Trojan Horse

Re-framing sustainable practices as “design support” to attract new practitioners

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“People with higher intrinsic values are both happier and have higher levels of environmental responsibility than those with materialistic values.”
Tim Jackson

“...has to be a narrative of a new prosperity because one of the big weaknesses of everybody who has been talking about sustainability until now - including myself - is that the narrative was a narrative of reduction...”
Ezio Manzini
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Preface

My background is in industrial design and during my Bachelor studies I was enchanted by it. However, after a year of work experience I did not see any point in working as a commercial designer at all. I was struggling for a while to shift my focus, since I had started to define myself to a certain extent as a designer drawing things which other people buy. Finally, I found a wonderful bunch of people and a new focus area - within design - at the Creative Sustainability (CS) Program. This change of values and to a certain extent lifestyle did of course not occur overnight. It was a long process and I still wonder whether there was a key moment or several ones. Since then the question why and how people change their everyday behaviours and maybe also the bigger picture in life has become one of the most interesting questions in life for me, although or maybe because I never expect to solve it.

It somehow also acts as a starting point of the work on my thesis. During my studies at Aalto University's CS Program I had the chance to participate in many wonderful events. No matter if privately initiated dumpster dive dinners or school based projects, all those events are truly needed and it is great to see passionate people engaging in them. However, while participating at the Open Source Circular Economy Days (OSCE) in 2015 I noticed that I mostly saw the same faces which I had seen in previous interventions yet again. Furthermore, I know many dear friends who do not care about anything related to sustainability, even if you tell them the world is going down. Likewise, even the ones who I thought to be critical, adapt their consumption pattern to their income constantly.

These points lead me to the initial question: “How to better communicate alternative lifestyles”?

I started to wonder if and how there are techniques to get people interested in thinking a bit more critical about the economy and the obviously pathological search for happiness through consumption or at least support them in becoming more active and confident in being an independent human being. Furthermore, as we all too often are motivated but do not act, I was wondering what makes people commit to something in the long run. We had talked about “behaviour change” and “awareness” so often at school, but I was left with the feeling that many designers expect the trendy term “behaviour change” to be a magical trick - let us make an intervention, raise awareness, do some co-designing - and then people are motivated to change their world. Since I had never had the chance to dive in either economic or psychological research I saw this thesis as a chance to explore and learn. Likewise, I have always been interested in organizing and facilitating events and I also take great joy in tutoring or helping people to learn skills. In this regard, the one year journey has been tough at times, but turned out to be very rewarding, making me a prime example of increased eudaimonic well being.
Abstract

Sustainability is a trending subject, but many practices and discussions tend to stay within dedicated communities instead of reaching out to the majority. The research focus of this thesis is to explore whether re-framing practices such as up-cycling as “making” or “designing” can attract new practitioners. Furthermore, the thesis explores whether hosting these practices at a bar terrace can support reaching out to the mainstream.

Underlying these questions is the assumption that gaining confidence in “making” objects yourself can be a valuable asset for developing a more sustainable lifestyle. The first part of the theoretical framework takes into account studies on how an increased eudaimonic well being - i.e. confidence, openness, and autonomy - may relate to a decrease in consumption patterns. Completing the framework, communities of practice (CoP) as a way to facilitate learning experiences, are studied.

Next, CoPs working on “design interventions” and “social support” were examined via a desk survey and another survey with 6 selected cases. Here, a hybrid area called “design support” was proposed. Consequently, building the practical part of this research, 6 events named “Afterwork Maker Sessions” took place at the terrace of a bar in Teurastamo, the former meat packing district of Helsinki. Each time, manuals, tools and leftover material were provided for the “making” topic of the day. Over the course of 10 weeks it was examined which audiences participated and how often they joined. Furthermore, it was studied whether their image of sustainability changed. The analysis was based on the results of a questionnaire, which 32 out of the total 40 participants had filled in. This, together with qualitative data helped to develop the case study further.

The sessions did manage to attract a variety of audiences, which did not feel dedicated to a sustainable lifestyle previously and also passers-by got interested. However, this only happened after more co-facilitators had joined the team, focusing either on talking to the passers-by or on making individual designs of their own, thus creating a seemingly contagious, proactive atmosphere. Generally, the majority of participants overcame their initial insecurity regarding their ability to “make”. While people did see a connection between sustainability and confidence in making, the workshops did not profoundly change their image of sustainability. Finally, the participants rarely joined the next workshops, although they had left the sessions happily and were determined to come again.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded, that re-framing and increasing the visibility of sustainable practices can indeed attract new practitioners. Furthermore, the chosen setting seemed to ease the move from sparking an interest to actual participation. However, both literature and action research indicate that the major task for attracting new practitioners to sustainable practices will be finding suitable long-term commitment strategies. Finally, to fully explore the potential of such workshops, a long term study and permanent location would be helpful, bringing along difficult questions regarding the sustainable business model of such a place and the acquisition of materials on a larger scale.

Key words: design activism / design support / re-framing sustainable practices / eudaimonic well being / facilitating learning experiences / community of practice / attracting new practitioners
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6. BIBLIOGRAPHY
This thesis aims at exploring ways to attract new practitioners to a less consumption intense lifestyle. The initial research question was:

**RQ1** How to better communicate alternative, sufficiency based lifestyles?

For this reason the following exploratory questions arose:

**EQ1** To what extent are current lifestyles or values not working?

**EQ2** How did they come into existence?

**EQ3** How can sufficiency be defined and what are the obstacles to adopt a sufficiency based lifestyle?

**EQ4** Can specific experiences catalyse a transition to a sufficiency based lifestyle?

**EQ5** What role can design play in this context?

### Transforming prerequisites for sustainability

During the first part of the literature review, the current state of sustainability research will be looked at. Classically, sustainability is described with the triple bottom line of environmental, economical and social sustainability (Hacking and Guthrie 2008 p.77). Taking into account the increasing efforts on global warming or on social sustainability issues such as cheap labour, sustainability can indeed be seen as a mainstream topic in the western world during the 21st century. However, as many have argued it is contradicting to pursue sustainability while relying on a well being model based on consumption and competition. Therefore, I would like to point to the contribution of designer Stuart Walker, who has proposed a quadruple bottom line of sustainability, which highlights the inner self of people as another crucial part (Walker 2011).

I believe that adding what others might refer to as a “spiritual level” offers a much more appropriate perspective on sustainability efforts, since the construct of identity and the inherent beliefs are at the core of any behaviour as it is pointed out by various researchers (Kasser 2009 p.7 ff.) (Scharmer 2011 p.111 ff). After all, even large parts of the educational elite see market economy, consumption and growth as more or less “naturally given” as well as the key elements to a prosperous society and personal well being. According to a recent study, 49% of Germans having completed their “Abitur”, i.e. being eligible to study at university, believe “the economy has to grow” (Schmelzer 2015 p.121). Being called the “growth paradigm”, there is obviously little questioning whether the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can serve as an indicator for societal well being, despite decades of stagnating life satisfaction during continued growth (Scitovsky 1976 and Worcester 1998 cited in Jackson 2004 p.21–22). Likewise, neither the obviously paradoxical concept of infinite growth on a planet with finite resources nor the negative impacts of increasingly unequal Western societies have been able to challenge the majority’s view on the economy.

### A selection of market economy and growth critiques

Interestingly, the word “economy”, derives from the Greek term “œconomia”, and stands for house-holding - obviously quite the opposite of infinite growth (Polanyi 2001 Ibid., p.55). Polanyi’s seminal work “The great transformation” provides the main source for the first section of the second chapter, pointing out the role of labour in the market economy.

Moving on to further critiques of the market economy, E.F. Schumacher as well as the more recently formed “Degrowth” movement are studied. Their claims for a downsizing of production scales and de-growing the economy in the western world respectively, aim at the same double dividend. Moving activities from the professional economy back to the households, could possibly result both in a lower throughput as well as increased levels of autonomy and intrinsic motivation. According to research on sustainable lifestyles and ecopsychology, increased intrinsic values are seen to have a strong positive impact on personal well being and on the environment. Tim Jackson puts it this way: “People with higher intrinsic values are both happier and have higher levels of environmental responsibility than those with materialistic values.” (Jackson 2011 p.149)

### Eudaimonia - a well being based on inner growth

The beginning of the third chapter in the literature review focuses on intrinsic motivation and its effect on life satisfaction, examining psychological research on needs and well being. Therefore, the two well being concepts of hedonism and eudaimonia are studied, mainly based on the
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Scribes three main distinctive features, namely domain, community and practice (Wenger 2006 1f). While the domain stands for a shared area of interest, and community for the regularly meetings of a dedicated group, the term practice emphasizes that it is not only a theoretical interest but practical doings which are at the center of interest. One form of a community of practice can be seen in the Swedish study circles, which usually consist of 5 to 10 persons, who meet weekly for about 10 weeks (Larsson 2010 p.13-14). Since the goal of the thesis is creating experiences to attract new practitioners to sustainability, such a circle sounds promising. Participants join this peer to peer learning out of an intrinsic motivation and the relatively small size makes it feasible to organize. Furthermore, it can be argued that the regular meetings result in a deeper learning impact. However at the same time its restriction in size could pose a difficulty and result in a rather closed community yet again.

The question arises if these needs would be better satisfied by a sufficiency based lifestyle than by a materialistic one? Sufficiency here is defined after a matrix by Sherwin and Bhamra, who describe it as adopting new behaviours while relying on existing technologies (Sherwin & Bhamra 2000 p. 52). From this perspective, such lifestyle would foster the needs for competence and autonomy well. However, since a lifestyle change towards an eudaimonic well being will inevitably be a longer term process, it is logically beyond the scope of this research work. Instead, it will be investigated which practices related to a sufficient lifestyle can best help to increase autonomy, relatedness and competence as well as how they can be re-framed to attract practitioners.

Consequently, the question arises how to motivate people? Unlike other choices, changing behaviours which build your lifestyle certainly are substantial decisions. Here, the philosopher Peter Bieri emphasizes the importance of “an individual’s ability to imagine, as it requires a look into the future” (Bieri p.65). Similarly, psychological research on belief systems has shown that whether or not people actually believe in being able to learn and acquire skills can strongly affect the outcome of a challenge (Dweck 2008). From this perspective I argue that regular positive learning experiences and support to overcome doubts play a crucial role for attracting new practitioners to sustainable practices.

Learning experiences in a community of practice

The second last chapter of the literature part reviews experiential learning in form of a community of practice (CoP), providing the second main theoretical framework. Coining the term CoP, Etienne Wenger, describes three main distinctive features, namely domain, community and work of Erich Fromm. While hedonism here is defined as maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain, thus linking well to the prevailing economic system and the consumption paradigm, eudaimonia can be described as inner growth (Fromm 1976 in Jackson 2004 p.20). However, other voices define pleasure more as challenging and skillful engagement than convenience driven consumption (Scitovsky 1992). Similarly, through the lense of eudaimonic well being, even unpleasant moments like a learning process can eventually lead to an increased well being. Next, exploring how eudaimonic well being can be best developed, the work of Ryan and Deci will be examined. According to them, the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are crucial for eudaimonic well being (Ryan and Deci 2001 p.6f).

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The emerging role of design in changing social practices

Similar to sustainability, design also has become a mainstream topic in recent years. While the majority still regards it as tool for functions and aesthetics, design is increasingly respected by decisions makers due to its potential to spark systemic change. Thus, it seems worthwhile to begin with an overview of the different areas it is applied in. Jones proposes four stages of increasing complexity for design, which he calls Traditional Design, Product and Service Design, Organisational Design as well as Social Transformation Design respectively (Jones 2014 p.100). While these areas have appeared chronologically over time, it is important to point out that a designer working on “social transformation”
can still make use of “traditional design”, e.g. building artefacts. While Jones speaks of Social Transformation Design, Ezio Manzini applies the term Design for social innovation, meaning design which activates and sustains change processes in society (Manzini 2015 p.62). As he points out, design does not solely act as a problem solver, but is also capable of developing meaning in the social world, thus making it a valuable tool for this thesis’ goal of attracting new practitioners to sustainable practices. After all, a practice must be meaningful to someone if she is to join it.

Further exploring design and sustainability, one emerging discipline needs to be highlighted, namely Design Activism. Comparing it to classic forms of activism, Thorpe describes Design Activists as “generative - rather than “opposing” they “propose”, or generate better alternative solutions.” (Thorpe 2012 p.117) Fuad-Luke proposes that Design Activism can work both generative and oppositional as well as anywhere in between (Fuad-Luke 2015 p. 280-295). These comments link well to critique on conventional activism, namely that due to its focus on what is right or wrong it tends to forget about building the actual capacities to make the specific change happen (Thorpe 2012 p.186). In contrast to this, an increasing number of small design activism teams have evolved, co-designing alternative realities based on interventions in the city. By doing so they have managed to involve a variety of people and increase their feeling of competence, while challenging conventions about how urban spaces look or function and who is entitled to intervene. From this perspective, design activism seems apt for pointing out alternative behaviours to a wider audience without opposing the “status quo behaviour” too frankly, which might be the key to attracting a new clientele.

Finally, having talked about challenging behaviours and values, it is worthwhile to at least touch on theories of change found in sociology. While usually, either structure or agents are seen as the engine of change, the evolving theories of practice propose a third way. According to Anthony Giddens, structures influence agents, but agents change the very same structures at the very same time (Giddens 1979 p.5). This perspective offers an interesting opportunity for designers involved in contesting paradigms. While it is clear that some social structures and norms inhibit the creation of new behaviours and practices to a certain extent, it can now also be stated that by the sheer act of practising a novelty, social life can be altered. Another interesting twist provided by practice theory should be mentioned here. Instead of looking at practitioners who find certain practices, researcher Elizabeth Shove proposes to turn the picture upside down and look at how “habits” find people to be carried out (Shove 2009). This comment links well to the proposed strategy of re-framing a practice to attract new practitioners. Could practices better enter people’s everyday routines in the style of a trojan horse?

Based on these findings, I deduce the following refined research question and a set of sub-question for the desk study:

**RQ2** How can design help to re-frame sustainable practices as a learning experience resulting in increased eudaimonic well being?

**RSQ1** Which CoPs, with a background in “design interventions” or “social support” are there?

**RSQ2** Which everyday activities constitute their practice and how are the identified essentials of this work, such as eudaimonic well-being, fostered by these practices?

**RSQ3** How do these practices differ regarding their level of duplicability?

**RSQ4** How do these practices differ regarding their level of visibility?

### Research Methods

The overall approach during the field research is based on the action research format. Here, the researcher constructs knowledge in a “continuous learning process” (Koshy 2005 p.9). This means that based on the gained data, modifications can be made constantly to hone out the concept. In this thesis, a first set of data is collected via a desk study, followed by two surveys, and finally to the design of a case study. As part of this case study analysis, a questionnaire is then handed out to the participants.

### Desk study and field research

Based on the literature reviewed, two theories build the framework for the field research. Firstly, linking intrinsic values and eudaimonic well being to decreased consumption and simultaneously increased life satisfaction offers a way to change the image of sustainable lifestyles. To improve eudaimonia, the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence were identified as crucial. Consequently, activities which can satisfy those needs are explored during the fieldwork.

Secondly, the idea of a community of practice (CoP), which comes to
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Together once a week to learn skills, seems apt for promoting the aforementioned yet to be defined activities. Subsequently, three different areas of CoPs are further examined. The previously mentioned study circles or “Social Support” groups, as I will refer to them, seem to hold a great potential regarding their longer term impact due to the repetitive structure, their high level of trust due to the relatively small size, as well as finally their duplicability due to its simple structure. Here, I argue that the high level of trust and the regular meetings are key to satisfy the need for relatedness and to keeping people committed to a practice. The second area of CoPs are the “Design Intervention” groups, who generate alternative urban realities. They seem interesting due to the practical nature of their activities, the fact that they naturally train the imaginative skills of their participants and finally, provide a high visibility and accessibility due to the public nature of their interventions. Based on these conclusions, I argue that these communities and their activities can well satisfy the needs of autonomy and competence and can attract a wide variety of people. Finally, I see a grey area in between “Design Interventions” and “Social Support”, which I call “Design Support”. CoPs in this area apply “Design Intervention” skills such as imagination or even practical hands-on making. At the same time, the “Design Support” CoPs show similarities to “Social Support” groups as well, as they use empathic skills and possibly show a longer term impact by either providing a fixed location or tools which stay with the participants. Finally, based on a desk study research of 18 cases from these 3 areas regarding their activities, impact, duplicability and accessibility, I deduce the following refined research questions.

RSQ1 What impact does regular peer-to-peer support show amongst the participants in comparison to one-off projects?
RSQ2 Which practices show the most improved eudaimonic well-being, i.e. increased openness, competence and autonomy amongst participants?
RSQ3 How have former or existing participants managed to inspire their respective peers to take new actions or develop new CoPs?
RSQ4 In which places of engagements can people of different backgrounds and values cross each other’s paths on a regular basis?

These assumptions are then examined via a survey with a total of 6 cases from the three categories of CoPs mentioned previously. Furthermore, another survey is conducted with the target group, which is students at the end of their studies. This target group is chosen partly due to pragmatic reasons, that means, being a student myself it is easy to reach out to them. However, the primary reason for this choice is based on the assumption that the change from being a student to a full-time employee will most likely bring along new consumption behaviours due to the sudden increase of income and decrease of time.

The results of the first survey with CoPs show no best practices on how to satisfy the aforementioned needs for eudaimonic well being. However, the practitioners agree that regular learning experiences play a crucial role for the respective goal of their CoP. In the second survey a great majority of students point to bars and music venues for attracting a mix of people as well as having a dedicated group and intrinsic motivation as the key to commitment.

The “Afterwork Maker Sessions”

The findings from the literature and the first part of the field work lead to the following design brief.

Goal: Creating a set of events which can attract and keep new audiences to sustainable practices as well as connect them to the established clientele.

Strategy: By providing enriching experiences related to sustainability topics while framing them primarily as a design and learning experiences. Furthermore, choosing existing social places, like bars, cafés or sports facilities as locality to foster a regular exchange between new and established audiences.

Based on this design brief, 5 concepts are generated. While initially aiming at applying design skills on more substantial questions of the participants life, pragmatic reasons such as the time scope and my rather small experience in facilitating, lead to the choice of a different concept. The “Afterwork Maker Sessions” centre around up-cycling practices, but are framed as “designing while enjoying a drink”. As part of a case study analysis, a questionnaire helps to examine whether the highly visible place at the bar terrace can attract new practitioners, and whether they return to further sessions. Furthermore it is studied, whether the activities improve their feeling of competence and subsequently their image of sustainability.
Part 2 presents a literature review, consisting of 6 chapters. The first chapter (2.1.) of the literature review provides evidence as to why the proposed change on a personal level is necessary. Next (2.2.), the establishment of the market society and its implicit definitions of work and prosperity, as well as various critiques are examined. Here, it is outlined how intrinsic values can be a source of increased personal well-being, as well as decreased consumption. In the following chapter (2.3.) eudaimonic well-being, which is based on inner growth, is defined. Furthermore, it is explored why a lifestyle based on intrinsic values is difficult to adopt despite its promising nature. Thus, this part examines psychology research on needs and well-being as well as fear and motivation. Since the proposed goal is to create experiences which attract new participants, the next chapter (2.4.) focuses on the community of practice as a form of experiential learning. The literature review concludes with an overview on how design has emerged from creating products to working on the change of social practices (2.5.). Based on these findings, the objective of this thesis and the research questions are refined (2.6.).

2.1. TRANSFORMING PREREQUISITES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

“Further, the entire population, as well as future generations, suffers from the effects of environmental degradation and cultural disintegration.”
(Thorpe 2012 p.25)

The entire population suffers from environmental impacts. This is presumably mainly due to climate change, which is one of the most critical problems mankind is facing. Evidently, human activity is at the root of this problem due to the emission of greenhouse gases (The World Bank 2014 in Welzer and Sommer 2014 p.27 ff). While these gases lead to an increased temperature, the earth’s complex system will reach a disbalance which in turn will result in various catastrophes affecting the life of humans (Welzer 2008 in Welzer and Sommer 2014 p.31 ff). Research further points out that climate change is “just” one of several ecological crises mankind is responsible for, since further two of the nine “planetary boundaries” have already been pushed over a limit which is seen as crucial for human life on earth (Rockström et al. 2009 in Welzer and Sommer 2014 p.32 ff).

Human activities have increased exponentially due to the capitalistic economy based on permanent growth - a concept which remains largely unchallenged (Altvater 2015 p.16ff) and therefore is referred to as the growth-paradigm. Underlying this specific paradigm is that growth - defined as the constant increase of production and consumption of goods and services measured in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - is needed for the stability of the current economic system and therefore society’s wealth and well-being (Altvater 2015 p.16ff) (The terms wealth and well-being will be further defined in chapter 2.1. and 2.2.). While the assumption that growth is needed for the stability of the current economic system might be the case, being a paradigm, there is little questioning regarding this system’s supposed efficacy for societal well-being (Jackson 2011 p.3) and whether there might be other more adequate approaches instead (Jackson 2011 p.61 ff.). Furthermore, proponents do not question the paradoxical proposal of infinite growth on a finite planet, i.e. a planet with limited resources (Welzer and Sommer 2014 p.13; Altvater 2015 p.16 ff).

Additionally, not just the environment’s condition is becoming a threat to society, but also society itself is undermining its base values, such as the common good, equal rights and fair conditions for all. The constant strive for an accumulation of goods does not provide an effective source of well-being after having satisfied a certain base level of needs (Skitovsky 1976 and Worcester 1998 cited in Jackson 2004 p.21-22)(chapter 2.2 will deal more closely with the definition of needs). Quite the opposite, the accumulation of goods and wealth leads to an increasingly unequal society. The rise in inequality for example impacts the health of those positioned lower in their respective countries, such as the United Kingdom (Jackson et al. 2007 cited in Jackson 2011 p.53).

The paradox situation that society is currently based on infinite growth while living on a finite planet, became clear to a wider audience already decades ago with publications such as “The Limits To Growth”. Being the first widely acknowledged academic report, it was followed by the
“Brundtland Report”, which popularized the term “Sustainability” (Park-er 2007 p.277). From this time on, sustainability has often been used by many as a synonym for the then proposed term Sustainable Development (SD), which is described as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. (Ibid., p.277 f.) However, I strongly agree with other voices calling Sustainable Development “a contradiction in terms”. (Ibid., p.277 f.) This is due to the fact that in this context, development synonymously describes economic growth, i.e. increased production and consumption which again is based on resource depletion (Welzer 2014 p.21).

Although there are different perspectives on the frame of sustainability, it is obvious that human behaviour must respect certain boundaries and show responsibility. Diverse actors agree that the three main domains for such responsible behaviour are the environment, society and economy which are thus referred to as the three pillars of sustainability or the triple bottom line (TBL) (Hacking and Guthrie 2008 p.77). Consequently, sustainability can only be reached when all three areas are respecting certain boundaries.

The designer Stuart Walker, has proposed another term which is based on the concept of TBL. Coined quadruple bottom line of sustainability, it essentially adds the personal identity or inner self as another factor (Walker 2011). More specifically he talks about “economic means/ money as means to an end”, practical meaning/ apt response to environment”, “social meaning/ apt response to the people” and “personal meaning/ apt response to the inner self”. Emphasizing the inner self, fits well into the picture that various voices in the field of social innovation advocate a change of personal lifestyle patterns in order to address the environmental and societal crises (Murray et al. 2010). After all, the construct of identity and the inherent beliefs and values are at the core of our behaviour and thus, should be included more in sustainability discussions (Kasser 2009 p.7 ff.) (Scharmer 2011 p.111 ff).

Put in very personal words, what is the point in talking about climate change and an unjust society, if at the very same time most Western people – including obviously some of the sustainability advocates - contradict all this by the very way they “act” in their everyday life. Whether they want it or not, most people will quite naturally follow the path that Western society proposes regarding the way we think as well as the goals we set for our lives and our well being. Usually, everybody (including myself) strives for recognition, for which they compete and work hard. However, income and status remain the classic indicators for success and consequently the supposed source of our well-being. By no means is consumption generally evil, but its central role in Western societies combined with its demonstrated inefficacy for well-being is clearly pathological. Therefore, talking about, e.g. climate change, while most people automatically rely on consumption and status to feel well, seems valuable but contradicting.

Thus, the question arises how to challenge the growth and consumption paradigm? According to Donella Meadows a paradigm can be described as “... an idea, an unstated assumption that everyone shares, thoughts, or states of thoughts that are sources of systems.” (Meadows in Surhone et al 2010 p.59 ff) Interestingly, the Neurobiologists Maturana and Varela talk in very similar fashion about tradition, describing it as behaviour which has become so widely accepted over time that it happens automatically (Maturana & Varela 1998 p.242). Breaking with such automatisms can happen - according to Meadows - via repeatedly pointing out the apparent contradictions to open minded people (Meadows in Surhone et al 2010 p.59 f).

At this point, a central issue for my work becomes apparent, namely the “in-group” of open-minded people when it comes to advocating change. Will a paradigm really shift if “change makers” keep addressing the open-minded people? Presumably no, since the size of this group is restricted. Should the goal then rather be to increase the size of the open-minded in-group? This again, as Maturana and Varela outline in their book “The tree of knowledge”, will be quite a challenge. In order to become aware of a new perspective, some people might first need to learn that different perspectives coexist and that they might not be seeing “the” but “a” world (Ibid p.245). In this regard, my contribution in the field work aims to provide people experiences, which demonstrate an alternative source for well-being instead of classic consumption. Thus, I hope to shift their perspective in a very subtle and less confrontational way. However, before further defining well being, chapter 2 will have a look at the history of the market economy and its critiques.

2.2. A SELECTION OF CRITIQUES ON MARKET ECONOMY AND GROWTH

The economy and its stability are at the top of political agendas in
most countries of today (Daly cited in Jackson 2011 p. xi). Therefore, it seems that being economic is the most valuable characteristic an action or thing can have in society. Underlying this model is the belief that human behaviour is naturally aiming at maximising financial profit (Polanyi 2001 p.71) and thus, a narrow minded focus on the power of financial capital as means for well-being dominates the western world view. In this regard, work is only a means for earning money which helps to satisfy needs through consumption and thereby increase well-being (Jackson 2004 p.21). Therefore, in the following sections, the dominating economic system, its specific definition of labour and prosperity as well as possible alternative proposals shall be examined.

When describing the economic system, it should be noted that this thesis will refer to the market economy instead of capitalism. The term capitalism derives from capital, which “describes any asset, including money, machines or even factories, which can be used or invested to make future assets” (Giddens 2006 p.16). In this system, the means for production are privately owned, work is organized in efficient manner and the goal is the accumulation of profits (Weber 1920 p.xvii)(Weber 1920 p.xxiv). However, it seems plausible to state that the term is often used in an overly ideological form and thus for many people implies a certain judgement. For this reason that the term “Market Economy”, which some use synonymously for capitalism while others describe it as a part of capitalism, will be used in the following.

2.2.1. LABOUR AND PROSPERITY IN THE MARKET ECONOMY

“The crucial point is this: labor, land, and money are essential elements of industry; they also must be organized in markets; in fact, these markets form an absolutely vital part of the economic system. But labor, land, and money are obviously not commodities.” (Polanyi 2001 p.75)

As pointed out above, the importance of the elements labour, land and money for the economic system is obvious. However, at the same stage it is evident that they are not commodities in the classic sense of the market economy, which defines commodities as being produced solely for the sake of sale. In this regard Polanyi goes on to state that labour “is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself”. (Ibid., p.75-76) As it can be seen, labour is something deeply rooted in human life. After all anything that humans do, no matter if it is physical labour like moving and building something or mental activity, requires input. Yet the then formed definition by the market economy implies that is an action produced in order to gain financial profits. Hence, it seems that the philosophy at the base of the market economy is somewhat flawed when it comes to the definition of money, land and labour as commodities.

Since there are obviously two very different perspectives on the function of labour, namely labour done for financial profits and labour done to reach other forms of value, section 2.2.2 will specify this term further. This section continues with a closer look at the relation of labour and the terms wealth and well-being. It has been shown in the first chapter, that the term GDP measures the production and use of all goods in a society and is, possibly erroneously used as an indicator for a society’s wealth and well-being. The term wealth in this regard was popularized by Adam Smith’s seminal publication “Wealth of Nations” where he argues that the personal strive of humans creates the wealth of the group (A. Smith 1776; 1909 p.19 cited in V. L. Smith 1998 p.1). As the economist Vernon L. Smith notes, Adam Smith has pointed out seemingly contradictory behaviours in his other main work “The Theory of Moral Sentiments”:

“How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.” (A. Smith 1759; 1976 p.9 cited in V. L. Smith 1998 p.1)

However, Vernon L. Smith argues that these views are not contradictory, since people can behave both selfish in “large group markets” to maximise the profits and unselfish in “small-group social transactions” at the same time (Smith 1998 p.1 ff).

Contrary to the idea of wealth, terms like prosperity (e.g. Tim Jackson), well-being (e.g. the New Economics Foundation) or even happiness (e.g. Happy Planet Index) have recently been used with the intention to more holistically define the status of society at a specific point in time. This thesis will rely on the term well-being which relates both to happiness and the realization of human potentials and chapter 2.3. will define well-being further. Coming back to the relation between labour and
well-being, it was shown that - in market economic terms - labour is not done for the sake of satisfying a need directly, but in order to reach financial gains. With these financial gains so the logic goes, people can then satisfy all their needs. The more gains they score, the more commodities can be consumed thus, theoretically, leading to a higher satisfaction and well-being. A postulate, which is increasingly criticised by various research over the past decades (Jackson 2011 p.1-16). Furthermore, it is obvious that measuring the total of economic activities is related to a question of quantity instead of to a question of quality regarding the labour being done. Hence, it can be concluded that the prevailing economic perspective on well-being does not look at what role the quality of labour as well as generally other sources play for well-being (Ibid.). In fact, mainstream economic theory is built on the belief that people feel indifferent about what they experience. Activities are therefore chosen, based on what can be reached through them. Consequently, it becomes apparent that the relation of labour and well-being in the market economy derives from a rather inhumane perspective. Similar to the dominating economic system as such, it raises some doubts regarding its efficacy and widespread acceptance.

As the previous chapters pointed out, the growth paradigm - infinite growth on a finite planet in order for economy and thus society to function and be well - is largely unchallenged. However, there is an increasing number of critics, which will be looked at in the next section, including proposals from the post-growth movement.

2.2.2. "SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL" AND THE "DEGROWTH" MOVEMENT

“What is the meaning of democracy, freedom, human dignity, standard of living, self-realization, fulfillment? Is it a matter of goods, or of people? Of course it is a matter of people. But people can be themselves only in small comprehensible groups.” (Schumacher 2013 p.78)

A couple of years ago, the researcher Tim Jackson had helped to jump start the discussions regarding the relation between GDP growth and well-being. In his book "Prosperity without Growth", which is largely building upon Peter Victor’s "Steady State" economic model for Canada, he indicates that there are indeed ways to a prospering society without relying on the growth paradigm (Thorpe 2012 p.24). However, similar proposals have been made already decades ago.

In 1973 the late German British economist E.F. Schumacher proposed small-scale local and sustainable production in his book “Small is beautiful”. Due to his experiences as chief economic advisor for the national coal board of the UK, he revealed the following problematic patterns of a growth based economy dominating society (Parker 2007 p.246). As it has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the growth based economy only deals with quantitative matters and thus proposes growth no matter which growth it is and what it is for (Schumacher 2013 p.53-54). In such a system everything is treated as equal because numbers provide the value (Ibid., p.51). Therefore, the most important characteristic any action can have is being economical (Ibid., p.48). Such imperatives show that means are put above goals and result in constantly refined technology for its own sake instead of being addressed at a societal need (Ibid., p.57). Furthermore, the characteristic of growth is increased productivity and therefore a new human-labour-relation. This relation is definitely not meaningful anymore (Ibid., p.149) and happens at an unnatural size regarding its organisation (Ibid., p.77). From this perspective the system’s purpose is apparently not the top priority, but the system is kept running solely for the sake of running.

Instead of following this “idolatry of gigantism” (Schumacher in Parker 2007 p.246), Schumacher suggests scaling down economic organization to what he describes as the “human size” (Schumacher 2013 p.157). This derives from his aforementioned understanding that a locally organized small-scale production will better serve the human purposes and will enable them to find meaning in their respective labour. Schumacher further proposes the term “intermediate technologies”, which are aimed at supporting people in their self-support and thrive for sufficiency (Ibid., p.157). Instead of delivering something ready-made and thus taking away labour as fulfilling essence of life, such technology would go back to its original meaning, i.e. being a support for mankind. A strong notion of sufficiency is also seen in what he calls the “Buddhist Economics”. Such economics would aim at the “Right Livelihood” instead of maximum profit (Parker 2007 p.246-247)(Schumacher 2013 p.62).

In conclusion, it can be said that “Small is Beautiful” not only suggests a smaller scale organization pattern, resembling a community, but also scaling down the economic activities as such, in order to treat the environment and the people with dignity instead of harming them.

Recently, other actors have drawn attention with a framework, which is based on very similar concepts. Originating from the same time as
“Small is Beautiful”, the term “Degrowth” was proposed by the economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen and then propagated in France by Serge Latouche as “Decroissance” according to his native language (Parker 2007 p.69).

The proponents of this movement again point out how the GDP does merely measure production and consumption while it completely ignores the environmental damage caused by the very same activities. Furthermore they also oppose the aforementioned concept of SD or green growth, as all improvements made with better technologies are more than cut back again by the increased production (Ibid.). Instead they argue, similar to Schumacher, that while some countries might still need to grow their economy, the western world definitely needs to de-grow, i.e. negative growth of the GDP (Nørgård 2011 p.61)(Muraca 2015 p.108-111). Such a de-growth however, would not resemble the misery of accidental de-growth, as experienced regularly when the current system is in a regression (Ibid.). Instead of leading to sacrifice or joylessness, by freeing people’s well-being from the growth imperative, they could become more autonomous and resilient (Ibid.). This is due to the accordingly minimized amount of labour done by each person, which again will give people time to take care of their own needs instead of outsourcing them, resulting in autonomy and joy (Ibid.). However the “Degrowth” activists do not provide a specific ready-made-solution as to how the transition to such an economy will be reached, since the necessary steps will be of different nature according to their local contexts (Ibid.)

During this section evidence was provided that the earlier critique of the dominating economic model is continued by various models with the potential to render the old one obsolete. With the introduction of these models and terms like “Steady State”, “Human Scale” or “Degrowth”, labour, unsurprisingly, plays an essential role yet again. Hence, the last part of this chapter will deal specifically with different notions of the term labour and how intrinsically motivating work and time relate to well-being.

2.2.3. TIME AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AS FACTORS FOR PERSONAL WELL-BEING

“If the nature of the work is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body. It nourishes and enlivens the higher man and urges him to produce the best he is capable of (…)”

(Kumarappa cited in Schumacher 2013 p.60-61)

As stated above, work, when experienced in a certain way, is not only an essential part of life, but can be a powerful source for personal development and well-being. Since the aforementioned statement centres around the term work, while Polanyi, the author cited earlier in this chapter, mostly relied on the word labour, it also seems worthwhile to briefly investigate whether they - on purpose or not – indicate two different notions of activities. The following differentiation is proposed by Lewis Hyde in his book “The Gift”. Here, he describes work as an activity done by the hour and usually for money, such as assembly line work. Labour on the contrary is something like raising children. It is an activity which "[...] sets its own pace. We may get paid for it, but it’s harder to quantify...". (Hyde 1980. p.112 f) This statement indicates that there are two very different kind of actions, which can be described by labour or work and thus shall be looked at closer. However since this thesis’ scope will not allow for further philosophical or etymological debate, in the following chapters labour and work will be used synonymously for human actions requiring input. Next, alternative terms to further differentiate the two matters will be looked at.

The two areas indicated can be distinguished in another way as Nørgård, a researcher affiliated with the “Degrowth” movement, points out. While work here is referred to as any human activity which aims at an output no matter if it is rewarded financially, the conventional money-driven economy is referred to as the professional economy and the other activities are part of the amateur economy, since they are being done for the love of it (Nørgård 2011 p.63). It becomes evident that although both economies refer to activities which require input, there are two differentiating factors namely motivation and time. Furthermore, whether or not something is intrinsically motivating, i.e. it is done for the sake of itself, seems to have consequences on personal well-being as the author points out further:

“...In the amateur or voluntary economy the very production activities, the process, is by definition a source of direct personal satisfaction, while in the professional economy such satisfaction is often lacking. In the professional economy, the lack of intrinsic satisfaction is
Thus, it seems plausible to link the Kumararappa quote at the beginning of this section, to work done for its own sake. This type of work is not solely rewarding the respective practitioner with a result, but also with a fulfilling process, which does not necessarily have a fixed time frame. It is the very opposite to the work in the conventional economy, which is aiming at maximum financial gain through efficiency, i.e. as much production in as little time possible. Similarly, Ezio Manzini, who researches on design for social innovation, describes this type of work as “meaningful work”, that means tasks which make up the basic everyday life, but are usually not considered as work (Manzini 2015 p.24).

At this point, it seems worthwhile to briefly examine why, despite advanced technologies, people still seem to not have enough time. The historian Gary S. Cross describes how at the beginning of the 20th century, the increasing productivity lead many to hope for increased “Democratic Leisure” time in their everyday life (Cross 1993 in Fischer et al. 2013 p.123). Here, leisure was not seen as doing nothing, but more as a time for purposefulness and participation – in short for self-development. Interestingly, since “Democratic Leisure” requested to use the increased productivity for free time instead of economic output, hedonistic pursuits might align well with growth criticism. However, presumably due to pressure from industries and politics as well as the world wars, Western societies went on to make use of their free time through consumerism instead of the increased leisure in the above-mentioned understanding (Ibid). Consequently, the new notion of free time lead to a clear separation between work and the “other” time, which was increasingly used to consume goods instead of producing for your own use.

It is also interesting to take a more specific look at the relation between humans perceived lack of time and a growth-based economy as such. As Hartmut Rosa points out, all rates of apparent time-efficient development, have brought along an ever increasing net of time-occupying opportunities, thus eradicating any possible advantage (Rosa 2015 p.42). While time again as such can not be pushed or prolonged, it means that people have to split their time for far more actions or interactions. Consequently, they can not immerse in an activity, but are left with a feeling of permanent stress instead (Ibid.). This can be linked directly to the economic system of today. Acceleration is the increase or growth of a matter during a specific unit of time, e.g. the increase of a nation’s production during a year (Ibid.). Thus, a growth-based economy will inevitably continue to further diminish the perceived amount of time available (Ibid.). Likewise, it becomes apparent that the problem is not acceleration as such, but rather when it leads to a feeling of distance towards oneself, the own activities or the people around (Ibid.). Hence, it is plausible to state that the perceived lack of time is directly linked to the implications of the market system. It results in a growing distance both towards other people and the inner self.

What does this finding mean for the Degrowth Movement’s proposal? Their plan is to de-grow the economy by moving activities from the professional back to the amateur sector (Nørgård 2011 p.62ff), which would be positive for the environment due to less throughput and the society due to more human forms of organizing. However, it might also increase the well-being of each person as such. The reason for this is increased autonomy and competence, which have been shown to be amongst the most essential needs for personal well-being (Ryan and Deci 2001 p.151). A sufficient lifestyle therefore does not necessarily mean sacrifice but possibly increased well-being.

This perspective sheds a different light on current campaign strategies, applying images of imminent catastrophes. Such an approach might lead people to see changing their lifestyles - which is necessary in the light of pressing problems such as climate change - as a sacrifice (Kasser 2009a pp.15–16). Now, however, it seems plausible to state that, what is good for the planet, can be good for the individual as well. Citing Kasser, Tim Jackson puts it this way:

“People with higher intrinsic values are both happier and have higher levels of environmental responsibility than those with materialistic values.” (Jackson 2011 p.149)

Furthermore, when looking at campaigning again, it should be examined if the positive experience of an alternative behaviour in the everyday life, could possibly work as a catalyst for more people to become determined to change further routines. However, it should be noted that it is out of this thesis’ scope to research whether or not the gained confidence in one topic could lead to a more substantial behaviour change, as this would require a time span of multiple years.

To summarize, this section pointed out that some activities, no matter if
referred to as labour or work, professional or amateur economy, should be separated into intrinsically and extrinsically motivating activities according to their underlying motivation and time frame. Furthermore, evidence was provided that intrinsically motivating work, has a more positive effect on people’s well-being by satisfying essential needs. The next chapter will take a closer look on needs. Thus, their essential role for the proposed change from a consumerist lifestyle to a lifestyle based on sufficiency and intrinsic goals will be pointed out.

2.3. EUDAIMONIA - A WELL BEING BASED ON INNER GROWTH

As I argued earlier, the identity plays an essential role when it comes to transforming society towards a more sustainable and resilient one. That is due to the fact that culturally formed identity consists of many automatisms, which again influence daily behaviour (Kasser 2009 p.7 ff.). Since western contemporary culture is based largely on competition and consumption, a considerable part of people’s personal life is structured in a way which is paradoxical but largely unchallenged (Welzer and Sommer 2014 p.21). In order to overcome such structures, people need to become aware of the problems and learn of alternative behaviour. In this regard, it was mentioned that experiencing alternative behaviours might be a much more successful campaigning method than the dominating concept of calling people to sacrifice and trying to motivate them by emphasizing threats (Kasser 2009a pp.55-56).

Since it was proposed that the aforementioned intrinsically motivating actions could not only serve the needs of the planet, but also the needs of people better, the following pages will provide a more specific definition of well-being and needs. Furthermore, sufficiency-based and materialistic lifestyles will be compared more precisely, before the final section looks at motivational theory and willpower.

2.3.1. THEORIES ON NEEDS AND WELL-BEING

“Though we are sometimes inclined to believe that such debates are a modern phenomenon, they can be dated (at least) to the Stoic philosophy of the 1st Century BC.” (Jackson 2004 p.19)

Needs have been at the centre of theories on well-being since the time of the ancient Greek and have been discussed by a variety of philosophers as well as psychologists. They can be described as “underlying internal forces that drive or guide our actions”. (Ibid p.7)

The most known theory about needs stems from Abraham Maslow and is usually shown as a pyramid of hierarchical needs, which need to be satisfied first, in order for the needs of the next levels to come into functioning (Ibid. p.8 f.). However, due to critique regarding the hierarchical order of physical and transcendent needs, Maslow partly revised his model later on, stating that there is an obvious strive for both of them at the same time (Ibid.). Furthermore as research points out, there is an individualistic nature to this theory which makes it easy to avoid e.g. actions to support climate change, simply because other personal needs are more pressing (Douglas et al. 1998 in Jackson 2004 p.10). Thus, it can be inferred that Maslow’s theory provides a good starting point for the discussion on needs, but lacks further dimensions.

This led Max-Neef to propose a theory based on nine “axiological” needs and four “existential” categories (Jackson 2004 p.11). While there are some common needs in both theories, Max-Neef unlike others, distinguishes between needs and satisfiers, i.e. if there is something missing, the individual can be motivated to do something in order to satisfy her need (Ibid. p.12). While there are only a few needs, the list of satisfiers consist of many different ones, depending on the cultural background (Ibid. p.13). Apart from the interaction between axiological value driven needs and existential needs, it is the concept of satisfiers which can be seen as Max-Neef’s essential contribution to the discussion.

The question arises how to differentiate satisfiers and what role the aforementioned work experiences can fulfil in this matrix? Max-Neef separated these various satisfiers into destroyers, pseudo-satisfiers, i-
Habituating satisfiers, singular satisfiers and synergistic satisfiers (Ibid. p.14 f.). Inhibiting satisfiers get in the way of another need, while singular satisfiers only fulfil one goal. Synergistic satisfiers, finally, may satisfy various needs at once, thus being the most powerful ones (Ibid.). Combining this theory with the previous findings of the possible uplifting nature of intrinsically motivating work, it becomes apparent that such activities could satisfy most of the needs mentioned by Max-Neef. Clearly, it can satisfy the need for subsistence, understanding and creation, but also the needs for affection, participation and identity could be met in a specific work experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEING</th>
<th>HAVING</th>
<th>DOING</th>
<th>INTER- ACTING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBSISTENCE</td>
<td>physical health</td>
<td>food, shelter</td>
<td>feed, work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTECTION</td>
<td>adaptability, autonomy</td>
<td>health systems</td>
<td>co-operate, help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFECTION</td>
<td>sensuality, humour</td>
<td>family, friendships</td>
<td>share, make love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td>intuition, curiosity</td>
<td>literature, teachers</td>
<td>analyse, study</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>dedication</td>
<td>duties, rights</td>
<td>express opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEISURE</td>
<td>imagination, spontaneity</td>
<td>games, parties</td>
<td>day-dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATION</td>
<td>imagination, curiosity</td>
<td>skills, abilities</td>
<td>invent, build</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
<td>sense of belonging</td>
<td>values, language</td>
<td>grow, commit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREEDOM</td>
<td>autonomy, passion</td>
<td>equal rights</td>
<td>dissent, awareness</td>
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</table>

Fig. 2 after Max-Neef cited in Jackson 2004

However, before analysing further how needs support well-being, it seems worthwhile to point out that research on well-being is informed by two very different concepts. The first perspective can be referred to as "hedonism" and links well-being to pleasure and happiness (Kahneman et al. 1999 in Ryan and Deci 2001 p.3), while the second concept can be referred to as "eudaimonism" (Waterman 1993 in Ryan and Deci 2001 p.3) and derives from "realizing one’s daimon or true nature" (Ryan and Deci 2001 p.3). Thus, it seems plausible to state that there are overlapping thoughts between the eudaimonic concept and the top level of Maslow’s needs pyramid. Opposite to this, the concept of hedonism can be linked to the thoughts of utilitarianism, which states that striving for maximum personal gain is the base for well-being of a group of people (Ibid. p.4). As it was pointed out in 2.2. these are the very thoughts on which the market economy is based.

Next, the possible relation between hedonism and market economy shall be looked at more closely. For the proponents of the hedonic concept, subjective happiness on a physical and mental level, i.e. the relation between pleasant and unpleasant experiences, is the very essence of well-being (Ibid.). Research on human pleasure and displeasure in modern hedonic psychology mainly applies the so-called subjective well-being (SWB) (Diener & Lucas 1999 in Ryan and Deci 2001 p.4). SWB looks into the three categories of “life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood and the absence of negative mood, together often summarized as happiness”. (Ibid.) The psychologist Erich Fromm outlined further how hedonism provides the base principles for the current economic system (Jackson 2004 p.20):

“(1) that the aim of life is happiness, that is maximum pleasure, defined as the satisfaction of any desire or subjective need a person may feel (radical hedonism); (2) that egotism, selfishness, and greed, as the system needs to generate them in order to function, lead to harmony and peace.” (Fromm 1976 in Jackson 2004 p.20)

From this perspective, it seems that the hedonic school of thought is not only linked to the dominating economic system, but a part of it. However, as it was previously outlined by Cross’ thoughts on leisure, there are also perspectives, which relate “Hedonism” not necessarily to the market society but also to growth critique. Scitovsky for example points to the distinction between pleasure and comfort. The latter can be described as the avoidance of pain or “the saving of effort, bother, and skill” (Scitovsky 1992 p.113) and resembles what Fromm states above. Pleasure, on the contrary, results out of engagement in challenging activities, which sometimes may be observed as being undesirable, but finally are very rewarding (Ibid. p.69).

More recently, coining the term “Alternative Hedonism”, the philosopher Kate Soper is “looking to self-interest as a motive for opposing the status quo” (Soper 2008 p.573) According to her, the current consumerist lifestyle will not be questioned, if there is no aesthetic or “seductive” alternative definition of “the good life”. At the same time, the dominat-
Consumerism as a social and economic pattern that emphasizes two areas. The first is the pursuit of material wealth, the frequent acquisition and accumulation of things. The second is the portrayal of oneself and one’s family in ways that compare favourably with commercially driven norms and ideas - the right “image.” (Thorpe 2012 p.20)

As Ann Thorpe describes it, the prevailing “mainstream” lifestyles tend to propose permanent consumption for short-term pleasure as the main source of well-being. Next, it shall be briefly examined to what extent these consumption based lifestyles satisfy essential needs for well-being. While it has been indicated that the managerial way of top-down organizing efficient work does not satisfy the needs for well-being, research points out that also materialism in general tends to result in feeling less autonomous and competent, as well as less affiliated (Kasser et al. 2004 pp.20-21). As research shows, the majority of people feel a con-
stant lack of time due to long working hours, which are based either on
growth-imperative lead policies or the wish for higher financial stand-
ards (de Graaf 2003 cited in Kasser 2009b p.179). This lack of time or a
feeling of acceleration (Rosa 2015 p.42) again means that there might
simply be not enough time to deal with one’s needs, such as social con-
tacts (Kasser 2009b p.179). Unsurprisingly, a materialistic lifestyle does
not seem to satisfy the essential needs for eudaimonic well-being.

On the contrary to materialism, the lifestyle emerging from the “De-
growth” proposals has a strong notion of sufficiency. As it was out-
lined in chapter 2.2.2., sufficiency can be described as consuming less
services and products while relying on existing infrastructures instead
of a constant strive for more advanced technology. To further define
sufficiency, a matrix by Sherwin and Bhamra will be used. According
to them, sufficiency can be described as adopting new behaviours while
relying on existing technologies (Sherwin and Bhamra 2000 p. 52).

In the following it shall briefly looked at how a sufficiency based life-
style can satisfy the previously defined needs. The previous chapter
pointed out already that intrinsically motivating activities have a pos-
itive effect on an individual’s feeling of autonomy and competence
(Kasser 2009b p.175). Furthermore, SDT has pointed out that the feel-
ings of autonomy and competence can also be fostered by the social
context (Deci & Ryan 2002 in Kasser 2009b p.175). Since work which is
done for its own sake is not based on efficiency and control like it is the
case in the conventional economy it can be assumed that any commu-
nication efforts will be more supportive and less controlling. However,
when looking at competence and self-sufficiency, the question arises
whether relying on oneself could in the beginning lead to a feeling of
decreased competence, as many ordinary everyday activities have been
outsourced and monetized (Kasser 2009b p.176). At the same time, it
is likely that in the long run, the feeling of managing one’s own life
is more rewarding than is the life of a passive consumer (Ibid. p.177).
Furthermore, such lifestyles would inevitably bring along small scale
local productions which again are likely to better satisfy the need for
affiliation within a community (Ibid.). It is also worthwhile to point to
the positive influence such a lifestyle change has, when it is done on a
voluntary basis and that not only intrinsic actions, but already intrinsic
life goals are linked to increased well-being (Ibid. p.179). Consequently,
it can be stated that a sufficient lifestyle can well serve the essential
needs linked to eudaimonic well-being.

This section provided evidence how a sufficiency based lifestyle can
better satisfy the previously defined needs for well being than a materi-
alistic lifestyle. In the following it shall now be looked at possible hin-
drances for overcoming consumerist lifestyles. More specifically, it will
be discussed how materialism might relate to fear and cultural norms.

2.3.3. MATERIAL ACCUMULATION
TO OVERCOME DEATH

Since there is a promising alternative lifestyle at hands, the question
arises - why has it not been adapted yet on a larger scale? This is most
likely due to a number of reasons, but their discussion is beyond the
scope of this thesis. However, to point out one possible reason, the rela-
tion between fear and materialism should be looked at more closely.
In fact, experiments based on the terror management theory (TMT) have
shown, how human existential angst exacerbates thirst for materialism
(Arndt et al. 2004 p.199). The concept of TMT is based on the work of
Ernest Becker, who combined theories from Kierkegaard and diverse
psychoanalysts, to state that humans knowledge of the inevitability of
death is so unbearable that it is the very engine for any cultural value
system created (Ibid.). To overcome this fear, moral standards are set,
which can e.g. lead to a life after death or to seemingly perpetual values,
thus leaving a mark on earth (Ibid.). At this point it seems worthwhile
to note, that the protestant belief in the value of hard work no matter
what it is aimed at, is exactly such a moral standard (Weber 2001 in
Nørgård 2011 p.64). This attitude can still be observed in many Western
countries, despite the fact that the religious practice may have decreased
profoundly. In TMT the aforementioned knowledge of death’s inevita-
ability is referred to as Mortality Salience (MS) and is said to trigger an identification with the respective cultural world views and values (Ibid. 204). Since consumerism is a strong feature of the mainstream Western culture, triggering the fear of death will lead, amongst others, to increased materialistic behaviour, as various TMT studies have highlighted (Ibid.). From this perspective people’s insecurities and materialism seem to feature strong links.

Understanding this leads to several conclusions. First of all it can be stated that working for the sake of work, a similar dynamic to the one described as the growth-paradigm, is deeply rooted in many Western countries. What is more, using images of threat to motivate lifestyle changes could ironically lead to increased consumption. Therefore, the commonly used communication strategies of third sector parties might have the very opposite effect than originally planned. In conclusion, it can be inferred that people’s insecurities and feelings of competence should be dealt with specifically on the way to adapting a non-materialistic lifestyle.

During this section, it was pointed out that the hurdles for a lifestyle change, might lie deep within personal identity and cultural norms. Accordingly, theories on motivation and support might play a crucial role in such change processes. At the same time, the long lasting process of a lifestyle change is obviously far beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, the practical part of this work will need to narrow down the focus on practices related to a sufficient lifestyle. Still, it seems worthwhile to take a closer look on theories of motivation in the concluding section of this chapter.

2.3.4. CROSSING THE RUBICON: THOUGHTS ON MOTIVATION AND IMAGINATION

“making a decision means considering in order to build an intention” (Bieri 2003 p.61)

Theories on motivation and volition, i.e. the will, have been at the centre of Greek philosophical debates from the beginning and also lie at the core of many psychological theories. Logically, this section can only aim at introducing some of the existing concepts. Likewise, since the emergence of awareness, motivation, decision, volition and action seems to be intertwined, it will be necessary, at times, to move back and forth between those terms.

First, the term motivation shall be looked at more closely. Originating from the Latin word “movere”, motivation describes how people can be moved or animated to do something (Rudolph p.1). Obviously, the aforementioned various forms of needs (Ibid. p.3 ff.) as well as, according to some psychologists, also emotions can motivate certain behaviour (Ibid. p.16). However, motivational psychology does not look at the human behaviour in general, but at intended, i.e. chosen, actions (Ibid. p.5). The process of an intended action, according to Rudolph, can be separated into the following four phases: decision, latency (waiting period), intensity and persistence (endurance) (Ibid. p.6). In short, it can be stated that a person will first decide between the alternatives at hand and then make arrangements, in order to finally act according to her intention. The action itself can happen at different states of focus and might not be kept up, but discontinued at some stage. Apparently, not only the first step to act on or possibly change something, but also staying focused and keeping up the process is a complex endeavour requiring motivation.

Looking at “intended action” it becomes clear that this term describes nothing else than an action a person is willing to do. Therefore, the thoughts on the “free will” will be studied in the following. In his book “The craft of freedom” (Das Handwerk der Freiheit) philosopher Peter Bieri discusses to what extent humans have a free will at their disposal. According to Bieri, the will to do something is informed by a wish (Bieri p.37) and limited by the possibilities available in the environment (Ibid. p.38). In this remaining space, what somebody wants, will then further depend on needs, emotions, character or previous experiences (Ibid. p.51). As the author points out, there are obviously boundaries for volition, so the question arises how this limited volition can be steered? Speaking about decisions, for Bieri as well, the resulting action, is a sign of volition, prepared by thoughtful consideration, which can steer the volition into a specific direction (Ibid. p.54). Therefore, the extent to which the steering of volition via consideration is possible, is the extent to which the will is free (Ibid.).

Next, Bieri goes on to state that, as long as consideration takes place, the formation of will has not come to an end yet (Ibid. p.76). Since the relation between consideration and formation has also lead to psychological models such as the “Rubikon-Modell”, it seems worthwhile to briefly explore this research. The “Rubikon-Modell”, borrowing its name from Caesar’s decision to cross the river Rubicon and conquer Rome,
stems from Heckhausen & Gollwitzer (Rudolph p.206). It consists of four parts namely a consideration part called pre-decision phase, a planning part called pre-action phase, an action phase and a post-action phase, where the result is evaluated (Ibid. p.206 f.). The second and third phase are characterised by the power of volition and show decreased openness for information and an optimistic treatment of information supporting the goal (Ibid. p.209). On the contrary to this, the first and last phases show a more objective processing of information and an increased openness to consider as many options as possible (Ibid.). Having decided, it is of advantage to exclude certain information and treat the little information incoming optimistically in order to implement the specific plan. As can be seen, volition comes into existence from that moment on, when considering different options has lead to a decision.

Going one step back again, it is interesting to ask which abilities are important for the consideration phase prior to a decision? Looking at Bieri’s writings, first of all, two types of decisions are differentiated, namely instrumental and substantial. While the first one implies thinking about a means to reach a certain goal (Bieri p.55) the latter deals with far more essential wishes, e.g. what do I really want? (Ibid. p.62). Consequently such a decision might be between two or more incompatible wishes (ibid). As soon as someone takes such a decision, he or she identifies with the wish chosen (Ibid. p.65). Thus, the process can be described as a decision about who this person wants to be (Ibid.). According to him, both types of decisions will be informed, first and foremost, by an individual’s ability to imagine, as it requires a look into the future (Ibid.).

This idea of how imagination affects decisions reflects well what contemporary psychology can state about belief systems. Carol S. Dweck distinguishes between a “fixed” and a “growth” mindset (Dweck 2008). While people with a fixed mindset believe that you are born and “stuck” with certain talents and abilities, humans with a growth mindset see their identity as malleable (Ibid.). In her research, which has mainly focused on learning processes of students she observed that those with a growth mindset can deal much better with challenges, to a certain extent apparently because of their belief system (Ibid.). Consequently, Dweck describes what students need first and foremost is:

“... mindsets that represent challenges as things that they can take on and overcome over time with effort, new strategies, learning, help from others, and patience. When we emphasize people’s potential to change, we prepare our students to face life’s challenges resiliently.” (Yeager and Dweck 2012 p.312)

Interestingly, one could argue that the attitude found amongst the majority of people involved in design works is very similar. As will be demonstrated further in chapter 2.5., design is naturally contesting the status quo and usually an explorative process instead of fulfilling a given task. Coming back to the previously discussed term willpower, Dweck describes another example of how the belief of people can affect outcomes. One group believing that willpower was easily depleted when facing a set of challenges indeed suffered from having to do two strenuous tasks in a row. The other participants believing in a “non-limited theory” of willpower managed the challenging task no matter whether the first one was easy or already a challenge (Dweck 2012 p.619 f.).

To conclude, a few important findings regarding the motivation to join a practice can be summarized. First of all, it can be stated that the motivation to do something is informed by a consideration phase, which leads to a decision. Therefore, it seems plausible to say that becoming aware on a deeper level is necessary, as well as attaining the ability to imagine alternatives are needed. Secondly, it seems that both starting an action as well as keeping it up, is influenced by needs, possibly emotions, character traits and previous behaviour. Furthermore, whether or not people actually believe in being able to learn and acquire skills can strongly affect the outcome of a challenge. From this perspective I argue that regular positive learning experiences and support to overcome doubts will be a great asset for overcoming the challenges of changing one’s behaviour. Finally, it also seems valid to ask whether there are ex-
Based on the previous findings, it seems plausible to state that even though alternatives worth exploring are at hand, implementing them in the everyday life is rather difficult. Fear and incompetence, which come hand in hand with new experiences might diminish the motivation. Furthermore, as outlined by activist Michael Gecan, it is quite a challenge to pursue such changes in the values and patterns around you while also relying on the stability of those very same traditions (Thorpe 2012 p.170). Finally, the socio-economic system makes it hard for the individual to follow alternative paths on a regular basis, since time, a highly important resource for transformation, is increasingly scarce. However, there are many strategies to learn and “grow”, whether it be an individual or a community process. Both styles provide inspiration to motivate a more independent living as well as question personal routines. They can further help to provide support from others to keep up the process, when facing hurdles. Consequently, the next sections will give an overview on awareness raising techniques as well as experiential learning, to inform the practical part of this work.

2.4.1 MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION AS EXAMPLE FOR SUCCESSFULLY REFRAMING A PRACTICE

“...and find ways to speak about it that avoided as much as possible the risk of it being seen as Buddhist, ‘New Age,’ (...) this was a constant and serious risk that would have undermined our attempts to present it as commonsensical, evidence-based, and ordinary, and ultimately a legitimate element of mainstream medical care. (Kabat-Zinn 2011 p.282)

Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) is a technique developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn to bring the Buddhist doctrine “dharma” to Western mainstream everyday life (Ibid p.281). Being a medical doctor, his experiences with the transformative power of Buddhist contemplative practices lead Kabat-Zinn to join two totally different perspectives, namely science and meditation, to form a new approach (Ibid). Like other Buddhist practitioners he argues, that most people in the Western World see themselves separated from the World around them (Ibid p.284) and throughout their everyday life act routinely, with the mind often being somewhere else (Ibid p.298). The relocation of the focus back to the specific activity being done at this moment of time is one of the core principles of MBSR (Ibid). Likewise, the understanding that there is always a choice whether to identify with sensations and thoughts or not, has been shown to help people coping with stress, fear or pain (Ibid p.298).

Talking about the origins of creating this new approach Kabat-Zinn states, that he wanted to make it “accessible” to anybody who suffered from enduring pain and was eager to invest time on a daily basis to overcome it.

As can be seen Kabat-Zinn obviously had doubts whether - as he describes it - the mainstream Western World was ready for such techniques and disguised them in order to be accepted. Looking at the current state of MBSR it is obvious that this strategy has been very successful, as the exponential rise of research papers regarding mindfulness and the widespread MBSR courses show (Ibid p.284).

2.4.2 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING BASED ON ‘THEORY U’

Taking these individual methods of creating awareness into organisational learning practices, the German MIT-researcher Otto Scharmer has written books on the so-called “Theory U”. Building upon work of Rudolf Steiner and Fritz Glasl amongst others (Scharmer 2011 p.61), Scharmer managed to conceive a social technique called “presencing”, which he practiced with various organizations.

Scharmer shares the belief that most people’s actions are essentially re-actions, i.e. they follow patterns which are being “downloaded” instead of becoming aware of a situation’s full potential and act accordingly (Ibid). It is exactly this u-shaped curve of going from routinely downloading back to a point of awareness and out into a new direction of action which lends the theory its name. The first half of the u-curve - creating awareness - has been further specified as the three steps “suspension”, “redirection” and “letting go” by the previously mentioned
professor of cognitive science Francisco Varela (Ibid p.63). He points out how contemplative practices just like the previously mentioned MBSR essentially train people to endure to seemingly do nothing (suspension), move your attention from the external to the internal (redirection) and accept your experiences (letting go) (Ibid). He further states that it needs “time and coaching” similar to the training process in sports (Ibid.). Varelas thoughts underline, what has been mentioned earlier, namely that time and support are the most important resources for becoming aware on a deeper level and that this process requires practice.

However, this is only the first half of the u-curve, therefore Scharmer goes on to examine what the corresponding steps on the other side are (Ibid p.65 ff). In accordance to the three steps of becoming aware - “suspension”, “redirection” and “letting go” - he lists “letting come”, “enacting” and “embodying” (Ibid). Furthermore, he goes on to list capacities which are needed to go through these 6 thresholds identified above, namely downloading, seeing, sensing, presencing, crystallizing, prototyping and performing (Ibid). Instead of just downloading, the organization will therefore begin to observe the system from outside (seeing/observing) and from the inside (sensing) to arrive at a moment where the full potential becomes apparent (presencing). These new visions will need to become more dense (crystallizing), tried out (prototyped) and end up being performed in new routines, however it needs to be noted that these steps are not happening in a clear linear process but in a more lively one (Ibid).

Interestingly, these steps show very strong parallels to the design process. While chapter 2.5. will specifically examine the role of a designer, it seems worthwhile to briefly point out how the design process and “Theory U” overlap. During the first half of the design process, a designer would typically start by looking at a topic from various angles, get as close as possible to get a feeling for the situation and finally re-frame the initial brief. After that, ideas will be generated, concepts tested and finally at least one proposal will be implemented. Similar to Scharmer, the design researchers Wahl and Baxter also draw on Ken Wilber’s Spiral Dynamics, which looks at the development of a more holistic and purposeful perspective in life and the different stages of being on the way to reaching it. Wahl and Baxter point to the transformative nature of trying to understand the full potential of a situation by looking at it from different perspectives:

"Designers have to become more aware of the power of imagination and visioning at the metadesign level. As facilitators of transdisciplinary integration, designers can help to change culturally dominant worldviews and value systems.” (Wahl and Baxter 2008 p.82 ff)

While the final chapter will further explore the transformative role of designers, this subchapter closes by returning to Scharmer and the results of the “Theory-U” process. He points out that three main areas open up and transform during this process, namely the mind, i.e. from seeing new things to prototyping, the heart as the back-and-forth movement between external and internal as well as the will, describing the letting go and letting come (Ibid p. 67 ff). The opening of will is further described as essentially overcoming the fear of letting go whatever you are or have (Ibid p.71). To perform these transformations Scharmer calls for infrastructures, which enable coming together, reflect and practice new visions (Ibid p.72). Citing the sociologist Robert Wuthnow, he points out that 40% of people in the U.S. regularly participate in some form of support group already, with only half of them being connected to religious institutions (Ibid p.109). Furthermore, not only in private lives but also on an organisational level, spiritual- or vision-based techniques have increased and are now widely accepted (Ibid). This quest for a deeper meaning can be seen as a counterpart to the equally increasing fundamentalism of today, one of the differences being that the first group seeks to increase freedom while the latter aims at diminishing it (Ibid p.449). Likewise, it could also showcase an increasing counter narrative to the materialistic society.
Coming back to the needed infrastructures Scharmer asks for economical platforms, places for participatory decision making and new educational institutions as well as a dedicated group of practitioners (Ibid p.452 f). While the above mentioned infrastructures are long-term goals, the questions arises whether there are infrastructures which could be created more easily. Therefore, the next sub-chapter will explore the concept “Community of practice”.

2.4.3. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AS SITUATED AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”
(Wenger 2006)

A “community of practice” (CoP) is set up by people through meeting on a regular basis to advance in a shared field of interest. Examples include artists testing and sharing new ways of making, researchers collaborating on the solution for a problem or people supporting peers while experiencing a new situation (Ibid.). It becomes apparent that CoPs can describe a wide array of human interactions. Likewise, Etienne Wenger, one of the authors coining the term, points out that while the term is relatively new, the phenomenon it describes is “age old” (Ibid). According to him, there are three main constituents for a CoP, namely “the domain, the community and the practice” (Ibid 1f). The domain describes the shared area of interest which is common to all members and creates the identity of the group (Ibid). Likewise, the members share certain competences which make them belong to the group (Ibid). However, it should be noted that the competences and therefore the possible belonging might be unknown to a person. The term community points out that the members of a group regularly engage to share knowledge and help each other thus building relationships (Ibid). These meetings can differ in their frequency from every day to every few weeks (Ibid). Finally, practice refers to the fact that the members not only share an interest but practice it together and thus create a shared expertise (Ibid). However the meetings might just have the purpose of exchanging personal experiences in the collective, i.e. the members practise on their own and meet to discuss the problems and solutions they encountered. No matter how the form of a CoP is shaped, reaching the goals “takes time and sustained interaction” (Ibid).

Etienne Wenger research on CoPs is also closely linked to the term situated learning. At its core situated learning theory criticises the separation from knowledge and the context it is applied in, a routine usually still found in most present day schools (Wenger 2010 p.1) In situated learning however, there is a strong focus on the community of learners and their participation. CoPs can therefore be described as a social learning system.

Another learning theory, which links well to the concept of CoPs is experiential learning. Analysing the main thinkers of this field, namely Piaget, Dewey and Lewin, the scholar David A. Kolb is credited with framing the modern experiential learning theory. Learning can therefore be seen as a continuous process, where knowledge is created based on the interplay of action and reflection (Kolb 1984 p.21-23). Common to all works related to experiential learning is furthermore a certain tension between two points, e.g. in Paulo Freire’s work it is action and reflection. Therefore, Kolb describes learning as confrontational (Ibid. p.29-30). Since this continuing process as such is seen as more important than the actual outcomes (Ibid. p.28), there seems to be an interesting link to the previously mentioned ideas of intrinsic motivation as well as eudaimonic well being, i.e. inner growth. In all three cases, it is not about acquiring something given, but about engaging in a context specific learning for the sake of the process itself. From this perspective, it also feels appropriate to link the experiential learning theory to the way design is taught and practiced, which is usually project and problem based, as well as iterative.

2.4.4. COPS RELATED TO “SOCIAL SUPPORT”

As it was pointed out earlier, CoPs can be found in many different areas, with the practitioners acting knowingly or unknowingly. Two very popular forms of learning groups which could be described as CoPs are “self-help groups” and “study circles”. In the following chapters, they will be referred to as “Social Support” groups or circles. Accordingly, they shall be looked at in the last section of this subchapter. Self-help groups such as “Anonymous Alcoholics” are well known and look back on a long and successful tradition in Western countries. However, for some people they could potentially also evoke negative notions since their members are supporting each other in coping with or overcoming problems, which are seen as non-normative in society. Therefore
it seems plausible to state that these groups differ from the so-called “study circles”, which is “understood as an activity where a group of people came together and chose a topic to study.” (Larsson p.9f) This form of self-organized learning is particularly popular in Sweden and Norway as well as in parts of the United States (Ibid). Although educational researcher Staffan Larsson states that the concept is malleable and very hard to define (Ibid), typically a study circle consists of 5 to 10 persons. They usually meet once a week at a member’s home or community centre for the duration of around 10 weeks (Ibid p.13-14). Furthermore the participation is voluntary and everyone should receive an equal amount of talking time. While there are no exams and no leader, there tends to be a facilitator guaranteeing the implementation of the aforementioned principles (Ibid). It comes as no surprise that study circles, just like the definition of a CoP indicated, have their roots in the democratic learning of folk-education (Ibid p.10f). Since research on the history of study circles in Sweden points out that this tool used to be at the core of workers movements and NGOs in their quest for spreading education and mobilizing for their specific causes (Ibid), this format seems to be suitable in disseminating sustainable practices. On the other hand, participating might require such large amounts of time and motivation that mainly people join, who are already strongly interested in sustainability.

This chapter outlined some concepts of awareness raising techniques and peer to peer learning formed by regular exchange and action. Consequently, the question arises how exactly sustainable practices can be re-framed to be seen primarily as a learning experience resulting in increased well being? Therefore, the final chapter will examine, if and how designers are capable of initiating processes aimed at changing social practices.

2.5. THE EMERGING ROLE OF DESIGN IN CHANGING SOCIAL PRACTICES

Design, over the last decades, has expanded from the areas of symbols and artefacts to fields of higher complexity such as strategies or systems (Jones 2014 p.104). Moreover, design’s methodologies are being implemented not only in the business world, but also in the context of societal transformation, i.e. supporting the change of social systems (Ibid.). The reason for this development can be seen in design’ s capacity to explore alternatives as well as, due to its practical nature, implementing them. Since the goal of this thesis is to explore narratives, that can attract new practitioners to sustainable practices, the following pages will outline why design is potentially capable of such a process. Hence, the development of design will be examined, followed by an outline of the different notions of Design Activism and Social Design, which both deal with societal change. First of all however, this thesis looks at sociological research on change, structure and agency.

2.5.1. STRUCTURE AND AGENCY IN THE THEORY OF PRACTICE

This section shall first and foremost discuss structure and agency. Structure in this context can be referred to as the patterns found in social life (Ibid p.8), which again influence human actions and according to some sociologists are the engine of change (Ibid p.106 ff). Others however, claim the idea of a human being and therefore his agency to be at the core of possible change (Ibid). Unlike the traditional separation found in sociology, the different notions of a theory of practice do not see either structure or agent as the dominating power. Instead, Bourdieu and others state that structures influence agents, but agents change the very same structures at the very same time. Being one of the most prolific thinkers of contemporary sociology, Anthony Giddens has framed his thoughts on this topic in the “theory of structuration”:

“...human societies are reconstructed at every moment by the building blocks that compose it - human beings like you and me.” (Giddens 2006 p.8)

This perspective offers an interesting opportunity for designers involved in contesting paradigms like the previously discussed growth-paradigm. While it is clear that some social structures and norms inhibit the creation of new behaviours to a certain extent, it can now also be stated that by the sheer act of practising a novelty, social life can be altered.

Another author working with practice theories, is Theodore Schatzki, who disagrees with a variety of change theorists, when he emphasizes that the emergence of social practices can happen at any point in time. According to him, it is therefore wrong to assume that “some break in the flow or routine advance of ongoing life – is required for change to begin or take place.” (Ibid.) However, the question whether or not a novelty or practice then spreads and becomes widely accepted is an entirely different one. Pointing out that some of those practices will lead
to sudden shifts at an almost shocking pace, he states that there are also changes, which can be observed step by step (Ibid.).

Regarding the question of how practices are kept up or being spread, Elizabeth Shove, citing Reckwitz and Jalas, points to another interesting twist provided by practice theory. Instead of looking at practitioners who find certain practices, she proposes to turn the picture upside down and look at how practices or “habits” find people to be carried out:

“...how habits secure the distinctly extensive resources of time and devotion required to keep them ‘alive’ (Jalas 2005). [...] ‘In practice theory, agents are body/minds who ‘carry’ and ‘carry out’ social practices. Thus, the social world is first and foremost populated by diverse social practices which are carried by agents.” (Reckwitz 2002: 256)” (Shove 2009)

This comment links well to the proposed strategy of re-framing a practice to attract new practitioners. Furthermore it resembles an approach design strategist and urbanist Dan Hill recently introduced as “trojan horse” (Hill 2014). Therefore, the question arises if practices could better enter people’s everyday routines in the style of a trojan horse?

Having outlined thoughts on structure and agency from the perspective of practice theory; this subchapter concludes with a brief look at recent developments in modern society. The previously mentioned Anthony Giddens together with the German sociologist Ulrich Beck has put forward the concept of late modernity or reflexive modernization. These partly overlapping theories refer to the idea that society is not in a post-modern state but rather in a second modernity - a status of “in between” - where society is reacting to the problematic consequences of modernization, as the term “reflexivity” describes (Dörre 2002 p.58). Here, various base forms of modern society such as the nuclear family are shaken by modernity’s own dynamic. (Beck in Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994 p.2). The reflexive modernization will therefore naturally lead to further change and instability instead of social order. Furthermore, looking back at this thesis’ special interest in support groups, it seems plausible to state that families, neighbours and clubs often shared this function. However, due to the above mentioned effects or maybe also due to the earlier mentioned perceived lack of time these groups seem to be more and more unable to do so currently. Likewise, also drawing on Giddens thoughts on “late modernity”, the designer Ezio Manzini states that:

“...the more tradition is weakened, the more subjects must learn to design their own lives and shift from a prevalence of activities carried out in a traditional way to one in which choices are mainly of design.” (Manzini 2015 p.31)

The sociologist Manuel Castells shares a similar view in his “network theory”, where he describes the personal identity as an increasingly open matter, to be made actively instead of by relying on traditions (Giddens 2006 p.122). In this regard, it seems interesting to ask whether the practice group, this thesis seeks to implement could also be referred to as a “life design support” group, basically connecting coaching, searching for purpose and designerly ways of working.

As it was outlined in this section, there are voices arguing that both agents and structure change one another and therefore, social practices are constantly transforming. Furthermore, it was pointed out that many traditions of modernity, are challenged. Thus, there might be a gap for a practice group, which applies a designerly way of thinking on substantial lifestyle decisions. Therefore, the development of design and its potential in changing social practices will be examined next.

2.5.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN FROM ARTEFACTS TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

“Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations, into preferred ones” (Herbert Simon 1996 in Fuad-Luke 2009 p.4)

The definition provided by Herbert Simon above, outline the ubiquity of design, i.e. it is everywhere in human life. Design deals with things as well as systems and thus works in a diverse set of areas (Fuad-Luke 2009 p.2). Fuad-Luke continues to outline that design appears in all parts of our life, embracing philosophy, science, media, economics, ecology and politics amongst others. Furthermore, it is being applied not only by professionals, but also - unintentionally - by other people (Ibid.).
However, underlying this status of design theory today, is an evolution, guided by various schools of thought. While the time of Herbert Simon was influenced by systems engineering and thus saw design as planning with standardized methods, the following era was more inspired by natural systems and consequently proposed design methods, which are context sensitive (Jones 2014 p.99). After that, approaches like participatory design, i.e. integrating stakeholders in the design process, were applied in order to be able to deal with social systems (Ibid.). The recently fostered inter-disciplinary approach to better meet challenges of even higher complexity, can be described as another phase of development (Ibid.). Thus, it can be stated that design over time has emerged to deal with problems of increasing complexity.

Acknowledging the fact that today’s design practitioners are facing problems of different complexity, Van Patter “advocates four distinct design domains”. (Jones & Van Patter 2009 in Jones 2014 p.100) Thus, Jones proposes four stages of increasing complexity for design, which he calls Traditional Design, Product and Service Design, Organisational Design as well as Social Transformation Design respectively (Jones 2014 p.100). Traditional design of artefacts and communications is consequently Design 1.0 and is also described as design as making. The classic commercial design including product and service innovation is referred to as Design 2.0 or integrative design (Ibid.). Both the third and the fourth stage, deal with the transformation of structures and thus again increased complexity. Design 3.0 deals more with work practices and organizations and is bound to a certain strategy (Ibid. p.101). Social transformation as Design 4.0 in comparison is described as dealing with complex structures, which are unbounded, such as social systems, policy making or community design, thus requiring an even deeper look into the system (Ibid. p.101). Dealing with social transformation in this framework can therefore be seen as the most complex category for design at this stage.

Having introduced design for social transformation, the questions arises what means designers can apply here and what exactly is their role?

Looking at specific methodologies to use here, Jones points out that the ever-so popular methodology “Design Thinking” is not as apt as its proponents describe it, since it is working essentially different in comparison to the social arena (Ibid. p.123). In fact, in commercial design it has been influenced by the relatively fast and cheap feedback possibilities through rapid prototyping and consequently promotes such behaviour (Ibid. p.122). Societal processes however, are too complex to be observed through such means and therefore need a more holistic and in-depth observation (Ibid p.123). Hence, Jones proposes joining principles of systems thinking with parts of design thinking instead, to thus create principles for an orientation which he describes as systemic design (Ibid. p.122 ff). Amongst these principles, are the need for a longer-term inquiry and regular adaptation. Taking this proposal into account, it seems that there might well be a potential for the previously mentioned contemplative techniques and communities of practice, to be deployed by design for societal change.

Further examining the role of a designer in changing social practices, it is worthwhile to come back to one of the area’s most prolific thinkers, Ezio Manzini and his thoughts on design today. With regard to Herbert Simon’s quote, Ezio Manzini points out that there are two valid and coexisting definitions to design. While design as a problem solver relates to the biophysical world, there is also the social world, where design helps to create the socially constructed meanings of everyday life (Manzini 2015 p.35). According to him, design can give valuable input on both sides, but, it is clearly the social world where design, “more than any other discipline, [...] can bring its most original contribution”. (Ibid p.3) Describing the overall design practice of today he continues to state that:

“...It takes place within open-ended co-design processes in which all involved actors participate in different ways. It is based on a human capability that everyone can cultivate and which for some - the design experts - becomes a profession. The role of design experts is to trigger and support these open-ended co-design processes.” (Manzini 2015 p.53 ff)

Looking at the link between expert designer and societal change, Manzini applies the term “design for social innovation”, which is “everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change toward sustainability.” (Ibid p.62) This being said, it is
worthwhile to mention that in his eyes, design for social innovation is not so much a new design discipline. Rather, he would like to see it as a general purpose, implemented in and by many design disciplines, possibly becoming the overall mode of functioning for design in the 21st century (Ibid p.59).

Regarding the expert designers role however, Manzini emphasizes that the role should not be reduced to solely being a process facilitator, in the sense of gathering input from the co-designers and analysing it in a formalized way of clustering “post-its” (Ibid p.66). Instead, he asks for a special skill of having real dialogues or in Richard Sennett’s words, “a special kind of openness” [Sennett 2012 in Manzini 2015 p.67]. The expert’s role can therefore be described as acting in a constant loop of personal input, listening to the others’ contributions, and then possibly pushing these contributions further, using one’s own experience. By doing so, in short, the design experts “make things happen” (Manzini 2015 p.67), for example as facilitators, activists, strategists or cultural promoters (Ibid p.70 f.). Looking at possible processes, which need to be triggered during the current societal transition phase he points out:

“This transition is a broad, complex social learning process, by which everything that belongs to the mainstream way of thinking and behaving in the old world will have to be reinvented: from everyday life to the very idea of well-being.” (Manzini 2015 p.54)

Manzini’s statement resonates well with this works specific interest in enabling people to actively pursuing an alternative form of well-being. The current concept of well-being stands at the very core of everyday interactions and for too long has not been redefined adequately. Since this thesis aims at providing alternative experiences and narratives in stead of other valid interventions like conceiving policies, the next section will now have a specific look at Design Activism. Comparing it to Social Design, it shall be outlined why the proposed actions belong to the first field.

2.5.3. DESIGN ACTIVISM

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” (Margaret Mead in Fuad-Luke 2009 p.22)

The above quote from Margaret Mead outlines the role and power of activists. Activist are often linked to a movement, which is a group of solidarity people trying to challenge norms and the elite leading such norms, by continued interactions with them (Fuad-Luke 2009 p.5). Thus, it becomes apparent that activism and design have a specific goal in common, namely to challenge and transform existing practices and therefore may be able to join forces. Design activism according to Fuad-Luke, is “design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create a counter narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change” (Fuad-Luke 2009 p.27). Hence, while many designers feel rather neutral when it comes to the political role of them or their work, design activists are by definition political, since their actions are aimed diametrical to the dominant commercial culture (Chick and Micklethwaite, 2011, p.59). Fuad-Luke further describes the design activist as:

“a person who uses the power of design for the greater good of humankind and nature. A person who is a free agent; a non-aligned social broker and catalyst; a facilitator; an author; a creator; a co-author; and a happener (someone who makes things happen)” (Fuad-Luke 2009 xxi).

Design activism’s arena therefore is changing social practices to the better of the common good. However, looking at differences to classic activism, which often address issues by sheer protest, design activism is seen as more “generative - rather than “opposing” they “propose”, or generate better alternative solutions.” (Thorpe 2012 p.137) This comment links well to another critique on conventional activism found in Ann Thorpe’s book, namely that due to its focus on what is right or wrong it tends to forget about building the actual capacities to make the specific change happen (Thorpe 2012 p.186). Opposite to this, an increasing number of small design activism teams have evolved, co-creating alternative realities based on design interventions in the city. By doing so they have managed to involve a variety of people and increase their feeling of competence, while challenging conventions about how urban spaces look or function. However, with regard to Ann Thorpe’s thoughts on “generative” and “opposing”, Fuad-Luke believes that Design Activism can work both generative and oppositional as well as
Further framing the field, it is worthwhile to point out how Design Activism might differ from Social Design which also deals specifically with the public good by changing existing practices. While Design Activism’s context is questioning the values leading to the current routine of the everyday life of people, Social Design is supporting the public good by working mainly with providers and the government (Fuad-Luke 2015 p.285). Likewise, the goals of social design can be described by the development of social economy and new policies (Ibid.). Design activism however, aims at creating a new narrative, i.e. a new set of values or beliefs and thus potential future norms (Ibid.). With regard to the terms “norm” or “habitus”, it also becomes apparent that design activism’s goal are radically new perspectives opposite to the incremental ones advocated by social design (Ibid.p.286). Accordingly, it can be said that, although both Social Design and Design Activism, aim at changing the existing interactions and social practices into better ones, Social Design “only” works within the system, while Design Activism contests this exact system itself.

However, the researcher Alix Rule claims that designers should be careful and not fall into the hybris, believing they could devise a valid method to radically change complex problems (Chick and Mickelwaihe 2011 p.55). Rather she advocates incremental changes in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals (Ibid.). Therefore, it seems plausible to sum up that the radically new visions of design activism might only be reached by incremental actions, but still contesting the system.

Having defined this present work as design activism, it shall now be outlined what specific outcomes this area has produced over time. Looking at the tradition of Design Activism, various movements over time can be associated with this area such as the British Arts and Crafts Movement or the Wiener Werkstatt and the Deutscher Werkbund, (Fuad-Luke 2009 p.37 ff). The activities of the latter prompted a contemporary commentator to state that “a simple form, on everyone, could produce the most complete and noble overcoming of the class conflict”, thus pointing out the transformative power of the movement (Ibid. p.38). These days, the most common forms of design activism include graphic campaigns in the tradition of Adhusters, the communication of problematic structures via products, but also the organization of events and interventions (Ibid p.87). Looking at ways for attracting new practitioners for sustainable practices, it was outlined earlier, that emphasizing environmental threats might lead to increased consumption (Kasser 2009a p.23 ff).

Consequently, this thesis will try to implement events or interventions, which are based more on providing positive, alternative experiences, rather than the confrontational communication of problematic structures. This approach also takes into account the findings on experiential learning from chapter 2.4. (Kolb 1984 p. 20 ff). It needs to be noted however, that the form of a design intervention is not restricted to the field of Design Activism, but can be applied also by Social Design or other Design disciplines obviously.

Taking these thoughts into account, the final chapter will enumerate the research findings so far and finally, based on them, propose refined questions for the field research.

2.6. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.6.1. FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Before outlining the visions for the practical part and the refined research questions, the findings from the literature so far shall be summarised. Looking back on the findings in chronological order, it first became apparent that various crises in the ecological and social realm are present. Furthermore, they are connected to the implications of a growth and consumption based market society. Next, the relation of labour and prosperity in the market economy as well as alternative proposals from the post-growth movement were analysed. Thus, the advantages of sufficient lifestyles not only for the planet, but also for the individual well being were discussed. More specifically, the positive influence of intrinsically motivating activities on personal well-being was noted. The question arose if the experience of such activities could act as a catalyst and generate further questioning of values as well as finally change on a deeper level. In the following, the terms well-being and needs were defined more specifically. The needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness were demonstrated to be crucial for a well being based on inner growth. While a sufficient lifestyle seems to satisfy these needs, it was pointed out that the adaptation of a sufficiency-based lifestyle is inhibited by various norms, and possibly also fears. Having touched on theories of motivation and willpower, it became clear that questioning one’s lifestyle, would require adequate support. While a lifestyle change is out of scope for this thesis, the adaptation of practices related to a sufficient lifestyle by new audiences is not. Looking at methods of mindfulness and experiential learning, the question
arose if a community of practice could help to disseminate sustainable practices related to eudaimonic well being, and thus provide support for starting to think critically about one’s lifestyle. Therefore, the final chapter has so far given reason as to why designers are capable of prototyping such a community of practice, how they can hereby initiate change in society as well as how recent sociological research relates change to agency and structure.

2.6.2. REFINED OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Hence, the objective of this thesis can be described as prototyping a community of practice as means for the participants to:

1. Experience that the future bears alternatives
2. Gain time and trust to investigate in them
3. Become able to envision ways to implement them
4. Receive the support for sustained action

The reason for this proposal is the belief that lifestyle changes are too time intensive and context sensitive for anyone to devise specific methods aimed at delivering this. Instead it should be looked at how the initial spark of such individual processes can be triggered and spread. Likewise, the very valid concept of a sabbatical is usually reserved to people, who are interested in the topic already and share a certain financial and academic status or security. Therefore, such initiatives do not seem apt for this thesis’ proposals. Opposite to this, it seems plausible to expect that everyday activities can create the first spark as well as are simple and accessible enough to address a wider audience. More specifically, by being everyday activities, such process might become available to people, who would otherwise not engage in such activities, since they are informed by values, which are yet too radical for them. In short, these everyday practices should resemble a trojan horse. Based on these findings, the following updated research question arose:

RQ2 How can design help to re-frame sustainable practices as a learning experience resulting in increased eudaimonic well being?

Looking at a new set of research sub-questions for the desk study phase, the following points seem to be essential:

RSQ1 Which CoPs, with a background in “design interventions” or “social support” are there?
RSQ2 Which everyday activities constitute their practice and how are the identified essentials of this work, such as eudaimonic well-being, fostered by these practices?
RSQ3 How do these practices differ regarding their level of duplicability?
RSQ4 How do these practices differ regarding their level of visibility?
3 RESEARCH METHODS
Chapter 2 provided a literature review to further define the area of inquiry and to create a refined set of research questions. Having defined a more specific area, chapter 4 will describe desk study, field research and the design phase.

While in one instance quantitative data was produced, the research mainly focused on generating qualitative data. Qualitative research can be described as analysis of “things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p.1).

The overall approach was based on the action research format. Action research is a form of enquiry carried out to generate knowledge on a practice and consequently change it. Reason and Bradbury state that: “Action research is about working towards practical outcomes, and also about creating new forms of understanding, since action without understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless.” (Reason and Bradbury 2001: 2 cited in Koshy 2005 p.9) The action research approach fits well in the context of this thesis, since it aims at challenging practices by interventions in the real world based on a theoretical framework. According to Koshy this methodology is a constructive form of research. The researcher constructs her knowledge in a “continuous learning process” (Ibid. p.9). This evolving nature - after an observation, the researcher enters a phase of reflection to subsequently change the settings and deduce new findings - is an important characteristic of action research (Ibid. p.4). The process thus resembles a spiral, as modifications can be made along the way, which is one of the advantages of action research (Ibid. p.21). Applying action research can be done via a variety of research methods such as questionnaires, interviews or field diaries (Koshy, 2005, p.87). Consequently, the following two sub-chapters will outline the research methods desk study, surveys, questionnaires and case study analysis in more detail, as they are applied in this thesis.

3.1. DESK RESEARCH, SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

At first, a desk study helped to collect a total of 18 examples of CoPs. The respective design intervention and design support CoPs were mainly discovered in the books “Going Public” (Klanten 2012) and “Agents of Alternative” (Fuad-Luke 2015), as well as on the website “Urban Tactics”. The social support CoPs were discovered by specifically searching the internet for “social support circles”, as well as through committed friends of friends. The total of 18 cases was examined based on the materials found on the respective websites. Based on the desk study the cases were clustered according to 3 separate areas, namely Design Intervention, Design Support and Social Support. Finally, a table was created to better see how these areas differ from each other. This helped to refine the research questions again.

Next, two surveys were used to examine the previously made assumptions on the different areas of CoPs. Questionnaires will then be used again during the workshops conducted as part of the case study to analyse participants perceptions and gain personal insights. The written results combined with personal observations from the researcher and photographs will act as source for analysing the case study. Questionnaires help to collect sufficient amounts of data in a rather short period of time and provide a simple way to depict information (Koshy 2005 p.89). According to Koshy gathering data on the participants perceptions can furthermore help to shape the emerging questions the researcher is aiming for in a following more personal setting (Ibid. p.87). At the same time, there is a risk for biased results. First, by asking leading questions, the researcher might eliminate possible answers which go against the assumption underlying the formulated question. Moreover, the respondents might tend to answer in a way which they believe aligns with the view of the researcher. Finally, in order to create more reliable data it might be necessary to conduct the surveys outside of the own institution or network. This again can pose a risk regarding the time line of the research project (Ibid p.89).

3.2. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

“It is one thing to have an idea and another thing to make that idea concrete and real. Designers, by the nature of what they do, must become skilled at moving between those two places. [...] Case studies are a useful tool for research and teaching that focus on the transition between
As stated above, case studies are deemed to be an appropriate research method for the intersection of theory and practice. It is in this area, where the present research work is located. Looking at the origins of this method, it becomes apparent that it can be dated back until 1870. At that time, according to Breslin and Buchanan, the case study research method was first introduced at Harvard Law School, before it was adopted by the fields of business and medicine as well as rather recently design (Breslin & Buchanan 2008 p.37 ff). While case studies can lead to the establishment of certain principles, in the design world this has not often been the case yet. This might be, amongst other reasons, due to the fact that the actions devised in design do not follow a process as clearly defined as in other areas and therefore best practices are often kept as secrets (Ibid). Nonetheless, this method bears the potential to shed light on new theory by applying an “in-depth investigation of single events or instances in context, using multiple sources of research evidence” (Yin 2002 in Martin & Hanington 2012 p.28). Studying the formal procedure of this tool, it can be described as defining a problem and hypothesis first, to then gain qualitative information, which either supports the previous idea or leads to a new hypothesis (Breslin & Buchanan 2008 p.37 ff).

To further outline the case study method, a comparison to other methods from the social sciences as well as possible critiques shall be examined briefly based on the work of Robert K. Yin:

“In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over the events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin 2003 p.1)

Hence, it becomes apparent that case studies look at “how” questions, compared to, e.g. surveys, which are used to look at inquiries related to “how much”, “who”, “what” and “where”. Furthermore, this method can be used, when no control of behavioural events is required, unlike in an experiment (Ibid p.5).

A complex problem with case studies seems to be that it is hard to evaluate whether or not the person in charge of analysing is suitable. Hence, there is a chance that, while being a popular method, it might not always result in good quality (Ibid p.11). Another frequent critique is to question whether case studies, much like interviews, can be used to produce results apt for scientific generalization. According to Yin however, “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes.” (Ibid p.10)
THE PROJECT
This part started with an online desk study and literature review to frame the wide field of CoPs. By collecting the information on the specific CoP's websites, 18 cases were listed (4.1.1.). The different cases were then compared regarding the research sub-questions framed so far with the help of a table (4.1.2). Linking these results to research papers on social innovation and design activism again, this chapter created a set of assumptions on best practice models as well as deficits in the existing CoPs. Finally, based on these assumptions, the research questions were further refined, building the base for the surveys. After the target group for the CoP, this thesis aimed to create, was defined (4.2.1.), the assumptions from the desk study phase were examined. The field research consisted of a survey with the target group (4.2.2.), six selected CoPs (4.2.3.) and the analysis of these surveys (4.2.4.). In the survey, closed questions were asked to find out general tendencies. Furthermore, some open questions were asked to gain personal and specific proposals. The idea was to hereby use the experience and creativity of the practitioners as well as the target group as a source of inspiration for the prototyping session. Part 4 concluded with the design phase, consisting of a design brief (4.3.1.), concept generation (4.3.2.) and the implementation of the chosen concept “Afterwork Maker Sessions” (4.3.3.-4.3.5.).

4.1. DESK STUDY PHASE

4.1.1. COPS IN “DESIGN INTERVENTION”, “DESIGN SUPPORT” AND “SOCIAL SUPPORT”

On the following pages 18 cases of communities of practice, related to the topics reviewed in the literature part shall be looked at briefly. They are mainly located in two categories, namely the fields “Design intervention” and what I call “Social Support”. Here, “Design Intervention” is defined as a communal action creating new realities in public spaces through hands-on work. By the term “Social Support” I refer to the previously discussed study circles, but also include examples from social work. These practices have in common that a rather small group of people meets regularly to support each other and share their respective stories.

Design intervention and social support have strong potentials when it comes to building skills and capacities amongst people. While social workers by definition work in this area, designers are relatively new and thus, as Victor and Sylvia Margolin in their seminal paper on a social model of design proposed, the latter group might want to take a look at some of the classical tasks and functionings of social work:

“Central to social work theory is the ecological perspective. Social workers assess the transaction that occurs between their client system (a person, family, group, organization, or community) and the domains within the environment with which the client system interacts. Various domains that impact human functioning are the biological, psychological, cultural, social, natural, and physical/spatial.” (Margolin & Margolin 2002 p.25-26)

Design again – as it was pointed out in the literature review – by definition centres around contesting the status quo. Furthermore, it provides a practical outcome, thus also offering something to the area of social work.

Obviously, the design intervention and social support examples differ in many ways. First of all, I believe they differ in the duration of their practice and in the way they are organized, i.e. designers working with communities might be commissioned, while some examples from social support are self-initiated. However, most strikingly, they differ regarding the domains mentioned above. The majority of the following “design intervention” practices are situated in the physical and spatial domain, while most listed examples from the “social support”, logically operate in the social domain. However, it seems appropriate to state that both, design and social support practices, willingly or not, also deal with the psychological and cultural domain. It is for these reasons, that some of the following practices might clearly be linked to design or social support. At the same time, there are also examples which belong to a grey area in between, which obviously shows some parallels to the field of social innovation. Trying to make sense of these three different
categories, it is necessary to come back to the respective tools and domains they focus on. The design category consists of initiatives, which work mainly in the spatial domain and apply classic hands-on design methods. The social support category operates in the social domain, applying conversational skills and due to the supposedly more repetitive process also methods of trust building. The examples in between “design intervention” and “social support”, which will be referred to as “design support” are located in both domains. Consequently, they apply both the design methods of hands-on making as well as the empathic skills found amongst social support. Furthermore, they either provide a permanent location or a tool for the participants, thus possibly creating a longer term impact.

‘Design Interventions’

Assemble:
“Assemble are a collective based in London who work across the fields of art, architecture and design. They began working together in 2010 and are comprised of 18 members. Assemble’s working practice seeks to address the typical disconnection between the public and the process by which places are made. Assemble champion a working practice that is interdependent and collaborative, seeking to actively involve the public as both participant and collaborator in the on-going realization of the work”

Raumlabor:
“Yes we do love the great ideas of the 60s 70s and the optimism which is inherent in changing the world at the stroke of a pen to the better. but we strongly believe that complexity is real and good and our society today does need a more substantial approach. therefore our spacial proposals are small scale and deeply rooted in the local condition.”

Stiftung freizeit:
“The Leisure Foundation are Markus Blösl, Rubén Jódar and Inés Aubert, a group of architects based in Berlin. We want to question statements, rethink meanings, generate debate. We’re looking for public sense in common space. Seeing the street as a communication platform, we open spaces for action, participation and exchange. The city is yours, share it!”

Labourfou:
“Our joint experience combines both Graphic and Exhibition Design and one off temporary installations. We prefer an experimental approach, based upon improvising with local and recyclable materials on site. You see it’s all about interventions in urban space, allowing us not only to change the point of view of the spectator but also to develop new ways of perceiving the spaces’ original character.”

Collectif:
“Born in Strasbourg in September 2009, the Collectif Etc willingness to marshal energy around a shared dynamic questioning of the urban space. Through different mediums and different skills, the Collective wants to be a medium for experimentation. How to make the city today in France essentially follows a vertical and hierarchical logic involving different actors of urban development in time and determined and fixed spaces. We believe that the different users of the city (residents and professionals) can all be actors in their development at very different scales. We wish to interfere in this vertical structure by implementing a flexible network of artistic and social interactions, meetings and debates. Our projects are meant optimistic, open and are directed to the spontaneous public of the city.”

Future farmers:
“Futurefarmers is a group of diverse practitioners aligned through an interest in making work that is relevant to the time and place surrounding us. Founded in 1995, the design studio serves as a platform to support art projects, an artist in residence program and our research interests. We are artists, researchers, designers, architects, scientists and farmers with a common interest in creating frameworks for exchange that catalyze moments of “not knowing”. While we collaborate with scientists and are interested in scientific inquiry, we want to ask questions more openly. Through participatory projects, we create spaces and experiences where the logic of a situation disappears - encounters occur that broaden, rather than narrow perspectives, i.e. reductionist science.”

‘Design Support’

Tactical technology collective:
“Based in Berlin, we work with an international network of partners and collaborators to help rights, accountability and transparency advocates and the communities they work with to use information and digital technologies effectively in their work. We currently work within
three programme areas: Exposing & Shaping issues; Digital Security and Privacy; and Data Politics. In all three We work to raise awareness, build practical skills and inspire critical reflection and inspiration. Through trainings and workshops we provide direct support to over 2000 advocates a year, through intensive training in small groups, as well as through ‘flash trainings’ or clinics at large-scale gatherings and conferences.”

Open source ecology:
“An open source, libre economy is an efficient economy which increases innovation by open collaboration. To get there, OSE is currently developing a set of open source blueprints for the Global Village Construction Set (GVCS) – a set of the 50 most important machines that it takes for modern life to exist – everything from a tractor, to an oven, to a circuit maker. In the process of creating the GVCS, OSE intends to develop a modular, scalable platform for documenting and developing open source, libre hardware – including blueprints for both physical artifacts and for related open enterprises.”

Anselma:
“Workroom, mainly for sewing and other crafts, where you can find fun and educational workshops and courses or rent a workstation for a day, week or month.”

Free thinking zone:
“Concept bookstore and discussion forum for contemporary art and thinking.”

Work life romance
“Get out of the one way street! There are people who say with a smile on their face: “I have the perfect job!” They are convinced and practise their profession with great passion. They live their personal work-life romance. Unfortunately, they are the minority. Only few people are inspired by their passions, talents, interests and dreams when choosing a career. Many end up in a professional dead end. They want a new path, but do not know where to start. Those who really want to change something, come to us. We work with them on concrete solutions and plan their implementation step by step.”

Active mob:
“We are a young social enterprise that has developed a unique approach to engaging with people and connecting them to resources through activity. We have learnt that before people make different lifestyle choices, they also need to understand that they can instigate changes in their own lives. We create the environment where people can change.”

“Social Support”

Weavers:
“We know caring can be hard. Weavers provides support to people caring for a loved one, like a husband who’s had a stroke, a wife with MS or parent with Parkinson’s. Everyone’s caring journey is different. Weavers walk beside you to help you regain a sense of control. Weavers are people who’ve cared for a loved one. They’ve been there, they get it. They catch-up with people one-to-one and provide support unique to their situation. We believe sharing knowledge can make it easier for others...”

Family by family:
“We find and train families who have been through tough times, who have come out the other side and are now experiencing more ups than downs. We call these families Sharing Families – families who have something to share. Sharing Families support families who are going through tough times and want to make changes in their lives. We call these families Seeking Families – families who are seeking something more. Together the families work on achieving goals and move towards thriving lives. Nobody tells the families what they need to change – everyone’s goals are different.”

Lean in circle:
“Lean In Circles are small groups who meet regularly to learn and grow together. Circles are as unique as the individuals who start them, but they all share a common bond: the power of peer support. Women are asking for more and stepping outside their comfort zones, and women and men are talking openly about gender issues for the first time.”

Fasther:
“Promoting race cycling for woman”

Mastermind tech circle:
“a group of people who share their ups and downs regarding possible entrepreneurial plans.”
Alcoholics anonymous:
“Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.”

4.1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE 18 COPS AND REFINED RESEARCH QUESTION

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Explanation of the table:

Sufficiency / Eudaimonic well-being
Sufficiency in this thesis refers to relying on existing infrastructures but adopting new behaviours, thus drawing on do-it-yourself principles. Eudaimonic well-being as defined earlier in the literature review refers to personal growth.

New norms / Societal norms
Societal norms will here refer to certain conventions, which the majority of the Western society practices or at least pretends to do so. New norms refers to a set of values, too radical or simply not interesting enough for the majority at this time, but possibly transforming into new standards later on.

Awareness / Participation / Enable / Enable to enable
Awareness, as it was pointed out earlier, despite its importance, is clearly only half the way. Next, action and participation are needed to complement the “u-curve” (Scharmer p.65). However, while many practices succeed in participatory methods for action, it seems plausible to identify two further steps. Enable refers to a capacity which allows people to change their own realities and is arguably developed by participating over a longer period of time. Enable to enable, is what might otherwise be referred to as agency. I believe that it is one thing to be able to change your own surroundings but another level if you are able to enable others to do so.

Long term impact / Regular engagement
While many practitioners succeed in providing people with access to theoretical and practical knowledge, I believe there is not enough focus on how such initial development will be sustained in the long run. Likewise, it seems plausible to state that long term impact is more probable when regular actions are taken.

Participant number / Accessibility / Potential duplicability / Actual duplicability / Visibility
Here, I draw mostly on the statements from Ezio Manzini who points out that: “to promote social innovation, design experts must use their design skills and competences to recognize promising cases when and where they appear and to reinforce them. That is to help them to be more accessible, effective, lasting, and replicable.” (Manzini 2015 p.58)
Participant number refers to the group size during one “meeting”. While some interventions can include many participants, study circles usually consist of 5-10 people only. Furthermore, some of the examined examples will target very specific people, while others incorporate topics which might be more accessible to a wider audience. Both, the number of participants and the accessibility, is likely to influence the duplicability of a group, i.e. whether it can be established in other places as well. While some examples will sound like bearing a high potential regarding their duplicability, the result might look very different in reality. Finally, depending on where the practices take place they are more or less visible to potential new participants.

Analysis and interpretation

In the following I will outline my interpretations derived from comparing the 18 examples according to the above defined parameters. Unsurprisingly, all examples examined promote eudaimonic well-being in the sense of personal development. Similar can be noted for term sufficiency, since all of these groups aim at reaching their goals with rather limited resources.

As it was mentioned earlier, the negative notion associated with self-help groups might be linked to the examples whose participants try to realign with conventions. Opposite to this, most of the groups listed here practice behaviours which are not widely accepted yet, but might become new standards for a larger audience in the future.

Obviously, all CoPs raise awareness, use a participatory approach in their work and enable their participants their respective area of concern. However, I believe, that the social support groups are more able to provide a participant with a capacity to enable others, since their participants could much more easily start actions on their own, which will be discussed under the point duplicability in short.

The ease to start actions on your own and the regular, but rather short meetings of “social support” groups, could possibly lead to a longer term impact than what “design intervention” teams can deliver. They tend to work on a topic full-time dedicated as opposed to the regular engagements of shorter periods.

The practices with regular engagements usually consist of smaller participant groups, while the ones working on full time projects can, but do not have to, include larger groups up to the size of a neighbourhood.

While there are mixed results regarding the accessibility, I believe that the potential duplicability of social support and design support practices is much higher than in the case of the design practices, as I mentioned above. The visibility again, should logically be much higher amongst “design intervention” groups than amongst the more hidden “social support” circles. This is due to the public nature of their interventions.

Finally, with regard to the design support area, I would argue that they either provide a permanent space (Free thinking / Anselma) or a specific process or tool which stays with the participant (Tactical technology collective / Open source ecology/ Work life romance / Activemob). This observation links well to the literature. There, it was stated that social practices constitute itself through material, locality or embodiment and always happen somewhere (Markus 1993 p.13-14 in Thorpe 2012 p.175).

Based on these observations, I believe that the “design intervention” practices can primarily provide practical tools and theoretical skills to use them. However, in my eyes it seems doubtful that this is enough for the people to bring along further change in their own lives, or that of others. For the next phase of this thesis, “Design intervention” practices are interesting because they naturally train the imaginative skills of their participants and finally, provide a high visibility due to the public nature of their interventions. In conclusion, I argue that Design Intervention practices and their activities can well satisfy the needs of autonomy and competence and can attract a wide variety of people, thus possibly satisfying the need for openness. The “Social support” practices, in my eyes, provide regular meetings and a locality, a higher level of trust due to the relatively small size and a higher duplicability due to their simple structure. While I believe the rather private nature will be problematic for attracting new audiences, I see the overall process as having more impact. To sum it up, I argue that these practices can well satisfy the need for competence and relatedness and manage to keep people committed to a practice. To conclude, I believe that the design support practices might be able to provide both, hopefully leading to a higher accessibility, higher duplicability and longer term consequences.

Refined research sub-questions

RSQ1 What impact does regular peer-to-peer support show amongst the participants in comparison to one-off projects?

RSQ2 Which practices show the most improved eudaimonic well-being, i.e. increased openness, competence and autonomy amongst par-
Participants?

RSQ3 How have former or existing participants managed to inspire their respective peers to take new actions or develop new CoPs?

RSQ4 In which places of engagements can people of different backgrounds and values cross each others paths on a regular basis?

4.2. FIELD RESEARCH PHASE

4.2.1. DEFINITION OF TARGET GROUP

“Historically, movements have focused on poor and socially excluded populations. The lens of economic growth shows that increasingly a much wider group of average, perhaps middle class people have their futures, as well as their current well-being, compromised by the costs of economic growth.” (Thorpe 2012 p.25)

As Thorpe points out above, the target group of design activism projects can be defined as a much wider entity compared to the relatively specific groups which classic activism targets. While both aim at supporting groups who are unable to make themselves heard well enough, the latter will usually support a minority, with a specific deficit. Design activism however, which aims at contesting the deficit resulting from the growth paradigm, therefore might generally have a much wider group of people as their possible clients.

At the same time, it must be remembered that the reference in Thorpe’s book is the Western World, with its increasingly pathological overconsumption. Likewise, Fuad-Luke defines design activism clients as the “over-consumers” opposed to the “under-consumers” (Fuad-Luke 2009).

Clearly, it would be absurd of a design activist to ask people, who fight to make ends meet each month, to question their overall consumption pattern. While both aim at supporting groups who are unable to make themselves heard well enough, the latter will usually support a minority, with a specific deficit. Design activism however, which aims at contesting the deficit resulting from the growth paradigm, therefore might generally have a much wider group of people as their possible clients.

A final differentiation to be made, is about typical milestones and therefore changes in a person’s life. This is due to the fact that routines and habits play an important role in adopting or letting go of a certain practice (Shove 2009). In this regard, I want to emphasize the graduation from university as a point in life which indicates a great and almost automatic change in the lifestyle of a Western, middle-class person with higher education. In this instance, the student is likely to get in contact with new people, thoughts and practices in a rather abrupt manner as well as being more independent in his consumption choices, due to a relatively sudden increase of the monthly income available. Therefore, the change from being a student to being an employee might show strong differences in consumption pattern and for many will be the first time that they are fully independent, but also fully reliant on their own income. Consequently, it seems that students in their twenties to early thirties, who are soon going to work full-time seem are the most appropriate target group for the practical part of this thesis. This being said, it is obviously impossible and also not in the interest of this thesis to restrict the interventions strictly to the target group of students.
4.2.2. SURVEY WITH SELECTED CASES

Survey 1 examines the research question Nr. 1 regarding activities and research question Nr.2 regarding impact through repeated action. Out of the 17 previously presented CoPs, I contacted 4-5 from each of the 3 categories and received replies by a total of 6 CoPs (2 Design Interventions/ 1 Design Support/ 3 Social Support). It was clear that the answers of only 6 practitioners was not a large amount of data, but it turned out to be very difficult and time intense to contact them. Still, the answers provided some useful information and helped to examine some of my assumptions.

While these 6 cases work on a variety of topics as seen in the first question, all state a type of empowerment as the behaviour change they aim for (question 5). Furthermore most of the practitioners mentioned a key moment which initiated their journey, from a friend who needed help, or a spontaneous intervention in a courtyard to research results expressing a need for action. Likewise, all practitioners agree that they have not discovered a best way to attract new participants. While it seems to be very context sensitive what works and what does not, some strategies were pointed out and two of them were of special interest for my own endeavour. Firstly, the French initiative Collectif Etc. mentioned the importance of a few dedicated people and the creation of a proactive atmosphere. This comment links well to research on facilitation, which highlights the importance of the set-up and the atmosphere (...). Secondly, the organizer of Anselma mentioned a seemingly basic point, namely the physical visibility of your practice. I have stated previously that I see this as one of the main advantages of Design Interventions and want to make use of it to attract new audiences. Next it was examined, whether certain practices show better results in reaching a behaviour change or increasing the participants feeling of competence, openness and autonomy, as these had been identified as crucial for eudaimonic well being. Here, most of the interviewed practitioners see a behaviour change amongst their participants and the level of competence definitely rises within all groups. The results for autonomy and openness are less obvious. Possibly, these two feelings are also much harder to observe. Finally, all practitioners agreed that repeated impact is crucial for behaviour change (question 7).

I tried to double-check the practitioners assumptions about the participants by getting in touch with the latter. Unfortunately however, this turned out to be impossible, since most practitioners do not know how to contact former participants.

Interview for the organizers:

1. Can you describe the main idea behind your initiative?

2. Was there a key experience/ event/ intervention to get this initiative started? If yes, please describe!

3. Did you discover a best practice model to spread the word and get people interested?

4. What kind of behaviour change(s) are you aiming for?

5. To what extent (0-1-2-3) do you see your participants reaching the behaviour change which you aim for?

6. To what extent (0-1-2-3) do you think regular meetings or repeated participation/ action is important here?

7. To what extent (0-1-2-3) would you say has your practice increased the participants feeling of competence?

8. To what extent (0-1-2-3) do you think does your practice support people in becoming more open to trying new things in other parts of their life?

9. To what extent (0-1-2-3) would you say does your practice support people in becoming more autonomous?
(Q1) “We are somehow all interested in making our cities better places and work on tasks that make sense and are joyful to work on and see realised. We all feel that there is no way out of working in a certain schizophrenia especially if you have moral values (...) in that sense you can say we are an initiative against giving up."

(Q1) “We decided to go around France and build structures with the inhabitants.”

(Q1) “It is sort of a public workshop.”

(Q1) “Supporting people who are caring for a loved one who is ageing through a peer to peer program. The fact that our volunteers have lived experience of caring is an essential component of the model of support.”

(Q1) “A closed group for people who are interested in self development and success in life & business. We meet weekly, often work together, learn together and share our learnings with each other. We solve problems and provide motivation.”

(Q1) “We organize weekly training rides and also a racing series for women.”

(Q2) “The key event was an inquiry of a friend that asked me to teach her how to sew.”

(Q3) “We didn’t find a best model because we always renew or methods...But what is more important to us is to have few people eager to act.”

(Q3) “If there is a strategy we share it’s we do things, we experiment and that way create a new perspective but this changes from place to place and from time to time.”

(Q3) “A lot of time and passion goes into organizing the rides and events. On top of a full-time job, it’s not always easy, but the feedback has been great. That’s part of why we keep growing our initiative. Personally, I have become more group-focused, I have become more of a doer and less of a thinker.”

(Q4) “Empower people to take more courageous decisions in life and business”
4.2.3. SURVEY WITH THE TARGET GROUP

Survey 2 examines the research question Nr. 4 on accessibility. More specifically, I was interested in finding locations where people with different values and lifestyles could come together easily. Furthermore, I was wondering whether or not urban interventions can support such meetings and finally, maybe spark interests in a topic. The participants were university students as they are the chosen target group for my own yet to be defined activities. Overall 72 students studying in Finland and Germany participated and the majority of them were about to finish their studies. Approximately 50% of them had a background in design and another 50% a background or interest in sustainability. About 25% had both studied design and sustainability.

Question 1 provided the participants with a set of 10 different locations of which they should indicate 3. The set of 10 examples was formed during previous discussions with friends and colleagues on how people tend to live in a bubble, but some everyday habits and their respective locations, such as grocery shopping, are still shared by everyone. Out of those locations, music venues and sports facilities were seen as the most promising ones by far. Subsequently, the participants were asked an open question to come up with more examples in question 2. While many mentioned events and festivities again, one specifically interesting example mentioned by about 30%, was “interest group”, linking well to the previously discussed term “community of practice”. While exactly half of the respondents had participated in an intervention according to question 3, almost all 72 respondents believed that interventions could well bring together people with different lifestyles. The main argument here for question 4 seemed to be that you only need to have one interest in common, while possibly living in a completely different “bubble” otherwise. Similarly, most participants saw a potential for such urban interventions to spark an interest in a certain topic. Based on a scale of 0-1-2-3 the overall average of 72 respondents was 1.9. The final question, which was an open one again, aimed at personal commitment strategies. I was interest to hear about ways to keep up an interest once it was sparked. Interestingly, here again a dedicated group of people and action or results were seen as key by about 25%. Another crucial factor was seen in intrinsic motivation, again linking well to the findings of the literature review.

Consequently, it was examined whether there was any correlation between the responses of students who had participated and those who had not or those with a background in design and those with a different background, but no clear indicator was discovered here.

Questions for the survey amongst University Students

1. Of the following 10 examples please indicate the 3 where you think it is most likely that you could engage spontaneously with a person of your age although they might have a very different lifestyle and interests?

X public transport X grocery shopping X student cafeteria X health facility X city service office X sports facilities X museum X bar/ music venue X festivity X beach/park

2. Can you briefly tell any other situations or places where you got to know somebody studying in a completely different field/ having different interests?

3. Have you participated in any urban intervention? (= a collective creative action in a public space, like claiming a formerly disused place or collecting expired food products for a public dinner)

4. Do you see such an intervention could actually bring you together with other people of a different background?

5. To what extent could such an intervention help spark your interest in a specific issue which previously did not bother you?

6. Once you have become interested in a specific issue, how do you personally push yourself to commit to it and take the necessary time?
(Q1) “If I would meet people in for example a bar at an area that I usually
mostly small gatherings that a friend invites me”

(Q4) “Yes definitely. The one common interest would bring together people that have otherwise different lifestyles”

(Q4) “No, I would assume that people who join an intervention are more likely to have a similar mindset, lifestyle as I have - otherwise we would not go to the same intervention.”

(Q6) “Sometimes I’m looking for a solution to bring it out for more people but that isn’t easy. Public interventions could work this way very well”

(Q6) “It’s not actually that much a matter of how strongly I feel about the issue but mainly if I feel that there is an interesting group or an organization I could join, then I’ll be motivated to spend more time on the issue.”

(Q6) “For me it’s easier to engage regularly if there is an active network of people”

(Q6) “Just enjoy it, then you will do it more often.”

(Q6) “I guess I don’t have to motivate myself in the first place because the interest in something already indicates that there is motivation. Any other problem concerning will, time, regular engagement etc. is difficult to talk about, it depends on the form of the commitment, the issue itself, my own weaknesses, my skills and abilities etc.”

(Q6) “It is also difficult for me to stay focused on a specific issue, I usually find other things that are worth the attention and consideration which

(Q6) “If I get interested and excited, I get it done quickly. More challenging is the long term change or how to make it into a habit”

(Q6) “Seeing the results and impact of my own actions is a good driver”

(Q6) “Just start to do it. Always aim for something concrete and not just talk”

(Extra comment) “If I have invested any kind of money I feel guilty after if I don’t participate”
4.2.4. ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

According to the Survey 1 with different CoPs the question of empowerment lies at the center of all practices and is clearly linked to a certain minimum duration of time and repeated action. However, no best practice for activities which can support eudaimonic well-being could be defined. Furthermore, there does not seem to be any general best practice models on how to get people to participate in the first place since this seems to be very context sensitive.

In this regard the first question of the survey 2 provides interesting information. As the majority of the students pointed out, social venues like sports facilities or bars seem to hold the strongest potential for attracting a variety of audiences. Furthermore, seeing the results of your own actions, having a dedicated group and being intrinsically motivated have been mentioned as the crucial points when it comes to sustaining action.

Consequently, for the development of concepts in the next section, a few crucial points arise. The concepts should each consist of a set of regular interventions with changing topics. Furthermore, they should be located in highly visible social venues. Hereby, I hope to:

1. Test different activities and their efficacy on supporting eudaimonic well being
2. Provide intrinsic motivation due to the different topics
3. Provide a stronger learning impact due to the regularity of events
4. Attract and mix a variety of audiences based on the location

4.3. DESIGN PHASE

4.3.1. DESIGN BRIEF

Goal: Creating a set of events which can attract and keep new practitioners to sustainable practices

Strategy: By providing enriching experiences related to sustainability topics while framing them as a design and learning experience. Furthermore, choosing existing social places, like bars or sports facilities as locality. Hereby a regular exchange between new and established audiences might be fostered.

4.3.2. DESIGN CONCEPTS

Based on the design brief the following five concepts were created. Besides a short description, the main pros and cons and their relation to the findings so far will be listed to decide on a final concept.

1. “Life Design Support”

Initiating a circle amongst students to exchange on fears or dreams and helping each other with knowledge and networks. Fears or conceptions could be challenged by activities like dumpster diving or hitchhiking.
+ It is the concept that resembles most the idea of applying designerly skills for substantial questions in life.
- I do not have experience as a facilitator and the topic is quite personal and sensitive.
- I need to find a good locality.
- It is hard to get out of your own comfort zone and obviously even harder to motivate strangers.

2. “Afterwork Maker Sessions”

Weekly D-I-Y sessions on different sustainability related topics like upcycling or repairing at the terrace of a bar in Teurastamo.
+ The former meatpacking area attracts both more alternatively minded people as well as people with a good salary.
+ The terrace provides high visibility and can attract passers-by and spontaneous participants.
+ Drinks, music and liveliness help when getting strangers together.
+ Due to my own job at the bar, organizing and bureaucracy will be less of a problem than elsewhere.
- Similar to previous, existing interventions.
- The sessions need to be framed to create a coherent story.

3. “Personal Project Cafe”

Due to a city initiative the beach is available for projects without permits. A personal project space could be established and tools and ma-
The Project

4. “Hero For A Day”

Based on a concept from my friend Christian Baumann, this event could follow the tradition of tiny movements in Helsinki like the Cleaning Day or Restaurant Day. Here, everybody could provide his skills or knowledge to share with others.

(Masters Introduction course for the Dept. of Design, Aalto ARTS, August/September 2014)

+ Very context sensitive motivation, people can choose interest.
+ Attracts a wider audience and also provides small private circles.
+ Team up with organizers from “Cleaning day”.
+ Frame it for the Aalto University audience instead of the city to have a manageable size
  - It will most likely be a one-off event and even if it is repeated, there would be a long break since it is rather complex to organize.
  - Concept ownership is not mine.

5. “Treadmill”

Organizing a corporate wellbeing day where a team engages in “hands-on” work with existing materials to co-create something permanent or temporary for the respective neighbourhood.
+ Using an existing group of people means less organisation and facilitation is needed.
+ It is easy to find people who are not that much aware of sustainability issues.

+ It is not so much an intrinsic motivation but rather a planned meeting.
+ I defined the target group as students or young professionals, so it will be hard to find a suitable team.

Conclusion

While all concepts incorporate thoughts which had built up during the writing, the Concept Nr.1 seems to be the most logical choice following the theoretical part of this thesis. However, there is one crucial argument against it. Talking about very personal topics like fears and dreams with strangers while not having any experience as a facilitator, is ambitious to say the least.

Concept Nr.3 did not seem to make much sense, since I would have to rely on funding to make it work, while Concept Nr. 4, apart from not being the author’s idea, did not align well with the goal of regular meetings. Finally, Concept Nr. 5 did not really sound like an intrinsically motivating work as well as was aiming at a different target group then previously defined.

Concept Nr.2 in comparison offered a highly visible location, which attracts the right target group. The proposed activities are linked to my previous studies as well as ordinary enough for strangers to participate. Activities on “making” are furthermore very likely to increase participants feeling of competence. Since we could design products with people of different study backgrounds and values, it might the activities might also increase participants feeling of autonomy and openness. Finally, since I know the area and people I can organize and store materials and tools without any bureaucratic hurdles.
4.3.3. CONCEPT REFINEMENT

“Afterwork Makers Sessions” was the chosen concept, consisting of six events, happening Wednesdays in the early evening at the B-Side Bar in Teurastamo, Helsinki. Being a former meatpacking district, the courtyard is probably one of the trendiest locations for food, drinks, and events in Helsinki and surrounded by industrial sites, currently being demolished to build new residential areas. Since I work at the bar, I have been able to observe the crowd for many months, leading me to the conclusion that the customers are mainly people between 25 and 35 years old. While there are hardly any people from the “upper-class” as you might find them in the south of the city, there are definitely many people with a good income coming for dining and having drinks. At the same time, the industrial and alternative setting of the bar, the relatively low prices for drinks as well as the terrace, which is surrounded by raised beds for vegetables, also make it attractive to a people with alternative mindsets. It was this mixture as well as the relaxed atmosphere on the terrace, which convinced me to ask my boss whether he would be interested in having an event like this on the bar terrace. The sessions were meant to attract a variety of different people. In order to develop a suitable “tiny brand”, a few personas were created to better imagine the target audience. I wanted to create a style and atmosphere, which would work for people who are into sustainability or into design, while also attracting students from the business school or just the “average joe”. Accordingly, the style of the posters, should create a look that was not too fancy and radical, but still somewhat contemporary. I tried to keep it simple with little text and a large image depicting the warm atmosphere of the terrace filled with people chatting and drinking. Finally, I added icons and banners to draw on the cliche of a contemporary “hipster” poster.
4.4. THE CASE STUDY
“AFTERWORK MAKER SESSIONS”

4.4.1. DOCUMENTATION OF THE SESSIONS

The previous chapter outlined the practical part of this work, resulting in the Afterwork Maker Sessions, six events conducted from June to August 2016. The goal was to test several assumptions regarding the dissemination of sustainable practices, in this case D-I-Y crafts sessions. The obvious link between sustainability and D-I-Y crafts was the reuse and up-cycling of leftover materials, but more important was another, more subtle, underlying idea. The overall hypothesis was that gaining confidence in “doing things yourself or in your own way” can be a valuable asset in attaining a less consumption based lifestyle. This idea is based on research on sustainable lifestyles, which has indicated a double dividend amongst people with intrinsic values, namely increased well being and decreased consumption. However, the scope of this thesis and the time intense nature of attaining lifestyles, did obviously not allow to examine this claim.

Instead, the main assumption which this thesis seeks to explore was whether re-framing the context of sustainable practices could attract people, who had not previously been engaged in sustainability related practices. Would the bar setting and the learning experience motivate people to join who would not engage in such activities otherwise? Furthermore, would the rewarding feeling of being competent change the participants feeling of sustainability?

The second assumption was, that participants are much more likely to incorporate their newly learned skills and show greater commitment if they can join the sessions regularly over the duration of a couple of weeks.

These hypotheses were examined in the workshops. Data for analysis was collected through observation and a questionnaire, which was handed out to each participant during the sessions. However, it was clear that the number of participants and the available time did not allow for a quantitative study. Instead, qualitative impressions based on the questionnaire as well as feedback from people in between the sessions pointed out the learnings from these interventions.

In the following section, the six events are documented. The topics include making raised bed for veggies, jewellery, furniture, backpack and repairing clothes. I chose different topics to be able to test whether some activities work better than others. The decision on the topics were influenced by what students need daily, e.g. eating food, have some sort of storage, have something to carry things and obviously wearing clothes and accessories. However, they were also based on pragmatic reasons like which materials can I access or which activities are simple enough to manage.
The Project

Background

For the first event, I wanted to “make” something as simple as possible. Therefore, I got inspired by all the “veggie boxes” around the terrace. They are made from wood and a simple hinge, to collapse them, which means participants can take them home easily. Moreover, these boxes are incredibly trendy and cost 2x20 € (you need two on top of each other), which is quite expensive for the target group to buy. However, the hinge can only be bought in a special store and the one I had asked failed to have them available at the time I needed them. On top, facebook events turned out to be set as a private by default, so almost nobody had seen the event online. Consequently, I just bought normal hinges and saw this event as learning experience.

Event #1: Raised bed for veggies

Short facts

Materials: 50m of weathered wooden planks from an industrial dumpster at Kalasatama. Hinges and screws from the hardware store. Tools: borrowed from Aalto University and friends. Participants/ Questionnaires filled-in: 4/2 Organizers: 1 Interested passers-by: 0

General thoughts

• People need about a week time to schedule their events
• Being in between the people is necessary to appear as a public event
• Being in the sun instead of shadow could the atmosphere
• A poster might help passers-by to know what is happening as well as to increase the visibility
• Being so committed to the making the photographer might forget to do the task he/she is supposed to do
• Participants might need a manual in the next events
• Doing the events every fortnight instead of weekly makes planning easier
“I think this kind of event is a fun way to for people to do something different.”

“It’s so much fun to use (the electric saw) and things get done very fast. That’s a very rewarding feeling.”

#1 Raised beds for veggies
15.06.2016
Questionnaire:

Before the session:
1. What is your study/professional background?
   
   *Software engineer, Hairdresser*

2. Why did you join today?
   
   *Friends/ friends of friends suggested it (2p)*

3. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (On a scale from 0-5)
   
   4.5

4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
   
   5.4

5. What it is your image of sustainability? (0= burden or hassle 5= enrichment or joy)
   
   5.5 “I think this kind of event is a fun way for people to do something different, the link between sustainability and the other questions is unclear and it could be worth clarifying the intention”

After the session:
1. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5)
   
   4.5

4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
   
   5.5

3. What is your image of sustainability? (0=burden/hassle 5=enrichment/joy)
   
   5.5

4. Would you join another one of the weekly session? Why (not)?
   
   Yes (2p) “This was a nice discovery and a playful, nice opportunity to meet people. But I dont especially need any of the items of the next sessions”

5. Is there any theme/idea which you would like to work on in one of the future sessions?
   
   N/A

Conclusions of Event 1

Despite many obstacles the event was fun and it turned out to be an advantage that only a few people came, regarding the organizing and facilitating. For the next event, it was clear that I would need to have another co-facilitator. Furthermore, I would need to move the action right in the centre of the terrace and promote it earlier and better via the facebook page. The participants were already very confident in making, but two of them were very sceptical about using the electric saw. Therefore, it was a great feeling to observe how happy and confident they became within a short time of minimal guidance. Finally, in the questionnaire it was pointed out that while the event format might be good to attract people, the link to sustainability should somehow be introduced to the participants, which I wanted to avoid.
Background

Based on the first workshop, I figured that a workshop with 10 people as it was planned originally would be hard to handle if you are the only facilitator. However, the co-facilitator needs to be good at making designs as well. Consequently, my friend Erin, who studies Applied arts at Aalto joined me in organizing and running this event. The chosen topic was jewelry, since there were very interesting materials in the workshops at school and jewelry is easy to make and take home. We created a set of design manuals to make it easier for people to get going. Furthermore, based on the learnings from the first session, I printed a big poster and moved the workshop area right in the centre of the terrace.

Event #2: Jewelry

Short facts

Materials: Brass, copper, aluminium and iron pieces from the dumpster at Aalto. Glue and earring sticks bought from the hobby shop.
Tools: borrowed from friends and Aalto University
Participants/ Questionnaires filled-in: 7/5
Organizers:2
Interested passers-by: 2

General thoughs

• Being right in the middle of terrace creates a much better atmosphere and makes people wonder what is going on
• Its great to have a co-facilitator, but it is still not possible to leave to get back-up materials in case needed
• You should always have a backup for every tool you need
• Its great to invite “expert users”, who are very proactive to create a good atmosphere
• 4 events might not be enough to see rich enough results or test different approaches
“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure”

“The atmosphere was great”
The second event was pretty successful regarding the number of people and their feedback during the sessions. The new location as well as the topic seemed to work much better than the ones of the first session. Also having a co-facilitator was very helpful. However, when some of the tools broke I needed to get more back-ups and therefore only one facilitator was at the location. Consequently, for the next sessions I decided that every tool needs to have multiple back-ups. The participants came from very different study backgrounds but presumably due to the music, weather, drinks and the proactive atmosphere they were chatting happily and supporting each other. The architecture students seemed to make other people become a bit more daring in their designs, due to their own material experiments. While, based on our observations, some of these others got more confident, most of them did not indicate any changes when they filled out the questionnaire.

**Questionnaire:**

**Before the session:**
1. What is your study/professional background?
   - Architecture (2p) Yoga teacher, Corporate governance, Business administration
2. Why did you join today?
   - Friends/ friends of friends suggested it (2p) Out of curiosity (2p), to have fun
3. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5)
   - 2, 3, 4 (2p), 5
4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
   - 2, 4 (3p), 5
5. What is your image of sustainability? (0=burden/hassle 5=enrichment/joy)
   - 3, 4, 5 (3p)
   - “A man’s trash is another man’s treasure...My mom always picked things from the trash to transform them”

**After the session:**
1. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5)
   - 2, 4 (3p), 5
4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
   - 3, 4 (3p), 5
3. What is your image of sustainability? (0=burden/hassle 5=enrichment/joy)
   - 3, 4, 5 (3p)
4. Would you join another one of the weekly session? Why (not)?
   - Yes (5p)
   - “It felt great to challenge oneself and use your own hands to create stuff.”
   - “The atmosphere was great!”
5. Is there any theme/idea which you would like to work on in one of the future sessions?
   - Food, Making shoes

**Conclusions of Event 2**
Event #3: Furniture & accessories

Background

Since we had a lot of very interesting material leftover and also found beautiful wooden pieces, we decided that small furniture and accessories like coat hangers, candle holders or lamps was the next topic. We came up with a set of very nice designs and prepared manuals. Furthermore, I had asked my boss to share the event on the bar’s facebook page to get more people outside of our network.

Short facts

Materials: Wood and metal from the workshop leftovers at Aalto University and accessories from the recycling centre in Kyläsaari.
Tools: Borrowed from Aalto University and friends
Participants/ Questionnaires filled-in: 3/2
Organizers: 2
Interested passers-by: 2 (joining the next time with friends)

General thoughts

• Finland might simply be the wrong country for this sort of event
• People might not make it on a regular basis even though they want to
• Sharing the event via the official facebook page of the bar did not help
• July is a bad time to organize events because everybody is on holidays
• Reaching out to people who are not amongst your peers is terribly hard
“I like the concept of repeating the activity”
Conclusions of Event 3

We were prepared very well, I had spread the word via the Facebook page of the bar and several people indicated on our own event page that they will join, we ended up with only three people. The Facebook event page did not work as an indicator at all regarding the people who had signed up. Furthermore, due to July being the holiday month in Finland the terrace of the bar was not busy at all and the atmosphere was much less vibrant. Consequently, I decided to not continue with the events during July as I had planned originally. Instead I took a break and refined the concept until August. More specifically, I decided to team up with even more people for the next events, to reach out to a wider audience as well as update the questionnaire to get more useful feedback.

Questionnaire:

Before the session:
1. What is your study/professional background? 
   Architecture, Music
2. Why did you join today? 
   Want to make a coffee table, to have fun
3. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5) 
   4 (2)
4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5) 
   4, 5
5. What is your image of sustainability? (0=burden/hassle 5=enrichment /joy) 
   4, 5

After the session:
1. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5) 
   4 (2)
4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5) 
   4, 5
3. What is your image of sustainability? (0=burden/hassle 5=enrichment /joy) 
   4, 5
4. Would you join another one of the weekly sessions? Why (not)? 
   Yes (2)
5. Is there any theme/idea which you would like to work on in one of the future sessions? 
   N/A
Event #4: Drawstring backpacks

Background

By chance me and my study colleague Jan Pakarinen found out that, although being from different programs, we share an interest in open design. Together with two friends he is part of the SEAMS collective and planning to establish a place for people to learn how to repair their clothes. Subsequently, the idea came up to collaborate. Fashion is an important part of our everyday consumption and in addition one of the most environmentally harmful consumption categories. Furthermore, many pieces which are thrown away do not require time and knowledge intense repairing but often very basic sewing skills. Finally, we chose to create tote bags and drawstring backpacks, since we hoped this could possibly be used for regular shoppings instead of plastic bags.

General thoughts

- Organizing together with others, helps with facilitating, but inevitably also brings more people to the event, due to a larger network.
- Many passers-by were obviously interested, but were again very shy and I had too many things to handle to be able to take time and engage with them thoroughly. This lead to the idea of having another co-facilitator focusing on engaging in chats with those people next time.
- Two students from Aalto came by and asked if we could repeat this event during the cooperation days during October.
- Via the social media contact of Teurastamo the chance arose to participate with the next event in the “Torstaimarketti”, a much bigger event bringing in various people outside of my own network.

Short facts

Materials: Flag producer + Flea markets + Marimekko Outlet
Tools: 5 Sewing machines + 1 seams maker
Participants/ Questionnaires filled in: 10/9
Organizers: 4 (SEAMS collective)
Interested passers-by: 5
2.2. A SELECTION OF CRITIQUES ON MARKET ECONOMY AND GROWTH

The economy and its stability are at the top of political agendas in most countries of today (Daley cited in Jackson 2011 p. xi), hence it seems that being economic is the most valuable characteristic an action or thing can have in society. Underlying this model is the belief that human behaviour is naturally aiming at maximising financial profit (Polanyi 2001 p.71) and thus, a narrow minded focus on the power of financial capital as means for well-being dominates the western worldview. In this regard, work is only a means for earning money which helps to satisfy needs through consumption and hereby increase well-being (Jackson 2004 p.21). Therefore, in the following sections, the reigning economic system, its specific definition of labor and prosperity as well as possible alternative proposals shall be examined. When describing the economic system, it should be noted that this thesis will refer to the market economy instead of capitalism. The term capitalism derives from capital, which “describes any asset, including money, machines or even factories, which can be used or invested to make future assets” . (Giddens 2006 p.16) In this system, the means for production are privately owned, work is organized in efficient manner and the goal is the accumulation of profits (Weber 1920 p.xvii)(Weber 1920 p.xxiv). However, it seems plausible to state that the term is often used in a rather ideological form and thus for many people implies a certain judgement. It is for those reasons that the term “Market Economy”, which some use synonymously for capitalism while others describe it as a part of capitalism, will be used in the following.

“Session was really great! But it can be scary to participate... if there are friends its more comfortable”

“I wanted to learn how to make something cool for myself”

“I think its easy to make actual products yourself by sewing now”

#4 Backpacks

10.08.2016
in collaboration with SEAMS collective
Questionnaire:
Before the session:
1. What is your study/professional background?
   - Architecture, Business and Management, Hairdresser,
   - Legal Professional, Marketing, Product and Spatial Design, (Digital)
   - Product Design, Product Design (2p)
2. Why did you join today?
   - Learn how to make a bag (4p) Friends/ friends of friends suggested it
   - Have a good time with nice people (3p)
3a. Which activities related to “D-I-Y”/”making” have you previously been involved in?
   - Desing projects for the studies (4p), None (2p), Decorating, Clothing,
   - Loudspeaker workshop, Jewelry
3b. How comfortable do you feel about "making" things yourself? (0-5)
   - 5 (4p), 4 (2p), 3 (2p)
3c. How did you hear about /become involved in these previous "making" activities?
   - Afterwork Maker Sessions, Friends, Facebook, Hobby groups, School
4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
   - 4 (4p), 3 (2p), 2
5. What do you associate with the term sustainability?
   - “Responsible use of natural resources” “Long term lasting of resources”
   - “Life, Health, Happiness, Community” “Long term use and quality”
   - “Basically everything related to keeping the world alive”
   - “A stronger consciousness about lifestyle, consumption and behaviour”
   - “Non-consumption, Organic things: “Things I should be doing” “
   - “Shorter showers, Trying to make less waste, Consuming less”

After the session:
1. What was the best moment for you during this workshop?
   - Choosing the fabric (4p), Accomplishing the task (4p), Learning how to use the machine, Sharing knowledge.
2. What was the most challenging part today?
   - Keep the order of the process (2p), Working with the machine, Unplanned mistakes, Finding the right materials, Fiddling around with the rope, Breaking a needle
3. Was there anything important missing for you?
   - No (6p), Maybe more sewing machines, No answer (2p)

4a. Do you think that getting more confident in doing your own things could lead to a more sustainable (less consumption intense) lifestyle in the long run?
   - Yes (6p), No answer (3p)

4b. Where and on what topic would you do workshops that aim to advocate sustainable lifestyles by means of “making” activities?
   - Location: Anywhere, Bar works great because of the music
   - Topic: Anything, Designing clothes, Electronics repair, Furnishing, Carpets, Making soups from leftovers

4c. Has your image of sustainability changed? How?
   - “No” (4p)
   - (“Already eager to participate in such activities”)
   - (“Not going to change during one workshop”),
   - “I think its easy to make actual products yourself by sewing now”

   “Can be fun and done collectively”

5. Although most of you would probably say they come again to another session, it’s likely that you don’t come after all - what do you feel are the main reasons for that?
   - “Other social gatherings”
   - “The rush”
   - “Work”
   - “It can be scary to participate - if there are friends its more comfortable”
   - “Not every topic is interesting top everyone”

Conclusions of Event 4

Half of the people who joined had a background in design, which might be the reason why so many indicated that they feel very confident in making things and why there was a very proactive atmosphere. This was further facilitated by the music and the bar setting as one participant highlighted. The atmosphere definitely helped the few participants who seemed to feel a bit insecure regarding the “making” in the beginning. Again, going through the material and discovering “treasures” as well as accomplishing the task were the best moments for many. While everybody agreed on the connection between a confidence in making and sustainability, again a majority stated their image of sustainability had not changed for obvious reasons. They had already been active in a related topic or the time of one intervention is simply too short. Finally, time and other preoccupations were seen as the main hinderance to come regularly. However, it might also be due the fact of the changing topics which are not relevant to everybody.
Background

Together with my friend Erin we had organized the second and third session on jewellery and accessories respectively. Since we still had plenty of beautiful leftover materials and the jewellery workshop had been very successful we decided to repeat this session. Due to the help of Teurastamo officials we also got the chance to participate in the last instance of Torstaimarketti - an event which can attract hundreds of people if the weather is nice. In this case the weather was miserable, but still a few people found their way to the event. As a consequence of the previous failures to motivate interested passers-by to actually join the sessions, our friend Zoe joined the team. Her job was to engage in chats with passers-by.

Short facts

Materials: Wood and metal from the workshop leftovers at Aalto University
Accessories: from Recycling centre
Tools: Borrowed from Aalto University and friends
Participants/ Questionnaires filled-in: 11/8
Organizers: 3
Interested passers-by: 6 (all joined the session!)

General thoughts

• an extra facilitator helps a lot in getting people to join
• grey weather does not necessarily kill a workshop
• having an event during another event is good to reach people
• having a tent or stand might after all work better to attract people than a bar terrace
"Finding out how easy it was to create things" (was the best moment of the session)

"We came to see the market and thought this was interesting because of the recycled material!"

"Excellent stuff. I hope this continues after the summer"
The Project

Architectu (2p), Creative Sustainability, Kindergarten, Illustrator, Tourism studies (2p)

2. Why did you join today?
Because of recycling materials (2p) Friends/ friends of friends suggested it (2p) To have fun (2p) To learn how to make jewelry (2p)
Curiosity

3a. Which activities related to “D-I-Y”/”making” have you previously been involved in?
Handicrafts course (3p), None (2p), Painting

3b. How comfortable do you feel about “making” things yourself? (0-5)
5 (3p), 4 (2p), 3 (2p)

3c. How did you hear about /become involved in these previous “making” activities?
Friends, Facebook, I don’t know actually (3p)
“Discovered it on the spot”

4. How likely are you to challenge yourself and try new things in your everyday life? (0-5)
5 (3p), 4 (2p), 3 (2p)

5. What do you associate with the term sustainability?
“Ecological, Ethical” “A lot of things”
“It’s one of the core values in my life”
“Innovation, recycling, new technologies”
“Good for the environment”
“I try to live in a sustainable way and recycle etc.”

After the session:
1. What was the best moment for you during this workshop?
Using my own hands to create something (3p), Finding out how it easy it was to create something, Meeting people, Nice atmosphere, Choose the materials, Getting the inspiration, getting it done

2. What was the most challenging part today?
Find the right material (3p), Using the tools, Trying to make a closing system for my necklace, Finish the work, How to cut metal

3. Was there anything important missing for you?
No (5), Thicker rope, Thinner wire

4a. Do you think that getting more confident in doing your own things could lead to a more sustainable (less consumption intense) lifestyle in the long run?
Yes (7p), Perhaps (1p)
“We would just need more place where we could do DIY projects”

4b. Where and on what topic would you do workshops that aim to advocate sustainable lifestyles by means of “making” activities?
Topic: Sewing workshops (3p), Cooking workshops, Anything
Location: “This is a good place but it could be inside in a cafe/bar in the winter. Music is great! Wine maybe too.”

4c. Has your image of sustainability changed? How?
“No” (4p) “Just modifying things a little bit can make it look completely different” “You can make beautiful things out of trash”

5. Although most of you would probably say they come again to another session, its likely that you don’t come after all - what do you feel are the main reasons for that?
“For me this is more like one-time thing where I do something nice for myself”
“The session does not continue, you have nothing to look forward to”
“Work”
“Maybe the feeling that you are not “artsy” enough”
“Busy lifestyle” (2p)
“I do not live here”(2p)

Conclusions of Event 5

The main finding of this event was that thanks to the help of Zoe we managed that 6 passers-by joined the session. Furthermore, it seemed that the two little tents provided some sort of official set-up or a private sphere. Interestingly, it might be that the bar setting resembled to much a group of friends just working on their own. However, the market and the fact that our tent was the only place that was providing a different experience might have played a big role as well. Here, the designers, who were obviously very confident in “making” again seemed to act as a source of inspiration for the others, broadening their horizon on what is possible with materials. Many participants also mentioned the great atmosphere of working outside while meeting people and listening to music. Regarding the fact that most people did not see a change in their image of sustainability, it might be that the question B5 was framed to open and misses the link on how it can be a burden.
Background

Through a friend I had heard of Sasa and hear initiative “I mend your clothes”. She is trained as a fashion designer and regularly organizes repairations for free, so I asked her if she would like to collaborate for the final event of my event series. I proposed that while she could still offer to repair the pieces we should offer training on how to do it yourself first. Since all previous events had been about up-cycling in the sense of creating from scratch, I wanted to run event on upcycling in the sense of repairing, since some people had indicated they do not need more things. Of course this setting meant that people would only come if they actually had something they wanted to have repaired and consequently we knew that we could not expect any passers-by to join the activities.

General learnings

* It is easier to organize repairing then making events since you just need the tools and people bring their materials
* You can only attract people before the actual event obviously
* The atmosphere is still nice and people chat, but in general it is more quiet and more of a process where people focus on their own piece, compared to the buzz during the making events

Event #6: Clothes repair

Short facts

Materials: participants own materials
Tools: Borrowed from friends
Participants/ Questionnaires filled-in: 6/5
Organizers: 3
Interested passers-by: 3 (not possible to join spontaneously due to the nature of the session)
“It (sustainability) can be a communal activity, which can serve as a motivational factor”

“Realising that I actually just sewed back together my jacket myself (was the best moment of the session)”

#6 Clothes repair

24.08.2016
in collaboration with “I mend your clothes”
The Project

Conclusions of Event 6

Again, the crowd was very mixed regarding their study backgrounds. Interestingly, this time nobody with a background in design joined the sessions unlike the previous events, which focused on “making” something new from scratch. The image of sustainability was pretty much identical amongst all of them, and again for many it did not change during the session. However some pointed out that this sort of activity might be more motivating than trying to pursue a sustainable behaviour on your own. Furthermore, the commitment issue was again clearly linked to a matter of time or too many competing interests. Finally, Alok and Maja, who had come to the fourth session asking about whether we could collaborate for an AYY (Aalto University student union) event, joined again. After being in contact with me and the SEAMS collective already, they now got to know Sasa as well and consequently, they are now working together on the event in October.
4.4.2. RESULTS OF THE AFTERWORK MAKER SESSIONS

Over the course of 10 weeks, I conducted 6 Afterwork Maker Sessions. The first 3 happened every fortnight, while the sessions 4-6 took place weekly. Overall 40 people participated and 32 filled in the questionnaire which I provided. The professional backgrounds of the participants varied a lot. It included different business and science related studies, “classically creative” design and architecture disciplines as well as non-academic trainings like hairdressers. Everybody stated, either in the questionnaires or during the event, that the atmosphere was great and relaxed. Likewise, although most people did not know each other they were chatting happily and supporting each other. The presence of students with a design background definitely seemed to help others to discover further possibilities of the materials. Similarly, the manuals which we provided helped people to get started in the beginning, and understand the process of more complex designs. Overall, It can be stated that the design activities should not be too complex to avoid frustrating the participants and make sure that the pieces are finished within a few hours. Consequently, many cited that completing the task was the highlight of the sessions. Many others, described the process of finding the right materials as most rewarding and almost like a “treasure hunt”. Surprisingly many people also stated that being together with nice people and having a good time overall was the best part of the session for them. The overall feeling of autonomy, competence and openness did not change much on the scale provided in the questionnaires. However, while many of the participants seemed already be confident to maximum in “making” most of them stated throughout the sessions that they learned more, presumably something specific. Likewise, many people stated that they were surprised how easy a specific task turned out to be in the end. Similar to the feelings of autonomy, competence and openness, the image that the participants had of sustainability also did not change much during the sessions. While some indicated that they see it as more of a joy and communal thing now, for many others it seemed to already be quite positive. Furthermore, it was stated that the time of one session was too short to see a change, which aligns well with conclusions from the literature review and desk study. However, despite my efforts to set up regular events and despite the determination of people to come again to the sessions, this rarely happened, except for some 5 or 6 participants who came to two sessions. The reasons for this were equivocally seen in the seemingly ever-shorter amount of time people have and in the abundance of other, competing events or interests. Finally, it was great to see that Heidi, Jan and Ida from the SEAMS collective, Sasa, as well as Maja and Alok, got to know each other and are now working together for another similar event. While it is not possible for me to participate there, we plan to work together during a Christmas special. Furthermore, both the people from the bar as well as from Teurastamo got interested in continuing the sessions and there might even be a chance to run a pop-up workshop for free in a nice spacious room close to the entrance of Teurastamo. While I had many unforeseen difficulties, I believe that, based on the general feedback as well as the above mentioned future plans, the session were very successful.
5 DISCUSSION
The final part of the thesis consists of the two chapters discussion and perspectives. The first chapter compares the findings from the “afterwork Maker Sessions” to the hypotheses made in the previous parts (5.1.1.). Based on this, conclusions are drawn (5.1.2), and areas which seem to hold potential for follow-up research are pointed out (5.1.3). After outlining the limitations to this work (5.1.4.), the second chapter points out possible next steps for the “afterwork Maker Sessions” (5.2.1.). Finally, the last section provides an overview of the learning journey, showcasing how the project developed its shape.

5.1. DISCUSSION

5.1.1. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Before discussing the findings of the “Afterwork Maker Sessions” I will briefly enumerate the hypotheses which literature review as well as the desk and field study helped to frame. The overall hypothesis was that feeling competent in “doing things yourself” can be a valuable asset in adopting a less materialistic lifestyle. This idea is based on research on sustainable lifestyles, which has indicated a double dividend amongst people with intrinsic values, namely increased well being and decreased consumption. However, due to the time intense nature of lifestyle changes, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to examine this claim.

Instead, the main assumption which this thesis aimed to explore was: Are participants more likely to incorporate their newly learned skills and show greater commitment if they can join the sessions regularly over the duration of a couple of weeks?

Regarding the new practitioners, I will briefly examine targeting people specifically, before I will elaborate how reaching out to passers-by worked out. While I had started my “marketing campaign” solely by posting a Facebook event, I learned quickly that this will limit my reach to friends of friends, which was good, but not my ultimate goal. Using the Facebook page of the bar and also putting up a real poster inside, helped to reach out to people outside of my own network. However, this apparently only lead to people liking the events on Facebook and not to participation. From this perspective it seems possible to say that the question of how many other participants a person knows might play an important role in actually attending a smaller Facebook event. Possibly, this is linked to the perceived level of privacy or trust - one of the participants stated in the questionnaire that while the session was fun, she found it hard to go somewhere without knowing anybody. A study from Taiwan indicates similar findings, but due to its culture-specific background it is questionable to what extent these findings can point to cross-cultural validity (Huang 2014). I also met a fellow student from Aalto University during one of the events, who turned out to be responsible for the social media at Teurastamo and was very happy to share my events on their channels. Previously, I had once contacted the management of Teurastamo, but after not receiving any response I did not try again. However, the results were similar as with the Facebook page of the bar - people liked it online but did not come to physically join. In conclusion, it can be stated that I was mainly able to target friends and friends of friends via posting the events online.

Next, I want to discuss the observations made regarding passers-by. The high visibility - the bar terrace is facing the main entrance of the Teurastamo courtyard - and the combination of tools and drinks, made many passers-by and people on the terrace, wondering what was going on. However, it turned out to be very hard to motivate those people to join in spontaneously. Presumably, this is because they had reserved their time to go for a drink, but it could also be due to a culturally determined shyness. Consequently, the idea came up to have a co-facilitator whose main job was to engage with the people around the intervention, which proved to be very successful. Apart from this, another measure taken might have been key. As there is a very popular market in the area on Thursday evening, I asked to join its last instance, and the organizers were so kind to provide us with a stand and tent for free. Despite rainy
weather quite a few people came. Consequently, I would definitely do any further workshops during other events if possible, to make use of existing marketing campaigns and networks. Secondly, it could also be possible that the visible border provided by the tent generated a more official and paradoxically more open image in comparison to the workshops on the bar terrace. The setting there might have lead people to believe, that this is an unofficial meeting of a group of friends. This, however, remains speculation.

Re-framing the activities primarily as design or “maker” sessions instead of sustainable or “Eco”, seemed to work in the sense, that it definitely attracted some people, who did not prioritize sustainability previously. However, at the same time it needs to be noted that for many participants the image of sustainability also did not change after one session. This again does not come as a surprise. I have argued earlier on that a set of recurring events will be needed to impact the view of people on sustainability. On top many participants already had a positive image of sustainability so there was not much that could change to the better. Generally all participants no matter what their stance on the topic was stated that they see a clear link between sustainability and being more competent in “making”. While many came to learn a specific craft, surprisingly many people stated they just came to have a good time. Likewise for many participants the highlight of the day was enjoying the company of nice people. Interestingly, Galina Kallio, who researches on food cycles has pointed out, that sustainability in this context often seems to be a by-product, while the primary motivation for people is their very own personal well being (Kallio 2010). In this regard, one could ask if it is actually necessary that people consciously see their support sustainability, for whatever motivation. Ironically, in this case, it could in fact be that the motivation to join was a very materialistic one after all – like “I want a cool bag for free”.

Coming back to re-framing the sessions as design, I can definitely state that the cozy atmosphere at the terrace of B-Side-Bar helped the participants to talk to each other and get going with their designs. One could almost say, that the combination of bar terrace, summer, drinks, music and people, helped to create a feeling of “flow”. Being in a flow, was coined by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi and describes a state of deep focus and increased joy despite engaging in a possibly challenging activity (Csíkszentmihályi 2000). To emphasize this finding I can share that I always ended up taking photos myself, despite having arranged for one or two people to take care of this task. The reason for this is simply that the photographers were totally dedicated to designing something, and at times forgot about documenting. Furthermore, for the people who did not seem confident about making, it was definitely helpful that we had prepared manuals and concepts which they could just follow. Being not too complicated and lengthy seemed to be another key to get people joining, as the successful jewellery sessions showed. This findings aligns with the results of my former study colleague Anja-Lisa Hirscher, who co-designed fashion pieces, which were already half-way prepared (Hirscher 2013). Finally, it turned out that having fellow design students pursuing their own ideas, helped to create a proactive atmosphere as well. Their “explorers mind” seemed to help others realizing the potential of materials.

Having discussed the results of the first research question, I will now examine the second assumption. The hypothesis was, that the learning result as well as the commitment would be stronger if participants can join the sessions regularly over the duration of a couple of weeks. Due to the fact, that only a few people came to a second session, it is difficult to draw conclusions based on the case study. Of course, it is possible that the variation of topics simply meant that people who are passionate about topic X are not at all interested in topic Y. Interestingly however, everybody was very happy with her results and was determined to come to the next sessions, which were already set and advertised. Nonetheless rarely did participants actually come again. The overwhelmingly big offer of activities and generally, the shortage of time were stated as the main hurdles here. In this regard, a possible solution for moving on the concept to a more professional level in the future, could obviously be a course fee. As soon as you choose a permanent location, where rent needs to be paid, such a fee would be inevitable anyway. At the same time it is questionable to what extent the participation is then due to intrinsic motivation or due to a feeling of “guilt”, i.e. waste of money if you do not participate. One reason for people not coming again might also be, that the “Afterwork maker sessions” were more based on the findings from the “Design intervention” CoPs than on those from the “Social Support” CoPs. To be more specific, the concept was designed in a way that had advantages regarding the attraction of new members, but maybe at the same time disadvantages at keeping them. Of course just like the “Social support” CoPs, the location was permanent, I asked people to contribute ideas for further sessions and the size of around 5–15 people created a feeling of trust. However, in the end it remained similar to “Design interventions”, where some organize a project and others “just” participate without having a great ownership. To a certain extent this set-up might have been inevitable, since I tried to combine...
two concepts which aim at very different goals - attracting and keeping participants. Therefore, one solution for the future could be to have a location, where the core team meets and then organize workshops like the “Afterwork Maker Sessions” to attract new participants every now and then. Another solution could be creating a more coherent set of events. By this I mean the design of a range of products which go together or the creation of a more complex object consisting of smaller parts which are then the different topics of the events.

Finally, while it was unfortunate that people did not join the sessions on a regular basis, having had six events provided me with great possibilities. First of all, the repetition of the events helped to spread the word and I would argue that the pictures of previous sessions on an event page definitely helped to motivate interested people to actually come to the next one. Furthermore, working on the events in a way of constant prototyping, enabled me to test several approaches, thus elaborating the concept continuously. This approach was part of my overall research methodology action research, but also aligns with my previous training as a designer.

While there were two main hypotheses to be examined during the workshops, I initially had developed a set of four research questions during my field research. One of the other two questions looked at whether study circles or consequently “Social Support” and “Design Support” practices, have a strong potential for duplicability by being rather small in size. Duplicability, according to Manzini, is one of the key strategies for increasing the impact (Manzini 2015 p.58). In this regard the fact that I know three different persons or teams who would like to continue the sessions somewhere in the city of Helsinki could be seen as an indicator proving the assumption.

Regarding the sessions, I would also like to briefly discuss general findings on running the events. The main problem I have observed in running events, might prove to be the main advantage for designers. No matter what you plan, it never works out that way, thus forcing you to develop spontaneous solutions constantly. In this regard I see two simple strategies very helpful. First of all, making sure that there is more than one back-up for every tool, as well as making sure you are close to a place where you could potentially get more substitute tools, is crucial. Secondly, having co-facilitators will enable you to get such substitute tools without leaving your workshop alone. Having a photographer, another co-facilitator guiding the participants as well as one co-facilitator engaging with passers-by has proven to be a necessary team size. Despite this support, I was unfortunately not able to spontaneously document much of my conversations with the participants during the workshops, since I always found myself organizing something. Obviously there were the questionnaires, but writing down immediate thoughts and raw pieces of conversations provides more depth to this data. In this regard, it might be worthwhile to take some time in between and specifically aim for writing down quotes, while engaging in short chats with the participants.

To conclude this section, I would like to zoom out from the “Afterwork Maker Sessions” and see how my field research compares to further studies and projects at the intersection of sustainability and design. The theoretical part of this work has been informed mainly by humanistic critiques on consumption, e.g. Max-Neef and Fromm. This lens has been applied by other students and scholars due to the apparent connection between self actualization and creativity or imagination. Although only touching on it, I have also looked at the phenomena studied from the perspective of the emerging research body on theories of practice, especially Giddens theory of structuration. Again, this approach is common amongst other research on sustainability, e.g. Elizabeth Shove. Likewise, John Ehrenfeld draws both on humanistic needs theories and Giddens structuration in his book “Sustainability by Design. A Subversive Strategy for Transforming Our Consumer Culture”. As he puts it, Giddens theory offers a much less frictional way of establishing new social practices: “By introducing new tools and changing the context in which action occurs, structuration works its way subtly by creating new (institutional) rules to conform to new norms and beliefs that are encoded and embedded in the design of the tools.” (Ehrenfeld 2008 p.147)

However, his practical strategies resembles more classic products with the ironic twist of engaging people and enable them to reflect more, thus countering a consumptive lifestyle (Ehrenfeld 2008 p.168 ff). This approach is very similar to the idea of critical design, and differs completely from the approach of this thesis, which relies more on the emerging “maker movement” or DIY approach. Again, there are quite a few voices drawing on the idea of DIY and design for sustainability (Gauntlett 2011). In the same regard, my former study colleague Anja-Lisa Hirscher wrote her thesis about increasing product person attachment to counter the consumption culture. Here, she was also organizing “maker” workshops to engage people (Hirscher 2013). However, her works differs not only because of the chosen focus on person product attachment in fashion. One difference is obviously the regular nature of the sessions, which I proposed. Secondly, while she also did not lead out with the
Finally, coming back to my approach, I believe that there are mainly three distinctions to the majority of research done in this area. Firstly, the overall approach and also one of the concepts proposed, aim at applying design ways of thinking on more substantial decisions in humans life. Although there are many papers and projects combining design and social support, I am not aware of any other “Design Support” circles with regular meetings. Originally, through such a group I was hoping to reach an effect similar to sabbaticals but aimed at a wider audience due to being less time and money consuming. For the moment, due to the restricted amount of time and my skills I could unfortunately not pursue this idea the way I had planned to. Still, I believe that there is a great potential. The only practical example I can point to as of this moment is the “Work Life Romance” team in Germany, which I mentioned in my desk research, but I am certain that there are more initiatives like them.

On a theoretical level MIT researcher Otto Scharmer (Scharmer 2011) as well as Daniel Christian Wahl and Seaton Baxter (Wahl and Baxter 2008), both mentioned during the literature review, use a similar perspective. They all draw on the work of psychologist Ken Wilber and his Spiral Dynamics, which centres around the development of a more holistic and purposeful perspective in life. This is what I am ultimately interested in by proposing the term “Design Support”. To attract a variety of people from e.g. a sales manager to a city servant, and provide them with both theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, to broaden their horizon on what they, with very small means, are capable of doing. If people have a chance to grow and pursue projects according to their wishes, I am confident that sustainability will happen as a by-product. Consequently, the term might then shift from “Design Support” to “Support by/through Design”, but that remains speculation. The other main difference in my approach was the location. I have not heard of any design or “maker” sessions at a bar, but since the maker movement can be found worldwide I would not be surprised that the very same concept has been practised somewhere else already. Last but not least, I still do believe that not enough effort is done on attracting new audiences, but instead most projects rely on targeting people who are already aware of large parts of the consumption paradigm. However, I am now more certain than ever that this poses a major challenge.

5.1.2. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion in the previous sections, it can be stated that re-framing the context of practices holds a strong potential for attracting new practitioners to sustainability. First of all, the observations prove that a higher visibility and unexpected combinations of location and practices help to spark interest amongst passers-by. Secondly, the findings indicate that framing up-cycling as design and “maker” events on a bar terrace help to increase the attractiveness of such practices. Here, manuals, simple designs and a proactive atmosphere seem to support the learning journey and feeling of competence of “maker” novices. Finally, the small size of the sessions might point to a potential for duplicability, as a few people got interested in running the sessions somewhere else, thus possibly attracting further audiences. However, it was observed that good facilitation skills are crucial to motivate passers-by to join spontaneously. Likewise, it might be necessary to separate the workshop area from the rest of the terrace to create an official appearance. Furthermore, it could not be examined whether participants feeling of competence and their image of sustainability had changed profoundly. This is primarily due to the fact, that participants did not join the sessions regularly despite their determination to do so. The reason for this is presumably the abundance of events in urban areas. Thus the major task evolving from this research is seen in understanding and framing commitment strategies to better support humans exploring their potential.

5.1.3. LIMITATIONS

Since it was only possible to do the events on Wednesdays and once on a Thursday, the possibilities of attracting people was strongly limited. Similarly, due to bureaucratic limitations it was only possible to join forces with another official event of the area once. Finally, the practical part of this study took place in an outside location, thus having to deal
with changing weather conditions. It remains speculation, but chances are high that a Friday night event or joining the “Thursday market” during the high season on a sunny day would have lead to many more participants, and therefore new findings and problematic, in short: richer data. The proposed examination on whether the repetition of events would lead to increased levels of competence in a longer lasting manner was not possible due to the fact that participants did not return often enough. Finally, due to the small number of workshop participants and restricted time frame, the results can not be applied for any empirical conclusions, but rather help to advance the discussion and propose further research opportunities.

5.1.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A long-term study to examine the learning results and the possible genuine behaviour shifts of such interventions as the Afterwork Maker Sessions would be interesting to pursue. Here, it would also be worthwhile to cross-check the assumptions regarding the visitors who were sitting at the terrace but did not join the workshop despite obvious interest. Another interesting follow up could be to use the findings of this event series to come up with a set of best practices, which could be published online as an open-source tool. Also, the previously mentioned work of Ken Wilber and the proposal of a deeper inquiry of purpose in life with the means of designerly thinking has great potential in my eyes. First and foremost however, I propose further research both on attracting new practitioners and commitment strategies. Regarding new audiences research on tiny social movements and how they frame their events as well as the idea of sustainability as a by-product could be examined further. On commitment strategies various design activism practitioners and researchers have pointed out their context specific learnings - mainly centring around ownership - but no widely acknowledged framework has been designed yet. In the same regard many practitioners do not possess tools to examine their impact, another hugely important field for anyone interested in sustainability.

5.2. PERSPECTIVES

5.2.1. PROSPECTS

Regarding a future development of the sessions, many interesting connections came up. Firstly, collaborating with the SEAMS collective and “I mend your clothes” brought me together with like-minded people, who also share the will to bring open design and sustainability to a wider audience. Secondly, during our cooperation, two students from Aalto University came by to ask whether I or the other two teams would like to repeat this event in October for the Student Cooperation Day. This is now going to happen and another session is scheduled as a Christmas special. Furthermore, both the B-Side-Bar as well as Teurastamo are interested in continuing the sessions, to promote the area and attract people during the low season. Therefore I will meet with Teurastamo official to discuss the possibility of a pop-up workshop in a beautiful and currently empty storage space close to the entrance of the Teurastamo court. Finally, thanks to my lecturer Cindy Køhtala, I got to know Juuso and Jan, whose Alku Festivaali in Salo shares the same core idea with this thesis, namely attracting people to sustainability in the style of a trojan horse.

While a repetition of the event as part of the students cooperation day is good news, it will most likely not lead to any scaling up in the near future. Participating in the Alku festivaali in comparison has a stronger potential, as it is planned to take part once a year for about five years in total. However, the most promising idea lies in repeating the events regularly at Teurastamo and possibly ending up with a permanent space. I have had this idea in mind for a while and it was great to talk to the SEAMS collective, who had a similar long term goal. While they are focusing primarily on clothes repair due to their knowledge and also because it is an easy topic to target, my vision as outlined earlier would be a bit different.

Coming back to one of the concepts proposed earlier in this thesis, I imagine a space where you can find sports, music, hands-on skills and tools to borrow, comparable to what is called a “library of things”. However, in the same space I would like to see coaching about leadership, dialogue or “life design” similar to the Work Life Romance team although in less of a “consultancy” style. In short, it would be a “library of tools”. Obviously, it would be the advanced version of what I have been doing now and bring along many new obstacles. Finding a space, equipment and co-organizers as well as generating a sustainable business model would be the first challenges that come to my mind. But also the visibility and the seasons will need to be dealt with in a new way. Most of my workshops happened during the best time of the year on a sunny terrace. The atmosphere is good, the place is visible and people are happy in a way that is contagious. If you move inside a space and it is winter the whole context changes again. Still, if anything in this
direction works out, I will be up for it immediately, no matter if as a voluntary activity in my leisure time, an actual job (or maybe more realistically a small job besides many other small jobs) or as a research project for a PhD.

5.2.2. REFLECTIONS ON THE LEARNING JOURNEY

In the preface I have stated that I am a prime example of increased eudaimonic well being. In fact, I believe that I have never learned as much as I have in the previous year. I have always been interested in economy, psychology and sociology, but never had the chance to explore these areas. Obviously, I could only touch on some theories, but the reading has been incredibly interesting and motivating. Apart from the various new topics which I studied in the literature review, I have also been writing my first academic piece. Surprisingly though, the hardest part was not the writing but refining the research questions after the field work. During the course of one year I have also managed to a) define more what I would like to work on in the near future and b) how I work best. Both findings are incredibly valuable. Amongst the main practical skills I have learned, are obviously advertising, running and facilitating events and the understanding that while I would like to continue facilitating and supporting people on their learning journey, being an event organizer might not be my thing. Finally, I also learned that I am way too shy to ask passers-by to join my workshops despite my outgoing nature and the fact that I am definitely passionate about this topic.

Somehow I would like to argue that the passion derives directly from my intrinsic motivation and maybe it does. After all, I had the ultimate freedom to explore, which is great and uplifting, but it comes with a burden. The open ended process became tiring after about nine month, right before I finally created the concepts for the practical part. Consequently, I have started to like the idea of finding a case study first and then searching for the suitable literature. At the same time it was interesting to let the reading shape the project. Since the literature review helped narrow down my focus, my thoughts on what is important or not and what the project is finally going to be, kept changing constantly.


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