Co Creating / The future SUBURB
Abstract
This thesis introduces a participatory and innovative design approach, more specifically the Creative Corner co-design method. The intent of the thesis is firstly to present the invented method. Secondly this thesis analyses the method and discusses the findings, such as the characteristics and attributes that are particularly necessary to be addressed, to support the participants as well as the designers in the creation of a pleasurable co-design experience.

The Creative corner method was invented to inspire people to co-design. Further the method was thought to aid in eliciting and collecting valuable knowledge owned by the collaborating persons. The thesis is based on the conducted co-design activities in the suburb 2072 project, which was part of the Aalto University 365wellbeing project and World Design Capital 2012 city of Helsinki initiative. The aim of the project, was to initiate ways of improving the well being factor in the context of the future suburb of Mellunkylä district of Helsinki. Local inhabitants were thus involved in the design process to co-create and vision about their future local living environment. Finally, the outcome of the project formulated into optimistic trend forecasts and a Scenario, imagining the suburban future.
This thesis could not have been completed without support from many persons. Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Kirsikka Vaajakallio for her patience and for always helping me out with my thesis challenges and for supervising me on the methodological approach and giving me new perspectives to my work. I acknowledge Mariana Salgado and thank the stuff of Media Lab, Pipsa, Rasmus and Anna for providing guidance throughout my long journey in the Media Lab.

Special thanks go to Minna Piirainen for her continuous motivating and structural commenting. I acknowledge and thank Jung-Joo Lee who provided feedback on the early stage of the thesis and suggested useful bibliography for my work.

I would like to thank Heidi Paavilainen, Katja Soini and Niamh Ni Mohr for commenting and providing useful co-design and trend forecasting related material. Further, I would like to thank my fellow students, Elina, Carmen and all the other people participating in the Suburb 2072 project, contributing to the co-design experience.

My thanks also go to my friends for inspiring me. Along, I wish to thank my family for continuously encouraging me to carry on with my thesis.

Finally, I sincerely wish to thank Marko, who has always been motivating and supporting me enormously in my design and research activities.
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Recently, many of the late 1960’s buildings in the suburban areas of the city of Helsinki are reaching a stage, where they should either be renovated or demolished. Luoma-Halkola (2010, p.9) suggests a complete revitalisation of the suburban context and its social environment, since mere renovations of the buildings would not be enough in the competition of being attractive to the future suburban inhabitants. According to Fuad-Luke (2012, pp.106-109) future cities, and suburbs alike, can sustain only by satisfying the collective benefits and the surrounding bio-region. In the context of such knowledge, the Suburb 2072 project aimed at initiating and generating new ideas, perspectives and positive expectations for well being for the future decision making within the city development.
suburb

Figure 01
timeline

project and thesis

Figure 02
Background

The following chapters will introduce the background for my thesis and the aim of the conducted case study. In the beginning of year 2012, I was participating a Trend Forecasting study module and its related Suburb 2072 project. The Suburb 2072 project was part of Aalto University 365wellbeing project and the World Design Capital 2012 city of Helsinki initiative. Hereinafter referred to as WDC. During the specified period of time, myself and a group of 12 other design students from Aalto University spent a couple of intensive months in Mellunkylä area which is a suburb of Helsinki. The suburb 2072 project consisted of four independent group works which all aimed at forecasting the future development of the suburban surroundings. In the scope of the project, the group works were divided into specific seasonal themes: winter, spring, summer and autumn. The usage of seasonal themes were thought to function as inspiration and help in staying focused around one distinct theme throughout the project. All forecasting activities were carried out by qualitative research and more specifically by applying a participatory and innovative design approach using Co-design methods as part of the design process. The research activities conducted within the suburb 2072 project and more specifically the Spring group work, of which I was a team member, hence formulates the framework for this thesis.

The aim of the Suburb 2072 project

The suburb 2072 project aimed at increasing the possibilities for the suburban district in becoming recognised in the headlines as Helsinki’s best suburb by 2072. Not only because of its excellent and powerful economy, but due to its concern about the infrastructure, well being in society as well as political and cultural achievements. Alongside, as defined by the course instructors Soini et al (2012) this implied that Helsinki would be regarded as a reputable metropolitan city, awarded
with an Alpha+ Global City mark. Such a status is characterised and measured by a few distinct criteria from an economical, political, cultural and infrastructural perspective and is considered both beneficial and desired (Wikipedia, 2012). From Helsinki’s standpoint a Global City mark would for instance signify an increased quality of the city’s life standards, by incorporating notable international educational, cultural, and political institutions. Furthermore, the city would profile itself as the head quarter site for multinational corporations. Along with the growing attention of the region, Mellunkylä suburb would become known for its excellent suburban atmosphere, living environment and functional advanced transportation system (Soini et al., 2012).

Informed by this understanding, the aim of the suburb 2072 project was to create optimistic trend forecasts and future visions that would inspire a broad range of stakeholders. In addition, the intention was to produce a distinct set of scenarios, imagining Mellunkylä’s future. The scenario approach was adopted, since future scenarios are widely used to understand emerging and fading societal trends and to help designers in the creation of options for improvement (Marttila, 2011). According to Fuad Luke (2012) ordinary people want to participate in the planning and development of their neighbourhood, thus design as a factor in solving societal issues is of high importance. With the recognition of such information, the project aimed at gathering a broad range of collaborators. In fact, the Suburb 2072 project mobilised around 400 participants, during the complete timeframe of its activeness. A network of local inhabitants, city administrators, experts, entrepreneurs, service producers, companies as well as various projects was incorporated in the process (Soini et al., 2012). Finally, it needs to be mentioned that around a fourth of the project participants were actively involved during the whole phase of the project. Further, the results of the project were distributed through various media channels, in seminars, internet, printed media, social media as well as radio broadcasting (Soini et al., 2012).
This thesis developed out of my deep interest in design research, trend forecasting as well as sustainable design. Hence, I am applying design techniques, methods and tools related to each of the mentioned discourses. For this thesis I have familiarised myself with literature particularly on innovative design methodologies, co-design, trend forecasting, social innovation and sustainable design. The motivation for this thesis, is to approach the design and research activities executed by myself and my fellow students, which are also referred to as the 'designers' and the collaborating people who I mostly refer to as 'participants', 'locals', 'inhabitants' or 'people'. In this thesis I am addressing the experiences I gained in the suburb 2072 project in my role as a designer and design researcher and a team member of the Spring season group work, which is also referred to as 'the project' or 'team'. 
Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into several chapters, approaching two main aspects in order to be fulfilled. Namely, the methodological approach and the pragmatical design case. In the first part of the thesis is discussed the qualitative design research and more specifically the applied innovative design methodologies. Further, I explain the method and toolkit invented for the concrete design case. Additionally, the context of the final produced Scenario is introduced. In the latter part of the thesis is introduced the implications drawn from the findings and analyses of the conducted research. Finally, there will be given a comprehensive summary of the thesis and a proposal for further potential studies.

Main Objective (Why, What, How)

In this chapter is introduced and explained the main objectives of the thesis, particularly the why, what and how aspects.

**Why** - As described in the previous chapters, the aim of the Suburb 2072 project was to initiate ways of improving the well being factor in the context of the future suburb.

**What** - To manage in the undertaken group work, we had to involve the local people in the design process. We needed to find out about their needs, thoughts, attitudes, values and dreams in relation to their lifestyles and living environment.

**How** – Together with my fellow students I invented a co-design method, the Creative Corner, including specific tools to elicit and collect the valuable knowledge owned by the locals.
However, based on my analyzes conducted for the purpose of my thesis, it was revealed that the toolkit alone was not enough in supporting the designers or the participants in the creation of a pleasurable co-design experience. Therefore, I needed to approach the holistic nature of the process, by analyzing my experiences gained during the Creative Corner co-design sessions. Correspondingly these characteristics appeared to be essential features of the paradigm. I have divided the uncovered characteristics into two categories of implicit and explicit attributes. These attributes which formulate the main objective of my thesis, will be discussed further in chapter nine.

Research Questions

To address the objectives of my thesis I attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the method and tools developed and applied in the co-design process of the Suburb 2072 project?

2. What were the emerging characteristics and attributes particularly necessary to be addressed, to support the designers and the participants in the creation of a pleasurable co-design experience?
Positioning the Thesis

The qualitative design research discourse is a widely acknowledged practice, compromising of a diversity of methods for involving people in the design process. Ho and Lee (2012) divide the design topology into three distinct sections:

- Design for people
- Design with people
- Design by people

This thesis and the invented Creative corner method are positioned within the 'Design with people section'. The principles of such collaborative and participatory design attempts will thus be elaborated in more detail in the forthcoming chapters. To start with, a brief introduction will be given to each of the above mentioned practices.
positioning
of the thesis and creative
corner method

Figure 03

design for people

design with people

design by people
Design for People

Sanders and Stappers (2008a, p. 6) argue that the 'Design for people' implies an action where designers query for and capture data about the customers' behaviour by interviewing and observing them in their natural context. This specific approach is often referred to as precise and strict design methodologies intending to support designers in developing usable design solutions for potential customers (Mattelmäki & Visser, 2011, p. 3). From this perspective the approach is not actively involving people in the creative process, rather people become passive objects spoken for by designers and researchers. Whilst, in collective design attempts, such as 'design with people' the customers are involved in the idea generation.

Design with People

The 'design with people' approach, suggests that people not trained in design are regarded as partners' and hereby act as active participants involved in the idea generation and the creative development of the design process (E. B. N. Sanders & Stappers, 2008a). Westerlund (2009) and Hanington (2003, p. 15) even believe that the results of engaging people in the co-design efforts will provide a richer outcome than by merely applying another less collaborative practice.

In order to gain an holistic understanding of the design problem of the Suburb 2072 project, it was essential to involve the local people in the participatory design process by applying a 'design with people' approach. Participatory design and more particularly co-design methods attempt to encourage design empathy by applying a sensitive manner, and understanding the concrete situation and feelings of the users, without judging (Visser & Kouprie, 2009, p.2). Hence, the approach could be
seen as two directional, since it requires an equal dialogue between the participants of the undertaken design process.

**Design by people**

It has to be mentioned that the 'design by people' approach also termed the creator economy is another expanding establishment within the participatory domain (Kuosma & Koskinen, 2012, p. 30). In this particular attempt people adopt an individual autonomy and authority to freely create their own way of acting during the creative process and thus decide the final outcome of their work (Ho & Lee, 2012). Such a complete democratisation of the design process decreases the difference between producers and consumers (Passera, 2011, p. 117). Driven by the principles of the 'design by people' approach the 'user' empowered environment strongly encourages the 'former consumers' to become prosumers.

Heiskanen, Hyysalo, Kotro and Repo (2010) stress that within the 'user' empowered environments the design or innovation is usually predominantly intended for the creator himself, thus excluding a commercial purpose. On the whole, the 'user' empowered behaviour has initially been represented in open source communities, user innovative communities and everyday hacking activities (Himanen, 2001). In the context of such development, there is already a paradigm shift emerging within the consumer innovation context, by the increase of people creating and modifying products and services for their personal needs (Hippel, Ogawa, & Jong, 2011). Open innovations and creative communities, for example people in the local neighbourhood, organise themselves around a specific everyday topic to improve or solve it (Hillgren, 2012). Nevertheless, It is not my aim describing the 'design by people' model in further detail, since it was not particularly applied in
the design activities carried out in the Suburb 2072 project. I however find it relevant to be remarked in the context of this thesis, since I regard it a potential approach for further studies.

My project contribution and core focus

My contribution to the Creative Corner, covered the ideation, planning the process, facilitating and documenting the findings as well as the creation of the co-design methods together with my two fellow students.

Finally, for the outcome of this thesis I have revisited and elaborated further on the findings of the activities within the Creative Corner. In brief, I have conducted purposeful analyzes of the project contents and correlated results. Drawing my conclusions from the findings, allowed me to answer my main research question.

Limiting the work

In order to focus on the defined aspects in detail and regardless my contribution to various other tasks in the design process, I have limited my discussions to the Creative Corner method. The establishing of the Creative Corner method, the supporting tools and the analysis of my co-design experiences is hence the core of this thesis. I therefore exclude detailed information about other accomplished tasks.
This chapter presents the major methods defining the framework for the qualitative research activities discussed in the thesis. As has been argued in the previous chapter a 'designing with people approach' was adopted in the scope of the project. Such an approach is participatory by nature and applies participatory design principles.
innovative design methods
Participatory Design and Innovative Design Methodologies

Participatory design emerged in Scandinavia in the 1960's and 1970's out of social, political and civil rights movements and was firstly introduced as the workplace democracy movement with the intent to improve employees’ working conditions by offering them better tools for the execution of their work (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012). Hence, participatory design can be seen as a collaborative reflection and social interaction between multiple participants, the designers and the people typically referred to as users, in the design process (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012, pp. 1–8). More strictly speaking, participatory design empowers people to impact on the results of the design by participating in the design process as equal co-designers (Mattelmäki & Visser, 2011). In recent years, growing attention has been devoted to the change in terminology of collective design activities. Consequently, participatory design is these days mostly referred to as co-design or co-creation (E. B. N. Sanders & Stappers, 2008b, p. 3). Especially in the Nordic countries, it is common to refer to participatory design and Co-design as synonyms, due to their shared principles and tools (Mattelmäki & Visser, 2011, p. 3).

The innovative design methods described in this thesis refer to Hanington’s (2003, p. 13) renown nomenclature. Innovative design methods are characterised by both their participatory nature and the allowing for creativity in the design process (Hanington, 2003, pp. 15–16). Further, these methods involve design empathy as a crucial part of the design process (Halmeenmäki, 2012, p. 27). Innovative methods blend creativeness, flexibility and a pragmatic manner, they are thus adaptable to a wide range of circumstances (Lee, Vaajakallio, & Mattelmäki, 2011, p. 2). For the suburb 2072 project a combination of three different innovative design methods, more specifically co-design, trend forecasting and scenario building were thought to be the most suitable approach for the design work. I want to emphasise that it would have been almost
impossible to deal separately with them, since they needed to operate simultaneously. In the following chapter is given a short introduction to each of the three methods applied in the design tasks executed by the Spring team.

**hanington's renowned nomenclature**

Figure 05

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<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Adapted</th>
<th>Innovative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>Observational research</td>
<td>Creative/Participatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Design workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Still, video documentation</td>
<td>Collage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>Ethnographic methods</td>
<td>Card sorting</td>
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<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Video ethnography</td>
<td>Cognitive mapping</td>
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<td>Unobtrusive measures</td>
<td>Beeper studies</td>
<td>Velcro modeling</td>
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<td>Archival methods</td>
<td>Experiential sampling</td>
<td>Visual diaries</td>
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<td>Trace measures</td>
<td>Cultural inventory</td>
<td>Camera studies</td>
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<td>Experiments</td>
<td>Artifact analysis</td>
<td>Document annotations</td>
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For the development of the Creative Corner method, the usage of innovative methods’ principles were applied. According to Hanington (2003, p. 15) innovative design methods are creative by nature and thus suitable for gathering data about peoples’ aspirations.
For the project a combination of three different innovative design methods, more specifically co-design, trend forecasting and scenario building was applied.
Defining Co-design and Co-creation

The first innovative design method applied in the project, the co-design method, has been around at Aalto University School of Art and Design for a decade (Mattelmäki & Visser, 2011, p. 1). This method advocates the belief that people not trained in design, referred to as participant in this thesis, are creative and can play an active role by participating and contributing in the design process (Guerrini, 2010, p. 130). In light of this claim, I tend to agree with Ho and Lee (2012) when they stress that people’s participation in the collaborative design process, should be seen as a methodological necessity. As stated in the previous chapters, the terms co-design and co-creation are often introduced somewhat differently. As a result the terminology often causes confusion among designers.

Mattelmäki & Visser (2011) explain co-design as an activity where the participants act as contributors in the design process, even though they are steered by designers. Others, like Sanders and Stappers (2008b, p. 3) define co-design as a collective creative process ongoing among trained designers, whereas, co-creation means the creative collaboration between designers and participants.

However, in this thesis I intertwine the two terms, co-design and co-creation, to refer to the creative activities performed by a group of two or more people. Hereby, in the scope of the project, the conducted co-design and co-creative activities involved both the designers and local people. In the particular context of the project, co-designing could have been termed 'co-futuring', as described by Fuad-Luke (2012, p.115), due to the attempt to gather various stakeholders to collaborate around the future of the suburb.
Tools, Toolkits and Techniques

There is a considerable repertoire of exciting methods and tools deliberately intended for co-creative activities, applicable for stand alone or joint intents (E. B.-N. Sanders et al., 2010). However, the terminology describing the participatory design practices, such as methods, tools, toolkits, and techniques, are varying and may often be explained inconsistently. Therefore, an overview and clarification would be of importance for the purpose of this thesis. Sanders, Brandt and Binder (2010, p. 2) determine the terminology of the participatory discourse as follows; Tools refer to the components used in the participatory activity, whereas a Toolkit is a collection of tools used in combination with each other. Techniques on the other hand indicate the way the tools and toolkits are put into action. When combined together, tools, toolkits and techniques, hence form what is referred to as a Method.

In summary, the broad amount of design research methods and tools provide an endless opportunity for exploration and innovation in diverse design situations. It even seems to be a common tendency among research communities to actively develop new innovative design methods to enhance the user involvement in the design process (Lee et al., 2011, p. 1).

Mattelmäki (2008, p. 15) points out the generative and playful 'design games' which are used to address the participants engagement in the participatory design process. Other approaches such as the cultural probes, initially applied by Gaver, are intended for evoking responses from the participants by providing tangible probe toolkits for the data collection of insights about people’s values and lives (Gaver, Boucher, Pennington, & Walker, 2004). The probe toolkit which is usually visual or physical by nature, typically include tools such as, diaries, pocket cameras, collages and other materials (Mattelmäki, 2008, p. 3). In general, the outcome of the probes activities are distinguished by their qualitative and subjective characteristics, with the major intent to inspire the designers in their work.
In the next chapter will be explained another innovative design approach applied in the project, namely trend forecasting.

**Trend forecasting**

Future research and more typically trend forecasting is one of many methods in mapping possible future phenomena and directions. In general, future research, can be seen as the basics of trend research and trend forecasting. Trend forecasting attempts to seek for hidden signals that could articulate possible societal changes (Saffo, 2007). For trend forecasters to succeed, both current and past activities of for instance a demography or society need to be observed. Paying attention to repeating tendencies or a specific behavioural pattern is of significance in the forecasting process. Particularly, non-visible behavioural patterns, the so called weak signals are of relevance supporting in forecasting possible emerging trends and lifestyles. According to Saffo (2007, p. 8), implementing weak information is even more veritable than relying on too strong information. Weak signals growing in popularity become what is depicted as a trend, whereas, trends visible only for a short period of time is regarded as a flop or fad (Juselius, 2012). Accordingly, trends are determined by their relevance, longitude and intensity and commonly divided into four main groups classified as Meta trends, Mega trends, Societal trends and Consumer Trends (Moller, 2012).
The word 'Trend' has commonly been used among economists and statisticians, whereas in the end of the twentieth century the expression expanded into the fashion and design industry. In his book, The anatomy of a trend, Vejlgaard (c2008., pp. 6–9) addresses the various explanations the word incorporates within different professions. Hence, within statistics it articulates the direction of a curve, whereas within fashion,

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metatrends</td>
<td>Large-scale and universal trends such as the basic rules of nature and evolutionary laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megatrends</td>
<td>Major changes of societal and technological as well as economical and political conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural trends</td>
<td>Express the sense of life and the human desires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer trends</td>
<td>Occur parallel to market cycles, societal change as well as to changes regarding products and fashions.</td>
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design and style alike it reflects the possible product development of for example clothing, car industry or home furnishing. Trend sociologist on the other hand apply the expression when implying a changing phenomena, process or inclination in society.

In the next chapter will be presented the introduced trends and trend forecast approach.

Mega trends and Lifestyle trends

The Suburb 2072 project investigated both societal lifestyle trends and mega trends in the creation of the future scenarios. Further, in the context of the scenario building, it was of importance to spot weak signals that could lead to new societal phenomena. In particular, the evidence where the emerging societal lifestyle trends originate from and where they may head were of relevance for the work.

A mega trend identifies major economical, political, cultural and technological shifts which influence different aspects of society (Vejlgaard, c2008., pp. 21–22). Larsen (2006) describes a mega trend as a source of knowledge in defining probable futures. Regardless their uncertain nature, a mega trend always reveal the present and future to come. Thus, mega trends are especially suitable as base in strategic and scenario work.

According to Vejlgaard (c2008) mega trends tend to be hard to predict, however when they occur they have long lasting impacts on society. Due to the great forces they empower, they may last over the coming 10-15 years (Larsen, 2006). Vejlgaard (2008) points out that in previous times trends used to emerge very slowly, due to the fact that the pace of society as such was slower. Moreover people did not have access to the network, communication and transportation systems of today. However, changes in trends, such as style and taste have always been
existing, even as far back as in the Middle Ages. However, in the post-industrial and (post) modern society, the duration period of different styles have just shortened along with the globalization, the mobility of capital and work as well as the behavioral change of the consumers (Vejlgaard, c2008).

As has been argued, forecasting both existing and emerging local and global lifestyle trends helped us envision possible states that could shape the future of Mellunkylä suburban area. Backhaus, Breukers, Mont, Paukovic, and Mouric (2011, pp. 22–24) describe lifestyles as reflections of peoples' entire environment, embodying the cultural, natural, economical, political and technical as well as social heritage. They add that lifestyles could be defined as 'social conversations' which convey characteristics of peoples' identity, their values, attitudes, aspirations, needs and social position in their living context. It is worth stating that the concept of future paradigm further compromises of several other directions ranging from scientific inventions to the imaginativeness of science fiction (Nuutinen, 2004, p. 17). However, these are not addressed in the scope of the thesis.

Scenarios

The third innovative design method applied in the project, the scenario building, can be divided into either exploratory or anticipatory scenarios (Nuutinen, 2004). Exploratory scenarios proceed in a linear manner, evaluating the past and present for the visioning of the future. Whereas, anticipatory scenarios support in the creation and visualization of alternative futures, visioning possible utopias and dystopias (Marttila, 2011). With other words, scenarios can be applied to generate more tangible and realistic visions and hence support decision and strategy making. Scenarios manifest themselves as useful tools in the forecasting
work, by simultaneously exploring various new opportunities of what might occur and illustrating the forecasting of several simultaneous possible future directions (Nuutinen, 2004, p. 40).

In this regard, the Future Scenarios website (2009) presents four different energy futures i.e. 'human capital, collapse, energy descent and permaculture and their related sub scenarios: brown tech, lifeboat, green tech and earth steward'. Each scenario approaches the consequences of climate change and peak oil from different aspects, ranging from a mild towards severe impact, depending on the executed actions. Nevertheless, in the scope of the Suburb 2072 project the scenario focus was merely on expectations having an optimistic impact on the suburban future to come. Still, as also suggested by Fuad-Luke (2012, p.114), we needed to reflect over what aspects would be beneficial to nourish and maintain in the suburban context as well as which currently harmful issues we thought should be diminished.

Generally, a scenario is presented in the format of a fictive narrative story including the actors of the story, the context, the motivation of the actors and the actions performed during the story (Westerlund, 2009, p. 41). Furthermore, a scenario can be performed in the format of a cartoon, animation or even video, thus by visualising the future visions, the scenario becomes more tangible and realistic. Eventually, the Suburb 2072 scenarios were produced in the shape of several shorter video portraits which consequently gradually formalised into the final scenario. In summary, the final Spring team scenario was realized with stop motion movie techniques in a naive visual style, with the format of a paper doll animation. The Suburb 2072 scenario is presented further in chapter five.
In the beginning of the 1960’s, Mellunkylä, nowadays the largest neighbourhood in Finland and a district of about 36,000 persons used to be a collection of separate residential areas combined of detached or semi-detached houses (City of Helsinki, 2012). These days the area is represented by both apartment blocks and single-family houses. Mellunkylä is divided into several zones: Kivikko, Kontula, Kurkimäki, Mellunmäki and Vesala of which Kontula was especially relevant to the Suburb 2072 project. Similarly to many other suburbs, Kontula started to expand in the early 1960’s, as a result of the construction of the Kontula apartment quarter and the rapid urbanization (Luoma-Halkola, 2010, p. 8) Due to its natural surroundings it represents a typical example of 1960’s Finnish zoning ideology and so-called ‘forest suburb’ (City of Helsinki, 2012).
A collaborative suburb

In recent years, the idea of bringing together different stakeholders in social and collaborative innovative networks and processes has increased (Seravalli, 2012). In fact, it is fairly common in today's design attempts to adopt partly public and heterogeneous establishments (Björgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren, 2012). The suburb 2072 project embraced a similar approach by conducting a public and close collaboration with the city of Helsinki and the inhabitants of the neighborhood of Mellunkylä area and its related suburban zones. Thus, the scenarios created during the project were grounded on the close co-operation and continuous discussions with a diversity of stakeholders participating the design activities set up by the students. The involvement of the citizens in the development process was of fundamental importance, since they are the strength of the region. Furthermore, Mellunkylä was particularly suited for this type of project due to its vitalized and long traditions within the establishments of local democracy (“Uutiset,” 2012).

To enhance the genuineness of the experience as well as ensure the closeness to the suburb, the students dismounted themselves into a local apartment building arranged by Aalto University. Hence, all the trend forecasting lectures and project activities took place in the apartment, which was named the 'Basecamp'.

The Suburban design space

In the beginning of year 2012, we, the group of 13 design students settled down in the suburban 'design space'. The 'design space' was physically located in a former spacious office in the basement of one of the ordinary 1960's grayish apartment buildings close to the metro station in Kontula. According to Sanders and Westerlund (2011) a 'design space' constitutes of various interpretations. For instance, it could be explained as the physical space, in which the design actions take place and its related
materials, tools and toolkits. Further it is described as the design work itself, for instance the current proposals under work as well as the future possible pathways it may propose. Besides, the described 'design space' simulates what is defined as a 'living lab'. Living labs are platforms where different stakeholders, universities, citizens, companies and non-governmental organizations, hereinafter referred to as NGO's, can collaborate (Hillgren, 2012). The operations of the labs varies, however they share commonalities by being situated in real-world environments, collaborating across borders of organizational and community boundaries as well as aiming for meeting social needs (Björgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren, 2012, p. 131).

Our 'design space', the apartment, consisted of five rooms altogether, in addition to a small kitchenette and two bathrooms. This specific suburban 'design space', played an important role throughout the whole design process by permitting us to study the phenomena of suburban dwelling and familiarize ourselves with the local demography, residential, recreational as well as cultural environment.

Particularly, visiting the local shopping mall, market, restaurants and pubs, strolling around in the surroundings or utilising the public transportation system became a daily routine to the students. Additionally, each student team worked regularly in the local 'Kontupiste' hub, which was open to the public for meeting with the students. Certainly, the efforts of settling down in the suburb offered the possibility to maintain close ties with the surrounding and reach out to the local people. Such an arrangement appeared to enable us to better understand and deal with existing local societal topics, like well being, sustainability and living environment.
The implementation of sustainable lifestyle options was seen as a key driver in the definition and visioning of the scenario. Hence, the content and substance of the scenario particularly focused on aspects of future dwelling, societal well being, transportation and environmental issues in the suburban living environment.

The produced scenario build on a narrative story of a fictive persona, Anna, who is a Spanish exchange student. Anna has settled down in Kontula, which over the past decades has evolved into an authentic natural oasis. In the scope of such development, Kontula has become known for its garden like 'cityscape', where people can perform collective urban gardening and co-producing among other sustainable lifestyles.
Paradoxical lifestyles as base for the scenario work

In the beginning phase of the project was noticed the paradoxical lifestyles and variety of perceptions people expressed in regards to the suburb and the civic concerns. Overall, the analyses of the creative corner outcome showed that when questioned the local people perceived the suburban area in different ways. They revealed a variety of concerns about the current situation of Kontula, but they were also positive about it. On one side were people deeply rooted in the suburb and hence perceiving Kontula as a caring living environment, even though the area around the metro station was seen as threatening. On the other side were persons, for instance new comers and homeless people, who tended to feel separated or were even marginalised.

One retired participant responded by statements like:

“This is my home, I've been living here for 40 years. I have enjoyed the area a lot, I am very fond of it”

Another participant told:

“Young people are not motivated to improve their lifestyles or lives. They do not have education or work. They have fallen outside society, already after secondary school”

A third participant said:

“Here different cultures arrange happenings, e.g. Russian music. It would be nice, if other cultures would arrange similar happenings. I would attend those”

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The statements given by the local inhabitants formed the initiative for the final scenario. More specifically, the major trigger for the scenario work grew out of the desire to bring together and balance the various groups of inhabitants within the diverse socio-economic context. By guaranteeing equal conditions for everyone, the feeling of well-being and sustainability was thought to increase.

In the scope of the scenario, Kontula promotes itself as a tolerant suburb where people of different nationalities come together in a multicultural and multi-ethnicity community socializing and sharing their daily life experiences and traditions. The final scenario furthermore attempts to build bridges between currently disparate communities within the suburban context. Guided by the principles of sustainable living, especially the investment in sustainable and natural materials in the creation of well being within the housing sector was seen as a major issue in the Spring team’s scenario work. Moreover, Kontula has adopted a car free and energy efficient infrastructure, by the invention of new mobility solutions, such as supported cycling zones and a reliable high speed public transportation system. While other cities are overcrowded and unsafe facing societal problems, Helsinki and particularly Kontula attracts millions of people promising a green environment and tolerant atmosphere.
In its entirety, from my subjective perspective, the suburb 2072 design process consisted of three main design clusters, all iterative by nature and heavily inter-linked with each other. Each of the design clusters contributed in studying and examining the design problem. The final scenario emerged mainly during the exploratory video capturing and Creative corner and co-creation clusters. Input was also collected from the first workshop round, whereas, the second workshop round, cultivated and condensed the previous outcome and eventually conceptualized the visions. The outcome of the three design cluster sessions eventually fostered and evolved into the vision of constructing a harmonious multicultural suburban soundscape in the vicinity of Kontula’s metro station.
Innovative design methods influencing the work:
*Trend forecasting, Co-design and Scenario building*
Structure and main objectives

The structure of the project and main design clusters related objectives were as follows:

1. Explorative video capturing
2. Creative Corner and co-creation
3. Workshopping

In general, each of the clusters and respective undertaken actions aided in forecasting emerging local lifestyle trends within the suburb.

Design cluster 1 - Exploratory video capturing

For the first design cluster an exploratory approach was applied by creating several video portraits describing the atmosphere and our first impressions of the area. The exploratory video capturing was utilized as a mean to forecast eventual emerging trends and existing lifestyles in the suburban zone. The first video clip was the initial step in getting to know and meeting face to face with the people in the streets of Kontula by approaching them through the lens of a motion picture camera. The premier exercise mainly attempted to monitor and map the suburban phenomena in a pragmatic manner. On the whole, the conducted video observations enabled us to familiarize ourselves with the urban infrastructure, surroundings, community and the way of living in the suburb. The storyboard for the video capturing tasks included acquiring for positive aspects of the district, even thought negative ones could not be excluded or even neglected.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the aim was neither to make the video portraits look fancy nor professional. Instead we
attempted to express a rather rough and amateur touch in preserving and convoying a feeling of genuineness. The very first video portrait influenced further ideation and brought forth the idea of developing the Creative Corner method. All three video clips, eventually merged into the final scenario.

**Design cluster 2 – Creative Corner and co-creation**

For the second design cluster of the project, I proposed inventing a method of a Creative Corner to facilitate and function as the arena for the co-design activities during the WDC open door event. The WDC open door event took place in March and was one of the 160 World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 weekend events. The Creative Corner method will be described further in the coming chapters.

**Design cluster 3 – Workshopping**

In the third cluster, as continuation to the first and second clusters, two co-design workshops connected various stakeholders. The participants were ranging from representatives of the public sector to the commercial sector, academia, city administration and actors within housing and renovation. In short, the aim of workshops are to learn about the suburban living context, in the development of sustainable ideas and meaningful proposals for the participants' desired futures (Westerlund, 2009, p. 55). Alike, Seravalli (2012) remarks that workshopping can form a fertile ground for the opening of new solutions by bringing together individuals and groups from different sectors. Consequently, the Suburb 2072 project aimed at gathering both locals and other potential actors to cover a broad range of different development aspects. The fact that many of the participants of the first workshop also contributed
to the second workshop, was especially beneficial since it allowed them to review and build further on their initial ideas.

All students were participating the first workshop, whereas for the second one I was representing the Spring team. The second workshop was a Tekes - funded collaborative project workshop: 'Suburb 2072 – A journey to the radical regeneration of neighborhood'.

The aim of the second workshop was to facilitate understanding about possible future directions within the suburban development domain, focusing on city planning and services within the energy providing sector of housing and renovation. This was accomplished with the means of addressing different ways of ensuring a future well being environment and supporting an ethical and sustainable living for the inhabitants of Mellunkylä area. During the workshops, the pre produced Spring team future Scenario served as a conceptual basis and reinforced the brainstorming process. For instance in the scope of the second workshop, the already mentioned 'Harmonious Soundscape' was visioned based on the provided scenario.
My primary intent of this chapter is to describe the executed procedures in the invention of the Creative corner method and the associated tools among other interacting elements within the process. In addition, a brief introduction is given to the participants invited to take part in the arranged co-design activities.
Introduction

The creative corner turned out to become a platform, where locals could temporary meet to share their ideas, values, dreams, visions and hopes with the designers as well as learn from one another. Involving locals in the concrete brainstorming and ideation exchange for the suburb 2072 scenario work was particularly important, since the inhabitants of Mellunkylä are the ones who owns a subjective opinion and understanding of how their future environment should be developed and structured.

Preparing the Creative corner

According to Sanders and Westerlund (2011) there are certain issues and actions of relevance impacting on the preparations of a co-creative session. These are for instance, the recruiting of participants, planning and selection of appropriate co-design tools and materials as well as providing activities to 'warm up' the participants for creative thinking. As also noticed by Jacobsen (2012, p. 17), co-design projects demand for careful management and co-ordination.

In general, qualitative research based projects share similar traditions in regards to the preparations and planning of the process. However, I found that the co-design session, the 'design with people', is different by its nature, compared to for example the so called 'design for people' approach. In my past experiences of 'design for people' projects, I have noticed that the contribution of the people who will utilise a service, product or innovation tend to be rather restricted. I found support for my arguments from research articles submitted by Sanders and Stappers (2008a). They remark that usually, in the 'design for people' approach, the participants are encouraged to perform instructed tasks and comment existing product concepts in a structured manner. Thus, instead of participating in the concrete idea generation together with the designers,
the participants are seen as mere objects. Sanders and Stappers (2008a) continues that participatory methods allow for a spontaneous approach and build on the belief that users are creative and can play an active role by concretely participating in the design process.

For the sake of the explained differences, the preparations of a co-design session need to be accomplished with a few particular aspects taken into account. Through observations of the preparations of the Creative corner, I have found that for instance the establishment of an inspirational design space and atmosphere is essential. Additionally, the inventing of an appropriate and easy to approach toolkit to trigger and motivate the participants is necessary. Lee & al (2011) argue that the findings from co-designing events need to be iterated and reflected on in an evolving manner throughout the whole creative process to be meaningful. Accordingly, the design process needed to be maintained open and accessible, meaning that there was a continuous possibility to adjust it.

Objectives of the Creative corner process

Particularly the objectives listed below needed to be considered in managing the planning of the co-design process.

- Laying the vision and foundation for the project scope
- Establishing an inspirational design space and atmosphere
- Planning the co creative session and goals for the research
- Inventing the method, visualising and adjusting the toolkit
- Recruiting potential participants
- Agreeing upon how to introduce and moderate the session
- Moderating the session and following up on the activities by the
participants
- Introducing and presenting the method and toolkit
- Triggering and motivating the participants
- Ensuring a democratic atmosphere
- Convoying a feeling of design empathy
- Establishing a common language among the participants and designers
- Adjusting the process as it went along
- Recording and documenting the session
- Analysing the experiences and outcome
- Drawing design conclusions and implications for further development, in this case for the Scenario work

It has to be emphasized that the presented objectives should not necessarily be considered as linear steps, but rather as interrelated and flexible actions.

Next will be explained how the above listed objectives were considered in the preparations of the Framework for the Creative Corner. Particularly the design space, atmosphere, the themes forming the boundaries for the work, the method, toolkit and collaborating participants will be introduced.

Establishing an inspirational design space and atmosphere

The primary assignment in the preparations of the Creative Corner involved the establishing of an inspiring and comfortable physical design space and atmosphere. Fuad-Luke (2012, p. 129) presents a similar thinking by addressing the importance of flexible, engaging and
comfortable spaces (real and virtual) where the actors can gather to innovate and create. In the Spring team, the ambition was clearly to ensure that the space reflected positive elements of Spring season to function as reference for the Co-creative sessions to come as well as for the scenario work. We aimed at making the environment feel welcoming and inspiring for the participants by providing a comfortable, still informal atmosphere.

The engaging and comfortable design space thinking was achieved by carefully planning the interior design and the furnishing of the room. As designers we could enrich and affect the design atmosphere by utilizing different kinds of tangible elements. For example, by applying colors and materials, furniture, textiles and plants corresponding to the characteristics of the spring season that the group represented.

The sense of comfort and freshness of spring was of foremost importance and thus implied by colorful carpets on the floor and fluffy curtains in the windows. We also aimed at bringing in natural elements in the shape of the awaking nature, even though it was snowing outside. Accordingly, the Spring atmosphere was emphasized by planting ray grass and placing pots of tulips on the windowsill. Further, a big table and smaller wooden chairs were placed in the middle of the room to function as the centre for the co-creative tasks and to allow the participants to enjoy an informal and relaxing atmosphere during the co creative activity. With other words, all the elements, the furniture, flowers and textiles in the room were there to aid in creating an engaging co-creative experience and inspiring design space.

Laying the design foundation for the creative corner activities

We had started the preparations for the creative corner by collecting a set of images and keywords explaining a variety of lifestyle trends and themes
related to the Spring season that we represented. Already at an early stage a distinct design direction steadily emerged out of the collected images and mind mapping activities. In fact, the mapped lifestyle trends and themes were especially beneficial in defining the objectives and driving the design and research activities during the co-design sessions.

The carefully chosen themes, also referred to as trends in this thesis, mainly evolved from our personal observations of the suburban surroundings, from discussions with people we met and from spotted lifestyle trends. At first the following themes were portrayed for the precondition of the initial brainstorming:

'slow rhythms', 'sensing homes', 'working up', 'tolerance, openness and democracy', 'my oasis'

Finally, two themes, 'My Oasis' and 'Tolerance, Openness and Democracy', were selected to stimulate further deliberation and function as a framework in the design process.
The 'slow rhythm' trend was about seeking for serenity and peacefulness in one's lives. It could be seen as a counteraction to the fast and hectic lifestyle that people are living in today's society.

The 'sensing homes' trend focused on driving sustainable development with the integration of intelligent responsive technologies and 'green' solutions, such as solar energy and renewable construction materials.

The 'working up' trend aspired for a transformation from a 'sleeping city' into a vivid working community by improving current conditions by bringing more jobs and carrier options to the region.
The ‘My Oases’ theme took many forms, ranging from the characters of the warm and cozy atmosphere of the basecamp to the transformation into a totally new oasis like cityscape. The inviting suburban atmosphere naturally evolved out of the noticeable strong local suburban community and its social cohesion. Whereas, the oasis like cityscape idea expressed a demand for human driven city planning, distinguished by dedication to communal activities. Such social elements were for example the intent to engage people in performing sustainable rooftop suburban farming or gardening.

The ‘My Oasis’ theme was signified by an escape from overcrowded and polluted city centers, among other factors, by providing a genuine experience of closeness to nature all around the year. The concept aimed at creating diversity in the landscape with the constructing of tall buildings. Such an architectural approach would maintain the currently existing spacious and green environmental conditions, parks and forests, as well as nurture the biodiversity and ecosystem of the suburb.

For the ‘Tolerance, openness and democracy’ theme, special attention, was paid to the socio - cultural dimensions, such as the openness of information sharing and access to new technologies and cultural services regardless lifestyle, social position, norms or values. Multicultural aspects were embraced with the intention to enhance the exchange of experiences between different multi-ethnical communities. In brief, providing a collective use of services was thought to enhance the attempt in linking different communities and networks within the suburban context. The common will to solve local problems was seen as a critical aspect in addressing the increase of tolerance, openness and democracy.
Inventing the method and toolkit

The creative corner method was planned and organised in an intuitive manner, with the intent to assist a flexible and spontaneous design approach. For this purpose a emotionally expressive and creative toolkit was provided to the participants. The toolkit intended to stimulate the creative thought of the participants and allowed them to easily access the tools it incorporated as well as to freely move between them.

Correspondingly, the offered set of tools was aimed to support the participants in influencing on the future development of the suburb. We wanted to find out what the inhabitants considered meaningful in their future local living environment and how they imagine the society and their surroundings in the future. Therefore, all participants were asked to conceptualise their ideas with the means of the provided toolkit. Strauss and Fuad-Luke (2008, p. 7) present comparable thoughts when stressing that the offering of creative tools to the locals, can enable them to impact and make structural improvements of their lives and living environment.

The toolkit sparked the innovation of the attendants and functioned as a trigger in opening up the communication channels in the beginning stage of the co-creative sessions. Further it aided in collecting meaningful information uncovered by the participants, such as their attitudes and beliefs. Finally, it served as a mechanism in formalising the visions of the participants.

The Creative Corner toolkit

The defining elements of the creative corner combined of three distinct co-creative 'tools' to encourage the locals in formalising, sharing and articulating their ideas. The unique combination of the tools, operated simultaneously.
The first tool, the Creative Artifacts, consisted of a concrete physical table situated in the middle of the room surrounded by wooden chairs, where the participants could comfortably sit down and start to build their visions by arranging, combining and building concrete constructions with the offered tool.

The intent was to provide a tool easy and fun to approach. To facilitate the ideation the participants were provided with the Creative Artifacts package which comprised of stickers, colored felt pens, pre-printed images, glue sticks, clay and wooden building blocks.
'the innovation tree tool'

The second tool was called 'the Innovation Tree' and illustrated in the format of a hand drawn big 1.5 meter high picture of a tree. The drawing was attached to the wall, to easily enable people to write down their ideas or even draw them if they preferred to. The tool allowed people to exchange their 'wants' and build on each others ideas. The three reminded a public art board, since people could freely share their creations and expressions on it. It thus became a visual representation of the participants discussions and suggestions by constantly growing and morphing as people added their thoughts. In combination with the tree tool, was displayed a set of pre-printed images related to Spring. The intent of the presented images was to evoke emotional reactions in the participants. In addition, a few keywords in relation to the defined trends, introduced in the previous chapters, had been added to the branches of the tree. These specific keywords aided in the process in maintaining a certain focus, thus people could write down ideas they associated with for instance the 'My Oasis' theme. Topics that people wrote about, were for example related to city gardening, nature, cultural happenings, places to do hobbies. One participant mentioned that a hip hop school would be nice. Not only was the 'Working Up' theme associated with conventional working proposals, but also referred to new innovative ideas. For instance, one attendant suggested that there would be a person becoming a role model for unemployed youngsters in the region. More specifically, someone to look up to and identify oneself with. These are just a few examples of the amount of data collected with the Innovation Tree tool.

Figure 14-15
Children drawing and co-creating.

'the pin-board tool'

The third tool was realized in the format of a Pin board, on the opposite wall of the Innovative Tree, where people could submit post-it notes or writings. The Pin board tool embodied the functionalities of a collective communication tool engaging people to generate an open dialogue. It invited people to freely express their perceptions and attitudes, both positive and negative ones, in regards to their experiences and memories about their lives in Kontula. An honest and people oriented approach was adopted by simply asking the locals why it is good or not so good to live in Kontula.
Recruiting the Participants

The suburb 2072 project and the WDC three day open door event was introduced in the local magazine and web portal, additionally over 500 copies of the project leaflet were distributed. Furthermore, the project gained visibility in the local media, when presented in a promotional project interview in a national radio channel. In the scope of the WDC weekend, visitors and participants mainly arrived from the surrounding Mellunkylä area. Additionally project partners, local actors and friends were invited to collaborate in the base camp situated near the metro station in Kontula.

Most importantly, the Creative corner was visited by people, widely representing different age groups and life stages, constituted of both children, elderly persons, working adults and students. The children attending the Creative Corner activities were three school girls aged 11 years old, all of them being inhabitants of the nearby neighborhood. Alike, the few elderly women in their late 60s and 70s were long-term citizens of the suburban area. The visiting students were mainly arriving from Aalto University, whereas the working adults were holding positions in Mellunkylä suburban area.

All in all, the suburb 2072 WDC event, incorporating design activities by all four student groups, gathered around thirty participants. The bad weather condition which blocked both roads and metro lines, complicated the passage to the event and thus impacted on the amount of visitors. As a consequence of the described interventions, the visitor amount was less than expected. Moreover, the fact that people were not paid for attending the event, may have impacted on the amount of participants. Eventually, people needed to have a genuine interest in the topic or show up out of mere curiosity or voluntary intents, since the WDC co-design event could be said to rely on a shared willingness to develop the suburban conditions.
In attempting to understand the stance of the co-design process, I have analyzed my experiences, the actions as well as the behavioural patterns and attitudes of both designers and participants in their co-design activities in the Creative corner. In this chapter I start by presenting the limitations of my analyses, I continue by briefly explaining the tools used for my interpretations. To conclude with, I stress the importance of applying a certain level of intuitiveness in the design process.
Limiting the analyses

I acknowledge that for this thesis I have particularly limited my analyses to concentrate on the co-creative behaviour of elderly participants in comparison to children. In this way, I intend to specifically focus on the co-design sessions which I was moderating in the scope of the Creative Corner approach. Based on my analyses of the co-design activities it was obvious that the greatest difference in behaviour was naturally visible among children and elderly attendants. For instance, when given the opportunity to co-design, children were full of energy and occupied the area and the provided toolkit. The elderly persons, on the other hand, were more careful and controlled in their collaborative attempts.

Tools for illustrating and interpreting the findings

The major intent of the thesis has been to analyse the experiences gained in the creative corner co-design session. Therefore, I needed to compose, adjust and mix a diversity of tools and techniques to aid in my interpretations. The composed tools were influenced particularly by service design, co-design and sustainable design principles. Especially, sustainable design tools allow designers to easily modify the equipment to fit specific requirements and needs that may occur when analyzing the outcome (Ceschin, 2011, p.133).

Such tools were for example different mind-mapping techniques, actors maps and radar tools. The chosen tools aided in visualising the complexity of the information collected during the co-design session. Further, my illustrations supported me in structuring and formulating the content of my thesis and enabled me to holistically overview the commonalities and differences of my findings.
Intuitiveness in revealing tacit knowledge

There is a variety of methods, techniques and tools to evaluate and benchmark the usability of products and services. However, when it comes to the evaluation of for instance implicit attributes of a co-design session, such as motivation and emotions, the evaluation process gets more complex. In such cases the emotional responses perceived from the participants would be a more effective option (Battarbee, 2006).

In the scope of the Creative corner approach a certain level of intuitiveness was required in the analysing of the findings, along with the logical processing of the collected data. Furthermore, the intuitiveness supported in revealing critical tacit knowledge. People owns tacit knowledge or subsidiary knowledge mostly without recognising it, due to its vague character (Nuutinen, 2004, pp.119-121). In the undertaken co-design sessions, tacit knowledge was for example used in formulating unconscious perceptions sensed through both formal and informal conversations. In short, tacit knowledge was gained during the collaborative experiences undertaken together with the local residents. It is assumed that the defined tacit knowledge would have been rather complex to spot or explain with mere rational or quantitative methods.

What is argued for here is the fact that intuitiveness and receptiveness prooved to aid in uncovering hidden tacit knowledge and intangible attributes which impacted on the co-design experience. These particular attributes will be explained further in the next chapters.
findings and implications

In this chapter I attempt to holistically discuss the findings, challenges, characteristics and notions addressed to the Creative Corner method carried out by myself and my two fellow students during the WDC weekend. The conducted co-design sessions took place in the Basecamp, in the apartment, more precisely in the Spring team's room. The implications presented here have particularly been drawn from the findings of the conducted co-design session facilitated by myself.
Explicit and implicit attributes

In my analyzes I attempted to uncover the different factors impacting on the co-design experience in the Creative corner. Based on my examinations, I have found numerous attributes, influencing on the maintenance of a pleasurable co-design experience. I have divided my findings into two sections:

- Visible explicit attributes
- Invisible implicit attributes

Visible explicit attributes are tangible and material, for instance the physical design space holding the props such as, furniture, textiles, plants and served refreshments. Additionally, the provided toolkit; the Innovation Tree tool, the Pin board tool along with the Creative Artifacts tool compromising of paper, glue, pens and wooden building blocks, belong to the visible means section. These attributes could be seen as a prerequisite in the co-design process.

Invisible implicit attributes are less obvious, immaterial and embody intangible or abstract knowledge, such as motivation, receptiveness, commitment, engagement, empathy, democracy, openness and sharing to mention a few. These attributes are usually tightly connected to the behavioral patterns and values of the participants. Besides, implicit actions, such as immersion, motivation and empathy are often required from the designer. Implicit attributes thus indicate hidden still understood information, or tacit knowledge, which is communicated indirectly within the process (Juselius, 2012, p.25).

Not always is it straightforward to point out whether an attribute is explicit or implicit. Although, treated as separate factors for the objectives of this thesis, it is worthwhile mentioning that the suggested attributes usually tend to overlap in the co-design process. I am aware that mostly the defined attributes cannot be separated. Regardless such knowledge,
for the purpose of my analyses, I have decided to detach the attributes in being able to uncover the nature of co-design. By monitoring the mentioned attributes, one can obviously enhance a deeper understanding of the relevant dimensions of the co-design process. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that I do not regard these attributes and characteristics as absolute truths, rather as something for me as a designer to elaborate around in the co-design process. In the following chapters is presented the attributes and implications derived from my findings.

**implicit and explicit attributes in co-design**

Figure 17

Different factors and attributes accounting for a pleasurable co-design experience. The illustration is based on the author’s subjective perceptions and analyzes of the Creative corner co-design context.
The physical design space, a co-creative arena

The physical design space, the Basecamp, and related props belong to the group of visible explicit attributes, which can be determined prior to the co-design event. The design space, intended for the Creative corner activities, embodied several functionalities. It served as an arena for gathering people and triggering for co-creation by providing a welcoming atmosphere and inspiring toolkit. In addition to the toolkit, also other props played an important role in creating a inspiring atmosphere. Such elements, were for example the furniture, textiles, plants and served refreshments. For instance, for the WDC event my fellow student had baked a cake to enhance the welcoming atmosphere.

Not only was the design space a platform for co-design sessions to take place, but also a venue for the designers to brainstorm, analyze, vision and create. From the perspective of the designers, the design space enabled a seamless transfer between the different activities. It permitted continuity across the conducted co-design sessions, the analytical process and the arranged workshops. It offered a concrete storage where to preserve the collected data. Furthermore, the room provided easy access to the material stuck to the walls and helped the designers in managing and overlooking the wide amount of information. In light of this, the physical design space aided in the iterative design process, since the designers could easily return to the visions written and drawn on the walls or constructed by the participants. Even, later the material could be accessed instantly, by new people arriving to workshop in the Spring room.

Apart from the above mentioned issues, the establishment of the physical Basecamp played an important role in helping us in getting accepted by the locals. This notion of acceptance which I have placed under the implicit attributes section, is described further in the 'Developing acceptance within the community' chapter. Finally, the
presence of the Basecamp allowed for spontaneous interaction with the suburban inhabitants. I am elaborating more on the impact of spontaneous meetings in the 'Informal rendezvous and commitment' chapter.

Tools for sparking the creativity of the participants

The Creative Corner toolkit, which belongs to the visible explicit attributes section, demonstrated several functionalities. For instance, it enabled the designers to catch the ideas and visions of the inhabitants. Further, it raised the curiosity of the participants and triggered them to co-design and express themselves with the help of the provided tools; the Creative Artifacts, the Innovation Tree and the Pin board. Finally, it supported in eliciting attitudinal factors highly influencing on the development of the future scenario.

When people first entered the Spring team's room and the Creative corner, they were curious hearing about the ideas already proposed and displayed by the designers. In order to create a reciprocal context, we, the designers needed to be frank in our explanations about the purpose of the project. Thus, the intent, the methodology and toolkit was explained to them.

My analyses showed that visual and physical composing was a natural part of the activity among children. According to Halmeenmäki (2012, p. 37) participants prefer to express themselves with the means of visual artifacts in the co-design process. The artifacts enable them to communicate about topics otherwise complex to formulate or describe with mere words. Especially, the possibility to write or draw anywhere on the walls attracted attention among the three girls. This showcases that the utilisation of concrete building blocks often sparks the innovation of the participants and enable them to express themselves more freely (Halmeenmäki, 2012, p. 35). When asked how they would like to improve
their current living environment, one of the girls constructed a new building complex for her neighbourhood with the help of the provided Creative Artifacts tool; the wooden building blocks and clay. She created colourful houses to increase the atmosphere in her current living environment consisting of mainly greyish block houses. Another girl improved the playground next to her house by developing her ideal and more fun outdoor playground equipment.

Faulkner and Coates (2011, p. 69) have found that playful co-design activities suit children, due to their natural abilities to express themselves with the means of drawing, building and colorising. In short the toolkit could be seen as a mean in mediating the thoughts and creative expression of the participants (Iversen & Leong, 2012).
toolkit main characteristics

creative corner

Figure 18
Developing acceptance and trust within the community

Throughout the project, the development of acceptance and trust within the suburban community was regarded as a necessary implicit attribute, due to the effects it had on the collaboration with the locals. When moving into the suburb we, stepped out of our comfort zone. Hence, we were naturally concerned with the issue of getting welcomed and accepted by the suburban community. However, by concretely settling down in the suburb the message of having a genuine interest in the local opinion was conveyed to the inhabitants (Heikkinen, Soini & Dhima, 2012). The immersion in the daily life context of Kontula and the direct engagement was appreciated by the inhabitants. In the light of these experiences, it appeared that such a flexible collaboration would not have been possible, if merely conducting the project by occasionally visiting the area. An approach similar by its nature, ensuring that local values and identity is considered in the collaborations with the local community, has been taken by the Rural Studio, at Auburn University creating homes and civic structures in Hale County, Alabama (Strauss & Fuad-Luke, 2008, p. 6).

From my viewpoint, our engagement and presence created a feeling of empathy and trust among the local actors and prevented us from being met with suspicion and regarded as outsiders. Obviously, this kind of immersive, and sometimes informal, approach supported an open minded and spontaneous interaction with the suburb and its inhabitants and led to reciprocal devotion. The relevance of informal spontaneous meetings taking place in the project will be presented more precisely in the next chapter.
Informal rendezvous and commitment

The thoughts exchanged during informal unplanned meetings established a shared commitment between the designers and the locals. A genuine interest in the locals' ideas and knowledge is of high relevance, when co-designing together. According to Lee & al (2011), informal meetings which are unstructured by their nature are not regarded as methods per se. However, such rendezvous build an empathic mindset, thus increasing the emotional commitment between the designers and collaborating persons in a project.

In the scope of the suburb 2072 project, highly informal meetings occurred, when spontaneously chatting with locals or shooting videos in the surroundings. Alike, unplanned rendezvous took place in the corridors, living room or kitchenette of the Basecamp when chatting with local visitors over a cup of tea. Beside establishing an emotional commitment, the informal meetings triggered for deeper discussions. These discussions naturally exposed a number of meaningful stories and valuable topics. For instance, stories related to societal problems affecting the daily life of the inhabitants. The uncovered stories were later digested further by the designers and used as design drivers in the visioning of the future scenario.

Motivating and Engaging Participants

It was found that various explicit and implicit attributes affected the motivation of the participants. For instance, the role of the designer as an interpreter of the participant’s individual needs or the role of the designer in motivating and encouraging the participants to co-design. Additionally,
the toolkit, the environment and atmosphere, a certain playfulness, fun of novelty and the meaningfulness of the topic to co-design around were just a few attributes influencing on the motivational aspects.

**Playfulness, fun of novelty and tools as motivators**

The advantage of the tools is exemplified by the impact they had on the participants motivation to co-design. As argued, people, both designers and participants, are more eager to co-create by visual means (Halmeenmäki, 2012, p. 35). Therefore the ability to draw pictures on the walls was of relevance in motivating the creative thought. Moreover, the advantage of conducting a short term co-design activity, as in the creative corner case, aided in maintaining the fun of novelty. Apparently this had an impact on the co-design with children, since a too long lasting session would have reduced the feeling of novelty and enjoyment. Generally, the co-design event took a more playful shape in the design with the children. The co-design sessions with the three girls resembled the methods introduced by Faulkner's and Coates' (2011) in their explorations of Children's Creative Narratives, in which a playful approach was adapted to the design occasion. In the Creative corner, the discussions involving the children were undertaken in a rather informal manner and covered the daily life of the girls, their social activities with friends and hobbies. Whereas, the sessions with the elderly participants were more formal and discussed a wide range of societal topics.
participants' activity diamond
creative corner
Figure 19

participant's tool usage pyramid
creative corner
Figure 20
Meaningfulness and purposefulness

It is evident that both meaningfulness and purposefulness of the elaborated subject is of importance in getting people engaged and motivated. The Creative corner session, did not employ any incentive mechanisms, thus people attended the co-design sessions for other reasons; as volunteers or out of curiosity or due to purposefulness and meaningfulness of the topic. It became obvious that the motivation to attend the event, was triggered by the will of the locals to contribute to the common well-being of the suburb. When approaching the inhabitants regarding what makes their suburb special, they cited reasons such as:

“Here people care about each other. People are open minded and here is a village like mentality”

“Different Happenings and services for elderly are close”

“It is possible to do outdoor activities, since Kontula is close to the lovely nature”

“My family and relatives live here and the housing prices are reasonable”

The designer as motivator

As stated, the key driver when co-creating is to understand how to motivate the participants to uncover their dreams and visions. Therefore, establishing a relationship with the participants is of utmost importance. In the Creative Corner, chatting, making participants feel homely, serving a cup of coffee or tea contributed in establishing a relaxed atmosphere, where people
felt comfortable to share their thoughts. Battarbee (2006) stresses that the challenge in the co-design process is firstly the designer’s willingness and ability to empathise and engage with the participants. Secondly, she has noticed that the success of engagement likewise depends on the participating persons will to be entertained. Consequently, an issue generally influencing the success of the design session is the role of the designer in the innovative context, in providing design conditions that engage and motivate people to act creatively (Baek, Manzini, & Rizzo, 2010). As stated by Heikkinen, Soini, & Dhima (2012, p. 4) in co-design processes the designers are taking on the role of facilitator with the intent to support and merge the knowledge and creativeness of the participants. This was especially visible in the co-creative discussions with the elderly participants. Since the designer often took on the role as facilitator when documenting their ideas on post-it notes and sticking them to the wall as well as grouping them into certain sections. This leads to the importance of establishing a common language.

Creating a Common Language

Throughout the project a common language was needed to convey and make the message interpretable between the different stakeholders. In order to co-design with the children one needed to adopt to their playful mind style, whereas with the elderly people trust and involvement played an important role in communicating.

Reciprocal Commitment

The suburb 2072 project course instructors Soini and Paavilainen (2013) notice that experiencing the contrast between the reality in the eastern suburb and the 'exclusive'
ambience of a design University encouraged, us, the students to become sensitised to local issues.

Being accepted by the locals permitted us to extend into the role of insiders instead of mere outsiders or spectators. By integrating ourselves with the community we could increase our understanding of the suburban circumstances, the living environment and get our hands on the reality of the people. As many times argued, settling down in the quarters of Kontula formed an agreement of reciprocal commitment between the local people and the group of students.

From my standpoint I discovered that such a commitment increased the need for both a common language and design empathy when communicating with the inhabitants. Certainly, it would have been difficult for the designers to become emotionally involved with the participants if being resisted by them. Further, an outsider role would have limited the access to obtain valuable information revealed by the people of the region.

The view of Barret (2008) is rather similar, he points out that a fruitful outcome of a co-creational project depends on the designers' social skills and ability to empathise as well as communicate with non-designers and accordingly collect useful information. Alike, Mattelmäki and Battarbee (2002, p4) stresses the importance of trust and empathy in the co-creative process to support in the collecting of subjective opinions from the participants. Here the mechanism has two directions; towards the participants to create an empathic and respectful dialogue and towards the designers to support empathic understanding (Mattelmäki & Battarbee, 2002). Therefore yet another implicit attribute, design empathy, needed to be considered and undertaken to gain insight and understanding.
The importance of design empathy

The involvement of design empathy played an important role in the project, due to the close relation the inhabitants naturally have to their suburb. Empathy means one's ability to understand other people's thoughts and feelings, such as motivations, emotional and mental models, values, priorities, preferences and inner conflicts (Visser & all, 2009). In empathic design, apart from observing what people do, the designers also focus on interpreting what people think, feel and dream by involving people as partners (Postam, Zwartkruis-Pilgrim, Daemen & Du, 2012). In the empathic design process the designer connect to the participant’s experiences and feelings by recalling to one’s own memories and experiences (Alkaya, Visser & De Lille, 2012, p.3).

Postam & al (2012) claim that the success of empathic efforts depend on the level of receptiveness demonstrated by the designers and to what extent empathic awareness is practised. As observed in the Creative Corner, the collaborative session with the children required a flexible and playful mind from the designer. Whereas, when co-creating with the elderly persons a more formal and discussing approach was needed.

In short, to get access into the subjective issues of people, marketing reports are not enough but design empathy, a personal contact and connection with the users, are also needed. Finally, a democratic mindset is beneficial in the collaborative design approach.

A democratic approach

Ho & al (2012) argues for 'opening up the communicative space'. They furthermore encourage designers to adopt an open attitude towards the democratic perspective, since this will help the designer to achieve a common consensus within the design community.

Moreover, democratisation, which is typical within the participatory
design approach, strives to actively involve people in the decision-making process (Postam & al, 2012, p.3). Hence, persons not trained in design or usually not involved in the design process gain the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas (Fuad-Luke, 2012, p.106).

However, conflicts and disagreements can be common when a democratic approach is emphasised, because of the striving to fulfill diverse and conflicting needs and motives (Seravalli, 2012, p. 10). Obviously, the co-creative actions carried out in the Creative corner context were too short to generate the above mentioned reactions. Moreover, the flexible structure of the provided toolkit and the possibility to freely move between the offered tools, may have decreased a need for competition or conflicting motives.

Due to the above statement, it is fundamental to make all the participants feel equally important (Westerlund, 2012). Such an attempt could thus positively influence on the atmosphere and aid in avoiding conflicting situations.

Barret (2008) takes a similar stance suggesting that designers should not draw conclusions out of their own assumptions or presume answers beforehand. Designers shall rather see the co-creating participants as equal partners in the process. This perspective was especially critical in the Suburb 2072 project, in fact it formed the core of the whole co-design process and the conducted actions. Without a democratic approach, there would have been no or little evidence on what is actually critical from the perspective of the local inhabitants.
The outline of this thesis studied and analysed the conducted Creative Corner method, which built on participatory and innovative design principles. The Creative corner method was carried out during the WDC weekend in the established design space, the Basecamp, in the suburban area of Kontula. The performed activities brought the co-design perspective into force, by encouraging the local inhabitants to co-design and vision about their future local living environment.

My undertaken analyses of the collected findings uncovered an amount of attributes impacting on the co-design experience. My findings will be revisited and summarised in this chapter.

To conclude with, I expand the discussion into the future of Mellunkylä as a potential innovation milieu.
future
innovation
milieu
What I explored

The thesis process has been fruitful to me in many aspects. As designers we easily move on to new challenges, without time to reflect over implicit attributes and factors which impact on the design process. This thesis consequently allowed me to dig deeper into the nature of the conducted co-design context and hence evaluate the values and challenges, both explicit and implicit ones, which can typically emerge during a co-design project. Although being a small scale study, the analyses enabled me to explore and develop new design strategies to be applied in my forthcoming co-design activities together with different actors.

Revisiting the method and findings

In the analysing of the findings and material was utilised tools borrowed from co-design, service design and sustainable design disciplines. Further, for the purpose of this thesis, I created my own infographics to illustrate the outcome of my findings. This approach helped me to get a holistic overview of the activities performed during the co-design session. At the same time it aided in getting an understanding of the attitudinal and behavioural commonalities and differences expressed by the different participants in relation to the co-creative activities. This consequently enabled me to understand the characteristics and qualities influencing on a pleasurable co-design experience.

The proposals collected with the means of the Creative Corner method were generated and influenced by the participants. In short, my observations showed that the girls enjoyed the possibility to improve the surroundings of Mellunkylä by constructing concrete visions with the input of the available tools. Their imagination seemed to know no limits, they expressed themselves by providing a continuous stream of ideas. They drew and wrote their proposals to the Innovation tree tool or composed tangible constructions out of the provided building blocks. The
elderly participants on the other hand preferred discussing with the designer, memorising and sharing their lifelong experiences within the suburban environment. As illustrated on the next page, the children generally expressed future wishes, whereas the elderly persons favored to share their past experiences and memories.

On average, the findings implied that a variety of design approaches and tools may be needed, depending on what is performed, by whom and how.

Moreover, the elderly participants tended to rely on the help from the designer. Sanders and Westerlund (2011) have observed similar challenges in the design process involving persons not trained in design. They for instance mention the complication in encouraging people to come up with new ideas, especially when they feel that there is a lack of supporting knowledge. These findings point to another important factor that the designers need to be able to improvise, interpret and adapt to various co-design situations and take on different levels of involvement during the sessions, depending on the personality and mind-style of the participants.
summary of behavioral model
in the creative corner context
Figure 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generate</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create</td>
<td>Memorize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Exchange experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Emphasis on playfulness and fun. Expressing FUTURE wishes. Comments showed that dreams and purposefulness was prioritized, e.g. 'a pony stable in Kontula would be nice'.</th>
<th>Emphasis on discussion and sharing PAST experiences and memories. Comments showed that meaningfulness was prioritized, e.g. 'this is my home, I've been living here for 40 years'.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Role of the designer | -Motivate and trigger others to co-design -Give free hands and appreciation -Find a common language -Maintain fun and excitement | -Facilitate the session -Convey a feeling of trust -Emphasize with the participants -Motivate the discussion -Elicit tacit knowledge, e.g. needs and values. |

| Commonalities | The will to impact on the conditions of the local living environment. The need for an inspiring design space and tools, a common design language and empathy in the design process. |                            |
As, illustrated on the previous page, beyond the observed differences among the two main groups, there were a number of commonalities in regards to the behavioral models of the participants. Such elements were for instance, the need for an inspiring design space and creative tools, a common design language, democracy and empathy in the design process. Especially, the empathic design approach combined with the co-design toolkit could be seen as fundamental, since it supported the designers in revealing, identifying and understanding peoples’ underlying aspirations. Additionally it helped the designers to immerse into the life of the user and understand what is meaningful to them. To conclude with the main findings could be summarised as follows:

- People, not trained in design, can provide valuable ideas and values to the co-design process, since the people are the most important capital impacting on the outcome.

- Both explicit and implicit attributes, play a crucial role in creating and maintaining a pleasurable co-design experience.

- It is beneficial, if the topic to co-design around is meaningful to the participants or have a certain purpose for them.

- Different tools would be needed in the co-design process, depending on the participating individuals, their behavioral models and priorities.

- It is of importance to make people feel equal and to ensure that their contribution is valued and appreciated.

- The designer may need to step out of his or hers comfort zone and take on different and unfamiliar roles, ranging from the role as co-
creator, motivator and encourager to empathizer, interpreter or be able to immerse into the world of the participants.

- It is useful to maintain an open design process, since co-design is creative, flexible and innovative by nature and tend to evolve or change during the process.

Ideas for further development, Mellunkylä a future Social Innovation milieu

Finally, this chapter will expand the discussion into a few ideas for potential future development within the suburb and the participatory design domain. In light of this, I am reflecting over the ‘new’ roles of designers and participants within the social innovation field.

To start with, one possibility to continue the Suburb 2072 research could be to extend the undertaken co-design activities towards a social and open innovation direction. Social innovations can range from products and services to ideas, principles or social movements with the intent to build bridges between different communities and organisations (Björgvinsson et al., 2012, p. 6). In this perspective the Spring scenario already shares similarities with a social innovation approach, since it promoted a new social enterprise within the suburban context.

Social innovation phenomena are driven by behavioral change, aiming at providing services that affect peoples ways of living along with solutions that would make people more comfortable (Baek & al, 2010). Such a phenomenon can for instance be a specific community designing new solutions; a new way of living together, sharing goods, co-buying food or co-housing.

For the democratic culture to flourish within the design and social innovation domain, an attitudinal shift is required (Fuad-Luke, 2012,
This means that the role of the designer is changing. In the most radical vision the role of the designer is morphing from facilitator into the role of spectator. However a more beneficial option could for example be the role of the designer as moderator in solving the everyday life problems of the suburban community, by providing conditions to support in the social innovation process. Baek et al (2010) propose that designers could provide tools and methods, empowering people to act creatively in the implementation of new solutions to meet their own social needs.

On the other hand, the social innovations and the phenomena of a specific creative community could be led by the members of that community. Such an approach already emerged among the 1980's Austrian early adopters and environmentalists when they initiated the self development of solar collectors. The community enabled the diffusion of the phenomena and made it evolve and grow in the Austrian society. Consequently the solar collector innovation was later adopted by a variety solar technology enterprises and manufacturers. In the described case, the distinct character of the community was their way of learning from one another. Alike, designers can learn by doing, together with the communities. Thus the suburban local community could also function as an inspirational source and new service ground for the designers.

As has been argued, co-design realizes the importance of the adoption of new practices within the design expertise. In brief, the understanding of future roles of designers and suburban innovating actors within the social and open innovation domain could be considered for further research. Fuad- Luke (2012) stresses that both within academia and in practice there has recently been growing attention towards open innovation.

As a result of the rise of novel phenomena in coming years, it is apparent that totally new design competencies will emerge in the context of the development of the participatory economy. I tend to agree with Björgvinsson et al (2012) when stating that growing attention has been recently devoted to find alternative options for future collaborative design.
attempts, thus instead of merely maintaining traditional expert groups, new social innovation oriented milieus could be explored. Such attempts are anticipated to be more of a rule than an exception by the year of 2015 (Kuosma & Koskinen, 2012).

In the context of such development, in the explorations of the potential of the suburban region, Mellunkylä could even function as an incubation environment for future radical innovations, experiments and social innovations.


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list of figures
