Shared Knowledge

An Exploration of the Use and the Design of Participatory Workshops

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Abstract
This master thesis presents an exploration of participatory workshops. It focuses on how these may involve a design project’s various stakeholders, and take the design process further by joint activities of mutual learning.

The main concern addressed in the thesis is how participatory workshops may be designed and implemented, together with companies working with design. The aim of the exploration is to gain an understanding of the various steps of the design and implementation of workshops, and also how these steps interact during the process.

The exploration is mainly based on the design and implementation of three different workshops: One workshop was designed on behalf of a design consultancy as part of the phase of concept, in an ongoing design project about cleaning products. Afterwards the team worked on ideas based on the winning concepts from this workshop.

A second workshop was designed for a working team at a company of wood floor production, in order to identify what future steps to take. The outcome emphasized what the team needed as well as desired to be working on next.

In collaboration with the same wood floor producer, a third workshop was also designed as a part of the company’s design competition. This workshop aimed at making the competitors share their personal experiences of the theme of the competition. The workshop resulted in a joint creation of understanding and knowledge about the company’s demands and desires of the new product.

In order to broaden my perspective on the method, I carried out a number of interviews, for example with MiL Institute, who is working with management training and coaching, and with Ordrum, who offers training in communication. To support mutual learning in the workshops, aspects of knowledge and learning are additionally included in the study.

The exploration shows the advantage of using prepared ambiguous materials as part of the framework of a workshop, for supporting divergent thinking; individual and collective storytelling; diversity of ideas; and collaboration between people. Additionally the exploration indicates that people’s involvement in participatory workshops may create more responsibility of the design, through the experience of a shared ownership of the process.

Moreover, it points out the challenge of working co-creationally in design work, also through the design process of workshops.
Acknowledgements

On page 11 I put forward the words of John Heron (1996) that before knowing there is belief. With this thesis two years of master studies are completed. During these my belief has grown in co-creation as a supporting way for reaching sustainable futures through design. The degree project has deepened my knowing in the accomplishment of workshops and promoted my understanding of what next steps to take as a designer of today.

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1 Starting point

**Inspiration and issues at question**

“Workshops are valuable research tools where different kinds of groups can outline and explore future trends and disruptions”, says futurist Alex Soojung-Kim Pang (2010) in his article *Paper Spaces: Visualizing the Future*. In recent years the workshop format has frequently been used in various design projects in order to explore precisely different stakeholders’ future needs and dreams and to understand their experiences of a particular issue.

In the book *Rehearsing the Future*, Thomas Binder (ed) (2010), Associate Professor at The Danish Design School, discusses the use of methods within design innovation. He honors that the methods movement in the 1960s “opened the door for approaches that think of the processes of how products and services come into being more than of the products and services themselves” (2010:19). Furthermore he addresses that innovation of today may take place not only in groups of experts coming from the same discipline, but in the intersection of many different competences. Based on his experience of conducting workshops with both designers and users, Binder has together with other researchers tried a new form of organization: *design laboratories* as a complement to the business organization. This with an aim to highlight issues like “how well are user needs actually met with existing products and what aspirations exist within and around the network of people in production and consumption in which the organization operates?” (2010:19). Accordingly the entire innovation process can be structured by a series of workshops.

Can it be that workshops are useful tools within a design process just as Alex Soojung-Kim Pang and Thomas Binder claim? Is there a need for a workshop format in the companies with whom I will be working? I will explore what format can be used and further how, when, where and not least why and with whom. At stake are advantages and disadvantages of a participatory workshop (see p.9) format as such and also in relation to the cases it will be a part of in this thesis.

Thomas Binder (2010) points out that the shared language that makes co-design sessions possible by supporting a reflective dialogue in this particular situation “[i]s typically not a language of abstract concepts but an everyday language in which stories of things and people can make sense across profes-

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1 “Characteristic of the 1960s Design Methods movement was its extreme trust in positive sciences, empirical and analytical, and its constructive and overoptimistic disposition. Even if the conclusions of Design Methods papers were highly abstract, their declared intention was to reform and improve design practice. By contrast, the Critical Theory movement which followed a generation later was indifferent, if not hostile, to the scientific approach and skepticism, if not pessimistic, about its helpfulness.” (Alexander Tzonis 2006:18).
sional boundaries, precisely because they are concrete” (2010:19).

If this is a correct observation what will characterize the “concrete” in terms of a shared language in the coming workshops?

The use of methods in the design process is discussed by Jon Kolko (2010) who works with interaction design and design synthesis. He regrets the occurrence of disconnection between the process of insight development and the process of product development, throughout the design process. Often the tangible artifact tends to be the only visual representation of the process of insight development; of the designer’s work of reflection. Therefore no connection is visible between the input of the overall design process and the output. Kolko’s (2010) answer to solve this dilemma is to not only conduct an act of synthesis as a private exercise, but to intentionally visualize the synthesis methods that the designer actually follows to make “[e]thnographic insights lead to new, innovative, appropriate, or compelling ideas” (2010:17). In this case the synthesis methods, abduction and sensemaking, are according to Kolko (2010) the acts of prioritizing, judging and forging connections. The participants in the workshops within this thesis will make this collectively.

There are several ways to externalize ideas, just as Jon Kolko (2010) is suggesting, in order to justify them and identify possible solutions. The (design) solutions are collected, tried out and proved.

A participatory workshop affords an opportunity for the participants to share their experiences, visions and ideas by jointly focusing on a certain topic, building on each other’s contribution and drawing connections maybe not explicitly made before. It is an opportunity for creating knowledge and thereby making decisions. As Thomas Binder stresses “[t]he richer the image the more it will stimulate explorations of the many aspects of the idea” (2010:21). Is this approach applicable within a company’s working process? That is, how to make the image richer in case of the design process and what does this activity bring about?
2 Framework

Various aspects of participatory design and workshops

Design projects as well as workshops can be conducted in many ways depending on the people involved and their mindset. The concept of “human-centered design” is relevant to this thesis. Professor Klaus Krippendorff (2006) is discussing different aspects of this approach in his book The Semantic Turn a New Foundation for Design. Initially Krippendorff (ibid) describes differences between technology-centered design and human-centered design. One of the highlighted dimensions is the semantic turn “[f]rom designers as a lone genius or authority to designers who can work in teams, including with users, and are able to enroll the stakeholders of their designs in joint projects” (2010:39). The earlier mentioned design laboratories, in chapter 1, is an example of this in practice. Krippendorff (2006) states further that he is most influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s arguments that there is no private language and that meaning is always social. Krippendorff (ibid) transfers this to the field of design by claiming that:

All artifacts have experiential histories, which are woven into social or cultural histories, always involving many people and their use of linguistic categories and artifacts. Also, new artifacts emerge from or develop from familiar ones. Artifacts are language in interaction. (Krippendorff 2006:46).

If we agree to this attitude, that artifacts are constituted in relation with people (like people are in relation with other people), what does it mean when designing for other people than ourselves and moreover, when planning and carrying through workshops? Before taking a closer look at the concept of meaning, we will look at the design position “participatory design” that Klaus Krippendorff (2006) calls on designers of today to embrace. In addition, some examples of current workshop formats within this field will be presented.

Participatory design

“[P]articipatory design involves an understanding that a design team’s working methods must be tailored to user participation while the implementation of the same may change during the project and be adapted to the particular project and its stakeholders” (Öberg 2010:273). With those words researcher Karin Danielsson Öberg (2010) puts forward a practical aspect and condition of participatory design. By referring to Joan Greenbaum’s perspectives

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2 Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) “initiated the linguistic turn in philosophy, a turn from abstract philosophical problems, such as the logic of reality, truths, and the nature of mind, to what humans do while speaking a language” (Krippendorff 2010:44).

3 My translation.
on the matter, Öberg (ibid) illustrates it in relation to design projects. She presents three perspectives: the pragmatic; the theoretical and the political perspective. The pragmatic perspective means that user participation is carried out with the aim to improve design, for instance through an enhanced requirements specification. The theoretical perspective is about how understanding between users and designers concerning the current situation, context and need, is promoted through different theoretical approaches. The political perspective is rooted in an engagement that technology should not only be cost effective but also improve the working situation. Öberg (2010) explains furthermore that there are two approaches regarding these perspectives: the Scandinavian and the North American. The latter is considered less political than the former.

The participatory design ideals within research projects in Scandinavia, started in the 1970s when the Norwegian Iron and Metal Workers Union (NJMF) project involved workers in the research, with a view “[t]o influence the design and use of computer applications at the workplace” (Bødker and Sundblad 2007:294). Since then the field of participatory design has become widespread, from IT applications at the workplace to home and leisure IT applications in addition. This design perspective is also used within other contexts such as commercial production, design for disabled users, children and learning environments (Öberg 2010).

The occurrence of participatory design engagement in public spheres and everyday life is discussed by Ehrling Björgvinsson et al. (2010). They put forward that this design position nowadays faces a reorientation from ‘democracy at work’ to ‘democratic innovation’. Ehrling Björgvinsson et al. (ibid) give an example of participatory design of today: the since 2007 ongoing project Malmö Living Labs. According to them there are more than two hundred innovation milieus within the European Living Lab initiatives. These user-driven labs are situated in real world environments and are aiming for collaboratively developing new services and products by collaboration with research organizations, companies, and public and civic sectors. Participatory design is lately used within the field of social innovation where the concept of sustainability is central for solving societal problems in new ways.

**Participatory workshops**

One way of involving stakeholders in a development process is to invite them to actively take part in a participatory workshop. Here follows some examples:

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4 User-driven design is concerned about supporting the users’ interaction with technology and their use of it. The user is mainly considered as a source for inspiration and information through the design process, not as a participating co-designer (Öberg 2010).
Future workshop

Future workshop was invented by Robert Jungk with the purpose of working with problem solving and developing positive change (Öberg 2010). Jungk’s experience of leaving Germany in 1933 due to Hitler’s policies and becoming a political refugee in Switzerland, eventually gave led to his development of this method. Jungk’s motive was to encourage people belonging to less powerful classes of society in democratic participation in their future (Bell 2009).

A typical future workshop includes one phase of preparation and three phases of activity within the workshop.

During the phase of preparation the theme in question, venue and time for the workshop are decided with the participants and finally announced. The material is collected, such as paper rolls, that is big sheets of paper to place on the wall.

The workshop begins with a critic phase when negative experiences and aspects of the issue of concern are discussed, written down on paper placed on the wall and finally clustered into categories. Then follows the phantasy phase when the participants share their wishes, dreams, conceptions and ideas. The most interesting parts of these are voted to be explored further during the workshop and possible solutions are drafted in small groups.

The workshop ends with the implementation phase when the suggested solutions are evaluated in regard to their practicability. Existing obstacles to a potential realization are identified and also how these may be overcome. Possible “next steps” are finally identified (Jungk and Müllert 1987).

From this example of a workshop that consciously covers the present, the past and the future supported by simple and inexpensive materials, to another one less widespread and more refined in terms of materials.

Exploratory Design Games

Eva Brandt (2009) offers another kind of workshop for involving stakeholders in the design process: Exploratory Design Games. Central to these series of design events are collaborative inquires into ‘what is’, that is the existing practice, and participatory design of ‘what could be’, that is possible futures (Brandt 2009). Brandt (ibid) claims that the game format is a means for structuring and organizing a multi-disciplinary design work aiming for mutual development of knowledge.

The games in question can be used “[i]n relation to space design, product and/or technological development work” (Brandt 2009:4) and they are: the User Game; the Landscape Game; the Technology Game; and the Enacted Scenario Game. In these games designers play the double role of both facilitating game playing and taking active part as players. The game materials based on field material are meant to be open-ended and open up for interpretations. Central for playing these games that can be designed and prepared by any of the stakeholders, is not competing but jointly exploring
Co-operative inquiry

Co-operative inquiry is another method used within participatory design research for including adult users as well as children. Characteristic of this way of proceeding is the view of participative forms of knowing and decision-making. Hence the participating users are regarded as co-designers and take part through the whole design process (Öberg 2010).

John Heron is a group facilitator who has elaborated this method and he claims that “[r]esearch cycling seeks to convert plausible belief into well-founded knowledge” (Heron 1996:53). Heron (1996) develops the concept of knowledge by claiming that before knowledge there is belief. Accordingly he divides knowledge into four different but interdependent kinds of cognition, where what is below grounds and supports what is above (ibid):

*Practical knowing* built on a belief in one’s own developing skill. This is about knowing how to exercise a skill.

*Propositional knowing* built on a belief that something is the case. This knowledge is based and expressed verbally and intellectually.

*Presentational knowing* connected to a belief in one’s own intuitive feeling for a meaningful pattern. This knowledge is characterized by expressive and artistic vents.

*Experiential knowing* rising from a belief in one’s own dawning sense of presence. This is about imagining and feeling the presence of some energy entity, person, place, process or thing. (Heron 1996:54).

John Heron (1996) states that an inquiry moves through these four stages each representing one kind of “knowing”.

An inquiry cycle begins with the action of describing something related to a particular topic. The next action is about evaluating these descriptions and then follows the action of theory building. The final step is the action of applying what has been learned and furthermore bringing what is learned in one cycle to the next, if they are several.

In interaction with the “movement” between reflection and action during an inquiry session, there is also the “movement” between the individual autonomy and the group interaction. John Heron (1996) terms these movements the *Fourfold interaction* and he means that “[a]n inquiry is most potent and effective if it can maximize this fourfold interaction” (Heron 1996:134). Questions to ask are accordingly: To what extent do the individual autonomy and the group interaction empower one another, and is there a mutual influence between reflection and action?

Moreover, John Heron (1996) divides an inquiry into two categories named *Apollonian* and *Dionysian* inquiry. The former takes a more rational, linear, systematic, controlling and explicit approach to the process of cycling be-
tween reflection and action, while the latter takes a more imaginable, expressive, spiraling, diffuse, impromptu and tacit approach to the interplay between making sense and action (Heron 1996).

The structure of the inquiry may be described by dividing the action phases into being divergent or convergent. In brief divergent means that the participants do, make, create, find or try out something different from each other. Convergent means the opposite; everyone does the same. These approaches can be altered within an action phase as well as between different action phases.

A co-operative inquiry can have either a descriptive or a practical focus. With a descriptive focus one performs different actions for gathering information about a certain domain. With a practical focus a lot of descriptive data is made evident, but here transformative actions within a domain is one’s primary intent and the information one generates about the domain is secondary (Heron 1996).

The concept of meaning

Human-centered design recognizes all stakeholders as experts in their own lives with freedom to choose and consequently taking responsibility for their choices and actions (Krippendorff 2006).

Coherently John Heron (1996) emphasizes an attitude of regarding the subjects of the design research as self-directing agents. He challenges the researcher to research with people and not on them. Furthermore, if the subjects’ experience is the focus of the research Heron (1996) claims that:

The researcher must invite the research subject not only to help decide what aspects of their experience and behavior are to be researched, but also ask them to be fully involved in making sense of these aspects, in devising conceptual constructs that give them meaning. (Heron 1996:203).

Thus the subject of the research is a co-researcher as well as the researcher, the designer, is a co-subject. Moreover the position of the researcher cannot be to inquire from the outside. Referred to John Heron (1996) one aspect of the human condition is to be embodied and that it is only through total embodiment with others similarly embodied, that a person can have insider access to the human condition (Heron 1996). Since people are meeting face-to-face in workshops this indicates a cornerstone for its setting and use. Professor Bengt Molander (1996) supports this belief when he elaborates, what he calls, the socratic dialogue as one aspect of learning: “[»I«] go into the dialogue in order to obtain knowledge and to find or shape myself, in a unit. And »you« do the same, thereby »we« are forming a we who can continue common and mutual learning” (Molander 1996:92)5. Molander (1996) clarifies that the knowledge he refers to is not the kind that can be tested obj-

5 My translation.
effectively, but a knowledge that is linked to the persons in the dialogue. To reach this knowledge one has to participate in the dialogue which according to him is an project constantly open to be continued through new lines.

People share the human condition. Another including aspect of this, besides being embodied, is to be either similar or different to others. What does that mean? Within the field of design research the concept of meaning is essential. Klaus Krippendorff (2006) not only emphasizes that meaning is central in human-centered design: he even claims that it is the defining concern for designers. Meaning, says Krippendorff is “[b]uilt on sense, rooted in the recognition of alternative ways of seeing on the one hand and acting on the other, and dependent on the context of the artifact’s use.” (2006:63).

Sense is according to Klaus Krippendorff (2006) an embodied phenomenon that always takes place in the present. It is the feeling of being comfortable within one’s world and in sync with what is happening. Our awareness of sense is usually perceived first when something differs from what we had expected, unconsciously as well as consciously. One can sense a chair but can also see something “as a chair” Krippendorff (ibid) continues. He stresses that “[s]eeing something as” opens up to the possibility of other meanings, both to oneself and to others. There is actually, he says, no meaning without awareness that something could be seen, read, interpreted, or used differently. How act upon this in a workshop situation? Krippendorff [ibid] argues that meaning is embodied in the beholder and in order to understand the meaning at hand one ought to ask questions and listen to people’s stories in which artifacts play the roles that their tellers give them.

Just like there can be several meanings of a word in a dictionary, so the meaning of an artifact is depending on to what context it is related to or experienced within (Krippendorff 2006).

In line with human-centered design, the meaning of interest to designers are embodied in individuals. John Heron (1996) states that “[a] full understanding of people necessarily includes the meaning through dialogue with them” (1996:198). Understanding someone else’s understanding, is an understanding of understanding, explains Krippendorff (1996) and he calls this second-order understanding. If this act always starts from one’s own position, as Krippendorff (ibid) claims, a conscious and “literal” change in point of view may be beneficial for promoting second-order-understanding. A “shift” of “viewpoint” is one of the opportunities a workshop opens up for.

Professor Barbara Czarniawska (2007) highlights by referring to the Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin that understanding is not gained by identification, but by the recognition of differences. Given that “[t]hese differences, in turn, are seen as a source of knowledge, not least about ourselves” (2007:21) illuminates the shared roles of co-researcher and co-subject, suggested by John Heron (1996).
The learning aspect
Regardless if the workshop is intended to facilitate collaboration or supporting co-creation\(^6\), we have learned that the aspect of learning plays a crucial part within participatory design. We may also regard the workshop as such (socratic) dialogue that Bengt Molander (1996) puts forward for promoting mutual learning through questions, answers and reflection. One part of this dialogue is to find and pay attention to the knowledge and the insight that the participants possess, even if they are unaware of it. That this is an aim that never can be fully completed, is another part to embrace, especially as facilitator.

Regarding the workshop as a learning situation, John Heron (1999) presents three modes dealing with the politics of learning: the *hierarchical* mode; where the facilitator leads from the front by thinking and acting on behalf of the group, the *co-operative* mode when the facilitator is sharing her or his power over the learning process with the group, and the *autonomous* mode; where the facilitator gives the group members freedom to find their own way.

Klaus Krippendorff (2006) puts forward that professional designers search the present for available paths to desirable futures just as people do in the realization of everyday life. Whose future is in that case a key question. Hence its answer ought to be in correlation to what is designed. One major difference between “[t]hose doing it largely for themselves” (2006:31) and those designing within the professional practice is according to Krippendorff (2006) that professional designers are using methods. This no matter if the designer in question is technology-centered, that is “[i]mproves the world in designers’ or their clients’ terms” (2006:31), or human-centered in that sense that the design is in sync with the community of users its criteria derives from. Regarding design methods this is something the designer often starts to learn in education.

Reflection in action
The thinker Donald Schön (1987) is often referenced in the context of how professional practitioners learn essential skills. He elaborates the concept of *reflection-in-action*. This activity to education means that people learn by doing. Bengt Molander (1996) explains Schön’s concept of reflection-in-action as a way to reflect both on what one has done, as well as on what one is doing. He interprets it as acting attentively and being ready for change. When discussing the learning of design, Schön (1987) notes that the student “[m]ust jump in without knowing—indeed, in order to discover—what he needs to learn” (1987:93). He means that this is the paradox of learning a new competence: the student must begin to do what he or she does not yet understand for understanding what he or she must learn for doing it.

\(^6\) Co-creation “is a special case of collaboration where the intent is to create something that is not known in advance.” (Sanders and Simons 2009:1).
experiences drawn from doing are essential and intertwined with a conscious reflection-in-action in the learning situation. Schön (1987) exemplifies this by recounting a learning situation from real life when a student in architecture is showing her sketches in a certain project to her supervisor. Molander (1996) uses their reciprocal exchange of views to illustrate a socratic dialogue, stressing that the progress of such dialogue depends on the participants having different knowledge and insights.

The student and the supervisor talk and work on the solutions in relation to the task and the supervisor is sketching in turn. Donald Schön (1987) says that what takes place is a conversation not only between student and supervisor but also with the sketches. Molander (1996) highlights that this conversation is an experiment of ideas and at the same time an experiment of action: the thinking and the acting cannot be separated.

With the help of a repertoire of examples, images, understandings, and actions based on achieved experiences, the supervisor guides the students in their work by letting them follow his interpretation of the current design situation (Schön 1987). Referred to Schön (ibid) the interpretation emerges from seeing the situation as something present in the repertoire, more specifically “[t]o see the unfamiliar situation as both similar to and different from the familiar one” (1987:67). Through experience the supervisor has gained guiding principles that he uses in order to structure the task and to frame the situation (Lawson 2004). These principles are visualized in the conversation and tried out too, once again, in action.

To gather references

The gathering of references or precedents is something designers always have done. To develop the skill to do so is critical not least because what is collected offers relevant points of departure through the design process (Lawson 2004). The references or precedents that one gathers are according to Bryan Lawson (2004) stored in the episodic memory containing times, places and events of our lives, which is part of the long-term memory that in contrast to the short-term memory is more or less permanent (Brynie 2009). Moreover, there are different types of long-term memory: theoretical and experiential memory, also known as semantic and episodic memory. Noteworthy is that these two types of human memory are stored and recalled in separate ways (Lawson 2004). Lawson (ibid) connects this embodied condition with the learning situation by observing that if (design) knowledge “[i]s taught largely as semantic knowledge it will be stored differently from episodic knowledge upon which students depend for establishing their precedent” (2004:105). This reasoning must also be a considerable guide for how to design the workshop material.

Returning to the tutorial situation mentioned earlier, this is a moment of re-
flection-in-action where particular precedents are evoked and together with them certain interacting frames or dilemmas that the current design project brings about. Donald Schön (1987) illustrates from this another aspect of the connection between experience and awareness: “[W]hen a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice [...] Frame awareness tends to entrain awareness of dilemmas” (1983:310).

If we consider every design situation as unique (Schön 1987) then consequently designers are frequently exposed to the need of learning. How to design the workshop so that the participants’ precedents and awareness of dilemmas are made accessible as fully as possible? And in addition arranged so that it may also add to the individual repertoires?

Just as Donald Schön (1987) emphasizes the importance of frames for learning, so do Nod Miller and David Boud (1996) when claiming that there is an opportunity for learning in every experience, but in order to learn the experience must be framed as an event from which something can be learned. How to frame workshops as events for learning?

**Reflection on action**

To alter the attention between what one is doing and how someone else is doing the same thing, is part of reflection-in-action. To reflect on what one has done is also part of the learning process. Crucial for a fruitful reflection, is in addition to be confronted with, and also consider how others received and acted upon one’s actions. Distance in terms of time may be good for describing and understanding the past situation and its activities in relation to larger contexts (Molander 1996). Once again it is about dialogue: “[t]o see something and to be able to reflect on it, it is often needed that someone else helps to visualize – paying attention to - different things.” (Molander 1996:98). Bengt Molander (1996) puts forward that we need representations of the including parts in order to understand the overall, the larger context, and also our actions.

To reflect on one’s actions for distinguishing what pattern of strategies these may follow, is one way to learning. What one is looking for is according to Molander (1996) what Donald Schön (1987) calls the theory-in-use, which is something that shapes the actions and behaviour of a person. It happens that people act according to another theory than the one they actually claim that they are following (Molander 1996).

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8 My translation.
The notion of future

Designers create proposals of products, services and spaces affording different use. Additionally they propose possible steps to take in order to reach the desirable change in question. Thereby the notion of future plays a part in the design process. Wendell Bell (2009) considers “critical realism” as an appropriate theory of knowledge for futures studies. According to Bell (2009) this is:

A post-postpositivist and post-Kuhnian epistemology and part of the larger humanistic culture of critical discourse. It synthesizes some aspects of older positivist views with some of those of the newer postpositivist philosophers, including in the latter case the claim that plausibility, not absolute certainty, is the most that can be claimed from scientific labors. (Wendell 2009:236).

The quotation gives the background to the concepts of posits and surrogate knowledge that Wendell Bell (2009) and Jeffrey K. Olick have elaborated. These are relevant concepts for design, and naturally to this thesis. A posits is a statement about the future which a designer can treat as true, although he or she does not know “[w]hether they are true, in order to explore alternative possibilities for the future, including improbable ones” (2009:237). When constructing images of alternative futures, which is something that designers are working with, Bell (2009) explains that a posits, an idea, may in such situation be worded as “as if” or “what if”, similar to the guiding questions in previously mentioned Exploratory Design Games. Knowledge surrogates are posits that one accepts as hypothetical knowledge, critically questioned but not yet disproved.

Accordingly, the main concern of a designer, is not so much predicting what the future will look like as to depicting imaginable variations of it. That is exploring and illustrating possible futures with the view that design is a tool to head in a certain direction, by which a desirable change may be fulfilled. In other words, prototypes of products, services or spaces to be, are also prototypes of the future.
3 Method

**Practice-driven theory and familiarity research**

This degree project consists of four interacting parts: a written thesis; an artifact; an oral presentation; and exhibition materials.

As reflection in action is a central concept of learning within design theory, this is the main approach for the exploration and analysis of this thesis. Like Bengt Molander (1996), Rune Wigblad and Seth Jonsson (2008) claim “[r]eflected knowledge is shaped in a ‘dialogical action’ and creates progressively familiarity”. Familiarity is by definition “[a] reflected experience drawn from long-term actions and communication within social contexts.” (2008: 313). This concept and the discussion about familiarity research which according to Wigblad and Jonsson (ibid) relates to the practice as the core during the whole research process, also make sense to this thesis. Moreover they argue that a familiarity researcher ought to work from the concept of abduction, seldom used within the academia so far, which means that the study has an emphasis on the practice. In contrast to a deductive approach that emphasizes the use of a framework of premisses, and an inductive approach that is largely based on a number of empirical observations, familiarity research is based on proved experience and the abductive main point, in terms of study, is that the researchers have their own familiarity which in addition constitutes a starting point, and/or work very closely with persons with much familiarity. Although I am a student, not a researcher, with only some familiarity with participatory workshops, I work closely with persons with much familiarity in this thesis.

Professor Bo Westerlund has conducted several co-operative workshops. During some of these “[t]he participants co-operatively make scenarios, props and video prototypes in order to create proposals for desired interactions with future artifacts” (Westerlund 2009:3). The importance of including activities in the workshop that aim for releasing the participant’s embodied knowledge and supporting mutual learning is a valuable aspect that Westerlund puts forward.

Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders is the founder of the company MakeTools. She has created many tools and methods for design research, used within a broad field of design issues. Co-creation is a central concept in her research and the following quotation about the pre-design phase emphasizes some of its objectives:

> It is often not known whether the deliverable of the design process will be a product, a service, an interface, or something else. The goal of this exploration

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9 My translation.
it to define the fundamental problems and opportunities and to determine what is to be, or should not be, designed and manufactured. (Sanders and Simons 2009:3).

Thanks to my opportunity of having an ongoing dialogue with Bo Westerlund and Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, I have been able to take into account their experiences of planning and conducting workshops.

Relevant to the approach of familiarity research is a reflective oriented analysis. According to Wigblad and Jonsson (2008) this reflection usually implies an analysis of actions through which a new piece is added to the experience domain in question. In addition the abductive starting point lays stress on results that are practically applicable.

In line with the approach of familiarity research I strove to start the study of this thesis with action within the practice of workshops with my own familiarity as a starting point (Wigblad and Jonsson 2008).

In order to limit the exploration, the workshop format is not compared with any other method in this thesis. It does not account for a result in the shape of a finalized physical product or service ready to use, but one proposal of another tailor-made workshop to each of the companies that I have been working with in the degree project.

Interviews

The interviews within this thesis are characterized by being “low-structured” (Wigblad and Jonsson 2008), that is they consist of themed open-ended questions and open answers. They were all video recorded which enabled me to more fully focus on the interviewee and take an active part in the conversation, than would have been possible if I had had to take complete notes.

The specified categories that the interview questions were all based on emerged from my participation in two workshops held by others: the first one by ex-designer Marti Guixe and the second by PhD student Fredrik Sandberg. These categories are:

- the definition of a workshop; future prospects; content and setting of the workshop; possible risks; and the role of the moderator.

*Figure I. Interview and timeline mapping with Pierre Sindre*
Workshops

The principal activities in this thesis are the workshops that I have participated within, designed or conducted. The given account of these events follows three main areas: purpose; framework; and implementation. John Heron (1999) illustrates six dimensions of facilitation with related questions that have been a guide to the work of planning, conducting and analyzing the workshops:

- **The planning dimension**: How shall the group acquire its objectives and its programme?
- **The meaning dimension**: How shall meaning be given to and found in the experiences and actions of group members?
- **The confronting dimension**: How shall the group’s consciousness be raised about its resistances to and avoidances of things it needs to face and deal with?
- **The feeling dimension**: How shall the life of feeling and emotion within the group be handled?
- **The structuring dimension**: How can the group’s learning be structured?
- **The valuing dimension**: How can a climate of personal value, integrity and respect be created?

Although all of these dimensions are not main objectives of the thesis, they point at the complexity of group dynamics which influence all kinds of team work, the workshops held within this thesis included. In the interest of the companies and their business secrets, certain details are not mentioned in the thesis.
4 Work process

Workshops, meetings and interviews

The main objective for this thesis is to explore opportunities for using participatory workshops within a company’s design/working process. I have had the advantage of working with the design consultancy Ergonomidesign AB in Bromma and AB Gustaf Kähr (Kährs), wood floor producer founded and located in Nybro. Here follows a short introduction of these two companies with global markets:

Ergonomidesign AB

Ergonomidesign is today a world leading design consultancy with 48 employees. The office is multi-disciplinary and offers services within design research, industrial design, inclusive design, sustainable design and conceptual engineering. Core values for their design are the users’ needs and experience of an improved life and/or working situation, ever since the start in the 1970s.
For further information: www.ergonomidesign.se

AB Gustaf Kähr

Kährs has still its major production and head-quarters in the small town Nybro where the company once was founded in the year of 1857. It is the largest wood floor producer in Europe, with 791 employees. The floors that Kährs produces are common in homes, offices, shops, hotels, concert halls, theaters and sports arenas. Examples of innovations developed by Kährs are the multi-layer parquet, the activity sports floor and the engineered floor with the glueless Woodloc® joint.
For further information: www.kahrs.se

Workshop held by Marti Guixe

In the end of January 2011 Marti Guixe visited the Linnaeus University. He is a designer, or more accurately an ex-designer as he is calling himself, living in Barcelona and Berlin. I participated in a three day's workshop held by Guixe for the class of Master I. The main purpose was to develop design ideas that the Master I students would be working on during the whole semester. Particularly with regard to “critical design” which is an approach often taken by Guixe, used to through artifacts raise people’s awareness of phenomena in society on a social, cultural or political level. “Critical design is not about being against”, Guixe claimed, “but pushing forward by developing tools for changing existing perceptions in today’s society”. Accordingly critical design is used to make a statement, that is including a message. Furthermore the instruction as well as the perception is consciously shaped.

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10 Marti Guixe designs “Concepts and Ideas for Commercial Purposes”. For further information: www.guixe.com
Notable is that the workshop mainly dealt with the perception of the designer and not the perception of the user. Although the workshop was not participatory in the sense that it included any further stakeholders or future users, it was interesting to take part in the group discussion evolving around Guixe’s model of synthesizing.

The method Marti Guixe introduced and made the group use for synthesizing was to initially make a subjective statement of an identified need, in order to highlight the chosen issue. Regardless the need is intended to be promoted or avoided it should be referred to a particular context with a written (critical) design proposal(s) i.e. a way of acting. Thereby visual links are made between the statement and the context (see figure II).

Some advice that Marti Guixe gave in this startup was to rely on one’s own thoughts and interests and to “dig where you stand”. In addition to choose a context one is a part of or familiar with.

The participants’ ideas were mapped, discussed and developed throughout the workshop. During the discussion we made the tour clockwise around the table and each participant shared their ideas. Although much of the discussion consisted of a dialogue between Marti Guixe and the student in question, everyone contributed by telling their thoughts and experiences of the issue at hand. In terms of facilitation Guixe mixed the hierarchical and cooperative mode: he thought and acted on behalf of the group but he also gave to us the participants freedom to find our own way (Heron 1999). It ought to be mentioned that Master I is a group of five students all from different countries showing each other mutual interest and respect, which itself facilitated the cooperation.

Marti Guixe’s ability to apparently make everyone feel at ease was impressive. One reason could be that he, just as Klaus Krippendorff (2006) argues, asked questions and listened to our stories in which people and artifacts played the roles that we gave them.
Class with Anita Malmqvist

In the beginning of March 2011 the artist, teacher and director Anita Malmqvist came to the Linnaeus University. For two days she gave lectures in “what is film”. It was not only interesting, but also useful to follow her thorough teaching characterized by philosophical aspects of film, because video is a guiding tool for the process of reflection (Molander 1996). Additionally for documentation as well as for presentation of the workshops.

Through a brief historical review Anita Malmqvist illustrated main film development events, both in content and technically. She also gave practical advice for future video recording and narrative aspects of editing. In addition Malmqvist showed how film essays (or cinematic films) may be portrayed. One of her examples was Schnittstelle by Harun Farouki, in which the film maker himself says something like “[I] speak to the pictures and let them speak back to me”. Farouki’s attitude to his way of proceeding the film making, recalled the process of learning in the context of design education demonstrated by Donald Schön (1987). As if the artist and the designer provide themselves with an “equipped” activity for launching a generative interplay between internal and external matters.

Anita Malmqvist suggested that one notion of time is a stream of reality. It was interesting to reflect on film as a time object and on the revolutionary novelty it once was to watch motion picture, when movements were captured this way. Since then man experienced time in a remarkably different way than before, because with film one was able to eventually speed up and slow down “the stream of reality”. Moreover the viewer was confronted with the sensational that someone else had decided the course of events to face and even the rhythm and pace of its progress.

Referred to film theory it was fascinating to learn that lately the bodily or carnal experience of film is no longer ignored but explored and treated as an interacting part of watching a movie. This is according to Anita Malmqvist related to an increasing interest and research into other intelligences than the one of the human brain, namely somatic intelligence also known as intuition. This is nothing that will be explored in this thesis, but it touches features of today’s society that are pointing to an enduring recognition of the human body.

Another capturing aspect of film that the lecture brought about was the notion of authenticity. Anita Malmqvist emphasized that realism is a living notion. Films are regularly sorted into the genre of realism. But once the expression perceived as “realistic” becomes a trend-setter that is, the expression becomes a style, a markable manner, the feeling of authenticity is lost and new expressions are sought.
Workshop held by Fredrik Sandberg

Fredrik Sandberg, PhD student at the Linnaeus University, has developed a method for creating knowledge about stakeholders, partners, and customers; about new product opportunities; about hopes and fears; and about future changes (Sandberg 2011). The Visual inquiry is carried through singly or together with another interviewer, with the support of sticky notes and dots as mapping tools.

During the inquiry when the person in question is asked to tell his or her story about something personally experienced, he or she tells the story and answers on possible questions, writing keywords of what is told on sticky notes, one by one. One color or shape of sticky notes represents an action and another the related actor(s). Changes and dreams for the future may be mapped out in the same way, too.

In an immediate connection to what is told, each pair of colored sticky notes, is stuck on a broad piece of white paper that represents a timeline. The latter is agreed on before starting and should cover the time that is intended to be described. The sticky dots represent problematic events and strengths.

Similar to the student and the supervisor’s sketches described in the previous chapter, the accumulating timeline becomes part of the conversation. It supports the joint act of sensemaking and constitutes a symbol of both the story told and the dialogue.

Fredrik Sandberg is doing research within the Digital Service Markets project. It is a collaboration project between an interdisciplinary group of researchers from the Linnaeus University, a group of food producers from the surrounding province and food buyers from the municipality in Kalmar. The project aims at creating new services that will help the municipality buying locally produced food and services that will increase the communication between the involved food producers.

For a period Sandberg carried through several Visual inquires with different food producers. As a next step he invited these people to join a future workshop at Pukeberg. I was welcome to participate to learn from the event.

Fredrik Sandberg shared his agenda for the workshop and he, Professor Bo Westerlund and I met to discuss it in the morning of the day when the workshop would take place.

It was productive to take part in that phase of preparation as well as the workshop, although the workshop was postponed four weeks, because of participants canceling in the very last minute.

When the future workshop took place in the middle of March 2011, three companies had the possibility to participate.

The three hour long workshop started with a critic phase. Here the participants shared their business and identified problems, with the support of the timeline map from the earlier inquiry.
After each presentation, everyone gave a suggestion on how to solve the identified problem within the business, marked on the map with a red dot. The suggestions were written and sketched on A4-papers placed on the wall by Fredrik Sandberg who was moderator. During a small coffee break the participants additionally wrote down all the food trends they could think of, on big orange post-it notes. Sandberg gradually placed these on the wall as well.

Then followed a phantasy phase in which the group was divided in two and worked on dream scenarios: how do we want this world to be for the next generation? (see figure III).

In conclusion the proposals were presented and during the final implementation phase possible next steps were identified.

![Figure III. Future scenario](image)

It was a good experience to take part in the workshop, not least because it brought on the fore the experience of being a participant. Since Bo Westerlund and I participated on other grounds than the others, I was confronted with the experience of not doing the same things during the workshop as the rest of the group, which personally was not an advantage.

One of the participants had from the beginning a critical attitude of “what’s in it for me?” and my raised awareness of this occurring was beneficial for coming workshops.

Bo Westerlund suggested that one could have immediately focused on the red dots, instead of the whole timeline map which initially took much time. The time gained could be used in the implementation phase for collectively identifying steps between the illustrated future and the present. It could also be used for brainstorming future dreams/ideas and clustering before the scenario planning. Westerlund also shared that a clever move for the moderator is to bring some thought through suggestions for next steps, just in case these will not come spontaneously from the participants.
Meeting and interview with Stina Andersson

Kährs’ Manager Designer Stina Andersson invited me to meeting her on March 25, 2011, in Malmö, where she works at Kährs’ Marketing Department. I brought with me a plan for a workshop concerning the company’s current design process, as a proposal, based on a need that Andersson had put forward in our earlier phone conversation. We discussed the plan and other workshop opportunities, but first I was introduced to the business with regard to floor design.

Recently a new production line had been implemented at the largest plant of Kährs, in Nybro. Stina Andersson is part of the production team, Nybro Design, assembled in order to carry through design projects to this particular manufacture. During a short period of about three months (their design projects usually last longer) this team of 14 employees with different responsibilities, had designed a new collection of floors, Craftsman Collection, which in a few weeks’ time would be launched on the Swedish market.

Stina Andersson shared that the team worked very well together and she considered it to be good for them to soon meet as a whole in a workshop. During their recent project many design ideas had emerged along the way, but all these were not gathered yet and Andersson stressed that sorting them was another workshop opportunity.

To understand more of the design process at Kährs, I asked Stina Andersson to describe it by using the Visual inquiry. So she did and she chose the first project run by Nybro Design as a sample. Andersson found the method easy to use and she appreciated the overview it admitted. The mapping helped her to make sure she did not forget any part.

![Figure IV. Timeline mapping by Stina Andersson](image)

Interview with Pierre Sindre

Architectural offices are a kind of company where participatory workshops could be a useful way to collaborate across professional boundaries. There was no occasion within the timing of the thesis to have a workshop with such
company, but on March 29, 2011, I got the chance to interview the designer and interior architect Pierre Sindre. With the support of the timeline mapping, he described a recent design project together with Växjö District Court and identified workshop opportunities in his design process, in which he usually does not make use of workshops. Sindre gave several definitions of a workshop:

In a workshop one is assigned to a task, often in groups, and one has a certain palette to work from during a limited amount of time. The goal with a workshop is not the result but the process which promotes cooperation within a team. To me a workshop is something unpretentious, like a lung or catalyst. I use to compete otherwise, but a workshop is only pleasurable.

According to Pierre Sindre future use of workshops in his profession could be to gathering the cabinet makers as well as the financial responsible within a project. The Government rules for Contracts are an obstacle to overcome in that case, though.

Regarding the role of the moderator, Pierre Sindre claimed that he or she must have the ability to generate enthusiasm in the workshop participants. In that respect it is a very demanding role, he thought.

Interview with Erik Mattsson

Erik Mattsson is CEO and founder of Ordrum AB in Gothenburg. Ordrum AB offers services and education within communication. He works as a lecturer, moderator and educator in communication. On March 30, 2011, we met for an interview about his long experience of meeting methods and the role of the moderator. Since Mattsson operates within a broad range of various businesses, not exclusively in relation to one particular, like design, it was interesting to be confronted with his perspective on workshops.

Erik Mattsson defined a workshop as an opportunity to think and act together with others. Additionally he meant that it is an occasion when new thoughts may be created. Mattson works for making good meetings take place and according to him that is when as many as possible are communicating in the current group meeting.

As for instance modern mobile communication devices provide us with access to information increasingly and more quickly than before, the demands on meetings face-to-face are high, Erik Mattsson said: "Because when you meet people you want something more than the information that you easily can download yourself".

When it comes to the content and setting of a workshop, Erik Mattsson meant that this depends of course on the purpose, but it is always good to bring more than you need. He also emphasized the advantage of summarizing together before the workshops ends and to visualizing the outcome of actions in the room, as they happen. This statement reinforces what Bengt Molander (1996) highlights: that we need representations to understand the
whole, and thus to understand an action.
A risk with a workshop format that Erik Mattson has identified is that the client often wants to solve too many things during a single morning session. He has learned to not always announce the meetings as a workshop, since creative activities tend to be considered unprofessional. Erik Mattsson put forward that as a moderator one has the freedom and the responsibility to adjust the planned course of events in the moment. “A moderator,” he continued, “must communicate safety, confidence and in control of what is happening. And he or she is allowed to do anything but being boring!”

Erik Mattsson did not use the timeline mapping for describing his working process. Maybe he considered it too personal to create a map. However, it was time saving to only do the talking. Besides, the objective of this interview was the experience of moderating, and not workshop opportunities like in the two previous interviews.

Interview with Jonas Janebrant
Jonas Janebrant is a professional moderator working at MiL Institute\textsuperscript{11} in Lund. They offer various programmes of management training and coaching to companies, and Janebrant has a long and solid experience of guiding people, as individuals and in groups, through different learning processes. During more than 30 years MiL Institute has designed, tailor planned and carried through workshops in line with the learning philosophy ARL: Action-Reflection-Learning. Inspired by Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön among others, this philosophy supports a coherent process of interplay between action and reflection: in order to learn it is crucial to shifting and/or widening one’s perspectives through reflection on made experiences. MiL Institute claims that an individual’s values and perspectives are not static but something that can change and develop, that is the theory-in-use (Molander 1996). One main aim with the design of the learning process that they are offering in different settings, is that the participants not only are improving their skills within a certain field, but also that a favorable transformation of ideas and perceptions may take place (Rohlin et al. 1994). Hence the focus in their workshops is practical and not descriptive (Heron 1996).

On April 12, 2011, Jonas Janebrant told me in an interview in Lund, that the programmes usually last for two to five days. He emphasized the importance of giving the participants time to get to know each other in the beginning. This makes it easier for them to open up later on. Since it turned out that the interview could last for only one hour, instead of the two that were planned, I decided on the spot to not suggest the Visual inquiry to Janebrant.

\textsuperscript{11} MiL Institute is a non-profit foundation formed in 1977 in collaboration between Lund University and industry.
When it comes to success, Jonas Janebrant meant, one of the crucial challenges for business of today is what characterizes the exchange of information between people and employees in the gaps between work activities. It is common to be aware of one’s own part, but not always the business as a whole. In order to make the business stronger it is useful to identify and implement a supporting system of conditions for good interaction between every position within the company.

A challenge for MiL Institute is to work for that the outcome of the programmes does not end only with individual development, like an encapsulated experience of the person concerned, but affects the business as a whole. Additionally that the new steps based on insight and new learning may be implemented during, and not after, the guided learning process which may span a period of several months.

During a learning process, a risk for Jonas Janebrant as a moderator during a learning process is to become a part of the group in the sense that he loses the external point of view.

At MiL Institute they often conduct workshops in pairs. One of the crucial issues for the moderators is to judge whether or not to stick to the prepared agenda or change it in line with any emerging core interest of the group. Also Erik Mattsson mentioned that there is no intrinsic value to complete all the planned activities: the important thing is that the implemented ones are carried out thoroughly. Therefore he usually keeps the agenda to himself.

With regard to the act of externalizing ideas, Jonas Janebrant stressed that to depict one’s experience in something more tangible than words, makes it easier for others to interpret one’s meaning. Besides the creation often shows more or something else than one initially had thought of saying.

As a conclusion Jonas Janebrant said that in a workshop situation the moderator must remember that he or she cannot “win them all”. Focus on those who are engaged and do not lose energy on someone who is critical from the start, he suggested. Because people with such attitude tend to strive for proving themselves right, that there indeed was nothing for them to win in the current situation. “In this job”, Jonas Janebrant continued, “you must love what you do. If you don’t, -then fall in love! If that’s impossible, give the chance to someone else.”
Exploratory workshop at Ergonomidesign AB

The first workshop to be implemented within this thesis, was one together with a design team of five various designers at Ergonomidesign AB, all part of the Product Design Team in Bromma.

One of the design projects that these designers were working on was about cleaning products and Elisabeth Ramel-Wåhrberg, its project manager, shared with me the conclusions and insights drawn from the research work that the team recently had completed. My task was to design a two-hour workshop, which would take place the following week, for exploring one of four particular categories, among others that had been identified as key issues of the future design. By the time of the workshop the team would have started to generate ideas and concepts, focusing on other aspects, though, than would be explored in the coming workshop.

Purpose and framework of the workshop

The workshop ought to bridge between the research result and the ideation of concepts. In order to explore the different aspects of the product: easy to start/end; appearance; easy to store; and fragrance, the workshop participants would be working together with regard not only to one single category, but to all four of them. Divided into two smaller groups representing two different families of personas, that is fictive characters, each group would receive a number of cards with various scenarios when the cleaning product in question was used at home. The personas and the scenarios were composed in a way that they together covered a broad range of users and a variety of possible needs.

The first task would be to jointly act (or read) out the scenario; sketch and make a mock-up out of wire and corrugated board to be used in current situation (at least one proposal to each scenario) and then act out the scenario once again for video recording the use of the proposal/mock-up. Additionally each of the four categories should be defined in relation to current family of personas and situation.

Thereafter each group would present their video-clips and definitions to the others, and also position the ideas in a matrix on the wall. Except from holding the ideas on the wall and allowing an overview, the matrix would show the connection between the particular proposal with its definitions of the categories and the frequency of use.

As a closure activity the participants would be voting on the ideas in view of what proposals to explore further.

Accordingly, the main framework of this workshop was: the pre-written scenarios; the two different families of personas; the four categories, the matrix on the wall and the time-limit of two hours.

To act out the scenarios by using mock-ups, would release the participants’ own embodied knowing. By filming it, the whole group would get the chance to analyze and discuss the particular activity and proposal. In addition
the videos could be saved and shared with those who would not participate in the workshop. Being able to go back and on the video recording see what happened, is according to Bengt Molander (1996) essential for “entering” the action in order to highlight the intent and to create understanding of that particular act, which leads to advanced knowledge of future similar actions.

Although Elisabeth Ramel-Wåhrberg had approved to the agenda of the workshop, she change her mind two days before the workshop, because of the time. Since the budget of the project was small, she wanted to make sure that no time would be lost on technical matters or the practical making of mock-ups at this stage of the process. So instead of acting and filming, the two small groups would be sketching in relation to the scenarios.

Implementation of the workshop

When the workshop took place in the morning on April 8, 2011, we all gathered in the company’s conference/dining-room. Things went according to the plans. The participants were easy going and well used to be working together. Each group was introduced to their specific personas and received a number of scenario cards. After a short while, when the sketching session had got started, they were given a pile of post-it notes too. One of the groups made use of these.

Next, the groups presented the scenarios that they had been given and together with them their various proposals of concepts, and these were positioned in the matrix. There was one scenario left from the sketching session. The whole group discussed a solution to this, after the sharing of ideas. Then the discussion spontaneously continued in the lavatory, where different examples of the product in question were tried out.

Lastly the participants did the voting on the wall, and before leaving the room when the workshop was ended, we jointly discussed and reflected on the workshop experience and its outcome.

It was encouraging to experience that they all appreciated to use the specific scenarios. Elisabeth Ramel-Wåhrberg considered them being detailed enough and “although it was all fiction”, she said “they highlighted realities”. I got credit for my willingness to adjust the content to their wishes in action. Instead of voting on two overall proposals, the group wanted to vote on one overall proposal and one detail, since all the proposals were not equally developed.

Even if the categories of concern were defined by the different sketched proposals, I had thought that their definitions would also have been written down in words. When using the matrix, the participants paid less attention to the categories too, than I had expected. But on the other hand it did not matter much, because the use of the matrix supported a discussion regarding certain details in the brief of the client, which was its main purpose. The client demanded namely a multifunctional product and by the way the various sketches were positioned within the matrix, pros and cons became clear.
The participants did not only participate actively in the session, they also contributed to enhancing the working situation by asking questions or closing the kitchen door, if it happened to be open when the situation demanded a full concentration of the group. In addition they naturally laughed from time to time, not at, but with each other, which had a positive impact on the experience to all of us.

Elisabeth Ramel-Währberg pointed out that to them it is effective to sketch: they work very fast with pen and paper. This is of course a good and well-justified reason to stick to this way of externalizing ideas. But if they had made mock-ups and video recorded the “suggestions-in-use”, the workshop would have been more of a challenge, because then the process would have been moved from the ordinary and habitual.

Even if the participants tried out different examples of the product in the lavatory, this performance was nevertheless limited to the already existing.

But Elisabeth Ramel-Währberg was probably right about that we would have needed two more hours for accomplishing the workshop with mock-ups and video clips. This extra time was not available which is due to the contract between Ergonomidesign and the client. Nor did the occasion admit that I could invite any end-users to the workshop, or had assistants with me who could assist in the filming.

![Figure V. Sketching based on scenarios](image)

![Figure VI. Sharing and positioning ideas](image)
Workshop with Nybro Design at Kährs

Some weeks passed after the first meeting with designer Stina Andersson before a workshop could take place together with Kährs. This brought that the intended participants were invited to participate well in advance.

Purpose and framework of the workshop

Stina Andersson chose in the end that the first workshop together ought to gather the team of Nybro Design, to focus on both generating and sorting ideas concerning the new production line at Kährs in Nybro.

One week before the day of the workshop Stina Andersson received a proposal of agenda and matrix to comment on. Some adjusting was made according to her point of view, namely how the heading was worded that would guide the matrix: from “Need of knowledge within” to “Need of development within”.

The workshop would start with a thorough brainstorming session. The participants would sit around a table and follow a method where everyone writes an idea on a sticky note and then sends it to the neighbor. The latter may add to the idea on another sticky note before placing it in the middle of the table, or just get inspired for the next round.

The next step would be to leave the table and rearrange the chairs. All the ideas would be read out loud and positioned in a particular matrix on the wall. The position would indicate within what field the team needed more knowledge: competence; material; technique; or profitability/pay-off, and also how fast the idea could be realized. Then the participants would vote on what ideas to continue with in the workshop and these would be positioned, too, in another matrix, which would show whether the idea was: a solution to an identified problem; the answer to an identified need; or an opportunity. Additionally to what existing market it belonged: Americas; Europe; Middle East & Africa; Asia Pacific; or Global.

Everyone would vote once more on what ideas to move even further and the three winning ideas would be explored in smaller groups, from an angle of what next steps to take in order to fulfill the particular idea.

Finally the groups would present their explorations to each other and every participant would get the chance to sign up for what he or she wished to be working with and take responsibility for, as a commitment.

The framework of this workshop was thus: the time-limit of three hours; the matrix; and the composition of materials for the explorations in small groups, namely a set of board, pens, sticky notes in various colors and sticky arrows.

Implementation of the workshop

On April 19, 2011, the workshop was held in the afternoon. The whole team and one extra employee who wished to participate, came to join the activity at Kährs in Nybro. Since the initial generation of ideas happened to be very
rich, much time was spent on the following joint discussion when these ideas were positioned in the first matrix. Therefore we skipped the use of the second matrix in order to have time for the exploration in small groups. Besides neither of the participants had marketing as their main field and could accordingly not share this knowledge with the others. Otherwise the workshop was carried through in accordance with how it was planned.

Stina Andersson and I reflected on the workshop, right after it had taken place. The day after, she also discussed it with some of the participants. We concluded that more time could with favor have been spent on the last activity in small groups. So next time the initial brainstorming would not last as long. Regarding the latter, one participant suggested that the post-it notes with ideas, could be sent not only to one single neighbor, but all around the table.

I was surprised by the participants talking during the first activity, which I had expected to be carried through in silence. I was also surprised by the gibes around the table, and that some of the participants answered calls on their cell phones during the session.

The most striking observation was though that after reading an idea out loud,
almost every participant turned to the group for discussing its position in the matrix. Instead of presenting the idea and then position it on one’s own, trusting that any opposition would be taken care of. Therefore this activity took more time than expected.

I was confronted with that one of the participants suddenly left half way through the workshop. He excused himself with a promise to soon be back, but he never did. This behavior actually showed more disrespect to the group of colleagues, than to me as facilitator: he did not take part in the completion of the process as he was part of in starting.

In terms of activity, this workshop brought the group from the ordinary and habitual. But I consider that it would have been beneficial to be meeting outside the factory, or at least in a room admitting more physical interaction to the size of the group.
Workshop with Kährs Design Studio

This year Kährs arranges a design competition: Kährs Design Studio 2011. Designer Stina Andersson and Karin Lagerlöf, the CEO Assistance with whom I was in touch initially, asked me to design a workshop for the competitors. As a start-up these were all invited to Nybro to spend two days at Kährs where they would receive the brief of the competition and useful information about the business and the production.

Purpose and framework of the workshop

This workshop aimed for sharing personal experiences of the theme of the competition: (design a new wood floor to) “a modern Swedish home” for making a joint discussion take place that would create an pre-understanding of the task from Kährs’ perspective, which both Stina Andersson and Karin Lagerlöf would present and emphasize.

The two hour long workshop would start with an individual activity: each participant would be asked to illustrate their experience and picture of what a modern Swedish home had been before and what distinguishes it today. In order to support the storytelling, every person would get a big, white board to work on and a prepared toolkit of 120 pictures and various paper shapes in different colors and sizes. The participants would present their collages to the rest of the group.

Generative toolkit is a method developed by Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders. Except from pictures and visual forms it also includes a wide variety of printed words. Since it was known that the participants all were used to present their ideas visually, I decided that prepared words were unnecessary. In order to assemble a wide range of images, I asked friends, acquaintances and other contacts with what they associated a modern Swedish home. Optimal would have been to ask them for pictures, but to make sure that I would receive enough answers in a short time, I only asked for words and matched these myself with images. Before using the toolkit I pilot tested it, to understand if any adjustments or additions were needed. Afterwards I added some more pictures and also the shapes of houses.

Figure IX. Prepared toolkit
After the first presentation the participants would be working in small groups and together illustrate what would characterize a modern Swedish home in ten years time, supported by another board and set of paper shapes. These co-creations would be presented as well. Then, before ending the session, similarities between the visions would be identified and written down on big sticky notes to mount on the wall. The idea was to create a space for similarities that could be filled as the day continued.

Consequently the framework of the workshop was: the time-limit of two hours, the toolkits and the questions to be answered, individually and collectively.

The day before the workshop I joined the seven participants in the competition in the afternoon, on a guided tour in the factory which I had visited briefly once before together with Bruce Uhler, Environmental Ambassador at Kährs. After the factory tour followed a presentation by the R&D Manager Hans Brännström, about the wood material and wood floors. After this it was time for dinner and a lesson held by Professor Henriette Koblanck about the use of the Identity Tool Kit (ITK)-model, a method that she has developed for facilitating the co-creation of joint vision(s) in projects that involves many different actors.

**Implementation of the workshop**

The workshop took place the following morning in a huge hall on top floor, and the participants enjoyed the individual collage making. Stina Andersson, Hans Brännström and Karin Lagerlöf attended the oral presentations, when they all were asked to describe the significance of the collage from their point of view.

The teamwork concerning the future had as guidance some key issues of a future scenario: where; how; who; when; what; and why. These were placed on big sticky notes on the wall. After the presentations of the joint collages, the outcome was reflected on and the wall of similarities begun.
The day continued with the rest of the planned activities. As a closure of the two days together we gathered again around the outcome of the workshop and made sure that the key issues of a future scenario could be answered, which constituted a joint future scenario to consider in the continuous (individual) design work.

*Figure XI. Sharing individual collage*

*Figure XII. Co-creation of future visions*

*Figure XIII. Wall of similarities for the joint future scenario*
Some of the participants wished that they could have spent more time on the activities, than the 30 minutes that they got to each task. Positive comments that I received from them, were that the activities turned out to be an easy way to structuring ideas, and a good way to getting started. In addition it was thought as a good way for cooperation, even if the context was a competition. The ready-made materials were appreciated too. One of the participants also expressed the advantage of in such an easy way, gaining new insights and creating new thoughts by the other participants.
5 Results

Workshop opportunities

A central question in this thesis has been if there is any need for participatory workshops in the companies with whom I have been working. This exploration of the design and the use of workshops within the design process, presents particular situations when the workshop format becomes a tool for gathering employees and other people for cooperation with different purposes. It shows that a participatory workshop works well for bridging the gap between different phases of the design process, as was the case at Ergonomidesign, and also between different projects, as was the case at Kährs. Additionally the exploration shows that this method works well for bridging between people during a start-up of a new project, although the participants are competitors, as in the workshop held by Fredrik Sandberg, and in the workshop with Kährs Design Studio. The thesis also shows that generation and exploration of ideas are relevant opportunities for participatory workshops within a design process.

Instead of implementing the same workshop with different groups of participants; or trying different workshops with the same group of people; or comparing the workshop format with another method, this thesis has explored relevant opportunities for its use. The main results are the various examples:

1. At the design consultancy Ergonomidesign, they are used to cooperating across professional boundaries. In the project about the design of cleaning products, the workshop was used for exploring different categories that in the research phase had been identified as key issues of the future design. Afterwards, the team continued with ideas based on the winning concepts from the workshop, and they kept referring to the personas in discussions. This shows that the use of particular personas in specific scenarios worked both for connecting research results with the act of sketching ideas, as well as people, not only during the workshop session, but also under the continuing work, which is an example of a long-term benefit.

2. At the wood floor producer Kährs, the workshop format is not used on a regular basis, either as part of the design process or in the different working processes. It ought to be mentioned that the company works on every level according to Kaizen, as a way for learning and improving the business through reflection-on-action. The workshop with Nybro Design gave the team an occasion for jointly discussing the ideas that they all were holding, and reflecting on what future steps they desired to take, although this decision would be taken in another forum. Design Manager Stina Andersson was pleased with the outcome of having reached consensus. She put together the result in a presentation to show to the Management Team.
3. The workshop for the competition Kährs Design Studio 2011, served as a part of the two-day start-up at the company in Nybro. Even if the seven participants were competitors, the workshop was designed in such a way that it would not intrude on their integrity as designers. Besides the result of a joint future scenario to consider in the continuous (individual) design work, the workshop brought about collaboration and co-creation between the competitors. It generated an understanding of the theme of the competition and also common references to use in the discussion that followed concerning the intention of the event and Kährs’ expectation on its outcome further on.

Future steps and lessons learned
The Landscape of Design Research and Practice by Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders shows the main different design perspectives within the fields of design: The workshops presented in this thesis tend to take place in the right upper corner, characterized by an approach of design-led-thinking and a mindset of involving people in the design process and democratizing the innovation to be. The workshop format is a way to also promote this mindset, applicable more or less on every design project.

The exploration shows that both companies are used to teamwork. It is clear though that more time is required in order to understand the working structure of the two workplaces.
In terms of working more co-creationally, the exploration indicates that the challenge to a manufacturing company like Kährs, is to work even more across the different internal services during the design process. When it comes to design consultancies like Ergonomidesign, the challenge is more to work together with end-users as co-creators of the design. Participatory workshops, or rather co-operative workshops, would work as a way to come together and address both these challenges.

The exploration also shows that one of the challenges to a moderator, or facilitator, is to improve the method for tailoring workshops as cost effectively as possible without compromising on quality. It is essential to remember that every workshop is unique and to be aware that the process as well as its outcome belong to the participants.

Another challenge the exploration shows, is to compose a contract about each one’s commitment. It may not be necessary if the workshop takes place within a company, but in the case of workshops where the participants all are coming from different places, or the facilitator is the only outsider, it would imply a certain security, especially when the content and outcome are confidential.

The activities and the materials that have been tried out within this thesis are known within the fields of design, but they have been adjusted to the current client and situation.

Working with workshops within a company is a long-term decision that needs to permeate the whole business, and it is a challenge to every business management.

Noteworthy is to emphasize that to Ergonomidesign the resource allocation is more critical than to Kährs, in the sense that within their business, the structure must be approved by the client with whom they have an agreement. Moreover, the client is also concerned about their handling of business secrets and may consider user-involvement on the level of co-creation in the design process, as both a risk and as something even suspicious. Therefore agencies like Ergonomidesign have to be driven by a strong belief in the methods and approach that they practice, in order to convince the clients that these are worth the bill.

However, the thesis indicates that working co-creationally in workshops in the beginning or throughout the whole design process, may be cost effective, since it affords an opportunity to collectively identify crucial issues early in a project. This reduces the occurrence of misunderstandings and mistakes along the way.

Likewise it is a method to apply for developing a solid requirement specifications, which the workshop with Kährs’ Design Studio showed, although it was an example of a small version.
The design process
Many people are affected by a design project, throughout the design process and especially when the result is launched, as a product or a service for instance. Initially the question was raised on how to make the “image” richer in case of the design process. One way is to involve different stakeholders as actors in workshops, which also assures the quality of the design process. It affords an opportunity to explore the current issue of concern from many angles at the same time, since many competences are represented.

Design projects are often illustrated as linear processes. In today’s society projects are run fast and the steps or phases that earlier were following one after the other, are almost forced to be accomplished simultaneously. Regarding that processes of learning and processes of change are time-demanding; the fast way is not favorable, since phases for reflection may not be prioritized. Nevertheless, the aspect of simultaneous phases draws forth an illustration of the design process as circular. Looking at a design project as an innovation process accumulating and working in circles, illuminates how the different phases of various activities are mutually dependent on one another in all directions, constituting a whole of made priorities, judgments and connections.

Design of workshops
Speaking of designing and carrying through workshops, John Heron’s (1999) six dimensions of facilitation (see p. 20) were all playing a part in the course of events.

The planning dimension
The process of the workshops, from the planning and preparation of them to the actual moment when they took place, may also be compared to a circular “accumulation” of steps. In order to do the planning the key is to be aware of how these steps intersect and interact.

The clients were naturally included and involved in the planning and preparation of the workshops, but to make a workshop as co-creational as possible, even the participants should join this phase of the activity. In that respect the proposals presented further on, are more co-creational than the other workshops that have been designed within this degree project. The different topics to be explored in the workshops within this thesis, have all been identified as urgent by the clients themselves. It was natural to work this way since the main objective has been to explore real workshop opportunities and the course of events in connection with these.

The meaning dimension
A crucial question and task have been to promote communication through the design process. The shared “concrete” language between the participants in the workshops was constituted by their various creations made from the physical materials, in combination with the stories and explanations told.
This way of describing is how they shared and made personal and particular meaning with each other. Regarding the view that artifacts are constituted in relation with people, the meaning and use of a product depend upon the user. Just like prototypes are used and evaluated by people in order to understand how users may interact with a particular design proposal, the workshop materials can be tried out before the workshop. The scenarios with personas and the toolkits of a limited set of items supported the participants to focus on externalizing both design ideas and personal experiences. Together they created new knowledge on which they could take joint decisions.

Through joint activities in a participatory workshop the focus is moved from the individual business to the shared issue at question and the co-creation. In terms of promoting cooperation, this is one of the strengths of the format, because it makes everyone a “shareholder” in the process and the project, which releases energy and creativity. A tolerant atmosphere and a shared ownership, contribute to improving the quality and the efficiency of the ongoing design project: one is often more willing and eager to take responsibility for and follow up something that one has experienced oneself being an active part of.

*The confronting dimension*

It is advantageous, or perhaps rather a condition for progress, to place the innovation process outside “the box”, in order to imagine, propose and implement a change within current pattern of social structures, activities, mindset or future use for instance. The place of venue, the design of the materials and the choice of participants are all workshop tools for moving the process away from the ordinary and habitual. In this regard, the proposals further on are more challenging to the companies than the other workshops that recently have taken place. If the facilitator is coming from outside, that is if he or she are not normally part of the company, the group may be challenged just by the external view on the issue of concern that he or she as an outsider naturally brings about.

*The feeling dimension*

An external facilitator, or moderator, is also not part of ruling social structures of power within the company, and may thus be more free to act fairly and straight ahead in relation to all the participants. The exploration shows that this has a positive impact on the teamwork, together with practical issues such as: a space big enough for the size of the group that literally enables interaction; furnishing that allows closeness and visibility to all; adjustable equipment; and refreshments(!)

All the workshops afforded a clear start and a clear end to the participants, who thereby got the chance to not only take ideas from one stage to another, but also to draw conclusions, which is part of sensemaking. Furthermore, it is liberating to experience that you finish what you have started, no matter
the situation. In order to care for a democratic process, any decisions concerning the joint work within the workshops were made through voting.

*The structuring dimension*

The physical materials were part of the framework that served for facilitating the participants to be creative and to focus on the issue at question of the workshop. The use of prepared material is to frame the task, but the material itself ought to be ambiguous and open-ended as in the design games by Eva Brandt (2009), for promoting divergent thinking and allowing freedom and diversity in interpretation. The material is a visual language of images, shapes and words. Together with the embodied experience of participating in the workshop it supports the participants’ creation of episodic knowledge (see p. 15). To explicitly include time for reflection-on-action in the workshop, is also a way to evoke the participants’ attention and consciousness, which is important for learning.

*The valuing dimension*

Balancing between the co-operative and the autonomous mode (Heron 1999) in the workshop process has been a critical part of the moderating. It is important to be attentive to what the group wants and needs. The more informed you are in the project, the easier it is to take a decision to follow or depart from what is planned during the workshop. It is the same for all people involved in a project: the more you know of the larger context, the easier it is to deal with its parts. A participatory workshop affords an occasion also to gaining more overview.

Finally, it is significant to stress the importance of a useful and available documentation of what the workshop led to. If you as a participant are aware of the further outcome of the workshop, you are probably more eager to engage yourself in another one. So this is an aspect to care for by assuring that someone takes the responsibility of this matter. Then respect is shown to both the participants and the result of the workshop, if the latter is followed-up. Not forgetting that responsibilities for any implementation may be determined during a workshop.

*Proposals of workshops*

One plan of workshop to each company is presented below, for illustrating proposals of co-design. These workshops would constitute parts of a larger whole: the design process, and they could be used for democratizing it.

This thesis shows that also workshops are put together through a design process, its typical phases of start-up; concept; design; production; quality assurance; and delivery (Öberg 2010) could be transferred to: dialogue; recruitment; agenda; preparation; pilot test; and implementation. This procedure may of course be marked by even more participation than the ones the thesis accounts for, and that is why I would like to implement a practice of the theory of action that this degree project strives for illuminating.
Proposal for Ergonomidesign

David Crafoord, Director of Product Design at Ergonomidesign, suggested in a dialogue about workshop opportunities, that the company’s homepage was a relevant option for a workshop. It could be a part of the development of a new homepage. With such a theme Ergonomidesign would be the only client in question and the employees would also belong to the group of end-users. Other stakeholders of this possible project, would beside the designers at Ergonomidesign (interaction designer; graphic designer; and design strategist) be the designer or production team who would get or already have got, the mission to design the new site; a programmer, that is someone who is technically qualified in the field; some existing client(s) with which the company has a business relation as well as potential clients. Who within these groups of people to include, is something Ergonomidesign assumingly knows well.

Even the design of this workshop could be a joint activity between all the participants, in addition to the co-operation between facilitator and project manager, who sometimes may be the same person. On a forum as a “wiki-page” or “google group”, ideas and suggestions on workshop activities could be presented, collected and voted on, which would permit everyone to interact in the planning. Or the facilitator who has correspondence with all people assigned to be involved, distributes information not only to, but also between the participants.

It is essential to initially decide upon an issue at question which potentially will lead the project further. When designing a homepage, as in most cases, the brand identity; the intention of the owner; the perception of the user(s); and future visions must be brought into consideration. These things would probably be explored in the project, perhaps in the setting of a workshop, but this one would explore opportunities for future use, that is focus on the core: the various activities that the homepage could afford. In order to do so one may follow the procedure of a future workshop (Bell 2009).

Since Ergonomidesign has an existing homepage, the workshop could start with a sharing of the last time each participant was confronted with the website and why. The different situations could be written down with markers on big post-it notes or on preprinted cards to fill in. These could be placed on the wall, on a big white paper, and when placing the notes one could also define if it was an experience to keep and care for; abandon; or improve. Homework for this workshop could be to also bring some stories about how others outside the company experience the site, and include their reviews in the mapping too.

Then the whole group could jointly “dream” of how one could make use of the homepage. The “dreams” could also be written down on post-it notes, and placed on the wall. Thereafter the ideas that eventually become voted as the most interesting or challenging, may be explored in small groups. Wire and corrugated board could support the co-creation of proposals of future use and interaction.
In order to create new knowledge, it would be guiding to after the presentation of all the concepts, reflect and comment on the proposals. Since video prototypes are not as common as sketching at Ergonomidesign, this would be an occasion also to explore advantages and disadvantages of this tool. To act in front of the camera would give people the chance to take into life various future scenarios. This kind of documentation would additionally afford an opportunity to all the participants to “see” the proposal in use.

It would be optimal for all the employees at Ergonomidesign to get the chance to share their thoughts of a new homepage, by commenting on the result of the workshop, or by repetition of the workshop with different participants. In such a case each group would as a suggestion, have the size of 9-12 people: it would be small enough to handle as one and numerous enough to be divided into smaller teams of 3-4 people.

Proposal for Kährs

Kährs’ Environmental Ambassador Bruce Uhler, the CEO Assistant Karin Lagerlöf and I met for a dialogue about opportunities for a cooperative workshop about Kährs’s waste material. Uhler and Lagerlöf shared that there are many possible future uses of the waste material which mainly becomes energy today. Their core interest for an exploration turned out to be what opportunities there may be to recycle waste into flat surfaces, which are new floor, ceiling and wall products. It would be in sync with the company’s core values concerning the environment, to explore further development of the waste material. Besides, new knowledge and regulations/laws within that area are constantly coming. It is a relevant design issue in order to keep producing the best looking floors that people feel good to buy, according to Uhler.

Karin Lagerlöf suggested that I could continue to work on the cooperative waste material workshop together with Design Manager Stina Andersson.

This workshop would aim for gathering a group of people with different backgrounds and competences to jointly explore design opportunities of flat surfaces out of waste material. The material of concern is a mix of various waste, so the team would need to decide whether or not to take every character of it into consideration in one single workshop, or focus on one at a time in a series of sessions.

With regard to the composition of participants, this co-creational workshop would as a suggestion benefit from bringing together Kährs’ Design Manager Stina Andersson; an employee from Kährs’ Marketing Department; and an employee from Kährs’ Production, together with a floor-layer; a Regional Manager from TMF, the national trade and employers’ association of the wood processing and furniture industry in Sweden; a Regional Manager from a developer of housing and residential areas; a local architect; two users; a wood-loving amateur inventor; and last but not least also a couple of design students at the Linneæus University.
As a homework for this workshop, each participant could think of a recent situation when he or she faced the choice of choosing “flat surfaces”. The personal stories could be shared initially during a short introduction of the team. After this a brainstorming could follow, about design ideas concerning the particular material and also potential target groups. Any clustering could be done gradually.

Then the participants would be divided into small groups, for exploring and elaborating one or several concepts. It would be possible to use existing waste material of concern, and paper and pencils for the design and co-creation.

In conclusion the proposals would be presented and reflected on together. Time would also be given for defining future steps.

**Personal reflection**

In order to learn about the accomplishment of workshops, I followed the activity of learning through reflection-on-action. The interviews were a way to reflect on such meetings together with professionals and through them include more aspects of interaction, not only between people and design but also between people.

I have planned a few other workshops for both companies that have not yet taken place. From this I have learnt the advantage with designing for several workshops at the same time: it puts you in a less vulnerable position in the case of a workshop being postponed or even canceled.

As a moderator you can do much to create good conditions for the workshop process, but yet the method is unpredictable and vulnerable in the sense that anything can happen at any time when many people are to be coordinated and interact. Depending on the issue at hand, it may be necessary to initially create a deeper pre-understanding of the subject before the workshop. This knowledge can be shared among the participants before the workshop or be made available to all through the design of the workshop materials. Of course, interacting parts and aspects of the issue may be mapped and explored in a (pre-) workshop too.

I got the impression that the workshop format has today an impact of being something authentic and reliable. One reason to this may be that much of the material and interaction within a design project of today takes place in digital terms, no matter if the work is run in one location or if it is distributed. Since the Internet is part of many people’s way of living, a digital venue for participatory workshops is an emerging issue not yet much explored. But the Internet is on the other hand already a venue of its own kind, where people connect, communicate and get access to all sorts of information and sharing. Today’s “networking”, both inside as well as outside social media, has perhaps contributed to opening up various working processes, also the design process.
However, as Anita Malmqvist put forward: the notion of realism or authenticity is changing over time, so even participatory workshops might be a temporary method. Trend or development, when directing design to the creation of sustainable innovations for democratic futures, participatory workshops afford a dynamic way for a structured exploration supporting sensemaking as well as decision-making.

“Genius design” will always exist, but co-design is a way to create a shared ownership of the design process, through which more responsibility may be individually taken for the design of concern, and also for its larger context.
References and Bibliography


