potential solutions
- receive feedback based on your experiences and expertise
- have prioritized ideas

***This session is NOT about:***

- *discussing challenges of existing immigration policies,*
- *analyzing existing (immigration) policy making process,*
- *going into depth about existing challenges of immigrants in Finland (they will however be relevant for evaluation solutions),*
- *learning about (immigration) policy making process,*
- *finding ways on how to immigrate to Finland.*

Figure 19: Example of a frame on setting expectations from evaluative workshop delivered during the project.

The introduction of all participants with a structured check-in that comprises of two parts: a short introduction of one's name and job (or role) and an answer to the question 'how does co-creation look like in your life?'. This question serves a specific purpose to get participants thinking about co-creation and realising that it is a part of their life in some way. It allows participants to share something about themselves, so they are able to express some personal information (if they wish to) and for other participants to get a first impression of who the participants are, beyond their roles.

After the introductions an overview of the agenda is given followed by an overview of the activities that were completed prior to the workshop with a more detailed description of the process from defining problem areas to creating proposed solution concepts. It is important for the participants to understand how these ideas were created and where they stem from. Ideas or themes are presented to participants (Figure 20) after which participants are invited to add their own ideas.



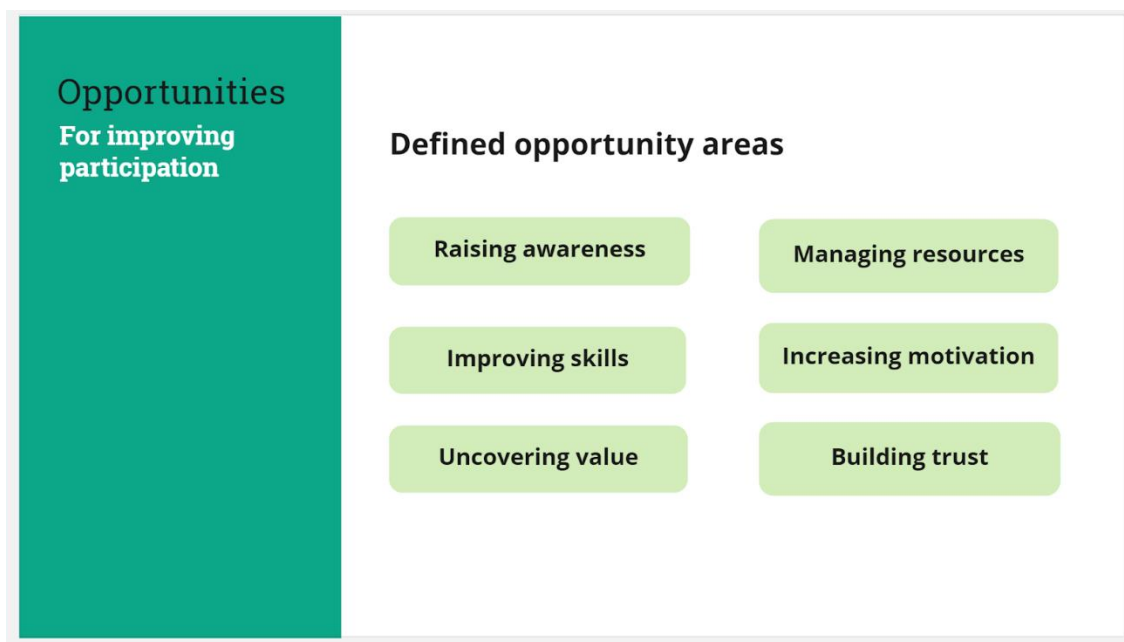


Figure 20: Example of a frame summarising what has been defined prior to the evaluative workshop.

#### 4.2.3 Co-designing workshop: prototyping solutions

The third type of workshop of the process is a co-design workshop. Prototyping as a service design method is used for further development of the chosen ideas. Participatory prototyping gives non-designer participants the ability to “make things”. Prototyping in this stage of the process is meant to create representations of the future and an aid to help us see what it could be. The aim is to collectively explore, express and test hypotheses about the future. (Brandt, E., Binder, T., and Sanders, E.B.N. 2013)

Prototyping is considered one of the core methods of any design process. It is a form that bridges the gap between designing and delivering, as it is a vehicle by which one delivers and plans. (Bason 2016, chap. 6). Prototyping is also inherently a form of research (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 210) and can thus inform on how to proceed with the development and implementation of a product, service, or a policy. It makes solutions tangible and helps de-risk both the future development and barriers to adoption (Bason 2016, chap. 6).

Prototyping enables participants to produce work that is grounded in reality and is mainly considered as a learning method (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Brandt et al. 2013). When they are tested with users and other stakeholders, they help create buy-in, common understanding and ensure that the development of a solution is going to work when implemented.

The session is focused on co-creating content of a system map focusing on three types of information: value, channels, and actors. Questions are formulated to help participants think about these three levels (Figure 21).

#### What needs to be on the map?

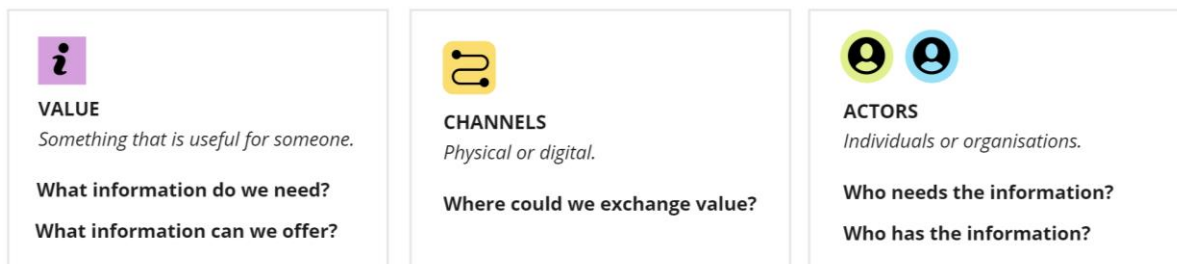


Figure 21: Questions that help participants think about what content needs to be on the map.

### 4.3 Outputs of the co-creative process

Policy cycle, policy-making and participatory policy making are complex themes that are difficult to grasp without having some prior knowledge or experience with it. It was not surprising that the three most voted ideas included visualisation. The outputs resulting from the process are three prototypes of tools, material components that can be used in design or participatory processes for a specific purpose (Sanders and Stappers 2012). These tools are visualisations of topics and information gathered through the development project and virtual workshops that could aid public servants and immigrants and improve immigrants' participation in policy making.

Visualisation is one of key approaches used in design to work with complexity (Kolko 2010). Visualisation can also be used to give policies and issues a physical form and thus making them "more real". Same stands for new ideas or possibilities that would be otherwise vague or distant. (Halse 2014). In policy design the topics, issues or problems usually involve a large number of elements that are difficult to abstract or generalise. Visualisation of such concepts enables the creation of boundary objects (Stickdorn et al. 2018), objects that enable people from various backgrounds to establish a common understanding of the topic (or concept) at hand.

### 4.3.1 Prototype 1: Participatory immigration policy

The first prototype is a ‘cheat sheet’ for policy makers. It is divided into two parts. The left part of the poster has a list of participatory levels and ideas on how to involve immigrants at each level, inspired by the OECD (2001) map of participatory methods in their three-stage model of policy making. Each level is also briefly explained by stating what is the promise to participants. On the right side, motivations, needs (Figure 22), barriers and value to immigrants' participation is listed. These statements are taken from the sessions and have not been adjusted beyond grammar. This tool is meant primarily for immigration policy makers that want to involve immigrants in their process, but they can be applied to other contexts as well (e.g., when involving immigrants in designing services). Full prototype can be found in Appendix 4.

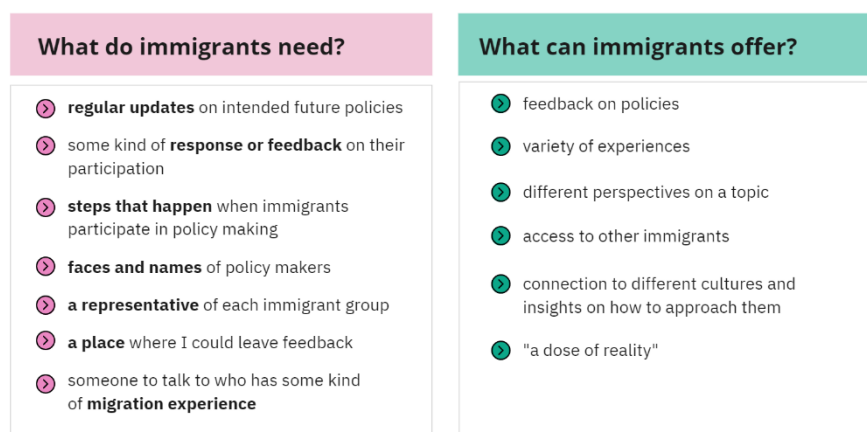


Figure 22: What immigrants need and what they have to offer in a policy making process (from the poster prototype).

### 4.3.2 Prototype 2: Digital participatory channels and methods

The second tool is a summary of digital participatory channels that can be used to involve immigrants. Each one of them was evaluated by immigrants (Figure 23) and can serve public servants when they design participatory processes. On the poster there are seven key digital channels with a short description and a tip on when to (not) use it. Below it is immigrants' feedback in the form of positive and negative statements. The visualisation makes it easier to have an overview of all the options and can aid a group when decisions on the channels need to be made. Full prototype can be found in Appendix 5.

Online workshops	Online interviews	Opinion polls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Networking and accessing more info</li> <li>✓ Hear other people's opinion</li> <li>✓ good option for co-creation</li> <li>✓ Allows participants to ask/clarify</li> <li>✗ Sometimes it's hard to think of an answer right away</li> <li>✗ Time consuming</li> <li>✗ Technical problems can take away time</li> <li>✗ "safe space" is a must.</li> <li>✗ only for digitally native ppl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Personal input</li> <li>✓ gives a feeling that ones opinion really matters</li> <li>✓ Allow for the participant to expand on answers</li> <li>✗ There feels like a power thing</li> <li>✗ Can be lengthy</li> <li>✗ technical problems can take away time</li> <li>✗ time consuming process</li> <li>✗ time must be allocated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fast</li> <li>✓ Understandable and quick questions</li> <li>✓ You can get many people to answer</li> <li>✗ Results can be rigged with use of spam bots/fake accounts</li> <li>✗ Not much choice for answers, may not reflect entirely one opinion</li> <li>✗ Usually quick answer, which often generalise</li> </ul>

Figure 23: A section from the poster prototype showing immigrants' feedback on some of the digital channels.

#### 4.3.3 Prototype 3: Learn more about immigration policy

The third prototype is a tool that is meant to be used by immigrants, but policy makers can use as well to reach and increase participation in immigration policy making. The tool was partly co-created with an immigrant and is based on the input from the workshops.

The goal of the poster is to make information about policy making easy to understand (Figure 24) by using simple language and graphic design. The tool - poster is divided into three sections. The first gives a simple explanation of what is immigration policy, an example of it and why it is important for immigrants. The middle part is a simple visualisation of the policy cycle presented in a linear way. The bottom part is a list of organisations and other contact points where immigrants can learn more about immigration policy and participate. Full prototype can be found in Appendix 6.

What is immigration policy?

**Immigration policy is a government document that describes how to work with immigrants and what rules apply to immigration.**

Examples of policies:  
laws, regulations,  
procedures, administrative  
actions, incentives,  
voluntary practices.

Why should you care?

Policies influence all services and procedures that you experience when you move to Finland. Your participation in the policy making process can improve your living in Finland and experience of other immigrants.

Figure 24: Definition of immigration policy, examples, and the importance of understanding what it is. Section from the poster.

## 5 Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of this thesis, to support the development of participatory processes and increase immigrants' participation in policy making, was fulfilled by implementing a participatory process, generating insights into barriers and opportunities for immigrants' participation and by giving the experience of active participation to public servants in an online environment. The thesis results are specifically targeted at immigrants' participation in policy making and can aid policymakers and other public servants who wish to involve immigrants more directly either online or offline. Specifically, it contributes to the design of digital participatory processes by developing and implementing virtual workshops in a co-creative process with immigrants. An examination of theoretical knowledge combined with practical experience also resulted in the creation of three prototypes that can be further developed and used in participatory immigration policy making and a model for different levels of participation in a design process.

The development project resulted in an experiential learning (Tracey and Baaki 2013) for both public servants and immigrants that were part of the virtual workshops thus aiding the development of participatory competences for both stakeholder groups. It specifically contributes to the development project by the Ministry of the Interior due to one of the leaders of that project, Mariana Salgado, participating throughout the development project.

This thesis followed the five actions proposed in the Finnish Strategy for Public Governance Renewal (Ministry of Finance 2020) that were set to implement the second policy of "expanding opportunities to exert influence and encourage people to participate in policy preparation and decision-making" (Ministry of Finance 2020). The open process used digital tools to develop participation and exert influence. By involving public servants and immigrants in an open dialogue it partially strengthened the culture of participation. The prototypes of tools use an understandable language and have the potential to strengthen service design capabilities. Even though the participatory process in this thesis did not influence policy making at large it does showcase an example of how the identified actions can be put into practice and provides knowledge on how to design and deliver such a process.

The first development question (*How might we use design to co-create solutions that will improve participation in immigration policy making with public servants and immigrants?*) was answered by examining theoretical frameworks related to design, co-creation, public participation, participatory policy making and immigrants' participation. Specifically, the understanding of what forms of participation are possible and identifying the gap between how participation is implemented today and the potential it has to improve not only policies but relationship between citizens and the government (OECD 2021a, Public Governance

Strategy, Veit and Wolfire 1998, Bobbio 2019, Jäske 2018). Moreover, the aim was achieved by implementing, documenting, and describing the process of using design to develop a participatory process. By reflecting on the process and the generated knowledge, insights on how to use design and co-create solutions with public servants and immigrants is offered. The three prototypes are a direct result of the design process which involved public servants and immigrants. The spiral loops process was created by reflecting on the development work and linking it to the theoretical frameworks presented in the knowledge base.

The second development question (*How might we design and utilise virtual workshops to engage immigrants in a participatory process?*) was answered by creating a theoretical framework and the design and delivery of three virtual workshops. Theoretical part focused on design and delivery of virtual workshops with special attention to the role of the designer and facilitation skills that are needed to deliver such an event. The three virtual workshops are results of answering the second development question as they were designed and utilised to engage immigrants in a co-creative process.

All results of the research-based development work are connected to each other as they were constructed through a dynamic and complex process of design. Not only were the three virtual workshops designed as a way to actively involve immigrants and public servants in a participatory process but also to co-create solutions. Not only are the three prototypes direct outputs of the design process but also aim to improve participation in immigration policy making. Moreover, the spiral loops process emerged during the design process and is not directly linked to immigrants, public servants or participation but rather to design as an approach to solve complex problems.

In the following chapters the author offers a more detailed reflection on the process, emphasising the importance of recruiting participants, designing, and delivering workshops, and co-creating solutions concluded by suggestions for future development of such processes. Then the author presents identified opportunities for increasing immigrants' participation that is based on the theoretical knowledge gained through the process of creating this thesis and practical experience of the development work. Finally, authors' personal thoughts are gathered on participation in the Finnish public sector and final thoughts on the thesis.

## 5.1 Reflection on the co-creative process

The co-creative process implemented during the development work followed the double diamond service design process. The three phases of discovery, definition and development were used as a framework for choosing and designing activities for the participatory process.

The design and implementation of the co-creative process was constantly adopted and changed according to the knowledge gained through research and other design activities, being similar to design iterations or co-evolution of a design problem and design solution (Maher and Poon 1996).

Designing participatory processes can be quite challenging but rewarding as well (Eriksen 2012). There was a lot of freedom in choosing appropriate methods and activities, deciding who is involved at what stages of the process and in what ways. There are many design methods to choose from for each of the design phases, some of them can even be used multiple times in various ways (Stickdorn et al. 2018). Moreover, looking at the theoretical frameworks for participation (White 1996; IAP2 2018; Karl 2002; Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001) it is clear that a designer has even more decision to make when designing a participatory process.

Co-creation, as one of the levels of participation, can happen on many levels. The author's decision on when and how to involve public servants and immigrants was based on the aim to share decision-making power, build on participants' own experiences and knowledge and previous experience.

The biggest barrier was the lack of time for co-creation due to participants' lack of availability. Public servants were only available two times for two hours and it was very difficult to get immigrants to participate. As two hours is not a lot for a virtual workshop, compromises had to be made. For example, the author decided to choose the following key moments for co-creation: identification of the problems (exploratory workshop), evaluation of ideas (evaluation workshop) and development of solutions (prototyping workshop). However, co-creation could have been used as well during other parts of the design process, for example when synthesising information from research or coming up with different ideas. Synthesis and ideation demand more time in participatory processes and were therefore not chosen. Lack of time also influenced other parts of the design process, for example there were many templates designed and used during the process to make gathering of input as simple as possible for participants and thus save time during co-creative sessions.

The initial plan for the co-creative process changed and decision-making was prioritised based on the theory of participatory levels and power sharing (White 1996; IAP2 2018; Karl 2002; Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001). A further examination of levels of participation in the design process is offered in the following section.

The experience public servants had during the participatory process will aid them in further participatory activities (Tracey and Baaki 2013) in their respective ministries. Consequently, by involving Finnish public servants their experience and involvement in a participatory

process positively influenced their view on participation and can motivate them to use this approach in their own work which can in turn improve public participation in Finland (OECD 2021a).

### 5.1.1 Levels of participation in the design process

The research-development approach used in this thesis resulted in another construct based on theory and practice. After the evaluation of participatory levels, the five level Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP 2018) was used to describe what levels of participation were used at what parts of the design process in the development work and in what way.

Informing in the design context means providing relevant information on who is involved, what the process will look like, what to expect and what are intended outcomes. A context of why such a project is happening might be offered as well. At this level of participation, the communication is one-way and could be considered as non-participative as there is no interaction. However, the users are somehow involved in the process by forming their own understanding of it. All decisions are made without the user.

In the development process this was done throughout the process, specifically when recruiting participants and when communicating with them through emails and the survey before the workshops. Then during the events at the beginning of the session, the design process was presented, and the specific workshop was put into context of the whole project. Finally, outputs and next steps were communicated after the workshops.

Consulting in the design process is one of the most common participatory levels used in design. This could be an interview with a user to gather information about their lives (discover), presenting the project scope with an opportunity to share feedback (define), showing different prototypes for feedback as a testing method (develop) or ask to rate their experience (deliver). Participants have no control over whether their feedback is considered. In this process this was done by conducting interviews with various stakeholders at the beginning of the process, mainly with the case client. During the evaluative workshop participants offered their feedback and when prototypes of tools were sent for evaluation.

Involving is the next level of participation. During the first phase, users could be involved in reviewing research insights and making sure their point of view is included (discover), then they would be asked to propose their own scope of the project with problem statements (define). In the third phase they could create some of the prototypes and receive feedback on it (develop) and in the last phase they would participate in pilots and offer feedback. Participants get feedback on how their input was used. In this development project, the



client was involved during all stages of the process to decide together how to move forward. Public servants and immigrants were involved in workshops where they added their own ideas and created their own journeys.

During the first three levels, participants have no control over the process and little or no control over decision-making. Similarly in this development work, the final decision was made by the author.

Collaboration involves at least some level of shared decision-making. This could be asking users to choose among different research activities and help perform them, participate in analysis and synthesis (discover), decide together what to focus on (define), co-create prototypes and test them (develop). At this level of participation, the user is part of the implementation (deliver). When a user is involved in production and contributes to the implementation of an idea, it is called co-production (Bason 2016, chap. 15). In the development process the only instance of shared decision making was when idea concepts were chosen for further development.

Finally, empowerment is the last level of participation. At this level all decisions are made by users, the designer (and other stakeholders) only provide necessary information or any other kind of resources that are needed. A structure of the process and methods can be proposed but the final decision on how to approach the issues is up to users. The facilitator takes on the role of a facilitator more than a designer. During the project there was little empowerment as they only had some decision-making power.

By looking at the examples of different levels of participation with users it is clear that designers usually move between the middle three levels of consulting, involving and collaboration. Participation of users might be different from the participation of other stakeholders. This is also true for the development case where the case client was involved differently than other public servants and immigrants.

The author created this as a way to help herself during the design process, to grasp better how different levels of participation can be used in a design process. The author used Levels of participation in the design process (Table 4) to reflect on the process however it could also be used before designing a participatory process to have a better understanding of possibilities or to discuss with other stakeholders on what level would be most appropriate (or possible).

	Discover	Define	Develop	Deliver
Inform	Tell participants what the process will look like	Present what decisions have been made	Present the development work done so far	Report results of the delivery process
Consult	Interviewing stakeholders	Gather feedback on the scope of the project	Testing prototypes and gathering feedback	Rate their experience of the development process
Involve	Involve users in research analysis	Invite users to add problem statements	Get inputs and ideas on prototypes during development	Invite them to observe and discuss implementation
Collaborate	Involve stakeholders in research activities, analysis, and synthesis	Decide together what problems to focus on	Teach prototyping methods and prototype together	Co-deliver solutions
Empower	Provide them with necessary information and support in the discovery process	Support them in the definition of the scope and problem	Offer resources for development	Guide them through development and evaluation

Table 5: Participatory levels during a design process based on the Double Diamond (Design Council 2019) and Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP 2018).

The model presented above can be used by anyone who wishes to be more intentional about involving others in a participatory process. Even though the design process that is used is the double diamond, the four phases can be transferred to other types of projects as well. The development of such models can make participation in design clearer and more accessible, specifically to those who are either new to design or participation.

### 5.1.2 Designing and delivering virtual workshops

Virtual workshops passed the weak market test of a construct as they were implemented within the organisation. The next step would be to implement them in other context by different organisations to pass the medium-level test. (Moilanen et al. 2022)

Two of the sessions theoretically could not be labelled as workshops due to only one person participating (Andersen et al. 2021). Nevertheless, since the purpose of the sessions was to work and all activities were pre-designed, they are considered as workshops.

Virtual workshops have been applied and tested in a design process to better understand their potential and barriers in using them in participatory processes. There is no recipe on how to use design methods in a (participatory) design process (Dorst 2008). They need to be adjusted to the specific context of the project, the needs of the participants and circumstances during the process. Flexibility on one hand creates an opportunity for a diverse range of application

possibilities but on the other hand demands high-quality design and execution of a participatory process (Matti et al. 2022, 18).

Due to the ongoing changing focus of the project the specifics of each workshop had to be adjusted to the needs of each step of the process. When designing a workshop, it is crucial to define how the results of the workshops will be used after it so that the sessions can be designed accordingly. This was lacking during the last co-designing workshop as it was not clear how the outputs (tools) might be used in practice. This left a lot of unanswered questions and ambiguity during the session.

There are many benefits of workshops for participatory processes including the possibility of designing a structure that enables equal participation of multiple stakeholders. Clear structure of the workshop process increases satisfaction of participants (Matti et al. 2022). Simultaneous inclusion provided by workshop format can save time and foster interactions that would otherwise not be possible. The creation and strengthening of relationships between stakeholders during co-creative sessions can produce further types of cooperation or collaboration outside the process (Stickdorn et al. 2018). Finally, the flexibility of the workshop format can accommodate constraints and the modification of methods to fit the needs of participants and requirements of the project. Workshops are an appropriate method for co-creation, but they demand careful planning and enough time allocated.

Virtual workshops can be as effective and sometimes even more efficient than face-to-face workshops (Andersen et al. 2021). There are many benefits that the virtual way of working offers. First, there is less hierarchy in an online session due to the videoconferencing interface. This might positively influence power relations (White, Arnstein) between participants making everyone more equal. Second, virtual participation offers a quick way of giving input (e.g., Zoom chat or Miro sticky notes) that is immediately seen by everyone else. For some it is easier to express their opinions or ideas using text and without directly exposing themselves.

Third is the ease of documentation. Since all content is created online it is readily available to create summaries and share them with others (Andersen et al. 2021). The use of digital tools like Zoom and Miro make it easy to record sessions and document content that is being generated. Interestingly during the development project nobody had issues with Miro, but some people had problems with Zoom which is, in authors' experience usually the other way around. Despite some difficulties, the process was not hindered, and it was possible to complete all activities as planned. As Anderson et al. (2021) warn, virtual workshops are always full of surprises.

The biggest constraint and the reasoning why full digitalisation of the public sector is often criticised (OECD 2021a) is access to technology and the skills that are needed to use digital tools. Only those who have an appropriate device (e.g., laptop) and some basic skills of using digital tools can successfully participate. Compared to face-to-face participation these are additional demands for the people involved which may block some to even consider participating. Given that a person has access to a computer and all the skills for using virtual tools, virtual sessions can considerably reduce costs of joining by not having travel and accommodation costs. This is especially useful for organisations that are located in different countries or in the case of the public sector, being able to access citizens from all over the country without them having to travel to a particular destination. (Andersen et al. 2021)

Visualisation in a digital context is on one hand much easier and quicker than in a physical context. Due to highly sophisticated applications available, anyone can access either premade templates, or elements to build visual messages. For example, Miro has an integrated database of icons that can be freely used. Images are also much easier to access and use. On the other hand, if not skilled in using digital applications or having little experience with it, one can be reluctant to do it. In the example of the development case of this thesis, visualisation was only done by the designer and not by participants. This decision was consciously made, as most participants didn't have any prior experience with the digital tool Miro, that was used during the workshops.

Another challenge is the complicated way of reading other people 'in the room' and getting messages across (Bailenson 2021). Complex human interactions are reduced to squares on a screen which is very demanding for the human brain and can result in Zoom fatigue (Bailenson 2021). Therefore, virtual sessions are usually shorter than face-to-face ones (Andersen et al. 2021). Final constraint for the person delivering an online session is the limited space for improvisation. An experienced facilitator can quickly adapt an activity in a face-to-face (Pullan 2021) setting whereas due to technical constraints this is more difficult in a virtual setting.

### **Discovery workshops**

During the exploratory workshops, theoretical models of Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP 2018) and the five-step policy cycle (Howlett and Giest 2015) were used to create shared understanding and guide discussions. In all sessions, both with immigrants and public servants, participants mentioned the frameworks and appreciation that they learned something new. Therefore, use of models proved to be a useful tool for not only guiding discussions but also facilitating learning for participants.

The activity where immigrants were invited to create their own ideal journey turned out to be tricky for some as they did not have enough knowledge of how a policy making process looks like. Those that had some previous experience with imagining scenarios did not find this activity to be difficult. In the second iteration of the workshop, based on feedback, the author offered a specific example of a new policy and guided them through step by step, giving descriptions of what the policy making process would look like. That enabled them to imagine their own role within the process.

What immigrants liked was that it offered them a safe space (“I liked feeling comfortable even though I didn’t know much about the topic”, “I felt like I can share my thoughts freely”), that they could contribute (“I liked the interactivity, that I was able to talk about the topic”, “I liked that it was participatory”, “I liked the mix between writing and conversation”), and the overall experience (“It was smooth”, “I liked the playlist”, “It was a nice atmosphere”).

What they learned was about policy-making steps, a new way of conducting a workshop (including Miro as an online collaborative app) and what policy can affect. What they wished was to have an example (“I wish there were some examples given to clarify or visualise better”), and participants with different experiences (“someone who has a very different opinion”, “I wish someone was here who has struggled to challenge the topic.” They also viewed this as an important topic and wished that it was more visible. Other feedback included “It made me think of ways in which citizens can be included in these processes” and “how little we are, because it was hard to imagine”.

### **Evaluative workshop**

This workshop was one of the most important parts of the process because two stakeholder groups that normally do not interact with each other had to work together and share decision-making power. Their voices were equally important.

What participants liked at the joint workshop was the opportunity to listen and discuss (“I liked listening to others”, “I liked the discussions”, “I liked listening to the experiences and ideas”, “I liked to be in contact with policy makers”), diversity of opinions (“I liked important discussions and different perspectives”, “I really liked to hear others viewpoint and some of the issues discussed”), and the overall experience (“positive atmosphere”, “I loved that it was really well laid out”, “I liked the playlist”).

What they learned were new ideas and techniques (“I learned new ideas on how to make a workshop”, “I learned that music is important to create a nice atmosphere in the (online)

workshop”, “some practical ideas like discussion cafes to get together and hear from foreigners living in Finland”), new insights (“I learned some new viewpoints too familiar problems”, “even active immigrants might not know a lot about what are our communication channels”, “that we could better benefit from students to open spaces of dialogue between civil servants and immigrants”, “that some services are already in place”, “that there are ways to ask questions to Migri”) and personal realisations (“that we should listen and listen”, “I learned that we can all be part of the process if given the opportunity”).

What they wished for was more time for the discussions and feedback and a more targeted session on a particular subject. There were also wishes to learn about the development of this project.

### **Co-design workshop**

The co-design workshop did not go as planned as only one person participated. Initially it was planned to involve both public servants and immigrants, but the former did not find time to participate. After delivering the session the author realised that other stakeholders, besides public servants, should have participated. For example, NGO representatives could add a lot of value during prototyping. Since there was only one person participating, the content was very one-sided and biased.

Another challenge was the lack of clarity on where and how the results would be used. This made it difficult to guide the conversation around the content of the posters. For example, it was not clear if the posters would be available digitally or physically. These kinds of design guidelines should have been created prior to the co-design workshop.

### **Participants**

The biggest limitation to this process was the number and diversity of participants. Even though workshops usually involve from 4 to 20 people (Andersen et al. 2021) two of them involved only one person. Moreover, there was a lack of diversity among participants.

The key challenge was how to attract people to offer 2 hours of their time. The simplest way is usually by offering some kind of compensation (usually a monetary one) however there were administrative obstacles to offering monetary compensation by the Ministry of the Interior. Therefore, a compelling invitation was needed to attract attention and motivate people to participate in the process. Using personal networks for recruitment is the easiest

and quickest way to get participants but it often results in lack of diversity and a heavily unrepresentative group of participants. This is exactly what happened in this development case. Most of the public servants were Mariana's colleagues and two of the immigrants were student colleagues of the author of this thesis. This meant most of the participants were biased towards participation and design.

What is important to notice is that public servants were not typical representatives of the Finnish public sector. They have had some experience with participatory methods and were open to co-creative approaches. Also, all immigrants did not report any big problems or issues when they moved to Finland. Therefore, the process itself was much easier to implement.

After completing the development work, it is not clear which groups of immigrants are easier to reach through virtual participation. Even though there was some interest expressed by those immigrants who filled out a questionnaire that was sent for recruitment purposes, not many participated in the co-creative process. The author believes that if there was more support from the public sector and if there was another incentive (e.g., monetary) that it would be easier to reach and involve the desired audience.

During reflection, public officials reported that they liked being part of the process, the intimacy of the session (with a small number of participants), getting to know new people and the structure of the workshop. What they learned was how it feels to be "on the other end" as a participant and their colleagues' views on the topic. One of them even learned about the participatory levels. What they wish was to have more time and have more similar sessions.

## **Facilitation**

During the five sessions that were facilitated it was important to create a safe space, set expectations, give clear instructions, keep participants' attention and their focus on the topic of the workshop (Andersen et al. 2021). Safe space was created in many ways. First music was shared as participants arrived signalling that this is a special place. A very informal and relaxed attitude was adopted by the author by having casual conversations with participants while waiting for everyone to join the session. Offering a personal story during the introduction gave the participants permission to do likewise themselves. The facilitator set an example of what is expected from participants by behaving that way herself. Another important thing was that participants got an opportunity to share something personal during the introductions. The invitation was to share something nice that happened recently on top of presenting their name and occupation. This expanded the view of participants not only as

representatives of a stakeholder group (e.g., immigrant) but as human beings, breaking the in- and out-group perceptions (Chipchase 2017, 335).

Safe space was also created by setting clear expectations at the beginning of the workshop. Setting expectations didn't start during the workshop but already before when communication with participants starts. In all emails that were sent to participants, it was clearly written what the session is about and what will be expected of them. Especially in an online participatory process, information has to be repeated multiple times to make sure the participants receive it.

Multiple methods for keeping participants' attention were used. First a presentation was made with all necessary information presented visually. The presentation was created in Miro, a virtual whiteboard app. Access to the workspace (in Miro) was given to participants so they had the option of looking at the presentation (and later participating) themselves. Miro's functionalities like 'bring to me' (Perminova 2022) were used to make sure everyone was looking at the same thing. Second, music was used strategically to set the mood and engage participants.

One of the key challenges in facilitating online, especially if done by one person, is keeping up with conversations that happen in breakout rooms (Andersen et al. 2021). That is why participants were always invited to summarise their key insights or points from their discussions in plenary. Participants were also invited to write down their thoughts and comments while in breakout rooms, but this was sometimes forgotten as participants got engaged in conversations. Oftentimes content written by participants is not very clear as it is not written in full sentences which makes it difficult to understand afterwards (Andersen et al. 2021). This is exactly what happened during the discovery workshops where some of the sticky notes did not have any contextual meaning when they were revisited. A way to avoid this is to have co-facilitators that help with writing down the contents of a conversation.

that the role of the designer changes during a participatory process. In a co-creative process, designers become facilitators of learning and aim to support stakeholders in achieving their goals. They do this by using their design knowledge and skills (e.g., visualisation). In the context of using (virtual) workshops, facilitation is key for successful participatory sessions.

## 5.2 Further application of the results

The development work combined with theory produced various constructs, with some of them being unexpected as they emerged throughout the process. Each of them is discussed in the context of further application.



## Process

For those that would like to use a similar process as it was used in this development work, this section provides some key suggestions for improvement. These suggestions are based on the authors' own experience and might not be relevant for every situation. Nonetheless building on some of these insights might improve the outcomes and outputs of a future process.

The biggest improvement that should be made is when recruiting participants. Who participates makes a big impact on the outputs and outcomes of a process. To gather a big enough and diverse group of participants there needs to be a clear directive from decision makers in the public sector (top-down). The "pulling power" of the one who sends invitations can have an important impact on who attends a workshop (Matti et al. 2022, 23). Additional use of digital channels by the Ministry of the Interior should be used to increase the reach and credibility of the project.

Moreover, a core group of representatives from different stakeholder groups (e.g., a policymaker, a subject-expert, an immigrant, a legislator) should be created and present throughout the process to ensure a balanced view on the topic, diverse inputs and a more holistic understanding of the problem. Ideally the core group would be led by an unbiased person who is focused only on the process and facilitation of it. Everyone in the core group should be compensated for their time and contribution a responsibility of the owner of the participatory process.

Second, there should be more co-creative sessions with less content. Once a group is formed it is much easier to meet regularly, especially online. A timeline of co-creative events should be created at the beginning of the project so everyone can make sure they have time to attend and participate. The core team with the support of the facilitator should define key moments of group decision making and where input from everyone is needed. The process should be designed accordingly.

Third, it should be very clear at the beginning of the process what the intent of participation is, what level of participation is needed and communicate it to all stakeholders. Communication throughout the process is key to building trust and achieving transparency.

It is also possible to use the four steps (content preparation, process design, session organisation and session preparation) in designing the virtual workshops. These four stages proposed by the author can be applied to any process of designing co-creative sessions.

## Virtual workshops

During the development work three types of workshops were developed and implemented: a discovery workshop, an evaluative workshop, and a co-designing workshop. Even though they cannot be used exactly as they are designed due to the specific context, parts of it can be used in any other context with no or minor adjustments. For example, the outlines of the workshops can be used as an inspiration or a starting point to design future similar online workshops.

Exploratory workshop can be used at the beginning of a project to identify key barriers and motivations. Evaluative workshop can be used when feedback is required from citizens. The co-designing workshop can be used when developing solutions. However, the exact activities need to be adjusted to the specific topic of the project. Moreover, some of the activities used in these sessions can be used in other contexts as well, for example the reflection activity of I like, I learned, I wish.

## Prototypes

The aim of the co-creative process was to involve public servants and immigrants who would be involved in the design of solutions helping them in participatory policy making. The solutions that were chosen by participants of the workshops and partly co-created were three posters. These posters are not final solutions but rather a tangible version of what the final solution might be. There are many questions that still need to be answered: Where will these posters be used? How will they be translated to different languages? Who will update the content of the posters?

Taking into consideration that they are not final products they can be either developed further or they can be used as a starting point to create other solutions that would improve participatory immigration policy making. They can also be used as a source of ideas and inspiration to any public stakeholder who wishes to involve immigrants by examining the different options for getting in touch with immigrants (online channels) or by looking at specific ways of involving immigrants depending on the level of participation that is intended.

They can be used as boundary objects or as shared spaces (Star 2010) to continue the conversation around immigrants' participation for example by showing them to relevant stakeholders and gather their feedback or when talking about immigrants' participation in the public sector and pointing out at what is possible and immigrants' point of view on policy making.

The prototypes are also an example how complex information can be simplified and how insights generated through a participatory process (e.g., immigrants' needs) can be used to create useful tools that aid public servants. Artefacts (e.g., tools) that can be used by policy makers create shared understanding (e.g., by using frameworks) and a point of reference that can be used across the public sector. They can be an add on to guidelines or other manuals prepared by governments or EU for increasing participation in the public sector.

### **Process model**

Author has previous experience in teaching design thinking in the public sector and has noticed that the use of the Double Diamond to explain the design process to non-designers often creates more confusion than clarity and sets misleading expectations of a linear process. Therefore, there is a need for the creation of a new visualisation that would better communicate design process in practice but that it is still rooted in existing design theories.

The proposed design process 'spiral loops' was created with the thought of applying design in contexts with non-designers as tangible object to guide discussions, set expectations and create a shared understanding. With the growing popularity of design courses at universities (Grönman and Lindfors 2021) and in business, design is being quickly spread. Therefore, it is important to develop models that will help beginners understand the dynamic nature of design (processes). The author foresees two contexts of use of the proposed process: by teachers and others when they explain the design process to teach about design (thinking), and by design professionals when they work with their clients.

The model would need to be reviewed by other designers and put into practice to test its value and practical use. As this process has not been shown to any non-designers neither has it been used by the author, it is not yet evident that it improves the current visualisations of the process. Therefore, further research and development of the visualisation is needed.

### **5.3 Ethical and privacy considerations**

Ethical principles of research rely on transparency and respect of the author towards participants and other researchers (Arene 2019). During interviews, participants were orally informed about the context of the interview and how the information they will provide will be used, that any of the data gathered through the interviews will not be linked to their identity, that they have the right to refuse answering any question and that they can stop participating at any moment during the interview (Kohonen 2019). Furthermore, none of the

interviews were recorded to create a safer environment for the participants. In the thesis the only person that is mentioned with their full name and surname has confirmed and given the right to do so to the author of the thesis. During the work with the Ministry of the Interior there were no documents, or any other data revealed to the author that would be associated with security risks (Kohonen 2019). For virtual workshops all participants were informed upfront about the context and purpose of these sessions. During the application process for virtual workshops name and surname was collected but the data was not used in any other way than for identification of participants at the beginning of the sessions. The participants were informed that their personal names will not be used or mentioned anywhere outside the workshops to which they all consented at the beginning of each workshop. Their personal data is stored in emails and in an online application that is password protected and can only be accessed by the author. The data that is stored in email correspondences and data stored online will be deleted after the author has finished with her studies.

The author followed Arene's checklist (Arene 2019) and confirms that all ethical and privacy issues were considered and that there are no violations with the work of this thesis.

#### 5.4 Author's reflection on participation in the Finnish public sector

The Finnish public sector recognizes the importance of participation. The Finnish Strategy for Public Governance Renewal (Ministry of Finance 2020) was co-created by involving various administrative sectors, municipalities, civil society, researchers, and other stakeholders including the Finnish Ministry of the Interior. Participation was recognised to have an important role in strengthening cooperation between different stakeholders, building a common understanding, (Ministry of Finance 2020) yet what is written on paper does not necessarily reflect the practice. There is a lot of interest in participation in documents prepared by the public sector (OECD 2001, OECD 2021, Ministry of Finance 2020) but most often at the level of informing and consulting.

There is a gap between what is written in various public documents (OECD 2021a; Ministry of Justice n.d.; Ministry of Finance 2020; OECD 2001) and what is the actual situation in the Finnish public sector. It was stated by public servants that joined the virtual workshops during the development work that they wish to increase public participation and involve other public servants in such processes, but that participation (in policy-making) is perceived as 'nice to have' and not as an integral part of the policy-making process. This confirms observations by OECD (2021a) that application of participatory methods varies between ministries and authors' experience working in the Slovenian public sector.

The biggest challenge in participation is not a lack of approaches or methods but will and systemic mechanisms to implement it beyond one-way participation. Because participation in the public sector is inherently political (White 1996) it will always be influenced by the political interests of the political parties. It often happens that organisational efficiency is put before citizens' needs (Bason 2016, chap. 10). Therefore, it needs to be institutionalised and legally binding, which is not the current case in Finland (OECD 2021a).

When participants are true co-creators in a participatory process, they also need resources that enable them to do so. An important aspect of participation is that the public officials are paid and have dedicated resources for a participatory process, whereas participants usually depend on their own existing resources. Therefore, for co-creation to truly take place, all involved need appropriate conditions for participation (Arnstein 1969). When there is no obvious gain or motivation for participation, it is more difficult to engage participants.

It is easy to find reasons or excuses why participation is difficult in the public sector, time being the most prominent one. Yet the author believes that it is not a problem of lack of time but a lack of priority. To put it in the words of the famous song Circle of Life from the Lion King (Lyrics.com 2022) that there is always: "... more to do that can ever be done.", decisions are needed to prioritize what is more important. If European Union and its countries truly want to achieve a more participatory public sector, then participation needs to be prioritised.

Even though there is increased tendency towards digital participation it is not fully inclusive and can even increase social inequality (OECD 2021a). Therefore, digital participation should not be the only way governments are involving citizens, rather it should be combined with traditional participatory approaches. Those who are leading participatory processes should be experienced in designing such processes and using participatory methods (OECD 2021a).

### **Opportunities for increasing immigrants' participation in policy making**

During the implementation of the participatory process, it was clear that immigrants want to be involved in policy making although they don't know how to get involved and fear that they have nothing to contribute. Similarly, like in political elections, the most common reason stated for not participating was the feeling of powerlessness and belief that one's voice does not have any influence (OECD 2001). In order to bridge this distrust, public servants need to regularly communicate how immigrants can participate, how their participation influences policy making and what were past benefits of participation, how immigrants' input influenced policies (OECD 2021a).

If public servants are to advance participation (of immigrants) in the public sector they need to learn about participatory methods and processes (OECD 2021a). There is not a lack of approaches or methods but interest to use them in practice. The best way to utilise participatory approaches and for public servants to learn how to involve immigrants in policy making is through their own experience. Instead of creating new toolkits, methods and guidelines for participation which is common in the public sector (Ministry of Finance 2020), public servants need to be involved in as many participatory processes themselves and learn through experience (Tracey and Baaki 2013) to gain procedural and tacit knowledge (Mumba 1989) that is needed for such processes.

Finally, it is important to make information on participation in policy making easily accessible to immigrants. Accessibility not only by using plain language but putting information where immigrants are. This was clear during the research phase of the development work and emphasised during the co-designing workshop with immigrants. To bring policy making closer to immigrants and their everyday lives, governments can attend events, use appropriate digital channels, or involve other organisations (e.g., universities, trade unions) to share information on policy making. Ministry of the Interior is a great example of this as they have already done this by organising a workshop with immigrants at one of Finland's family festivals in 2021 (Salgado 2021).

Increasing immigrants' participation in policy making is a long-term endeavour that needs time and continuous work. There are many aspects that can increase the likelihood of successfully involving immigrants including top-down prioritisation of public participation, allocated resources (mainly time), competent professionals for designing and facilitating participation and nation-wide institutionalisation of such approaches that would systemically support any participatory process in the public sector.

## 5.5 Final thoughts

This study argues that design is a useful and appropriate approach for developing participatory processes in the public sector. The development case of this thesis demonstrates how virtual workshops can be adjusted to any purpose or goal during a participatory process. It shows the versatility of design and designers who can take on different roles during a co-creative process. In this thesis, some of the key barriers are identified that need to be overcome for a successful online participatory process. However, it is also emphasised that if designed and facilitated properly, participatory sessions can not only generate useful co-created outputs but contribute to learning and changing attitudes towards the public sector, immigrants, and public participation.

With the growing number of governments and public servants adopting participatory approaches like design there is not a lack of methods but a lack of commitment. Participatory processes, methods and tools are not enough on their own to achieve any meaningful change. Involving many stakeholders that often have opposing views and language barriers is a complex but rewarding approach to solving complex societal issues. There are obvious benefits to involving citizens in policy making from the start. Still many challenges pertain and without deliberate planning and intentional design, participatory processes can make achieve the opposite of the desired effects.

If participation is understood as the foundation of democracy (Arnstein 1969), then its understanding needs to be broadened beyond voting. There are many unused opportunities for greater involvement of citizens and active participation. There is greater knowledge in groups than in individuals and there are opportunities to leverage co-creation in our society.

Specifically, when bringing actors with different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge and skills, issues are being approached holistically and results are more likely to effectively solve the problem. To improve our lives, we will need to learn how to overcome barriers to co-creation and reap the benefits of collective wisdom.

If governments really want to increase and improve public participation, then they will have to make it a priority and put it at the core of governmental activities and processes. This way public participation can provide long-lasting improvements of the relationship between the public sector and citizens, successfully meeting complex challenges and involving everyone to actively participate in the (co-)creation of a brighter future.

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for semi structured interviews.

### **Guidelines for semi structured interviews**

1. Please introduce yourself
2. What is your role? How is it connected to participatory immigration policy making?
3. What is your experience in participatory policy making?
4. What is your experience in involving immigrants in policy making processes?
5. What barriers or challenges have you noticed or experienced in the context of participation in policy making?
6. Can you share an example where participation was successful?
7. Who should I talk to to learn more about the topic?

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (screenshots from Airtable)

### Participatory Immigration Policy Making

This is a research questionnaire prepared for a Master thesis at Laurea University in Helsinki, Finland. I am exploring the topic of Participation in Immigration Policy Making in collaboration with the Finnish Ministry of the Interior ([intermin.fi](http://intermin.fi))

Your data will be used only for reserach purposes and will not be shared with anyone else but the researcher (Ana Kyra Bekš).



Thank you for taking your time,  
Ana Kyra

Name \*

How old are you? \*

Where do you live? \*

- In a city
- In the suburbs
- On the countryside
- Other

How long have you been living in Finland? \*

Country of birth \*

Where were you born?

What citizenship(s) do you have? \*

In what languages can you communicate? \*

## Occupation \*

- Student
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Self-employment / Freelancer
- Project-based work
- Unemployed
- Other

## Do you have children? \*

- Yes
- No

## What religious family do you belong to or identify yourself most close to? \*

- Christian
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Other
- I am not religious

## You would say your political views are... \*

- More conservative
- More liberal
- I don't want to say

## Have you ever participated in any of the following events? \*

Choose the ones that you have participated in.

- signed a petition
- offered feedback to any government organisation
- voted for political officials
- attended a protest
- attended a flash mob
- participated in a government survey
- participated in a political campaign

## Which devices do you own? \*

- Smartphone
- Mobile phone (non-smart)
- Desktop / Portable computer (Laptop)

What do you use your smartphone for? \*

- Learning / School
- Work / Job
- Entertainment (playing games, watching movies or shows)
- Connecting with friends
- Informing myself (eg. reading news)
- Create content (photo, video)
- I don't have a Smartphone

What do you use your Computer for? \*

- Learning / School
- Work / Job
- Entertainment (playing games, watching movies or shows)
- Connecting with friends
- Informing myself (eg. reading news)
- Create content (photo, video)
- I don't have a computer

Which tools/apps are you comfortable working with? \*

Being comfortable means that you have a basic understanding of how to use it.

- Email (for example Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook,...)
- Social media (for example LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter,...)
- Messaging (for example Messenger, Slack, Discord, WhatsApp,...)
- Videoconference tools (for example Zoom, Hangouts, MS Teams,...)
- Collaboration tools (for example Mural, Miro, Figma,...)

Have you ever offered feedback online? \*

Some examples: A review in an online shop, rating of an app)

- Yes, many times
- Yes, a few times
- No, never
- I don't remember

Would you be interested to participate in an online workshop about policy participation? \*

This 2h online workshop will happen at the end of February and will be about finding opportunities for policy making participation.

- Yes, I'm very interested
- Maybe, I need more information to decide
- No, I am not interested

Please leave your email if you would like to be contacted for the online workshop.

I will use your email only for the purpose of my studies and will not show it or give it to anyone else.

Appendix 3: Comparison of workshop activities based on three sections



Appendix 4: Prototype 1: Participatory immigration policy

# Participatory immigration policy

## how to include immigrants in policy design



### DISCLAIMER

This poster is a prototype. Its intention is to stimulate discussions on involving immigrants in immigration policy design. Content on this poster needs to be further developed and completed with more data. The poster was developed as a part of a master thesis case study at Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki.

### Ideas for including immigrants if you want to...

<b>Inform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a <b>newsletter</b></li> <li>• Put updated information on your <b>website</b></li> <li>• Create <b>e-mail lists</b> and send information via emails</li> <li>• Put an <b>article in a newspaper</b></li> <li>• Post a <b>blog</b> on the Ministry's website</li> <li>• Create a post on <b>social media</b></li> <li>• Organise a <b>webinar</b></li> <li>• Host a <b>panel discussion</b></li> <li>• Create <b>posters</b> and <b>flyers</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Promise to participants:</i> <b>We will share information with you.</b></p> <p><i>Participation goal:</i> Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</p>
<b>Consult</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>International panel</b></li> <li>• visit an <b>event</b> (e.g. Koliibri, Village world)</li> <li>• use <b>online platforms</b> (e.g., Otakantaa.fi)</li> <li>• organise a <b>seminar</b></li> <li>• create a <b>questionnaire</b></li> <li>• conduct <b>interviews</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Promise to participants:</i> <b>We will acknowledge your concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on your input.</b></p> <p><i>Participation goal:</i> To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</p>
<b>Involve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with <b>Advisory Board for ethnic relations</b> (ETNO)</li> <li>• create <b>visualisations</b></li> <li>• facilitate <b>online workshops</b> and <b>meetings</b></li> <li>• organise <b>focus groups</b></li> <li>• create <b>scenarios</b> and <b>visions of the future</b></li> <li>• create <b>citizens' panels</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Promise to participants:</i> <b>We will include your input and give you feedback on results.</b></p> <p><i>Participation goal:</i> To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p>
<b>Collaborate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organise <b>co-design workshops</b> with public officials and immigrants</li> <li>• <b>prioritize ideas</b> with stakeholders</li> <li>• create visualisations and <b>simple prototypes</b></li> <li>• collaborate with a <b>panel of users</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Promise to participants:</i> <b>We will work on your ideas, advice and recommendations.</b></p> <p><i>Participation goal:</i> To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</p>
<b>Empower</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create <b>experiments</b></li> <li>• <b>prototype</b> solutions</li> <li>• <b>offer resources</b> for creating solutions</li> <li>• <b>involve users in decision-making</b> moments</li> <li>• <b>offer knowledge</b> and <b>skills</b> for solving challenges</li> </ul>	<p><i>Promise to participants:</i> <b>We will implement what you decide.</b></p> <p><i>Participation goal:</i> To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</p>

<h4>What do immigrants need?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <b>regular updates</b> on intended future policies</li> <li>2 some kind of <b>response or feedback</b> on their participation</li> <li>3 <b>steps that happen</b> when immigrants participate in policy making</li> <li>4 <b>faces and names</b> of policy makers</li> <li>5 <b>a representative</b> of each immigrant group</li> <li>6 <b>a place</b> where I could leave feedback</li> <li>7 someone to talk to who has some kind of <b>migration experience</b></li> </ul>	<h4>What can immigrants offer?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 feedback on policies</li> <li>2 variety of experiences</li> <li>3 different perspectives on a topic</li> <li>4 access to other immigrants</li> <li>5 connection to different cultures and insights on how to approach them</li> <li>6 "a dose of reality"</li> </ul>
<h4>What motivates immigrants to participate?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 I am <b>informed</b> about immigration policy process</li> <li>2 I know <b>how</b> my participation could <b>help</b> in a <b>particular situation</b></li> <li>3 I <b>see</b> other people in <b>my community</b> participating.</li> <li>4 I <b>trust</b> policy makers</li> <li>5 I <b>care</b> about the topic or have a particular problem related to the topic</li> <li>6 I can have a <b>direct, positive impact</b> on other immigrants</li> <li>7 I <b>align</b> with the party or government</li> <li>8 I <b>see</b> how my opinion matters</li> <li>9 I can <b>contribute</b> to a positive change</li> </ul>	<h4>What makes it difficult for immigrants to participate?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 I am intimidated by policy making</li> <li>2 I don't know where or how to get involved</li> <li>3 I don't have time to participate</li> <li>4 I don't know anything about policy making</li> <li>5 I don't know how I could contribute to policy making</li> <li>6 I think that participation will demand a lot of my (free) time</li> </ul> <p>How might we <b>increase immigrants' participation</b> in immigration policy making?</p> <p>By <b>increasing motivators</b> and <b>decreasing barriers</b>, policy makers can increase the number of participants and thus improve future immigration policies.</p>



Appendix 5: Prototype 2: Digital participatory channels and methods.

## Digital participation in immigration policy design

### Overview of digital channels

**DISCLAIMER**  
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	Participatory platforms	Social media	Questionnaires / surveys	Phone call	Online workshops	Online interviews	Opinion polls
<b>Short description</b>	Online participatory platforms are specially designed for participation. They enable proposition, evaluation and voting of ideas with direct contact to public servants.	Social media are online interactive platforms that focus on communication between its users. They include review sites, media sharing sites, community blogs or discussions sites, sharing economy sites or a mix of sites described above.	Questionnaires or surveys collect information using different types of questions (open, closed) and scales. They can be digital or physical.	Phone call is a direct call between two people, usually a public official and an immigrant. It can be used for doing online surveys or to establish first contact.	Online workshops are facilitated sessions that include different types of activities for participants (e.g. discussions, co-creative activities, presentations).	Online interviews are usually done through a videoconferencing application. Additional apps and different types of media can be used during the conversation. Additional options like screen sharing can be used.	Short surveys that offer pre-defined answers to a question.
<b>Use it to...</b>	Use this channel to get specific feedback on concepts, prototypes or proposals.	Good for reaching a wide audience or interest groups. Beyond informing or sharing information, these platforms usually provide spaces for discussions.	Good for detailed and extensive feedback, for gathering personal information, for asking many questions.	When you need to talk to a particular person, when you need to contact people who might not have access to the internet.	Good for co-creative activities, connecting participants and complex discussions. Useful for larger groups.	When doing in-depth interviews, good for gathering additional information (e.g. video).	They are used when details are not relevant, for immediate feedback, when there is a lack of time for analysis.
<b>Challenges</b>	Be aware of complicated or technical language and what knowledge is needed for immigrants to participate.	Reach depends on the number of followers or members of the group, little or no censorship of content.	They need to be well designed to get useful information.	It is difficult to document data (e.g. record the conversation).	They demand some basic skills for using videoconferencing and other collaborative applications. Time consuming and need to be facilitated.	Recruiting participants can take a lot of time.	Information gathered is very limited.

### Immigrants' feedback on online participatory channels

Participatory platforms	Social media	Questionnaires	Phone call	Online workshops	Online interviews	Opinion polls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Easily accessible</li> <li>✔ Plenty of information can be presented at the same place</li> <li>✔ Good way to access information</li> <li>✔ If it is participatory, it can reach many people</li> <li>✔ Gives a better idea of the proposal.</li> <li>✔ Combination of proposing by citizens and voting up/down feels comprehensive</li> <li>✘ Unfair if it directs to a certain community</li> <li>✘ Too much information</li> <li>✘ Relevant information might be scattered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ big audience (lots of users)</li> <li>✔ modern and well known way of interaction</li> <li>✔ Different social media can get to diverse profiles of people</li> <li>✘ one doesn't have an account</li> <li>✘ Information get lost easily after other posts</li> <li>✘ Too open for any types of people</li> <li>✘ Not 100% trustworthy</li> <li>✘ They are not anonymous responses</li> <li>✘ Generation gap?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Easier to write an extensive feedback/opinion</li> <li>✔ Easy and informative for opinion measuring</li> <li>✔ Depending on the questionnaire it can be fast</li> <li>✔ Feels more formal, like will actually be used</li> <li>✔ Quick and easily accessible</li> <li>✘ They are a bit overdone</li> <li>✘ Quite long, many questions (sometimes unrelated to the topic)</li> <li>✘ one can be "tired" to fulfill hundreds of feedback questionnaires etc.</li> <li>✘ Questions can be misunderstood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Personal input</li> <li>✔ For those who don't know how to use a computer or a smartphone</li> <li>✔ Can feel like a casual conversation</li> <li>✘ Hard to think quickly of a contribution</li> <li>✘ Can be bias due to time of the day</li> <li>✘ Old fashioned and expensive for the organization</li> <li>✘ Phone call phobia</li> <li>✘ can be considered as a "sales call" and left without response.</li> <li>✘ time must be allocated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Networking and accessing more info</li> <li>✔ Hear other people's opinion</li> <li>✔ good option for co-creation</li> <li>✔ Allows participants to ask/clarity</li> <li>✘ Sometimes it's hard to think of an answer right away</li> <li>✘ Time consuming</li> <li>✘ Technical problems can take away time</li> <li>✘ "safe space" is a must.</li> <li>✘ only for digitally native ppl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Personal input</li> <li>✔ gives a feeling that ones opinion really matters</li> <li>✔ Allow for the participant to expand on answers</li> <li>✘ There feels like a power thing</li> <li>✘ Can be lengthy</li> <li>✘ technical problems can take away time</li> <li>✘ time consuming process</li> <li>✘ time must be allocated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Fast</li> <li>✔ Understandable and quick questions</li> <li>✔ You can get many people to answer</li> <li>✘ Results can be rigged with use of spam bots/false accounts</li> <li>✘ Not much choice for answers, may not reflect entirely one opinion</li> <li>✘ Usually quick answer, which often generalise</li> </ul>

Appendix 6: Prototype 3: Learn more about immigration policy

# Learn more about immigration policy & how you can contribute to a better future

**DISCLAIMER**  
 This poster is a prototype. It's intention is to stimulate discussions on involving immigrants in immigration policy design. Content on this poster needs to be further developed and completed with more data. The poster was developed as a part of a master thesis case study at Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki.

What is immigration policy?

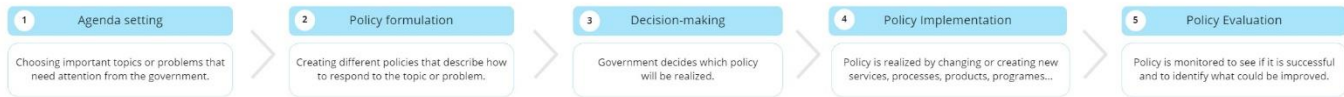
**Immigration policy is a government document that describes how to work with immigrants and what rules apply to immigration.**

Examples of policies: laws, regulations, procedures, administrative actions, incentives, voluntary practices.

Why should you care?

**Policies influence all services and procedures that you experience when you move to Finland. Your participation in the policy making process can improve your living in Finland and experience of other immigrants.**

How is policy created?



## How can you participate?

Share your experience

**Finnish Immigration Service Points**  
 migri@migri.fi / 0295 430 431  
<https://migri.fi/en/service-points>

<b>Helsinki</b> Kauppatori 10 00700 Helsinki Mon-Fri 08-16.15	<b>Lahti</b> Kirkkokatu 12 D 15140 Lahti Mon, Wed, Fri 08-16.15	<b>Tampere</b> Tekniikankatu 1 33720 Tampere Mon, Wed, Fri 08-16.15	<b>Raisio</b> Address City Opening hours
<b>Lappeenranta</b> Address City Opening hours	<b>Vaasa</b> Address City Opening hours	<b>Kuopio</b> Address City Opening hours	<b>Oulu</b> Address City Opening hours
<b>Rovaniemi</b> Address City Opening hours	<b>The Åland Islands</b> Address City Opening hours	<b>International House Helsinki</b> Address City Opening hours	

Offer suggestions

**Websites for participation**

<b>Otakantaa</b> for enhancing the mutual dialogue and participation of citizens, organizations and authorities. <a href="http://www.otakantaa.fi">www.otakantaa.fi</a>	<b>Demokratia</b> explore democracy services <a href="http://www.demokratia.fi">www.demokratia.fi</a>
<b>Puoluekisteri</b> for party registration and collecting declarations of support. <a href="http://puoluekisteri.fi">puoluekisteri.fi</a>	<b>Kansalaisaloite</b> for raising initiatives and support initiatives that others have raised. <a href="http://www.kansalaisaloite.fi">www.kansalaisaloite.fi</a>
<b>Invånarinitiativ</b> for municipal residents to submit support and follow-up initiatives to the municipalities. <a href="http://www.kuntalaisaloite.fi">www.kuntalaisaloite.fi</a>	

Learn more about policy

<b>NGO's</b> <b>Maniheli</b> Is a network which includes over a hundred member organisations that support immigrants, integration and social inclusion and advance equity. Kuortaneenkatu 1, 7.krs. 00520 Helsinki +358 (0)44 717 0225 <a href="https://maniheli.fi/en/">https://maniheli.fi/en/</a>	<b>Universities</b> <b>For exiting and future students</b> If you are or want to study, you can contact your university for more information on how you can improve Finnish immigration policy. List of universities: <a href="https://www.studyinfinland.fi/universities">https://www.studyinfinland.fi/universities</a>
<b>Employers</b> <b>Do you have a job?</b> Your employer can give you more information on how you can participate in Finnish immigration policy making process. Need to find a job? <a href="https://www.businessfinland.fi/">https://www.businessfinland.fi/</a>	<b>Municipality</b> <b>Your city will help you!</b> Contact your local municipality for more information on immigration policy and how you can contribute. A list of all municipalities: <a href="https://www.localfinland.fi/finnish-municipalities-and-regions">https://www.localfinland.fi/finnish-municipalities-and-regions</a>

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