

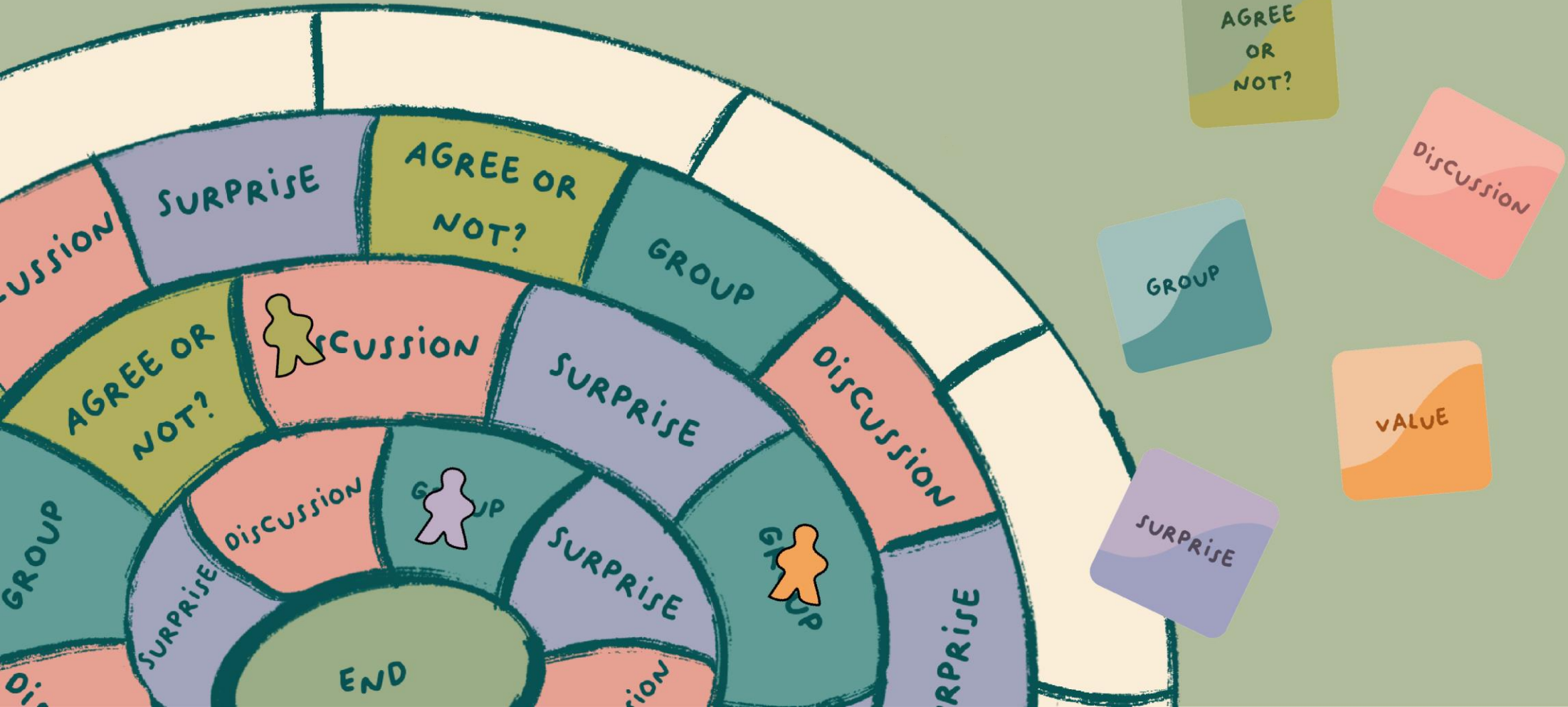


AALBORG  
UNIVERSITY

STUDENT REPORT

Msc. Sustainable Design Engineering

# SUSTAINABLE GIFT-EXCHANGE



# Title page

Study programme: Msc. Sustainable Design Engineering

Semester: Master thesis – spring 2022

University: Aalborg University Copenhagen

Name of project: Sustainable gift-exchange

Project duration: 07.02.2022 until 02.06.2022

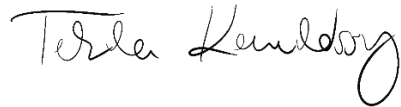
Number of standard pages: 72

Number of characters: 172847

Supervisor: Signe Pedersen, Associate Professor, Department of Planning

Student: Eszter Tekla Komlóssy

Student number: 20201805



Date: 02.06.2022



AALBORG  
UNIVERSITY

STUDENT REPORT

## Abstract

This thesis is a sustainable design project targeting a narrow segment of sustainable consumption, gifts. The project is taking a focus point in the practice of gift-exchange, within gift-consumption takes place and is determined by.

The project integrates collaborative design, including the Staging negotiation spaces framework by Pedersen (2020) and generative design research (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013), as well as implements social practice theory (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Building upon the theoretical and methodological framework, as well as the literature review, during the thesis 10 semi-structured interviews and 5 generative design workshops have been carried out, where for the latter the scope has been narrowed to second-hand gifts.

Findings from the empirical research have been translated to a final concept, which is a boardgame for families. The game facilitates conversations around second-hand gifts and implements strategies for changing the practice of gift-exchange, and thereby aiming to contribute to a sustainable development in gift-consumption.

Keywords: gift-exchange, gift-consumption, gift, social practice theory, collaborative design

## Acknowledgement

First, I would like to deeply thank to my supervisor, Signe Pedersen for her great contribution to the project and continuous support throughout this period. I am grateful that I was always challenged by her to do my best in the process.

I am also thankful for Peter Karnøe and Charlotte Louise Jensen, professor, and formal associate professor of Department of Planning respectively, who contributed to this work with their time and great insights.

Furthermore, I would like thank Andres Felipe Valderrama Pineda, associate professor of Department of Planning, who has been the project module coordinator in this semester, for all his efforts and support.

I greatly appreciate the help of all the participants of my interviews and workshops, thank you Al, Alex, Anders, Anna, Annamarieke, Caro, Chris, Emilie, Flo, Jaap, Lukas, Mathias, Mikkel, Molly, Nati, Nusi, Siri, Śliwa, Tüsi and Vibe.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude towards my family, my boyfriend, and my friends, who have been the most understanding and encouraging during this work.

## Table of contents

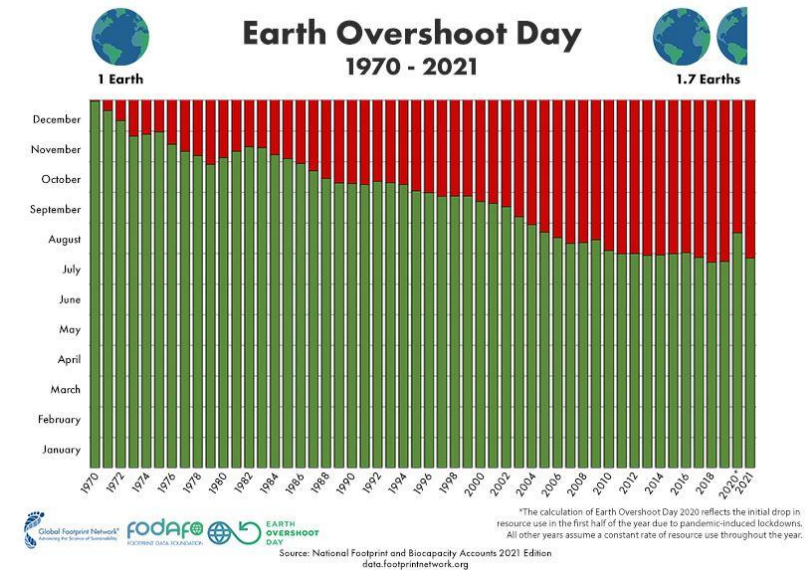
Title page .....	1		
Abstract .....	3		
Acknowledgement.....	3		
Table of contents.....	4		
1. Introduction.....	6		
1.1. Why gifts? .....	7		
1.2. Framing the problem .....	7		
1.3. Design process and reading guide.....	9		
Discover .....	10		
2. Literature review.....	10		
2.1. Sustainable, socially responsible, and ethical consumption.....	10		
2.2. Consumption and people.....	11		
2.3. The problem of (Christmas) gift consumption.....	12		
2.4. Gift-exchange and sustainability.....	13		
2.5. ‘Sustainable’ gift categories.....	15		
2.6. Gift-exchange in anthropology and sociology.....	16		
2.7. Problem statement .....	20		
3. Theories and methods.....	20		
3.1. Social practice theory .....	20		
3.2. Double diamond.....	24		
3.3. A collaborative design framework.....	24		
3.4. Affinity diagram.....	30		
4. First empirical data collection .....	31		
4.1. Interviews .....	31		
4.2. Staging negotiation spaces .....	36		
4.3. Reflection and limitations .....	37		
Define .....	39		
5. Data analysis .....	39		
5.1. Affinity diagram.....	39		
5.2. Mapping practices.....	46		
5.3. Narrowing the topic .....	50		
5.4. Reflection and limitations .....	51		
Develop .....	51		
6. Re-framing the problem.....	51		
6.1. Literature review.....	51		
6.2. Gift value .....	53		
6.3. Mapping the concerns around second-hand gifts .....	55		
7. Second empirical data collection .....	56		
7.1. Generative workshops.....	56		
7.2. Staging negotiation spaces .....	65		
7.3. Reflection and limitations .....	66		
Deliver.....	68		

8.	Data analyzation .....	68
8.1.	Values .....	68
8.2.	Mapping current practices .....	69
8.3.	Workbook answers .....	73
8.4.	Exercise map of the design game .....	74
8.5.	Affinity diagram.....	75
8.6.	Reflection and limitations .....	78
9.	Conceptualization.....	79
9.1.	Re-framing.....	79
9.2.	Brainstorming .....	80
9.3.	Settling with a direction .....	82
9.4.	Design specifications .....	84
9.5.	Concept.....	85
10.	Conclusion.....	90
10.1.	Answering the initial research question.....	90
10.2.	Answering the additional research question....	91
10.3.	Reflection on the process .....	93
10.4.	The contribution of the project to Sustainable Design Engineering .....	93
11.	References .....	95

# 1. Introduction

*“Human consumption have been recognised as the greatest threat to social and environmental sustainability.”*  
(Aitken, Watkins and Kemp, 2019, p299)

Unsustainable consumption patterns are connected to many of the environmental challenges, “such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and resource depletion.” (Köhler et al., 2019, p3) The problems that we are facing with, are not new, ecological overshoot has been started in the early 1970’s, where the biocapacity of our planet already could not meet with the demands of humanity. However, global consumption of goods and services is rising ever since, resulting the World Earth overshoot day<sup>1</sup> to arrive earlier and earlier. As of by 2021 we would need 1.7 Earths to compensate the footprint created by humanity. (Earth Overshoot Day, 2021)



1. Figure Earth overshoot day (Earth Overshoot Day, 2021)

Furthermore “about 20% of the world’s population is responsible for 80% of the total world consumption” (Kovács and Valkó, 2013, p142), which data is raising awareness around the unequal and unfair distribution of the planet’s resources, where the richest countries keep using more and the poorest countries often suffer the consequences.

Many attempts were made to addressing the unsustainable levels of consumption in various fields and transition it to the better. Among

<sup>1</sup> “Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity’s demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year.” (Earth overshoot day, n.d.)

others the 12<sup>th</sup> of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations is addressing the matter of ‘Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns’ involving diverse topics in the target points. (United Nations, 2015)

However, this thesis is located in a segment which has received little attention so far, gift-consumption.

### 1.1. Why gifts?

While gift consumption is not widely researched from a sustainability perspective, it has received growing attention from economists in the past years. The tradition of Christmas, especially stands out, as (adapted from (Bryant, 2010)) - the “greatest annual environmental disaster, with Christmas not only symbolic of hyper-capitalism, but constitutive of it.” (Farbotko and Head, 2013, p9). Research shows that billions of dollars are spent on Christmas gifts each year (Sweeney, 2021), resulting a huge impact of producing, packaging, shipping, and wrapping these items. However, millions of these gifts “end up on the landfill once Christmas is over”. (Ong, 2021)

The overall impact of gifting is hard to research, since in most cases it is not possible to determine if a product is purchased with the intention to give it as a gift. However, seeing that Christmas gifting is just one of the many occasions, where gifts are given, the problem of gifts appears to be an overlooked one, which is important to address.

Gift consumption, however, cannot be separated from, and is determined by gift-exchange, which is why this thesis is focusing on

the overall practice of gift-exchange. Gift-exchange is a socio-culturally embedded and complex practice. “Gift giving have long constituted some of the most important modes of social exchange in human societies.” (Farbotko and Head, 2013, p1) and thereby symbolizes fundamental parts of social life, self-identity and belonging, the relationship between the giver and the recipient and other cultural and traditional characteristics (section 2.6). Thereby, gift-exchange, and gift-consumption as a part of it, is a wicked problem from a sustainability perspective.

### 1.2. Framing the problem

Wicked problems “are problems with many interdependent factors making them seem impossible to solve. Because the factors are often incomplete, in flux, and difficult to define, solving wicked problems requires a deep understanding of the stakeholders involved, and an innovative approach provided by design thinking.” (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.)

As Jensen and Friis (2019, p47) say these problems are requiring ‘new problem framings’ as opposed to “traditional problem framing (which has typically relied on a mix of rational consumer choice models, efficiency measures and information-based behavioral change theory)”. The authors see a solution in applying social practice theory with the combination of ethnographic research and involving participants in the project.

Following that, this thesis integrates collaborative design, including the Staging negotiation spaces framework by Pedersen (2020) and generative design research (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013), as well as social practice theory (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). The

adaptation of these theories and methods to the topic resulted in the initial research question:

### **How can practices of sustainable gift-exchange be explored in a collaborative design framework?**

This exploration involves the understanding of current gift-exchange practices, as well as how they adapt when introducing sustainable elements of material and meaning.

A practice is defined as “a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, knowhow, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (Reckwitz, 2004, p249) A practice based on (Shove et al., 2012) consists of elements of materials, meanings, and competences, as well as their connections to each other (Section 3.1.).

The research question is addressing the matter of practices in plural, as a way of recognizing that sustainable gift-exchange might be performed as part of different practices. This thesis, however, is not aiming to explore all of these. Furthermore, while many studies are talking about gift-giving, in this work the term gift-exchange is used as a way of recognizing the dependency of the practice on both the giver as well as the recipient.

Sustainable gift-exchange is understood as a way of gifting, that contributes to sustainable development, which is defined in the Brundtland Report, as the “development [that] seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the

ability to meet those of the future” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p39).

This thesis understands gifts as objects or non-materialistic things, which may fulfil various roles and carry meanings, which is described further in Section 2.6. While it is recognized that some gifts are not requiring consumption in a direct way, most gifts, even if not objects, are having implications of consumption and thereby considered to be relevant to the scope of this thesis.

Finally, a collaborative design framework in the research question is understood as term, including design-led and research-led methods, implemented in different phases of the design process, which are contributing to involve the people in the design process, so the solution meets their needs and wants (Section 3.3).

After the first empirical data collection the scope of the project has been narrowed to the practice of exchanging second-hand gifts. This scoping resulted an additional research question:

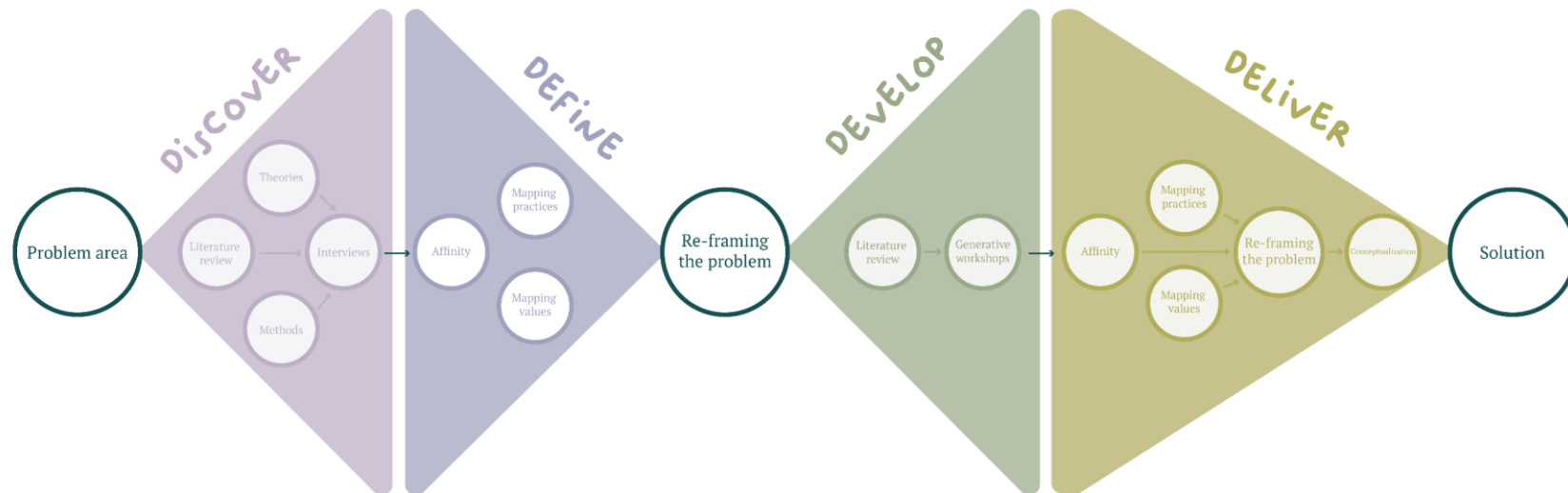
### **How can second-hand gifts become an alternative to first-hand gifts, and by that contribute to a sustainable development in gift consumption?**

The research question is based on the understanding that participants associated different qualities to second-hand and first-hand items, where the latter is the norm in gifts. Thereby, the second part of this thesis was aiming to understand and challenge these qualities, especially the ones associated with second-hand items and gifts.



### 1.3. Design process and reading guide

The thesis is following the structure of the Double Diamond (Section 3.2.), resulting in 4 big parts of the project, Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver, structured as follows<sup>2</sup>.



2. Figure The design process (own illustration)

<sup>2</sup> The illustration is not representative for time, as the first diamond has taken significantly longer, than the second one.

Furthermore, the thesis is divided into 10 chapters.

Chapter 1 is this Introduction. Chapter 2, the Literature review is a prolongation of this introduction, aiming to provide an overview of what has been done on the field and where is this thesis contributing. Chapter 3 is establishing the theoretical and methodological foundation for the project. Chapter 4 is describing the first empirical research, which has been done with conducting 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews. Following that chapter 5 is guiding the reader through how this data has been analysed. Chapter 6 describes how the problem has been reframed with the focus shifting on second-hand gift, resulting in the additional research question. Chapter 7 includes the second empirical research, conducting 5 generative design workshops. After that chapter 8 describes how the workshops have been analysed. Chapter 9 is containing a re-framing the problem, followed by conceptualization. Finally, chapter 10 is concluding this thesis by providing answers to the research questions, as well as how the project contributes to Sustainable design engineering.

# DISCOVER

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Sustainable, socially responsible, and ethical consumption

Adapted from the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) “sustainable consumption has been defined as consumption which minimizes impacts on the environment to secure human needs for present and future generations.” (Gram-Hanssen, 2021, p433) Another definition provided by the United Nations (no date) claims that “sustainable consumption and production is about doing more and better with less” incorporating growing economy, but not compromising environmental needs.

While these definitions on sustainable consumption, seem to focus more – but not exclusively -on the environmental aspect of sustainability, the term socially responsible consumptions might provide a somewhat bigger focus, by incorporating both the environmental and the social pillar more. Adapted from Roberts (1996), Kovács and Valkó (2013, p143) refer to the socially responsible consumer as “one who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive (or less negative) influence on the environment or who patronizes businesses that attempt to effect related positive social change”. Another definition from Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001, p47) states that the socially responsible consumer is “a person basing his or her acquisition, usage and disposition of

products on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long term beneficial impact on society.”

Further relating to sustainability, ethical consumption defines consumers “as individuals whose consumption decisions are guided by a variety of social, political and environmental concerns, including animal cruelty, human rights, environmental degradation or anti-capitalist sentiments.” (Papaoikonomou, Cascon-Pereira and Ryan, 2016, p210) While ethical consumption notably adding an extra layer and “relates to broader perspectives of what is right and wrong” (Gram-Hanssen, 2021, p433), similarly to socially responsible consumption, it is connected to not only environmental, but also social aspects of sustainability.

The above listed definitions on sustainable, socially responsible, and ethical consumption point out that these terms in consumption overlap. Building upon this overlap, while this thesis is having a focus on sustainability, literature from socially responsible and ethical consumption has been used and adapted, as going to be discussed in the followings.

## 2.2. Consumption and people

With the emergence of ‘consumer culture’, consumption has become an ‘expression of the self’, a way to construct identity. By adding this symbolic layer of materialistic goods, those goods became representatives of lifestyle, norms, social situation, and cultural affiliation, indicating the complexity of consumer choices. Understanding, how these choices are made has an ever-growing interest, and been identified in behaviour science as results of active and responsible decision making of the consumer. (Papaoikonomou

et al., 2016)(Warde, 2014) This view resulted to see sustainable and ethical consumerism as often contradictory, where “values and actions fail to align” (Hiller and Woodall, 2019, p894), a reference to the ‘value-action gap’ (Section 3.1.4).

In relation, an discussion in the field of ethical consumption - with the potential to adapt to sustainable consumption - is a deviation made between ethical (those with the “ability to fully evaluate and successfully adapt consumption behaviours in response to ethical concerns” (Hiller and Woodall, 2019, p898) and ethically-minded consumer (“those with some ethical motivation or values; with a degree of ethical knowledge; and who are likely to seek to manifest their values through consumption practice.” (Hiller and Woodall, 2019, p898))

By acknowledging that the consumer cannot be categorized and hold accountable on consumption decisions as they might vary over time and space, this discussion leads to a social practice theory perspective (Section 3.1), where consumption practices are perceived as shared and collective, embedded in ‘socio-cultural and socio-technical settings’ and “thereby seen as a part of the production and reproduction of social order.” (Jaeger-Erben and Offenberger, 2014, p166) Moreover, consumption can not only be seen as a group of practices, but as Warde (2005) points out, since all practices require to obtain elements of material, consumption can also be framed as an inevitable part of particular practices.

An example of a practice generating consumption is Christmas, which, to engage in, people are purchasing from food and drinks, to decoration, ornaments, christmas trees, cards, wrapping paper and the central stage of it all, gifts.

### 2.3. The problem of (Christmas) gift consumption

While it is hard to determine the impact of gifts in general, there are some statistics available on a more narrowed segment, taken as an example before, Christmas gifts.

A 2021 article on BBC Future summarizes that in the UK, consumers estimated to spend £388 (approx. 3400 DKK) on the gifts, from which “roughly 23 million gifts will end up in the landfill once Christmas is over” producing, together with other waste over the holiday season “30% more rubbish, equivalent to 1.4 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, compared to any other time of the year.” (Ong, 2021) Another 2021 source from the USA reveals that “around \$15.2 billion [was spent] on unwanted holiday gifts in 2019, and 4% of them ended up in the trash” (Sweeney, 2021) assuming these numbers to even go higher as of the year the article is written.

The problem of unwanted gifts results both economic and environmental impact. In economic terms, gifts often come with ‘deadweight-loss’, meaning that the receiver will estimate them to be less monetary value as they really are. Calculating with a 10% deadweight-loss, where the recipient assumes a gift to be 90% of its real value and taking the estimated amount of \$859 billion (Sweeney, 2021), which Americans would spend on gifts in 2021,

there is a \$85.9 billion economic loss. (Lam, 2014) As Camerer (1988, p181) puts; “in the simplest theory of consumer choice, there is no place for the sort of inefficient gift giving we routinely observe between people; if consumers know their own tastes and markets function smoothly, givers should give cash (if anything) rather than try to guess the desires of receivers.”

From an environmental perspective, unwanted gifts – ‘as best’ – are contributing to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, by shipping or transporting them back and forth, resulting (shipping) “around 16 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> [emission] a year”. While returning or exchanging unwanted items, seems like a logical choice, as these numbers indicate, these actions are coming with a huge impact. Even more, 5.8 billion pounds of returned inventory ends up in a landfill each year. For that comes the additional number of gifts, which are ending up in household waste (according to Bedard (2018) 6% of the respondents from an American study of 2018), and the ones, which are, while kept, never used (29 percent of the respondents of the same study (Bedard, 2018)). These goods are wasted resources, material, production, and shipping cost, and wasted effort from the giver as well. (Sweeney, 2021)

Another, probably more well-known issue around gifts is the packaging and wrapping. Cox (2019) summarizes some data from the UK about the amount of packaging wasted around Christmas, listing “7,000 tonnes of turkey packaging, 125,000 tonnes of plastic wrapping for food, 500 million canned drinks [...] and 13,350 tonnes of glass bottles”, not even mentioning the packaging as part of online sales. About wrapping paper, the amount of used in the UK is about to be 365000 km (Ong, 2021) “enough to stretch nine times

around the world.” (Cox, 2019) And while sometimes wrapping paper is recyclable, it is still debatable why to recycle something which could be avoided or substituted at the first place.

The above-mentioned statistical data is from the UK, the USA and Canada and is almost exclusively from online sources, which reflects the lack of accessible information (in English) in the topic. However, as cultural similarities apply to the mentioned countries and Europe, Denmark, where this thesis is written, a line can be drawn on the problems with (Christmas) gifts. Furthermore, gift-consumption can be seen as part of a global problem, which resulted to take a cross-cultural approach in this project.

## 2.4. Gift-exchange and sustainability

*“It is harmful to buy a gift that nobody wants, and nobody needs, and which will just stay on the shelf forever and then it will be forgotten and then finally thrown away. So, it is a bad gift”*

[Anna, from personal interviews]

While there are many problems around gifts, there is only a limited number of studies, which are focusing on that segment. For this thesis, 3 sources have been analysed covering the topic of gift-

consumption and focusing aspects of sustainability, which are going to be discussed as follows.

From an environmental sustainability point of view, it seems a logical solution to not give gifts at all and some of those, who are concerned about the environment would make attempts to eradicate gifts from their life. Lorenzen (2018) however, found that those who wanted to escape from gift-exchange, soon experienced the complexity of ‘social ties’ keeping them back. Being part of conflicting social networks result to just refer to this attempt as ‘the big taboo’. Building upon empirical research of 45 interviews with ‘voluntary simplifiers’<sup>3</sup>, ‘religious environmentalists’<sup>4</sup> and ‘green home owners’<sup>5</sup>, the author found that most of the participants ended up compromising on “negotiating the exchange of fewer gifts, giving less resource-intensive gifts (services and experiences), and turning to green and ethical consumption like fair trade for gift buying.” (Lorenzen, 2018, p248)

The challenge of changing the practice of gift-giving also had been acknowledged in a 2013 research article on Christmas gift-giving of ‘green’ consumers<sup>6</sup>. The article defines gifts, based on the work of Osteen (2002) as “a product of meaning accumulated over time, and the meanings attached to gifts are subject to change as they circulate

---

<sup>3</sup> “Voluntary simplifiers in this study focus on antimaterialism and are reducing their consumption in order to address climate change and other environmental harms. Being a voluntary simplifier, according to one informant, primarily means “doing without, using less, and reducing waste”” (Lorenzen, 2018, p253)

<sup>4</sup> “Religious environmentalists assert that caring for the environment is part of their religious duty” (Lorenzen, 2018, p253)

<sup>5</sup> “Green home owners remodel or build homes in order to conserve resources and reduce adverse effects to health and the environment; focusing on energy, water, and building materials” (Lorenzen, 2018, p254)

<sup>6</sup> “A Maussian perspective might posit that green gift giving is likely for those who hold environmental concerns: a way to ‘widen the circle of [a] desired society through the circulation of ... ethical commodities” (Farbotko and Head, 2013, p6)

(or not) among different people or groups.” (Farbotko and Head, 2013, p2) This definition highlights an interesting question arising on the field of gifts, - ever since we are mass producing items, - how can become an object personal and meaningful (a gift) and how might this transition work the other way around. Using Santa Claus as a figure and ‘myth’ is for instance considered one of those ways to personalize, accompanied by wrapping the present – to transform, although only temporarily, the commodity. Similar findings - based on empirical research involving 14 households - have been made as discussed in the previous paragraph, in the sense of interviewees attempting to limit gifts in the Holiday season (by quantifying the number of gifts, creating a monetary limit as well as formulating qualitative ‘rules’), but not being able or willing to stop taking part of gift-exchange. The authors conclude that ‘green-consumers’ are often not ‘green givers’ and draw light on the fact that little if any research has been made focusing on the recipients as ‘green’. (Farbotko & Head, 2013)

Finally, a 2016 article, focusing on socially responsible consumption (building on 30 semi-structured interviews covering a diverse demographical background), found some interesting results, comparing participants consumption choices when they are purchasing for themselves vs. when they are purchasing for others (gifts). As Figure 3 shows they identified groups of consumers along a 2x2 matrix. They found those, who want to include CSR<sup>7</sup> related attributes to their consumption choices both for themselves as well

as for others, named as CSR Evangelists, as well as a group of people who did not value these aspects, nor they wanted to incorporate them when buying gifts, CSR Resisters. Which is more interesting, that they also identified a group, CSR Preachers who would willing to focus on CSR elements when buying gifts, believing that their impression would appear better, the recipient would value the gift more, or the gift would have ‘a story’. Finally, they found CSR Introverts, who although they value such elements in their own purchases, ‘actively avoided’ buying gifts with CSR attributes, believing that such gifts would not make the recipient happy, either because it is not their own decision to support such causes or because they perceived these products as less creditable. (Green et al., 2016)

---

<sup>7</sup> “A discretionary allocation of corporate resources toward improving social welfare that serves as a means of enhancing relationships with key stakeholders.” (Green, Tinson and Peloza, 2016, p31)

		Includes CSR-related information for personal consumption decisions	
		YES	NO
Includes CSR-related information for gift-giving decisions	YES	<b>CSR Evangelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of CSR equating to high quality</li> <li>• Positive outcomes for society</li> <li>• Developing Awareness of CSR activities amongst others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Special Occasions (weddings, birth of child, Christmas)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>CSR Preachers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impression Management</li> <li>• Role of the gift recipient</li> </ul>
	NO	<b>CSR Introverts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impression Management</li> <li>• Role of the gift recipient</li> <li>• Perceived lack of credibility of CSR-related products</li> </ul>	<b>CSR Resisters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Awareness</li> <li>• Lack of availability of CSR-related information</li> <li>• Perceived lack of quality of CSR-related products</li> </ul>

3. Figure Consumer categories regarding CSR related attributes (Green et al., 2016, p36)

All these articles found that personal values often do not translate to the purchase of gifts, which is again in line with the previously mentioned ‘value-action’ gap. However, gifts are a unique segment of consumption, as they are involving the consideration of another human being and thereby, social relations<sup>8</sup>. To understand the role of gifts within these relations, Section 2.6 is going to cover a theoretical foundation of gift literature in anthropology and sociology.

<sup>8</sup> It could be argued that a gift can be bought for the self, however, this possibility is not the focus of this thesis, and thereby not taken into consideration.

## 2.5. ‘Sustainable’ gift categories

As no research has been found about a clear standing point regarding sustainable gift categories, inspiration was taken from online holiday gift guides about sustainable and ethical gift categories. The identified categories are often considered to have a lesser impact on the environment, compared to ‘traditional’ mass-produced first-hand items, by having fewer implications of consumption (experiences, services or handmade), supporting companies who are standing by sustainability (ethical buy), supporting circular economy (second-hand) or noble causes (contributing to social or environmental sustainability). However, it is important to highlight that this lesser impact not necessarily true for all gifts belonging to a certain gift category (an experience gift can be a long flight for a tropical island as an example), and thereby calling these gift categories sustainable, without consideration can be misleading. Thereby, when referring to these categories as sustainable in the following parts of the report, it is done with that consideration in mind.

These gift guides are usually visualizing gift options as a hierarchy, as shown on an adapted illustration below. However, it is not the intention of this thesis to evaluate the order of these categories or compare them to each other. Therefore, all of these categories have been equally considered in the initial part of the design process.



4. Figure Sustainable gift categories (adapted from Farai (2018))

## 2.6. Gift-exchange in anthropology and sociology

### 2.6.1. Reciprocity

This thesis relies on, one of the earliest works about gifts, is the book of Marcel Mauss, French sociologist, and anthropologist, called ‘The

gift’, which states that gifts by nature are never free, as the giver always expect something in return, creating the obligation to reciprocate. This expected ‘something’, however as opposed to market bargains is not defined, but always shaped by societal expectations and social norms. (Mauss, 1925)(Farbotko & Head, 2013) “Givers remain superior to receivers as long as gifts are not reciprocated” (Eriksen, 2007, p7) as receivers are seen as indebted. Reciprocity has been widely researched in gift literature, and the ‘Maussian’ ideas have been criticized as being incomplete but keep building upon the original work. One of these criticisms was the possible overlook of the need to be recognized and have a place in social order. Another point, while not dismissed by Mauss, but not emphasized either, goes to the fact how certain possession can never become gifts, unless it is a betrayal for the identity of the individual or the social group the individual belongs to. (Eriksen, 2007) Based upon this, Eriksen (2007, p1) identifies four possible sources of social tension around gifts; “the refusal to give, the refusal to receive, the refusal to return<sup>9</sup> a gift, and refusing others to return a gift”.

### 2.6.2. Identity construction

Mauss (1925) also states that the gift is always representing the giver for the recipient, and by circulating objects, “goods are never pure gifts nor pure commodities, but shift with time along a continuum between the two.” (Farbotko and Head, 2013, p6) As givers are aware that their gift will be evaluated, gifts are part of self-impression

<sup>9</sup> Where return is used as a synonym of acceptance, not as a reference of gift returns nowadays



managements and identity construction. These factors are coming in play even more prominently in a situation where multiple givers are present, and the gifts given are 'compared' by the recipient. Givi, Galak and Olivola (2021) are reporting that if the giver believes that the gift chosen would be unfavourable by the recipient in comparison with others, they might even avoid showing up on a gift-giving event altogether. As another consequence, of identity construction, givers also tend to over individualize gifts, when there are multiple recipients, even in situations, where these gifts are never going to be compared to each other. As an attempt to show effort and 'knowing the recipient', givers would rather focus on smaller, but unique (from each other) characteristic traits of recipients, then choose the same gift for multiple recipients, which would fit better for both or all. (Steffel & Le Boeuf, 2014)

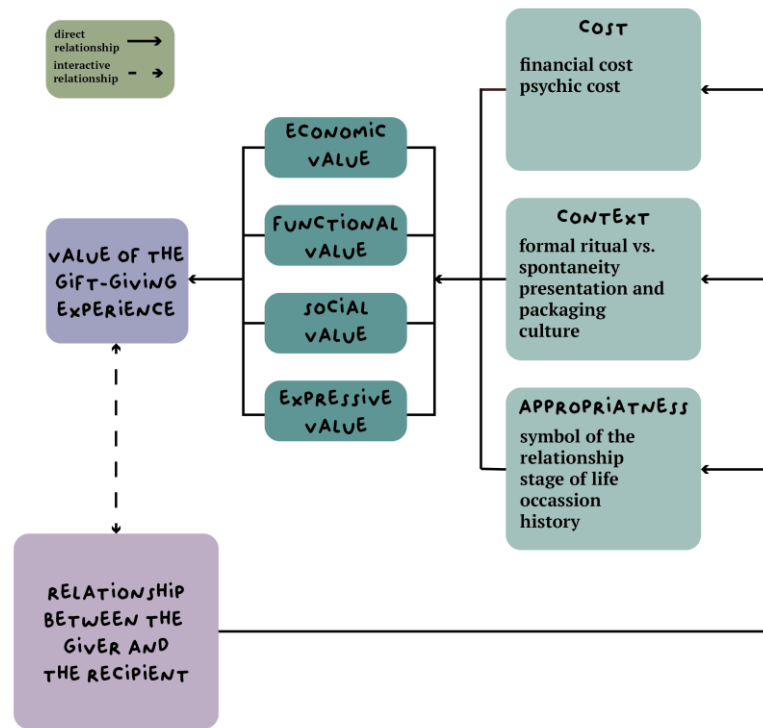
### 2.6.3. What makes a good gift?

Considering the complex and symbolical nature of gifts, the haunt for 'the perfect gift' (Belk, 1996) is reasonably an important and returning idea. The perfect gift, as described by Belk is 'altruistic' (the giver does not expect anything in return), not needed but desired ('a luxury'), 'appropriate' (fits to the situation, the giver, the recipient etc.), unexpected ('a surprise') and makes the recipient happy. However, it is questionable if the idealistic picture of 'the perfect gift' is rational and if it can be ever reached. (Branco-Illodo & Heath, 2020)

An empirical study based upon 35 in-depth interviews by (Branco-Illodo & Heath, 2020) was set to find how this idealistic concept relates to the 'best gift ever' that participants received. While

researching the 'best gift ever' the authors found that those gifts are characterized by 3 recurring elements. First, they have been involving an experience, either in the act of giving, getting, or purchasing, or as part of the gift itself. Often these experiences provided the whole meaning of the gift, and these meanings were also sometimes attached to the memories looking backwards. Similarly, the second element, 'unforgettable', was also often characterized from the point of view of the present self, associating gift for instance with major life events or childhood memories. The third theme, that the gift is 'life-changing', refers to how respondents sometimes experienced, that objects are marking a significant stage of life, or a part of their identity. The authors conclude that 'the best gift ever' is mostly not about the gift itself, but about the social relations that the gift becomes a symbol of. (Branco-Illodo & Heath, 2020)

Larsen and Watson (2001) puts the question of what makes the gift valuable in a bigger picture by visualizing 'the map' of gift-exchange, which is going to be adapted later in this thesis. The authors categorize the values related to gifts as economic (the gift is a rational exchange between two parties), functional (the gift is useful, functional), social (the gift reflects on social relations) and expressive (the gift reflects on the giver) and situates them within 'the context' (occasion-based vs. non-occasion-based, presentation of the gift, culture), the effort (money, thought, time), 'the appropriateness' (symbolism, life stage) and the relation between giver and recipient.



5. Figure The map of gift value (adapted from *Larsen & Watson (2001, p892)*)

Larsen and Watson (2001, p902) conclude that “stores objectify gifts rather than see them for what they are—personal experiences. The physical gift is but one small part of the entire gift-giving exchange” and emphasize that the success of the gift, might depends on how it is presented and made unique by the giver. Findings from the research of (Pizzetti & Gibbert, 2018) further strengthen this view. The authors found that personalization is not only important to recipients, because the gifts are becoming unique in a way, but also because it reflects on the giver, as well as on how the giver sees them

as a person, therefore on their relationship as well. This ‘symbolic meaning’ provides great value for the recipients, even if they do not like the gift itself.

In some aspects contradicting, in another study by Galak, Givi and Williams (2016), who are analysing errors in gift-giving, is stated that givers often ‘getting it wrong’, because they are focusing on the moments of exchange, while the recipients on how the gift is going to be proved useful or valuable for them on the long-term. This statement is supported by the analyzation of multiple other studies, resulting the table below, which aims to debunk ‘myths’ about the preferences of givers and recipients, depicting the recipients as more practical focused as givers would assume.

	Gift-giving rule	Preferences		Gift-exchange thought processes	
		Givers	Recipients	Givers	Recipients
Aspects of the gift	Gifts should be desirable.	Desirable gifts	Feasible gifts	Desirable gifts dazzle when opened.	Feasible gifts provide sure value.
	Gifts should be enjoyed immediately.	Lesser but complete gifts	Better-quality, even if incomplete, gifts	Lesser, complete gifts are appreciated when opened.	Better-quality, incomplete gifts will eventually provide the most value.
	Gifts should be tangible.	Material gifts	Experiential gifts	Material gifts elicit an immediate positive response.	Experiences provide more overall happiness.
Aspects of the giver	Givers should surprise their recipients.	Unrequested gifts	Requested gifts	Unrequested gifts will surprise.	Personally requested gifts are more valuable.
	Givers should be generous.	Thoughtful and expensive gifts	Thoughtfulness and price are unimportant	Thoughtful and expensive gifts signal generosity.	Value does not always correspond with thought or price.
Aspects of the recipient	Gifts should reflect their recipients.	Specific and unique gifts	General gifts and gifts that reflect most important personal interests	Gifts reflecting specific and unique interests signal knowledge of the recipient.	Versatile gifts and gifts that reflect important personal interests provide the most value.
	Gifts should symbolize the giver-recipient relationship.	Socially responsible gifts	Traditional gifts	The recipient will feel a “warm glow” when receiving a socially responsible gift.	A socially responsible gift provides little ownership value.

6. Figure Giver-recipient discrepancies in gift preferences (Galak et al., 2016, p382)

## 2.7. Problem statement

This thesis aims to contribute on a field which received very little attention from the scientific community before, sustainable gift-consumption, and targeting that aspect by researching the practice of sustainable gift-exchange in a collaborative design framework.

By reviewing the gift-literature there was no study found taking a theoretical framework of social practice theory, neither applying collaborative design. Therefore, the thesis is also aiming to add to the gift-literature in a broader sense, by taking and combining these approaches.

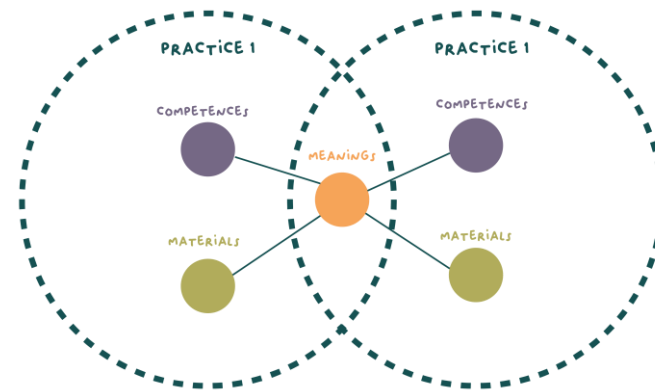
## 3. Theories and methods

### 3.1. Social practice theory

Social practice theory (shorter practice theory) is an umbrella term for a group of theories sharing similarities in social science, understanding social behaviour as not individual, but collective, interrelated and routinized actions, waved into the ‘fabric of social structure’. (Shove & Pantzar, 2005) Practice can be also defined as “a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, knowhow, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (Reckwitz, 2004, p249)

#### 3.1.1. Elements of the practices

In this thesis the analysis of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) is going to be used, who define practices as consisting of 3 elements - materials, meanings, and competences, creating the ‘practice triangle’ -, as well as the links among these elements. Materials are not only physical, but might be also technologies, infrastructure, or software. Competences, in relation, include knowledge, skills and the ability of understanding. Finally, meanings are referred as shared images, emotions, beliefs, and other interpretations of the mind. These 3 elements are continuously shaping each other through the links between them, resulting to changing practices over time. Similarly, elements of materials, meanings or competences can not only belong to one practice, but several, therefore practices are to be understood as interconnected and embedded in each other.



7. Figure Different practices can share for instance elements of meanings (adapted from Shove et al. (2012, p10 of chapter 1))

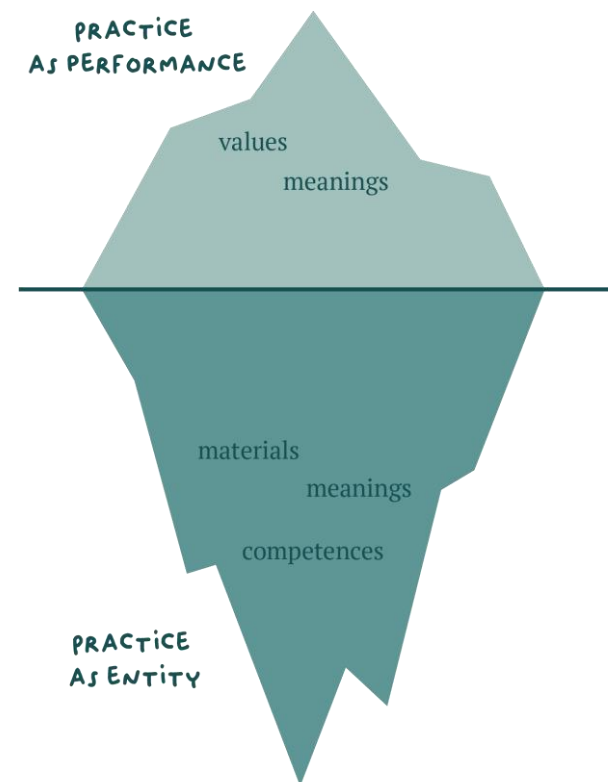
### 3.1.2. Framing practices

As a result of this interconnected nature, it is challenging the determine what “to count as ‘a practice’”. One response is to treat practices as anything that practitioners themselves take to be such. [... However,] to describe the evolution of practices over time, for example, to show how ‘driving’ emerged from horse-riding and engineering, we had to make our own judgements about what to count.” (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p3 of chapter 7) As the authors of the book, ‘The dynamics of social practice’ point out, there is no exact definition of what a certain practice is, and in a historical context – where innovation resulted radical changes and the emergence of new practices –, seemingly different practices can also be categorized as one. This example also makes it clear, that practices can also function as a group of other practices within. Therefore, when researching and discussing practices, framing, and creating boundaries are key elements. (Shove et al., 2012)

### 3.1.3. Practices as performances and practices as entities

As adapted from Schatzki (1996), there is a theoretical distinction between ‘practices as entities’ and ‘practices as performances’, where the former refers to the depicted relations between materials, meanings, and competencies, while the latter is how these relations are translated into actions and behaviour as a performance. Therefore ‘practices as performances’ are not consistent, but different versions of the same entity, creating an observable and reachable, but not definitive layer. As opposed ‘practices as entities’ remain hidden, but stable over space and time. The ‘performance’ and the ‘entity’, however constitute each other, as not only the

performance is rooted in the entity, but also the entity is reproduced and reconstructed with each performance. (Kuijer, 2014)(Shove et al., 2012) (Warde, 2005) (Welch, 2017)



8. Figure Practice as entity and practice as performance illustrated with the iceberg metaphor (adapted from *Jaeger-Erben & Offenberger (2014, p171)*)



9. Figure Practice as entity and practice as performance (adapted from Kuijer (2014, p53))

### 3.1.4. Practices and people

As stated, practices are not individual, but collective, therefore people are not owning or having practices, but they are carrying and carrying them out by performance. People engaging in the same practices are forming a ‘community of practice’, which essentially can be viewed as an informal network. (Shove et al., 2012)

This understanding of practice theory described above confronts behaviour science, where individuals are viewed as active decision-makers and might explain the so called ‘attitude-behaviour’ or as also mentioned ‘value-action’ gap from the field. This gap is present in situations, where individuals express a certain attitude or personal values, such as the importance of sustainability, but does not engage in pro-environmental behaviour or taking as many actions as the attitude implies. (Welch, 2017) However, even from a practice theory perspective “there is more to practices than unconscious or subconscious bodily routine” (Kuijer, 2014, p29) as people “can transform it [the practice] by performing it in new ways.” (Hards, 2011)

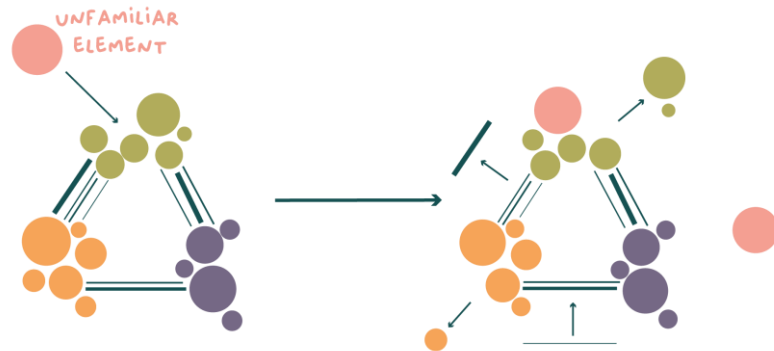
### 3.1.5. Practices and values

In behaviour science values are connected to the individual, seeing them as “a psychological and/social construct and parameter, residing within individuals, finding reflection and expression in human behaviour, institutions, and practices— and in human accounts, explanations, and rationalizations” (Reser & Bentrupperbäumer, 2005), whereas “from a social practice perspective, should be understood not as psychological entities antecedent to behaviour but as themselves carried in and conditioned by practices” (Welch, 2017) and as so, just as other elements of the practice, shared and collective. Values and the other elements of the practice, especially meanings can be also seen as ‘co-constructive’, as a value shift can result a different performance, while on the other hand a performance can reassure values. (Hards, 2011)

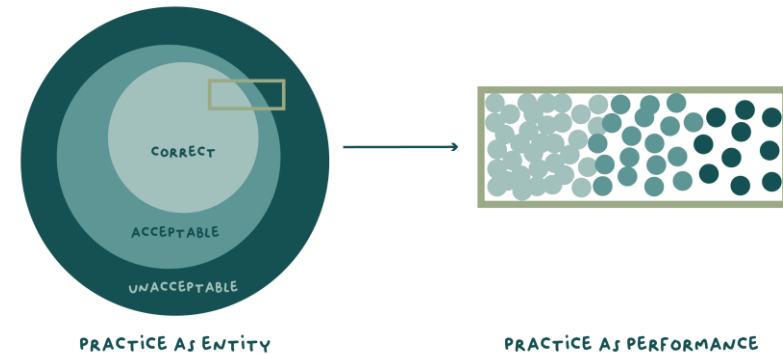
People, as those who perform the practice, cannot relate rationally to the practice ‘as entity’, as it is not reachable on the cognitive level. However, by observing and understanding their own performance (behaviour), they can relate to elements of the practice, for instance some meanings and the values connected to those. Looking into these performances, thereby can provide the researcher with valuable insights about how the practice as entity is might constituted.

### 3.1.6. Changing practices

While taking practices instead of behaviour as a ‘unit of analysis’ seems sufficient, from a designer perspective it is an important question how they can contribute to sustainable design. As Kuijer (2014) summarizes practices can be changed by ‘reconfiguration’ (adapting unfamiliar elements of material, meaning or competences and thereby breaking and creating new links), ‘repetition and recruitment’ (how differently repeated performances can expand the area of ‘acceptable performances’ and thereby recruit more performers) and ‘adaptation, improvisation and experimentation’ (adjustment, spontaneous reconfiguration or planned creative change of the performance).



10. Figure Reconfiguration of the practice (adapted from Kuijer (2014, p76))



11. Figure Repetition and recruitment (adapted from (Kuijer, 2014, p79))

### 3.1.7. Adapting social practice theory to this thesis

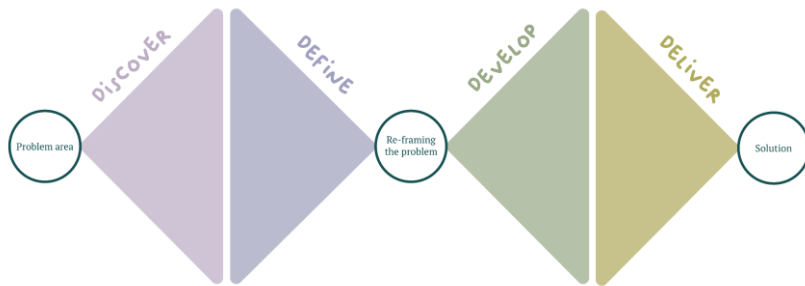
As described in the introduction and in the previous paragraphs, social practice theory provides a new framing to solve problems and has been mainly used to address the topic of consumption, thereby being a relevant, strong foundation for this thesis.

Social practice theory will not only be when analysing the empirical material in this project, but also utilized to design collaborative solutions with strategies of changing the practice of gift-exchange. Reconfiguration is going to be implemented to several parts, where unfamiliar elements of materials (e.g., second-hand gifts, charity gifts) and meanings (e.g., sustainable, ethical) are going to be added.



### 3.2. Double diamond

The Double Diamond has been developed by the Design Council UK in 2004 and understands the design process as a set of diverging and converging phases. The double diamond consists of four big phases; discover, define, develop, and deliver. In the discover phase the designer gathers data with desk and field research, opening towards many ideas and possibilities of what the problem might be. This is followed by the define phase, where the analysis of information takes place, resulting a problem formulation. After this the develop phase takes place, where the designer tries to find solutions for the formulated problem by broadening the perspective. The final design proposed is detailed in the last phase, deliver. (Design Council UK, 2019)



12. Figure The Double Diamond (own illustration)

In 2019, the Double Diamond has been expanded to the ‘Framework for Innovation’. One of the critiques the Double Diamond has received was about its linear representation of the design process (Drew, 2019), since there might be many other diverging and converging phases, and it is also possible that the direction of the process results in a return to an earlier stage. The reformulated framework not only emphasizes the importance of iteration but formulates other key principles as well, such as people-centeredness, visual and inclusive communication, and collaboration (Design Council UK, 2019), which is well-aligned with the overall framework of this project, collaborative design.

The Double Diamond has been used in the project to illustrate and understand the design process.

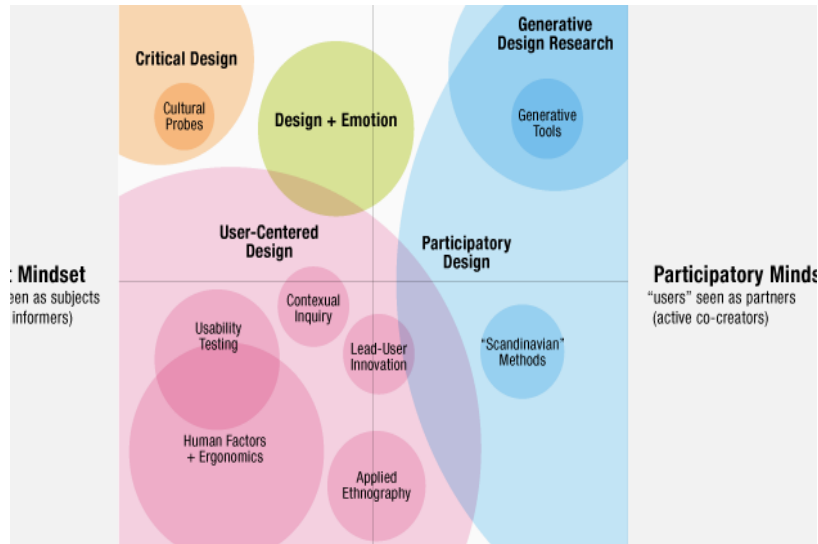
### 3.3. A collaborative design framework

Collaborative design, also known as participatory design<sup>10</sup>, is an approach based on the idea of creating ‘with the people for the people,’ meaning involving the people in the design process, so the solution meets their needs and wants. As seen in the landscape of design research, in collaborative design people are not the subject of the research but active participants, referred to under various terms, such as users, stakeholders, actors, or co-creators. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013)

---

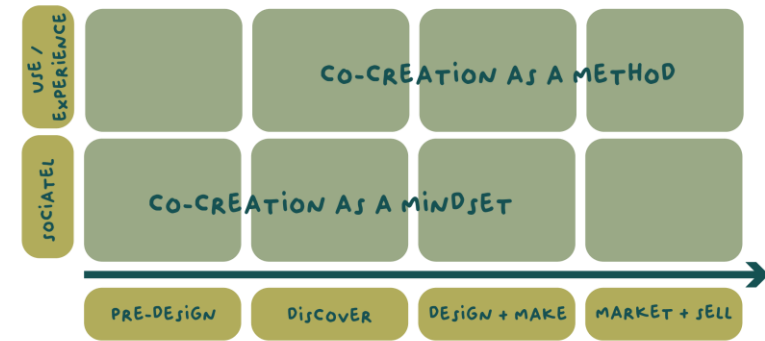
<sup>10</sup> Some sources are making a division between collaborative and participatory design, however, in this thesis the two terms used as synonyms, building upon the work of E. Sanders & Stappers (2013).





13. Figure Design research map (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013, p21)

The term collaborative design is also defined “collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design development process.” (Sanders and Stappers, 2013, p25) Based upon that, along the various stages of design, the authors are discussing co-creation both as ‘a mindset’ and as ‘a method’, understanding a more theoretical or practical approach. As illustrated above, the area of participatory design, called ‘Scandinavian’ methods are laying closer to this theoretical (‘research-led’) interpretation, while Generative design research on the ‘design-led’ side implies being more practical. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013) As in this thesis, both are going to be adapted, collaborative design is referred to as ‘a framework’ in this thesis, aiming to include a broader understanding.



14. Figure Co-creation as a mindset and as a method along the different stages of design (adapted from E. Sanders & Stappers (2013, p31))

### 3.3.1. Staging negotiation spaces

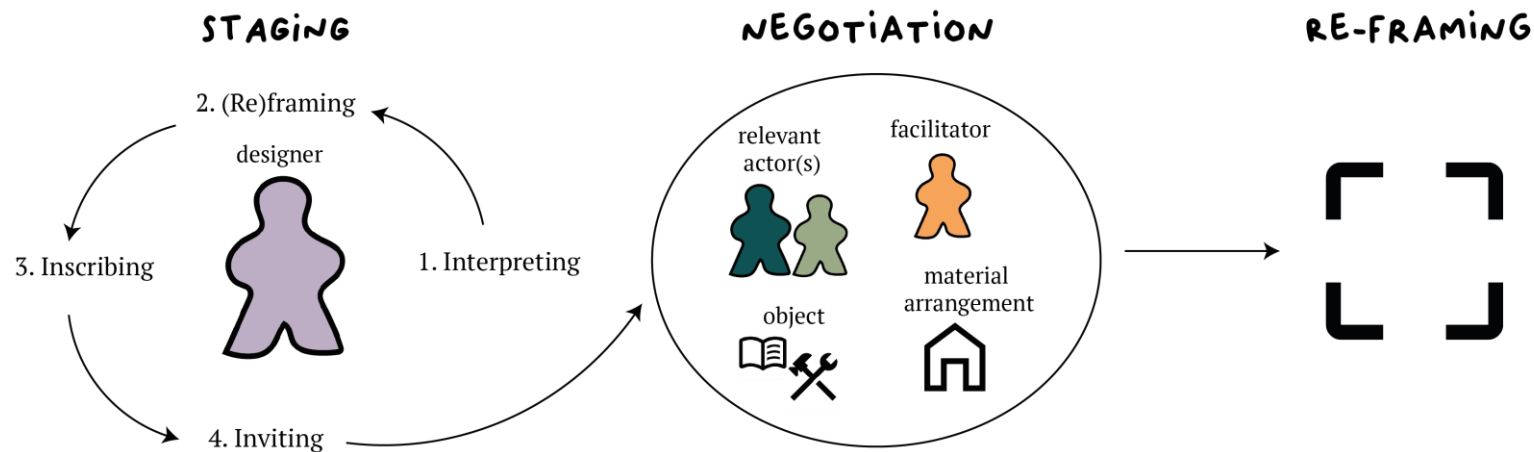
Building upon the Scandinavian roots of participatory design and actor-network theory (Callon, 1986), the Staging negotiation spaces framework from Pedersen (2020) is one of the leading analytical approaches taken in this thesis. The framework is taking the analogy of a theatre, where creating the design space is referred as ‘setting the stage’ for negotiating among various actors, who are ‘casted’ to ‘play their roles’. Taken from collaborative design, this analogy expands to the role of the designer to not only being a creative expert or observer, but a ‘humble stage director’ who is facilitating the negotiations among participants and their ‘matters of concern’.

The framework suggests 3 key steps: staging, negotiating, and reframing. Staging is referred to the phase, where the designer frames the problem, to create a design space within that can be negotiated. Staging is further detailed as ‘interpretation’ (contextualizing the problem and understanding what is at stake),

‘(re-)framing’ (directing the negotiations around the problem), ‘inscription’ (creating objects that can function as design tools during the negotiations) and ‘invitation’ (identifying and involving the relevant actors). (Pedersen et al., 2022) The second step, negotiation takes place by circulating intermediary objects (Vinck, 2011) among the relevant actors. Intermediary objects as adapted from Vinck and Jeantet (1994) “have the ability to represent, translate, and mediate between actors as they are moved along in a design or development process.” (Pedersen, 2020, p64) Potential

intermediary objects can be presentations, pictures, graphs, design games and game pieces, scenarios, etc.

The last step, reframing is the result of the negotiation and the collaborative design process. These steps are taking place in an iterative way, resulting several rounds in a design process. However, as opposed to a theatrical play, these iterations are constantly adapted to the changing circumstances, the different actors, environment, time, and opportunities, requiring the designer to be equipped with a flexible mindset. (Pedersen, 2020)

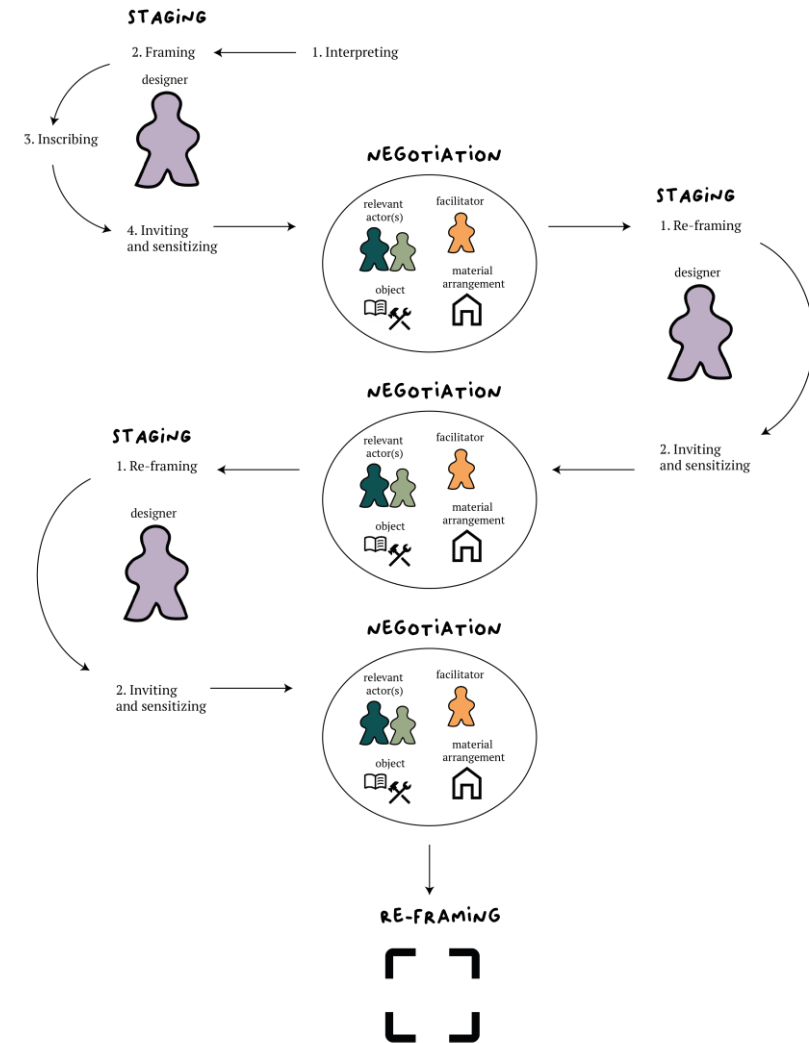


15. Figure Staging negotiation spaces framework (adapted from (Pedersen, 2020, p73))

When adapting the Staging negotiation spaces to this thesis, inspired by generative design research (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013) three of the steps have been expanded with sensitizing (Section 3.3.3). First sensitizing became part of the framing, which resulted that the inscription included constructing sensitizing devices as well. Following that, as part of the invitation, actors have taken place in sensitizing.

Furthermore, some changes have been made when using the framework within the same empirical part of the research. As introduced in the design process (Section 1.3), the empirical research of this project has been carried out in 2 parts, first 10 semi-structured interviews (Section 4) have been conducted, which was followed by 5 generative workshops (Section 7).

Taking the example of the interviews, when iterating between them, the problem has not been re-interpreted, there have been no new design objects produced, and only small adjustments have been made in the staging process. Therefore, while the actors from different interviews have not been negotiating with each other, it can be understood that each negotiation space have been part of one bigger design space, by sharing the design objects, and therefore they all resulted together a new re-framing in the end. With other words this ‘final’ re-framing was produced by analysing the data from all the interviews.



16. Figure Adapted Staging negotiation spaces framework (own illustration)

By adapting the framework, it has become an actionable approach in the project, while it was also used as a way to understand the steps taken in the design process.

### 3.3.2. Generative design research

According to (Sanders and Stappers, 2013, p14) “Generative design research gives people a language which they can imagine and express their ideas and dreams for future experience. These ideas and dreams can, in turn, inform and inspire other stakeholders in the design and development process.”

Generative design research is building on a central idea of everyone being creative, and thereby able to take part of the design process. Consequently, it is the role of the designer to frame the space within this creativity can unfold. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013) Enhancing creativity has been an important goal in the empirical research of this project, which was inspiring the designer to engage with understanding creativity in a deeper level.

In the following, creativity is going to be discussed from different perspectives, which provided inspiration when setting the stage.

#### 1. Individual creativity

Individual creativity can come from various places, ‘the head’ (ideas), ‘the heart’ (emotions), ‘the body’ (enactment), and the environment, including ‘materials’, ‘places’, and ‘spaces’. All these layers can be activated and translated into the process. Ideas may exist as definitions, associations, bisociations, or metaphors, but can emerge from incompleteness as well (e.g., open-ended statements). Emotions might be recalled also with associations, but also through

memories of people, stories, and things. Creativity can also shape form through involving the body, for instance by roleplaying or interacting with toolkits or prototypes. Materials influence all of the above by shaping what comes to the surface. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013)

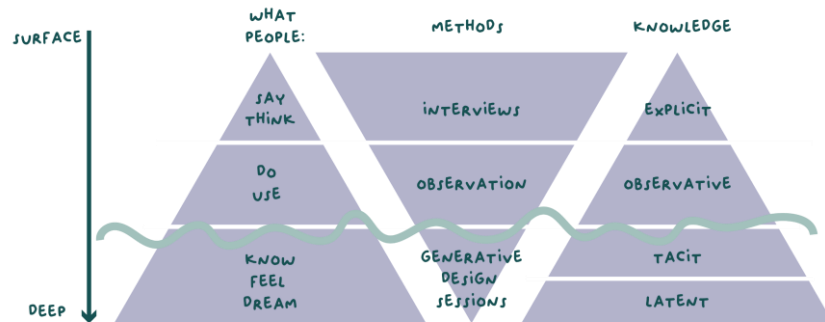
#### 2. Collective creativity

By bringing in diverse viewpoints and various background in the design process, participants as a collective can spark ideas in each other’s minds and inspire new ideas to born. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013) They can also experience a mutual learning process, by sharing knowledge. Moreover, from a sustainable design perspective, activating creativity as a community in a collaborative setting can contribute to envisioning sustainable futures and successfully work toward that shared vision. (Aitken et al., 2019)(Robinson et al., 2011)

#### 3. Say, do, make

As creativity can be situated on distinct levels, so does knowledge, and relating to that, how people are expressing themselves. Illustrating with the iceberg metaphor, people have easy access to their explicit knowledge about themselves and the worlds, expressing this in what they think and say. Some of their knowledge is less on the surface, but still observable based on what they do and use. However, how they feel, and dream is under the surface in the realms of tacit and latent knowledge. Different tools and techniques of collaborative design address these different levels, such as interviews, what people say, observation, what people do and generative design sessions, what people make (E. Sanders, 2018), as

illustrated on Figure 17. In the collaborative design process, each of these have their place and function. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013)



17. Figure Relations of say-do-make, methods and knowledge (adapted from (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013, p67))

### 3.3.3. Collaborative design tools and techniques

From the many collaborative design tools and techniques, the followings have been adapted to this thesis.

#### 1. Sensitizing devices

Sensitizing devices are based upon the idea, that a creative solution is often emerging after an ‘incubation’ phase, when the person is not actively thinking about the problem, but it is sub-consciously present. This phase, however, takes time, which timeframe is dependent on numerous factors, such as the problem, the participant, the environment, etc. To provide that time and the opportunity for participants to ‘immerse themselves’ in the problem, sensitizing is taking place before the generative design workshops. Therefore, when participants are arriving to the

workshop, they are already somewhat familiar with the topic they need to contribute to and able to activate more in-depth knowledge.

Sensitizing can happen with the use of various sensitizing devices, such as taking notes, keeping a diary, taking photographs or videos, ranking different terms etc. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013)

In this thesis sensitizing has been an important mean of collaboration and a key addition to the Staging negotiation spaces, as described earlier in Section 3.3.1.

#### 2. Scenarios

Scenarios are narratives of stories or situations, which can help the participants to step out of their usual thinking and take on different point of views. The form of scenarios can be visual (pictures, videos) and written (text), but also the combination of these two. Depending on the purpose, scenarios can be familiar situations (e.g., going to the shop, to understand what people do) and unfamiliar situations (e.g., travelling in 2500, to discover underlying drivers or needs). (Díaz et al., 2009)

In this thesis, scenarios have been used for the interviews, to explore existing practices as well as to envision new ones, by framing alternative elements of materials. Furthermore, they have been functioning as tools to recall memories and discover concerns.

#### 3. Generative design toolkits

Make toolkits are an important part of generative design research, as they can influence the success of enhancing the creativity of the participants. They can be useful for “recalling memories, making

interpretations and connections, seeing and explaining feelings, or imagining future experiences” (Sanders and Stappers, 2013, p70) and as adapted from Sanders and Dandavate (1999) “allow people to construct design representations through visual elements as expression of need.” (Vaajakallio and Mattelmäki, 2007, p225) Toolkits might include various objects, such as pictures, photographs, words, shapes and figures, stickers, puppets, Legos, or scrap materials. The selection of these elements is never generic, toolkits need to be situated in the context they are going to be used in. However, similar toolkits might be successful in similar settings, for instance, a ‘dollhouse toolkit’ might be a viable choice in the enactment of different scenarios. Toolkits, however, are not only about the physical objects selected for it, but also about framing the design space as an area, where they can be implemented. This includes how the participants might be instructed to interact with the toolkit, as well as what role the designer is taking on during the session. (E. Sanders & Stappers, 2013)

In this work, a generative toolkit was designed for the workshops, which was including elements to use in a collage making exercise, and in a design game.

#### 4. Design games

Vaajakallio and Mattelmäki (2014, p64) defines design games as “tools for codesign that purposefully emphasise play-qualities such as playful mindset and structure, which are supported by tangible game materials and rules”. Through gamification and interaction with the design elements, participants may be able to express deeper levels of knowledge which can be translated to the design solution.

Design games, as not clearly defined, can have many forms, and might be employed to serve different purposes, such as research, education, co-creation, or a combination of those. (Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki, 2014)

Referred as ‘explorative’, design games and how they might be created provides a lot of creative space for the designer. As part of a design game, various tools and techniques might be framed, such as scenarios, roleplaying (Díaz et al., 2009), mock-ups, prototypes (Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki, 2007), storyboards, cards or a gameboard. Similarly, design games themselves can also be seen as a tool, and take part, for instance a generative design toolkit. As a characteristic of games, design games also have certain rules, either fundamental or clearly defined ones, which eventually lead to an end of the game. (Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki, 2014)

A design game has been created as part of the generative workshops to explore concerns, implement strategies for changing practices and envision future solutions.

### 3.4. Affinity diagram

As mentioned in the Previous section, the interviews have been coded with an affinity diagram. The affinity diagram is a bottom-up method, which allows the designer to analyse the collected data. The process starts with highlighting each piece of information and add it with a post it note. These notes are marked (often coloured) based on where the information was sourced. Following that, the post-its are organized based on how they relate to each other, creating groups. This is followed by adding titles to the groups, based on the

content. The created structure is often overlapping, leading to a map-alike visual.

The affinity is a great tool for processing huge amount of data, without losing sight of smaller pieces of information. However, it is also easy to go in too much of detail when using the method, which can end up being very time consuming. Another limitation is that all the post-its are considered as equal in the mapping process, therefore it is important to carefully consider how the content of the post-its is formulated. (Holtzblatt et al., 2005)

## 4. First empirical data collection

### 4.1. Interviews

Followed by the interpretation of the problem (Section 2), an exploratory approach has been taken in the project for the empirical research, with the idea of finding a focus within the topic of sustainable gift-exchange together with the actors.

For this exploration, 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted. This type of interview choice allowed a flexible approach, by follow-up questions to discover different directions, which provided valuable insights. (Zorn, n.d.) The interviews shared the same structure (Appendix 1), with five sections: demographic data, recalling memories on receiving and giving, a scenario on receiving and a scenario on giving with a discussion on values and finally some questions to further discover attitudes.

For the 10 interviews opportunistic sampling (through personal and online enrolment) and snowballing have been used, resulting a demographically roughly diverse group, with equal gender-distribution (5 men – 5 women), the age ranking from 22 to 45 (with 7 participants being in their 20's), including students, part-time and full-time workers, and diverse nationalities, by home countries including Denmark, Colombia, Poland, and the USA. A cross-cultural approach has been an intentional decision in the project based on previous experiences with the limited (non-international) network of the designer. All the participants, but one, have been living in Copenhagen, Denmark at the time of the interview. As a result of that, except the one interview which was only possible to conduct online, all have been physical.



18. Figure Online recruiting poster (own illustration)



To process and analyse, all interviews have been audio recorded and fully transcribed. However, for simplification purposes only the quotes used for the Affinity diagram (Section 5.1) from each participant are going to be attached in Appendix 2. Using the recordings, the pictures that the interviewees shared, as well as their names has been consented.

#### 4.1.1. Sensitizing

As a way of sensitizing (Section 3.3.3), participants before the interview have been asked to think about a gift that they (recently) give and a gift that they (recently) received, and prepare pictures of them for the interview, if they have any. That was done with the intention to prepare them for the topic as well as to bring their in-depth knowledge to the surface.

These memories have been discussed in the second part of the interview, further elaborating on the details of the gift-exchange (for instance who was involved, what was the occasion if any, etc.). During these discussions, photos from the participants have been functioned as intermediary objects (Vinck, 2011) between them and the designer. These pictures contributed to create a shared understanding by translating the memories of the interviewees to tangible visual materials. Often these pictures provided deeper understanding about the participants as well. For instance, this description from Śliwa and the picture (Figure 19) she shared also shows what she finds ‘cool’ and worthy to ‘show off’ for people she knows.

*“And there they are crocodile shaped. And because the crocodile also has legs sticking out. They're absolutely unusable. [...] But I make sure*

*to wear them when I know I'm not moving. And if I'm sitting on the couch I wanna do it in the crocodile socks. I still want to use them. They are cool.” [Śliwa]*



19. Figure Crocodile-shaped socks (photo by Śliwa)

In some cases, participants were even having the objects with them, creating a more hands-on experience. Chris for instance had the socks on from this story: *“My wife for Christmas or maybe birthday [...] sort of as a joke gift, she gave me a lot of the same types of socks, like these ones. But like hundreds of them.”*

#### 4.1.2. Scenarios

With the attempt of framing the problem and explore gift-exchange practices, 12 scenarios have been constructed, 6 on receiving and 6 on giving. The decision about separating giving and receiving scenarios have been made with the purpose to discover their differences, if any, as well as to create a design space for



participants, where they can take on different perspectives and by that allowing them to share more. Each of these scenarios had a picture – that the participants based their decision on when choosing – and a short story (Appendix 3).

An example for that is the following:



20. Figure Scenario picture of handmade pullover (adapted, but sourced from (Scenario Pictures, 2022))

## STORY

It has been a long time since you visited your grandparents, and they are excited to see you now that the holiday season is here. After a nice, shared meal, you are gifted a package with a soft knitted pullover inside.

Not surprisingly for you, it is handmade from them! It seems warm, but unfortunately, you find it particularly ugly.

21. Figure Scenario story about the handmade pullover (own illustration)

Scenarios have been also functioning as intermediary objects (Vinck, 2011), where the picture and the text translated the framing that the designer created to the interviewees. Furthermore, the scenario pictures represented some associations of the designer and personal interpretations of for instance what is a good illustration for a handmade pullover. Sometimes these associations come across on the interviews, for example Śliwa said about this scenario, when asking why she chose it: *“I think it's just the most positive energy coming from it is that you can see that it is a hand-picked and they are matching and they're probably family [...] you can see the connection.”*

In other cases, participants had completely different associations, for instance Anders picked the scenario with the lunchbox, not because it was a zero-waste item, but *“because lunchboxes remind me of my mother who used to make me lunch for school and she continued*

*to do that for into high school, and sometimes when my friends were sleeping over, they got one as well.” [Anders]*

The scenarios covered many different aspects, listed below.

#### 1. Gift categories

First, they have been focusing on gift categories which are considered sustainable (Section 2.5.), namely second-hand (including purchased and pre-owned by a friend), supporting noble causes, handmade, experience and eco-friendly products have been included. Additionally, money as gift and not giving gifts at all was part of one-one scenario. In two cases they type of gift was not defined, allowing the interviewees freer space.

It has been assumed that some of these categories are going to be unfamiliar for the participants, and thereby, incorporating these elements of material was an attempt to reconfigure the practices in an imaginative way (Section 3.1.6).

#### 2. Relation between the giver and the recipient

The scenarios also targeted different situations regarding the relationship between the giver and the recipient, including close and distant family, friends, partners, and colleagues. Furthermore, they included to different age categories as well, referring to family members in some cases as parents, grandparents, or children.

#### 3. Occasion

Different occasions also have been covered in the scenarios, such as the winter holidays, wedding, graduation, birthday, leaving a

company or moving as a big life event. Two scenarios have been purposefully framed a situation with no occasion.

#### 4. Multiple givers, multiple recipients

Some of the receiving and giving scenarios implied multiple givers and multiple recipients, respectively. However, none of the scenarios put the participant in an imaginary situation where they were part of a group as a giver or recipient. This was avoided, due to the reservation that the participants will only give relevant answers considering themselves only in the imagined situation.

#### 5. Presenting the gift

Some of the scenarios also had additional information about how the gift is presented, for instance it is a surprise, or it was sent in an e-mail. In both giving and receiving situations participants have been asked if they would have expected the gift presented in a certain way. When they asked for further elaboration, the question was concretized as being wrapped, however this association mostly happened naturally.

The scenarios often inspired participants to share more related memories, and further elaborate their answers by that, either on their own, or when asking about how much the scenario felt realistic for them. In many cases their memories implied that the scenario was directly connected to a lived experience, for instance Anna, one of the participants said: *“It is very realistic. I think it happens all the time where I work”* before she started to share about how goodbye parties take place at her workplace. In other cases, the interviewees could not connect to the situation, but shared some important

details about their gift-exchange practices. For instance, Alex stated that *„receiving gifts from friends, not really [feels realistic], because I don't celebrate my birthday with friends. I just, with my family.“*

Apart from analysing memories and other answers, interviewees have been also asked what they see as most challenging with the scenarios, as an attempt to discover some of their matters of concern (Latour, 2004), which in many cases, worked very effectively. An example from Śliwa about handmade gifts formulated a concern that the item will not fit: *„Even though I like making things by hand, I don't think I would try to do something that might be size variable in, in worries that it will be very wrong.“* While Lukas, for instance, raised a concern about second-hand items not working: *“I would say making sure it works can be difficult [...] that would be the most difficult thing to make sure that what you're buying is actually worth the money.“*

#### 4.1.3. Re-framing between interviews

From the first 6 interview a pattern emerged when it came to choosing scenarios, where all men have chosen the same pictures on both giving and receiving, and all women choose the same on receiving. Because of that reason, scenarios were taken out from the possible choices, as Figure 22 shows. For the last interview, only 2-2 scenarios have been offered, which were not discussed before.

2 scenarios have been not discussed at all, but the topics (second-hand and money gifts) have been covered in the interviews by other scenarios and personal stories.



22. Figure The selected scenarios on giving and receiving and how the options have been narrowed (own illustration)

#### 4.1.4. Values

Many of the literature related to values (Section 2.4. and Section 2.6) which has been also a focus point in the interviews. Participants have been asked about 3 things that they value most in gifts that they receive and give, as well as about values that they consider sustainable and find important in these cases. During the interviews these questions, when further elaborated included the words valuable and meaningful as well. From a practice theory point of view, these answers considered a mixture of verbalized meanings and values (Section 3.1), which are strongly related and therefore have not been separated later when analysing. In the followings, including the analysis, these are going to be referred as values, because the participants in their answers considered them as so.

#### 4.1.5. Final questions of the interview

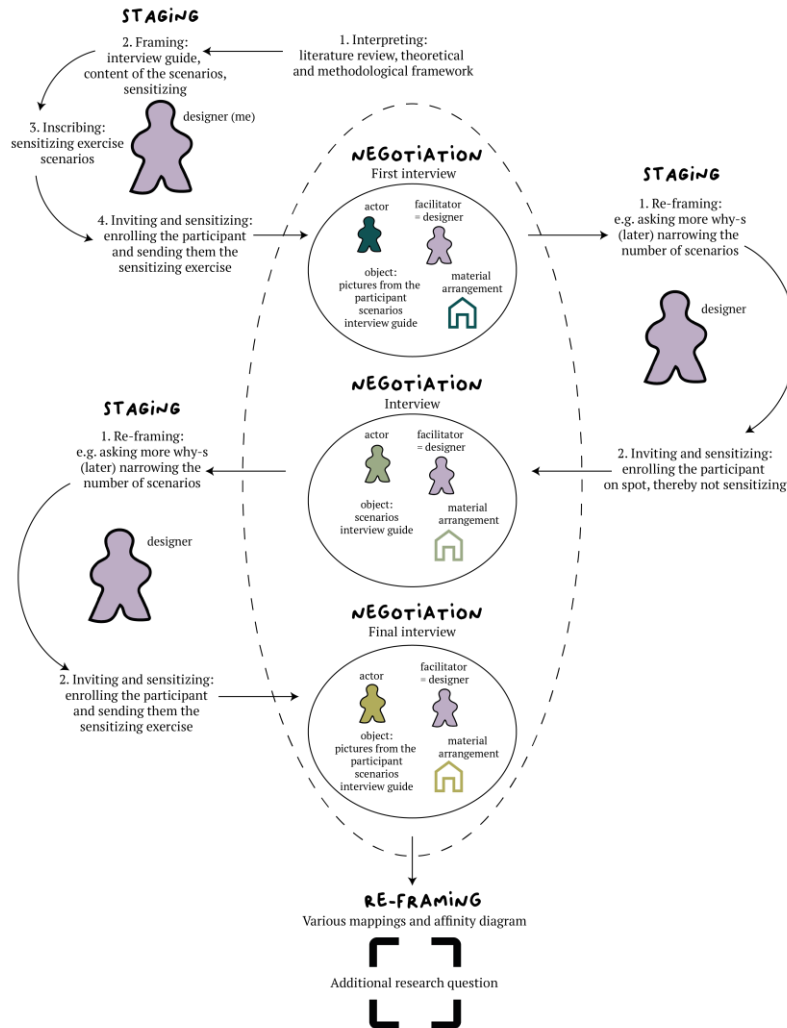
The question about ethical consumerism has been adapted from the article 'Constructing and communicating an ethical consumer identity' by Papaoikonomou, Cascon-Pereira and Ryan (2016). Similarly, to the findings there, the interviewees also showed care around the term ethical consumer, identifying a wide variety of ethical concerns, and placing themselves as people who are trying to incorporate ethical and sustainable aspects into their choices.

Furthermore, this section was inspired by the work of Green, Tinson and Peloza (2016) with the aim of adapting their matrix (Section 2.6.) to values related to ethical and sustainable gift-consumption.

Finally, expectations have been discovered around giving and receiving to further elaborate on the possible differences between the two.

## 4.2. Staging negotiation spaces

Figure 23 illustrates how the interviews relate to the earlier (Section 2 and Section 3), as well as following (Section 5 and Section 6) sections, using the Staging negotiation spaces framework (Section 3.3.1). For simplifying purposes, only 3 interviews are included as generalized examples. The initial staging includes the framing by the interview guide and scenarios and the inscription of them, accompanied by the sensitizing exercise. This is followed by enrolling the participants and sending them the exercise. When the enrolment happened on spot, the sensitizing was missing. As explained earlier the design objects prepared by the designer are the same and, in some cases, additional pictures from sensitizing are circulating as well. However, each negotiation space is with a different actor and in a different environment. Results from all the interviews are mapped together in various ways, including an affinity diagram (Section 5.1), and an additional research question is formulated as an outcome (Section 6.1.3).



23. Figure The adapted Staging negotiation spaces used for the interviews (own illustration)

## 4.3. Reflection and limitations

### 4.3.1. Participants

As a result of opportunistic sampling, most of the participants knew the designer, and have been aware that the interviews are part of a Sustainable design master thesis, which might have influenced their answers, and the memories, which they have shared. Furthermore, the scenarios also pictured situations with more sustainably considered gift categories, which made the topic clear, where they could have modified their answers to provide – in their interpretation – more pleasing answers.

These biases were noticeable for instance when moving on to the giving scenarios (after asking about ‘sustainable’ values). An example for that how Emilie wanted to show concern about a gift that she would choose for a colleague in the scenario: *“Sustainability would be, important for me in this aspect, finding something that communicates a value.”*

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that 3 of the participants (Vibe, Śliwa and Nati) have been working with sustainability, either in their studies and/or at their work.

### 4.3.2. Lack of sensitizing

As some of the interviews have been taken place spontaneously, there were participants, who did not take part of the sensitizing, resulting a notable difference in their interview process. Those who did not think about memories beforehand, have been confused about which memory to choose and had a harder time to recall them, as

well as were more challenged to verbalize, which values they find important regarding gifts. However, this reflection might be the result of other factors, considering the small sample amount.

#### 4.3.3. 'Language'

Regarding definitions, sustainability and ethical consumption was not defined for the participants purposefully, encouraging them to find their own definitions and interpretations. This had both advantages (discovering many unexpected concerns) and disadvantages (in some cases the participants have been confused about or experienced these terms as 'too heavy').

#### 4.3.4. Environment

The interviews have taken place in different environments and times, in some cases resulting disturbances. This was especially present in 2 interviews, which ended up being recorded in several parts, with 10-15 min breaks.

Also, the one online interview resulted somewhat less fluent communication, as well as it was more challenging to interpret the non-verbal communication of the interviewee through camera.

#### 4.3.5. Cultural differences

When framing the scenarios, some of them seemed potentially controversial (for instance second-hand, charity, not giving gifts) based on the interpretation and cultural background of the designer (coming from Hungary). However, these situations did not seem to surprise the participants, which suggest that in their eyes they were

more normalized. Second-hand gift-exchange seemed especially accepted among Danes.

Cultural differences also resulted other surprises in the interviews, for instance the discovery that wish lists are a popular and well-known part of the holidays in Denmark, or that exchanging or returning presents is a common practice.

#### 4.3.6. Process

The interview guide has been put together early in the project, and the interviews have been carried out parallel with some of the literature review. That is why some findings from the literature review was only considered later in the process.



# DEFINE

## 5. Data analysis

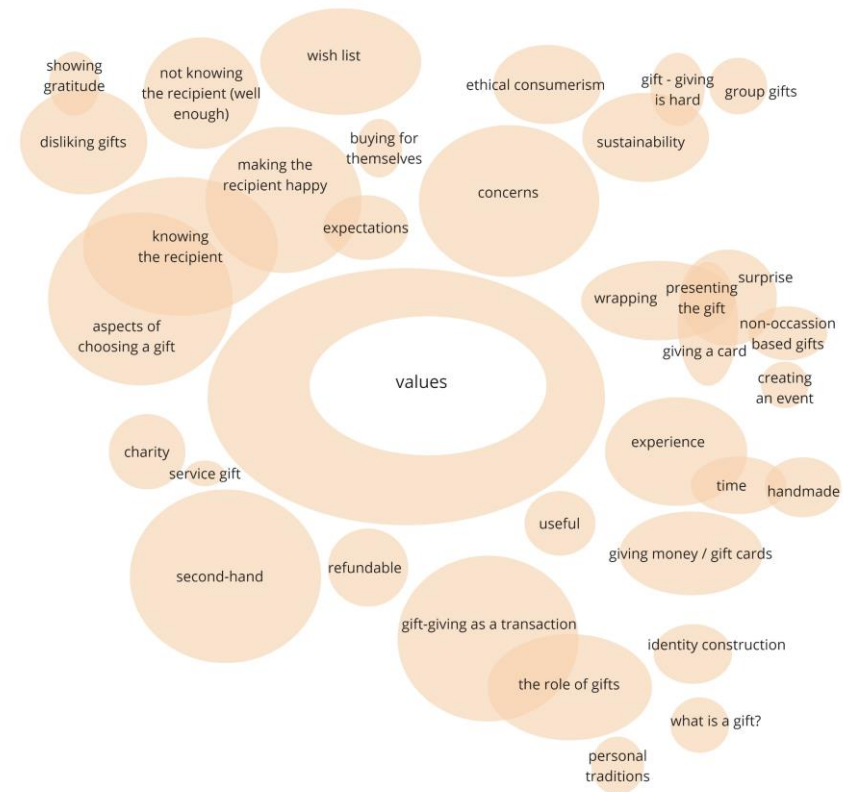
Several mappings have been used to analyse the empirical data from the interviews, which are going to be discussed as follows.

### 5.1. Affinity diagram

First, an affinity diagram (Section 3.4) has been used, which due to size limitations is available in Appendix 4 and in Miro on the following link:

[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762)

While the affinity diagram is often used to structure the empirical and the desk research together, it has been only used for analysing empirical data in this thesis. That was mainly the result of the lack of available information on the topic of sustainable gift consumption, which would have directly related to the grouping. Furthermore, it was also a consequence of including some of the finding from the literature review already to the interview guide and thereby the initial framing. However, as the next paragraphs are going through the most important groups (Figure 24), connections will be made to the literature review as well (Section 2).



24. Figure Simplified version of the Affinity diagram, showing only the groups (own illustration)

To start with, it might be interesting to highlight the many considerations around what counts as a gift, according to the participants (Figure 25).



25. Figure What is a gift? Group from the Affinity diagram (own illustration)

### 5.1.1. Values

The affinity diagram has been constructed around the values that participants formulated as important, as most of the other groups are connected to those. These values have been also mapped separately from other empirical data (Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).

In general, participants formulated values on receiving easier than values on giving, which might be a result of values being context-dependent, and thereby harder to generalize in a giving situation. Furthermore values, related to sustainability was hard to interpret for many participants, especially for those who were not considering themselves as caring about the topic.: *"I don't think sustainability particularly comes into play when I am selecting a gift for someone. I think if I added that restriction, I already find it difficult to find a good gift. A really don't need more restricts"* [Chris]. In one case, with Anna, asking about sustainable values even proved to be disturbing and upsetting: *"And again, sustainable. I not sure if you are aware of that,*

*your questions are very confusing and they also make me feel guilty because these are not categories, which I take into consideration."*

Values on giving and receiving also seemed to have a different importance, for instance useful/functional was mentioned more on the giving side (other differences are available in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).

### 5.1.2. Gift categories and matters of concern

Many of the post-its have been formulating concerns and revealed attitudes regarding different gift categories (as a likely result of scenarios targeting them).

#### 1. Charity and service gifts

Charity and service gifts have been connected to purpose as an important value, formulated for instance as *"if it helps someone"* [Mikkel]. While interviewees stated that they found the idea of supporting a noble cause good, they also formulated some concerns regarding the creditability of such initiatives *"I know that some of such companies are scam"* [Anna], as well as stated that you need to be a certain age to appreciate such gifts *"my mum has like a certificate that she owns part of a rain forest, that she got when she was 35 years old [...] I felt like, what a weird gift? Why would you give someone a m<sup>2</sup> of rainforest?"* [Lukas].

#### 2. Experience and handmade gifts

Experience and handmade gifts formed a bigger grouping, both relating to time aspects. Regarding experience the desire of spending time together has been standing out. Anders said for



example: *“I invited my dad out to a cottage house in Sweden. [...] the reason for it is that we would be spending time together in that cottage house.”* Although, many formulated concerns of how hard it is to initiate such a gift to happen. *“I bought him [dad] one of those special harnesses you need for that [via ferrata] and the devices and said that we can go do it once together. That never happened”* [Alex].

### 3. Giving money and gift cards

Giving money and gift cards have been seen similar *“The only difference between giving a gift card and giving the money of the same amount is that they are [...] bound to the store, they can't use it for whatever. Also, I suppose it shows at least some thought”* [Chris], and therefore mapped together. Many shared the opinion, that none of them is personal. *“I'm almost where I think that the idea of getting somebody a gift is gone, if you just give them the money”*, said Vibe. Similarly, to the experience gifts, a problem with gift cards have been also, that they *“have a thing with disappearing in the shelf, and then they never use it.”* [Lukas] However, giving money or gift cards were seen as an easier option as well, then choosing other gift types.

### 4. Second-hand gifts

The group of second-hand items turned out to be the biggest, which was probably a result of many scenarios with this gift category, as well as that many interviewees mentioned them on their own. Within the category, pre-owned items formed a separate group. Many of the interviewees claimed that they are frequently buying second-hand items for themselves *“I buy so much stuff second-hand”* [Lucas], but they have had a different attitude when it comes to buying others *“I wouldn't buy a used piece of anything for my mother-*

*in-law”* [Vibe]. Participants formulated various concerns, such as the quality not being good enough *“you could also say that it's about quality. Like, not all second-hand things look like they are completely, you know, like straight from the factory.”* [Śliwa], items are non-refundable *“I find it sometimes more difficult to buy second-hand for other people because you know, it's not refundable”* [Vibe], or the gift would not be worthy enough for the recipient *“they [second-hand items] can be considered like less worth. So [...] they would need to be [...] a kind of a lower grade gift”* [Śliwa].

#### 5.1.3. Gift-giving as a transaction and the role of gifts

The need to return items has not been only present with second-hand gifts, but also in other categories. One of the participants, Vibe even claimed that she mostly exchanges whatever she receives: *“If I receive something with an exchange label, I immediately start to imagine what I could get for that. [...] It's also an issue of me getting cheated. You know, I could have had something I like, now I get something I don't like, why is that?”* [Vibe].

The monetary value of the gift was also important. Participants seemed to be concerned about not giving neither too expensive *“if you give friends a really expensive gift, it is kind of awkward”* [Chris], nor too cheap presents *“If I give my mom something that she really need and it only costs 10 Swiss francs [~73 dkk] than I will maybe put something else next to it so I can keep a value that is fair.”* [Alex]. While on the side of receiving, only too expensive gifts seemed to be an issue. Interviewees connected multiple concerns to that, such as ulterior motives *“when I get the gift, it sometimes [...] think [...] they probably want something”* [Anna], or the feeling that they are owning

to the giver *"wait, what now I owe you? [...] Now I have to work hard to deserve that present"* [Emilie].

This need for having a balance in the gift-exchange situation connects to reciprocity (Section 2.6.1), and also relates to other roles a gift can play, for instance as a tool to build the relationship *"sort of like [...] seeking to be remembered and to deepen the relationship [...] some of the gifts have this sort of function."* [Anna], as well as reminders *"That bike ended up getting stolen [...] usually I have like a very low attachment to [...] materialistic things, but that one was like hard to loose, since [...] my friend, he has cancer and he has been going back and forth and [...] he spent some of his excess energy to make the bike for me"* [Anders].

Participants also made several statements, regarding how they define themselves by gifts, an indicator of how gift-exchange is indeed part of constructing their identity (Section 2.6.2), whether a good *"I'm a giver. So, it's just how I am."* [Nati] or a bad one *"I'm a bad gift giver, I think"* [Śliwa].

#### 5.1.4. Presenting the gift

As a way of presenting the gift also several categories emerged, wrapping, the element of surprise (and relating to that non-occasion-based gifting), as well as giving a card with the gift. Many participants found important that the wrapping paper is an eco-friendlier solution, but it was also a returning element that the wrapping should reflect on the present itself *"if I'm expecting to be given a gift. It can be maybe a bit more nice if it's wrapped, but if I'm not expecting one, it doesn't need to be"* [Anders]. *"Beautiful wrappings"* have been even highlighted as a key value by Vibe. For

some, wrapping have played a very important role, supposedly to make the gift more personal (Section 2.6.3).

As regards to appropriateness, it seemed that a surprising situation or a non-occasion based gift-exchange relieves pressure from the giver *"spontaneous gifts are [...] much more fun to give"* [Vibe], and also more appreciated by the recipient *"the gifts I've been most happy for the things that I did not expect"* [Lukas], which is from the recipient side is contradictory with the findings of Galak et al. (2016) (Section 2.6.3).

Giving cards with the gift seemed to be a way of adding extra value to it *"I made a card with like a homemade card with like stick figures walking up the mountain"* [Alex], as well as to make it up for gifts without much physical aspect. An example from Lukas for that, regarding experience gifts was the following: *"because I guess these things can seem a lot like a lazy gift. So you have to put in a little bit of work for the actual card, so people don't feel like, oh yeah he just bought that"*.

#### 5.1.5. Further valuable aspects of gifts

A repeatedly mentioned value have been usefulness and functionality, which was in some cases, extremely important for participants. Alex said about receiving something cheap, but not useful: *"I would feel awkward. Because if I can't use it than maybe I rather want to get nothing at all."* Usefulness as an important functional value has been also part of the mapping from Larsen & Watson (2001) as well as was part of the discussion from Galak et al. (2016)(Section 2.6.3), although staying with the example of Alex, in

his case usefulness was not only more valued but clearly desired as well.

One of the biggest emerging groups (on Figure 24 with the headlines: ‘aspects of choosing a gift’, ‘knowing the recipient’, ‘making the recipient happy’ and ‘expectations’) was interconnected with multiple values, such as effort, thoughtfulness, customization, having a story behind the gift and making the recipient happy.

Having the gift personal or customized has been one of the most returning themes with emotional statements, such as: *“Gifts are personal and should be personal” [Vibe]*, and *“If they give me something that it really makes me very, very happy, I feel moved. And I even sometimes cry” [Anna]*. Participants expressed their desire to be thought of *“it is always nice that you can feel that someone actually saw something and though, ah, you would like this” [Mikkel]*, and to be acknowledged and understood *“I got a doll house from my grandfather when I was a child and I started crying [...] And I remember so vividly, I cried because it was so sad because my grandfather didn't know me. I had never played with dolls. [...] He based my gift on what girls in my age probably would like. And not, what would Emily like?” [Emilie]*, which finding are in line with the research of Pizzetti & Gibbert (2018).

Showing effort or thought behind the gift was also important for participants in giving situations, for instance Śliwa shared about a present: *“I've been wanting to give that book to that person for at least eight months now.”* As well as it was important both when receiving and giving that the gift represent something; it is a symbol *“I don't know, something symbolic. [...] like wildflowers picked on that day”*

*[Nati]*, knowledge of the recipient *“my favourite colour is purple. So, I get a lot of purple flowers for example. And I love that. [...] it means so much more to me” [Emilie]*, or a memory (referring to reminders) *“and they [earrings for an anniversary] were actually connected with my wedding ring in the way of the pattern” [Vibe]*. Although thoughtfulness was formulated as a key value more on the side of receiving, it was more detectable in personal stories in a giving situation, which would support the findings of Galak et al. (2016) (Section 2.6.3).

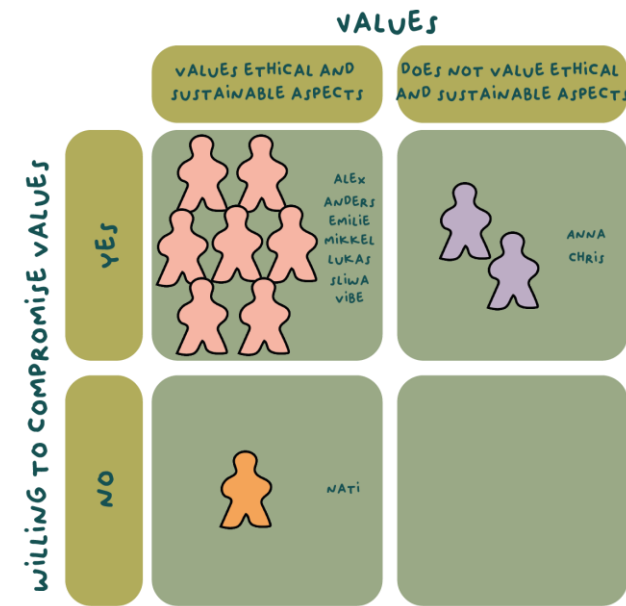
#### 5.1.6. Expectations and approaches when giving and receiving

When asking about expectations, many interviewees said that they are *“not a lot” [Chris]* or *“I have no” [Nati]*, when it comes to receiving. Lukas even stated that: *“I would be happy for pretty much whatever people will give me”*. Although, these statement then often connected to the condition - as long as there is thought behind. This, in contrast with the previous paragraph, would contradict the same study (Galak et al., 2016).

At the same time there have been a lot of self-pressure present when thinking about giving: *“I expect a lot of myself when I give gifts. I want it to be really nice. I want it to be perfect.” [Lukas]*. These high expectations also often result giving up personal values, including sustainability and, as Emilie said, ethics as well: *“I think I compromise more the ethics when I buy for others”*. Although it can also result to happen to other way around as Anders formulated: *“So if something like sustainability is something they value very highly, then I'll try to navigate through that”*.

In general, the results showed that in a giving situation, participants would try to think much more about what the recipient wants and what would make them happy, although some examples also showed givers who would prioritize their values higher: *“maybe it seems a bit selfish, but I often think, like would I enjoy getting this? Or can I maybe stand behind this?”* [Mikkel].

This consideration of gift-consumption decisions had a particular focus in the interviews, with the aim of adapting the matrix of (Green et al., 2016) to values related to ethical and sustainable gift-consumption. However, since there was only one question about the relation of personal consumption and gift consumption, it would have been irrelevant to compare the two, therefore, the mapping of the authors has been translated to visualize values and see how participants might compromise them or not (Figure 26).



26. Figure Visualizing how many of the participants would be willing to compromise their values (own illustration)

Not knowing the recipient well enough had different approaches to deal with from the participants. In some cases, recipients have been labelled as difficult to give to *“he [dad] is also incredibly difficult to give gifts to. [...] He has everything he needs”* [Chris], while generalized gifts have also been seen as a solution *“I think that like buying flowers or a bottle of wine is really a good idea instead of guessing what the person might like and being completely wrong.”* [Anna].

Wish lists as a tool to deal with uncertainty was also a prominent topic: *“We’ve been doing that since I was really young in my family. [...] so you know, the people who are not that close to me, that still give me gifts have a guidance”* [Lukas] and while it was also seemed as

something not personal, generally participants related to it as a practical solution.

Despite the best efforts, participants experienced that they did not like gifts that they received, or their gifts proved not to be as good as they hoped for. In line with ‘difficult recipients’ they have been also labelled people as ‘picky’, even themselves: *“I mean, I’m pickyish. I don’t like a lot of stuff. I like particular stuff, you know?”* [Vibe]. But even in unfortunate situations, they emphasized the importance of appreciating the intention and being grateful: *“I would try to express satisfaction or happiness for being given a gift”* [Anders]. Referring back to the work of Eriksen (2007) (Section 2.6.1) the refusal to receive is mostly not seen as an option, as it would result a social tension.

#### 5.1.7. Sustainability and ethical consumption

Sustainability and ethical consumption have been purposefully not defined for the interviewees, allowing them to express their personal interpretations, and discover various concerns around them. This resulted numerous definitions by the participants, often hidden in context. Śliwa for example weaved the term sustainability in talking about Christmas gift-exchange practices in her family: *“So we don’t want to buy something that the other person will not use. [...] it’s also in a way more sustainable. Just give somebody a piece of paper saying next time you need something, I can pay for it”*. Some participants said that they have never thought about sustainability in a gift-exchange context before or it is just not something which is important for them: *“It is sustainable I suppose to both wish for and wanted to be*

*found with used items, but it is not why I wish for used items. It might be coincidentally sustainable“* [Chris].

Interviewees also defined gifting as *“hard work”* [Vibe] and some felt that thinking about sustainability just makes it even harder *“You know, it takes a lot of effort [...] to really think about all these different sustainability aspects”* [Emilie], as well as restricting, although the recipient deserves the best *“I would probably thinking, oh, no we’re doing the whole shazam, f\* sustainability in that sense, if it was a gift for my girlfriend or [...] a gift for someone else [...] will be more like, no, they deserve this”* [Lukas].

As described earlier the question of being an ethical consumer (Papaoikonomou et al., 2016) resulted similar answers from participants, recognizing that caring about ethics and sustainability is a spectrum, where they are trying to make progress. Even those who initially answered with yes or no, when further elaborating, places themselves somewhere in the middle. Asking about ethical consumerism also revealed many concerns, which mapped together with sustainability resulted groups as travel/transport, energy/water, diet, production/material, plastic pollution, and minimalistic approaches.

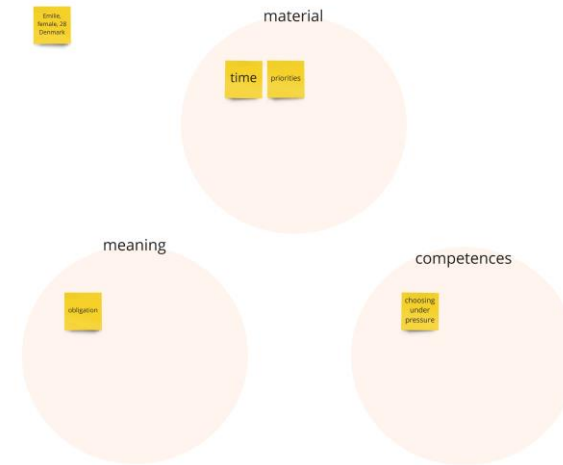
## 5.2. Mapping practices

Gift-exchange can be seen not only as one practice, but also as a bundle of sub-practices, which are going to be described as follows.

Illustrations have been made following the practice triangle by Shove et al. (2012), separating the elements of material, meaning and competencies. Relations between the elements have been illustrated with the colours, for instance a red post it in the materials and another in the meanings belong together.

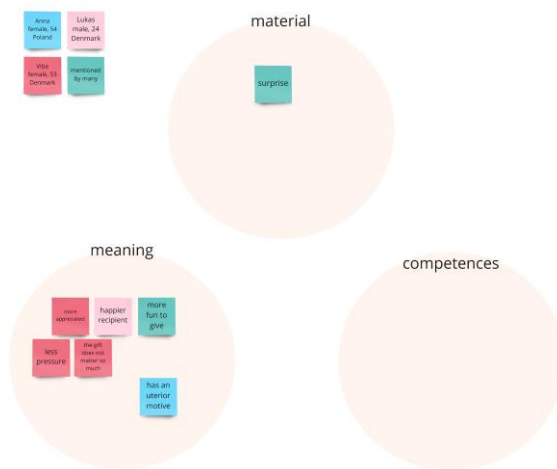
### 5.2.1. Occasion-based vs. non-occasion-based gifting

First a differentiation has been made between occasion-based and non-occasion-based gift-exchange situation, where the latter reflects on spontaneous gifting, often combined with the element of surprise. Unfortunately, not many statements have been made about the two in general, but as reflected earlier, it seems that spontaneous gifting situations are less challenging for the participants.



27. Figure The practice triangle of occasion-based gift-exchange (own illustration- also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))





28. Figure The practice triangle of non-occasion-based gift-exchange (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

### 5.2.2. Gift categories

Practices have been also separated based on the materialistic element of what type of gift is given. Throughout this mapping a distinction emerged between two types of gift categories, one where it is more required to know the recipient and another, where it is not or less important.

#### 1. Knowing the recipient

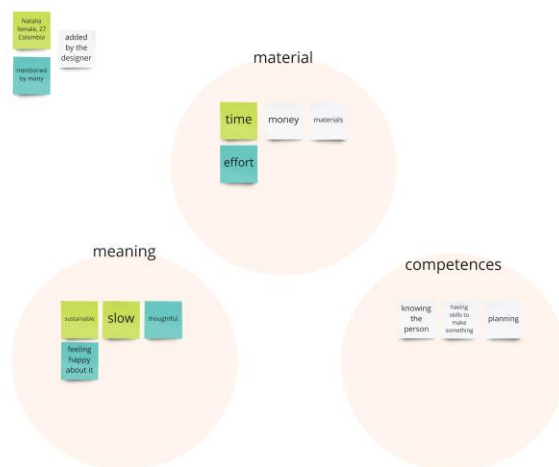
The former includes experiences, handmade and second-hand items. Regarding experiences, the mapping illustrates contradicting meanings, which shows that this type of gifts can also have a wide range regard to effort put in, time and money spent, and grandiosity.

As participants seen, an experience can be traveling from the other side of the world (from USA to Denmark) but also a ticket to the opera.



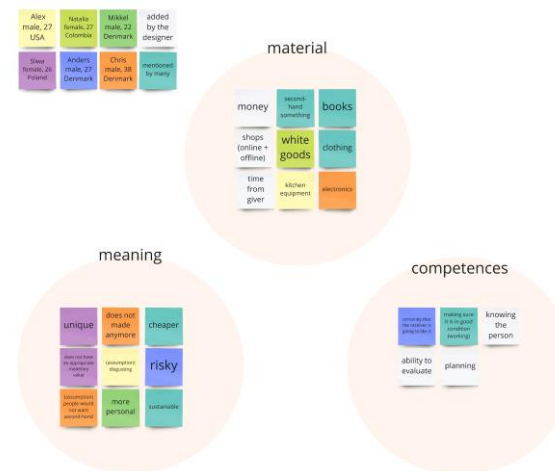
29. Figure The practice triangle of experience gifts (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

Handmade gifts, seemed to represent a lot of value for some, although that value was sometimes symbolical and not related to the actual object. Vibe described for instance how difficult is to her to receive handmade gifts from her daughter: *“she even saw a bag for me [...] I don't know when to use it or how to use it. I really don't like the colour and t's really not that well-made. [...] That is actually the most complicated is to wear something out of charity”*. However, as the lack of post-its show, the practice of giving handmade gifts have not been deeply discovered.



30. Figure The practice triangle of handmade gifts (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

Around second-hand items, as stated above, many discussions have taken place, resulting a more detailed illustration. Meanings, similarly to experience gifts, seem also controvert, highlighting both positive and negative features. Furthermore, material elements have been also concretized more often.



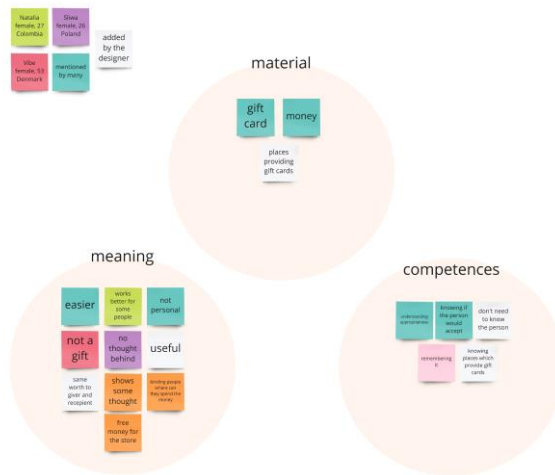
31. Figure The practice triangle of second-hand gifts (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

## 2. Not knowing the recipient (well enough)

Charity, giving money and gift-cards, as well as the practice of using wish lists have been seen as not requiring knowing the recipient that well, except knowing if the recipient would accept such a gift.

Money and gift-cards have been identified as an easy, but useful solution, with no or just some thought behind, but at the same time also something, which for some cannot be seen as a gift. Gift cards also considered often forgotten.

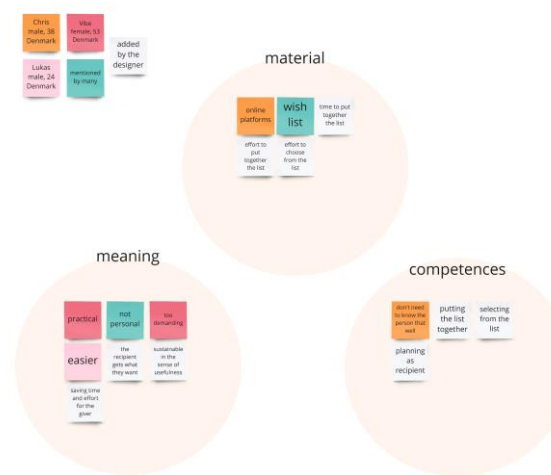




32. Figure The practice triangle of money and gift-cards as gifts (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

Mapping charity, compared to the Affinity did not bring new insights, but is available in Appendix 7.

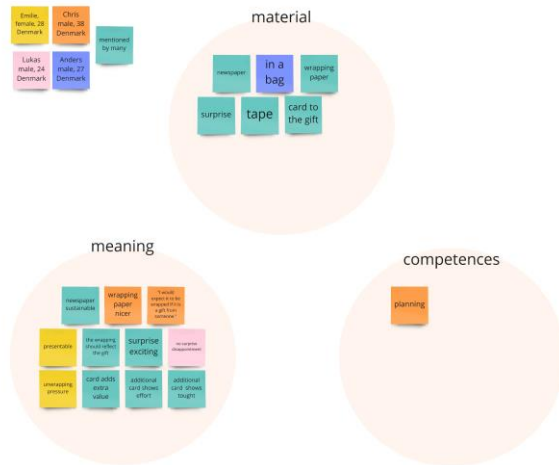
While one could argue that using a wish list is not fundamentally different from money and gift cards (especially the former) regarding the result, - as the recipient essentially gets what they wanted - as the practice mapping shows, it is still a way more accepted solution, at least in Danish culture.



33. Figure The practice of using a wish list (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

### 5.2.3. Presenting the gift

While presenting a gift is not separate from the gift itself, many elements come in play, resulting a practice around. Presenting the gift has been also the category with the most shared elements of material and meaning, which leads to the assumption that wrapping and presenting the gift is a cross-culturally important and shared practice.



34. Figure The practice of presenting the gift (own illustration also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

### 5.3. Narrowing the topic

Other than analysing, the purpose of various mappings has been also to provide a structured overview which support the decision of narrowing the topic.

First, after conducting the interviews the decision has been made that the rest of the project will focus on **occasion-based gift-exchange**. As described, it seemed that this type of gifting is more

challenging and therefore, an area which could be further developed. In connection with that, the focus was also narrowed on **families**, because occasion-based gifting is the most prominent within. Furthermore, families are an interesting mixture of people who know each other very closely and people who, although don't really know each other, are 'required' to exchange gifts. Thereby, it is also a complex field of obligation and voluntarism, regards of gifting.

Consequently, of these two decisions, it seemed logical to focus on one formal occasion, which involves the whole family. The biggest of these is **the holiday season** (those who celebrate, Christmas, but framing it only around that, seemed exclusive and thereby wanted to be avoided.) This decision was further supported by findings from statistics and literature review, which often also used this as a scope (Section 2.3).

A more difficult decision has been, to narrow with the category of the gift given. As on the affinity the category of the values; 'personal', 'thoughtful', 'shows effort' and 'has a story behind' were standing out, which are all connected to knowing the recipient, the focus was shifting for practices accommodating this competence: experience, handmade and second-hand. From these, **second-hand** have been chosen as the final focus, which is the most clearly sustainable<sup>11</sup>, whereas the other two have more of a spectrum, depending on the gift. This decision was further assisted by the fact that this gift-category had the most empirical data available at this point in the process.

<sup>11</sup> Second-hand objects are contributing to circular economy, by saving resources and expanding the life of already produced items.

#### 5.4. Reflection and limitations

First, a limitation has been the explorative approach taken before the interviews. As the scope has been very wide, the research resulted a lot of data, but in some cases not enough about specific topics (e.g., handmade gifts). As the scenarios were not planned but chosen by participants, the produced data was also somewhat randomized. However, as a possible limitation, these unexpected factors of the generated information influenced the decision making, thereby turned out to be an important part of the project.

An additional reflection wanted to be made about the length and importance of this section. As the 10 interviews generated a huge amount of data, this originally topic-starter empirical research turned out to be a main cornerstone of the thesis. Furthermore, as the result of producing this amount of information, analysing it, also turned out to be unexpectedly long, especially for a one-person team.

## DEVELOP

### 6. Re-framing the problem

#### 6.1. Literature review

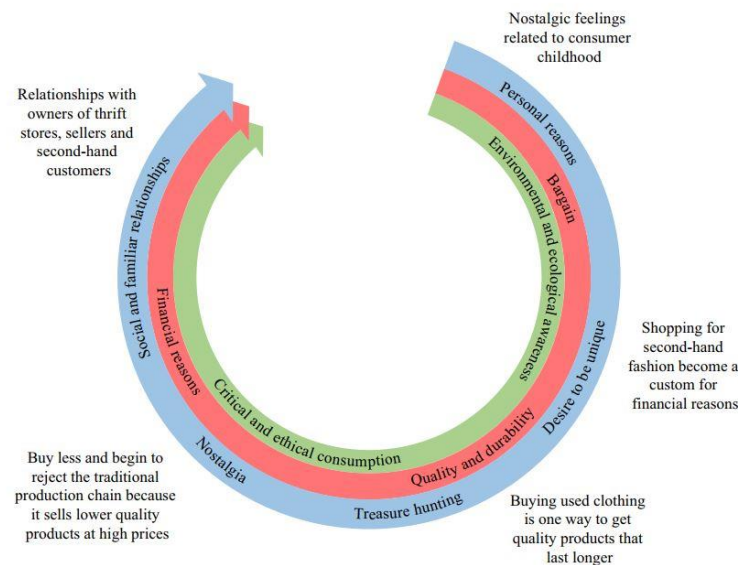
##### 6.1.1. Second-hand consumption

Narrowing on the topic of second-hand items has initiated a new, but significantly smaller literature review, first focusing on second-hand consumption. As a result of this research, one relevant study is going to be described.

This study was focusing on circular economy related motivational factors for buying second-hand clothing in Brazil, involving 9 participants in the ethnographic research. These factors have included financial reasons, finding that second-hand products are sometimes better quality and thereby superior to first-hand (especially fast-fashion), the need from people to express themselves as unique individuals, as well as nostalgic reasons regarding the product, which ‘has a story’ or regarding a childhood memory. Second-hand shopping was also seen as a ‘fun and cool’ activity, and often also involves social aspects. Vintage pieces have been identified as a special category within second-hand items, hence the associated higher symbolical value, and because of that, higher price. The authors mapped these reasons, as seen on Figure 35. Another interesting, although not key element of the study has been a discussion of how the growing interest in the second-hand

market might leading to exclude those, who need having access for clothing cheaper, which is an important consideration to have when working towards a more circular future. (Machado et al., 2019)

Findings from this study have been used when analysing data from the workshops, to compare the emerging groupings to other research results.



35. Figure Motivational factors for buying second-hand (Machado et al., 2019, p392)

### 6.1.2. Second-hand gifts

Similarly, to sustainable gift-consumption in general, there has been no research found about second-hand gifts or gift consumption in particular. Online surveys, however, provide some insights.

An USA survey with 1500 participants found in 2019 that 48% or the respondents would be willing to give second-hand clothing, while 56% would be happy to receive. (Accenture, 2019) Two years later another survey, from ThredUp, an online second-hand clothing retailer platform, with 2000 USA consumers revealed that 66% of the respondents would be open to get second-hand fashion gifts. This number is even higher among GenZ with 72%. (ThredUp, 2021) Another 2021 article in the UK also conducted with 2000 respondents shows that 42% would be more open to receive second-hand items, compared to previous years, with popular items, such as books, DVDs, toys and jewellery, and 35% said, they would buy second-hand for their children. (Young, 2021)

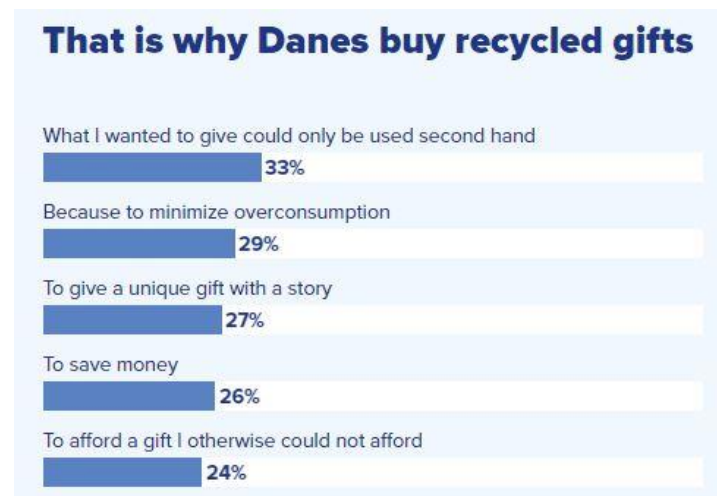
Finally, the annual report of 2021 from DBA<sup>12</sup>, including 2000 participants as well, presents that 69% of Danes would like to receive second-hand items and 52% would consider giving. As an indicator of how important role wish lists are having, 66% of the respondents would be more likely to give a used item, if it would be on the wish list of the recipient, that they would like that. Furthermore 27% shared that they, in fact, has given a second-hand present to

<sup>12</sup> The report has been translated to English by using Google translate, therefore mistakes in the translation might occur.

someone in the last year. Most popular second-hand items, according to DBA are displayed on Figure 36, followed by the motivational factors on Figure 37. (DBA Genbrugsindeks 2021, 2021)



36. Figure Most popular second-hand items according to the DBA Genbrugsindeks 2021 ( 2021)



37. Figure The motivational factors behind Danes choosing second-hand gifts (DBA Genbrugsindeks 2021, 2021)

What can be seen from these statistics that people are more open to receive second-hand items, as opposed to give, but there is a big gap

between what people claim and what they would do (see the example of DBA report with 25% difference between respondents who would consider and who have really given second-hand items). Which is another example of the behaviour-attitude gap (Section 3.1.4).

### 6.1.3. Additional research question

As a result of scoping and investigate new literature, the additional research question has been formulated for the second part of the project as follows:

**How can second-hand gifts become an alternative to first-hand gifts, and by that contribute to a sustainable development in gift consumption?**

The emerging research question was building upon the concerns regarding second-hand gifts from the interviews, which suggested that qualities of second-hand and first-hand are seen different in the eyes of the participants. Therefore, the second empirical research was focusing on further discovering these problems, as well as find solutions.

## 6.2. Gift value

To determine what participants value in gifts and adapt this knowledge to the second empirical research, the work of Larsen & Watson (2001) has been used, combined with findings from the interviews, resulting an expanded version of gift values. To the four value categories they have identified (yellow on Figure 38) an additional two has been added (green on Figure 38); sustainable and receptive values, where the latter is in a way the opposite of expressive values.

As an outcome of the value exercise and the affinity various values have been formulated (summarized 51 in Appendix 8) and simplified throughout an iterative process, resulting 11 most important ones, which have been evenly distributed to the related categories. Some

of these values have been formulated with two words, for instance 'desired/needed' with the aim of giving them a deeper character.



38. Figure Values of the gift (expanded and adapted from Larsen & Watson (2001, p892))



### 6.3. Mapping the concerns around second-hand gifts

Concerns around second-hand gift-exchange has been mapped separately using the affinity diagram, and these concerns has been categorized under different headlines. Riskiness, as the first is an exception to start with, as many other categories result uncertainties and therefore could be joined to this first one. These concerns have been used to construct the next empirical research, generative design workshops (Section 7).



39. Figure Mapping of concerns regarding to second-hand gifts (own illustration)

## 7. Second empirical data collection

### 7.1. Generative workshops

To further discover that question, in the second part of the project 5 generative workshops (Section 3.3.3) have been conducted with families<sup>13</sup>, involving 11 participants. For enrolling, opportunistic sampling has been used, where in all cases the engaged participants were bringing additional family members with them. Most of the participants have been women (7) and in their 20s, including students, part-time and full-time workers. Participants had a diverse background, involving participants from Colombia, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, England and Hungary. Some participants are living in their home countries, therefore 3 of the workshops has been conducted online.

The workshops have been structured in two sections, a collage making exercise and a design game. Before the workshops, participants filled out a workbook, which was functioning as a sensitizing device (Appendix 9). Each of these are going to be further detailed in the following.

All the workshops have been following a session script (Appendix 10), which was shared with the participants at the beginning. To process and analyse, all workshops have been audio recorded and transcribed. One of the workshops has been conducted in Hungarian, where the transcription was made in parallel with

translating<sup>14</sup>. For simplification purposes only the most important quotes from each workshop are going to be attached to Appendix 11. Both on the online and the physical workshops, photos have been made about the participants. Using the workbooks, the recordings, the pictures that the participants shared, the photos about them, as well as their names has been consented.

#### 7.1.1. Sensitizing

For the workshops a workbook had been made to function as a sensitizing device (Section 3.3.3). Similarly to the interviews, the workbook was asking about various memories of the participants to help them activate their knowledge and discover their attitude about the topic. It was also made with the intention to cross-analyse the statements that they will make during the workshop, as well as to make it easier to participate, as some of the elements returned in the exercises.

After some demographic data, participants have been asked to think about a gift that they received in the last holiday season, as well as a gift that they gave and illustrate it with a photo if they have any. Following each memory, they have been asked to rank the 5 most important values out of the 11 formulated in Section 6.3. In the next step, they have been asked to think about and describe a second-hand item that they are having, again with including a photo, if they can. The final exercise of the workbook included several open-ended

---

<sup>13</sup> A family has been defined, as people relating either by blood, adoption, marriage, or engagement.

<sup>14</sup> The translation has not been shared with the participants; therefore, some statements might have been phrased with different words, compared

to what was chosen by the author of this thesis. However, it was the purpose to make the translation as close as possible.



statements about second-hand, which they have been asked to fill out.

Photos that the participants shared in the workbooks, have been functioning as intermediary objects (Vinck, 2011), although in a more limited way, as there was no possibility for the designer to make follow-up questions. Nevertheless, they translated some of the highlighted aspects of the memories to tangible materials, making it easier to understand. Furthermore, they shared additional information about the person, and sometimes the giver/receiver as well.

A picture shared by A1, about a painting she got from her daughter is a good example. She described that it is *“A hand painted watercolour picture of my greenhouse in an oak frame”*, which she reacted to as: *“I love it! I was moved to tears when I opened it, it’s such a good likeness and the dog is in the picture too. It means so much that a person takes the time to make a such a personalized gift.”*

When looking at the photo, it is not only the painting however, which is there, but one can also see what kind of dog A1 is having and how her greenhouse looks like with benches and little tables, surrounded by nature. It can be assessed that A1 really likes the greenhouse and the dog as well and that she appreciates handmade items in a great extent. It also tells that Molly is a talented painter, who could make this painting with ‘such a good likeness’.



40. Figure The greenhouse painting (photo by A1)

To ensure that participants will fill out the workbook beforehand they have been told that some of the results are going to be used during the workshop. Possibly because of that, all participants have done so, although in different levels of detail. The filled workbooks have been mapped in an illustration (Appendix 12).

Sensitizing in one case, has also have taken place the other way around, where one of the participants, Siri, prior to the interview shared, that in her family they celebrate Sinterklaas (beginning of December) instead of Christmas, and this holiday have different, special traditions. She also wrote, that in recent years they started to celebrate on Christmas day keeping the same traditions, as now many of the family members are living abroad, and that is the time when they can come together.

### 7.1.2. Workshop materials online and physical

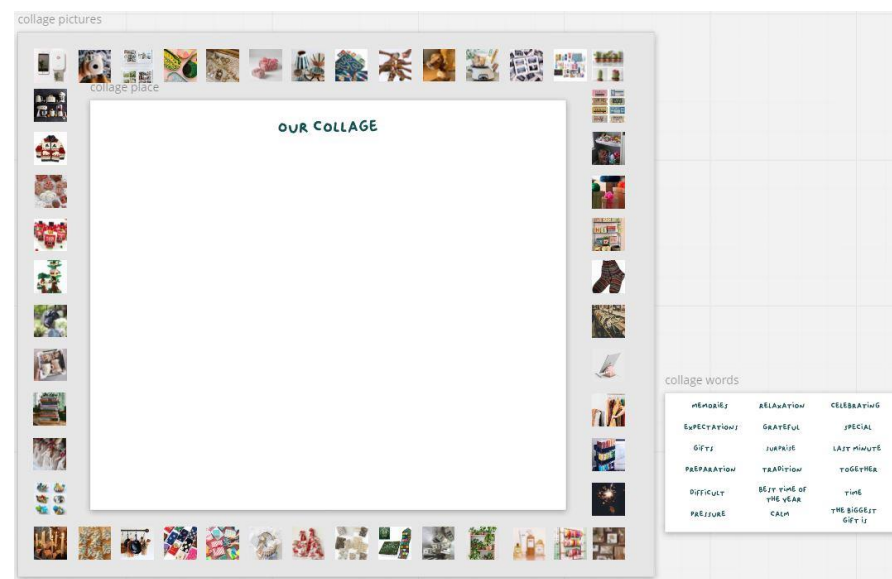
The workshop materials included an immense number of pictures (Pinterest, 2022; *Surprise Cards*, 2022) for both exercises, some words for the collage making, and icons (Google, n.d.), cards, a game boards and avatars for the design game. Furthermore, a dice was needed to role, in both versions, for which the participants used online plug-ins and apps.

Many of the workshop materials have been also functioning as intermediary objects (Vinck, 2011), translating both between the designer and the participants, as well as among the participants. Pictures and words used for the collages translated different memories and helped to be more specific about certain objects. Elements of the design game translated the different exercises planned, as well as the framing of the designer. Pictures for instance for the surprises helped the participants to imagine the ‘received’ objects. Icons translated complex ideas of the participants to easy symbols, which they could use for communication.

The same of these workshop materials have been used for the online and the physical version, except the avatars for the design game, which have been taken from a chess game in the physical version.

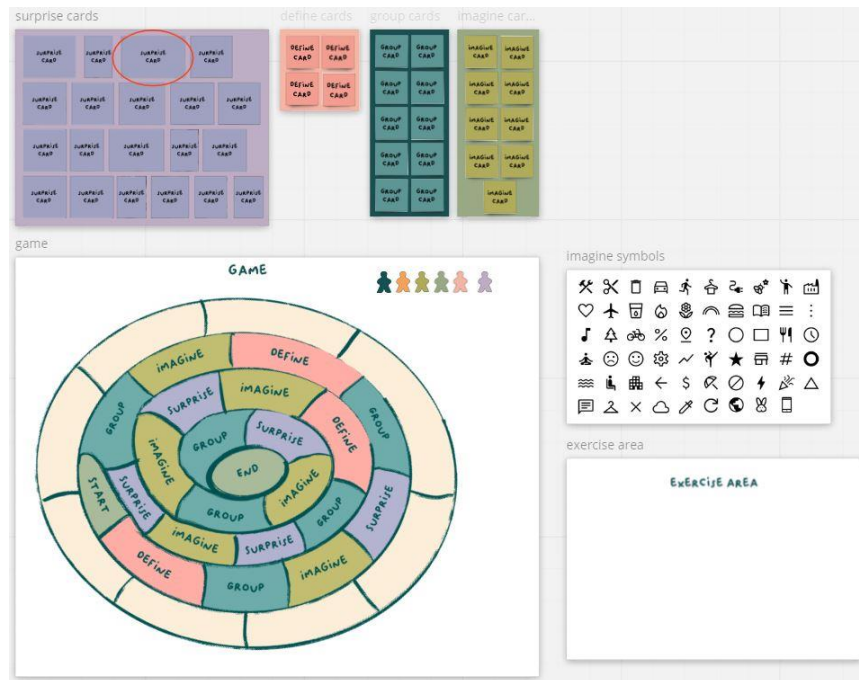
For the online version, Miro, on online whiteboard have been used, which is an easy to navigate platform, where users can move elements, add texts, post-its and arrows and can even follow each other to navigate, thereby considered to be a suitable choice. Miro allowed to display elements on a big area, as with zooming in and out, participants could have easily gained a good overview. White areas, for instance the ‘Our collage’ are indicated that it is a place where the elements should be moved to. Miro also turned out to be

a platform, which all online participants have had prior experience with.

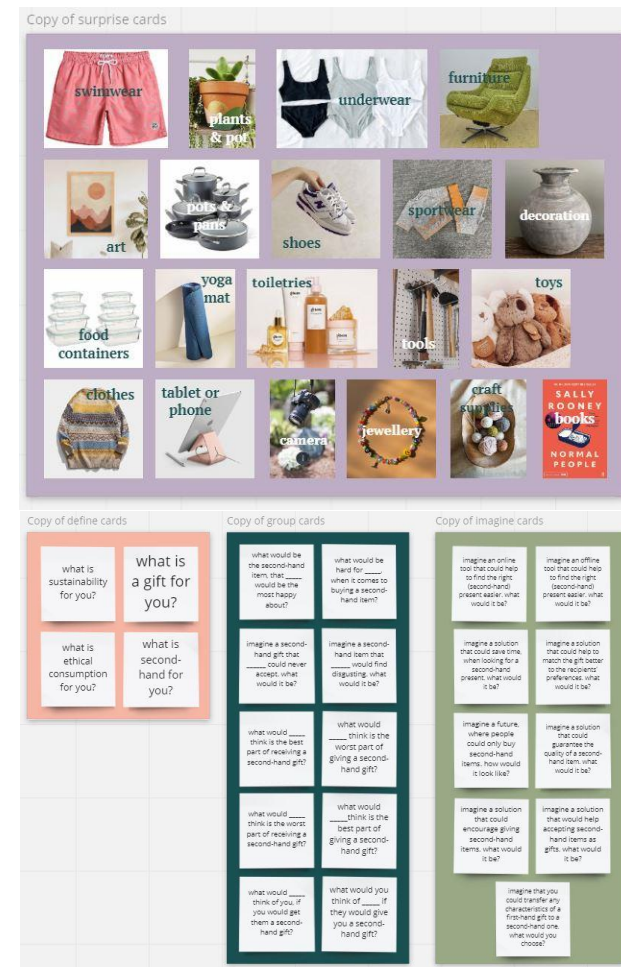


41. Figure The collage making exercise in Miro (own illustration)

To provide the experience of drawing cards, the card elements have been covered with colourful rectangles. These have been removed by participants when ‘drawing’ to reveal the questions or pictures.



42. Figure The design game in Miro (own illustration)



43. Figure The exercise cards in Miro (own illustration)

For the physical version the elements have been printed and the game board was glued to a piece of cardboard. The amount of workshop elements, however, has been a disadvantage in the physical version, as it was challenging to display all of them at once.

This has been done only for the first time (Figure 44) as the participants seemed a bit overwhelmed, in the followings only the elements from one exercise have been used at once. Furthermore, as only two workshops have been played physical, as well as because of the lack of time, no test printing has been done, resulting the pictures to be a bit too big, and the icons to be a bit too small.



44. Figure The physical version of the game (own photo)

In comparison, the different placement of the words, at the collage exercise resulted a significant difference. While in the online version some participants forgot about using them (and only did so, after

reminding), in the physical version both families started with the words, using them as headlines or notes, and kept consistently attach words for almost each picture. Adding notes or drawings was not popular in the online version but providing tools to do so in the physical one seemed to remove the burden.

### 7.1.3. Collage making exercise

The collage making exercise had a purpose to provide a better understanding of current gift-exchange practices within the family, by asking them to create something that reflects on how they give gifts and what kind of gifts they are giving to each other. Participants have been encouraged to use the provided pictures and words, but also to add their own notes. Some things in the collage exercise have been illustrated with two pictures, for instance there has been two different types of photo albums. That made the participants in some cases confused, while in other cases they have been happy to find a more suitable picture.

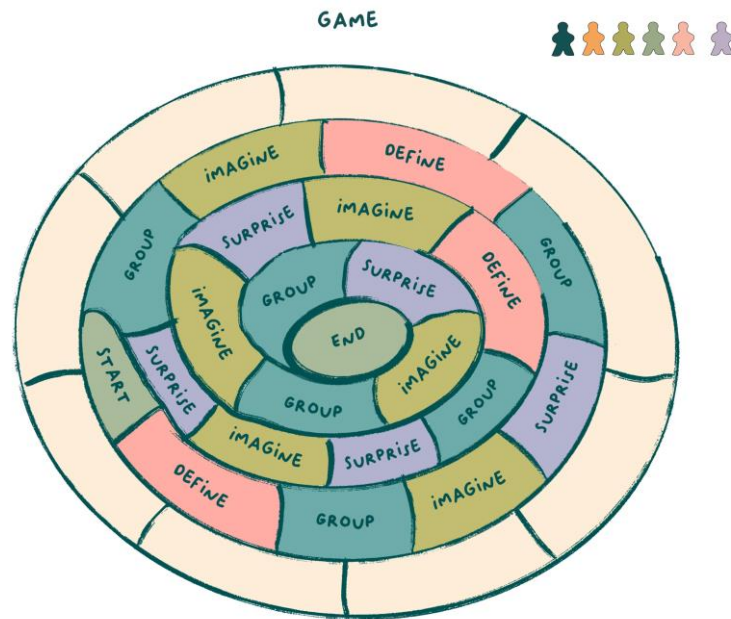
Participants from the first workshop, Nati and Mathias, an engaged couple, have been receiving the instruction that they should only focus about their family (as themselves) in the mapping. This turned out to be difficult in the process, as they did not share so many Christmases together. Therefore, eventually, they also discussed what they would give each other in a theoretical situation. As a result, this instruction later with another couple, Tüsi and Nusi has been changed, and they have been encouraged to discuss practices from both side of their families.

Two collages, one online and one physical can be seen below, while the others are available in Appendix 11.





similarly named and coloured card. The frequency of these fields has been designed according to the number of exercises belonging to them (resulting for instance the define field only to pop up 3 times, while the Group 6). The exercises are going to be further explained in the next paragraphs.



47. Figure Gameboard and avatars (own illustration)

## 1. Define

Define cards (Appendix 13). asked for a definition, which the player has to formulate. This exercise, while being useful and interesting for the analysis, has been challenging for some participants *“I am so glad you got that one. [...] I should have used Google.” [A1]*.

While all the questions have been phrased as ‘what does it mean **for you?**’, participants still wanted to add accurate answers. An example with Flo for that:

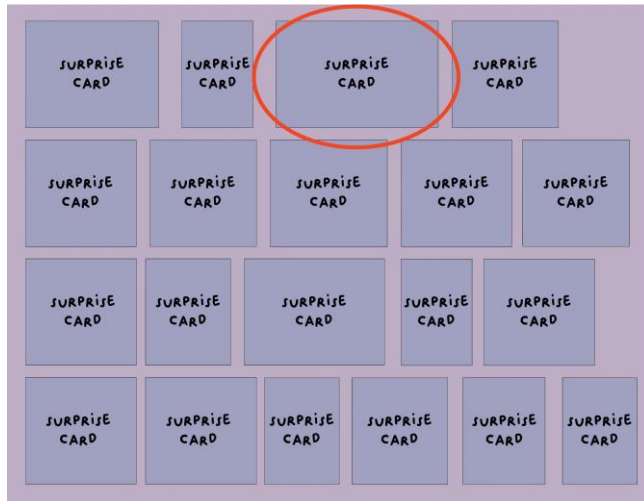
*Flo: “I guess in a traditional way a gift is some kind of object that you give to someone who did not have it before, but I guess in a broader sense it can also be an action or...”*

*Designer: “And what is it for you?”*

## 2. Surprise

When drawing a surprise card (Appendix 14), the players needed to imagine that they would receive the object on the picture, but as second-hand, and react to it. This exercise in general proved to be a great conversation starter and participants had a lot of fun, especially with controversial items, such as second-hand underwear.

An interesting, phenomenon occurred because of the different sizes of the surprise cards, where the underwear card has been the biggest, and supposedly because of that, was chosen in all online versions. (In the physical game the size difference between the cards has been notably smaller.)



48. Figure Different sized surprised cards, with the second-hand underwear marked (own illustration)

### 3. Group

For the group exercise (Appendix 15), participants have been asked to add names of their close family members<sup>16</sup>. They also needed to place one avatar on the outer beige area. When arriving to a group field in the spiral, they needed to roll again, and move the avatar on that outer circle to get to a name. After that, they must have drawn a card and needed to put that name in place of the empty spot. For instance, if the name was Annemarieke, the question would be: What would Annemarieke think is the best part of giving a second-hand gift? - where the underline marks the previously empty spot.

<sup>16</sup> By close family members it was meant those, who they defined so in their workbook.

With this exercise an additional rule has been added with 3 players, where if they agreed, they could have move one forward on the spiral with their avatars. This idea was also adapted from Imaginiff Description (n.d.) and helped to make the game faster with more participants.

While the game was dependent on luck by rolling the dice, it has been interesting that in some workshops this exercise was completely missing and was only tried in the very end, as opposed with 3 participants a lot (7 out of 10) of the group cards have been used.

### 4. Imagine

While the Define, Surprise and Group exercises had the purpose of discovering attitudes relating to second-hand, as well as concerns around them, the Imagine cards (Appendix 16) were aiming to frame a solution space. To create these questions, the previously identified concerns (Section 6.3) have been used as an inspiration.

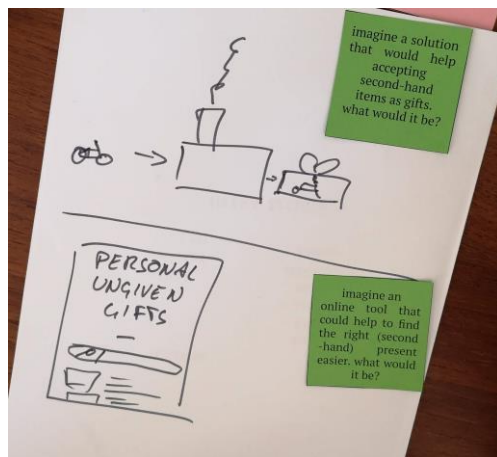
When drawing an Imagine card, participants have been asked to imagine something in the future, related to second-hand, for instance: 'Imagine a solution that could guarantee the quality of a second-hand item. What would it be?' To make this exercise easier, participants have been encouraged to use the provided icons<sup>17</sup> as inspiration, as well as to add their own notes or drawings.

<sup>17</sup> The selected icons were inspired by an existing game, called Imagine (*Imagine Description*, n.d.), which is a creative game with transparent cards





49. Figure Solving Imagine exercises in Miro (made by participants)



50. Figure Solving Imagine exercises in the physical version (own photo)

This exercise was also challenging for some participants, even resulting in delegating the exercise to another player at one point: *“I really would not know what to say, Siri, would you know something?”* [Annamarieke]. While some shared that the icons helped in the

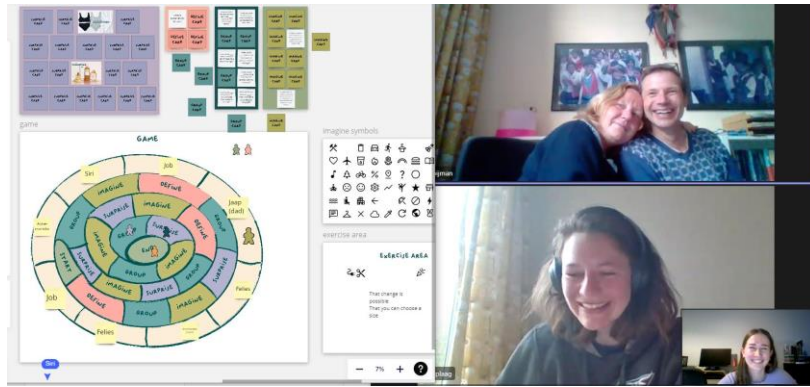
each of them having an icon on it. With the combination of the cards, new illustrations can be made, and thereby it is possible to explain concepts in a fun way. In fact, for the physical version of the workshop, even the cards

process, reflecting on the exercise, it seems that they did not provide enough support. It was also observable, that in those cases where more of the other exercises have taken place before an Imagine one, participants were coming up with ideas easier.



51. Figure Participants on the physical version of the workshop (own photo)

from the original game wanted to be used, however, unfortunately the author did not have the game and could not borrow it from anywhere.



52. Figure Group picture with participants from the online version, including the design game in Miro (own photo)

When creating the different exercises of the design game, it was considered how might these facilitate changing practices. Many of the exercises were accommodating an imagined re-configuration<sup>18</sup> of the practice of gift-exchange. Most of the exercises replaced the gift (element of material) with a second-hand item instead of a first-hand and encouraged to discover various elements of meaning (e.g., what would [someone] think is the worst part of receiving a second-hand gift?), competences (e.g., imagine a solution that could help to match the gift better to the recipients' preferences. what would it be?) and other elements of material (e.g., imagine a future, where people could only buy second-hand items. how would it look like?) in this restructured practice.

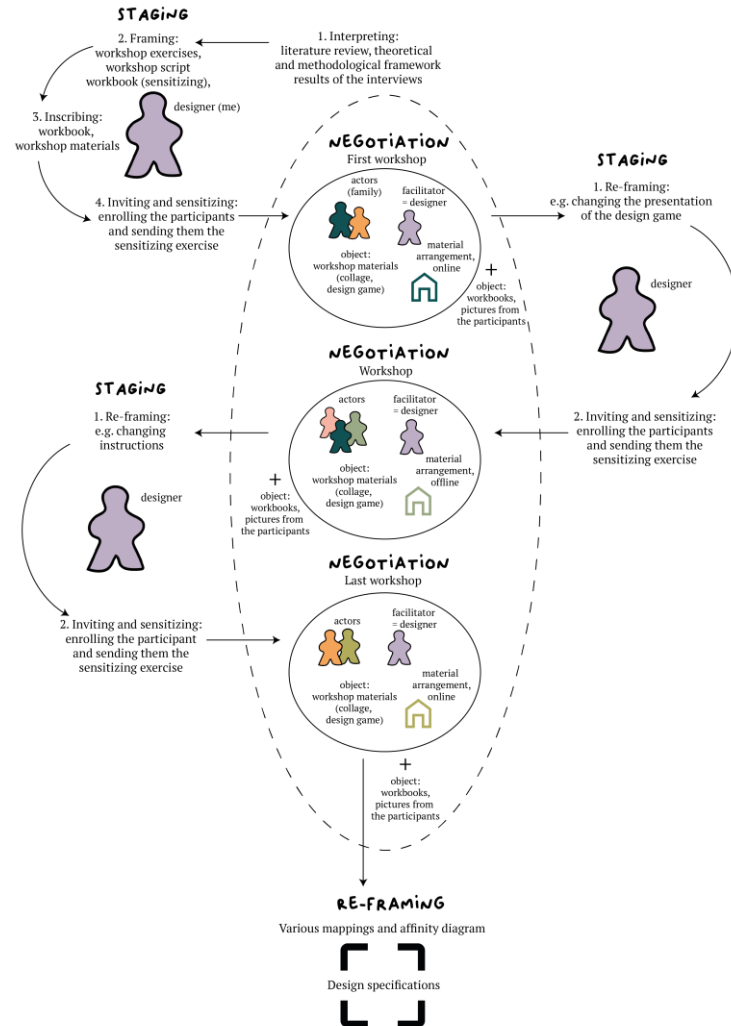
<sup>18</sup> The idea that this re-configuration is needed was an assumption of the designer. In the case of Al and Molly for instance it turned out, that they

## 7.2. Staging negotiation spaces

Figure 53 illustrates how the workshops are built upon earlier parts of the projects (Section 2, Section 3, and Section 6.1) and the results of the interviews (Section 5), as well as how they relate to the next stages of the project, such as analysing (Section 8) and creating the design specifications (Section 9.4) using the adapted version of the Staging negotiation spaces framework (Section 3.3.1).

Like the illustration of the interviews, this picture also has been simplified and show a generalized view of how the framework has been applied. The first staging incorporates interpreting the previous parts of the project, which is followed by framing the design space and problem as well as the sensitizing as part of it. Consequently, the workshop materials and the workbook, functioning as a sensitizing device are constructed in the inscribing phase. Enrolment of actors and sending the sensitizing materials are part of the last step of the staging, invitation. The inscribed objects are circulating among the actors in the negotiation spaces, functioning as intermediary objects. As described earlier, workbooks, while outside of the workshops as a negotiation space are still part of the bigger negotiation process. Each negotiation space is with different actors (families) and with different spaces, both online and physical. Results of the workshops and workbook have been mapped together and contributed to create a concept in the design process (Section 9.5).

are already giving mostly second-hand items, therefore the exercises have been more of a discovery of their current practice.



53. Figure The adapted Staging negotiation spaces used for the workshops (own illustration)

## 7.3. Reflection and limitations

### 7.3.1. Enrolment

While started well in advance, the enrolment for the workshops has been one of the biggest challenges throughout the design process. Enrolment have taken place both online and offline, informing the potential participants that the workshop would take approximately an hour with an additional workbook which would need to be filled out beforehand. Furthermore, they have been asked to bring at least one family member, as the workshops intended to involve families only. While it has been offered to join online, asking for ‘extra’ participants proved to be a big obstacle to come over.

Furthermore, as the designer was only speaking English and Hungarian fluently, these has been the two possible languages to conduct the workshops in, which has been also a challenge, as family members often could not speak English well enough. It was not possible to assess if the timeframe of the workshop was also unappealing to the potential participants.

### 7.3.2. Participants

Because of opportunistic sampling, some of the participants were known by the designer, which might have resulted biases in their responses. Furthermore, knowing or assuming the connection with sustainability, some of their answers might have been modified according to what they believed to be accepted. One of the participants mentioned for instance purposefully not including memories about gifts, which they did not assess as ‘sustainable enough’.

As all the participants have been confident with their level of English (or have been native Hungarian speakers) language barriers have not been considered as a significant limitation. However, it might have been an influential factor in some cases, as for instance the Hungarian workshop, which is also the mother tongue of this author, seemed to be filled with more expressive details, when discussing.

Another reflection is that all participants have been close family members, and they have been also instructed to think about close family members. That was done by making the process easier, however, the involvement of distant family members likely would have resulted in different outcomes.

#### 7.3.3. Online workshops

Despite the best efforts, online workshops have had some limitations compared to physical ones. The communication was sometimes harder, and participants were sometimes difficult to understand, especially when more joined from one screen, sharing the microphone. It also seemed that online participants have been more hesitant to add their own words or post-its, which probably could have been avoided if empty post-its are provided.

#### 7.3.4. Cultural differences

As the designer has been also sensitized in a way, with learning from different cultures, there have been fewer surprises on the workshops as opposed to the interviews. However, further knowledge-sharing about different traditions has taken place.

#### 7.3.5. Time limitations

The workshops have been a combination of discovering concerns and trying to find solutions, which decision was made because of time limitations. In an ideal scenario it could have worked better to separate these two and have two different collaborative workshops.

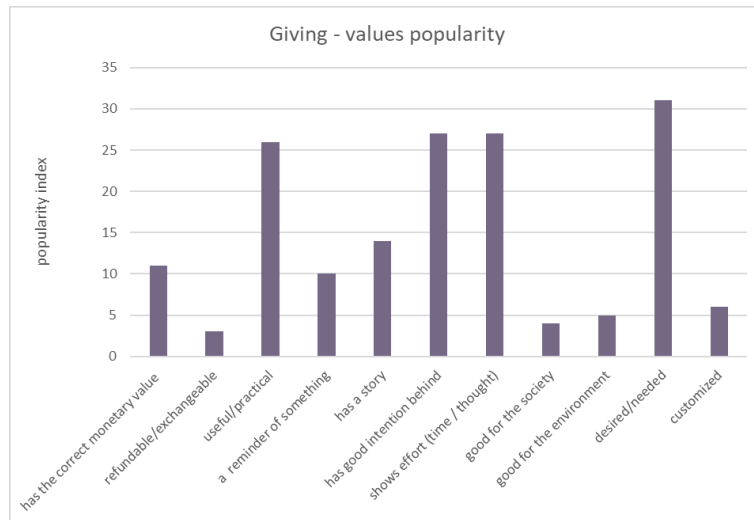
# DELIVER

## 8. Data analyzation

Similarly, to the previous analysis phase, also multiple mappings have been made to visualize the results of the workshops and workbooks, as going to be discussed in the next paragraphs.

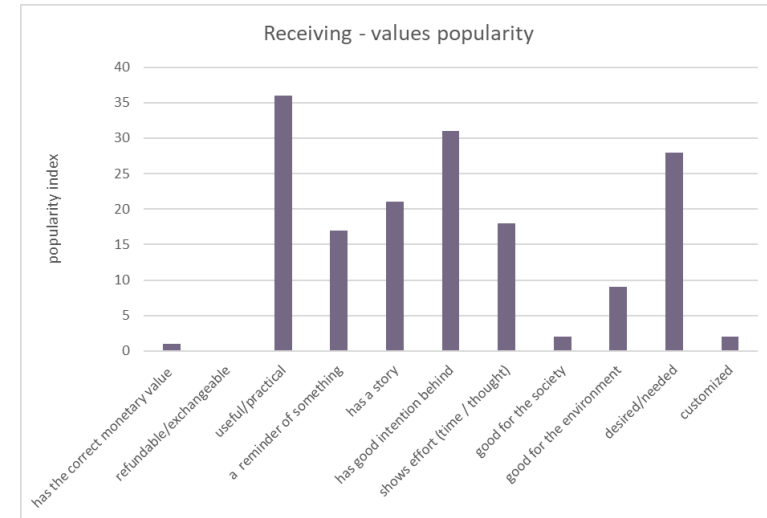
### 8.1. Values

From the value exercise of the workbook (section 7.1.1), values have been organized based on popularity (further described in Appendix 17). Figure 54 shows the most important values on giving.



54. Figure Most popular values on giving (own illustration)

Figure 55 illustrates the most important values when it comes to receiving, resulting a notably different picture.



55. Figure Most popular values on receiving (own illustration)

However, putting the top 3 values next to each other from each mapping (Figure 56), as well as which category they are in, there are a lot of similarities.

	GIVING		RECEIVING	
	VALUE NAME	VALUE CATEGORY	VALUE NAME	VALUE CATEGORY
MOST IMPORTANT	desired/needed	receptive	useful/practical	functional
SECOND MOST IMPORTANT	has good intention behind shows effort (time/thought)	expressive	has good intention behind	expressive
THIRD MOST IMPORTANT	useful/practical	functional	desired/needed	receptive

56. Figure Top 3 values on giving and receiving (own illustration)

Comparing the results to the interviews, one of the most outstanding differences is that while ‘customized’ have been an important value on the interviews, it has received very little attention in the workbooks. Reflecting on that phenomenon, a possible explanation might be an unfortunate choice of word, where probably using ‘personal’ would have been a better fit<sup>19</sup>. ‘Customized’ might implies that a certain gift is getting adjusted to the person, instead of choosing a gift which fits to the person, as it was intended. Another factor which supports that ‘customized’ should have been more popular, is the fact that the other receptive value ‘desired/needed’ was ranked very highly both in giving and

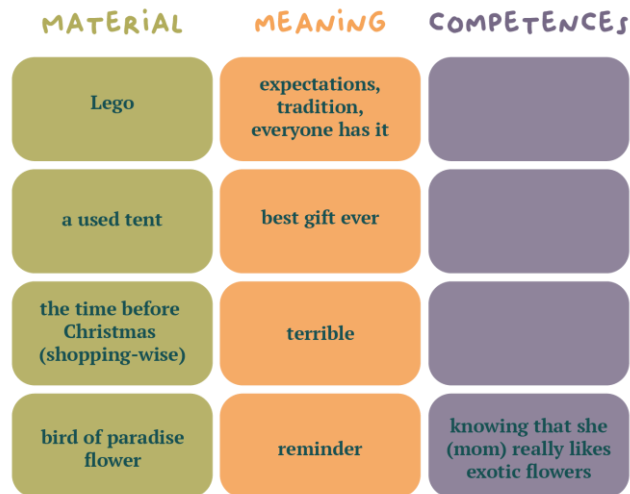
receiving. Furthermore, other mappings (Section 8.2 and Section 8.5) also show the importance of giving something fitted to the recipient.

Further statistics on the values are available in Appendix 17.

## 8.2. Mapping current practices

As an attempt to understand current practices the data from the collage-making exercise have been used for mapping. For that, elements of material have been annotated with the associated meanings from the participants (Appendix 18). If they referred to it, elements of competences were also added. For instance:

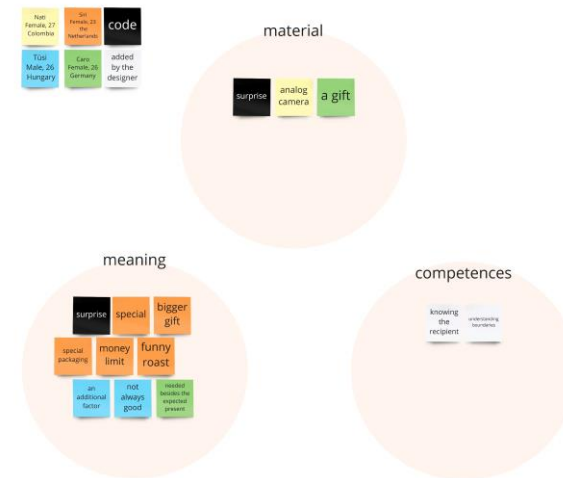
<sup>19</sup> Following this line of thought, the word ‘personal’ or ‘personalized’ is going to be used in later parts of this thesis, instead of ‘customized’.



57. Figure Materials, meanings and competencies associated together (own illustration)

After that, the most returning elements or meanings and materials have been coded, using the words: together, memories/ reminder, surprise, practical/useful, handmade, money, wrapping/packaging, what the recipient wants, sustainable, tradition and safe present. As a result of the coding multiple practices have been illustrated, in a similar way how it was done after the interviews.

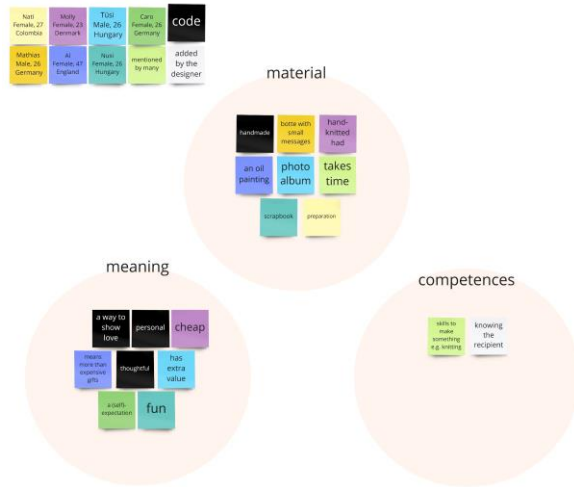
The first mapped practice was about occasion-based gift-exchange but adding the element of surprise. Results of this mapping show that introducing the factor of surprise has been associated with positive meanings, such as special or funny, however also has been seen in negative light, for instance as an additional factor, which does not always turn out good.



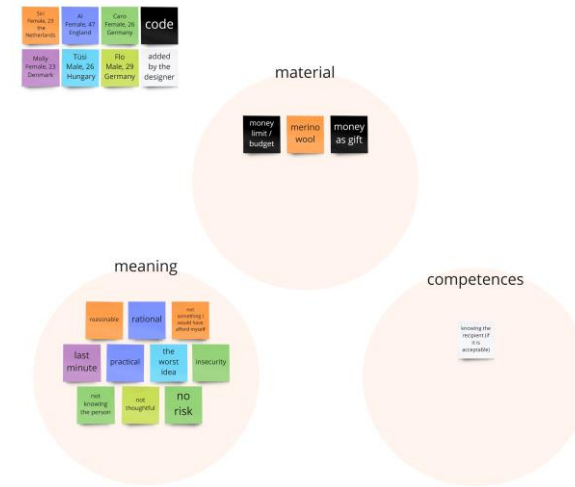
58. Figure The practice of occasion-based gift-exchange (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

The categories of handmade gifts and money also emerged. Compared to results of the interviews, these categories have been further elaborated, but show similar outcomes.



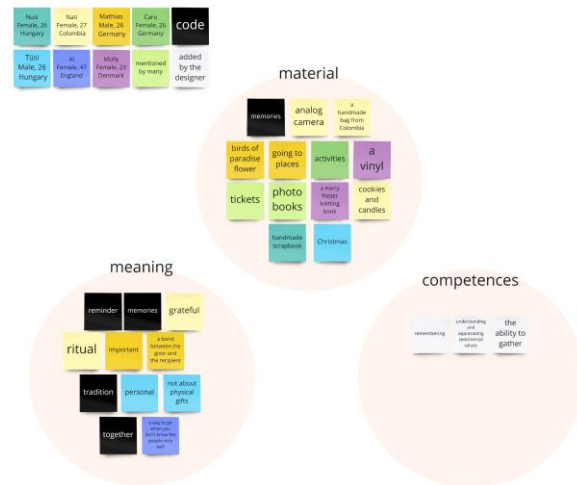


59. Figure The practice of handmade gifts (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))



60. Figure The practice of money as gift (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

Experiences have been mapped together with objects functioning as reminders, identifying an important connection between the two, that Mathias also put into words: *“I think for me, memories is the most important part of a gift because first of all, it's about creating memories through events like concerts and stuff like that. And on the other side, also tracking those memories, having photobooks and. That kind of creates a bond between the recipient and the one giving.”*



61. Figure The practice of experience gifts (own illustration also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

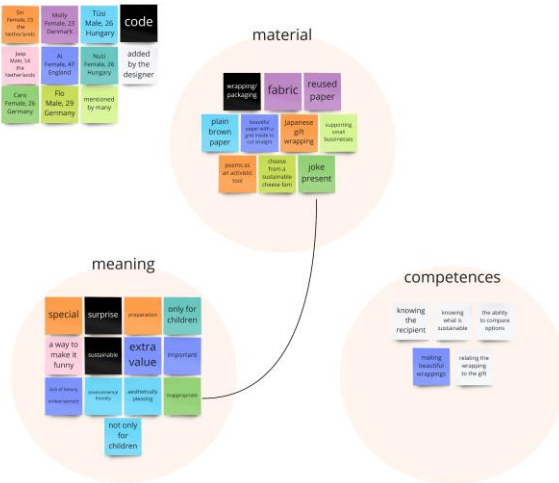
Furthermore, similarly to the interviews, the practice of presenting the gift was mapped as well, with a focus on wrapping. It was prominent, that sustainability was mostly associated with wrapping the gift, and participants shared several ways of how they are trying to make a change with that. Annamarieke and Jaap for instance have been proud to share that they participated last year on a furoshiki gift-wrapping workshop, about which they even shared a photo.



62. Figure Gift wrapped with furoshiki technique (photo by Annamarieke)

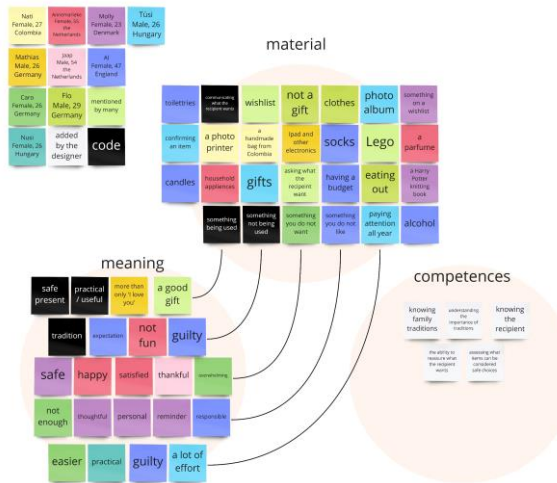
Nusi, another participants described: *“In our family, we are not wrapping the presents I think for 10 years now. [...] we either just put it in a gift bag or we just put it under the tree.”*

However, wrapping the gift for many was still important, referring to it as special, funny, added extra value and part of the preparation. Al shared a story about her sister, for example: *“she just does the most beautiful presents with really [...] everything matches the paper and the card and there are always bows on it. [...] And when they come to visit [...] she spends a whole day at our house, hidden away in the bedroom, wrapping them [the gifts]. And when she comes out, it's like sort of Santa's workshop.”*



63. Figure The practice of presenting the gift (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

Finally, a practice around finding ‘personal guarantees’ emerged, where participants wanted to ensure that the gift is going to be liked by the recipient, by using a wish list, finding ‘safe presents’, or building on family traditions. This mapping resulted a chaotic illustration, which shows the many ways this practice can be carried out and performed by participants.



64. Figure The practice around 'personal guarantees' (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

Unfortunately, there was not enough information from the collage making exercise to map the practice of exchanging second-hand items.

### 8.3. Workbook answers

Some of the workbook answers, which were not discovered in the workshop have been mapped separately, resulting in groupings as seen on Figure 65. While many of the participants are often buying second-hand items for themselves, this number significantly decreases when it comes to giving something second-hand and drops even more when asking about receiving second-hand items.

As about where to buy second-hand, participants named a mixture of offline and online sources.

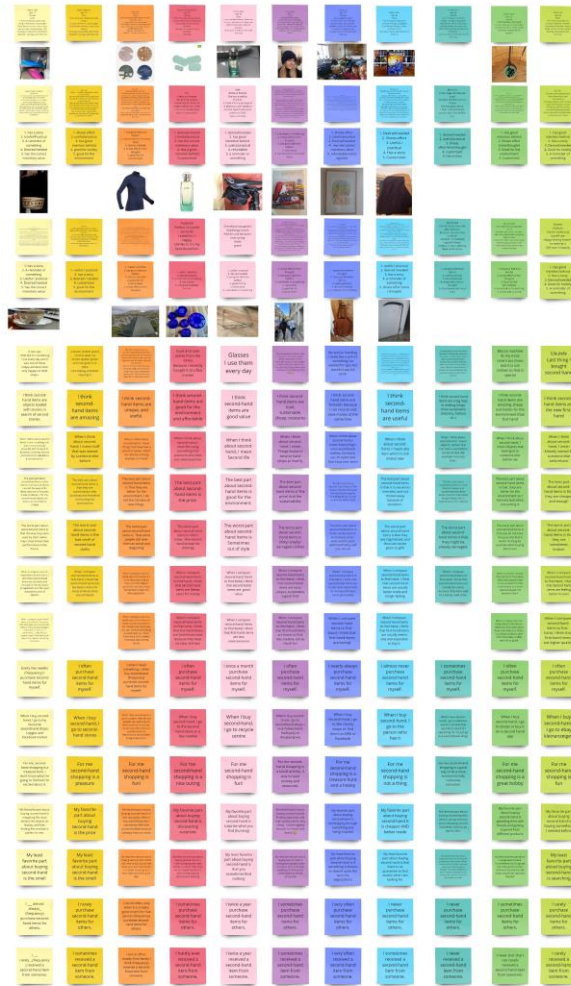


65. Figure Some answers from the workbook (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

## 8.4. Exercise map of the design game

To provide a good overview of the different exercises in the design game, answers about each game have been mapped together (Figure 66). This shows that all Define and Imagine questions have been answered, and only one Group exercise was left out. From the Surprise cards there have been a lot not used in the game, but there were still 6 different pictures discussed.

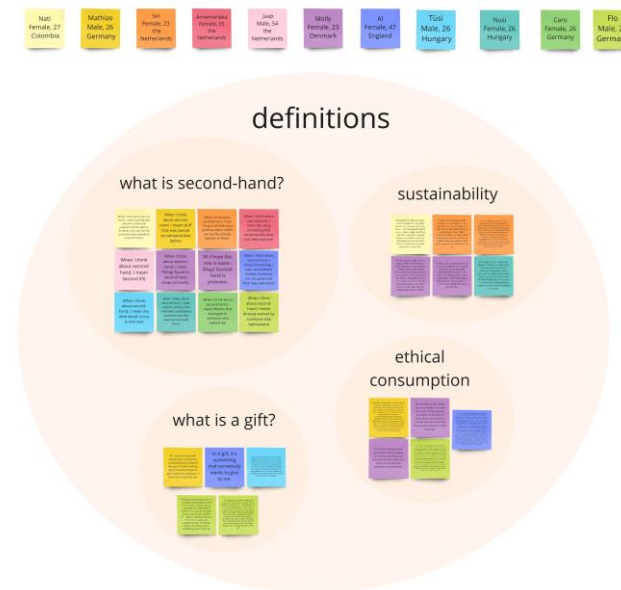
The mapping highlights some similarities in the way of thinking between different workshops and participants, proving gift-exchange to be a culturally shared phenomenon with underlying principles (among those who have been involved in the workshops). An example for that is the case of second-hand underwear, which has been drawn several times and even mentioned by one of the participants out of the Surprise exercise. As a controversial category, practicality and social norms battled in the answers of participants, where Nati is a good example: “Oh my god. Oh, no. Okay. I think it depends on the person [...] I think it also depends on the item. Like a panty, I would be honestly like super rude and ask like what the f\*? But maybe if it is a bra, well I don’t know. Okay, I have second-hand bras from friends.” Answers, including hers, often showed that the evaluation depends on who owned the item previously.



66. Figure Mapping of the exercises from the design game (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

## 8.5. Affinity diagram

An affinity diagram (Section 3.4) has been used to map together answers from the design game and the workbook, resulting four big groups. The first group, definitions, includes statements about second-hand, sustainability, gifts and ethical consumption.



67. Figure Definitions (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

The second group, ‘Why is it good to buy (and give) second-hand?’ (Figure 68) shows a lot of overlap with the earlier introduced research of Machado et al. (2019) (Section 6.1.1), in such as the pleasure of finding good deals *“I think, you know, for me second hand,*



it's a good value for money." [Annamarieke], and unique pieces "The best part about second-hand items is the stories that such an object can tell." [Nati] or engaging in a social activity "My favourite part about buying second-hand is spending time with friends" [Caro]. Considering the important role of shared experiences, and the practice mapped around (Figure 61), building on the fact that second-hand shopping is also seen as a social activity might be promising in consideration for future solutions.

'Hunting' for items was also highlighted "And also there's the surprise of what you buy. What you find." [Jaap]. As incorporating the element of surprise was also an emerging part of current practices, this joyful feeling of finding something unexpected might be translated to an advantage of second-hand items.

The mapping from the workshops also shows concerns for the environment "For me second-hand shopping is a good way to be a more environmentally conscious consumer." [Nusi], and how second-hand pieces come with less guilt "When I buy something new, I sometimes feel a bit uncomfortable because I already have so much." [Siri]. One participant Molly even mentioned how she feels that her consumption decision does not make her feel responsible anymore about how the product has been made: "I guess you kind of deal with that by choosing second-hand [...] you don't have to worry about the workers because it's someone else, who took that decision."

Another participant Caro was telling about a surprise card: "a second-hand camera [...] I use my phone for that so I don't really need it, but then I would feel okay if it is second-hand, I guess at least it is not just produced for me, but for another person". This statement raise

concern about how rebound effect (Korhonen et al., 2018) is present with second-hand items, justifying consumption decisions, or receiving an item, because it is second-hand, even when the participant does not need it.



68. Figure Why is it good to buy (and give) second-hand? (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:

[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

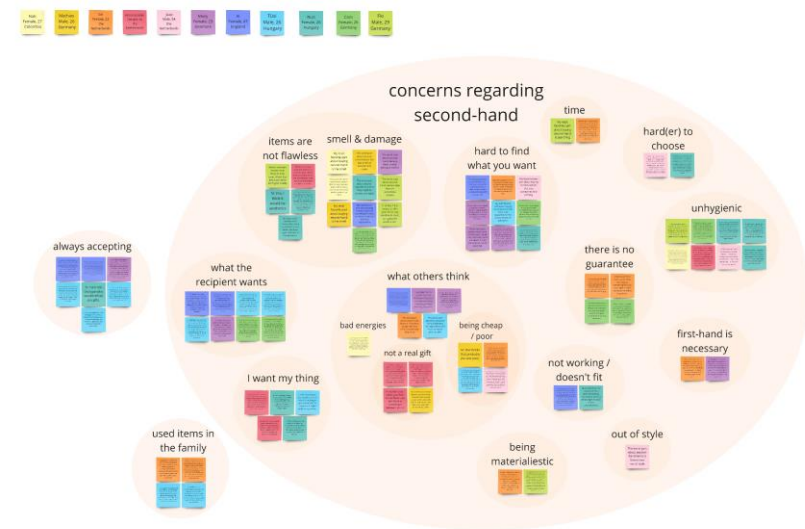
The third group (Figure 69) is mapping various concerns regarding second-hand items. Many of these are targeting the potential bad quality of the product, such as the item is unhygienic, smelly, or damaged "The worst part about second-hand items is the bad smell of

second-hand clothes” [Mathias] or just in general not flawless. Further concerning was the fact that second-hand items in most cases don’t have a guarantee.

Social acceptance also played an important role. As identified earlier in the practice mapping, ensuring that the gift is liked by the recipient is an important segment of the gif-exchange practice, performed in different ways. Participants formulated worries that if they would give second-hand gifts, the recipient would think that they are ‘cheap’ or poor *“the second gift is always seen as the cheapskate option of giving a gift somehow”* [Siri], the gift has bad energies, the recipient would find the gift disgusting *“some people still view them as weird and disgusting”* [Siri] or would not even see it as a gift at all *“He [son] doesn't see a second-hand gift as a gift. He sees this as something that comes naturally when he visits his mom.”* [Annamarieke].

Furthermore, it was discussed that it is more important what the recipient wants, which is leading to not risk a second-hand gift or just simply get the item that the recipient would be happy for: *“I did buy something new this year for my husband, which was tools because that's what he really wanted [...] but I really have to go and compromise my own thought”* [Al].

Another discussion emerged around used items circulating in the family, which was commonly accepted among participants: *“Within family it is easier to accept something used, because you know who used it, and you don’t have all those assumptions.”* [Tüsi] However it was also questionable how much participants see there as real presents.



69. Figure Concerns regarding second-hand items (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOwAjB10=?share_link_id=156483296762))

The last group (Figure 70) mainly contained information from the imagine exercises, creating a map of possible solutions. As a parallel to the concerns regarding quality, ideas have been formulated how to make sure to conserve that *“everyone would take care. Cause it's the, that's the default and everyone wants an enjoyable consumption experience.”* [Mathias] or reconstruct it by repairing the object or making it ‘look like new’ *“sometimes things that are second-hand [...] need a bit of reparation as well, at home. And I mean, I'm happy to do that, but if it's a gift, then maybe that's a bit weird”* [Siri].

Packaging was also part of the solutions: *“you know if you rebuy for instance stuff like used electronics they look completely new just that the*

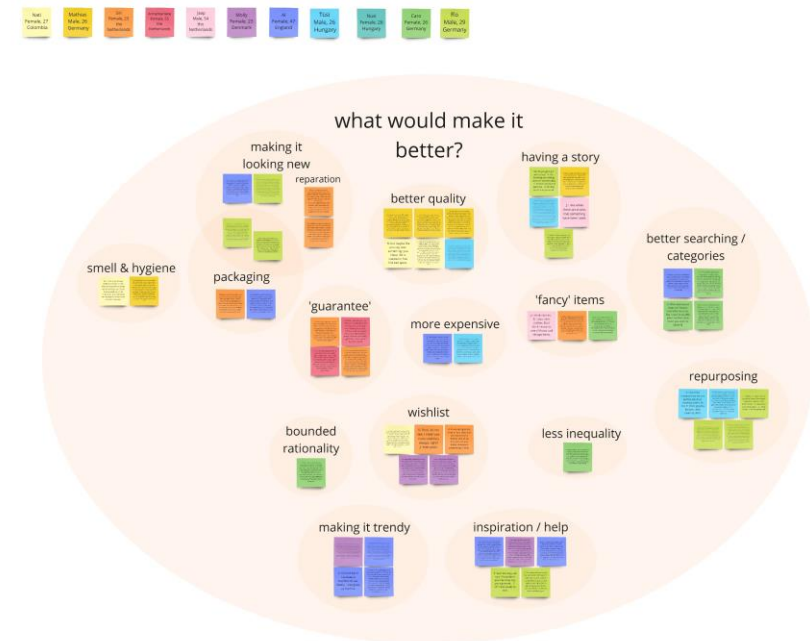


*packaging is not the same thing, it is in a basic cardboard thing and not in the shiny Apple super new packaging and I think 90% of that stuff is just like, you know taking it out of a super nice packaging, you are the first one opening up and you could like redo this whole thing” [Flo].*

It has been also a returning element to provide some sort of guarantee for the giver, that the gift is going to be well accepted, for instance giving just an idea *“you give the idea of kind of, so I want to give you those shoes, but I don't know which size so we can go together and you're going to pick the right size.” [Siri]*, choosing an item from a wish list or something similar *“So I think, a solution would be a clear form of do-s and don't-s.” [Nati]*, (which is in line with the DBA Genbrugsindeks 2021 (2021) (section 6.1.2)) or get inspiration or help for choosing a gift *“It would be really good if it gave you [...] ideas to [...] to presents for that person. So, you could maybe put a profile in child, girl, 10 years, and then it came with ideas” [Al]* Relating that, many seen better searching categories a potential help *“I would like to have a shop [...] with like different hobby sections in a way. [...] I am just thinking of which categories can help people to find a good present” [Caro].*

Finally, vintage or ‘fancy’ second-hand items also seemed to be considered differently, such as the finding showed from the study of Machado et al. (2019) associated with higher value and thereby seeming like more potential gifts. It has been also discussed that by emphasizing the story behind the item or adding an extra sorry, the associated value can increase: *“how could I make a cool and memorable gift out from cheap stuff than I was always thinking about fabricating a story, so that the value could be improved by that. [...] if I can figure out a story to the gift, that explains why this is the best gift*

*for that person than honestly, I can choose anything. [...] And then that gift becomes a symbol of recalling those memories, so that the person is going to remember that story” [Tüsi]*



70. Figure What would make second-hand better? (own illustration - also available in Miro on the following link:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share\\_link\\_id=156483296762](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOWAjB10=/?share_link_id=156483296762))

## 8.6. Reflection and limitations

An important consideration is that correlation of the workbooks and workshops could have been more thoroughly examined, as the designer was only looking for differences when mapping the data.

Furthermore, statements from the workbooks have been used in the design process, which might have been biased, depending on what the participants wanted to communicate in written material.

Another reflection targets the mapping of current practices, which is recognized as incomplete, as some statements from the design game also reflected on current practices in some cases, which due to the separation was not considered.

Another limitation is the fact that participants were not necessarily reflecting, when making the collage, if the items that they are put in are first or second-hand. An example for that is the family of Al and Molly, where the designer only close to the end of the workshop realized that they mostly give second-hand items.

Finally, many of the concerns have been directly or indirectly asked about, based on the results of the interviews, thereby it has to be considered that they might would not appear in the workshops ‘on their own’.

## 9. Conceptualization

### 9.1. Re-framing

The results of the workshops led to identify different categories of objects existing within second-hand: re-gifted<sup>20</sup> (from family and friends), ‘standard’ second-hand items and higher-value second-hand items, such as vintage.

The initial problem-framing before the workshops, as it is reflected in the additional research question, was to discover the concerns around second-hand gifts and items in general, and how these could be targeted with a practice theory perspective to create an alternative to first-hand gifts. This perspective was focusing mainly on the obstacles around second-hand. However, the results of the workshop imply that coming through these is not enough. It seems that second-hand gifts should be superior to first-hand ones in some way, to ‘compete on the market’. Thereby, as part of the solution it is also important to identify what makes a good gift.

#### 9.1.1. What makes a good gift?

Several parts of the empirical research conducted during the period of this thesis has been building on what makes a good gift according to other studies (Section 2.6.3) and had the aim to determine what

---

<sup>20</sup> Re-gifting in literature is commonly used to pass on unused and disliked gifts. However, in this context it means passing on an item, that someone already had and used, which was not necessarily a gift.

is important for the participants involved in this work, resulting discussions on gift values in Section 5.1.1 and Section 8.1.

Summarized, and building mainly upon the work of Farbotko & Head (2013), Larsen & Watson (2001) and Pizzetti & Gibbert (2018) as well as on the empirical findings from interviews and workshops, it is the understanding of this thesis that gifts are becoming ‘good’ in the context, they are given and in the context of their life after the gift-exchange is performed. However, there are factors, which can influence this contextualization and increase the chances of evaluating the gift as ‘good’, such as knowing what is important for the recipient and the giver. Considering the identified importance of expressive and receptive values on both the giver’s and recipient’s side, personalization has been identified as a key step towards giving a good gift. Personalization is defined here as the process of endowing the gift with characteristics, which are reflecting on both the giver and the recipient.

Based on desk and field research 4 ways have been identified to personalize the gift.

### 1. Handmade

Handmade items are the exceptions to start with, since they are uniquely representing the giver, who made the item and if matching to the preferences of the recipient, might be the perfect personal gift. As Vibe, one the interviewees said: *“it’s the purest feeling of, you know, what people put into creating something with you in mind. It’s rather uncomplicated.”*

### 2. An experience together

A possible reason why experiences as gifts are so popular because an experience creates a personal shared value for both parties involved. However, not only an experience gift can facilitate that, but also how an object is given can be a memorable experience. In these cases, the gift might function as a reminder of that shared time together.

### 3. Story

This is leading to the third point, having a story behind the gift. This ‘story’ can come from various places, it can be a shared memory, a translation of why the giver was associating the gift with the recipient, or an object with a previous life as examples.

### 4. Wrapping

Finally, wrapping is also an important way to personalize the gift and making it different from other objects. As Farbotko & Head (2013, p5) describes: “mass-produced commodities may be successfully transformed into personalized gifts and embody a valued relation between giver and receiver” by wrapping them. On the same note a (handmade) card might also function this way.

## 9.2. Brainstorming

After re-framing the problem, a short divergent phase has taken place in the project with brainstorming on different solution ideas. Brainstorming is a popular tool in creative thinking, which is building “on the assumption that quantity leads to quality”. (Boeijen et al., 2014, p117) During the brainstorming ideas are not criticised, as the goal is to unlock creativity, and translating the results to ‘real’ solutions can happen afterwards.

In this project the Imagine exercise of the design game could be seen as a 'pre-brainstorming' and inspired the designer to incorporate ideas, when starting this phase.

With the addition of an extra second-hand category: upcycling/recycling to include aspects of handmade, initially different solution categories emerged, including making the consumption experience better both online (apps, websites, platforms) and offline (how to improve shops), organizing workshops, making 'kits', creating a game or a 'second-hand map' and thinking about shared systems.

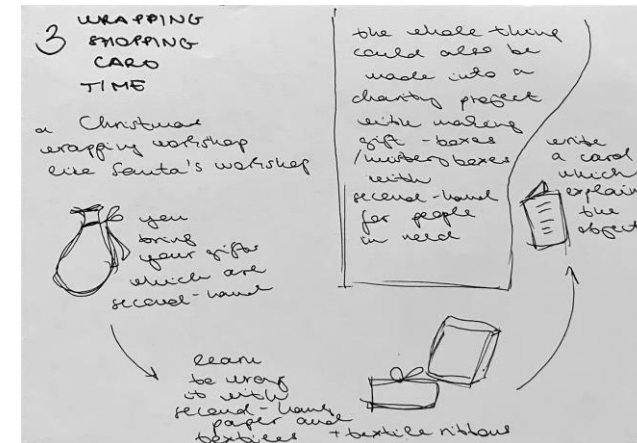


71. Figure Brainstorming page from notebook (own photo)

Withing the game idea, different designs were created (Appendix 19), considering for instance a 'treasure hunt' game, where the participants should find the best gift, a game which would have different stages from ideating to giving as well as other modified versions of the design game used at the workshops.

For creating further ideas an additional exercise has been used, where first, keywords<sup>21</sup> have been collected around the topic. After that 3-4 words have been drawn and inspired by that, a quick idea was created in a couple of minutes, with focusing on second-hand. This exercise was resulting 12 small ideas, from which Figure 72 illustrates Idea 3. The rest of the ideas are available in Appendix 20.

Idea 3 had the keywords: wrapping, shopping, card, and time. This inspired to think about a wrapping workshop, where the previously bought second-hand present could be wrapped in also second-hand materials, like re-used paper and textiles. The workshop could also include creating a card, where the giver 'explains' the recipient why they have chosen the gift. An additional idea of turning this to a charity project emerged, where the second-hand items could be forwarded to people in need.



72. Figure An example of the ideation with keywords (own photo)

### 9.3. Settling with a direction

As the brainstorming was leading to various directions, as the next step, the designer returned to the second research questions.

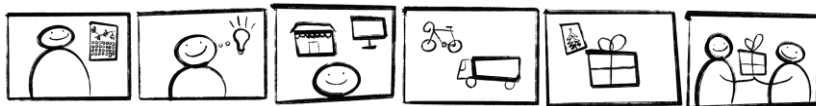
**How can second-hand gifts become an alternative to first-hand gifts, and by that contribute to a sustainable development in gift consumption?**

First, some categories have been excluded. Re-gifting was not considered for the final solution, as it was not the primary focus of this thesis and was too little data available about it. The category of

<sup>21</sup> The 20 chosen words have been: together, creative, repair, workshop, game, card, story, knowledge, shopping, sharing, family, holiday, wrapping, handmade, money, time, thought, safe, prejudices and acceptance.

upcycling/recycling was also not considered; hence it was not an element of the empirical research and was outside of the scope. Furthermore, this category was hard to relate to first-hand items, which are purchased as ready to use.

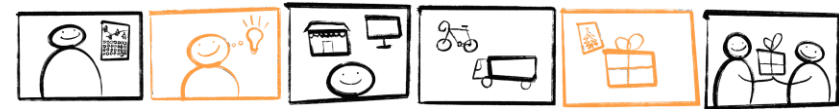
To identify where the design intervention should be located, a simple storyboard of gifting a second-hand item has been created as Figure 73 shows. The first slide illustrates that the holiday season is coming up, therefore the giver needs a gift for the recipient. The second slide shows the thinking process, which is ending with finding an idea what to give. The third step is getting the gift, either online or offline, whereas the fourth is to transport the gift, either by the giver or got it delivered. The fifth slide is preparing the gift for giving. The last step is performing the act of giving or exchanging the gift.



73. Figure Storyboard of gifting (own illustration)

A possible intervention has been considered from step 2 to step 5, since the last step, giving the item and how it is accepted is outside of the influence of the designer. From the remaining four possibilities transportation was excluded first, as it has not been in the scope of this work. Getting the gift, which was the target of many ideas from both the workshops and the brainstorming was finally also rejected, since these ideas were not (necessarily) contributing to answering the research question and thereby the addressed problem.

Thereby, the solution space was narrowed on thinking about the gift, which has been identified as the key entry point, as well as personalizing the gift, which can take place as part of the thinking process, as well as just right before giving the gift.



74. Figure The solution space highlighted (own illustration)

Considering the ideas emerging from brainstorming in this narrowed focus, it has been decided that the concept is going to be a game.

As mentioned, the ideation covered different game ideas, where a main dilemma has been if the game should facilitate the players' real characters or if it should be a roleplaying version. The main argument for the latter was, that it would make the game to be more competitive and funnier (by for instance evaluating different gift ideas in the end, which could give a final score) without hurting the feelings of the players or becoming too personal. However, allowing the players to reflect on themselves and representing themselves in the game serves more the purpose of this thesis, and was chosen therefore in the end.

This was leading to return to the design game<sup>22</sup> of the workshops, which was already designed with this mindset, and focus on developing it to become the concept of this thesis. This decision was further strengthened because the design game played on the workshops received a lot of positive feedback and was functioning well to negotiate between the actors.

#### 9.4. Design specifications

As a next step in the process, a list of requirements has been created, often referred to as design specifications. Design specifications is a method primarily used in product design for various purposes. It is a tool for initial problem framing, a way of organizing knowledge, as well as a method to evaluate the design. The requirements are a concise, structured way of determining what objectives the design should meet, using categories of demands (must have), criteria (measurable objectives) and wishes (nice to have). (Boeijen et al., 2014)

Design specifications had the purpose in this project to structure the findings of the empirical research and find the objectives which can frame the game. Therefore, two goals have been formulated as a starting point. First, the game should facilitate discussions among the participants about second-hand gift-exchange. Second, these discussions should result an understanding that the participants can take with themselves to the real world.

As opposed to traditional product design, where requirements are specific, in this implementation the objectives remained rather broad, focusing on what the game must facilitate, but not on how. Furthermore, the list was used in an iterative way, but only the final version is presented here. Therefore, the list contains only objectives, which the concept is aiming to fulfil, and for that reason no categories have been included. Furthermore, different objectives are also not sourced as they are connected to multiple findings.

---

<sup>22</sup> Before settling with a concept, normally the ideas are more elaborated as in this thesis. This further elaboration did not happen in this case, because the concept ideas have been very different and were excluded relatively

early based on the reasoning explained. Furthermore, the collaborative design framework provided a strong foundation and direction for settling with the development of the design game used in the workshop.



TOPIC	NO.	DESCRIPTION
SCOPE	1	Focus on second-hand gifts
	2	Focus on families
	3	Focus on the holiday season (Christmas, Sinterklaas etc.)
IDENTIFYING A GOOD GIFT	4	Enable the players to reflect on their values regarding gifts
	5	Enable the players to communicate about their values
	6	Enable the players to discuss how effort (time, thought, money) is assessed
	7	Enable the players to discuss what makes a gift personal
	8	Enable the players to think about the importance of presenting the gift
THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO GIVE	9	Enable the giver to assess what a safe gift might be in the context of second-hand
	10	Enable the giver to think about how mental effort could be saved
	11	Enable the giver to think about how time could be saved
	12	Enable the giver to think about how money is related to second-hand items
SECOND-HAND	13	Enable the players to discuss the qualities of second-hand items (including the ones already identified)
	14	Enable the players to discuss concerns around second-hand items in general, and second-hand gifts in particular (including the ones already identified)
	15	Enable the players to formulate conditions regarding categories of second-hand items as gifts

75. Figure Design specifications (own illustration)

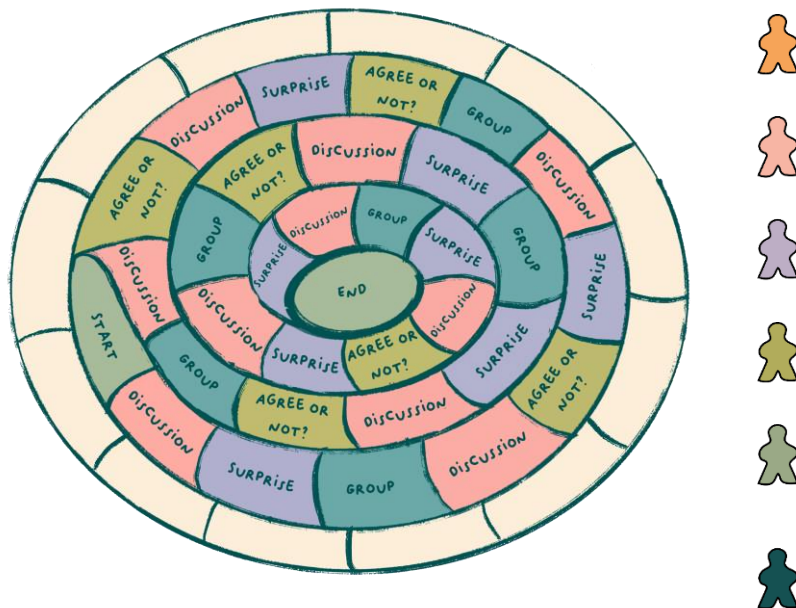
## 9.5. Concept

### 9.5.1. Changes to the design game

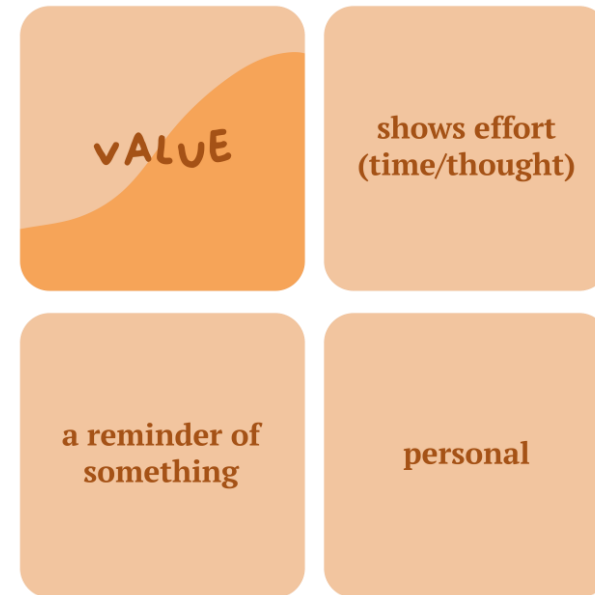
For developing the design game used on the workshop into ‘a real game’ first the game exercises have been considered. The ‘Imagine’ exercise was discarded because it was focusing on a fictional future, thereby was considered not useful for the players. The exercise of ‘Define’ was merged to a new card type, ‘Discussion’ cards. The other two exercises have been kept and slightly changed. The gameboard has been extended to accommodate more players and provide a longer playtime.

### 9.5.2. What is in the ‘new’ game?

The proposed solution is a boardgame, containing a game board, 6 avatars, 1 bigger avatar, 4 decks of cards, a dice, a removable marker, and the rules. The game would also have a starting exercise for which 6 sets of value cards would be provided.



76. Figure Board game and avatars (own illustration)



77. Figure Value card examples (own illustration)

The rest of the cards are available in Appendix 21.

### 9.5.3. Starting exercise

The starting exercise would be implemented from the workbook (Section 7.1.1). Each player would receive 11 value cards, changing only the value 'customized' to 'personal', from which they would be instructed to choose and rank 5. As a next step they would share these lists with each other and would be encouraged to discuss what they mean under the expressions and why they ended up with that result.

#### 9.5.4. Game rules

The game would follow a set of basic rules.

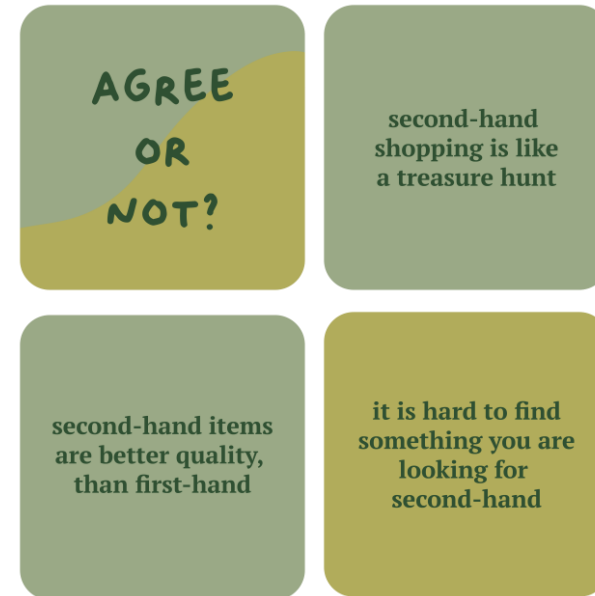
### GAME RULES

- 1** First the players are using the removable marker to put names on the beige fields of the game board. Each beige area should contain one name of a close family member. The players can also include themselves, resulting more interesting discussions.
- 2** The players put the big avatar on one of the beige fields randomly. Following that the game can start.
- 3** Each player starts on the START field.
- 4** Players are taking rounds. Who starts is up to common agreement.
- 5** Each player at the beginning of their round rolls the dice and takes the number of steps rolled.
- 6** Depending on the field the player arrives, the player is required to take a related exercise card and follow the exercise. There are four different types of fields and cards; 'Agree or not?', 'Discussion', 'Group' and 'Surprise'.
- 7** The game ends when the first player gets to the End. Although, players can agree to continue the game until all except one gets to the End, leaving less and less players.

78. Figure Game rules (own illustration)

#### 9.5.5. Agree or not?

Agree or not? cards are the simplest card type, the player simple has to agree or disagree with the statement of the card and argue why.



79. Figure Agree or not? card examples (own illustration)

The rest of the cards are available in Appendix 22.

#### 9.5.6. Discussion cards

The Discussion cards present various ideas and proposes questions to think about. Players are encouraged to discuss the content of the card, where the player whose turn it is, fulfils the role of the facilitator and responsible to include everyone in the conversation.



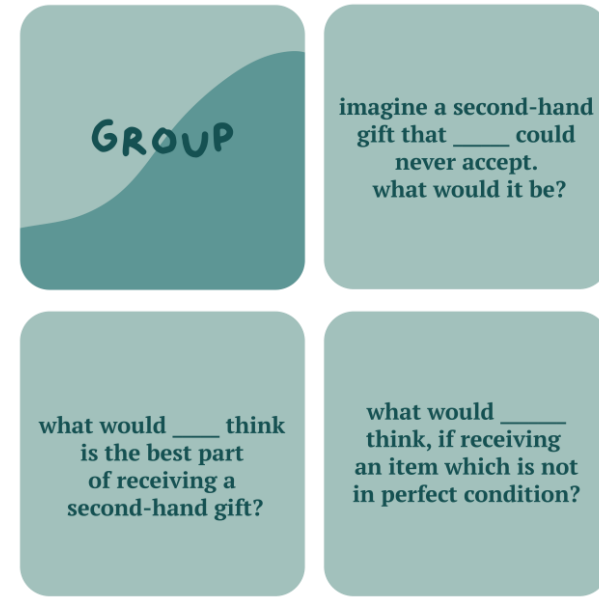
80. Figure Discussion card examples (own illustration)

The rest of the cards are available in Appendix 23.

#### 9.5.7. Group cards

The Group exercises have some special rules. Before taking a card, the player needs to roll the dice again, and move the big avatar on the beige fields following the number the dice shows.

After that the player must take a Group card, where the empty space in the question must be substituted with the name the big avatar stands on. All the players need to discuss the answer. If that name belongs to one of the players, that player should allow the others to discuss before stating their standpoint.



81. Figure Group card examples (own illustration)

The rest of the cards are available in Appendix 24.

#### 9.5.8. Surprise cards

The Surprise cards are pictures about second-hand objects that the player would 'receive'. The player has to explain under what conditions would that item be acceptable for them, if any.



82. Figure Surprise card examples (own illustration)

The rest of the cards are available in Appendix 25.

#### 9.5.9. What is after the game?

The game could be played before the winter holidays as a way to settle an agreement between family members. Therefore, they would be encouraged to spend some time after to game and discuss if they would like to celebrate in a different way, or if they see something implementable from the game. To support that a 'holiday planner' could be added to the game in the future.

#### 9.5.10. How is the game aiming to create a change?

The game is aiming to create a safe space for the players, where they can have a discussion on second-hand gifts and share their knowledge and experiences, which might inspire them for a change. This is done by having various exercises accommodating strategies to change practices. Several exercises are focusing on 'reconfiguring' practices, by introducing second-hand as an element of materials and challenge the meanings related to it. Other exercises are adding sustainable as a new meaning to the reconfiguration. When playing the game multiple times this can lead to a change strategy of 'repetition and recruitment', where players might consider different answers (as imaginative performances) and create new links in their thinking. When adapting something from the game to the real world 'adaptation, improvisation and experimentation' might take place, resulting in a different performance of the practice (Section 3.1.6).

Furthermore, the game would like to help the players in giving 'better-liked' gifts, by learning about what is important to each other and what makes a good gift.

## 10. Conclusion

### 10.1. Answering the initial research question

This thesis was focusing on the initial research question:

#### **How can practices of sustainable gift-exchange be explored in a collaborative design framework?**

and attempted to find the answer by two rounds of empirical research, including 10 semi-structured interviews and 5 generative design workshops<sup>23</sup>. The interviews and the workshops applied and adapted the Staging negotiation framework (Pedersen, 2020) and several collaborative design methods, and used a practice theory framework. Literature on the topics of consumption, gifts and second-hand have been reviewed and applied to the research as well.

The applied methods have been suitable for activating in-depth knowledge of the participants and allowed them to formulate values and meanings related to their gift-exchange practices.

Using sensitizing devices allowed the participants to get familiar with the topic and express themselves better and easier when participating (based on comparisons from the interviews), thereby providing a better understanding of their current practice and the links among the elements.

---

<sup>23</sup> While the workshops have been primarily focusing on second-hand items, they are seen as equally relevant in finding the answer for the research question.

Scenarios provided a successful framing, where participants felt encouraged to share more personal memories from their life, reflecting on different aspects of the scenarios, which also proved to be useful when mapping current practices. Furthermore, links to unfamiliar elements have been explored as well.

Design games, as part of the generative toolkit used on the workshops facilitated the expressions of matters of concern, and the exploration of elements of materials, meanings, and competences. The exercises, especially ‘Imagine’, contributed to identify the links between the elements and how they have been interrupted when introducing new elements.

The collage making elements, proved to be useful as well when mapping current practices, as the pictures and words created a shared understanding between the participants.

The adapted version of the Staging negotiation spaces framework provided a good ground of exploring practices and was working effectively for empirical research where the same empirical tools (interviews, workshops) have been used repeatedly with different actors.

#### 10.1.1. Findings

Several current ‘sub’-practices have been mapped within the practice of gift-exchange, which have been introduced in Section 5.2 and Section 8.2. Elements of materials (sustainable gift categories)



and meanings (sustainable, ethical) have been introduced to research how they relate to existing practices and the connections among its' elements. When doing so, in some cases disturbance and resistance occurred, however, many participants were open to reflect on their performances of gift-exchange practices as well.

These findings have been added as matters of concern (Latour, 2004) and were part of the Affinity mappings (Section 5.1 and Section 8.5). Furthermore, the concerns discovered based on the interviews, relating to second-hand items have been incorporated when designing the generative design workshops. Findings from both the interviews and the workshops were important means to design the final concept.

Finally, it has been discovered that many meanings and some of the materials and competences are shared across the mapped practices, and in different 'communities of practice' (for example different families), resulting in the understanding that there are some fundamental elements which are shared in our culture and determine the practice of gift-exchange and what makes a good gift.

#### 10.1.2. Limitations

A limitation of practice theory itself, that practices as entities cannot be reached or observed, only performances. Thereby the mapped practice is always incomplete and the reflection of one or many performances.

As a further limitation of the topic, no real performance has been observed in this thesis. This decision was made because of multiple reasons, including time limitations, limitations of the network and

limitations of occasions, where the practice could have been observed.

As no real-life performance was included, the reconfiguration of elements remained imaginative in this thesis. As, in the knowledge of this author, there is no comparative research exists on the success of changing practices facilitated in real-life or imaginative, further research on the topic could result in validating credibility.

Furthermore, the other two strategies of changing practices: 'repetition and recruitment' and 'adaptation, improvisation and experimentation' was not possible to implement to the empirical research, as both would have required to either facilitate the (imaginative) performance multiple times or observe practices carried out as performances in the real world.

Finally, a limitation is identified regarding the targeted way of implementing sustainability in gift-exchange practices, as the primary focus has been on the type of gift, and not for instance on the limitation of gifts.

#### 10.2. Answering the additional research question

In the second part of this thesis the additional research question was introduced:

**How can second-hand gifts become an alternative to first-hand gifts, and by that contribute to a sustainable development in gift consumption?**

Building upon the first empirical research, the question was attempted to find an answer for in the generative design workshops, as well as in the final concept.

The question implies a reconfiguration of the gift element from first-hand to second-hand in the gift-exchange practice, which reconfiguration was made as described under the previous research question.

The workbook as a sensitizing device was aiming to make the participants to reflect on how they relate to second-hand items as gifts, by building upon memories. These workbooks provided a baseline for understanding the qualities of second-hand items associated by the participants.

The collage making exercise was contributing to discover current practices. The design game was allowing participants to formulate concerns regarding second-hand items, as well as to compare their qualities to the qualities of first-hand items. Furthermore, questions and icons facilitated envisioning a different future, where second-hand items could become an alternative for more people as well as the ways leading there.

The final concept is aiming to facilitate a safe space for players, within qualities of first- and second-hand items, especially the latter, can be further discussed and discovered, and matters of concerns can be talked about and possibly solutions can be found.

### 10.2.1. Findings

Regarding qualities, positive and negative ones as well as solution ideas have been mapped in the Affinity diagram (Section 8.5).

Furthermore, a general understanding was gained on what makes a good gift, as a result of literature and empirical research, where key values and meanings have been identified. The thesis concludes that second-hand gifts need to become superior in some way to first-hand gifts, to be seen as an alternative. This change in the practice might take place over time, by breaking old links and creating new ones to the introduced 'unfamiliar' elements, where the concept is aiming to contribute with supporting the qualities of second-hand, include leading questions about what makes a good gift and provide a space for discussions and self-expression. Thereby, it can contribute the shared decisions about alternative performances of the shared practice (for instance introducing new Christmas traditions). In line with that, a sustainable development in consumption might be reached, by more families choosing second-hand gifts and are equipped to give 'better' gifts to each other.

### 10.2.2. Limitations

An important limitation regarding the research question, that the exchange of first-hand gifts was not directly addressed, therefore more data could have led to different results. Furthermore, a similar reflection could be made as after the first research question, on how no real performances of the practice have been observed, and thereby the introduced change strategies remained imaginative.

Among limitations of the game social desirability bias is seen as an important one since family members might want to perform to each other to feel accepted. Furthermore, a concern might be if the game could enter the market, as it cannot be replayed many times with the same people, without possibly losing its entertaining value. As for now, it is seen that the game would require further development, which could include other sustainable gift categories, different card decks, different targeted occasions as well as target groups. However, it could also be available open-source and thereby being non-profitable.

There are some important limitations of second-hand gifts as well, among which one is the consideration of rebound effect (Korhonen et al., 2018), when buying second-hand. An example for that could be for instance buying way more, because second-hand items are cheaper and purchasing them can be more justified for some. Results from the workshops prove this concern to be relevant, as described earlier. Another consideration is the importance of ensuring that the level of society, which is in most need of having access to cheap (second-hand) items, will not become excluded, by second-hand becoming more popular.

## 10.3. Reflection on the process

### 10.3.1. Collaboration

The project was carried out without a collaboration partner, which has been the result of multiple factors. First, attempts to find a collaborator early in the project proved to be challenging, as the contacted companies and initiatives did not show interest. Second, the project scope was very wide at the beginning which resulted

difficulties when searching for collaborators. Third, as the first empirical research phase was started relative early and was resulting a lot of data, eventually a collaboration seemed to be limiting in the project and was considered as an option possibility leading to a very different direction than it was taken. However, it is acknowledged that a collaboration could have resulted advantages in the project.

### 10.3.2. Project work

This project was carried out alone, which had both positive and negative impacts. Many decisions have been easier to make, while creative processes and staging proved to be more challenging. However, working alone proved to be a great possibility for knowledge development, project management and strengthening a professional identity.

## 10.4. The contribution of the project to Sustainable Design Engineering

The thesis was contributing to a narrow segment of sustainable consumption, gifts, by exploring various practices around gift-exchange.

Alternative gift categories, with a lesser environmental impact have been part of the strategy of reconfiguring practices, by adding these as elements of materials (with related meanings).

In the second part of the design process the scope has been narrowed on second-hand gifts, leading to the final concept, which is targeting gift personalization and thinking about gifts. While in this project the design intervention seemed the most ideal on these two steps,

further research could target two other stages in the gift-exchange process, getting and transporting the gift, which areas are also supported by findings of this thesis.



83. Figure Possible areas for future research (own illustration)

By adapting collaborative design and practice theory to the topic of gifts, a gap has been filled in the literature, as no similar research was found. Furthermore, very few studies have been identified in the topic of sustainable gift-exchange or sustainable gift-consumption, thereby it is also an addition to that research area.

This thesis might serve as a case study for future research on other socio-culturally embedded problems, where the combination of practice theory and collaborative design has been applied in various ways, and methods have been adapted to the case specifically.

Especially, the adaptation of the Staging negotiation spaces framework (Pedersen, 2020) is seen valuable to apply to similar empirical research strategies as described before, where interviews or workshops sharing the same intermediary objects, are carried out several times. Finally, the combination of the framework and generative design research tools and techniques, proved to be an effective combination for collaborative design, and thereby seen as applicable for other research taking a participatory-focused perspective.

## 11. References

- Accenture. (2019). *Most US Shoppers Expect to Spend as Much or More This Holiday Season than Last Year, with Many Turning to Physical Stores for Inspiration, Accenture Survey Reveals*. Accenture. <https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/most-us-shoppers-expect-to-spend-as-much-or-more-this-holiday-season-than-last-year-with-many-turning-to-physical-stores-for-inspiration-accenture-survey-reveals.htm>
- Aitken, R., Watkins, L., & Kemp, S. (2019). Envisioning a sustainable consumption future. *Young Consumers*, 20(4), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-12-2018-0905>
- Bedard, P. (2018). *Humbug: \$13 billion wasted on unwanted Christmas gifts, only 5 percent want one*. Washington Examiner. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/humbug-13-billion-wasted-on-unwanted-christmas-gifts-only-5-want-one#targetText=According to a new survey,the receivers won't like>
- Belk, R. W. (1996). The Perfect Gift. In *Gift giving: a research anthology* (pp. 59–84). Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Boeijen, A. van, Daalhuizen, J., Schoor, R. van der, & Zijlstra, J. (2014). *Delft Design Guide: Design Strategies and Methods*. BIS Publishers.
- Branco-Illodo, I., & Heath, T. (2020). The ‘perfect gift’ and the ‘best gift ever’: An integrative framework for truly special gifts. *Journal of Business Research*, 120, 418–424. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.012>
- Bryant, R. L. (2010). Peering into the Abyss: Environment, Research and Absurdity in the ‘Age of Stupid.’ In *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology, Second Edition*.
- Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. *Sociological Review*, 32(S1), 196–233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1984.tb00113.x>
- Camerer, C. (1988). Gifts as Economic Signals and Social Symbols. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(1988), S180–S214. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228946>
- Cox, A. (2019). *What is the environmental footprint of Christmas?* OECD Environment Focus. <https://oecd-environment-focus.blog/2019/12/24/what-is-the-environmental-footprint-of-christmas/>
- DBA Genbrugsindeks 2021. (2021). DBA. <https://guide.dba.dk/publikationer/genbrugsindekset/2021/>
- Design Council UK. (2019). *What is the framework for innovation? Design Council’s evolved Double Diamond*. <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/what-framework-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond>
- Díaz, L., Reunanen, M., & Salmi, A. (2009). *Role-playing and collaborative scenario design development*. 79–86.

- Drew, C. (2019). *The Double Diamond, 15 years on....* <https://medium.com/design-council/the-double-diamond-15-years-on-8c7bc594610e>
- Earth overshoot day. (n.d.). *About Earth overshoot day*. Earth Overshoot Day. Retrieved May 27, 2022, from <https://www.overshootday.org/about-earth-overshoot-day/>
- Earth Overshoot Day. (2021). *Past Earth Overshoot Days*. <https://www.overshootday.org/newsroom/past-earth-overshoot-days/>
- Eriksen, T. H. (2007). Trust and reciprocity in transnational flows. In *Holding Worlds Together: Ethnographies of Knowing and Belonging* (pp. 1–17). Berghahn Books.
- Farai, M. (2018). *Conscious Christmas Gift Guide: a giving hierarchy*. Ethical and Eco Living. <https://www.mfarai.com/conscious-christmas-gift-guide/>
- Farbotko, C., & Head, L. (2013). Gifts, sustainable consumption and giving up green anxieties at Christmas. *Geoforum*, 50, 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.08.004>
- Galak, J., Givi, J., & Williams, E. F. (2016). Why Certain Gifts Are Great to Give but Not to Get: A Framework for Understanding Errors in Gift Giving. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 25(6), 380–385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721416656937>
- Givi, J., Galak, J., & Olivola, C. Y. (2021). The thought that counts is the one we ignore: How givers overestimate the importance of relative gift value. *Journal of Business Research*, 123(October 2020), 502–515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.009>
- Google. (n.d.). *Material Symbols*. Google Fonts. Retrieved May 27, 2022, from <https://fonts.google.com/icons>
- Gram-Hanssen, K. (2021). Conceptualising ethical consumption within theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 21(3), 432–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14695405211013956>
- Green, T., Tinson, J., & Peloza, J. (2016). Giving the Gift of Goodness: An Exploration of Socially Responsible Gift-Giving. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 134(1), 29–44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2076-0>
- Hards, S. (2011). Social practice and the evolution of personal environmental values. *Environmental Values*, 20(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.3197/096327111X12922350165996>
- Hiller, A., & Woodall, T. (2019). Everything Flows: A Pragmatist Perspective of Trade-Offs and Value in Ethical Consumption. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 157(4), 893–912. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3956-5>
- Holtzblatt, K., Wendell, J. B., & Wood, S. (2005). Building an Affinity Diagram. In *Rapid Contextual Design: A How-to Guide to Key Techniques for User-Centered Design* (pp. 159–179). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012354051-5/50009-4>
- Imagine description*. (n.d.). Board Game Geek. Retrieved May 28, 2022, from <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/191894/imagine>



- Imaginiff description*. (n.d.). Board Game Geek. Retrieved May 28, 2022, from <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2750/imaginiff>
- Interaction Design Foundation. (n.d.). *Wicked Problems*. Retrieved May 19, 2022, from <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/wicked-problems>
- Jaeger-Erben, M., & Offenberger, U. (2014). A practice theory approach to sustainable consumption. *Gaia*, 23, 166–174. <https://doi.org/10.14512/gaia.23.S1.4>
- Jensen, C. L., & Friis, F. (2019). Experimenting with resource-intensive practices and related energy consumption levels. *Eceee Summer Study Proceedings, 2019-June*, 47–54.
- Köhler, J., Geels, F. W., Kern, F., Markard, J., Onsongo, E., Wieczorek, A., Alkemade, F., Avelino, F., Bergek, A., Boons, F., Fünfschilling, L., Hess, D., Holtz, G., Hyysalo, S., Jenkins, K., Kivimaa, P., Martiskainen, M., McMeekin, A., Mühlemeier, M. S., ... Wells, P. (2019). An agenda for sustainability transitions research: State of the art and future directions. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 31, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2019.01.004>
- Korhonen, J., Honkasalo, A., & Seppälä, J. (2018). Circular Economy: The Concept and its Limitations. *Ecological Economics*, 143, 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2017.06.041>
- Kovács, I., & Valkó, G. (2013). Sustainable consumption – consumers’ reactions to CSR activities in Hungary. *Regional Statistics*, 3(1), 141–154. <https://doi.org/10.15196/rs03108>
- Kuijer, L. (2014). *Implications of Social Practice Theory for Sustainable Design* (Issue February 2014). [www.studiolab.ide.tudelft.nl/kuijer%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/266247132%0Ahttp://repository.tudelft.nl/view/ir/uuid:d1662dc5-9706-4bb5-933b-75704c72ba30/](http://www.studiolab.ide.tudelft.nl/kuijer%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/266247132%0Ahttp://repository.tudelft.nl/view/ir/uuid:d1662dc5-9706-4bb5-933b-75704c72ba30/)
- Lam, B. (2014). *What Can Be Done About the Inefficiencies of Giving Gifts?* The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/what-can-be-done-about-the-inefficiencies-of-giving-gifts/384041/>
- Larsen, D., & Watson, J. J. (2001). A Guide Map to the Terrain of Gift Value. *Psychology and Marketing*, 18(8), 889–906. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.1034>
- Latour, B. (2004). Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. *Critical Inquiry*, 30(2), 225–248. <https://doi.org/10.1086/421123>
- Lorenzen, J. A. (2018). Social Network Challenges to Reducing Consumption: The Problem of Gift Giving. *Symbolic Interaction*, 41(2), 247–266. <https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.312>
- Machado, M. A. D., Almeida, S. O. de, Bollick, L. C., & Bragagnolo, G. (2019). Second-hand fashion market: consumer role in circular economy. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(3), 382–395. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-07-2018-0099>
- Mauss, M. (1925). *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Presses Universitaires de France. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610201007657>

- Mohr, L. A., Webb, D. J., & Harris, K. E. (2001). Do consumers expect companies to be socially responsible? The impact of corporate social responsibility on buying behavior. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35(1), 45–72.
- Ong, S. (2021). *The countries where gift giving is better for the planet*. BBC Future. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211208-how-to-make-diy-gifts-that-children-will-love>
- Osteen, M. (2002). Gift or commodity? In *The Question of the Gift: Essays across disciplines* (pp. 229–247.). Routledge.
- Papaoikonomou, E., Cascon-Pereira, R., & Ryan, G. (2016). Constructing and communicating an ethical consumer identity: A Social Identity Approach. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16(1), 209–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514521080>
- Pedersen, S. (2020). Staging negotiation spaces: A co-design framework. *Design Studies*, 68, 58–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2020.02.002>
- Pedersen, S., Clausen, C., & Jørgensen, M. S. (2022). *Navigating value networks to co-create sustainable business models : An actionable staging approach*. April, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3127>
- Pinterest. (2022). *Workshop pictures*. Pinterest. <https://hu.pinterest.com/ekomlssy/workshop-pictures/>
- Pizzetti, M., & Gibbert, M. (2018). The value of gift personalization: current insights from the gift recipient’s perspective and future research directions. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 35(5), 512–521. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-04-2017-2186>
- Reckwitz, A. (2004). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*, 5(2), 245–263. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203335697-23>
- Reser, J. P., & Bentrupperbäumer, J. M. (2005). What and where are environmental values? Assessing the impacts of current diversity of use of “environmental” and “World Heritage” values. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(2), 125–146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2005.03.002>
- Roberts, J. A. (1996). Will the real socially responsible consumer please step forward? *Business Horizons*, 39(1), 79–83. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813\(96\)90087-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813(96)90087-7)
- Robinson, J., Burch, S., Talwar, S., O’Shea, M., & Walsh, M. (2011). Envisioning sustainability: Recent progress in the use of participatory backcasting approaches for sustainability research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 78(5), 756–768. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2010.12.006>
- Sanders, E. (2018). *Generative Design Method Cards*.
- Sanders, E. B. N., & Dandavate, U. (1999). Design for Experiencing: New tools. *First International Conference on Design and Emotion*, January, 1–5.
- Sanders, E., & Stappers, P. J. (2013). *Convivial toolbox: Generative research for the front end of design* (4th printing). BIS Publishers.
- Scenario pictures. (2022). Pinterest. <https://hu.pinterest.com/ekomlssy/scenario-pictures/>

- Schatzki, T. R. (1996). *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527470>
- Shove, E., & Pantzar, M. (2005). Consumers, producers and practices: Understanding the invention and reinvention of Nordic walking. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5(1), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540505049846>
- Shove, E., Pantzar, M., & Watson, M. (2012). *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and how it Changes*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Steffel, M., & Le Boeuf, R. A. (2014). Overindividuation in gift giving: Shopping for multiple recipients leads givers to choose unique but less preferred gifts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(6), 1167–1180. <https://doi.org/10.1086/674199>
- Surprise cards. (2022). Pinterest. <https://hu.pinterest.com/ekomlssy/surprise-cards/>
- Sweeney, E. (2021). *How Holiday Gift Waste Impacts the Environment*. Discover Magazine. <https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/how-holiday-gift-waste-impacts-the-environment>
- ThredUp. (2021). *Thrift For The Holidays Report*.
- United Nations. (n.d.). *Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*. Retrieved May 21, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>
- United Nations. (2015). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In *General Assembly*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718093-12341375>
- Vaajakallio, K., & Mattelmäki, T. (2007). *Collaborative design exploration: Envisioning future practices with make tools*. August, 223. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1314161.1314182>
- Vaajakallio, K., & Mattelmäki, T. (2014). Design games in codesign: As a tool, a mindset and a structure. *CoDesign*, 10(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.881886>
- Vinck, D. (2011). Taking intermediary objects and equipping work into account in the study of engineering practices. *Engineering Studies*, 3(1), 25–44.
- Vinck, D., & Jeantet, A. (1994). Mediating and commissioning objects in the sociotechnical process of product design: a conceptual approach. *Management and New Technology: Design, Networks and Strategies. Proceedings from COST A3 Workshop, August*, 111–129.
- Warde, A. (2005). Consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5(2), 131–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540505053090>
- Warde, A. (2014). After taste: Culture, consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 14(3), 279–303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514547828>
- Welch, D. (2017). Behaviour change and theories of practice: Contributions, limitations and developments. *Social Business*,

7(3), 241–261.  
<https://doi.org/10.1362/204440817x15108539431488>

World Commission on Environment, & Development. (1987).  
Brundtland Report: Our Common Future. In *Oxford: University  
Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07488008808408783>

Young, A. (2021). *Millions of Brits will buy second-hand gifts this  
Christmas - to be more eco-friendly*. Mirror.  
[https://mirror.co.uk.trem.media/money/shopping-deals/brits-  
buy-second-hand-presents-25592565](https://mirror.co.uk.trem.media/money/shopping-deals/brits-buy-second-hand-presents-25592565)

Zorn, T. (n.d.). *Designing and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews  
for Research* (p. 11). Waikato Management School.