

Design for society

A qualitative research on the Social Design practice in the Netherlands



Master Thesis

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Abstract

In Western societies there is a growing awareness that the current social-economic system is unsustainable and cannot provide us with solutions on the pressing problems of our time. These problems are social, economic and ecological by nature. The Western social and economic systems have to be redesigned. A New Economy is rising based on principles of sharing, connectivity, proportionality and localism. New business models are being developed in which there is room for multiple value creation. In recent years the design sector has been paying more attention to societal themes and issues. This has resulted in a *Social Design* movement. Specifically the design sector can play a role in changing the Western consumer orientated societies, as everything that has been touched by humans is designed. The argument of this research is based on a necessity for societal change and the role that designers can play in this. The research is aimed at finding answer to the question: *Why are designers involved in social projects?* Through qualitative research this research aims to gain understanding in the involvement of designers in social orientated projects. Within this research Social Design is seen as a result as well as a leading force in the search for an alternative socio-economic reality. Social Design is a design attitude, mentality or position that is applied in the design practice through methods that are social both in their means and in their ends. This research concludes that as a result of their intrinsic motivation to contribute to a better world these designers are able to balance social, economic and ecological values in Social Design practice. The Social Design practice is challenging but the opportunities that the New Economy provides will contribute to the further development of the design movement and its potential.

Keywords: social design, new economy, designers, creative industries, society, environment, sustainability, values

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

Western societies are facing complex issues that are economic, social or ecological by nature. The recent economic crisis resulted in an increase in social inequality, large scale unemployment and a loss of faith in the banking system. Our common perception of growth, well-being and labour has to be reconsidered. Additionally societies face welfare disease such as obesity or burnouts, global climate change, waste, are confronted with wars and have to find solutions for the enormous group of refugees fleeing towards Europe. Unfortunately this list can easily be extended. These problems are too complex, urgent and large to find solutions in (European) politics. Besides that, in our interconnected world it is not always clear who should counteract these problems. There is demand for a creative, sustainable and interdisciplinary approach of these issues. These problems reflect on all of us and the way Western societies respond to this will make a significant impact on the future development of humanity. In order to start fixing these problems Western social and economic systems have to be redesigned. And indeed, individuals and communities are responding and change is occurring. As a result of the technological revolution and the growing social, humanitarian awareness, that has been growing since after the recent economic crisis, individuals and communities are enabled and motivated to take initiative themselves. This shows that solving societal problems is no longer only the business of international NGO's or governments (Laken, 2015). A growing group of individuals are more aware of their consuming patterns and contribute to the debate of changing the social-economic system into a more sustainable form (Avelino, 2014). Millions of individuals all around the world are experimenting with new forms of ownership, production systems and the use of available resources in innovative business models (Hawken, 2007). In these new business models there is room for multiple forms of value creation. This implies that economic value is subordinate to societal and ecological values. These movements are referred to as the sharing-, collaborative or circular-economy. Or overall, the New Economy, based on the principles of sharing, connectivity, proportionality and localism (Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013). Combined, all these developments can result in a paradigm shift: a change in our basis assumptions and worldview (Kuhn, 1962). This New Economy is being accompanied by a growing group of supporters nevertheless this is by far a majority. For a large scale societal transition to take place all individuals should take their responsibility. Nevertheless it is very difficult to change the

behaviour of individuals. Societies can use support in redesigning these systems and solving societal problems.

In recent years the design sector has been paying more attention to societal themes and issues. This has resulted in a *Social Design* movement. Designers have shown to be increasingly interested in the contribution of design in bringing societal change and improvement (Tromp, 2013). Specifically the design sector can play a role in changing the Western consumer orientated societies. Everything that has been touched by humans is designed. All our daily object, public spaces, houses and processes surrounding us were at one point in time designed. This is why the role of designer and their decision making process is crucial in shaping our world. Besides shaping our world, designers also have to take responsibility. Design in the current mass production and consumption model can be seen as one of the most influential disciplines. The current design product and processes are supporting an unsustainable lifestyle. The environmental impact of the current design discipline can be reduced if designers change focus from mass production towards locally produced sustainable products, processes and services. This research will focus on designers dealing with challenging and changing societal, ecological and economic conditions. The argument of this research is based on a necessity for societal change and the role that designers can play in this. The research is aimed at finding answers to the question:

Why are designers involved in social projects?

Within this research Social Design is seen as a result as well as a leading force in the search for an alternative socio-economic reality. Social Design is a design attitude, mentality or position that is applied in the design practice through methods that are social both in their means and in their ends. The broad definition of the concept makes that in reality people are applying Social Design without ever having heard of the term. Nevertheless naming it Social Design is relevant as it makes the associated activities more visible and therefore part of discussion and debate in both the design industry as in society (Van der Zwaag, 2014).

This research takes place from a cultural economic perspective. This implies that specific attention will be paid to the design sector as part of the creative industry and the related governmental policy. Additionally attention will be paid at the organisational form of the social design practice regarding the used business models. This implies gaining an insight in which spheres, the Market, Governmental or Social sphere, these designers are active (Klamer, 2012).

1.2 Relevance

Scholars argue that there is a need for scholar attention for a historical understanding as well as a critical reflection on the rise of social and sustainable design (Fallan, 2014). This way the possibilities of the social design practice providing societal contribution can be explored and ensured for the future. This is important exactly because Social Design can be broadly defined. The danger is, that like the term sustainability, the term Social Design might lose its power through misuse of the word. Further, establishing a deeper understanding of the potential of designers in social projects is important for the following parties. First of all, designers can learn from the insight of this research. The term designers refers to both established social designers and aspiring social designers, as the current Social Design practice and its successes and failures will be discussed. Secondly governmental parties and policy makers can benefit from this research. In recent years the economic impact of the design industry, as part of the creative industries, has been frequently argued for by the government. But in the light of the aforementioned societal challenges it seems more relevant to establish an understanding of the sectors' social potential. This insight can be used to develop policies that support the phenomenon. Additionally other parties, such as potential crossover partners from other domains have the same interests. Finally, individuals or even societies at large can benefit from this research whereas a better understanding of the Social Design phenomenon will eventually contribute to its capabilities of solving societal problems.

1.3 Research structure

This research is constructed in five sections. After this introduction the *theoretical framework* of this research will be developed in two chapters. The first chapter will discuss the rise and characteristics of the New Economy, which is seen as a result of the flaws in the current economic and consumption model. The second chapter will describe the evolution of the design industry, as part of the Creative Industries, towards a more socially orientated practice. The next chapter provides insights on the *methods* used to conduct this research. Chapter five presents the *results* of the data analysis. Finally in the *conclusion* the discoveries of the main findings of both the theoretical part of this research as the empirical part will be used to answer the research question.

2. New Economy

To be able to understand why designers are involved in social projects it is necessary to get insight in the social-economic reality of these individuals. Therefore this first chapter demonstrates that there is a new economy on the rise. First the likeliness of a shift in paradigm taking place is discussed. Secondly an explanation follows of the features of the mass-producing economy, the recent economic crisis and how this crisis can be perceived as an opportunity to realize change. Thirdly, the modern production and consumption model will be portrayed through a description of the current situation in the fashion industry. After which our perception of growth, labour and human wellbeing will be discussed. Fourth, the concept of value is introduced. And finally, the pillars of the new economy are discussed: sharing, connectivity, proportionality and localism. The conclusion of this chapter will present the new economy as the boosting force behind the rising Social Design practice.

2.1 Paradigm shift

“The present convergence of crises -in money, energy, education, health, water, soil, climate, politics, the environment, and more - is a birth crisis, expelling us from the old world into a new.” (C. Eisenstein, 2012)

Kuhn (1962) describes a paradigm shift as a change in our basic assumptions and worldview. The recent economic crisis has been a ‘game-changing’ macro development, which caused tensions and triggered debates on the unsustainability of our current economic system (Avelino, 2014). A paradigm shift can ultimately only be determined retrospectively. Nevertheless, currently there is an increasingly louder call for change as a result of uneasiness about the socio-economic situation that affects all areas of society. Within this research *Social Design* is seen as a result of, as well as a leading force in the search for alternative socio-economic practices. This is why it is relevant to gain a deeper understanding of the rising new economy and its main aspects.

2.2 Mass production, crisis and opportunity

After World War II the sun of a new age started to rise in western societies, the age of mass consumerism: a new and liberating ideology in a late modern society which was dominated by mass media and mass ideology that lured people into consumerism (Carbonaro, 2012).¹ Since

¹ Early-modernity was characterized by a rational, well-organized and stable system based on solid absolute values such as religion or powerful political leader (Carbonaro, 2012). Late modern society is here referred to as

1945 politics and policies were dominated by the paradigm of economic growth. The economy was expected to grow at an endless exponential rate (Schneider, Kallis and Martinez-Alier, 2010). The consumer good market borrowed its vocabulary from military language: targeting customers, intercepting people's wishes and wants, conquering market shares, launching advertisement campaigns and penetrating consumer hearts and minds. Within half a century the mass consumption model was expanded globally (Carbonaro, 2012).

From 2008 onwards a wave of global financial disruption shocked the economic system. This resulted in an economic crisis, provoked by a small group of people who possessed the financial power and were sharing this based on financial speculation and negative social and ecological balances. Societies had to deal with financial cuts in order to re-balance the system. These financial cuts resulted in, first of all, increase of poverty and societal inequality and secondly, a growing group of protesters against the system (Doorman, 2012). Countless protests movements questioned the current ideology of capitalism and evoked a wave of different interpretation of the economic, political and social system. The Occupy Wall Street Movement is one of the better known protest movements because of its international reach (Van Gelder, 2011). Meanwhile, some economists persisted that the answer to the crisis would be (governmental) financial interference or support to be able to return to the previous unsustainable pace of economic growth (VINNOVA, 2009). To this day, there is globally a growing awareness about the unlikeliness of the mass-production and growth orientated economy to provide answers to the economic, social and environmental crises. Both the private and public sector are challenged in dealing with the problems that these crises bring (Schneider et al., 2010; OECD, 2011).

Whereas the economic and social crisis might affect numerous individuals, the environmental problems that the world is facing are a collective problem (Schneider et al., 2010). Optimists see a crisis as an opportunity, which can be turned into a blessing as it enforces change and transition in our economic and societal system. The Oxford English Dictionary (<http://www.oed.com/>) gives, amongst others, the following definition for the term crisis: "A vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything; a turning-point; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent" (OED, 2015). A fundamental change is based on a period of crisis that forces mankind to adapt. Schneider et al (2010) emphasize the necessity of economic and societal change. "The present economic

western societies during the Modernism period from the late 19th century until the first half of the 20th century (Eystainsson, 1992).

crisis opens up a social opportunity to ask fundamental questions. Managed well, this may be the best, possibly last and only chance to change the economy and lifestyles in a path that will not take societies over climate, biodiversity or social cliffs” (Schneider et al., 2010, p. 511).

2.3 Production and Consumption model

2.3.1 The fashion industry

The problematic state of the economy and specifically the production- and consumption-models will now be illustrated by elaborating on the situation in the fashion industry. The state of the art in the fashion industry is an exemplification of the problems in a wide range of industries, such as the market for food, technological devices or other consumer oriented industries. In the past decade the fashion industry has been increasingly criticized because of the low quality, fast and cheap fashion production that is taking place under distant and exploiting working conditions (Siegle, 2008). By using marketing and promotional campaigns brands build up relationships and communities with their end-consumers. The actual producers of the products pose a stark contrast against this ‘glamorous’ life. Typically anonymous and overseas, they are being exploited in terms of labour quality, wages and human rights. This has led to bad- and in some circumstances even inhumane working conditions. The major and dominant fashion brands take advantages of the lack of regulation and other jobs in developing countries. This way these companies can maintain their competitive advantage by keeping the production cost low. Thus, directly or indirectly, these companies are responsible for the conditions of their overseas employees, which are being exploited to be able to keep up with the high pace of the fast-fashion production chain. Within and beyond the fashion industry it is being recognized that this type of business is economically, socially and environmentally harmful and unsustainable (Crewe, 2013; Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Dirty business practices are applied in the fashion industry, which resulted in long production footprints and short consumer lifetime. The increase of cheap and fast fashion stimulates needless consumption, which caused an enormous increase in waste volumes. However, with the awareness of the unsustainability of this business model some parts of the fashion production chains are becoming more transparent. And with the increased insight in the - mostly invisible - fashion production chain, the call for a more sustainable and social fashion practice is growing louder (Crewe, 2013). Projects such as Who Made My Clothes by Fashion Revolution or Detox by Greenpeace are raising awareness for the broken links in the fashion supply chain and call for consumers’ responsibility and involvement

(FashionRevolution, 2015; Greenpeace, 2015). To really change the industry consumers, producers and designers have to take their responsibility and initiate change.²

2.3.2 Consumer behaviour, third industrial revolution and creative destruction

Slowly consumers are changing their patterns but this is only a small percentage of the population. Many consumers are holding on to the mentality of 'wanting more for cheaper' and do not want hear about their goods being made in China, Bangladesh or Brazil, in sweatshops or by child labour, or by using up our scarce resources. Cheap products enables people to more or less maintain their standard of living while dealing with declining income as a result of the crisis. This is a pattern within Western societies or societal groups that are still dominated by persuasive power of mass media. The demand for more and cheaper offerings keeps the mass production industrialized system in place. By buying these products consumers contribute to decreasing quality while driving up the invisible cost for safety protections, larger ecological footprints and inhumanity for the workers (Carbonaro, 2012; Frieden & Rogowski, 2014). This kind of consumerism resilience will persist until price deflation will hit the bottom, empowered people lose their positions and a system of consumption austerity will be enforced: a third industrial revolution (Rifkin, 2011; Hawken, 1999). This revolution can introduce a democratic, market-based system of production and distribution in which different forms of capital (human, financial and natural capital) are recognized (Hawken, 1999). Additionally Rifkin (2011) argues that in this fundamental economic shift energy regimes, on which societies are more and more depending, and communication technologies will play a crucial role.

Within the prospect of a third industrial revolution it is relevant to keep in mind that the realization of better consumption patterns and different forms of assigning value will be accompanied by the process of *creative destruction*. In his "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" (1942) the Austrian American economist Schumpeter introduces a process of *creative destruction* as an essential fact of capitalism. The still frequently used and relevant concept is defined as a "process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one" (Schumpeter, 1942, p.83). The recent crisis, as discussed before, was the first disruptive sign of the unsustainability of the current dominant economic system. But unavoidably a more

² As part of the empirical part of this research a case study on the fashion brand Granny's Finest has been conducted which deals with the economic, social and ecologic challenges in the fashion industry. An introduction of the case can be found in chapter 3.3

social and sustainable reality will come with high cost and consequences. With the replacement of industrialized clothing factories by local factories, high quality products will inevitably come at the expenses of jobs in developing countries. This is closely linked to our perception of growth, labour and wellbeing, which will be discussed in the following section. The capabilities of dealing with these changes and the resilience of humankind will determine whether or not a successful outcome is being realized. Yet, in the long-run there is no alternative than re-designing our world and economy.

2.3.3 Growth, labour and wellbeing

The recent crisis revealed the limits of our economic system and exposed our obsession with growth, referred to as “growth fetishism” by Hamilton (2009). The claim is that due to the pursuit of growth we put tremendous pressure on the environment, democracy and on societal values. Therefore the future of economic growth is uncertain. Ever since the mid-1700s several steps of (industrial) revolution have resulted in 250-years of, almost continuous, growth. But the continuous long-term growth that society got used to is being challenged by, amongst others, the following areas of society: demography, inequality, labour, energy and environment, globalization and consumers’ or governmental debts (Gordon, 2012). As a result of this pursuit of economic growth during the past decades a transition took place from a production to a consumption society. From a sociological point of view Hamilton (2009) argues that whereas first consumption was a way to fulfil material needs, in the past decade, it became a method to create a personal identity. Advertisements play a crucial role in this. Key ingredient for economic success is the creativity of the marketing department, which makes consumers believe they need and want to consume products and services. This has resulted in the fact that most of the consumption currently taking place in Western countries seems redundant. Awareness campaigns about the impact of people’s individual consumer behaviour and decisions have shown to have limited effect because consumer patterns are deeply integrated in people’s sense of personal identity (Hamilton, 2009).

As a result of consumerism and growth oriented economy it seems as if western societies have sacrificed the pleasantness of labour. We want too much and work too hard. By far, modern Western societies are the richest civilizations that have ever existed but we are remote from being ‘satisfied’ or having ‘enough’ (Sedláček, 2011). Work is such a big part of our lives that there is more and more awareness that there is a need for satisfaction and purpose in our jobs. The term ‘bullshit jobs’ was introduced by American anthropology professor David Graeber which refers to jobs of which even the job-holders state they are

unnecessary and redundant. This challenges the moral dynamics of our economy whereas it seems that pointless jobs are numerous. A shocking amount of people would admit that their job is meaningless; their job does not contribute to the world or should not even exist (Graeber, 2013).

As a response to this, the generation called Millennial's, the generation born in the last two decades of the 20th century, is increasingly more motivated by purpose than by pay check (Mayhew, 2014). This illustrates a changing perspective on what individuals perceive as important for their wellbeing, and therefore happiness. Seligman (2002), founder of positive psychology, differentiates between three approaches to wellbeing. First the pleasant life, in which one is motivated by *hedonism* – the desire to maximise the number of emotional and physical 'highs', and symbolises modern consumer capitalism. Secondly the good life, devoted to fulfilling one's potential and capabilities through purposeful engagement, high-quality relationships and personal growth. In the good life the pursuit of the good can be self-focused (musicians, athletes) whereas the third approach to life – the meaningful life – implies commitment to something greater than oneself such as social improvement or realizing transcendental values. In the last two approaches to life Seligman (2002) refers to the Greek term *Eudemonism*, which stands for human flourishing (Seligman, 2002). Not only the youngest generation of employees entering the labour market have shown to be interested in making use of their full human potential but throughout Western societies more and more people approach growth, labour and wellbeing differently. According to Hamilton (2009) societies are making more use of sources of wellbeing such as social relationship, job satisfaction and a sense of purpose or meaning. The awareness to the fact that economic growth is not by definition part of a modern day democratic society is growing. But if our common goal is not economic growth, then what are we striving for?

2.4 Values

Currently our perception of growth is being re-evaluated as it only seems to be measurable in financial or economic terms and numbers. Living in a time dominated by economic and market logic, counter reactions emerge which take position against currently widespread unsustainable economic growth. New-economy theorists propose social and ecological indicators besides economic based measures such as GDP. According to Schneider et al. (2010) there is a need to “support an extension of human relations instead of market relations, demand a deepening of democracy, defend ecosystems, and propose a more equal distribution of wealth” (Schneider, et al., 2010, p. 2).

Classical economists determine the value of a good based on its monetary value that is realized on the transaction market. This valuation is based on the moment that the transaction takes place, where supply and demand meet. The monetary value is what Klamer (Forthcoming) describes as the temporary instrumental valuation. Whereas monetary value serves as an instrument it does not give information about the customer’s valuation. Beyond this temporary valuation it could be questioned why a good is purchased and what it serves for? Goods, cultural goods in specific, carry “meaning over and above this usefulness” (Klamer, 2011, p. 1). Klamer introduced the value-based approach drawing on the principle that (cultural) goods realize more value than monetary value (Klamer, 2011). The value-based approach aims at understanding the aspired valorisation on which transactions are based. Klamer divides these values in four categories illustrated in table 1.

Table 1 – Value Framework (Klamer, 2012)

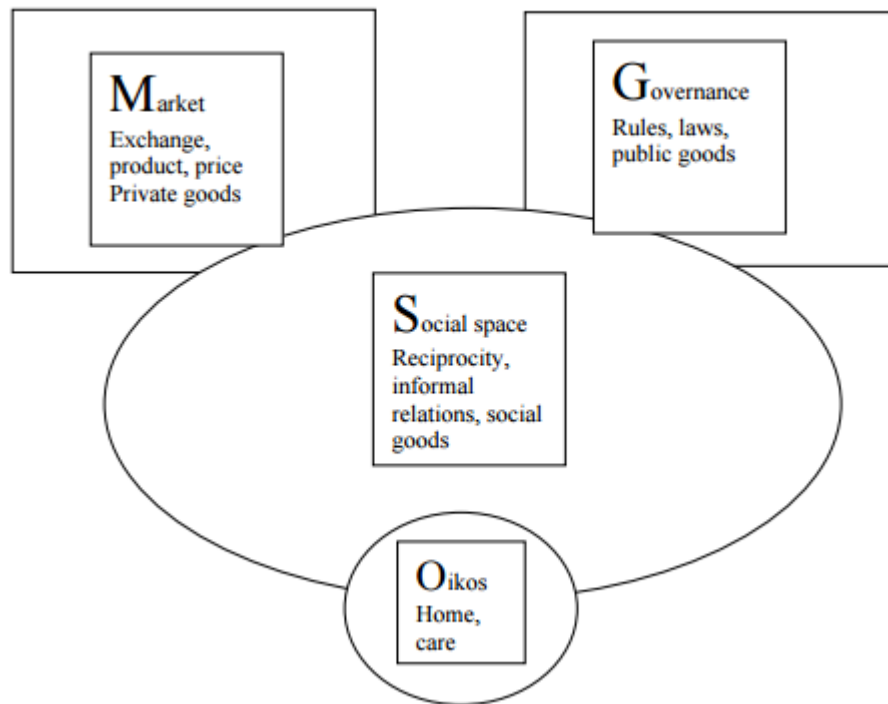
<p>Transcendental</p> <p>Beauty, Truth, Enlightenment, Art, Spiritual Freedom, Science</p>	<p>Societal</p> <p>Justice, Solidarity, Civilization, Awareness, Education, Sustainability, Democracy, Human rights, Nature</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Family, Community, Friendship, Neighbourhood, Trust Collegiality</p>	<p>Personal</p> <p>Wisdom, Dexterity, Craftsmanship, Freedom, Fun, Love, Personal growth, Self-esteem</p>

“The value system of an organisation in a new economy starts with these social, societal, transcendental and personal drivers and lead to economic, social and ecological effects and impact” (Spaas, 2012, p.26). The underlying goals and values of individuals and organisation influence all end results. Therefore in the rising New Economy, as in the Social Design practice, more attention is being paid to different forms of values.

2.4.1. The Four Spheres

For the realization of values it is important to be aware in which societal logic or sphere this is taking place. Klamer (2012) developed the following framework to describe in which four spheres organizations and individuals can operate.

Figure 1 – The Four Spheres.



Market sphere: commonly the first sphere thought of when thinking about financing. Market logic is based on exchange in equivalents, generally translated into money, and takes place in an anonymous setting. Within this sphere it is not about building relationships with other parties but merely about exchanging commodities.

Governance sphere: subsidies or support are provided by the government. This implies that for an organization or individual to be taken into consideration for support they have to offer the values as required by the subsidizing agency.

Oikos: is the most personal sphere and stand for the most intimate relationships of individuals, such as family. Specifically in the artistic world the oikos accounts as significant source of finance. For example, an architect, contributes a great amount of time and work while commonly accepting low financial compensation. The financial balance is realized by for example a side job or their partner.

Social sphere: the sphere in which people socialize, build relationships, friendships and social connections. Individuals contribute to social goods through gift-giving, reciprocity and sharing.

Klamer (2012) argues that the logic or sphere in which a person operates influence the values and therefore end result of their activities. Depending on what an organization or individual is

striving for, different spheres will contribute in different ways. For example in the Governmental sphere they might seek to realize educational or experimental value. Which implies that plans, initiatives and budgets have to be submitted to be considered for support. While in the Market sphere the wishes of sponsors or partners have to be taken into account. The Social sphere is based on investing in the quality of relationships and getting people involved. Therefore the social logic involves reciprocity as well the making and receiving of contributions. For a long time in the cultural and creative field in the Netherlands the focus was on participating in the market and government sphere. Especially after the budget cuts for the arts and culture in the Netherlands in 2011 more attention was paid to alternative sources of financing. Klamer (2012) predicted a shift towards the social sphere, mainly based on necessity. The social logic is most effective in realising social values as it calls for involvement and investing in relationships. These social values play a key role in the rising New Economy of which the main features will now be discussed.

2.5 Features of the New Economy

As a response to failures in the economic system individuals and societies are in search of alternatives in what is called the New Economy. Commonly described as an economy in which democratic ownership, ecological sustainability and community building are at the core. The shift from a consumption mass-market industry into a green economy is already taking place. Slowly mass movements and behaviours are disrupted and adapting (Avelino, 2014; Weaver, 2014). As a result of growing social awareness and responsibility people are adapting their way of life, value systems and changing their patterns. A growing group of individuals are more aware of their consuming pattern and contribute to the debate of changing the system. This is what is called ‘transition thinking’, a positive way of thinking that spreads as a phenomenon represented by sustainable actions (Avelino, 2014).

Hawken (2007) describes how there are around 2 million non-profit organisations in the world that are being led by millions of engaged people which together form ‘the largest movement in the world.’ These individuals are experimenting with new forms of producing, sharing and using resources in innovative business models. The Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA) defines innovative activities that drive societal change as social innovation. Particularly in the light of the economic recession and budget constraints social innovation is seen as a way to empower people and drive societal change “by mobilising people’s creativity to develop solutions and make better use of scarce resources.” (BEPA, 2010: p.7). Currently lots of individuals are in search for business models and practices that realize more than

economic value. A social sustainable approach can reframe current business thinking and reveal opportunities for innovative business strategies. “As a result of the financial crisis and ongoing social transitions, old certainties have become fluid and new business models are emerging: business models in which the basis of multiple value creation is provided by new and existing cash flows, local entrepreneurship, social capital, open networks, energy transition and new technologies” (Schutten, 2014). Societies are evolving from a vertical to horizontal organization, from central to de-central and thirdly from top-down to bottom-up led. The new and emerging business models are changing consumer behaviour. They encourage the shift in behaviour from frequently buying new “things” towards alternative forms of ownership, such as borrowing, swapping, and re-use. The development and activities in the new economy can be divided into four features: Sharing, Connectivity, Proportionality and Localism, which will now be discussed in order (Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013).

2.5.1 Sharing

A new generation of consumers is arising, consumers are trying out alternative forms of ownerships and experiment with other business models. By exploring these new methods, consumers reject mindless consumerism. Head (2013) refers to the Millennials who are used to online solutions, the accessibility of information and embrace change that can realize a collaborative economy. This new type of consumer is open for a different value structure, one that goes beyond materialism. If this awareness will continue to grow manufacturers and retailers will be forced to rethink the way they use production and distribution systems and product life-cycles (Head, 2013). In the new economy the key to enjoyable consumption is no longer based on ownership but on accessibility. This is why it is frequently associated with the sharing economy, which is an innovative way to start using underutilized resources (Belk, 2014; Botsman, 2011). The sharing economy is being applied in innovative, emerging businesses such as Airbnb for housing or Uber for private taxi drivers (Belk, 2014).

2.5.2 Connectivity

The culture of individuals and networks in which everyone and everything is interconnected is called connectivity. Connectivity is of growing importance in every (digital) network (Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013). The culture of connectivity can be linked to both the information given by producers to consumers, the connections among consumers, and the information given by the consumer to the producer. First of all, global consumerism and the continuous development of new technologies have resulted in a nonstop demand for diversification and innovation in production, consumer experience and new marketing

approaches. The rise of the knowledge economy makes consumers more and more informed. This results in the fact that quality and cost are no longer the only value determinant of products or services. Production chain transparency, design innovation, sustainability and consumer- experience and -involvement have become requirements brands have to meet in order to maintain credibility as organization (Casa, 2014).

Rinaldi (2014) stresses the importance of social networks to communicate and promote a (sustainable) production chain. In the past decades every (design) industry experienced a transition in their relationship with their consumers. Globalisation and the rise of online possibilities have enabled consumers with the options to share and co-create. “These new consumers want to be more informed about the origin of the product, manufacturing process and the labour used. The new consumer is willing to participate more and more in direct communication and dialogue with the company” (Rinaldi, 2014: p.1). Companies are required to exhibit transparency of their production chain. When trying to deal with this demand for transparency, organizations apply unique storytelling and exclusivity as tools to connect with consumers. In some design disciplines a sustainable attitude is being communicated through labelling. Unfortunately these labels do not always imply what they should (Hracs, et al., 2013).

Additionally, connectivity is also taking place amongst consumers. Consuming with awareness is a growing trend within western societies. In recent years the hype around food consumption rose, one that includes buying organic, non-processed food. The combination of the healthy and organic food consumption together with the hype of (self) promotion on social media is a form of conspicuous consumption. This growing group of ‘professional consumers’ is gaining more and more insight in quality-price ratio of food and beverage products as well as gain insight in the underlying production chain of these products (Sestini, 2012; Carbonaro, 2012). Communication technologies and social media make sure the knowledge and expertise on what to buy and where to buy it is spread, and used to inform others. By forming alliances with other responsible consumers these ‘professional consumers’ function as intermediaries. For example when a scandal occurs they will propagate this through word-of-mouth, a phenomenon that can mobilise a mass of people and (online) protest and thereby destroy brands (Kaplan & Heanlein, 2010).

Finally connectivity can also be perceived as consumers providing information to the producer. With every purchase or user decision of any product or service, the consumer contributes to the information available for the producer. The collection of a very large amount of data and comprising this data in one data set is what is called ‘big data’.

Companies such as Google and Facebook are masters at utilizing this sort of information through online searches and Internet advertising. The amount of data available is growing rapidly: it doubles every two years not only in numbers but also in type of information. This big data can be used in manifold of forms like improving the competitive advantage of the supplier or increasing the user experience (Lohr, 2012).³

2.5.3 Proportionality

Practical examples show that producing and consuming less can give us back more jobs, more free time and more happiness. The upcoming paragraphs will discuss proportionality in the form of slow-production movements and waste management.

Schneider et.al (2010) argue that to increase human well-being and improve ecological conditions, downscaling of production and consumption is necessary. This is what is called *sustainable degrowth*. Degrowth movements apply forms of ‘slow-design’ which is design to slow down human, economic and resources by using metabolisms in order to re-balance individual, socio-cultural and environmental well-being (Schneider et.al., 2010). Especially in southern European countries these social degrowth movements are popular. Examples are *décroissance* in French or *decrescita* in Italy. (Demaria, et al., 2013) “Practitioners [...] promote local, decentralised, small scale and participatory alternatives such as up-cycling, reuse, vegetarianism or veganism, co-housing, agro-ecology, eco-villages, solidarity economy, consumer cooperatives, alternative (so called ethical) banks or credit cooperatives, decentralised renewable energy cooperatives” (Demaria, et.al., 2013, p.202).

The Cradle to Cradle (C2C) theory is an example of a sustainable approach and a shift in the design mentality that can result in proportional end-results. Design in the consumption industry has long been characterized by one-way consumption. Almost everything, from the products we use, the fashion we wear to the houses we live in, are designed for obsolescence. By considering the complete life cycle of objects, enormous steps can be made in reducing trash. Design should be focused on reuse, disassemble or upcycle. Based on this the design philosophy Cradle to Cradle was developed. Cradle to Cradle (C2C) is a design philosophy introduced by American architect William McDonough and German chemist Michael Braungart who strive to create closed cycles for materials, energy, waste and water. Cradle to Cradle is a design practice that is based on a circular and regenerative production system. It is

³ FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB is an innovation agency in industrial product design that applies big data in their products in order to improve the health situation in the world. In the empirical part of this research an interview has been conducted with Jeroen Verbrugge, co-founder, creative director and industrial designer at FLEX. An introduction of the case can be found in chapter 3.3.

a holistic framework that seeks to produce efficient and waste free, in economic, ecologic and social ways. Cradle to Cradle implies material health, material reuse, renewable energy and social fairness (McDonough and Braungart, 2002).⁴

2.5.4 Localism

The new type of consumer purchases through a value driven perspective that goes beyond optimizing financial gain; more for less. In trying to find alternatives for the consumer good system and reducing the shock of the crisis, consumers are more frequently purchasing local products. More and more people purchase biological, high quality, local products directly from the suppliers. This is referred to as 'low-food miles' which is an alternative for the food imported from far away countries (Carbonaro, 2012). The new economy is grounded in the local while embracing the global. Local qualities, from materials until local craftsmen, are valued accordingly (Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013). In localism the previously discussed sharing and collaborative economy just as local waste material management are important attributes.⁵

2.6 Conclusion New Economy

This chapter has shown that there is a New Economy on the rise as an alternative of the mass production and consumption model that dominated the social-economic reality in the past century. The recent crisis has shown the limits of the growth- orientated economic system which has resulted in a shift in consumer behaviour and people's perception of wellbeing. In the New Economy social and ecological values are no longer subordinate to economic values. Sharing, Connectivity, Proportionality and Localism are the pillars of the New Economy and provide numerous initiatives that are together realizing a more sustainable social reality.

⁴ A leading example in applying this circular philosophy in architectural design is Superuse Studios, a Rotterdam based architectural studio, which is renowned for re-using and connection local waste streams ranging from material to energy or human resources. In this research a case study on Superuse Studios has been conducted, an introduction of the case can be found in chapter 3.3.

⁵ This local and conscious attitude is also being applied in the design industry. The Palmleather project by Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven focuses on local qualities of craftsmen with the aim of creating a stable local economy and empower the community. An introduction of the case can be found in chapter 3.3.

3. Evolution of the Design Industry

3.1 Impact of Design

Creating and stimulating inspiring condition that change perspectives on issues that are at the core of our lives is one of the roles that the arts can fulfil. Specifically design, as a creative practice, has the potential to engage in the relevant issues in society. The essence of design is making things that society needs, but in our contemporary society this is happening less and less. A lot of material and time is wasted on the production of stuff that nobody actually needs. This takes place with the purpose of keeping the profit orientated consumer society alive, as discussed in the previous chapter (Radoja, 2010). Besides designing ‘stuff’ designers are commonly seen as problem-solvers who aim to improve the engineering process as well as the user experiences (Fallan, 2014). But when taking a critical stand towards design history in many ways the design practice has not been problem-solving but problem-creating (Fry and Kalantidou, 2014). This can be understood by the following quote from the book *Design for the Real World* by Victor Papanek, Austrian-American designer and theoretician, published in 1971 and still applicable to the situation in the design industry: “There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them. [...] Today, industrial design has put murder on a mass production basis. By creating whole new species of permanent garbage to clutter up the landscape, and by choosing materials and processes that pollute the air we breathe, designers have become a dangerous breed” (Papanek, 1971, xi). This quote sketches the impact of the design industry. Behind every object we use until the places we inhabit, there has been a designer that decided on the end result. Choices made by these designers, on the production process and materials used, have a tremendous impact on the world. As a result of this critical stand and changes in the economic system a more social and sustainable design practice is emerging. Scholars argue that there is a need for scholar attention for a historical understanding as well as a critical reflection on the rise of social and sustainable design (Fallan, 2014). There is a need to build on the knowledge base to reinsure the further development of design as a social and sustainable practice. This is why this chapter will describe the evolution of the design industry from a focus on mass production towards more social and sustainable orientated design. This chapter will zoom in on the design sector as part of the creative industries. Therefore first the definitions of the creative industry and of the design sector will be discussed. After which the focus will be on the evolution of the design sector towards a more social and sustainable practice.

3.2 Design sector as part of the Creative Industry

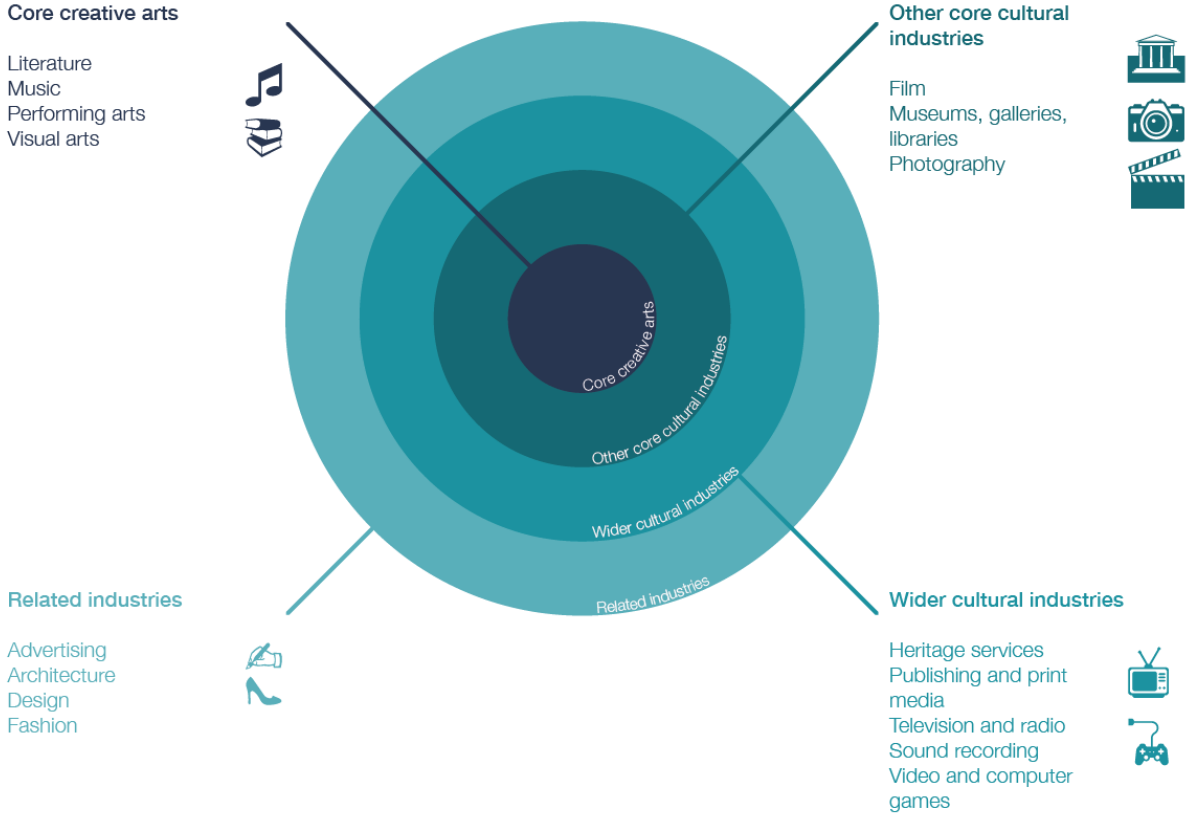
3.2.1. Creative Industry

The creative industry is an industry part of the macro economy that produces goods and services for which the production requires a significant input of creativity. Worldwide the definitions and conceptualization of the creative industry made by governmental or academic organizations differ (Throsby, 2008a). An overview of the most used definitions will now be given to be able to understand the evolution of the term and define what the creative industry means in this research.

Since the end of the last century internationally policymakers and researches have paid interest in the creative industry (Rutten, 2014). The English Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was the first to formally define and analyse the creative industries in 1997. The following industries were said to be part of the creative industries: advertising, architecture, crafts, design, video and photography, tech, music and the visual and performing arts, radio, museums and galleries and publishing (DCMS, 2015). Nowadays, the DCMS specifically describe the potential for wealth and job creation of the creative industries through creativity, talent and the exploitation of intellectual property (DCMS, 2001). The emphasis on cultural or commercial qualities of the creative industries differs per organisations. For example UNESCO, the world heritage organisation, emphasises the cultural aspects in the production and distribution of intangible cultural content (UNESCO, 2015). Whereas the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) focusses on the creative sector as built around the copyright industries and therefore pays more attention to the commercial components (WIPO, 2003). The final frequently referred to definition of the creative industries comes from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which sees trade as the driver of the creative economy. “Creative Industries constitute a vast and heterogeneous field dealing with the interplay of various creative activities ranging from traditional arts and crafts, publishing, music and visuals and performing arts to more technology-intensive and services-oriented groups of activities such as film, television and radio broadcasting, new media and design” (UNCTAD, 2008, p. 4). In the UNCTAD Creative Economy Report (2008) the creative industries are placed at the crossroads of the arts, culture, business and technology. They comprise a set of knowledge-based activities that produce tangible goods and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value and market objectives with intellectual capital as their primary input (UNCTAD, 2008).

Despite the diversity among these definitions they tend to a similar collection of disciplines as part of the creative industry. According to Throsby (2008a) most researchers and policy-makers, when speaking of the creative or cultural industries, mean all or a combination of the following industries: the creative arts; cultural heritage; audio visual media (film, music, television, video and computer games, etc.); print media and publishing; design; advertising; fashion; architecture; smaller supporting industries to these activities such as musical instrument making, retail bookselling, commercial art dealers, etc. (Throsby, 2008a). The emphasis and differentiation between cultural or creative content of these industries tends to differ per country, organisation or research. In this research the design industry is approached as in the model of Throsby (2008b). In the Concentric Circles Model (see figure 2) the industries are visually represented through which Throsby (2008b) provides an understanding of the structure of the industries.

Figure 2 - Concentric Circles Model (Throsby, 2008b)



The four circles start from “the core creative arts” and move outwards to “related creative industries”. At the core of the model are those industries that provide high cultural value. “With layers extending outwards from the centre as the cultural content falls relative to the

commercial value of the commodities or services produced” (Throsby, 2008b, p. 149). Nevertheless it is important to keep in mind that the determination of cultural or commercial value depends on the interpretation of the creatively produced good or service. Throsby (2008b) argues that a differentiation between creative and non-creative occupations can be made. For example, in theatre, the actors provide creative input whereas ticket sellers can be described as non-creative. This latter group of workers is described as ‘humdrum’ input (Caves, 2000). In the Concentric Circles Model the general idea is that the further an industry is in the layers extending outwards from the centre the higher the amount of humdrum input will be (Throsby, 2008b). This research focuses on the outer layer of Concentric Circles Model in which the industries are found that produce cultural goods and services related to the design industries including architecture and fashion.

3.2.2. Governmental policy

It is important to define the design sector as part of the Creative Industries because the industry as a whole is included in the Dutch top sector policy. The Creative Industry is seen as crucial component of a creative economy, which is necessary to keep up with the global competitive economic pace. Therefore the creative industry is presented as a new source of economic and societal value (Rutten, 2014). The previous government (Rutte I, 2010-2012) adopted the creative sector as one of the nine “top sectors”. These nine top sectors are seen as those sectors that support the international competitive position of the Netherlands and its economy.⁶ The policy has been initiated to enhance innovation within and across these sectors. As a result of the policy several institutions, funds, and boards were initiated to stimulate the creative sector (RVO, 2015; Rutten, 2014). The creative industry is seen as a lever for economic development, innovation and crucial in the development of creative urban environments. This signals a shift in paradigm where the creative industries gradually became associated with wealth. Stimulating crossovers and collaborations with other sectors is therefore an important goal in the policy. Creative individuals have been recognized to have added value in making new combinations between economy and society, which in turn is necessary for innovation. Especially for an ‘in-between practice’ as design, which means the boundaries of the design sector are blurring and crossing other sectors, building relationships and partnerships with other sectors is crucial (Rutten, 2014). The following paragraph will

⁶ The other 8 sectors are Agriculture & Food, Chemical, Energy, High Tech, Tuinbouw, Life Sciences & Health, Logistics and Water (RVO, 2015).

provide an insight in how the design sector has evolved as well as in what designing implies and therefore distinguishes from other creative industries.

3.3 Design sector

Throughout the Fordist era design was a discipline undertaken ‘in house’ within large vertically integrated corporations.⁷ With the arriving of the knowledge economy the design industry has grown significantly.⁸ This caused the structure of the design industry to evolve towards an agency sector. Now it is common that independent design consultancies collaborate on a project base with companies to bring fresh and new ideas (Sunley et al., 2008). Additionally Julier (2014) describes how the design practice and its production have changed since the 1980s. The changing commercial, economic and technological contexts has moved the design practice from ‘artisanal, problem-solving activities’ toward a complex model of hard- and software thinking ‘beyond the object’. This is a result of increasing technical possibilities and continuous increasing range of ‘objects’ that can be designed. “The exponential growth of the design profession from 1980, alongside that of other creative industries, has produced a point of ‘critical mass’ whereby it now takes a prominent public and commercial role” (Julier, 2014, p. 25). The heterogeneity of design markets and diversification of the design practice makes defining design complex. Additionally designers and design consultancies continuously have to differentiate themselves, which makes it impossible to describe the design practice in one model (Julier, 2014). The design discipline is commonly divided into the following subsectors: fashion design, graphic design, interior design, product design, industrial design and architectural design (KEA, 2006). However like the structure of the design industry also the included subsectors are continuously evolving. Exemplifying this is the fact that this research focuses on the emerging social design practice. The aim of this research is to cover as many subsectors as possible in the empirical research to be able to draw conclusion on the design industry in general. The research sample will be elaborated in section 4.3 Research Sample.

⁷ Fordism is the use in manufacturing industry of the methods pioneered by Henry Ford, typified by large-scale mechanized mass production, standardization and assembly lines throughout (the beginning of) the 20th century (Baca, 2004).

⁸ The knowledge economy was first mentioned in the 1960s by Machlup (1962) which focuses on the rise of new science-based industries and their role in social and economic change. In a knowledge economy a company’s value is based on intellectual capital and intangible assets.

3.3.1. Dutch Design

Whereas the focus of this research is on Dutch designers in the Creative Industry the following section will elaborate on their activities in the past decades. Dutch Design has evolved into an international phenomenon and refers to a design aesthetic typical for Dutch designers: minimalist, experimental, innovative, unconventional and with a sense of humor. In the 1980s the Netherlands was known for its graphic design. Dutch Design is specifically associated with the internationally recognized Dutch designers from the 1980s and 1990s such as star-designers Benno Premsela, Maarten Baas, Hella Jongerius and Marcel Wanders. Additionally renowned design studios and collectives such as Droog and Moooi contributed to the reputation of Dutch Design at important design events such as Salone del Mobile in Milan. Further Viktor & Role, as fashion designers, and the architectural agency OMA are associated as prominent Dutch designers. The rise of Dutch Design was made by the quality and accessibility of Dutch design education. Both the Technical University Delft as the Design Academy Eindhoven provide internationally recognized top education (CLICKNL, 2015).

3.3.2. Design methods

This section will focus on the qualities of design methods and approaches. Design has proven its value in its problem solving capacity. “Designers have been described as practitioner researchers who operate as a bridge between ideas and practice, linking artistic, imaginative and creative elements with practical, realisable outcomes” (Dodgson et al., 2005 in Sunley et al., 2008, p. 683). Specifically designers are praised for their human centred design approach. This means that designers have proven their problem solving capacities in their close interaction with end-users. “One of the key strengths of human-centred design is the active involvement of end-users who have knowledge of the context in which the system will be used” (Maguire, 2001, p. 588). Continuous interaction and feedback between producers, designers and consumers commonly results in positive outcome and seems to be more common within our increasingly open-source society. Design is about solving problems with as much insights into the human mind as possible (Kuang, 2014).

Heskett (2008) argues that the design industry faces continuous challenges in communicating this value of design. Ultimately, any organization can benefit from the skills of a designer (Heskett, 2008). This is why, as part of the top sectors policy, the Dutch government is promoting and stimulating crossovers; working interdisciplinary across sectors to reinforce different sectors. For crossover to actually be realized individuals within business

parties and corporations have to acknowledge the added value that a designer can bring (Federatie Dutch Creative Industries, 2014). Additionally, in an age of oversupply and competition design is the thing that can make a product, service, website or experience stand out from the crowd. There is a growing recognition that innovative design is an increasingly valuable way of gaining an advantage in the market (Whyte et al., 2005).

3.4 Evolution towards social design practice

In the past few decades the design industry has evolved towards a more diverse and wider reaching practice. First, the emphasis was on creating a product through mass production or another extreme very conceptual and aesthetic, but useless design. Now it seems as if designers stepped away from designing only a physical object, a product. They are designing the environment and processes that take place in that environment with an integrated focus on what design actually can do for its users. Therefore design practices, as almost every discipline, is increasingly concerned with societal and environmental issues. This originated from the 1960s, which has been a transitional phase for the design discourse. Previously fuelled by the industrial revolution, with its continuous innovations in science and technology, modern design was based on belief in progress and prosperity. The more sustainable orientated visions started as a form of consumer activism but developed into environmentalism, which caused a shift in the design discourse. This was the start of the development of visions on a more social and sustainable design practice (Fallen, 2014). Fallen (2014) differs between the histories of sustainable design and traditional histories of design. In the following paragraphs the history and rise of social and sustainable design will be described.

The history of a more socially orientated design discourse started with Munari, an Italian artist, engineer and one of the most influential designers of the 20th century. He promoted social awareness within the design practice, which is why he is described as a “critical designer” (Hájek, 2012). Munari believed in the Bauhaus ideals, that art and life should be fused.⁹ Munari saw it as the designers task to respond to the needs of society. Art and beauty should not be separated from everyday life but visual quality should be part of everyone’s daily experience. According to Munari our lives will be in balance when our environments, the objects we use and the places we live in, have become works of art. These

⁹ The Bauhaus movement was the most influential modernist art school of the 20th century which aim was to make quality accessible for the masses under the basic assumption: Forms Follows Function. This was the basic principle of the modern design practice in the 20th century (Droste, 2002).

statements result in Munari (1987) rejecting the idea of designers having a personal style, which he saw as remains of romanticism.

“Artists have realized that at the present times subjective values are losing their importance in favour of objective values that can be understood by a greater number of people” (Munari, 1972, p. 13).

Another key figure was Victor Papanek (1927-1999), Austrian-American designer and theoretician, promoted ethical design mainly from Scandinavia where he was guest-lecturing at design-schools. He criticized designers involved in mass-production and –consumption. “Papanek’s persistent and public call for a radical change in design culture made him a key figure as visions of sustainability gradually rose to the fore of an ideologically and morally charged design discourse” (Fallan, 2014, p. 16). Papanek argued for a radical user-centered design approach and asked fundamental questions about design such as: What does this object do? Who is it for? What is it made of? And do these answers have consequences for the rest of society? (Johnson, 2001). Papanek promoted ecological conscience by criticising multinational corporations from car manufacturer to fast food chains by giving insight in their selfish and profit orientated policies regarding for example packaging and waste (Fallan, 2014).

In the last decades of the 20th century the attention for a more social and sustainable orientated design practice stagnated as a result of the dominant star-design culture. This culture was characterized by design celebrities whom determined the trends. The principle of Form Follows Function was subordinate to design aesthetics up to the extent that design was seen as art. Forms of critical design and high design were combined which according to Julier (2014) portrays the fragmenting qualities of the design culture. New practices and discursive design fields are continuously created (Julier, 2014). Nevertheless in the past decades the call for a more social oriented design practice increased, enhanced by changes in our social-economic reality that were discussed in chapter 2. One of the frequently raised issues in the contemporary design discourse is the lost values in the majority of the design practice. Exemplifying this is the design manifesto published by Hella Jongerius “Beyond the New” (2015). This manifesto was published with the aim of searching for better ideals in design that promote quality over profit. Jongerius describes how the design world can nowadays be described by the desire for “newness”, stimulated by our consumer culture. Which is linked to the focus of modern societies on promoting profits instead of good design principles. This mentality encourages consumers to continuously purchase new things, resulting in bad design.

Also Jongerius refers back to the Bauhaus Movement of the 20th century and concludes that during the past decades quality and value have been replaced by striving for economic profit (Jongerius, 2015). This is why the recent economic crisis, according to certain designers, was more than welcome since it eliminated trash from design. “Once things get more difficult, design becomes simple, and it imposes the concentration of things that you really need” (Radoja, 2010). The aftermath of the economic crisis that started in 2008 resulted in many individuals from different practices reconsidering their work. According to Laken (2013) this has also affected designers to wonder: Why do I do what I do? What is my contribution? How can I contribute to positive change?

3.5. Social design

“Design has become the most powerful tool with which man shapes his tools and environment (and, by extension, society and himself). But when design is simply technical or merely style-oriented, it loses touch with what is truly needed by people.”

(Designer Daniel Young, as quoted in Radoja, 2010).

All design disciplines that support a sustainable lifestyle and offer or search for alternatives for the current social and economic system can be regarded as Social Design (Van der Zwaag, 2014). Not only for the design discourse it is important to re-discover the values lost but for society at large it is crucial that the design practice moves beyond striving for economic profit but actually contributes to a better society and therefore world. Designers can play a role in solving societal problems through their design. In trying to solve complex societal issues common methods or techniques have shown not to be satisfying. Through the process of framing and re-framing a social designer approaches the problem from various perspectives to get to a sustainable solution. Within this process a diverse range of involved parties, partners or (end) users should be heard (Paton & Dorst, 2011).

The philosophy underlying social design is that it is socially engaging, non-commercial and thought-provoking, forcing people to think about social issues. Social design is not a trend but a mind-set. The fact that it has become a frequently used term characterizes a shift in the mentality of designers, architects and artists who are less product driven and more human and society orientated. In the design, but also business and governmental world, there is a growing urge to make a positive change. Creative people are challenged to deal with societal issues and feel obligated to contribute to solutions. Additionally, designers realize that there is an abundance of products in the world which makes them wonder, what do I want

to add? (Zwaag, 2014). With her book *Looks Good Feels Good Is Good: How Social Design Changes Our World* Van der Zwaag (2014) hopes to contribute to a broader definition, application and impact of social design. It is important to realize that the scope of social design is very broad: from conceptual to pragmatic solutions, micro to macro scales for diverse cultures and socio-economic groups. The term social design is therefore misleading as it covers more than society and design. Social design is equally concerned with economic systems and the environment. This implies that Social Designers based on a sustainable attitude find an equilibrium between first of all the environment: the protection and improvement of natural ecosystems and resources. Secondly, economic productivity and lastly, providing social infrastructures and systems.

Figure 3 - Social Design: Society, Economy, and Environment



As discussed in chapter 2, new economic systems are arising in which attention is paid to different forms of exchange, connectivity and local qualities. Commonly social design projects are closely linked to this New Economy as they are experimenting with production processes and business models. Additionally sustainability is a guiding principle in the social design practice. This way social designers take the environment into account throughout the whole value chain. It involves everything connected to the designing of a product therefore it is a mentality based on engagement, curiosity and willingness to change. This implies that social design is a multidisciplinary approach as it spans beyond the design world. This suggests that besides associated with design related projects Social Design can play a role in

urgent societal challenges that demand multidisciplinary approaches and solutions (Zwaag, 2014).

Social design is not a new phenomenon but as design thinker Jogi Paanghaal states: “Social design is an old tradition with a new profession” (Jogi Paanghaal in Zwaag, 2014). Besides designers, companies, governments and consumers have to embrace the potential of social design movement. Creatives can be the innovators or pioneers but more societal parties have to get involved so the design can be implemented. This is why the rise of the collaborative economy is interesting. Based on a social, economic and environmental infrastructure with diverse parties involved a change in our social-economic system can be made (Zwaag, 2014).

3.5.1 Implication of Social Design

In ‘The Sustainable Design process’ Van Doorn (2012) argues that the underlying process that is responsible for the preparations and implementation of social and sustainable designed project, the software, is crucial for its success. This means that at the beginning of a project the social values that the project should realize are determined and should remain leading during the preparation and realization of the project. These values and the social ambitions will evidently have impact on the budget, the choice of partners and other involved parties in the production process. Joint input by all involved parties is crucial for a successful design outcome. All involved partners have to be committed and willing to cooperate while aiming for the desired and sustainable end result. This implies that all partners have to step away from their familiar working processes to be able to contribute to innovative social and sustainable solutions. (Doorn, 2012). According to Zwaag (2014) projects initiated bottom up and locally have the most impact. This is why for a successful outcome social designers should start small and locally, engage local partners and involve the end user. Social design comes down to the moral and ethics of the parties involved. Solving problems in the world by starting at their social core. The changing role of design does not only impact on the role of designers but on the production process as a whole. These values challenge the traditional production processes and require new organizational form of the production process and value chain. The cases in the empirical part of this research are exemplifying this.

4. Methodology

This chapter describes the research design as used in the empirical part of this research. It will offer an overview of the steps made to realize the research. The chapter is organized into five sections that will justify the decisions made. First, the type of research is described in the section on the methodology. Next, the unit of analysis will be described. Thirdly, the method of data collection is presented. After which the fourth section introduces the cases of the empirical part of this research as the research sample. Then the methods used for the data analysis are explained. Finally the limitations and ethical issues of the methods used will be discussed.

4.1 Method

The aim of this research is to explore the role of social designers, get insight in the main factors that influence their activities and how their practice impacts society. Therefore the empirical part of this research will aim at getting an understanding of how social designers perceive their role within social and sustainable orientated project and how it differs from their activities in more commercially orientated projects. In the light of a changing society and economy as societal trends this research will consider both the current role of the designers as their potential role in the future. At the end the following research question will be answered: Why are designers involved in social projects?

To understand the role of designers' in-depth information about their experiences is most informative. This research will therefore make use of a qualitative research method. Qualitative analysis provides the research with the possibility to raise a variety of issues or topics and allows the interviewees to elaborate their responses which will result in in-depth knowledge of the subject (Babbie, 2011). This is why conducting qualitative research is most suitable for this study. A case study design will allow a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. Through the examination of individual cases the complexity and particular nature of the case can be taken into consideration. This implies systematically gathering information on a particular person and his or her social setting which allows an in-depth understanding of the subject (Bryman, 2012). Within this research designers and one of their social design projects are the subject. Data on these cases will be obtained through semi-structured interviews. This will allow the interviewer to get an understanding of the role of the designer and the phenomenon of Social Design (Babbie, 2011).

4.2 Unit of Analysis

To achieve the above mentioned aims and answer the research question a sample of cases has been selected. This selection was aimed at identifying Dutch Social Designers to conduct the interviews with. A sample selection has taken place to identify individuals who meet the following three criteria: (1) based in the Netherlands, (2) active as designers and (3) engaged in the Social Design practice. These criteria will now be elaborated.

This study focuses on the design practice in (1) the Netherlands for the following reasons. First of all because the activities of the Dutch design industry have experienced a blooming period in the past few decades which has been recognized by national and international attention. This has resulted in numerous publications dedicated to current trends in design, such as *Looks Good Feels Good Is Good* (van der Zwaag, 2014) and *Open Design* (van Abel et al., 2011). Additionally the themes of leading design events such as *the Dutch Design Week* or *What Design Can Do* touch upon trends towards an open, social and sustainable design practice. Therefore also the major art academies and design courses are shifting focus, exemplifying for this is the initiating of a Social Design Master at the Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE, 2015). Parallel to this there has been a rise in governmental attention in the creative industries through the selection as one of the sectors in the Top Sectors Policy. This policy is aimed at stimulating knowledge and innovation through, amongst others, extra financial support and the participation of the creative industry in international trade missions (Federation Dutch Creative Industry, 2014). Lastly, for proximity reasons the focus is on designers in the Netherlands. The researcher is based in the Netherlands, hence the interviews can be conducted in person.

The second criteria is to identify individuals (2) active as designers. The interviews will target designers active in the Netherlands which can work in firms ranging from individual designers to design studios with larger number of staff. This research does not focus on one specialized form of design. The target was to involve a variety of designers from different backgrounds: product design, fashion, architectural or urban design and industrial design.

The last selection criteria was that these designers should be (3) engaged in a social design practice. The first criteria makes it necessary for the designers to be based in the Netherlands. Nevertheless the scope of project can reach beyond Dutch boundaries whereas the Dutch design industry is increasingly internationally orientated. To identify the social features of these projects some characteristics have been identified based on the theoretical

framework. This checklist has functioned as a framework to identify the designers and their projects that can be considered as example of social design and fit the definition in this thesis. The selection criteria were the following:

- **Solution to societal challenges.**
- **Social or societal values first:** rather than profit orientation.
- **Facilitating connections:** social and innovative throughout the production chain.
- **Novelty and improvement.**
- **Proportionality:** Appropriate scale, human dimensions and (slow) pace of production.
- **Sharing and openness:** social interaction, collaboration and exchange of knowledge.
- **Tangible design result.**

With these criteria in mind snowball-sampling took place for which both the internet and leading design publications, such as van der Zwaag (2014), were used. Based on this a selection of designers and their social design projects took place. Additionally based on prior knowledge, obtained from events such as the design *Fair Object Rotterdam*, a list of ideal participants for the case studies took shape. A broad range of projects and designers can be defined as social design. A social approach can be implied in diverse forms in both the production as the consumption of design services or goods. This is why the decision was made that the focus in this research is on the social design projects with a tangible product or outcome. Therefore projects that, for example, aim at intangible social results such as social regeneration have been excluded in the selection of the cases. By only focusing on projects with a tangible outcome complexity and incomparability has been avoided. This is necessary to end up with relevant and comparable cases and therefore results. The cases will be compared, first of all on their inherent values and secondly on the steps made to realize the social design project. Preferably these projects are in an advanced or realized state to be able to allow the designers to reflect on all the phases of the project.

The search results and verification of relevance through the checklist resulted in a list of Social Designers suitable for this research whom all received an email. In this email the research topic and aim was introduced followed by a request for their time for the interview. In total eleven social designers received this email. As a result of practical constraints in the empirical part this research concluded with a final sample of five cases (N=5). The practical constraints were, first of all, the busy period in the design industry in which many events were taking place, such as *Salone del Mobile* in Milan as *What Design Can Do* in Amsterdam. These events plus the general busy (international) schedule of the approached designers

restrained four Social Designers of participating in the case study. Two individuals did not answer the first email, nor the friendly reminder that followed later. Five individuals responded positively and eventually participated in the interviews. Even though the final sample is not as numerous as anticipated the final selection of cases is of high quality. All selected case studies can be qualified as ‘best-practice’ of the social design practice in the Netherlands. This conclusion is based on the fact that all cases have either won (numerous) awards, were mentioned in publicly accepted hand- or guide-books for the Dutch Social Design practice (Van der Zwaag, 2014; Crossover works. 2014; Utrecht Manifest, 2013.), were awarded with funding by Stichting DOEN or have taken place in leading design event. An introduction of all the cases can be found in the following section on the data sample. The scope and size of the projects differ per designer since some work for design studios (with 30 employees) while others work as independent designers. Finally, in the selection of the cases the specific design discipline of the individuals has been taken into account. The ambition of this research was to end up with a diverse sample that can represent a diverse range of the Dutch design disciplines. The final selection of the interviewees can be found in the table below. An in-depth introduction on all the cases can be found in the following section.

Table 2 – Overview research sample

Name	Project	Design discipline
Charlotte Kan	Granny’s Finest	Fashion design
Tjeerd Veenhoven	The Palmleather Project	Product design
Jeroen Verbrugge	Esos- toilet	Industrial design
Césare Peeren	Blade Made	Architectural design
Nynke Tromp	Temstem	Game design

4.3 Research Sample

Case 1: Granny's Finest

Interview with fashion designer Charlotte Kan

Out of the 2,6 million Dutch 65+'rs more than one million feels lonely sometimes. Granny's Finest is an initiative to prevent loneliness amongst elderly in the Netherlands. By organizing meetings and knitting clubs throughout the Netherlands the foundation realizes its social ideals. During these meetings the Granny's are offered the opportunity to socialize, which helps in preventing loneliness. They are provided with sewing material and patterns which enables them to apply their knitting skills into the production of beautiful winter wear such as scarfs and heads. In the form of a nice trip the Granny's receive gratitude for their work. Besides that all the Granny's Finest products come with a personal note of the Granny who made it. By using the attached code and online platform the consumer can send the Granny a personal -thank you- note or picture of the product in use. Lastly the products that these clubs produce are designed by talented young creatives. Together with upcoming photographers, writers, aspiring models, stylists and other young designers they are provided with a chance to grow their portfolio and build a name for themselves. The collaboration with the designers and the granny's results in crafted hand made products which are produced in a social and sustainable way.

Charlotte Kan – works for Granny's Finest as one of their fashion designers. During the knitting clubs Charlotte discusses techniques, socializes and works with the Granny's. Besides that she designs for her own fashion label 'Charlotte Kan', selling her own designs and patterns through an online web shop. In here collections her sustainable and 'slow-fashion' ideals are reflected.¹⁰



Case 2: Palmleather Project – Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven.

Interview with product designer Tjeerd Veenhoven

Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven realized the production of products made of palmleather which offers large scale environmental benefits as well as the realization of socially responsible business by discovering a new raw material which is available in abundance. Soaking the bark of the Areca Palm in a natural oil solution results in soft, flexible and leather-like material which could serve as a cheap plant based replacement for animal leather, plastic and rubber. The large scale application of palmleather material can utilize the world's waste streams. Tjeerd Veenhoven decided to focus on the production of palmleather flip-flops as a biodegradable alternative for plastic flip-flops. Ambition of Veenhoven is to design for the 2,5 billion poorest people in the world. Additionally, the palmleather slipper can replace disposable plastic hotel slippers, of which every year 50 million are worn once after being discarded.



The design studio has been occupied with process design of the entire value chain. The social ambitions are realized in the production process of the Palmleather products. Socially responsible business was set up to empower local craftsman and build a sustainable community and self-reliant small-scale enterprise for them. Based on the belief in a production culture free of sweatshops, greed and inhumane working conditions. Small producer owned production unit provide training and employment for local craftspeople who receive fair pay and work in comfortable conditions. The Palmleather project received the Material Award 2011 and the Encouragement Award 2011 from Stichting Doen.

Tjeerd Veenhoven – a product designer with a love for inventing materials and production techniques, founded his design studio in 2000. In his design practice he does more than expressing trends or aesthetics, it is almost an activism; design to change the world, even if just a little (©Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven).

Case 3 : eSOS-toilet by FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB

Interview with Jeroen Verbrugge, co-founder, creative director and industrial designer.

Flex/the INNOVATIONLAB is convinced that design is not a goal but the means to make a difference. Their aim is to improve people's quality of life by innovation and enhance the sustainability of our society. In this creativity is seen as the key to a new reality. Therefore Flex develops relevant products and services that have a positive impact on the world of tomorrow.

In this research a specific focus is on the eSOS project. The eSOS-toilet was designed with the aim of improving the quality of life in emergency situations and areas. "The eSOS reinvents (emergency) toilet and treatment facilities, and uses ICT to bring cost savings to the entire sanitation management chain. The toilet will improve the quality of life of people in need during emergency situations – from natural to anthropological disasters – and minimizes the threat to public health of the most vulnerable members of society." (FLEX, 2015). The smart toilet is provided with equipment that is connected with satellites and data-centre in order to gather data that enables organisations to take action if an epidemic or disease is on the rise. The project is a collaboration between Flex/ the INNOVATIONLAB, UNESCO, SYSTECH and was partly funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project received the Africa Leadership Award 2014 in the category "Most Innovative New Technology of the Year." And during the Munich Creative Business Week 2015 represented the eSOS project the Dutch Creative Industry as a successful crossover.



Jeroen Verbrugge - industrial designer, co-founder of FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB and managing-creative director. Outside of Flex Jeroen Verbrugge has been and is part of many initiatives that strengthen the design field, currently he is member of the Dutch Creative Council, the advisory board of the Topsector Creative Industry and part of the advisory board of the Topsector Creative Industry.

Case 4 : project Blade Made by Superuse studios

Interview with Césare Peeren, co-founder and head of design

The designers at Superuse Studio believe in transforming society through ingenious beautiful and functional architectural and social design solutions by using ‘waste’ by re-linking all the materials, resources and systems that already exist. Their design is not for single or multiple generations, but for indefinite use. This way society can become more sustainable and, the current huge impact of architecture and design on energy and virgin resource use significantly reduced. Within this research a specific focus is on their project “Blade Made” which involves multiple architectural urban design made from rotor blades of old wind turbines. In the growing wind energy industry each new turbine is provided with rotor blades made from “valuable composite materials that are difficult to recover at the end of their energy generating life, with an average lifespans of 10 to 25 years.” (Superuse Studios, 2014, p. 2). Rotor blades have been successfully designed into urban furniture, a playground, and bus shelters, demonstrating the potential for blade made designs and architecture. Globally this could play a considerable role in reducing waste generated by the wind energy industry, reducing the ecological footprint. This research focuses specifically on Wikado is a playground build of rotor blades in Rotterdam. The playground was designed to maximise imaginative play, social interaction and children driven game development. It has a small ecological footprint, it is weather and wind resistant; organic, has ergonomic shapes and is strong while built for the same price as a comparable standard playground. The playground won the European Environmental Design Award 2009.

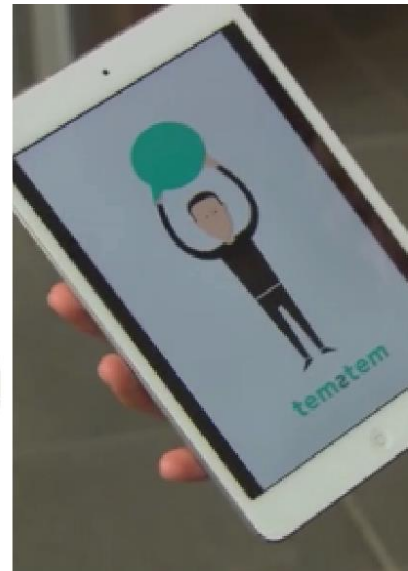
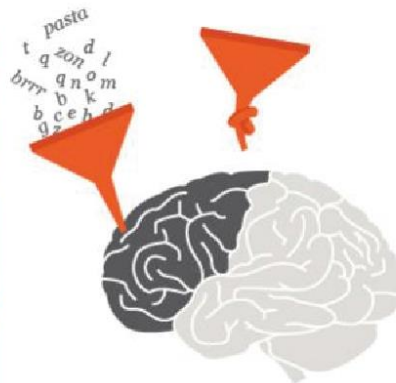
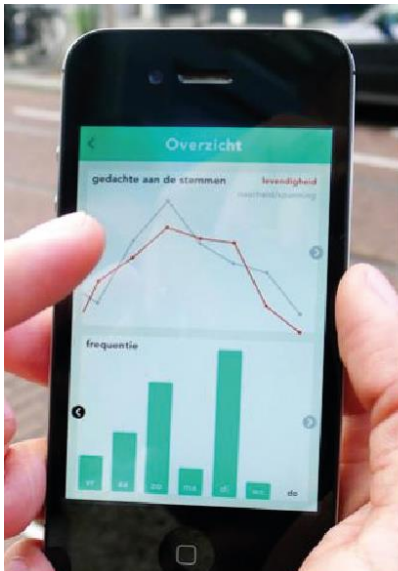


Césare Peeren – head of design and co- founder of Superuse Studios, a studio internationally renowned pioneer in designs, approach, methods and tools aimed at making resourceful use of waste streams. The studio is run by 5 engineers that team up in different combinations and with a diversity of specialists to match a project's needs (Superuse Studios, 2014).

Case 5 Temstem by Reframe Studio

Interview with Dr.ir. Nynke Tromp, Industrial designer

Some people receive advices, tasks or even treats from voices in their heads. Roughly 10% of adults ever hears voice, of which 2% commonly. These voices can be very negative or even aggressive which has big impact on the function and wellbeing of the people. As an alternative for expensive and distant therapies Reframing Studio and Parnassia Group developed an application for people that hear voices as a result of a psychosis. Temstem is an app for smartphones and tablets that through games allows the users to suppress the voices in their heads. When hearing voices the language production area of the brain is active. The app distracts this area of the brain with through language games. Besides short term distraction the app has shown longer-term therapeutic effects. The app allows users to address their problem immediately and take control. The app does not replace the psychiatrist or medication, but offers an innovative and effective means of self-help to those suffering from psychosis. The result of the app is temporarily stop of the voices or makes the voices less vivid and impressive. Additionally, the user feels stronger and more confident which enables them to feel secure in social situations. In comparison with therapeutic session this app offers a cheap and accessible solution for a social and mental problem. And whereas phone use is socially accepted the voices can be tamed in any situation or setting. The temstem app won the Rotterdam design award 2013.



Nynke Tromp – works as an Assistant Professor Social Design & Behaviour Change at the department of Industrial Design, Delft University of Technology. After her PhD and working as a social designer in practice at Reframing Studio, she now continues her study to the hidden power of design to counteract social problems.¹¹

Source: www.parnassiagroep.nl and www.io.tudelft.nl [visited on 31 May 2015]

4.4 Data Collection

The data collection took place during the period 20th April – 1th June 2015, which makes the research cross-sectional (Babbie, 2011). All the semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in the following cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Delft. The interviews took place in familiar settings for the interviewees, his or her studio, office or a suggested café. All the interviews took place in Dutch.

Whereas in almost all cases time was limited due to the busy schedule of the interviewees an extended (online) pre-research took place on the designer and their social design project. This prior knowledge gave the interviewer the opportunity to make efficient use of the time available during the interview. Semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended and non-directive questions provided an understanding of the origins of designers' actions and the struggles they might face in realizing their social design projects (Babbie, 2011). The interview questions were based on the theoretical- and the value based approach - framework. The Dutch interview scheme can be found in appendix A. The interview started with an introduction of the research topic and an explanation of the concept of value. The first questions aimed at understanding the goals and values the designers pursue with their projects. The second group of questions focused at gaining insight into the interviewee's perception of the role of social designers.

4.5 Data Analysis

To be able to analyse the data obtained in the interviews these were all transcribed. The full transcriptions can be provided upon request by the author. The data has been analysed by using two tools.

First of all, the program NVivo has been used to organize the data to make exploration of the structures possible. NVivo enables to read the data and get insight in the main themes. By coding the raw data the comprehensive and returning themes and concepts appear. A coding scheme that will function as a starting point of these themes was developed. A coding process is not a linear process and since the interviews have been conducted over a period of six weeks, throughout the empirical part of this research constant re-evaluation has taken place to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the coding scheme. This means that after each interviews the set of categories and nodes has been re-evaluated (Babbie, 2011). First of all these categories and nodes have been used to compare and match the values of the designers. Secondly to understand the interviewees perception of the current state in the design practice

and the creative industry. An overview of the final categories and nodes as a result of analysing the data in NVivo can be found at the beginning of Chapter 5 Results.

Second tool for data analysis was a table that was designed to give insight in the values and goals of the interviewed designers. This table enabled to connect the obtained data with the value based approach during the data analysis. This table has been used for every interview, all these tables can be found in appendix B. The data analysis was aimed at creating an understanding in the role of social designers in the Dutch design practice, specifically to be understood in the context of current changes and trends in society. Therefore the arguments given by social designers will be categorized according to the values they reflect. For this the value-framework of Klamer (2012) was used. According to Klamer (2012) the new economy is driven by new forms of entrepreneurship based on other forms of value, such as social or ecological, in addition to economic values. People and organisations are increasingly driven by the desire to contribute to goals beyond financial gain. Therefore the values and goals of the social designers will be categorized within the following framework:

1. **Personal goals:** personal development or security
2. **Social goals:** contributing to or developing relationships of the community of which your part of.
3. **Societal goals:** contributing to a better world.
4. **Transcendental goals:** contributing based on what is beautiful, what is true, what is good, and therefore close to spiritual motives (Klamer, 2012).

4.6 Limitations and ethical issues

Analysing the social design practice might touch upon personal statements or sensitive subjects for the specific designer. Therefore, the designers will be approached in ways that allow them to open up and discuss their experiences so that their perception of the social design practice will be revealed as is required in research in the social sciences. The semi-structured approach during the interviews has both negative as positive implication. The approach leaves room to discuss a diverse range of topics, which is necessary to gain insight in their values. Nevertheless the non-guiding characteristic of the interview can cause an effect of the interviewer on the interviewees by steering the question towards specific pre-determined directions, which is a weak point in a qualitative approach.

Additionally the research focus is on Social Design, a concept that can be very broadly

defined. This has resulted in a wide range and differentiating characteristics among the research sample, for example the cases differ significantly in design discipline (architecture, fashion, product or industrial design) as well as in size of the design studio. This will make generalizing the results difficult (Bryman, 2012). To overcome this limitation there has been decided that this research will focus on social design projects with a tangible product or outcome. By focusing on these type of cases it is likely that the steps made by the designers to realize the social projects are similar and therefore comparable. This way it is possible to gain insight in which values (personal, social, societal or transcendental) the designers have in common.

5 Results

The aim of this chapter is to find out what motivates designers to participate in the social design practice. Which values and goals drive them? This chapter is organised in three parts. In the first part the motivation of designers to be active in social projects is discussed in which the Value Based Approach will be applied on the goals persuaded by the designers, defining their personal, social, societal and transcendental goals. The second part focuses on the design practice with in specific on the role of designers in social projects, the methods they apply, the challenges they face and finally their perception on the used terminology. Thirdly the perspective of the designers on the creative industries is discussed with a focus on the situation in (design) education and activities of the government. In the final part of the results the designers perspective on our social-economic reality and changes that are arising are discussed after which the main points are summarised in the conclusion. Table 3 offers of the categories and nodes that derived from the data analysis in NVivo. Citation of the designers will illustrate the main results.

Table 3 - Overview of categories & nodes

Category	Node 1	Node 2
Social design project	Goals and values	Personal Social Societal Transcendental
Design Practice	Role of designer	Storytelling and connectivity Product - system design
	Method	Creativity and knowledge Open-source
	Challenges	Proportionality and Upscaling
		Finance
	Terminology	
Dutch Creative Industry	Shift to social	
	Education	
	Crossovers	
Social - Economic reality	Paradigm shift	
	Implement change	Bottum up
		Top down
Necessity		

5.1 Social Design Projects

In the first section of this chapter the leading and common transcendental, societal, social and personal values of the designers will be discussed. In appendix B the tables can be found that have been used to analyse the values and goals that were derived from the interviews with the designers.

5.1.1. Goals and Values

After analysing the data in NVivo and completing the Values & Goals table it can be concluded that for (4/5) designers' transcendental values and goals are the biggest drive for their involvement in social design projects. In table 4 the main values that are leading in the motivation of each designer are described.

Table 4 - Leading values of designers

Case	Value	Type of value
Case 1 Project: Granny's Finest Designer: Charlotte Kan	The biggest motivation to be involved in the Granny's Finest project is based on the designers' values and believes in slow-fashion that are reflected in the production process.	Transcendental
	Addressing loneliness amongst elderly as societal problem	Social Societal
	Realizing a beautiful end-product with commercial potentials	Personal Societal
Case 2 Project: Palmleather Project Designers: Tjeerd Veenhoven	Realize consumer awareness and realization that everyone is responsible for his or her consumer behaviour and the consequences. Main driver is the discussion that results from showing that production can be done differently.	Transcendental
	Process design: Creating social and sustainable production and value-chain as alternative for harmful fast-production	Societal Transcendental
	Finding new raw material: palm leather, resource that is available in abundance and with that utilizing waste streams	Personal Societal

Case	Value	Type of value
Case 2 Project: Palmleather Project Designers: Tjeerd Veenhoven	Enable local craftsman to apply their skills, create sustainable community	Social Societal
Case 3 Project: eSOS-toilet Designer: Jeroen Verbrugge	Extended health impact through connective product which enable to prevent epidemics from arising in underdeveloped countries or disaster areas	Transcendental
	Internal motivation for the Flex-team by working on divers projects with social impact	Personal Social
	Work with new parties and publicity for the company	Personal Social
Case 4 Project: Blade Made Designer: Césare Peeren	Develop methods and design that can make recycling globally possible and with that contribute to the transformation into a green and sustainable economy as replacement for the current harmful and unsustainable model.	Transcendental
	Stimulate awareness by spreading the social, sustainable story to increase knowledge and understanding for the necessity of change. All the knowledge is shared via open-source.	Transcendental Societal
	Urban transformation through innovative materials use	Societal
Case 5 Project: Temstem Designer: Nynke Tromp	Enabling people with psychosis to participate in society by providing them self-esteem and a feeling of being in control through the accessible character of the app.	Societal
	Provide alternative for expensive and distant therapy	Societal Social

Transcendental values – the above described values are transcendental because they either aim at spreading truth and transparency or at global humanitarian impact (Klamer, 2012). What these designers are striving for is a fairer and better world. They try to realize this by providing alternatives for mass-production and consumption models through value chains in which profit is subordinate to social and ecological qualities.

Societal value

The societal values of (3/5) are cases related to enabling a vulnerable group (elderly, poor or sick people) to participate in and contribute to society. In (1/5) case the societal value is based on providing basic human rights. Other forms of societal values that (4/5) cases had in common was the fact that through the social projects the designers felt like they contributed to societal awareness of the implications of production processes and consumer behaviour.

Social values – knowledge exchange

(3/5) designers emphasized the social values that motivate them during the project. These projects resulted in direct social contact of the designers with the social groups for which the project was initiated. This is according to the designers and added value for two reasons which are illustrated by the following quote of Charlotte Kan: “I did not only learn new techniques but also got involved in a very fun collaboration and gain great new contacts”. First of all these collaborations result in knowledge exchange between crafted individuals, such as the granny’s or sewing experts in India, and the designers. Secondly the social interaction among these groups were perceived as very valuable.

Personal values – Recognition and publicity

As any individual, designers are motivated by purpose and in search for recognition by their peers. (4/5) designers mentioned explicitly that recognition by peers, media and consumers is what had motivated them during the realization process of the project. First of all, as Tjeerd Veenhoven argued: “I also want to be on a stage and receive applause.” This is what Seligman (2002) describes as realizing a pleasant life in which one is motivated by hedonism. Nevertheless the recognition by peers and publicity has wider implications than only professional recognition. Designer Césaire Peeren argued that participating in, for example, design conference besides providing a self-esteem boost are also important for networking. While being surrounded by peers and potential customers or partners these events are crucial in ensuring future projects. Thirdly, and for (3/5) designers the most crucial reason why publicity is important, is the promotional effect of media attention which can result in more supporters or sales and therefore the success of the project.



Case eSOS-toilet by FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB

In the case of design studio Flex and the eSOS-project it was very clear that the design studio is aware of different forms of value. “We are being paid less than the commercial rates we normally ask based on the same hours. But this is a risk we find worth taking, especially because of the social impact of the project.” (Jeroen Verbrugge). This shows that the design studio is willing to invest time and money to be able to realize other (social) values that they find important. Verbrugge links this form of investment to the importance of internal motivation of his team. “We focus primarily on what the product realises in developing countries. But also to what it brings within our organisation. The fact that we work on this kind of projects is internally appreciated. People love working on it and are proud of the project, for internal motivations it is very important” (Jeroen Verbrugge). Explicitly this case shows that the willingness of investing money and time (quantity) to realize qualities (societal or personal) exists among designers. Nevertheless it is important to keep in mind that Flex has a commercial core business with which they make money and 25 years of experience. The income of the commercial activities enables them to finance the more experimental, social and sustainable projects. The realization of social projects is possible because their design practice balances with commercial- and social-rate.

5.2 Design Practice

In this section on the design practice, first the role of designers within social projects will be discussed. This is done according to the following themes *storytelling and connectivity*, and *product or system design*. Followed by a section on the methods applied by designers, with in specific the balance between *creativity and knowledge* and the use of *open-source strategies*. After this a description of the challenges faced by the designers will follow, discussing *proportionality and upscaling* and the models for *financing*. Finally a discussion on the terminology as used in the Design practice will conclude this section.

5.2.1 Role of designers

Storytelling an Connectivity

Storytelling - 4/5 of the interviewed designers stated that one of the most important aspects in their social design practice is 'telling the story'. This implies that through their social projects they contribute to an awareness campaign, that the design practice can contribute to an improved production processes, solve social issues and therefore to a better world.

“I’m at this point that I think that little bits of awareness within the industry are right now the most useful thing I can do.” (Tjeerd Veenhoven)

These designers (4/5) argue that storytelling is a big part of their practice, spreading knowledge and understanding through which people gain knowledge and potentially will change their behaviour. The cases in this research are examples of how social designers can be part of a positive narrative, which is enhanced by the publicity as discusses in the section on personal values. All cases show that a more socially focused design practice and production chain is feasible. Furthermore it is important to be aware of the changes already made. A different mind-set on different forms of values amongst consumers and producers is growing. “I do not want to fall in a negative discussion. In my opinion we cannot change much faster than this” (Tjeerd Veenhoven). In specific the following quote illustrates the importance of social value during this story telling process. “I learned it is important to tell a positive story, show a way that it can be done differently instead of indicating what is going wrong. This way I can inspire others to do better” (Césare Peeren). This designer sees the current social design projects as inspiring examples to get other (designers) aware and involved in the social design practice.

Charlotte Kan argues that the story that is being told is of greater importance than the actual design. “Right now the way you give form to your practice and how it is being communicated is more important than the design itself. The practices of social enterprises works because the story that they are telling is right.” (Charlotte Kan). This confirms the statements on the growing group of ‘professional consumers that demand insight and transparency in the production chain as well as the power of communication technologies and social networks to connect with the consumer (Sestini, 2012; Kaplan & Heanlein, 2010). Additionally this can be related to the fact that individual consumer behaviour is more and more integrated people’s sense of personal identity (Hamilton, 2009). Therefore telling a

strong and inclusive story with which consumers would like to associate themselves is a requirement in a successful social project.

Connectivity - What enables the designers to make impact with their stories is related to the concept of connectivity as characteristic of the New Economy. In the theoretical part of this research the growing potential and use of communication technologies was stressed (Rifkin, 2010; Kaplan & Heanlein, 2010). As stated by Casa (2014) quality and cost are no longer the only value determinant of products or services. Production chain transparency, design innovation, sustainability and consumer- experience and -involvement have become requirements brands have to meet in order to maintain credibility as organization. Further Rinaldi (2014) stresses the crucial role of (online) social networks to communicate and promote any product. All designers make use of the technological possibilities in their communication. In the Palmleather Project technologies enable Tjeerd Veenhoven to be in direct contact with the producers in the production unit in India. The eSOS-toilet makes use of satellite connection to build on a big data that could potentially prevent epidemics. The app Temstem created free accessible technology for everyone with a smartphone. Superuse Studios has been building open-source platforms on which any information about available resources or waste can be shared. And finally, Granny's Finest enables its consumer to personally thank the Granny who produces their product via social media.

Product or System Design

Nynke Tromp states that it is important to be aware of the difference between designing in a social domain and Social Design. Social Design is not about applying the normal design approach in for example a problematic neighbourhood. In these cases the design process does not differ, only the domain in which the designer takes place. Frequently these kind of projects are focused on short-term happiness of a social group without taking the long-term implications into account. Social design is not asking the users what they want or need but looking on a macro scale at how society is functioning and how design can improve that. Nynke Tromp argues that for societal impact designers have to take a step beyond the user-centred design approach. Tromp defines Social Design as design that aims at realizing a societal effect. This means that a designer should not focus on the interaction between the user and a product but on the effect of the design on behaviour and social values based on a long-term vision.

This implies that the tasks of designers and the focus of their work change when they

try to realise societal impact. From frequently designing tangible products the practice is shifting towards process and system design. Exemplifying this is the case of Granny's Finest in which a social problem, loneliness, is being solved through the production process. (4/5) designers emphasises that when other parties come with a problem they are commonly searching for a tangible solution. But most problems can be better tackled through changes in the system that is behind the problems. For example a municipality with trash problems is not looking for a new trash can but for a new waste-management system. As argued by Julier (2014) commonly designers would focus on the product or tangible outcome that could potentially solve a problem. In the social design movement a designers starts by looking at the context, and the problems in it. After this follows a product or system that can realize a societal goal. Social design applies a more 'holistic approach' of societal problems. Other designers take more the role of the creator whereas this holistic approach allows for co-creation with the problem owners or end-users. Kuang (2014) stated that design should be about solving problems with as much insight in the human mind as possible. Additionally this shift from product to system design is illustrative for the general trend in society in which a growing group of people steps away from mass-consumerism and instead look at the qualities within the system.

As a final remark on the methods used by social designers it is interesting to notice that the changing tasks of designers involved in social projects has consequences for the amount of time they spend actually designing. Because of the interdisciplinary application of design method and the global reach of problems designers are involved throughout the whole value chain of a project. Charlotte Kan stated: "I am more and more aware of how many steps there are in the production process." Generally the role of designers in social design projects has changed because they are involved in more steps in the production process apart from exclusively designing a product. Césaire Peeren argued that "designing is only a marginal part of my daily job."(4/5) designers argue that they spend a significant part of their time on managing their design business, studio or enterprise, or on networking and meetings with other parties.

5.2.2 Methods

This section will discuss methods applied by designers. First the balance between creativity and domain knowledge in a design process will be discussed. After which the potential of

open-source methods and knowledge are argued for. Finally the difference between designing in the social domain and Social Design will be stressed.

Creativity and knowledge

“Designers as re-thinkers can lay connections which are very desirable within societal developments that are completely stuck such as healthcare, energy, sustainability, urban development, cultural issues and safety problems.” (Jeroen Verbrugge)

Dodgson et al. (2005) argued that designers are practitioner researchers that can operate as a bridge between ideas and creative elements with practical, realisable outcomes. Designers have proven their strength in shining new light on a situation and therefore their value in crossovers. The strength of a designer is making a problem tangible, making it visible. A designer can create something that can make us experience how a situation can be different.

Regarding the contextual understanding of social problems (4/5) designers emphasized the continuous process of learning and adapting to new knowledge. This means that projects are constantly becoming more social and sustainable as more knowledge becomes available. Specifically in the design process domain knowledge and contextual understanding is crucial for a successful outcome. There is a need for knowledge about the social context to understand what does this person, culture or situation need. Designers have to find a balance between ‘creative ideas’ and domain knowledge. It is necessary to possess enough knowledge to be credible but also the ability to come up with new perspective.

Open-source

Specific in the case of Blade Made knowledge plays an important role. Césaire Peeren mentions the open-source strategy they apply on all their knowledge and used methods at Superuse Studios. When the research is done and the knowledge is available about the applicability of certain materials projects can be repeated in such a way that every project turns out unique on any location. Césaire Peeren: “What we are doing is sharing the knowledge and with that call for other designers to also start using this material.” This method contributes to the realization of the transcendental goals of this case. The open-source strategy is based on the ideas of the sharing- and collaborative economy as discussed by Head (2013) which support innovative ways to start using underutilized resources. Inherently these methods are based on a belief that not competition, but collaboration will improve the world. As argued by Césaire Peeren: “I do not believe in competition [...] I refuse to be pushed into

the suppression of the capitalist system. If everyone would collaborate and share knowledge, we would find the solutions way faster.”

5.2.3 Challenges

The challenges social designers find in practice are commonly related to enlarging the impact of the projects. In this section the problems regarding proportionality and up-scaling, and finances are discussed.

Proportionality and up-scaling

As stated by Schneider et.al. (2010) and Demaria et.al (2013) in the New Economy there is more attention for proportionality in the form of local- and slow-production movements. (3/5) of the social projects apply a form of small scale or local production. In these projects human well-being in the production process and improved ecological conditions through waste management are the main drivers. These (3/5) designers argued that their involvement in the projects was mainly based on the reflection of their values and beliefs in the production process.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs the ambitions in the social design practice is to realize values and provide solutions that address social or societal issues. (4/5) interviewees described that it is difficult to stay true to these values while trying to enlarge the impact or output of the project. Tjeerd Veenhoven argued: “To change the world sometimes you have to be satisfied with small steps.” This product designers believes that his values can only be maintained by keeping initiatives small. Upscaling while staying true to the values for which projects were initiated is in (4/5) cases challenging. Exemplification of this is the case of the Palmleather project in which the problems with upscaling are related to the fact that Palmleather is more expensive because in the current production process it is produced by hand by craftsman. A craftsman is more expensive then industrialized mass production. The current production process and material application are not applicable in a mass market. Currently the production price is higher and quantity produced lower but the social values are realized.

Small scale in some cases is the only possibility. Upscaling of the production would undermine the social or transcendental values of these projects. Nevertheless opportunities can be found in the replicability of these project. The production can be set up in for example different countries were the production processes can be applied on a local level. Ideally these projects realize the same values on a different location. In the discussion and the potential of

upscaling and enlarging societal impact all the concept of the New Economy can be identified: sharing and connectivity through open-source. Proportionality and localism through the replicability of small and successful social projects. This implies that rather than unquestioned upscaling appropriateness of scale, production pace and human dimensions are taken into account. Commonly this is accompanied by (re)discovery of the local qualities available, such as resources, skills and communities (Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013).

Finances

It is very unusual for any business to be financially strong at the beginning, let alone a social business for which financial profit is subordinate to the social goal. (2/5) projects resulted in a social enterprise that aims at realizing the social goals. Both projects received initial support from Stichting DOEN at the launch of the project.¹² Some years into the project both are able to balance their finances, nevertheless it is challenging. The designers found a way to deal with this by taking satisfaction from other forms of value that are being realized. Tjeerd Veenhoven: “If profit, in financial form, is the purpose then it [social enterprise] is very difficult. You have to look at the spin-off and if these contain different values which are relevant for you. Then you are looking at the value for a community, the value for the region, stability.”

An overview of the financial background of all the projects can be found in the table on the next page. This table provides insight in the spheres in which the projects find themselves.

¹² Stichting DOEN support artists and designers that approach social issues from creative angles and contribute to possible solutions. The aim of Stichting DOEN is supporting entrepreneurial activities and projects that unite a social, sustainable and creative practice (Stichting DOEN, 2015).

Table 5 – Financing background of the case studies

Case	Financial resources	Sphere
Case 1 Project: Granny's Finest	Receives support from Stichting DOEN in addition to their profit made by sales	Governmental Market
Case 2 Project: Palmleather Project Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven	Receives support from Stichting DOEN in addition to their profit made by sales. Ambition is to make the production factories financially independent from the studios	Governmental Market
Case 3 Project: eSOS-toilet FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB	Flex balances cost through low social rate compared to higher commercial hourly rate (see section 5.1.1) Partly funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Social Market
Case 4 Project: Blade Made Superuse Studios	Project based with external parties. Research is financed through subsidies based on art-projects or educational activities with academies	Governmental Market
Case 5 Project: Temstem Reframing Studio	Funded by the innovation fund available at Parnassia Health Group, an organisation funded by the government.	Governmental

As argued by Klamer (2012) the source of financing matters and has implications for the end results and realized values. Designer Tjeerd Veenhoven specifically made differentiation between the Governmental sphere and the Market sphere. The government is always one step behind and tries to describe what is already happening as it takes time to plan and apply policy. While in the market sphere, business can make very disruptive moves at any time. Veenhoven argues that facilitating collaboration through subsidies by the government is a questionable incentive for innovation, as the impact is commonly short term and project based. "If a large corporation would pick up a project like this it goes way faster. Problematic is that it is likely that this goes at the expenses of social or ecological values. In maintaining these values the government can play a role." What Veenhoven is referring to is that the source of finances matters as argued by Klamer (2012). In making the weigh off between the market and governmental sphere in the case of a social designer it is relevant to consider which values are important and in which sphere these could be best realized.

(4/5) cases are based on a mixed financial model. A multiple income stream is what

seems the best available model to apply in social design projects or social enterprises. Césaire Peeren underlines this by stating: “we make a little bit of money with everything we do [...] I believe that answers lay in the multiple income stream. This way you can stay true to yourself which means you do not have to spend 80% of your life working on something you do not believe in, just to be able to finance the rest.”



Case Temstem by Reframe Studio

Temstem is a free app financed by the innovation fund of Parnassia (health care group) which is a government funded organisation. From a business model perspective the app is not profitable, it is purely philanthropically. The app actually provides an alternative next to treatment of patients, on which Parnassia would earn money. Currently the government is providing a counterproductive incentive by paying health care institutions per bed.

Nynke Tromp states that: “In the current business model the government provides destructive financial incentives, as there is a growing awareness that preventing is better than treating patients in a clinic.” In the long-term an app such as Temstem can prevent health problems instead of treating them. In the near future the government will run into the necessity to change the business model as these development can not only be funded by innovation funds. For this the government has to acknowledge the benefits of investing in an app.

In terms of business models this case is interesting as it shows the potential of approaching a problem-owner, in this case the government. If a designer makes a good case, which means through research and results being able to quantify results for the future, a problem-owner can be involved in an early stage and provide financial support based on the idea of preventing higher cost in the future.

5.2.4 Terminology

All designers (5/5) found the use of terms such as ‘social design’ or ‘sustainable’ problematic. These kinds of terms have the tendency to be turned into a bucket concept which results in a loss of meaning whereas people apply the terms in a broad variety of forms. “Social design is every type of designing in which more is taken into account than form and profit, but that you think about the world, and what moves it.” (C. Peeren) This results in the fact that the interviewed designers would not refer to themselves specifically as ‘Social Designers’ but rather by mentioning their specific design discipline such as fashion designers, product

designer or architect. This is related to the fact that (3/5) cases social design is not part of the core business. These designers have taken on social projects in addition to their ‘normal design practice.’

5.3 Creative Industry

5.3.1 Shift to social orientated

As argued by Van der Zwaag (2014) there is a shift in the design discourse taking place. More and more designers are occupied with social and sustainable topics but this does not imply that a majority of the designers are active in a socially aware practice. All designers (5/5) mentioned that making a living in the ‘normal’ design practice is already challenging. By restricting the design practice to specifically the social nice a designer has to overcome an extra hurdle to realize projects. This makes it understandable that not all designers in the industry are enthusiastically adopting a social approach. “If I see what a battle it is to realize these flip-flops, I do not wish that to anyone.” (Tjeerd Veenhoven). Nevertheless it is important to be critical about why other designers would not apply a social approach. This might be the result of the inherent motivation of the majority of the designers which is based on pursuing a ‘star-designer career’. Education plays a crucial role in this, which will be discussed in the following section

5.3.2. Education

All interviewees (5/5) acknowledge the importance of design education and the altering focus of education towards a more social orientated practice. To get more people involved in the social design practice the focus of design education has to change along with the evolving design profession to prepare design students for the work practice. Reality it that it takes time to shift the focus of educational material. Jeroen Verbrugge argues that “education is lagging behind the speed of developments in society. This is an example of a clash within the exponential society. All developments go so fast, that it is hard for everyone to keep up. The current design practice requires skills from our people that we would have never thought we would need. Everyone is in search for the right knowledge”. As a result of this, companies start to educate their own people, while education should have jumped on trends years ago.

Charlotte Kan emphasizes the challenge of getting students involved in these subjects. Students have to want to learn about a more social and sustainable practice and there is a need for right professors to communicate the potential of these topics. To enable a more interesting approach to these topics for young students it might be necessary that more scholar attention

is paid to gain an historical understanding of the rise of social design practices, as argued by Fallan (2014). Nynke Tromp, also speaking from her role as Assistant Professor in Social Design at the TU Delft, confirms Fallan's (2014) arguments by stating that a solid scientific foundation on the topic is still missing. Nevertheless the interest in the social design practice from the academic field is increasing. Tromp argues there is a growing group of graduates that want to work with subject such as social design. And also in educational institutions there are many people working on social design as an academic subject.

(2/5) designers mentioned that in the current educational system leans towards putting quantitative values and goals above qualitative. Exemplifying of this is the fact that institutions receive financial support for the yearly amount of graduates while it seems that there is less room for qualitative critical reflection on society. Recent events at the University of Amsterdam (UVA) exemplify this and the protests this system provokes.¹³ Besides the missing room for criticism specifically design education is challenged by the high number of yearly graduates. Reality is that we do not need 300 new product designers that make more stuff. Jeroen Verbrugge argues that “the influx of young people in both creative education as in the field is huge. And I cannot deny it [designing] is really fun work what we are doing, but the image is too positive. The unemployment is structurally and studies do not communicate this clearly enough”. This results in a demand-supply imbalance in the labour market as too many people present themselves in the market. This results in a decrease in quality and income. Jeroen Verbrugge suggest that the design practice might need stricter selection processes.

In the previous section the challenges for the younger generation of designers were described. Designer Tjeerd Veenhoven stresses the strengths of the youngest generation of designers which grew up in a world in which technology provides a variety of possibilities. As argued by Head (2013) the Millennials generation embraces the possibilities of the collaborative economy. Tjeerd Veenhoven describes admiringly how young designers cooperate with each other in different projects. “It is Facebook in practice. As individual you are connected to many different groups and these sometimes come together and sometimes not. [...] you can see how powerful the gathering of young creative is if they surrender to a sort of natural process of collaborative creation. That is amazing, they can handle way more

¹³ A protest movement, referring to themselves as The New University, demand democratization of the university, more transparency and less efficient-quantity focused educational management. They raise awareness for the negative effects of thinking in terms of quantity rather than quality which has resulted in standardized forms of teaching and research (www.newuni.nl)

complex themes. Especially with the current problems in society it is necessary to look at them with different perspectives.” (T. Veenhoven) If this trend will continue among the youngest generations of designers it might be argued that the era of the star- and ego-designers really is over, as argued for in the manifesto by Hella Jongerius (2015).

5.3.2 Crossovers.

As discussed in the previous section on methods of social designers, designers have proven their strength in shining new light on a situation and therefore their value in crossovers. By making problems tangible and visible designers prove their added value in other domains. This is why stimulating crossovers and the top sector policy of the Dutch Government is a form of branding of the creative industry.

What the government is doing now in the top sector-policy is establishing conditions which have to be met. The rest is up to the businesses and creative parties (Rutten, 2014). Verbrugge argues that there are steps to be made to make the top sector policy more visible for design companies. The top sector policy is a bit too abstract phenomenon for most companies. Therefore Verbrugge suggest that the Government should develop an instrument that companies would actually feel in their daily practice. An idea suggested is a voucher, monetary support to lower the barriers and actually initiate collaborations. “I noticed for example that healthcare and medicine is not being picked up enough by design studios. This is a waste as it is such an important societal theme. This can be stimulated by a project-base voucher from the government.” (Jeroen Verbrugge). An initiative like this could make the policy more tangible for the design sector.

The Federation of Dutch Creative Industries (2014) emphasized that for successful crossovers there are steps to be made by individuals in businesses or corporations to acknowledge and embrace the value of designers. (3/5) designers argued that this is part of a cultural change within companies which is slowly taking place. “With a little luck in a while the creative industries are integrated in the thinking about production and consumption, that it is standard included in the value chain.” (Tjeerd Veenhoven). Nynke Tromp argues that the main problem is that, especially governmental funded organizations cannot justify the cost of hiring a designer. To realize large scale embracement of the design sector the government and corporate management should enable resources to start these kind of projects.

Crucial for successful crossovers is not only the mentality of governmental or business parties but the ability of designers to communicate and prove their added value. In business circles attention is being paid to the potential of Design Thinking. According to Jeroen

Verbrugge: “The Creative Industry should take a clear and louder stand. Design Thinking is what we do and this is why we do it best. Currently these terms are more frequently used by marketers than by designers. Therefore designers have to become stronger at communicating their own strengths.” The Council of Creative Industry is one of the platforms that communicates this. But it is the task of the creatives, to tell the right story, have domain knowledge, show enthusiasm and show a long-term perspective that makes people realize that problems that are stuck have to be redesigned and the role designers can play in that.

As a final remark on crossovers in the creative industry it is worth taking a critical look at the employment opportunities in the design industry. This leads to the conclusion that crossovers might be a necessity for designers. As discussed in the previous section on education, the design industry has to deal with a supply-demand imbalance due to the oversupply of designing individuals. Crossover are from this perspective a necessity for the creative industry to be able to generate an income. This makes it seem as if there is potential for a success story in the Creative Industry. Government and corporate parties can benefit from embracing creatives to contribute to solving (societal) problems in other domains. While creative have to step out of their own domain to be able to make a living. If handled well all parties can benefit from crossovers.

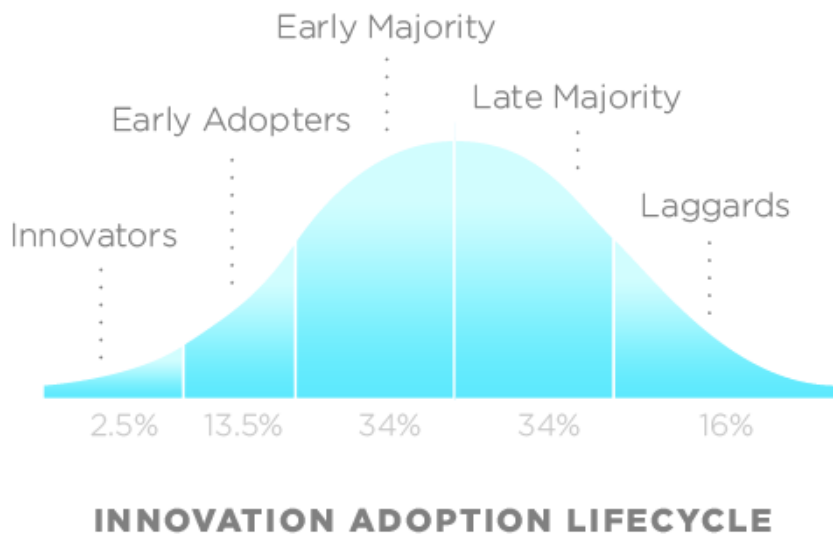
5.4 Social and Economic reality

5.4.1 Paradigm Shift

(4/5) designers mentioned paradigm shift during the conversation. Césaire Peeren emphasizes the necessity of this shift: “The majority of the people are relentlessly participating in the consumer society. I hope that the mentality shift grows fast enough.” To illustrate where the movement of the rising new social-economic reality finds itself in terms of supporters this designer refers to the Innovation Adoption Lifecycle of Rogers (1962). This is a sociological model which describes how new ideas and technologies spread in different cultures. The process of adoption indicates the group of people who adopt it in the following order: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and finally the laggards, the conservatives (Rogers, 1962).¹⁴

¹⁴ "Diffusion Of Innovation". Licensed under CC BY 2.5 via Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DiffusionOfInnovation.png#/media/File:DiffusionOfInnovation.png>

Figure 4 – Innovation Adoption Lifecycle



Césaire Peeren describes his own practice at Superuse Studios as the Innovator. He believes that the period of Early Adopters has passed and that currently the Early Majority in society might be joining the new perception of our economic reality and value system. It is the question whether or not the rest of society will join. In the following section the argument given by the designers on what should happen to enforce this change, from both bottom-up as well as top-down, will be discussed.

5.4.2. Implement change

Bottom up - Charlotte Kan calls on the growing awareness amongst consumers about the unlikeliness of the mass-production and growth orientated economy to provide answers to the economic, social and environmental crises as discussed by Schneider, et al. (2010). “You vote with your wallet. If everyone wants to see a change the ‘wrong companies’ will have to adapt.” (Charlotte Kan). Unfortunately this is a development which is taking place slowly. Tjeerd Veenhoven stresses that the connection between consumers’-behaviour and the flaws in the system is missing. This is related to Hamilton’s (2009) arguments on the integration of people’s sense of personal identity and their consumer behaviour. This is why awareness campaigns on the consequences of individuals’ consumption have limited effect.

Top down - (3/5) designers stress that the government has an important task in supporting the transition to a more social and sustainable reality. Even though bottom-up initiatives are numerous, they tend to have a limited impact. The government can enable support by making

initiatives such as the top sectors policy more tangible. This means that not only the ‘best-practice’ cases should benefit from the policy but the design sector as a whole. Specifically related to the design sector and its potential of contributing to societal problems, Nynke Tromp mentions countries such as the UK and Denmark in which design organisations inform the government on their possible contribution. For example the British Design Council supports the design industry in the UK. The Design Council is an independent charity which ‘champions great design.’ Through design they try to contribute to a better society (designcouncil.org). An organization like this would be of added value in the Netherlands.

Another form of top-down initiatives is suggested by Césaire Peeren. He calls for a global shift in the tax system in which not labour should be taxed but material and resources. Césaire Peeren: “with cheap labour and expensive material people will make very different decisions.” It would imply that transporting is expensive, forcing people to think local and asking people to contribute. It would mean less use of industrial production and more use of craftsmanship. This would solve unemployment issues. Most importantly this would bring dignity back into the production system as it is necessary that different kinds of labour and employment is realized. It is not necessary that we lose diversity, but the scale on which we are globally consuming and transporting can decrease, without loss of added values or qualities. Arguments given by Césaire Peeren can be linked to the approaches of wellbeing from Seligman (2002). Western societies are ready to embrace systems in which – the meaningful life – is realized. Systems in which social relationship, job satisfaction and a sense of purpose or meaning are prioritised.

Necessity - Further (2/5) designers argues that for real transition to take place the problems are not urgent enough. Meaning that as long as there are alternatives available, say oil instead of green energy, global transition will not take place. Peeren argues that in this perspective “What Superuse Studios is doing is building on the knowledge base to be able to be prepared for when this shift *has* to take place. The risk is that we and the earth won’t make it until that moment.” This would mean that societies are waiting for the third industrial revolution in which the existing mass-production and consumption model is replaced by a sustainable welfare system (Rifkin, 2011; Hawken, 1999).

5.5 Conclusion and Discussion of Results

The main motivations of the interviewed designers to be involved in social projects are based on transcendental and societal values. The designers in this study are all in their own way contributing to a fairer and better world. They try to realize this by providing alternatives for mass-production and consumption models through value chains in which profit is subordinate to social and ecological qualities. The impact of the discussed cases is not large in terms of quantity which is not problematic as the designers initiated the projects to realize social or ecological qualities. Nevertheless the discussed projects find challenges in upscaling, while staying true to their initial goals and values. This touches upon the issues of proportionality. Solutions can be found in replicating these projects, in the same proportion based on the same values, on a different location. Emerging online platforms, such as discovered.us provide connectivity with the rest of the world for small entrepreneurs that sell their crafted handmade products online directly to the consumer. This kind of developments embody all the components of the New Economy: sharing, connectivity, proportionality and localism and provide an alternative for the mass production and consumption model.

It is worth discussing the business models applied. Designers have to make an aware choice in which of the four spheres they decide to be active and find their financing as this will affect the realized values. Working in commercial logic might go at the expenses of social or ecological values. (2/5) project are only working on a social orientated business while the other (3/5) cases have a commercial or government funded core business. Therefore it seems as if the current most beneficial model is finding a balance between commercial and social practice, which means the latter is partly funded out of the money made in the core business. Nevertheless the (2/5) projects refuse to take up a commercial practice as this is not aligned with their core values and beliefs. The multiple income stream is mentioned as the best potential model for social design projects or social enterprises.

What seems inherent to the social design practice is the focus on system design instead of product design. This way designer do not only take responsibility for the end-product but for the entire production chain. An interesting idea suggested during the conference *What Design Can Do* (May 2015, Amsterdam) was to let designers take an oath during their educational years. Doctors, politicians, lawyers and even bankers take an oath. Design has such an influential role in society that a moral code would not be out of place. Through an oath designers will be obligated to practice their profession in a responsible, sustainable and social manner.

6. Conclusion

The Social Design practice in the Netherlands is showing promising initiatives that can contribute to improvements in society. This research explored designers involved in the Social Design practice in the Netherlands. In the theoretical framework first the rise of a New Economy, based on sharing, connectivity, proportionality and localism, was discussed. After this the evolution of the design industry towards a social and sustainable practice was described. Through in-depth interviews insight was gained into the motivations and the role of those individuals that are designing for social projects. By combining the theoretical framework with the empirical findings the main research question can be answered:

Why are designers involved in social projects?

The answer is threefold. First, the reason why designers engage in the Social Design practice is because they are driven by intrinsic motivation to contribute to a better world by solving societal issues. These individuals are dedicated to find a balance between economic, societal and environmental values based on a sustainable attitude. These designers step away from the mass-producing and consuming economic system that has proven to be unsustainable in the long run. Secondly designers pick up on the Social Design practice because the current social-economic reality demands a more social and sustainable attitude from them. On a daily base we are confronted with the numerous challenging social, ecological and economic problems in Western societies. These problems can be tackled through a creative, sustainable and interdisciplinary approach. As a result of, and parallel to these crises an increasingly louder call for change is coming from millions of individuals all around the world. It is not unlikely that in few decades humanity looks back at the first decades of the 21th century and concludes that a paradigm shift has taken place. A shift towards a New Economy in which local qualities, collaboration and sharing are key. This leads to the third reason why designers are involved in social projects: because it is exciting, challenging and future orientated. The growing belief in the idea that not competition but collaboration will bring the world further opens up exciting new possibilities in our interconnected global societies. Design can question, stimulate and attempt to change our collective consciousness and help us find new direction. A social and sustainable way of living, producing and consuming is a belief system which will lead us into the future. The role of social designers is to tell this story and get more and more people involved.

Based on these conclusions this research adds to the existing pile of academic research on the historical understanding as well as a critical reflection of the rise of Social Design. For the future development of Social Design it is necessary to deal with the tendency of it becoming a 'catch-all term' which threatens to diminish the impact that the discipline can make. Therefore it is important to keep in mind that Social Design does not refer to every designed product that has a social impact. Social design is design that focuses on societal impact, on solving societal problems and not solely on the interaction between user and product. Secondly, to continue the growth of the phenomenon of Social Design it is necessary that the added value of design is clearly communicated. This would contribute to the embracement of the design sectors by other domains and parties which is necessary for successful crossovers. The strength of designers is shining new light on a situation and making a problem tangible. Crucial is that designers show that applying design methods and design thinking is what they do best and not let marketing departments of corporations take over their tasks.

In the coming years interesting developments might arise that will support the future development of Social Design. Specifically in the context of the Dutch Creative Industry a great step forward would be the foundation of an institute such as the British Design Council, a body which support the integration of the design sector in governmental policies as well as in society. Another initiative that can ensure that the design sector will continue developing its social and sustainable potential would be by morally committing designers to the practice by letting them take an oath in their educational years. Other options would be the development of a quality label or certificate as proof for a social design practice as a way to inform consumers on the underlying production process and the available options. This would enable the consumer to take responsibility for their consumption behaviour and design choices. At the end of the day we are all designers of our own reality. Therefore it is not only up to designers to take responsibility but to all of us.

The limitations of this research could provide inspiration for future research. This research was of explorative nature based on the fact that Social Design is an emerging and continuous evolving movement. This, plus the time constraints of this research make that this study captured one moment in time of the social design practice in the Netherlands. Additionally this research finds limitations regarding the sample. First of all, the sample is not identical, the interviewed individuals have a backgrounds in different design disciplines which makes their design practice differ from each other. Therefore the results of this research say something

about the general trend of Social Design in the design sector and cannot be generalized to all the existing design disciplines. Additionally all the cases in the empirical part of this research can be considered as best-practice cases. This implies that the interviewed designers are not representative for the population of individuals designing in social projects, but that the cases can be viewed as example for future Social Design projects.

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Appendix A - Interview scheme (Dutch)

Instructies:

- Vraag toestemming voor audio opname en gebruik van data voor onderzoek.
- Introduceer onderzoek: master, scriptie onderwerp.

Vragen:

Values and goals

- Wat zijn de doelen of waardes die u nastreeft met dit project?
- Zijn alle doelen en waardes gerealiseerd?
Ja: Hoe zijn ze gerealiseerd, welke strategie?
Nee: Wat waren de uitdagingen? Wat is er tot nu toe gerealiseerd?
- Waarom zijn deze doelstellingen belangrijk?
- Voor wie zijn deze doelstellingen belangrijk?
- Wat zijn de uitdagingen voor de toekomst en voortzetting van het project?

Rol designer

- Is de rol van de ontwerper veranderd in de afgelopen jaren?
- Wat is de potentie van ontwerpers in het designproces? Vraag naar de toekomstige voor de rol van ontwerpers in het designproces? Wat zijn de uitdagingen?
- Hoe zou u social design definiëren? Ziet u uzelf als een social designer? Waarom?
- Verschillen jouw activiteiten van andere ontwerpers in de design industry?
- Spanningsveld : economische, artistieke en sociale waarde?
- Hoe brengen we andere dan economische waarde van de creatieve ontwerp praktijk in beeld? Hoe wordt de kwaliteit van ontwerpen gevalideerd, hoe bepalen we maatschappelijke, sociale of ecologische waarde?

Appendix B - Goals and Values per case

Goals	1. Production through slow-fashion principal	2. Addressing loneliness problem amongst elderly	3. Realizing a beautiful end product with commercial potential	4. Knowledge: learning and preserving techniques (craft)	5. Publicity and building name brand
Realized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partly
How	Production by granny's	Enthusiastic and continuous growing participation of Granny's which show decrease in loneliness	Consumer shows (increasing) demand in the end product	Designer and granny's continuously learn from each other	Media attention from tv-shows and (news)papers. Nevertheless difficult to draw conclusions regarding increase in sales
Why important	Example of how fashion production can be done differently: less quantity but higher quality	Loneliness amongst elderly is a social disease. Decreasing it shows improvement in wellbeing and happiness	Necessary for a successful product	Preserve knowledge from the granny's from which the designers can learn	Promoting brand and reaching audience
For whom important	For the designer: a personal motive For society: show that social and sustainable production is possible	Individual elderly and society	Individual designer, initiators of GF, the Granny as content producer and for the satisfied consumer	Granny's, designers and society	Organisation Granny's Finest and individual designer
Challenges	Scaling up and finding (ecological, biological) materials	Scaling up and reaching elderly that do not knit	Finding suitable and affordable (ecological, biological, beautiful) material	Communication with granny's	Reaching large audience
Type of value (tr/s/s/p)	Personal Societal Transcendental	Social Societal	Personal Societal	Social Societal	Personal

Table 7.1 Project: Palmleather Project by Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven Interview: Product Designer Tjeerd Veenhoven				
Goals and values	1. Creating awareness	2. Material innovation	3. Product design for world's poorest	4. Utilizing waste stream
Realized	Partly	Yes	Partly	Yes
How	By realizing and promoting the Palmleather Project and its values	Experimentation with material that lead to palmleather	Designing flip flops of palmleather	Palmtree bark normally seen as waste: unused material
Why important	To promote and stimulate change in international production processes	Need for non-harmful new material as the planet runs out of natural resource	Most design aimed at developed countries while bulk of waste comes from small products or developing countries	Make steps in tackle the international waste problem and promoting non-harmful use of natural resources
For whom important	Producers, consumers, future planet and generations	Everyone, specifically producers and consumers that benefit from the products	2.5 billion poorest people in the world	Everyone, specifically producers and consumers that benefit from the products
Challenges	Reaching and involving more people. And applying different tactic in developed and developing countries	Creating appealing products that consumer wants to buy	Realizing large scale production and creating a (very) cheap end product	Upscaling and making desirable products with it
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Transcendental	Personal Societal	Societal Transcendental	Societal

Table 7.2 Project: Palmleather Project by Studio Tjeerd Veenhoven Interview with Product Designer Tjeerd Veenhoven				
Goals and values	5. Process design	6. Enable local craftsman	7. Creating sustainable community	8. Publicity
Realized	Yes	Yes	Partly	Yes
How	Creating social and sustainable production and value-chain as alternative for harmful fast-production	Start social enterprise in India and provide them with work to apply their craft	Providing stable employment and selling to local consumers. This project is not charity, but aimed at realizing enterprise	Recognition of several awards for the Palmleather project
Why important	Need for a more social and sustainable production and consumption model to replace the current harmful and unsustainable model	Using available knowledge and provide income and purpose for craftsman	Supporting the well-being and development of local entrepreneurs and their community	Promotion and impact of the project. Plus for the ego and self-esteem of the designer
For whom important	Direct: producers and consumers of the chain. In the long run: important for everyone	Local craftsman Consumer	Local society, social enterprise and its consumers	The designer and palmleather producers
Challenges	Upscaling while staying true to initial value	Upscaling, applying the model in different locations and cultures	Making it successful so producer can become independent unit owner and upscaling in other locations	Enlarging and measuring impact
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Societal Transcendental	Social	Societal	Personal

Table 8 Project: eSOS smart-toilet by FLEX/the INNOVATIONLAB Interview with Industrial Designer Jeroen Verbrugge (Co-founder and director of Flex/the INNOVATIONLAB and member of Dutch Creative Industries Council)						
Goals and values	1. Improving and saving lives	2. Develop connective product	3. Extended health impact	4. Work with new parties	5. Internal motivation for FLEX team	6. Build on diversified FLEX image
Realized	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
How	By providing basic need toilet facility	Providing toilet with technique that communicates information	Reading and acting towards the information provided by the big data	Collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and SYNTECH	Letting Flex team work on diverse projects with social impact	Working on diverse projects with social impact besides commercial once
Why important	Improve worldwide quality in life	Build on 'big data' information base which is part of Flex strategy	Improve world health situation and be able to intervene when epidemics arise	To build relationship with diversified group of partners	To keep team motivated and let them contribute by solving social problems	Because of the positive impact of social projects on Flex image for current and new partners
For whom important	People in poor countries or disaster areas	People in need for which information can improve the situation. Flex for strategic position	People in poor countries or disaster areas	Flex/the INNOVATIONLAB	Flex/the INNOVATIONLAB	Flex/the INNOVATIONLAB
Challenges	Upscaling the product while keeping it accessible and cheap	Actually build big data base	Getting large amount of people to adopt the product to create big data base	Working together with parties form different domains	Balancing the time invested in social projects with its returns	Balancing commercial and social project
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Societal Transcendental	Personal Societal	Transcendental	Personal Social	Personal Social	Personal

Table 9.1 Project: Blade Made by Superuse Studio's Interview: Architect Césare Peeren, co-founder and head of design at Superuse Studio's (Add: reduce footprint of architectural design?)				
Goals and values	1. Reduce waste streams	2. Innovative material use	3. Urban transformation	4. Social awareness
Realized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partly
How	Linking surplus or waste output with needs or input	Adding functions to material through innovative methods	Transforming rotor blades into playgrounds, bus-shelters and furniture	Sharing their values through architecture practice, education, peer events and media
Why important	Necessity of solving end-of-life waste issues and global waste problem	New functions to existing resources to solve existing problem with existing material	Show innovative use of materials and resources in a daily functional architectural form	Spread the social, sustainable story to increase knowledge and understanding for the necessity of change
For whom important	Short term: Waste-owners and those who gain the input Long term: everyone	Society and waste owner	Project owner, designers and users	Society
Challenges	Research on innovative material use, finding partners and finances	Financing projects and finding partners to support in research and realization of projects	Finding projects with willing partners and finances	Social awareness doesn't grow fast enough before resources and earth are damaged.
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Transcendental	Societal	Societal	Societal Transcendental

Table 9.2 Project: Blade Made by Superuse Studio's Interview: Architect Césaire Peeren, co-founder and head of design at Superuse Studio's				
Goals and values	5. Encourage social interaction	6. Publicity	7. Transforming world to green and sustainable economy	8. Sharing knowledge
Realized	Yes	Yes	Slowly	Yes
How	Realisation of public furniture building making us of existing resources	Innovative practice draws attention of peers and media	Showing that it can be done differently	Making all their knowledge, experience and research accessible through their platforms
Why important	Playground stimulates interplay and imagination for the kids while urban furniture public comfortable spaces	Spread the story, make other designers see possibilities, broaden network and for ego of designers	Need to replace the current harmful and unsustainable production and consumption model	Competition is not the answer to a better world but collaboration and enabling others to make us of the same tools
For whom important	Citizens (consumers) that make use of the urban furniture	Short term: Superuse Studios Long term: necessity of changing practice for the whole world	Everyone	Other designers and consumers
Challenges	Minimalizing adaption or production of available resources while realizing comfortable urban furniture	Finding right platforms, and right public to listen to their story and start changing behaviour or making impact	Extending impact and changing system before it is irreversible	Making a living from open-source platforms
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Social Societal	Personal Social	Transcendental	Transcendental

Table 10 Project: Temstem by Reframing Studio Interview: Industrial Designer Nynke Tromp						
Goals and values	1. Enable people to feel free and participate in society	2. Create cheap and accessible product	3. Realize strong and well-designed product	4. Provide alternative for expensive and distant therapy	5. Provide short term distraction of voices	6. Realize long-term impact on mental health
Realized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partly, not yet proven
How	Tackle health problem by distracting voices as result of psychosis	By developing an app which makes it freely accessible for everyone with a phone	By the designers of Reframing studios	By realizing the cheap and accessible product	Through the language game in Temstem	Not proven but a coming clinical trial has to proof this
Why important	With the voices in their head these patients cannot participate normally in society	This social problem can arise in any situation. Through the availability of the app people feel empowered	For sense of contribution and purpose for the designer	Voices can arise at any moment. Distant and expensive therapy cannot provide an answer to this	Enable patients to participate in society	Previous trials have shown potential and diversified effects of the app
For whom important	Patients, their care givers and society at large that can benefit from their participation	Patients and their care givers	The designers and the patients	Patients and their care givers	Patients	Temstem users
Challenges	Maintain the effect of the app over a longer period of time	Now app is funded from innovation fund but free care will be challenging in the future	Creating successful designed and functional app	Financing this free care in the long run	Providing personalized solutions for each patients problem	Proving the long-term impact
Type (tr/s/s/p)	Societal	Societal	Personal	Social	Social	Societal

Appendix C - Transcription Interview

The full transcriptions of the interviews can be provided upon request by the author.