A new perspective on reducing overconsumption

**Shift recreational shopping practices in city centres towards
a practice that fosters long-term happiness**

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Master thesis report
MSc Design for Interaction

Preface

Dear reader,

I hope you'll enjoy this thesis and be inspired to come along on the journey of creating a more sustainable future. The past half a year, other people have already taken the ride with me and I would not have come this far without their help and support.

Thanks Ruth & Pieter Jan for your always accurate feedback and challenging my views with critical questions. Thank you Ruth for your knowledge on people's behaviour and thank you Pieter Jan for making me look on the positive side and keeping me on track.

Thanks Gert-Jan for all the valuable discussions, inspiration, positive energy and motivation and giving me the opportunity to take a look behind the screens of a governmental institution that gave me lots of learnings.

Also, thanks to the others of the behavioural team for sharing your knowledge. Moreover, two things I'd like to share about them, one: Civil servants are definitely not as lazy as the stigma suggests (although they do often go on holidays) and two: They're working super hard on many important topics and I applaud their efforts.

Thanks to all my friends who helped me, listened to me, gave feedback and made my days. In particular, thanks Mila and Emma and Flore for all the hugs, chats, coffees, listening to my turbulence of thoughts and keeping the days in a positive light.

Thanks,
Eline

"In this paradigm of new wants that make way endlessly for newer wants, people are encouraged to board an escalator of desires "

– Kerryn Higgs

Can we jump off that escalator?

Summary

This master thesis shows the research and design to **tackle overconsumption of products within the context of recreational shopping practices in city centres**. Thereby show the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management how they could tackle the 'Refuse' strategy of their Circular R-ladder, which is currently unexplored.

products such as clothing, (small) electronics, household appliances, furniture, leisure product, toys etcera

Why...

... this approach?

Sufficiency asks to change the way society consume
Merely relying on circular strategies is insufficient for reduce overconsumption. In order to accomplish deep emission reductions, people have to make do with less. Therefore, the focus of this thesis lies on absolute reductions of product purchases.

Practices are embedded in our everyday lives
The strategies from the Ministries National Program Circular Economy focus on product categories, but this implicitly assumes people have a need for those products, while excluding other types of products. The practice perspective shows that the 'need' is embedded in people's ways of doing and if those ways change, the need can fade or shift to non-material alternatives and thereby reduce overconsumption.

... does overconsumption happen?

People like products, even more in certain circumstances
Literature research showed that people like products for multiple reasons and are influenced by the industry. A sustainability label for 'Refuse' won't work and materialistic views should be tackled, especially the question: *when are people materialistic?*

Shopping in city centres results in unplanned purchases
Through street interviews and generative sessions with recreational shoppers, it was discovered that important elements of shopping are fueling novelty, feeling fulfilled, and bonding with a shopping companion. These are currently predominantly facilitated by the product (environments).
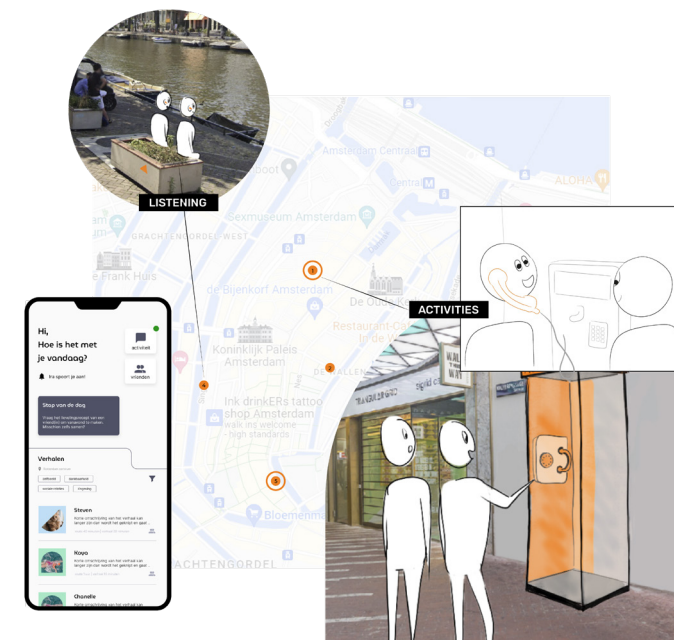

How?

A future perspective that involves long-term happiness
Through explorative research with stakeholder interviews and the Vision in Product approach, different futures of practices in city centres were framed of which this one showed how long-term happiness can be facilitated in the city centre.

Change orientation towards the city centre
This strategy derived from the qualitative research aims to change the current situation by changing the focus from the product environment tot the city environment.

What?

The final design, Wend, proposes a new type of practice for returning visitors in the city centre that support long-term happiness, whilst keeping it a place to achieve fulfilment, enhance bonding and fuel novelty in a low key way.

Wend offers story routes that allow people to engage in specific happiness topics and discover other perspectives together, creating a space for happiness in the current city center context, without feeling like it is a serious and effortful activity. This is achieved through:

- The storyroutes substitute the engagement with stores and instead offer multiple real-life stories of average people, which can be listend to at different points in the city.
- The activities during the route and in the app let people work on their personal happiness together, thereby improve their wellbeing and develop resilience towards materialistic tendencies.

What's next?

The concepts implementation fits a bottom-up approach best, together with a municipality, and alongside more testing and validation, it could help move towards practices that support a sustainable and happier society.

A multitude of recommendations are proposed for the Ministry to tackle overconsumption that emphasize to look at practices of everyday lives, social embeddedness and long-term happiness.

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1.

Relevance and scope

This project explores how overconsumption of products within the context of shopping practices in city centres could be tackled by the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management.

This chapter introduces the topic of this project and the angle taken to approach it. It will first elaborate on why overconsumption of products is a problem. Then, it explains how the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management wants to tackle this problem, but does not know how yet, why this project takes a sufficiency point of view and in particular focusses on absolute reductions. After that, it shortly introduces social practice theory as a way to approach the issue, specifically within context of shopping practices in city centres. Lastly, it gives a first understanding of the Ministries position regarding this context.

1.1 Impact of product overconsumption on the environment

The release of IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report has made it clear once more, climate change is a topic that addresses all sectors. Immediate and deep emission reductions are needed to meet the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. The consumption of products is the topmost contributor to pollution among Dutch citizens, as reported by CE Delft (2020), figure 1. This includes products like, clothing, (small) electronics, household appliances, furniture, leisure product, toys etcera. People have gotten used to the high frequency and excessive consumption of products, especially in western cultures (i.e. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2018, Hickel 2021, Jackson 2006). This excessive consumption is mostly due to people that engage in a cycle of purchasing, using, and discarding without consideration. This behaviour is not merely a result of personal preference, the current world screams consumerism.

Numerous experts have emphasized the need to address overconsumption in order to find an enduring solution to the escalating environmental problems (amongst others: Club of rome 1972; Hansen and Schrader 1997 ; Jackson 2006 ; Schrader & Thøgersen, 2011 , Hickel, 2021).

According to the Hot or Cool Institute (2022), meeting environmental goals would require consumers to buy only five new clothing pieces a year, which is now forty on average (NOS, 2018). However, if the fashion industry continues on its current growth trajectory, world clothing sales could increase by 65 percent by 2030, see figure 2 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation , 2017). Other products follow similar growth trajectories. If this pattern persists and it will be impossible to achieve environmental goals.

Moreover, materials for these products are extracted at a faster rate than efforts to improve circularity can keep up with, as reported by Circle Economy (2023): 'Rising material extraction has shrunk global circularity: from 9.1% in 2018, to 8.6% 2020, and now 7.2% in 2023.'

Figure 1: CE Delft, 2020

Image from the collection 'You may also like' by Daniel Stier (n.d.)
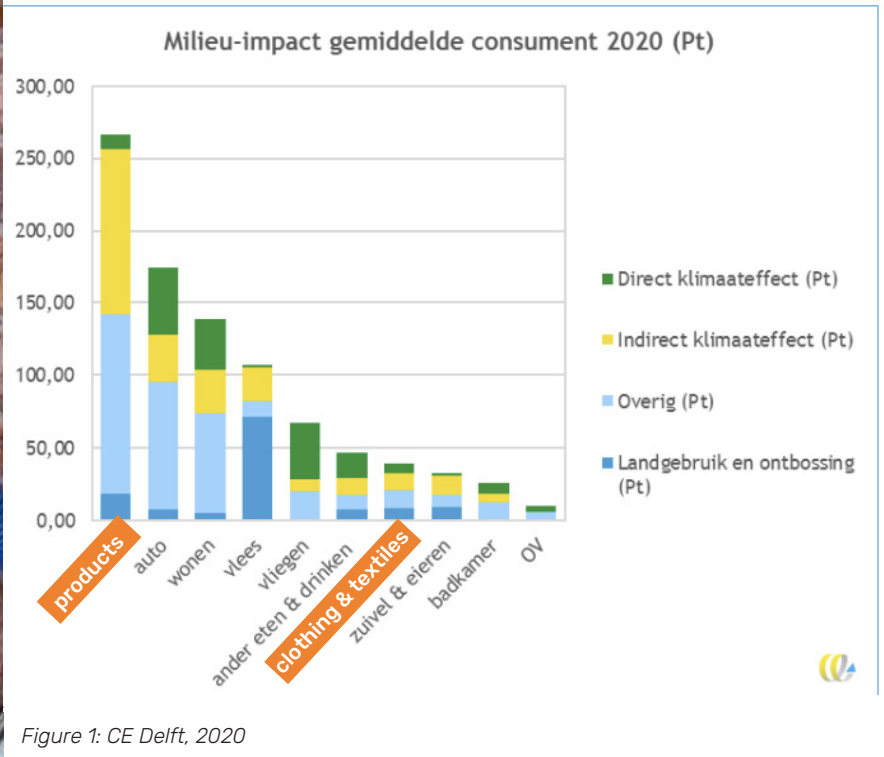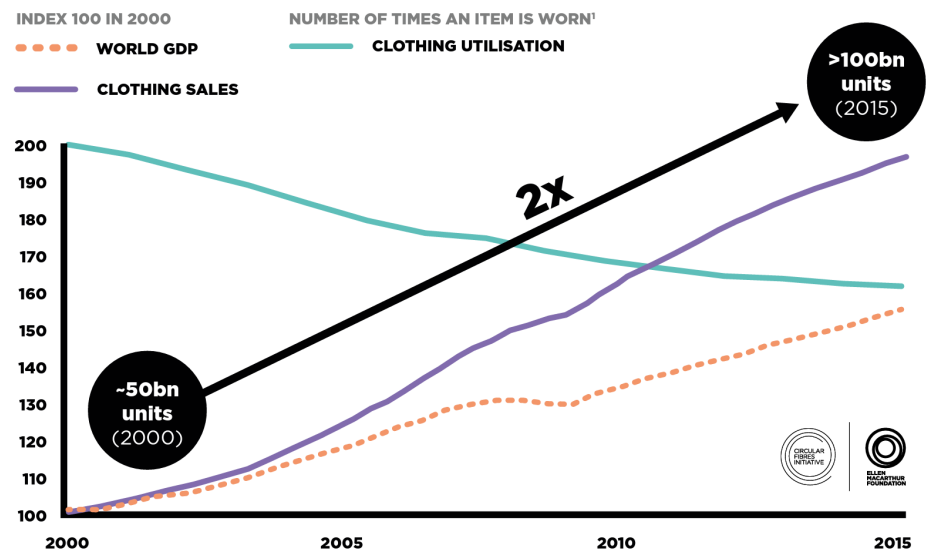

1   Average number of times a garment is worn before it ceases to be used

Source: Euromonitor International Apparel & Footwear 2016 Edition (volume sales trends 2005–2015); World Bank, *World development indicators – GD* (2017)

Figure 2: Growth of clothing sales and decline in clothing utilisation since 2000 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)

1.2 Aiming for sufficiency

The Dutch government is working on minimising the environmental impact of several goods and has set up the National Program Circular Economy (NPCE, Ministerie van Infrastructuur & Waterstaat, 2023), which takes consumer products as one of the five main categories to tackle. Its aim is to reach a fully circular economy by 2050 and reduce material use to 50% by 2030. Multiple strategies are setup according to the R-ladder (see figure 3), with the aim to narrow the loop, slow the loop, close the loop and substitute materials.

The common consensus is that the higher the strategy is located on the R-ladder, the more it reduces material use (PBL, 2019). So, Refuse is most preferable, followed by Reduce and Rethink. These three strategies consider the product before use. The NPCE states that it should first be considered if a product is even needed, or if the need can be fulfilled in another way, i.e. focus on Refuse and Rethink. Even though this is stated, tackling overconsumption remains a relatively untouched topic, which up till now lacks vision and confidence to act upon it. The two actions stated in the NPCE to tackle Refuse are:

"We voeren een verkenning uit naar mogelijkheden om burgers aan te zetten tot minder consumeren". - NPCE 2023, p. 43

"We onderzoeken de onderliggende redenen voor overproductie- en consumptie" - NPCE 2023, p. 78

Bocken et. al (2022), proposes a way of seeing this, by using the term sufficiency-based circular economy:

A sufficiency-based circular economy encourages citizens to make conscious consumption choices for sustainability, by making do with less, avoiding unnecessary purchases, repairing, and maintaining existing products, and buying second hand, refurbished or remanufactured where possible, to the effect of reducing overall resource use. Businesses strategies and policies should support this hierarchy of choices by making "refuse, reduce, and rethink" the most feasible, desirable, and viable options for citizens.'

Sandberg (2021) clarifies it by differentiating four

types of consumption changes that can be made to work towards sufficiency: absolute reductions, modal shifts, product longevity, and sharing practices.

Key to understand from the sufficiency perspective, is that just implementing the different R-strategies in the use loop (figure 3) does not per se lead to a decrease in consumption nor material use. A variety of rebound effects can occur, which means there is an actual increase in consumption caused by the lowering of technological, financial, ecological, or societal barriers. Some examples:

- Reselling platforms (like Vinted) offer consumers justification to give in to temptation and buy more (impulsively), because it is a more 'sustainable' choice (Parguel et al., 2017). Or they buy a new piece of clothing with the money received from selling old clothes;
- A product can be designed to be long-lasting, but a consumer only keeps it for a short period and discards it, because the newer version is trendy and the consumer gets a reward for handing the old product, such as with iPhones;
- Renting and sharing services causes consumers to use more of products that were previously out of reach (Martin, 2016);
- Sustainability labels offer a reason for indulgent consumption through the moral licensing effect (Parguel et al, 2017; Adıgüzel et al., 2020).

Sandberg (2021) also indicates that 'Sufficiency may be most straightforwardly imagined as absolute reductions in the consumption of various products.' Therefore **in this thesis, the main focus will be put on absolute reductions**.

To achieve sufficiency, and particularly absolute reductions, a change in *the way* society consumes is required, which is embedded in our practices of purchasing, using and discarding, these are the consumption patterns people have and rarely question.
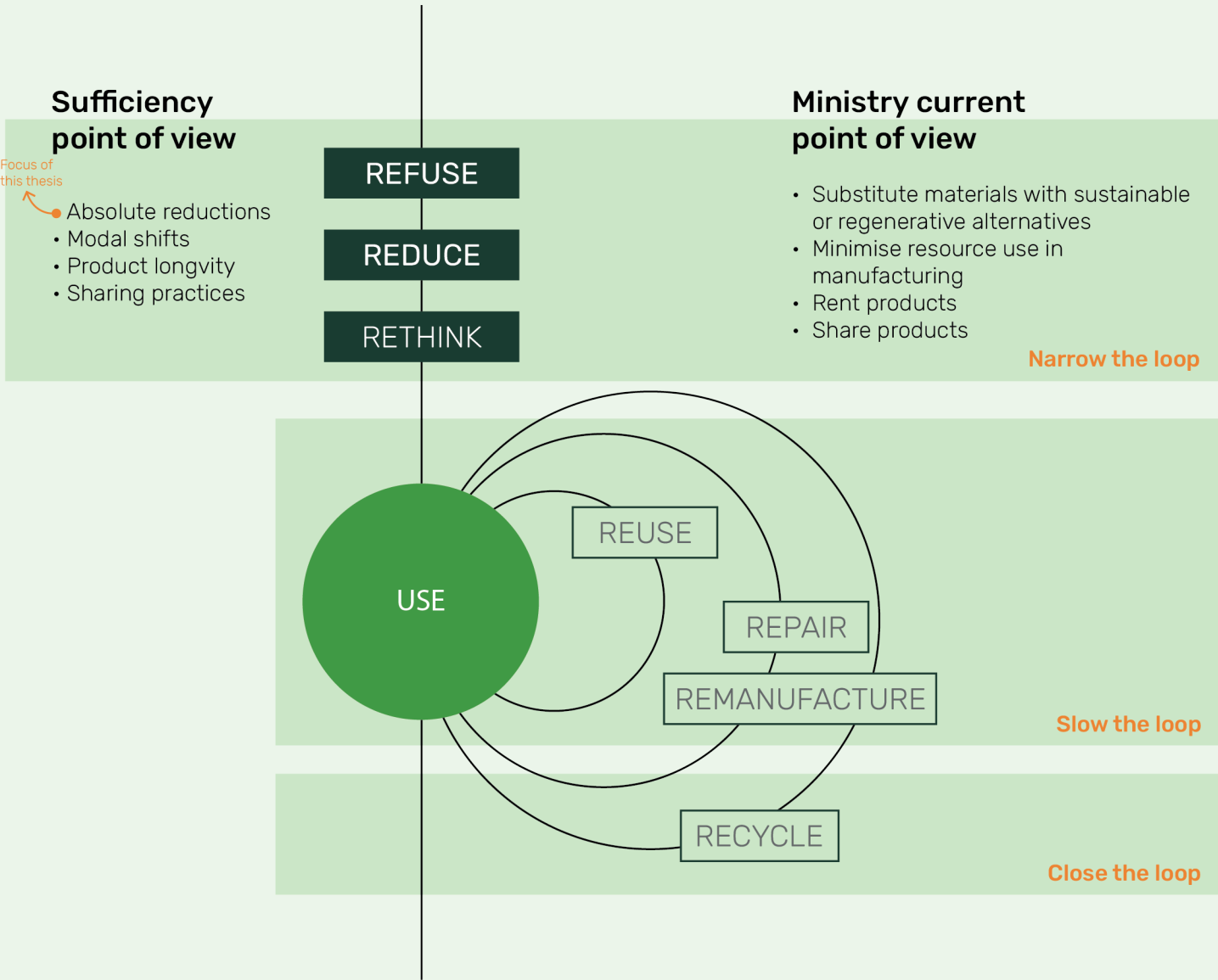

Figure 3: The R-ladder with the Ministries strategies and sufficiency strategies mapped on the left

1.3 Social practices as point of view

To address this, this thesis builds upon the social practice theory (Shove et al., 2012; Kuijer 2014). This theory decomposes shared behaviour types based on the action itself, instead of the human that acts it out. Therefore it challenges the status quo instead of working within the status quo. A practice constitutes of meanings (values or drivers: 'why do people do this'), materials (physical/digital entities and bodies, 'who and what is involved in this practice') and competencies (learned routines and norms, 'how can it be done') (Shove et al., 2012). These three categories overlap and elements mutually influence and shape each other. Moreover, for understanding practices, the links between the elements are just as important as the elements themselves. Although people are not central in practice theory, they are the performer of the practice whom actively integrates and makes links between the elements and thereby reproduces, but also possibly transforms the practice.

A practice can change if new links between meanings, competencies and materials occur or reconfigure. An intervention, for example to reduce overconsumption can aim to create these links or a new meaning, competency, material or combinations.

Regarding product consumption, there are practices around the use, purchase and discarding of products. The practices related to purchase are noteworthy in the context of absolute reduction, as it leads to an accumulation of items.

1.4 Context: practices of shopping in city centres

In this thesis, the focus lies on a practice that constitutes the purchase of products: shopping, in particular shopping in city centres. Current shopping practices go far beyond fulfilling basic needs. It constitutes a major 'leisure' activity (figure 5). To illustrate, one of the Dutch most popular attractions is the Designer Outlet Roermond, with more than 8 million visitors per year, which is more than the Rijksmuseum and Efteling combined (Heesakkers, 2019).

The aim of this shopping is not solely utilitarian to replace an owned product, it is about enjoyment of shopping, that can be achieved in various ways (Bäckström, 2006).

This 'recreational' shopping goes hand in hand with mass consumption (Bloch et al., 1991). It is made so easy and normal with a multitude of products that are cheap, easily accessible and quickly obtained through multiple on- and offline channels. This makes room for many unplanned and immediate purchases that lack sustainable considerations. Consequently, products are also quickly discarded or left in a drawer unused. And, people want more and more - more than those around them, which gets reinforced by companies and their marketing. This industry has become an expert in influencing people to buy, the past 50 years of literature on marketing and B2C business strategies is extensive.

Although e-commerce has become more mainstream, physical shopping will remain preferred for 60% of the time (GfK, 2022). City centres are an intersting context to research these practices as they facilitate a wide variety of purchase opportunities, but also serve leisure in other ways.

In this project, the 'city centre' is referred to as the main shopping areas of a city where the streets predominantly facilitate shops ('kernwinkelgebieden' in Dutch).
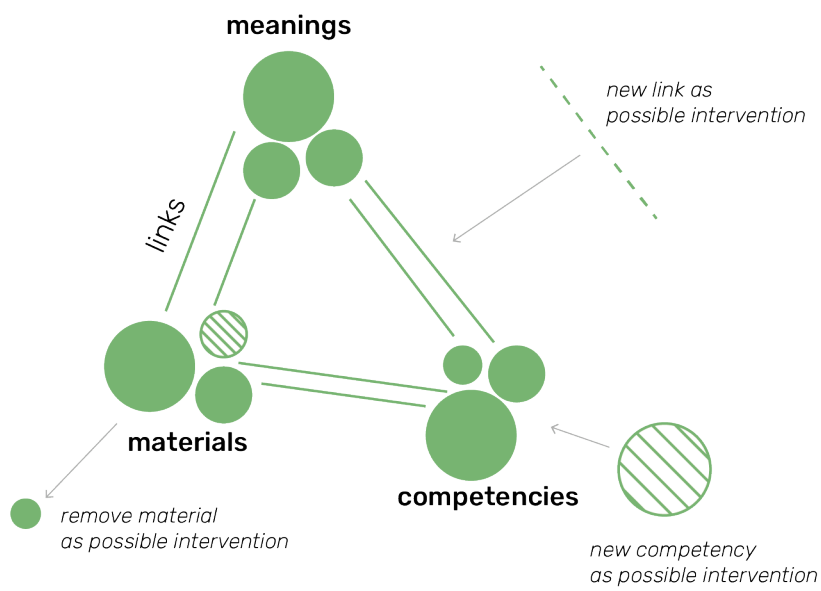
Figure 4: A practice is a groupings of elements (materials, meanings and competencies) and interconnected through a multitudes of links. Interventions aim to replace or reconfigure these elements and links to achieve change in a practice.

Figure 5: Pictures from Utrecht city centre

1.5 Position of the Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management

Position of this thesis

This thesis is performed in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management (which will be referred to as the Ministry). They are responsible for the NPCE (National Circular Economy Program), but strategies to tackle absolute reductions remain limited, as mentioned in 1.2.

More specifically , this thesis will be performed within the behavioural insights team of the Ministry. They research behavioural interventions that might fit different policies. Based on this, they advise the policy team on certain behaviour change or work together with parties in the concerning industry for implementation or sharing knowledge.

Since the topic and context for this thesis (sufficiency and practices in physical shopping) are not incorporated in current policies of the Circular program yet, this thesis aims to be explorative and define how the Ministry could play a role here.

Position in the retail system

A closer look at the different actors in the retail system and their roles regarding changes towards the Circular Economy creates a first understanding of the Ministry's influence on product consumption. This system, see figure 7, is referred to as the

"retail-CE system" throughout the rest of the thesis, as it combines the stakeholders of city centre retail and the stakeholders involved with the Ministries CE pogram.

The Ministry conditions and governs policies through different policy instruments. These include measures, regulations, financial incentives and support and so-called 'soft instruments', like knowledge sharing (see figure 6). The Ministry defines the policies themselves and works out European Union imposed EU wide regulations for the Netherlands,

These different policy instruments are currently mostly directed towards product industries. To cope with the measures, they work together to on different initatives and sometimes collaborate with municipalities. These initiatives can also advocate for changes in policies.

However, in the current retail-CE system, the industry is still dominant in defining what product consumption looks like. Together with real estate parties and municipalities the industry defines and manages the city centre, which is what the consumer perceives when shopping.

Measures regarding product consumption directly targeting consumers are still minimal.

Figure 7: Schematic overview of actors related to CE program of the Ministry and the retail system that will be in scope for this project. The top triangle includes actors that condition and govern policies. The middle triangle includes actors that initiate collaboration. The lower triangle includes actors that define and manage the city centre.

Economic instruments			Regulatory and legislative instruments		Soft instruments		
Tax frameworks	Direct financial support	Economic frameworks	Regulations	Legislations	Knowledge, advice & education	Collaboration platforms & infrastructure	Stimulate

Figure 6: Policy instruments

2. Project goal and process

This chapter describes the project goal which is stated in the form of a research question and six subquestions. It also elaborates on the project approach, which is a combination of social practice theory and systemic design, and shows the structure this report follows.

2.1 Initial project goal

This thesis explores how overconsumption of products could be tackled from a sufficiency perspective within the context of shopping practices in city centres. Thereby show the Ministry how they could tackle the 'Refuse' strategy of their Circular R-ladder.

More specifically, the goal is to design an intervention that could answer the research question stated below. Six subquestions were defined to further elaborate how the project is shaped.

How can recreational shopping practices of city centre visitors shift towards sufficiency, in particular absolute reductions, and what role can the Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management play here?

Q1 | Why do people buy?

Q2 | What do shopping practices look like?

Q3 | What would sufficiency in shopping entail?

Q4 | Where does the possibility space lie to change shopping practices within the system?

Q5 | What are suitable interventions to support sufficiency?

Q6 | How could the Ministry (or other actors) intervene?

2.2 Project approach

The process to answer the above questions, builds on two different approaches; social practice theory and systemic design and combines these, see Figure 8 (next page).

2.2.1 Social practice theory

As mentioned before, social practice theory sees patterns of behaviour as socially embedded practices. To recap, a practice can be understood through the elements and links between:

- meanings (values or drivers: 'why do people do this'),
- materials (physical/digital entities and bodies, 'who and what is involved in this practice') and;
- competencies (learned routines and norms, 'how can it be done') (Shove et al., 2012).

People are seen as the performers of the practice, who connects elements. .In this thesis, the theory helps to define these different elements and links of shopping practices.

Social practice theory is often applied to the use phase (of a certain product), e.g. bathing, transporting, heating a house. In this project, the practice of shopping relates to the buying phase, there are significant psychological factors that influence people's decision to buy or not. Since much research has been done about this, I extend understanding the practices of shopping with a literature review on the psychological influences on buying.

Furthermore, Shove et al. (2012) argues that changing a practice can happen under various circumstances by either:

- Re-crafting practices; making an breaking links and elements in within the practice.
- Substituting practices; replacing the current practice with a totally new one, i.e. where most elements and links are different.
- Changing interlocks; changing how one practice is related to another practice, which will most probably not apply to this project.

Shove et al. (2012) emphasizes that changing practices is most effective when changing different elements at the same time, instead of only a meaning for example.

So, the social practice theory will give a good understanding of current practices and possible areas for opportunities. However, it does not elaborate on who should make the change and how these changes can be done. In addition, it looks at the context on a very small scale, whereas in shopping context there is a lot at play that is defined by different actors in the retail-CE system. In order to answer the other sub-questions, the social practice theory is combined with systemic design.

2.2.2 Systemic design

Systemic design is a way to look at a problem more holistically. It embraces the complexity of a context by recognising the multiple stakeholders at play and the dynamic and emergent structures and behaviour within a system (Jones & van Ael, 2022). It drives change by looking for leverage points within a system. These are promising points of intervention to affect the system towards desired change.

This approach is similar to social practice theory in the way that it looks at different elements and relations, that both do not put any of those in a central position and recognise the emergent and dynamic properties. However, it can strengthen the social practice approach by also including the stakeholders at play and seeing where they move towards.

Systemic design is used and applied in different ways. In this thesis, the systemic design approach from Jones & van Ael (2022) is taken as the basis. Key elements that are important and are integrated in this approach are:

Understanding the actors at play and exploring the possibility space

The approach involves considering the various actors involved in a system and examining the potential outcomes of their interactions. In the context of this thesis, it is necessary to consider the role of both the Ministry and the actors in the retail industry in relation to physical shopping. The introduction set the first boundary for determining which individuals or groups should be included in the retail-CE system. Further steps will build upon this and explore potential pathways for achieving sufficiency, in light of the perspective of these actors.

Envisioning desired futures

In addition, the approach shows that exploring

futures will help create an understading of where the actors can work towards, especially by (re) framing futures. These future frames can show and inspire the Ministry to determine where they actually want to work towards. Consequently, in this thesis, the aim is to define these possible futures for a city centre that support sufficient (shopping) practices.

Fostering transition
Finally, this approach also emphasizes that shifting a system towards a desired future needs a multitude of small and big interventions. Consequently, in the shopping context, suddenly changing all practices is impossible. Therefore, this thesis aims is to design an intervention that can change an aspect within th retail-CE system.
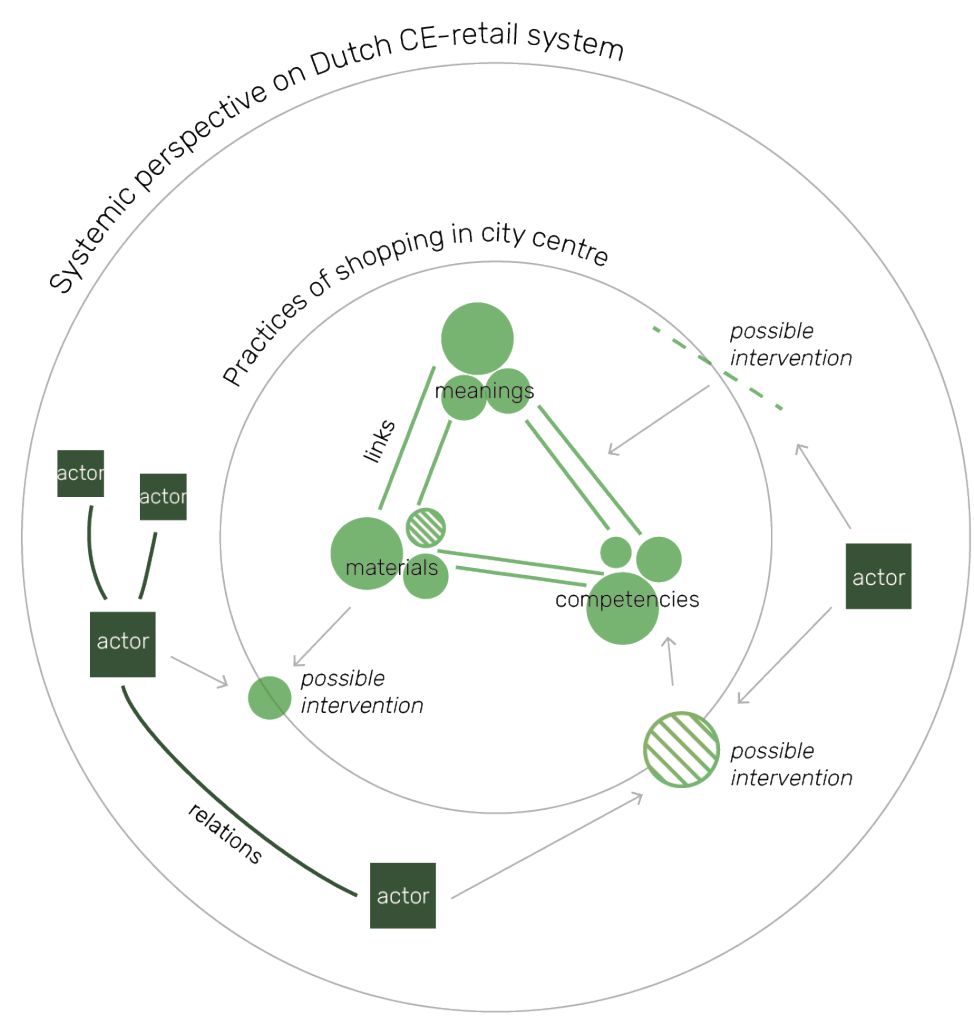
Figure 8: Schematic overview of combining the two approaches to come to interventions

2.2.3 Combined approach in this thesis

With the combination of the social practice theory and systemic design approach, I aim to answer the research question(s). The report follows the structure on the right. Each phase will be shortly elaborated upon below.

The purpose of the **Understand phase** is to gain insight into the shopping practices of individuals through the use of qualitative research, including street interviews and generative sessions. Also, existing literature is reviewed on the psychological factors that influence product purchases, as well as exploring alternative perspectives on consumption.

The purpose of the **Explore phase** is to envision desired futures for sufficient practices in the city centre. This is done by gaining a broader understanding of the actors that play a role within the retail-CE system, through conducting inteviews, and using the Vision in Product Design methodology.

The purpose of the **Define phase** is to combine, choose and formulate the insights into a design direction and design goal, along with a set of requirements that the design needs to meet in order to be succesfull.

The purpose of the **Design phase** is to bring the design goal to live in a concept through ideating, testing and evaluating. The concept is presented here with reference to the requirements and design goal.

The purpose of the **Deliver phase** is to conclude the project and recommend possibilities for the Ministry to work towards sufficiency within the shopping context.

3.
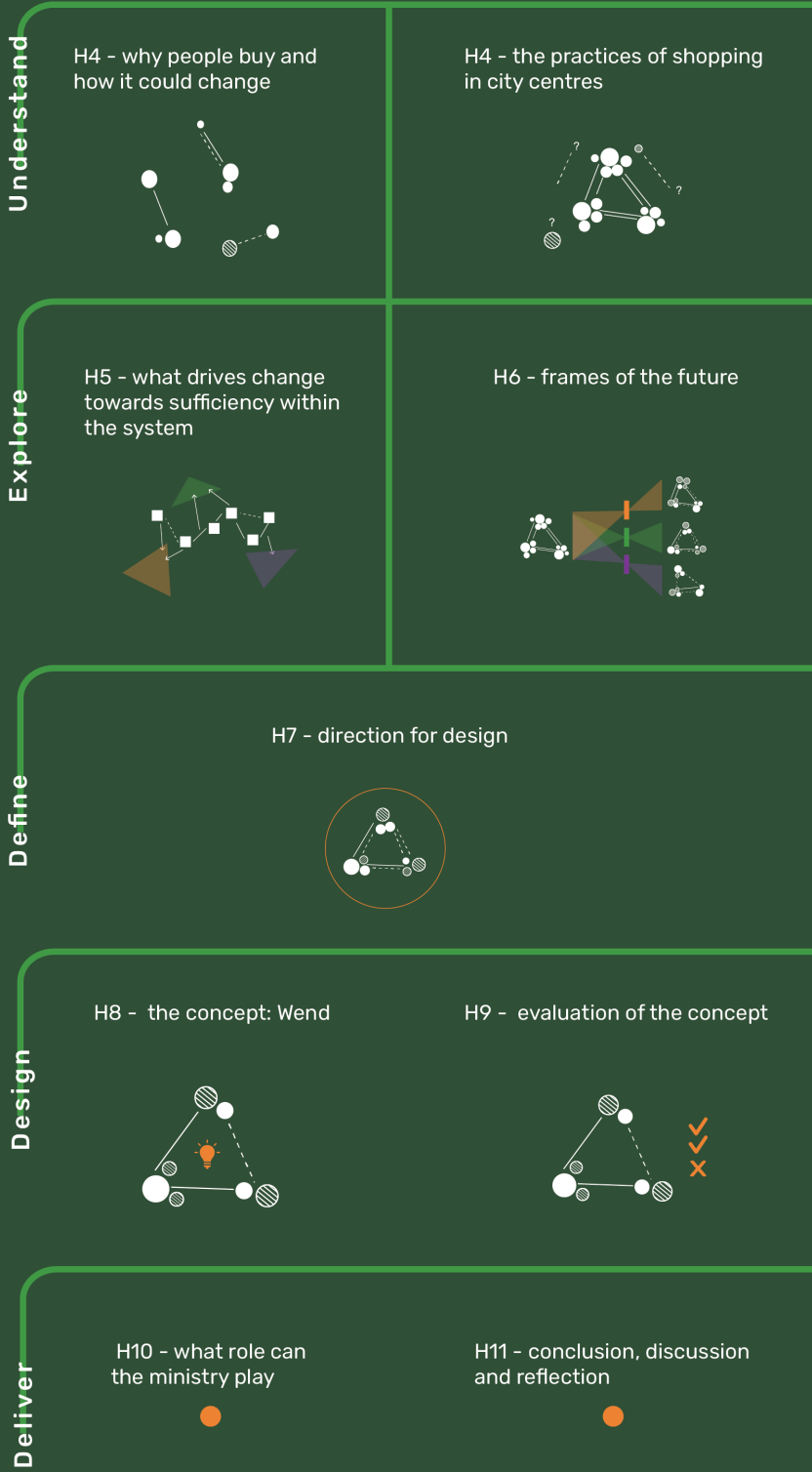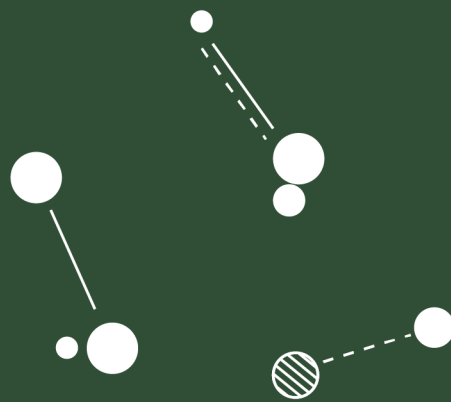
Literature review: why people buy and how it could change

This chapter reviews literature about the psychological aspects that influence people to buy. While shopping practices are the primary focus of this project, buying a product encompasses more than the shopping experience. The psychological values and drivers create meanings for people to buy, which are not always consciously considered. Therefore, this chapter first forms an understanding of the current knowledge on the meanings that people hold towards products. Secondly, it creates an understanding of the psychological influences of the retail industry on buying. In addition, this chapter puts these understandings in light of possible opportunities for change retrieved from literature around sufficiency transitions and several alternative consumption practices.

3.1 Approach

This literature study aimed to answer the following research questions:
1. Why do people buy?
   - What are the psychological drivers and values?
2. How do companies influence people to buy?
3. What is already written about sufficiency regarding (product) consumption?
4. What other (frugal) consumption concepts are there and what can be learned from them?

Academic papers from the fields of psychology, (sustainable) consumer behaviour, sufficiency (transitions), retail and marketing were researched along with some books and desk research.

3.2 Meanings attached to products

First of all, meanings can arise in relation to a specifc product or relate to products in general. This distinction is used to illustrate different values and drivers.

What applies to both, is that the values and drivers people have to buy products are often underlying, because most of these decisions actually happen unconsciously. Kahneman explains this in his work 'fast and slow thinking' (2011); He shows that people ´have´ a system 1 and system 2, which indicates decisions are partially driven by inherent biases, heuristics, emotions and prior experience and partially by reasoned, controlled cognition. People have a tendency to reside as much as possible in system 1.

In shopping this means that we actually have made our decision about a product purchase before consciously thinking why a yes or a no, based on these underlying meanings (VPRO, 2017).

Moreover, as mentioned before, consumption can be divided in four phases: the desire, purchase, usage and discard phase (Sinclair, 2018). Buying a product is mostly related to the desire and purchase phase. The usage and discard phase will be out of focus for this project, but some of its aspects also affect the other phases, so it will reoccur in the following paragraphs. The values and drivers that arise in the desire and purchase phase can differ, which is elaborated on in the next two sections. Also, some meanings regarding products are more general and not described to products specifically, this is discussed in the last part of this section.

3.2.1 Why people want a certain product

Social value and conformity & distinction and identity
People give symbolic values to a product, which define to what kind of products a person is attracted. Through products of social value people want to communicate what kind of person they are, with whom they affiliate, and what their socio-economic status is (Schor, 1998). They also show in which social circles they fit (figure 9 and 10). These social circles can vary from friends, work, family surroundings, hobby groups to social media. There is a delicate balance between distinction and conformity through products. It differs per cultural group how expressive this is.

Maldini (2019) made an interesting observation in fashion: A few decades ago there were some main trends and icons to watch out for, and people wanted to follow the trends, even though they might not have access to those type of products. Nowadays, there is a more complex network through online platforms and mass chains on who to follow, what the trend is and how to differentiate within. There is a bigger emphasis on what someones 'taste' is and people have to make this up from products that are accessible by anyone; the tension is higher. Other product categories follow these same networks, lik home furniture (restyling ikea cabinet so it doesn't look like ikea (Kristen McGowan, 2021), electronics (buy wireless air buds or not).

Figure 10: Exactitudes; photo series of people who dress similar based on social circles and their identity.

Figure 9: Even toothbrushes, which may seem to have only functional value, can trigger epistemic value (left) or social value (right); 'electric toothbrushes give me whiter teeth to show that I'm well-groomed'. (Images: Guyon, 2017)

There are also other values that people attach to products, which are more personal or general and less socially related:
- *Emotional value*: This symbolises that products arouse feelings. This can be because of certain aesthetics, but it can also be more related to personal memories: a gift makes someone remember of the giver. The latter often create a stronger and more caring relationship with the product.
- *Epistemic value*: The perceived novelty of the product itself (Sheth et al., 1991). If a product is very different from what someone knows, it creates more curiosity.
- *Functional value*: This relates to utilitarian aspects and product performance (Sheth et al., 1991). Interestingly, Luchs & Kumar (2015) showed that if a product has functional aspects that a person highly values, it is less likely to swap it for a sustainable lesser alternative than with hedonic motivated products.
- Conditional value: This defines whether the product is in the right circumstances to buy, often derived from temporary functional or social value. (Sheth et al., 1991). For example, a Christmas ball is only of value during christmas season.

Financial value
Finally, whether someone wants to spend money on a product creates the financial value of a product. Note, it is different than the question whether someone actually has the money. Above mentioned factors can outweigh the financial costs.
Moreover, the perception of what something should cost is culturally dependent, often unconsciously set as the norm (VPRO, 2017).
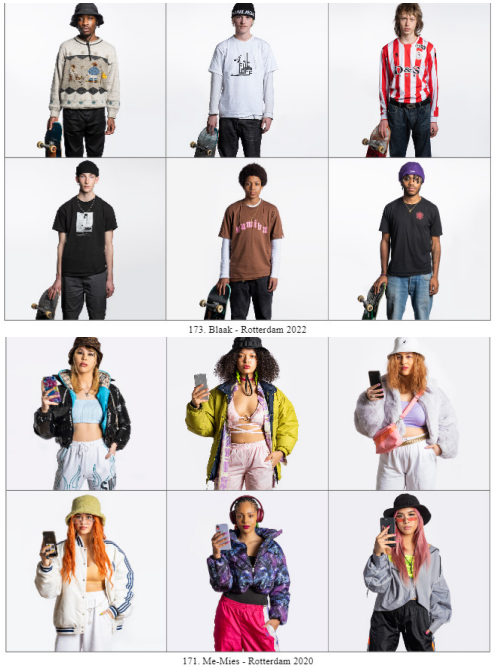
3.2.2 Likeliness of purchase

The models of Ahlström et al. (2020) and Beattie & Friese (1996) identify the psychological factors that shape people's perception/preferences in relation to acquiring products. Of these models, one was based on impulse buying and the other in context of affluence and consumer credit. Here we discuss a combination of the factors.

- *Compensation:* People expect to be rewarded for their hard work or achievements, they feel like they deserve the consumption. Furthermore, people buy something to repair their bad mood, also known as 'retail therapy' (Atalay & Meloy, 2011).
- *Affective forecasting*: In prospect of buying a product, people tend to think that it increases satisfaction more than it actually does. People like to focus on the positive consequences and neglect the possible negative ones. This is also related to the endowment effect: trying or holding an item in-store, already fosters a sense of ownership and emotional attachment, which amplifies affective forecasting (Shu & Peck, 2011).
- *Self-control*: This is a struggle between desire and willpower and often associated with unplanned buying behaviour, or impulse buying. Compensation and affective forecasting play a role here, but also proximity in time: sudden increases in desire can override long-term

preferences or rational decisions.
- *Self-discrepancies*: People are more likely to purchase if they personally perceive a gap between their actual self and their ideal self. The latter is often associated with social groups, but also role models and marketing messages.

Finally there are two factors that influence both desire of a product and the likeliness of purchase:
- *Adaptation*: A well-known psychological theory that can be applied to consumption is hedonic adaptation, or hedonic treadmill effect, which shows that people have a peak in happiness when buying a product, after which it normalizes again, which actually happens relatively quickly. Interest in products or experiences with more variety in use or functions however, does not fade as fast (Carter and Gilovich, 2010).
- *Evaluation of product value*: The perception of owned products indirectly contributes to the desire for a new product, which consists of a combination of aspiration level and mental book value. The latter is referred to as the purchase price that gradually depreciates through repeated use (Okada, 1999). The aspiration level for new things is induced by encountering other products and satiation of the things you own. The higher the aspiration level the less satisfaction of owned products

3.2.3 Why people want products in general

Materialism

Some people and cultures attach more value to materialistic products than others. Multiple authors argue that in our current western culture, the emblematic relevance of material possessions has become too dominant (amongst others: Jackson 2006, Hickel 2021). Empirical research even shows that people who put more emphasis on material possessions show decreased happiness, more negative attitudes toward nature and less concern for other people and consequently social justice, equality and world peace (Fournier & Richins , 1991; Schultz, et al., 2005; Vohs et al., 2006; Crompton & Kasser, 2009).

However, Jackson (2006) warns that importance of material value cannot suddenly be downplayed: 'their embeddedness in social conversation, their vital role in negotiating meaning, and the depth of their engagement in cultural myths and narratives suggest that material consumption patterns might represent a sphere of resistance to social change'. A good example of the embeddedness is from a quote of a conversation overheard in the train: '*what did you buy from your first salary?* '.

Furthermore, Kasser (2016) adds on to this by saying all of us have materialistic tendencies. Therefore the question is not only "Who is materialistic?" but also "*When are people materialistic?*".

Kasser also proposes three strategies to reduce materialism in his studies:

Activate and encourage intrinsic and self-transcendent values.
These values that stand in relative opposition to materialistic values in line with Schwartz value circle. So, activate and encourage intrinsic and self-transcendent aims.
1. *Reduce exposure to or diminish effect of materialistic messages in peoples environment*, which suggest that suggest that money, possessions, status, and image are important values to pursue are important to pursue.
2. *Help people to feel less insecure, threatened, and worried about their ability to satisfy their physical and psychological needs.*
'Bad' life history and threats and uncertainties at broader societal levels induce this. This strategy also relates to the earlier mentioned factors of acquiring products, in particular it could have effect on the self-discrepancy, -control and compensation.

Figure 11 shows the (reinforcing and reducing) influences on someone's materialistic orientation.

Desire for novelty

Just as nature renews itself from time to time, it's in the nature of people to want something new every now and then. This does not per se mean a new product, but a change in any form. However as said before, the product industry has sped up immensely the past 20+ years, constantly fuelling this desire for novelty. People are continuously given new input to desire, adjusting expectations to this level and wanting again, getting out of this continuous loop is hard (Fletcher & Grose, 2012; Jackson, 2009). Not only in product consumption, but also (news) articles, social media, everything has to go quicker.
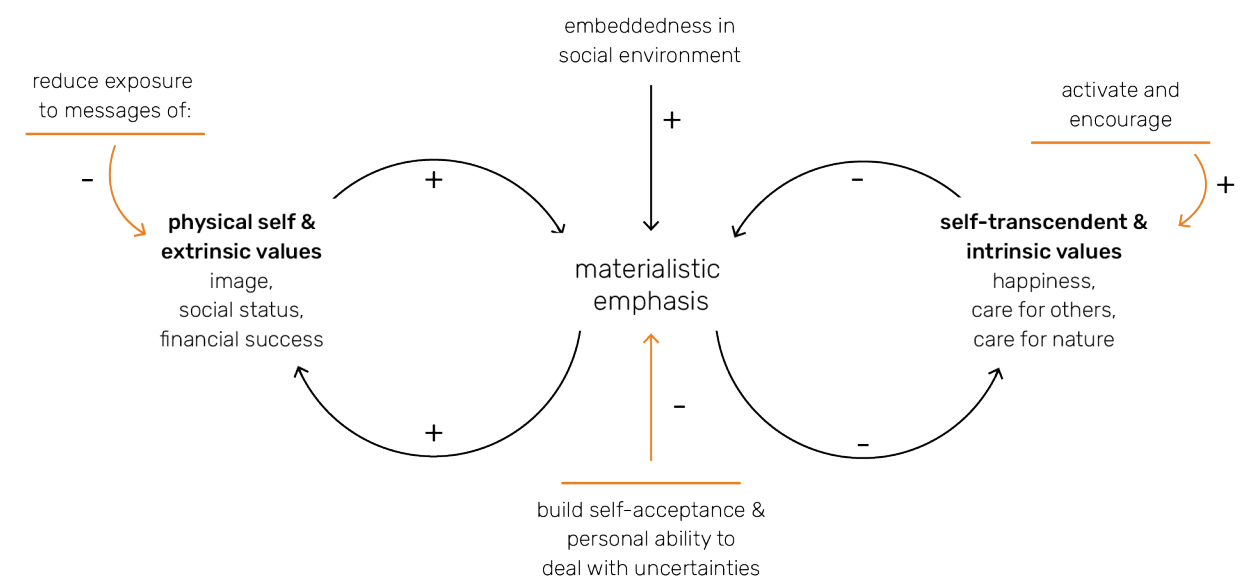

Figure 11: The different influences on the materialistic orientation of a person.

3.3 Retail industry's influence on buying

Over the years, the consumer product industry has become expert in capitalizing on psychological and social behaviour of people to increase sales. A wide variety of strategies are developed within this sector that are mostly not consciously noticed by consumers and play into their biases.
A few strategies are highlighted and discussed based on relevancy towards physical shopping experiences. These will be discussed along four different dimensions: pricing & availability, store experience, branding/loyalty, advertising. This is based on the retail matrix by Kahn, a well-known framework for companies on how to strategically position themselves (Kahn, 2018), see figure 12. The advertising dimension is added, because this is a strategy used by almost all companies independent of their positioning.

Pricing & availability
Apart from the general differences in prices of a products per brand and store, there is a trick that almost everyone uses, which is promotion. Whether it is a discount, buy one get one free, flash sales or other types of promotions, they are based upon the same set of persuasive principles. Companies use these with the goal of either temporarily increase sales and attract new customers or clear out excess inventory.
First of all, these promotions induce the 'silver lining effect': people tend to segregate the price from the discount. They will feel separately the emotion from the loss of the spending and the gain of 'saving' the discount. As a result, the consumer will not just be happy because of the purchase, but has an additional 'gain' because of the discount saving, which makes them feel even better.
Secondly, urgency and scarcity trick people to

Figure 12: Adapted from Kahn retail success matrix.

feel like they will miss out if they don't buy quickly. As Cialdini (2006) explains, perceived scarcity is linked to our aversion of loss with negative feelings associated and doing what we can to prevent that.

Experiential (environment)
The store experience also has an effect on buying behaviour. Aspects like the layout, display design, lighting, ability to touch and tryout, scents, music. For example, Rituals stores have sinks where you can tryout the soaps; Soft lighting and closed off fitting rooms makes someone comfortable. These elements are less consciously noticed by people, compared to discounts for example, but they respond to the mood of people through their senses. In case done well, people will stay in the store longer and eventually buy more.

A side effect that should not be overlooked, is that a nice environment has a positive influence on someone's mood, which transcends beyond buying behaviour and contributes to enjoying a day of going into the city.

Branding & Loyalty
Branding is closely related to the symbolic role of goods. Since nowadays brands often sell the same kind of products, they have to differentiate with their proposition. If this fits with the values of the customer, they will opt for that brand. Moreover, people are willing to pay a lot for a product because of the brand. Once a brand is embedded in someone's life or a social group, the person will have a preference for that brand when going

shopping . Sometimes it can even go as far as people identifying with a particular brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

This is where loyalty comes in. Companies really want to maintain this connection, therefore offer memberships. These often seduce people to buy more, by giving the option to save points for a discount, free gift or special offers over mail. But, it can also take on different forms, such as Patagonia gives their customers lifetime free repair, which also increases loyalty (Michel et al., 2019), see figure 14.

Advertising
Ads are widely used and people encounter a lot on average a day, varying from the more classic tools like posters, tv ads and using famous people to newer tools like social media influencers, blogs and affiliate marketing. A wide variety of psychological strategies is used, and it often induces self-discrepancies.

Depending on a person's preferences and values, the marketing will speak to a person or not. To illustrate, if an adolescent encounters an ad about diapers where a mom is holding a baby, the person will not be triggered. However a very emotionally triggering ad, will target more people independent of the product, food brands often do this very well, but more and more product brands are copying it, see figure 13.

The digital environment makes advertising more powerful, companies have infiltrated social media. Tiktok is a good example where products that get a good review are quickly going viral, leading to a lot of different people wanting that item (Jennings, 2021). This works so well, because it is a way of word of mouth - average people show and promote something they like (sometimes payed sometimes not). In contrast, people also desire things when a role model wears or uses it, which plays into the self-discrepancies as noted before (Dinh & Lee, 2021).

Finally, there is ads are also powerful because of the principle called priming. Someone might not be aware that it has seen a certain item in an ad, but unconsciously it has been captured (Karremans et al., 2006). If this item reoccurs more often, it will take a place in our memory and we tend to like it more.

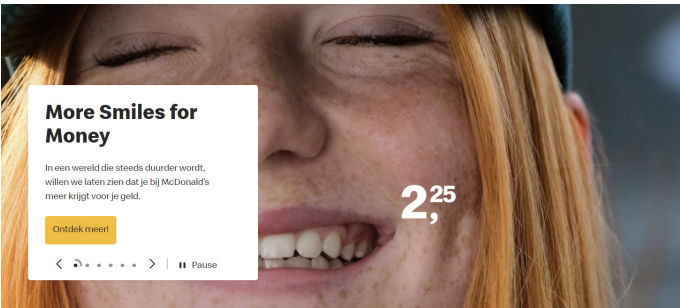Figure 14: Different forms of Loyalty, to buy more or to provide services

Figure 13: Pamper ad that only triggers certain target group vs smile that appeals emtionally to a big group of people (from Mcdonalds)

3.4 How the label sustainability won't work for Refuse

There are also more brands that do (say they) care about sustainability and start to sell 'conscious' lines or market about sustainability. Although quite some people is willing to 'act sustainably', they don't behave accordingly. Often conclusions then quickly direct towards the behaviour-intention gap, indicating that their good intentions are simply obstructed by various thresholds which need to lowered or changed.

However, informing, attracting and making it easier for people to choose the sustainable option, is only partly effective in the context of shopping for stuff. Harris, Roby and Dibb (2016) give three main arguments why: sustainability is too complex; consumers are too diverse in their ethical concerns; and most products obtained are not an altruistic purchase. Moreover, Frick (2021) argues that pro-environmental motives are more influential in contexts such as household energy use and recycling than in shopping, where hedonic motives are more salient. It can (sometimes) be effective to use the sustainability label and lower the thresholds for "sustainable products" as an alternative, as consumers still receive product after the tradeoff. However playing the sustainability card, so that people will refrain from buying, is much more challenging.

This is why examples of marketing strategies such as from Patagonia, see figure 15, only appeal to a very small group of consumers. As Bocken and Short (2016) note that the widespread consumerist culture can hinder companies in advertising sufficiency, as it does not overlap with what many consumers consider their social and cultural needs.

Therefore, the intervention should shift people towards sustainable consumption without them realizing it by responding to other motives and making the alternative choice easier, logical and fair . This is also in line with one of the pillars of the new NPCE behavioural strategy (Ministerie van Infrastructuur & Waterstaat, 2023). This way, the intervention should not try to change the motives or attitude in order to change behaviour, but the other way around: changing the behaviour and the attitude will follow.
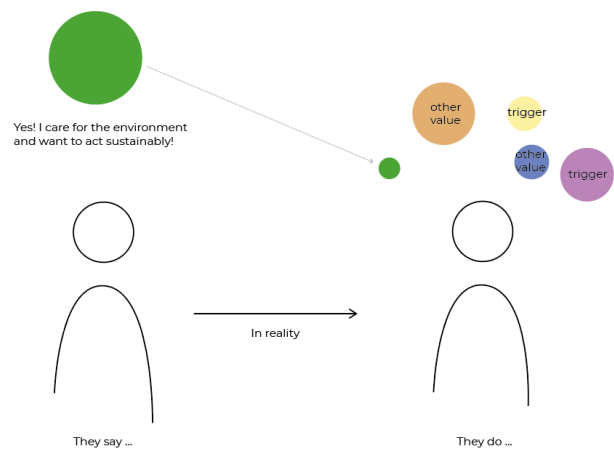
Figure 15: Marketing from Patagonia in line with the Refuse strategy, but it only increased sales (Demkes, 2020)

3.5 Alternative consumption practices

Sandberg's (2021) research on sufficiency transitions points out potentially relevant streams of research to absolute reduction in miscellaneous goods around alternative consumption concepts, such as anti-consumption, voluntary simplicity, and minimalism.

People practicing this mostly have in common that they try to buy less, care more. They prioritize owning fewer possessions and intentionally promoting the things they value in life. Consequently, extended lifespans of products and sharing is interlinked with these alternative consumption concepts.

There have always been people who have lived with the mindset of 'less is more', but a relatively new Minimalism movement seems to be a reaction to the seemingly limitless possibilities of consumption. The movement became popular in recent years with the release of the book and documentary "Minimalism" (2011 and 2016) by Millburn and Nicodemus, as well as the Marie Kondo movement (2011). Minimalists often cite freedom as a reason for pursuing this lifestyle, both in terms of time, finances, and the ability to focus on other aspects of life. Besides, only some consider sustainability a main reason to pursue Minimalism.

> *Minimalists don't focus on having less, less, less. We focus on making room for more: more time, more peace, more creativity, more experiences, more contribution, more contentment, more freedom. – J. Millburn and R. Nicodemus*

3.6 Relationship between consumption and wellbeing

At last, there is a recent interesting study conducted by Mynaříková & Pošta (2022) that looks at the relationship between well-being and consumption in 22 wealthier countries. The study found that higher well-being leads to lower consumption, particularly for non-essential items such as clothing, toys, dining out, and travel.

Potential explanations for this relationship are that individuals with higher well-being may prefer activities such as sports, music, and socializing with friends and family over buying extra items. Additionally, they may experience less insecurity in relation to their social status and, as a result, feel less compelled to use material possessions as a means to boost it. They also tend to find less comfort in consumption when they are sad.

3.7 Concluding and takeaways

There are a lot of different elements around products that influence people psychologically. In short:

- Products can have different values for someone.
- Acquiring a product plays into a lot of short term happiness effects that we do not consciously notice.
- Companies have become expert in using emotional and sensory exposure to get people's attention through branding, advertising, pricing strategies and experiences.
- Our desire for novelty is something that will always stay. However, in essence novelty is not per se 'new', it can also be a change.
- Materialistic views are very much part of our society, however in some situations people are more materialistic focussed than in others.

The overview on the right captures the different elements and opportunities for change retrieved from literature.

Aspects that influence buying

Opportunities for possible intervention

focus on materialistic values: image, social status, financial success

desire for novelty

sparks sensations
- advertising
- affective forecasting
- experiential (environment)

perception of self
- compensation
- self-discrepancies
- self-control

pricing & availability

follow
- symbolic role of social conformity & distinction, identity
- branding & loyalty

(direct) prodcut value
- adaptation
- evaluation of product peformance
- functional, epistemic, emotional, conditional value

focus on improving/maintaining high subjective wellbeing

leads to lower consumption of non-essential items

intentionally promote intrinsic and self-transcendent values

allows to care more and value freedom of less possessions

fuel with changes or experiences

instead of products

reduce exposure to and affect by messages on materialistic values

reduces tendencies to buy new

build self-acceptance & personal ability to deal with uncertainties

reduces focus on materials

shift people towards sustainable choices without them realizing it

as an alternative for sustainability labels

would be better to research in context of product longevity

would be better to research per product type

Legend:
- ● meanings attached to certain product
- ● meanings attached to products in general
- ○ drivers of purchase likeliness

4.

The practices of shopping in city centres

The purpose of this chapter is to understand what current shopping practices in the city centre look like and define possible areas of opportunities. The chapter begins by outlining the methods used for this research. Secondly, it illustrates the insights showing what different performances of shopping include. Thirdly it shows some key linked elements identified that occur in a lot of shopping practices. The chapter closes with a model that gives direction for an intervention.

4.1 Approach

Social practice theory for analysis

First of all, Social practice theory has been explained previously, but in order to use it for analysis, it is necessary to delve a little deeper. Kuijer (2014) explains how the practice-as-entity contains all elements and links that can occur in shopping practices, but people perform it in different ways where they do not connect or 'use' all the elements, see figure 16. Hence to analyse practices, the performances are the observable behaviour of people, what they say and do (Sustainable Practices Research Group, 2013). This is just the tip of the iceberg. A grib on the fundamental groups of elements and links, that make up the practice-as entity, should be retrieved from finding themes in what people say, do, make and feel.

Method & Setup

To get to this, first street interviews were held to retrieve a first broad understanding of different perormances. This was done in the city centre of Rotterdam and Utrecht.

Next, it was chosen to do group sessions. The confrontational aspect of talking and discussing practices allows for uncovering elements on social conventions, meanings and material and social influences (Maréchal & Holzemer, 2018), that would not necessarily be grasped in individual interviews.

The participants were selected, based on if they shop recreationally, but also asked to bring friends, which were not asked up front if they shop recreationally, sometimes leading to a mix or contrasting within groups. Also the groups were chosen based on age, to see if this made a difference in the shopping practices.

The sessions were held in a generative form(Sander & Stappers, 2012). Key to this form is, to gain tacit and latent knowledge, participants do not only talk about their experiences (past and future), but also have to express it in physical materials, like collages (figure 17). Before the session they were asked to write down what they've bought, where and why the past three months. During the session they were given three different assignments that aimed to uncover what shopping means to them and how they perform it.

The aim of this thesis, reducing consumption, was deliberately left out of the introduction of the sessions, to prevent receiving biased discussions and answers from participants. Only at the end it was shared.

Additionally, a small study was done with Minimalists (description of MInimalists in 4.5). In a facebook group consisting of 6533 members. They were asked to share what they think of shopping in the city centre, if they do it, how and what their experiences are. Twentyfour answers were received.

See Appendix A for the details of the studies.

Limitations

Due to time constraint, the participants were not given an in-depth sensitising activity beforehand. This could've made the discussions more in-depth from the start, which now sometimes took a while and let to other (type of) insights.

Secondly, the participants of the sessions were all women, which has possibly biased the outcomes. They did, however, also refer to their male partners or friends during the conversations.

- 🟢 people interviewed on streets in Rotterdam and Utrecht (15) - lasted between 5 and 20 minutes
- 🟠 people in sessions (10 total - group of 4, 2, 3 - 1 solo) - lasted between 50 and 1.45 minutes

Figure 16: Practice-as-entity versus performances of the practice (Kuijer, 2014)
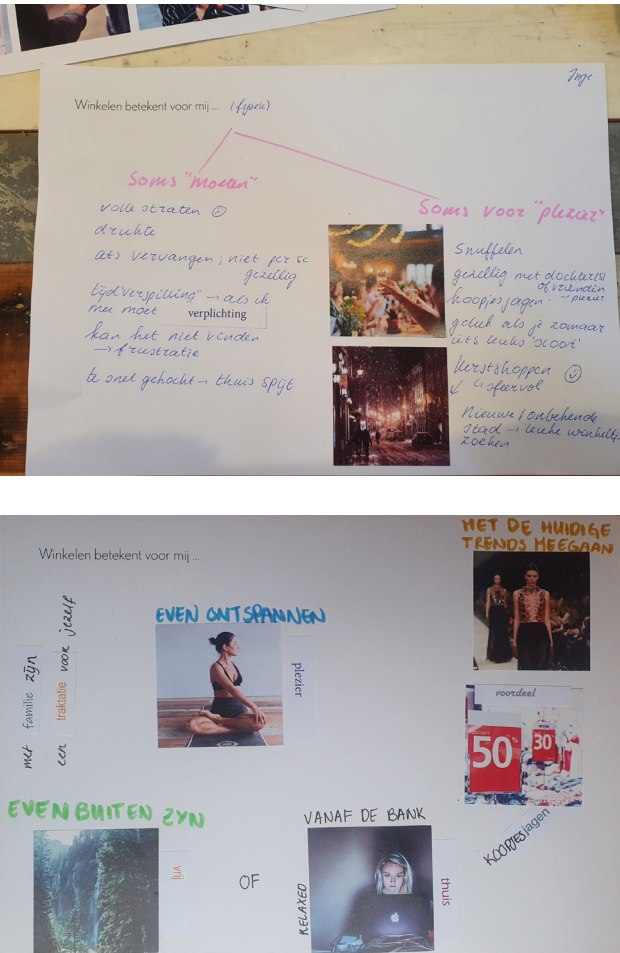
Practice-as-entity   Performance 1   Performance 2

Figure 17: Two materials from sessions made by participants. Using words and images to express their experiences

4.2 Different performances of shopping
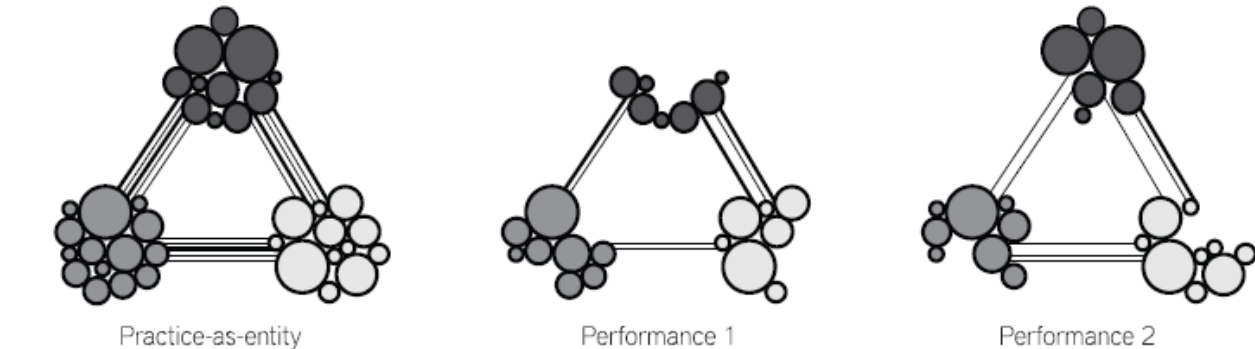
This section outlines the various forms of recreational shopping and highlights their differences and similarities. It begins by defining different types of performances. The second part shows that within the performances there are different phases, which demonstrate how they lead to different focus of elements therewith allow for different intervention strategies.

4.2.1 Different intentions

Although quite some literature has distinguished different shopper motivations/typologies, such as: adventure, gratification, role, value, social, obliged, trend and idea shopping, motivations (Bäckström, 2011; Tatić et al., 2011; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Mitchell & Bates, 1998). However, these are moslty focussed towards product purchase. In the case of this project, it is important to put practices of recreational shopping in a different frame that do not per sé revolve around the products.

Consequently, four types of practices that people do in city centres were identified from the insights of the research activities, see the right page. Each type has a different focus or groupings of elements. Performance 1 and 3 emphasize the city surroundings as part of the practice, whereas for performance 2 and 4, it is mainly about the shop(s) and products.

Figure 18: A lot of people go into the city centre together

These performances are illustrative, in reality, the configuration mixes. For example, a solo shopper can also do it as a day out in a new city, or a couple can go target shopping. Or even within couples, one can see it as a fun day out, whereas the other mainly has a target. Also the focus of elements (can) differ and change throughout the shopping journey, which is elaborated on in section 4.2.2.

Social composition
What was also noticed in during the research activities is that people often go with two people (see figure 18), or alone. but less often with three or more.

Target shopping is more than functional shopping
Moreover, shopping with a target can be misinterpreted as functional shopping instead of recreational. Functional is seen as for example 'I just need to get a toothbrush and go back home'. Instead, participants often talked about this performance in a way that they had something in their mind already before going shopping, but they did see it as a nice outing for example. The difference with the other performances is that the focus is much more on scanning and hunting products.

Also the 'target' can be concrete 'I'm looking for this type blouse I've seen online' or vague, such as: 'I'm looking for pants for the winter season'. Or, a target can arise during shopping, where either the person gets triggered by a product in a store, also called reminder impulse shopping in literature (Stern, 1962), or through chatting with their companion.

Performance 1: Shopping as a day out

"gewoon gezellig om er een leuk dagje van te maken met z'n tweeen... drankje, gezelligheid, lekker samen lunchen"

focus on:

city surroundings	quality time	navigating
multiple shops	give a treat	know what other likes
cafes & eateries	openness/desire for novelty	

mother & daughter

Performance 2: Unplanned shopping

"moest mijn mobiel laten repareren, toen zijn we daarna ook even wat andere winkels ingegaan"

focus on:

products	openness/desire for novelty	know what other likes
multiple shops		knowing directions
	attraction in relation to personal taste	

couple

Type 3: Shopping as pastime

"gezellig even samen en ontspannen .. ik hoef niks te kopen" – reaction companion: "maar je komt wel altijd met een jurk thuis"

focus on:

city surroundings	getting out of everyday hassle	know what other likes
multiple shops	socializing	knowing directions
cafes & eateries		
bench or public facilities		

friends

Type 4: Shopping with a target

"ga niet super vaak naar de stad en dan heb ik al een lijstje in m'n telefoon ... dingen die ik nodig heb maar ook gewoon wil kijken"

focus on:

| product aspects | address a certain 'need' | ability to define and find what is looking for |
| one or few shops | inspiration | knowing directions |

solo

materials   meanings   competencies
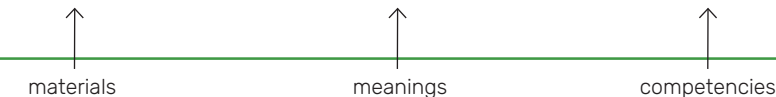
4.2.2 Different focus within phases

This section dives deeper into what actions emerge during a practice. Figure 19 illustrates a shopping journey that could happen, which is compiled from different stories during the research (appendix B). It gives insight on the activities shoppers go through, but more importantly, it aims to show how people can find themselves in different phases during shopping.

These different phases trigger different performances where different meanings, materials and competencies are in focus. The phases are shown on the left of the image. They can be categorised based on a different focus in elements. This categorisation also allows to see different strategies for possible interventions.

1 change orientation

In this category of phases, the focus lies on the city surroundings and other activities besides shopping. In these phases, people wander around through busy and quiet areas, might give attention to the looks of buildings, see spaces to chill and not be active. However, as shown in the journey, participants indicated they do not really engage with other types of activities that are facilitated in the city centre (see section 4.3.3 for elaboration on this).

The strategy for possible interventions here, is to change the orientation of people, e.g. get people prefer to stay 'outside' so they won't go in the shops or see it as a place to just have fun (like Minimalists, see section 4.4). Using this strategy will also lower the probability that they to get into the other phases.

2 turn the desires

In this category of phases, the focus lies on the products, retail environment and the meanings that these materials elicit. Here a 'target' can form and people can get focussed on finding the right product for their 'need' (see section 4.3.1 for elaboration on this). People can be stubborn with their desires:

> "als je het eenmaal in je hoofd hebt dan kun je het er ook niet meer uithalen, dan kan ik het ook maar beter gaan kopen" – Noa

The strategy for possible interventions here, is to turn the desires, e.g. get people to recognise the different values that create the desire and realise they do not need it, already have something similar or it doesn't fit with their ideal values, etcetera.

3 Realise ownership

In this category of phases, the focus still lies on the product which a person by then desires, but now other elements get involved in deciding, both consciously and unconsciously. Such as competency to define if it fits their style, their budget, their amount of self-control.

The strategy for possible interventions here, is to let people realise the ownership of a product. E.g. that they have to care for it (and learn competency to do so), use it for as long as possible or let them recognise the consequences directly (like financially), or indirectly (like should it replace something).

> "jaa... waarom heb ik het gekocht? ik zag het en ik vond het gewoon leuk" – Nina

Figure 19: Figure X: Shopping journey of a mix of type 3 and 4, indicating the different phases the people can reside in and described what elements are in focus each phase.

4.3 Key linked elements in shopping practices

This section dives into the shopping practice with more of an practice-as-entity perspective. As such, it shows the key linked elements uncovered in the research. These are labeled as 'key' as they were either reocurring across different performances and/or very determining for actions that emerge from practices.
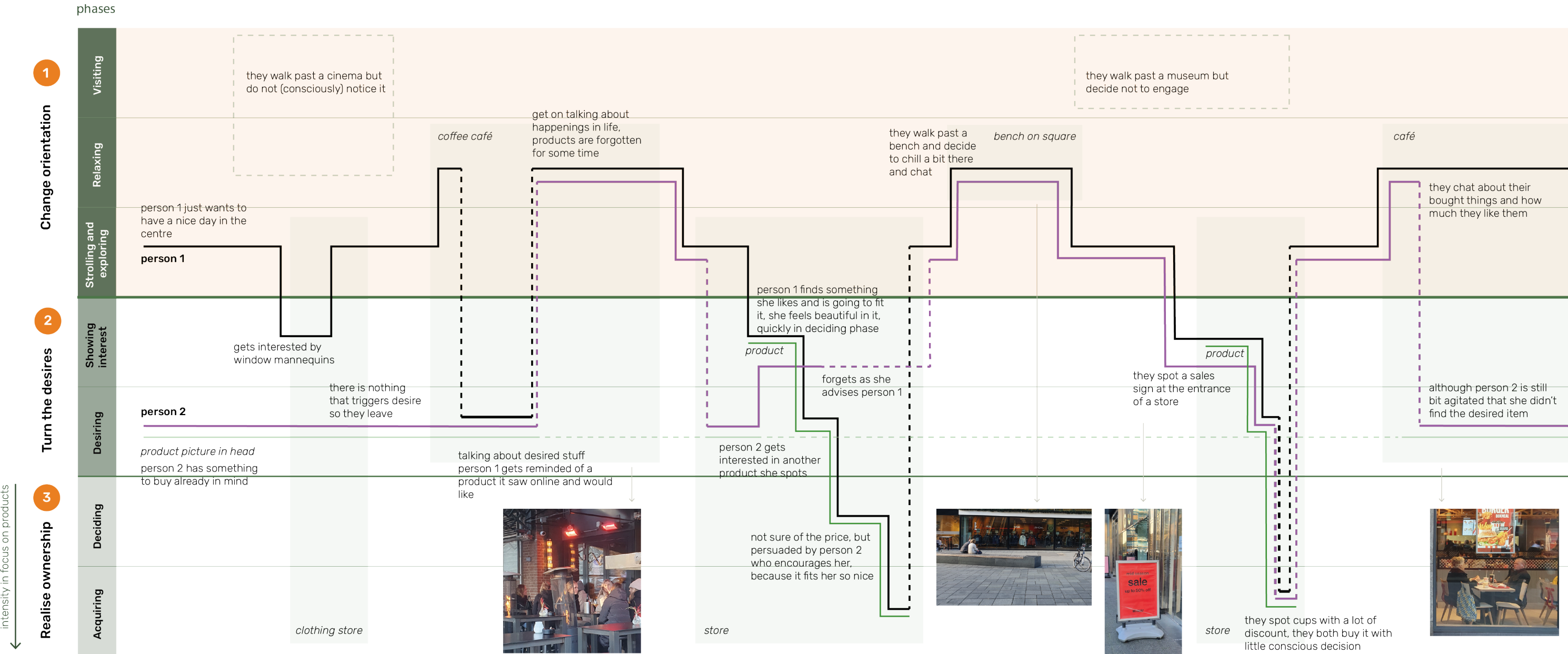
4.3.1 Attached meanings and competencies to products

Externalising needs towards others and events
One of the research insights sees a relation between products and attached meanings that extends the literature discussed in chapter 1. In literature, literature has primarily focused on individuals and their personal values. Even values like social conformity and distinction are positioned as a personal motivation. However, what was noticed here, is that people do not always perceive their needs as a motivation of their own, they can see it as external needs. They, as it were, project values for others or for certain events, see figure 20.

This difference shows how people, by having a reason due to the external need, purchase more easily. What people see as an external need can vary, see figure 20 for an overview from insights. It becomes a competency to connect a product to know what someone else likes; what is expected for events to have; ability to research what you need for a holiday.

People can also transform a personal want into an external need. For example, someone sees a blouse she likes and by stating - that is perfect for work events - she creates an external need, thus has a reason to buy.

Once this external need is seen as a reason, it is hard to get people of that thought, as also mentioned in 'turn the desires' on the preceding page. In the cases of products perceived as valuable for others or for events, it is more effective to tackle the cause, which are often related to social norms, These happen mostly outside of the physical shopping domain. Nevertheless, minimising exposure to these types of products

will also reduce the occurrence of the thought of needing it, which relates to the next topic: Elicit Fear of Missing Out.

Elicit Fear Of Missing Out
By encountering products, thoughts or associations that trigger values mentioned in chapter 1, people get feeling that they need the product and they miss something if they do not buy. This fear of loss is also known as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

There is some literature that links FOMO to shopping, but more to online environments (Kang et al., 2019), social circles and scarcity induced on purpose (Cialdini, 2006). A study of simpson et al. (2008) shows that around 40% of consumers tend to observe surrounding materials, like strangers in the city centre and posters with models, both (un)consciously. He shows that self-confidence and conformity influence this, which were also mentioned in the previous chapter.

A quote from one of the participants that illustrates FOMO in relation to conformity of social circles:

> "… gewoon t ja t beste eruit halen wat erin zit. FOMO-achtig misschien wel. … Zou stom zijn als ik dan in een winkel geweest ben en dat iemand anders dan zegt ja ik heb nou toch zo iets leuks gekocht gister bij deze winkel dat ik dan denk shit ik heb dat niet gezien" - Julia

However, insights from this qualitative research suggested that during shopping, FOMO takes on different forms, see figure 20, not only in relation to others, but also in relation to ones own competencies. To illustrate, someone might see a dress that fits her own taste, if she is not going to fit it she can get a fear of missing out on feeling beautiful. Another example; someone might see a promotion of a cooking book that he likes but has no reason to buy, however now he has seen this exclusive promotion he has a fear of missing out on it, then he remembers a good friend would like it too (competency of knowing someone elses taste) and he will buy it as a treat for his friend.
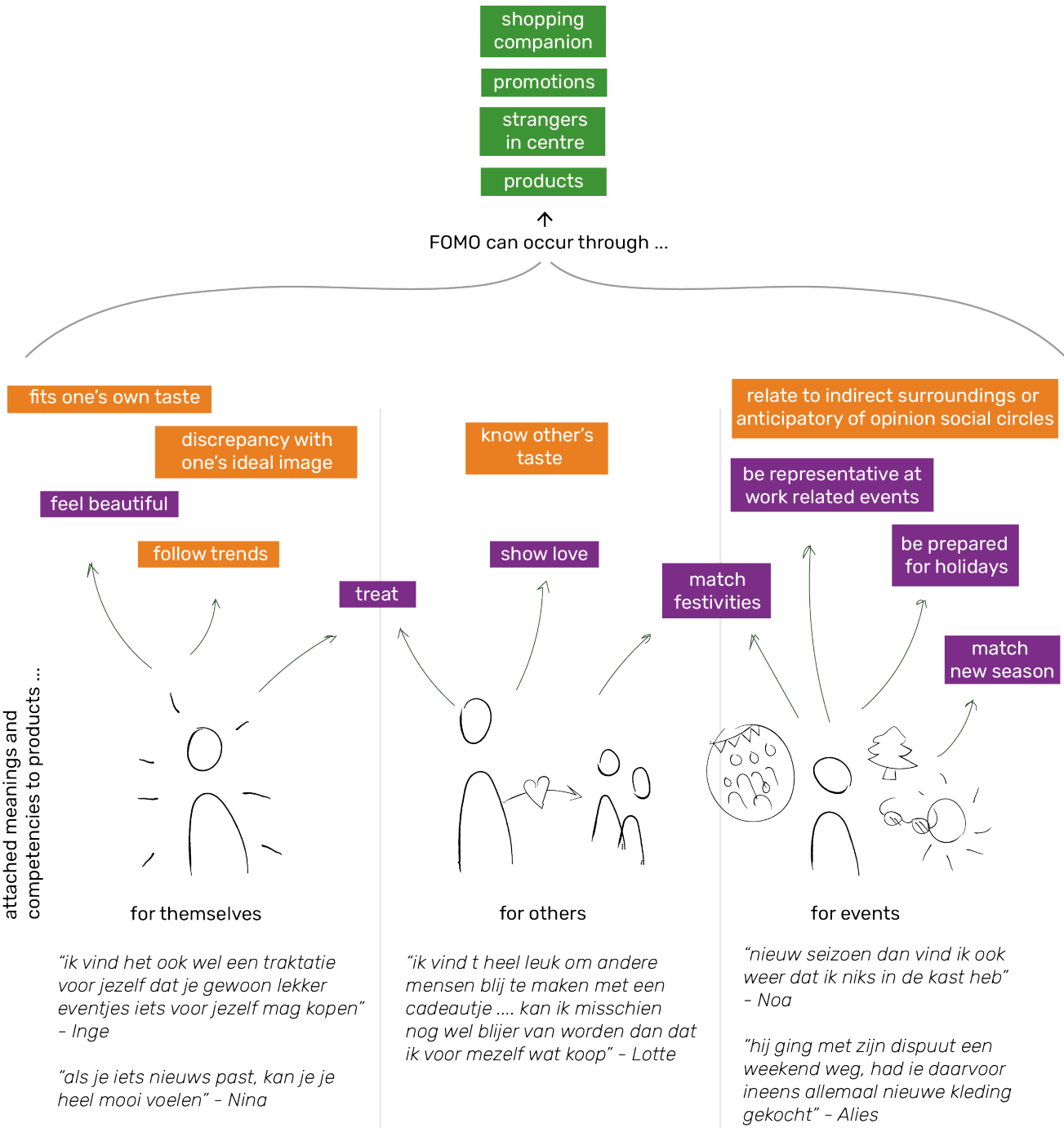
Figure 20: shows the different meanings and competencies products (and other things in surroundings) can trigger in people

4.3.2 Togetherness and influence of companion

As mentioned in shopping types, people often visit the city centre together, either with a friend or a family member. The relation and dynamics between these companions during shopping created interesting insights and will be discussed in more detail here.

A shopping outing is seen as a bonding activity through elements like chatting, get second opinions, new perspectives and complementing each other.

'omdat ik het leuk vind om iemand die ook heel erg van winkelen houdt daarmee dit te delen'

Moreover, this bonding increases conformity tendencies and gives a reinforcing effect concerning the buying of products. On one hand by expecting that if one buys something, the other should too, even though this is not explicitly mentioned, but it does illustrate in this quote:

"... als ze dan niks kochten dan vond ik dat jammer" - Henriet

On the other hand, by complementing a person is more quickly convinced to buy. On the other hand, it can also have a diminishing effect: when the companion is not convinced, the person will buy it less quickly.

"als je dan gaat shoppen wordt je door elkaar aangestoken" - Alies

In addition, most of the participants also mentioned having a drink or lunch is part of this experience. It shows that going together creates room for activities that are not related to products, as illustrated in the top category of the journey (figure 19).

4.3.3 Competency of reaching a goal

A link noticed frequently during research, was that people had the idea that once in the city, they should also be able to reach a certain goal. On one hand, because it creates a feeling of fullfillment and on the other hand it confirms their competency to find things that fit their taste or their needs.

'"Voel me meestal voldaan ... als ik niks koop ga ik wel met een ander gevoel naar huis." - Nina

It also relates to nowadays the expectance of efficient use of time, in this light a visit without buying feels like wasted time.

In literature recreational shopping has traditionally been associated to pleasurable experiences rather than to the acquisition of products (Bäckström, 2011). But, this insight suggests that people do often emphasize material values over social and experiential; They still get quite focussed on the products as fullfillment even though it is spoken of as a nice get together.

"Als ik echt een dagje met m'n moeder ga shoppen en ik koop niks, nou dan .... Nee da's wel jammer." - Elisa

4.3.3 Meanings linked to city surroundings

Finally, there are also several meanings that people attach to the city surroundings. These are especially prevalent in shopping type 1 and 3 (p. 41).

Vibrance of the city centre
The city centre is a busy place where a lot of different people walk around and theres are a lot of visual triggers. This is perceived as the vibrance of the centre, from both people and input.

'winkelen en shoppen gewoon sfeer hebben of zo. Ik vind dat gewoon leuk om door zo'n winkelstraat te lopen ... vaak niet de allermooiste straat maar toch heeft het iets' - Julia

VIsitors can absorb this without doing much themselves, it doesn't require much rational thought, which is why people also see it as a pastime activity. We can link this to Kahneman's

sytem 1 and 2 again, explained in section 3.2. People reside in system 1 while absorbing the vibrance, therefore they perceive it as a 'thoughtless' activity, something they can do if they don't want to think too much. Which is also why a possible solution that creates awareness can create tension with this meaning if it imposes a higher cognitive load and lead people into system 2.

'shopping is a bit of relaxation' - couple, streets

In the second place, all the input also fuels the earlier mentioned insight, that people get the feeling they need to reach a goal.

Shopping versus other activties: The eased pace of wandering through the city

People who engage in a known city visit and even people with an exploratory mindset, mostly only engage with shops and sometimes cafés, but not with other type of venues. While there are actually a lot of other activities to do in the city centre besides shopping, they do not easily enter or even notice other venues, On one hand, because the shops are predominantly in the picture in the city centre. On the other hand, shops and cafés are perceived more 'open and approachable' than other venues; Entering a theatre has a much higher threshold than relaxing somewhere with a cup of coffee.

This threshold is also due to the attention span that is expected for different leisure activities, see figure 21. Shopping spreads this over a longer period of time with peaks and lows: the attention/cognitive effort is chopped up in smaller parts and keeps room for nondirectly-related activities (such as chatting with a friend, relaxing on a bench).

Shopping
Varying levels of attention; higher in stores and towards products, alternating with moments of relaxation. But because of attention put in products, also expect more to be fullfilled through them.
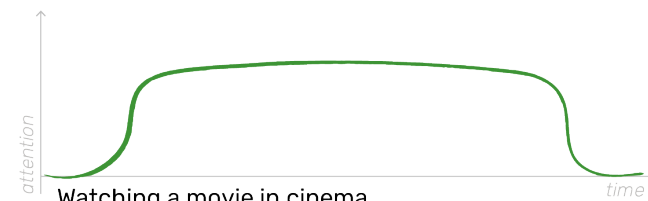
Watching a movie in cinema
High attention for longer period. Fullfillment from the story and being entertained.
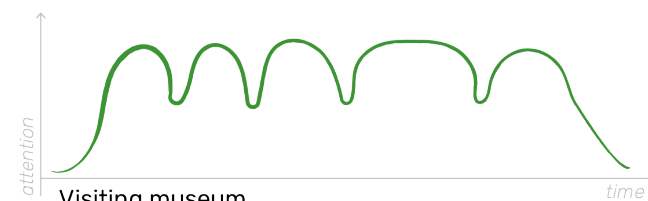
Visiting museum
High attention when reading and interpreting objects and info, fullfillment from learning something.
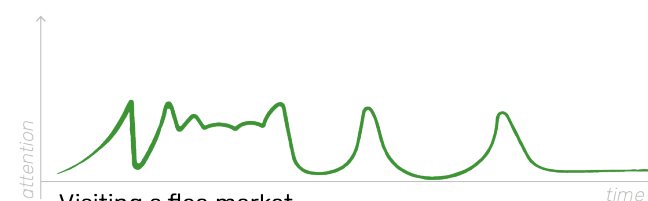
Visiting a flea market
Similar levels as shopping, maybe less involvement, but mainly lower (expected) competency to find something, so fullfilment more from *seeing* novelties.
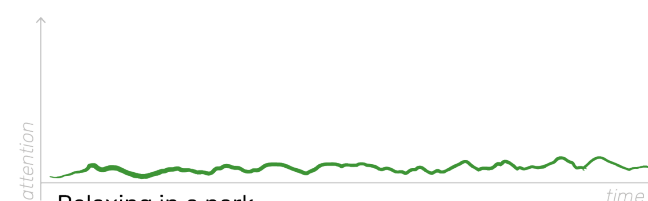
Relaxing in a park
Low attention but also fullfilled because that was the intent.

Figure 21: Figure X: Different attention spans for different leisure activities

4.4 Shopping practices of minimalists

As mentioned, a small research was done with Minimalists and how they perceive shopping. The insights are shared here.

3.4.1 Insights

Need for (mental) support
Most people indicated they only go shopping when they need something and make a list beforehand, to avoid distractions and impulse buys. In addition, some of them indicated that due to this distraction, they have a negative association with city centres. They feel like they cannot control themselves when being in that context.

> 'Ik ga dus nooit de stad in of naar de winkels gewoon om te kijken en als ik moet dan maak ik een lijstje .., kijk niet rond op mijn doel af , kassa en weg.'

City centre are one-sided and boring
Some indicated that they find the city centre to be uninteresting due to the onesidedness of functions, this perception had changed over time. In addition, they preferred second-hand or vintage stores for unique and diverse products.

> 'Alsof het hele concept winkelen een totaal andere lading heeft gekregen... Er voornamelijk eenheidsworst of artistiek onbetaalbaar aan je voorbij gaat. ...'

> 'Ik vind de stad ingaan zonder te shoppen dan weer echt heel saai, haha.'

Outing with others
Finally, a few indicated they still go into the city if initiated by others, and experience it as a fun day out, just as 'normal' shoppers. In contrast to the first insight, these people have the self-control to engage in shopping without being prone to impulse buys.

> 'Als ik de stad in ga is t vaak kijken en niet kopen. Leuk om inspiratie op te doen en gezellig ergens thee drinken.'

3.4.2 Comparison with majority of shoppers

If we put these insights in light of the previously discussed insights, we can actually see that there is some overlap.

- Mental structure is related to reaching a goal. The difference here lies in the deliberate consideration of what 'needs' to be bought. Minimalists take more time before doing so.
- Going to the city with others is a reccurring pattern, but minimalists are more 'resistant' to the opinions of others. Also they can see it as a nice day even though nothing has been bought.
- The perception of the city centres functions and activities: mostly (big chain) stores are noticed.

4.5 Practice-as-entity model that combines insights

Previously mentioned insights of the shopping practices are combined in a model to create an image of the different elements that play a role and get insight on where there are opportunities for possible interventions, see the right page. It is visually arranged based on the strategies of the journey (section 4.2.2). Three different strategies were defined in that section, based on the phases of a journey: 'change orientation'; 'turn the desires' and 'realise ownership'. The latter two are grouped, the reason for this is elaborated on below.

The middle line contains the key elements of shopping practices in the city centre, those can make links with both the left and right side, these are the *turning points*, depending on which performance a person is in. For example, someone can seek fullfillment in looking for the right product for an upcoming party and wanting to reach that goal. While another time they can feel fullfilled, because they were relaxing on a bench with a companion and bonded through chatting about life stuff.

What was noticed during the research is that currently a lot of elements in the city centre pull elements of the middle line to the right side of the model, leading people to buy. Whereas there are all kinds of other activities to do in the city centre that would keep people from buying, they are not really part of shopping practices (yet). This is especially interesting for performance type 1 and 3 (section 4.2.1): 'shopping as a day out' and 'shopping as pastime' where the city could take a bigger stage to prevent people from engaging with products and buy on impulse.

Since not all strategies can be used for one design, this needs to be scoped to one of the strategies. **This model allows to see that opportunities for possible interventions regarding the *change orientation* strategy are interesting to build further upon. The key elements, or *turning points,* should be kept in consideration as they form the foundation that can change sides for practices for visitors of the city currently.**

4.6 Concluding

There are a lot of different elements in shopping practices that influence how it is performed. This chapter identified 4 main shopping performances: shopping as a day out; as pastime; unplanned and; for a target. These all have different linked elements in focus and include elements related to the city surroundings, which makes them distinct from current literature on shopping typologies.

Secondly, the chapter showed that within a shopping journey there are also continuously different links made between elements depending on the 'phase' the person finds itself in. This led to three different strategies that each target different phases within such a journey: 'change orientation', 'turn the desires' and 'realise ownership'.

Thirdly, elements that are key in most of these performances are:
- The meanings and competencies related to products: meanings regarding themselves, others, and events and different competencies that induce FOMO;
- The bonding with and influence of a shopping companion;
- The desire to reach a goal and make use of the time spent in the city centre;
- The vibrance of the city and the eased pace activity that it facilitates.

Finally, these insights are combined in the practice-as-entity model to provide a picture on what can be leveraged to shift the practices towards a reduction in purchases. The strategy 'change orientation' is chosen to elaborate upon.

City environment
change orientation

turning point

Product-related environment
turn the desires & realise ownership

meanings

- relaxing
- vibrance
- fullfilment
- fuel novelty
- new input
- (direct) value of a product
- be prepared for holidays
- match festivities
- feel beautiful
- new season
- a treat
- show love
- match festivities

materials

- public surroundings
- other venues / activities
- cafes & eateries
- companion(s)
- retailers environment
- products for themselves
- triggers that spark sensation (ads & affective forecasting)
- triggers that induce 'act now' (promotions)
- products for events & others

competencies

- appreciation of surroundings
- navigating
- knowing directions
- reaching a goal
- materialistic orientation
- FOMO
- know others taste
- know personal taste
- follow trends
- perception of self
- adaptation & evalu. of product perform.
- social distinction & conformity

Legend:
- insights on elements from this chapter
- insights on elements from previous chapter
- elements are there but not in focus as much
- biggest circles are most defining elements of shopping practices

5.

What drives change toward sufficiency within the system

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what future sufficiency practices might be possible from the retail-CE system perspective. The previous chapters uncovered the current context and possible opportunity areas, now it is important to define how reconfiguration of a future practice that supports sufficiency can be achieved. This can be done in a lot of different ways, therefore it is interesting to explore the different directions. Moreover, not all elements and links can suddenly be changed or removed, this requires an insight in who might be involved and what moves them. That is why this chapter zooms out from the direct context of shopping practices of city centres towards the stakeholder activity.

The first step is to uncover and map the systemic connections between the stakeholders of the retail sector and the circular economy program. Next, following the ViP approach, themes of change are formed that may move the context towards a sufficient future.

5.1 Approach
5.2 Stakeholders map from the Ministries perspective
5.3 Themes for possible change
5.4 Conclusion

5.1 Approach

This section describes the approach towards understanding the systemic connections and towards forming future perspectives.

Identify and understand actors of the retail-CE system

First, a general understanding of the stakeholders within the system is achieved through talks with people from the Ministries Circular Economy team and behavioural team, their projects and internal documents.

Then, the identified stakeholders could be researched to uncover the relations and happenings within the system. This was done through several research acitvities:

- Interviews with stakeholders, one from each group (see figure X):
  - sustainability manager RND - to get a broader vision on what different retailers are concerned with/ working on
  - indepedent sustainable retail advisor; to gain a perspective on whats going on within multiple retailers (that change towards CE)
  - 3 circular managers municipality of Amsterdam; to gain a perspective on happenings within another governmental body
  - retail expert Rabobank; to gain a perspective on the retail sector and new retailers joining
- attendance with aim to observe what is discussed:
  - Retail festival from Minstry of Economic Affairs and Climate
  - Online sessions (inretail, circular fashion week, versnellingshuis)

Interview guides can be found in Appendix C.

ViP approach

Secondly, the aim is to explore future possibilities, but with all the different opinions, interests and activities, it was hard to match this up towards a future that support sufficient shopping practices. Therefore it was chosen to support it with the Vision in Product Design (ViP) approach (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011). Figure 22 shows the ViP approach, not all steps were precisely followed. In the method for this section, inspiration is taken from the step 'future context'. The first step is to generate "building blocks for the future", also called 'factors', which can be trends, developments, principles and states. These can come from a mix of sources, both in form and in perspective. In this case, factors were created from the insights of research activities mentioned above and broadened with research through different (online) sources.

Next, by clustering these factors, in a way that sparks curiosity, they form the themes or 'driving forces' for future change.

The next step in the approach, is that by combining these themes one can create a context structure for a future vision. In this project, the themes are combined into different frames that each give a different future view, this step is done in chapter 6.
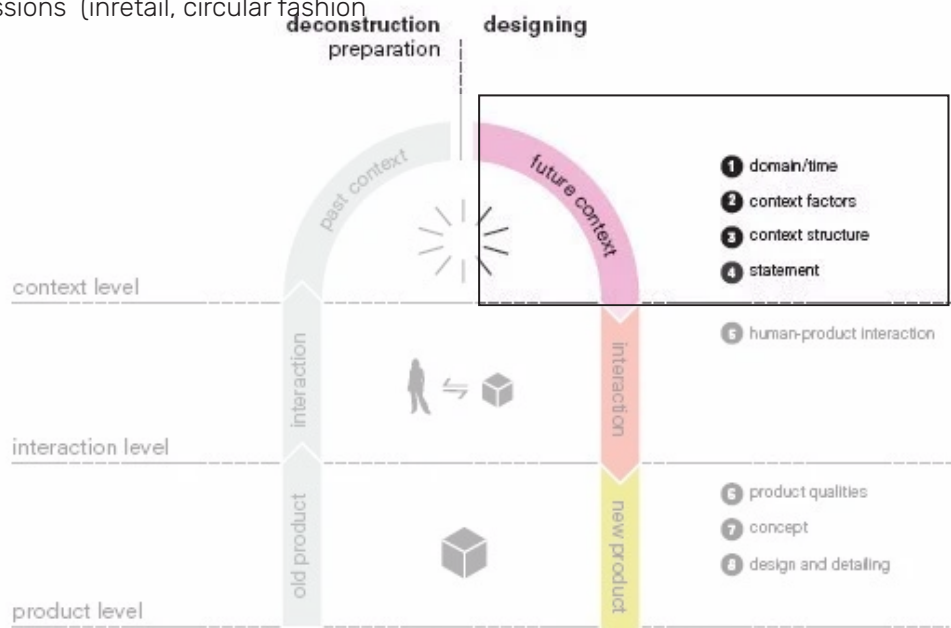
Figure 22: ViP approach, the top right will be used in this chapter
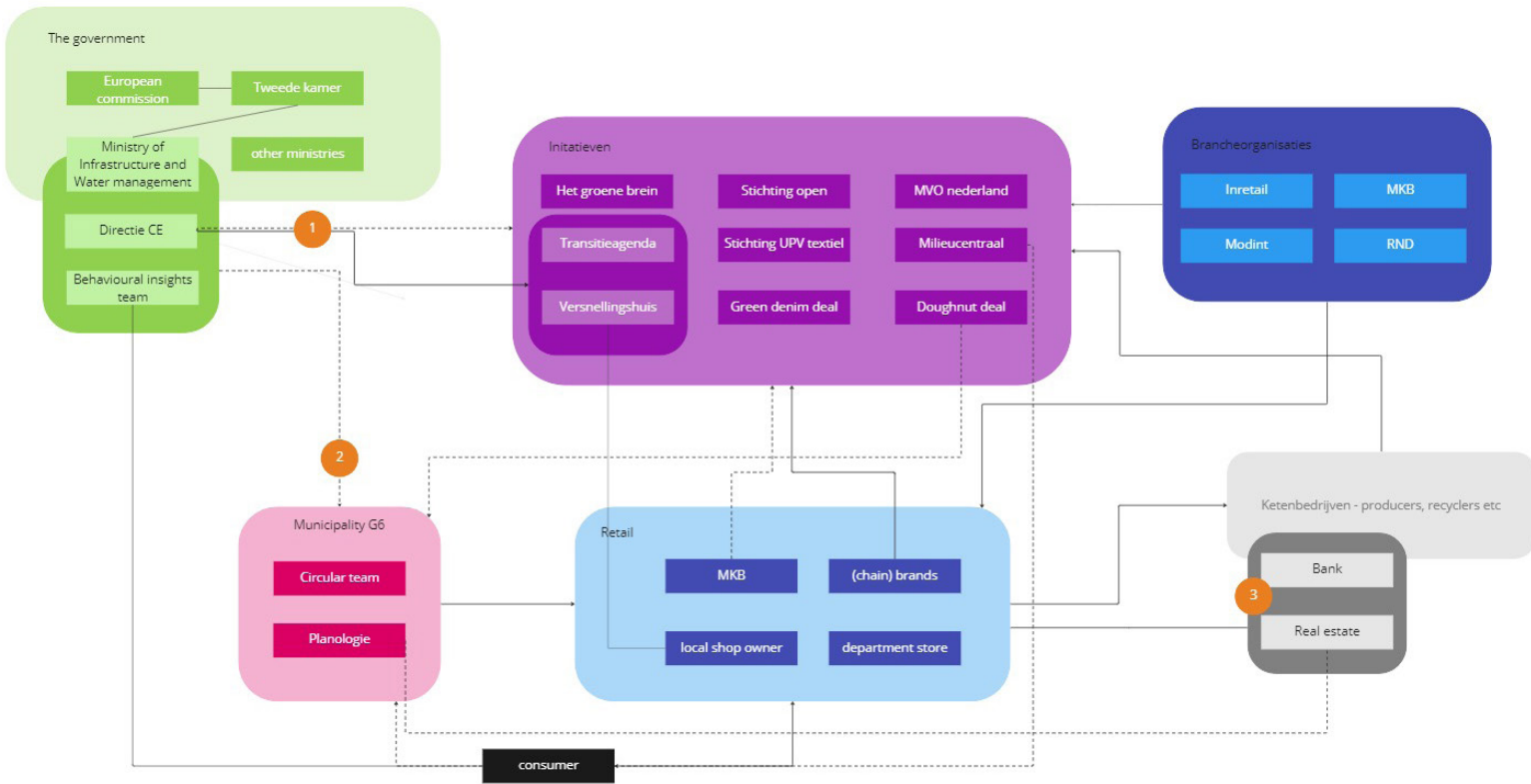
Figure 23: Retail-CE system map containing the parties identified, the lines show who works together or influences each other.

5.2 Stakeholders map from the Ministries perspective

Figure 23 shows the stakeholders and relations involved in the NPCE program and in the retail sector. It is a representation based on insights from the research. It is important to note that his overview is made from the perspective of the Ministry and the reseachers insights, thus is not complete.

Since it is not the main aim of this thesis to research these relations, it will not be extensively elaborated on. It does, however, show some relation where there could be room for leverage from the Ministries actions in light of physical shopping practices. Three insights that are worth noting for this research:

1. When a new policy is set up that concerns the product companies, it is either communicated through initiatives that foster collaboration among the companies to work towards the policy, or the companies are left to navigate it on their own. These policies do not necessarily extend regulations into the company-consumer relationship. While this grants companies flexibility to adapt the policy to their own workflows, it also risks the intentions of the policy to get lost.

2. There is minimal direct collaboration with municipalities. This is only initiated in cases of pilots or a policyplan needs to be executed. Moreover, each municipality is differently organised, as such, if circular economy is part of their program or not and how they address it greatly differs, which has both pros and cons. A pro is that this can bring various great learnings that could be beneficial for the Ministry, which is currently underutilized. (interviews municipality of Amsterdam).

3. While intermediaries such as real estate, banks, and online platforms are crucial for product companies, they are not considered central players. Currently, the Ministry has not established any partnerships with these intermediaries. This presents an opportunity to provide product companies with support in circular shifts from multiple angles while also giving them an additional extra push.

Other observations about current happenings are incorporated into the themes in the following section.

5.3 Themes for possible change

This section captures the research insights in 8 themes or so called 'driving forces' (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2011), which form and impact the future of sufficient (shopping) practices. Some are more directly linked to city centres and others to retail strategies which influence shopping practices. The factors that the themes are based on, can be found in Appendix D.

The themes combined form future frames, which is elaborated on in Chapter 6, but they also independently provide a picture of the contextual opportunities and challenges.

Retail strategies	City centre
I. Shifting responsibilities	
II. Prosperity over profit	
III. Consumers are also people	
IV. Stop the discount paradise	
	V. Spaces of social cohesion
VI. Persuade less	
	VII. Fun is at the centre
	VIII. Hybrid spaces and collectivity
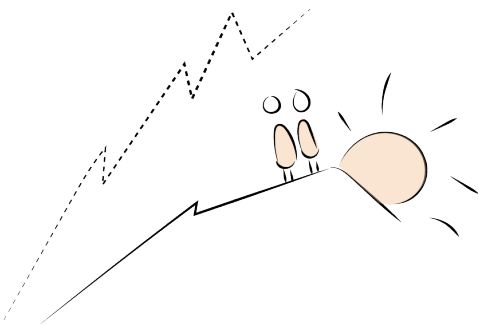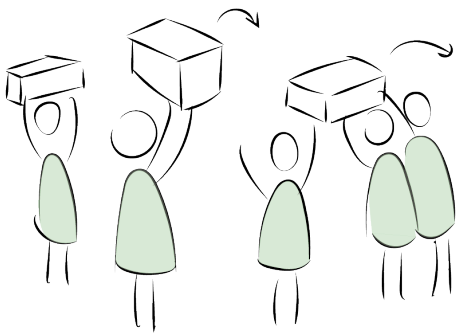
I. Shifting responsibilities

Less of minding your own business and more shared responsibility.

Whereas previously the industry hds a free market for developing and selling products, this is slowly changing in relation to sustainable developments. In terms of measures around the circular economy, the Ministry and other governmental parties are getting less hesitant to take leadership and put measures on the way industry is doing its business. As a consequence, retailers will have to ask more responsibility from consumers. Which is a challenge as companies will have to make it as easy as possible for the consumers, as this is what they're used to. For the government to directly influence consumers will need a lot more trust in this relation. Consumers should start to see governmental figures or policies as role models, however over past decades brands have taken on these leadership roles where consumers look up to.

Currently, shared responsibility is on a relatively low effort level with a focus on handing in used products and recycling. However, a future increase in measures and collaboration will increase responsibility entanglement. Therefore it is important that shifting responsibilities should go beyond making regulatory frameworks and beforehand already initiate collaboration or provide the concerning parties with alternatives. Otherwise, the chance of resistance and rebound effects can be high and difficult to reverse.

Ministry	retailers	consumer
		intermediairs

shows who is mostly concerned with this theme
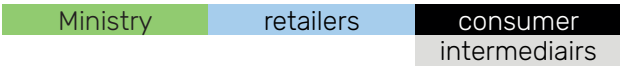
II. Prosperity over profit

The way welfare is measured and perceived should be broadened beyond monetary value.

In todays society, monetary value is the main measurement tool to define welfare of a country and health of a company.. However there is a growing consensus that indicators addressing social and environmental wellbeing should become equally important. This is a topic the strategic advisory team of the Ministry has recently started working on by researching models around broad prosperity. Also, city of Amsterdam has started with the doughnut economics model, which prioritizes ecological and social well-being over economic.

Additionally, within the industry, companies are taking initiative in doing business differently. Certifications, such as 'B-corp', create a common understanding in indicators that define the impact and value of companies beyond financial gains. In the near future companies will have to report on their sustainability.

However, for consumers, who are also getting more aware of this, it is not yet always clear what the purpose of a company is and often, e.g. with greenwashing, the target remains making more profits by selling more.

Supporting businesses to not only become circular or report on sustainability, but also direct them to make social and environmental impact the key indicators of their business is therefore essential.

Ministry	Initiatives	consumer
municipalities	retailers	intermediairs

III. Consumers are also people

Retain peoples emotional connection within digitalising physical space to ensure care for a product.

People are seen as entities who want to buy new things every second in their lives and business are putting a lot of efforts into achieving this. Everything has to go as effortly and smoothly as possible, leading to changes such as one-day free delivery and eliminating staff from the shop floor. People do like everything to go as easy as possible while their time is getting more and more precious. However, with that, the feeling of responsibility and reciprocity by people towards a store also fades.

If buying new things and services becomes so easy and quick, investment in care towards a product fades and should be retained or facilitated otherwise if a circular and sufficient future is desired. For this the people side of consumers should not be forgotten, who likes to be emotionally connected and create their own unique value or have the idea they add value.

| Ministry | retailers | consumer |

IV. Stop the discount paradise

An alternative for discounts and excess supply should be sought.

As mentioned in previous chapters, people fall easily for discounts and they like the feeling of buying something with reduced price. Yet most don't see that as their priority when shopping. The industry has been using this tactic more and more. In the Netherlands, it is allowed to give discounts any time. Besides the sale periods at the end of seasons, it has led to retailers having sale almost every week or using particular days, such as Black Friday and Singles Day, and even business models that account on it. Some companies are making a statement by not participating, but other (often smaller) retailers feel pushed to participate, even though it is quite unhealthy for their business.

Moreover, mass supply models are part of the problem. These have high cost benefits, but the delay makes it one big gambling machine for companies to predict a year upfront what their consumers want. In contrast, Fast fashion label Zara has very little discounts since they have very short production-selling time. However the speeds at which they produce is not sustainable. Alternatives do exist, such as digital platforms offer ways to handle demand-production differently or companies decide to keep collections for a longer period of time.

By regulating discounts or improving supply models, both consumers and businesses would be helped.

Ministry		
retailers	consumer	
	intermediairs	
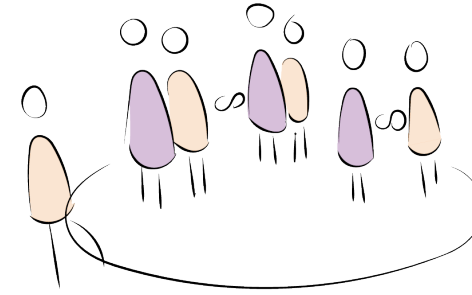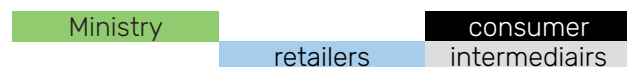
V. Spaces of social cohesion

The city centre should give space to create and connect together.

Whereas the city centre has long been seen as a place for product acquisition as the main attracting purpose, retail groups and municipalities no start to refocus: the added social value of the city centre needs to become a key purpose for the future. This is now mainly facilitated by catering establishments and few relaxing spots in public space, but it could go further.

Currently, the consumer already makes a social outing of it with their own social circles. Retailers could start to play a role here to make the city centre a place to create together, which could [leverage] the leisure aspect of shopping.

As a lot of people come together here from different neighbourhoods it also has the unique position to be place to connect a variety of citizens, which could be utilised more. Creating a sense of community has already started with a reinforcement of 'local shopping' during the Covid period. In addition, some initiatives of community-first movements of retailers show how they facilitate visitors to organise events or activities. This has yet to evolve further and both municipalities and retailers should redefine what this 'social value' can mean.

| municipalities | retailers | consumer |
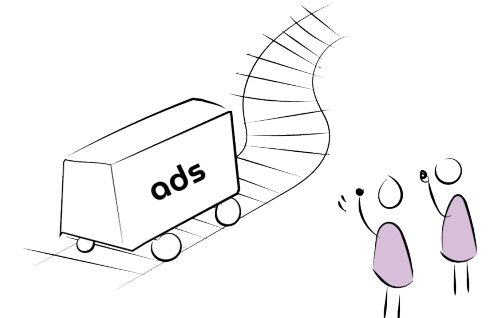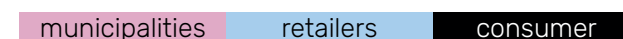
VI. The right track for ads

Ads can no longer go their own way.

Ads lead people who do not know they want something to give the feeling they need it and need to start shopping. Companies spent a lot of money to achieve this. Ads have already shifted from informational purposes to playing into people's emotional responses, but they are getting even more sophisticated and personally persuasive with (online) data exchange and algorithms. Leading people to want only more and more of the things that 'perfectly fit' their 'needs'.
Currently, this mostly happens online, which does already greatly influence our 'offline' behaviour, but retailers are also working on incorporating all the personal information in-store, making the persuasion even more fluid through peoples everyday lives. Consumers are greatly unaware of the consequences for themselves in their perceived freedom of choice.

In relation to sustainable developments, there are businesses that quit spendings on ads and instead spend it on fair pricing. Also, in several countries in the world, municipalities are acting to ban (certain) ads in city sight as they think it has a bad influence on their citizens. It could also be in the hands of the marketeers to steer people to more sustainable behaviours.

There is still minimal development in regulations around these strategies that now only increase consumption. Leading advertisement on the right track is important for a sufficient future.

| Ministry | retailers | consumer |
| municipalities | | |
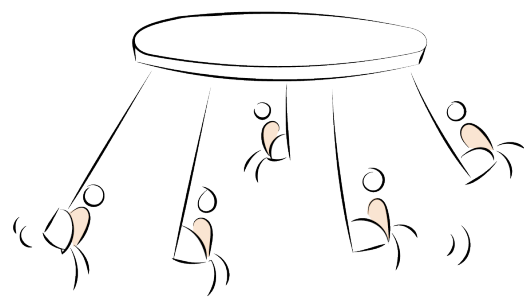
VII. Fun is at the centre
Create fun out of experiences instead of purchases.

The fun should be created through a mix of functions besides shops. Slowly these other types of functions, such as sports, theatres, are coming, but the dominant view is still shops should be on the main street. Retailers themselves are also making their stores more and more of an experience. Interestingly, the shift towards experiences also gives them opportunities to ask a higher price. These experiences can go as far as transforming into a museum. However, these often remain to have a main goal of selling more.

If products are removed from the main focus and people get enough fun and fulfilment out of experiences and other functions, they have a lessened urge to buy products. Therefore other (experiential) functions should replace stores in the city centre.

municipalities	retailers	**consumer** intermediairs
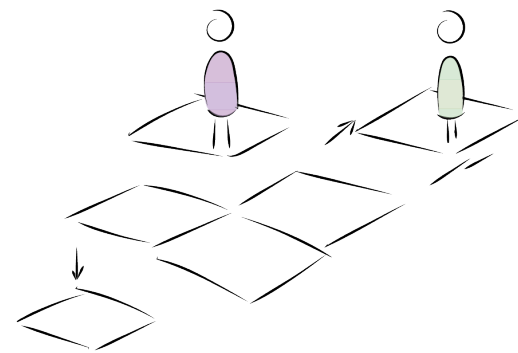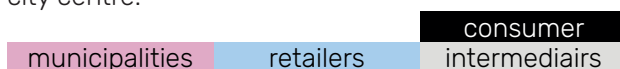
VIII. Hybrid spaces and collectivity
Create space for retail premises to become flexible and multifunctional in both space and offer.

Last years, municipalities and real estate have been struggling with abandoned retail premises in their city centres. Here lies a tension between the classic one store, high rent and the online, experiential and circular retail environment. The latter pushes stores to use the space differently and be adaptive. There are some examples arising where new functions are given to the space or making it flexible, such as a store being a work spot or rent the building to a university.

In relation to sustainable developments, companies are also finding new ways to collaborate, especially for circular markets, making their business models more fluid. This can lead their retail space to give a place to services of other companies and sell products that may not be produced by themselves.

A change in looks and functions of the city centre requires multiple stakeholders to collaborate. Currently, it remains hard for retailers to work together unless there is a more centralized management. Facilitation by real estate (and municipalities) is key to enable flexibility.

municipalities	**Initiatives** retailers	intermediairs
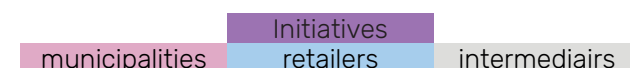
5.4 Conclusion

The retail-CE system is complex and defining how these could move to a view where sufficiency is core is a significant challenge. However, as the environmental impact becomes more apparent, the system is experiencing notable changes. While these changes are currently primarily focused on other Circular R-strategies (such as Recycle and Reuse), the eight different themes also show there are signs of movements that can support to shift shopping practices toward sufficiency.

Frame 1

Frame 2

Frame 3

6.
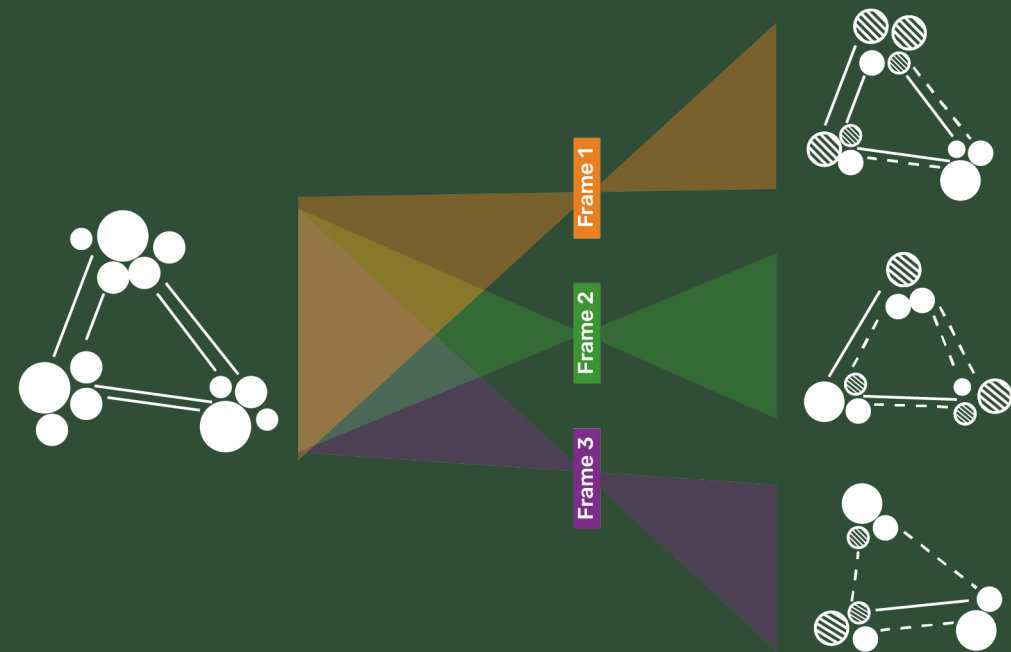
Frames of the future

This chapter provides a look into possible futures for a city centre that support sufficient practices. The themes of the previous chapter are grouped and (re)framed in such a way that they make up three different frames to view the future. First, this chapter elaborates on the these frames as if we arrive in the year 2050. Subsequently, it identifies areas of opportunity for the Ministry in general as well as for the design direction.

6.1 Approach
Frame 1. It's a two way street
Frame 2. Dynamic and equal environment
Frame 3. Happiness is all you need

6.1 Approach

The frames were made by grouping the different themes from the previous chapter that made interesting combinations or seemed related in some way. To guide this, frames were set out against 'main purpose of the city centre', based on the choice of strategy in 4.5 to 'change orientation'. This led to three frames, see figure 24 below.

Also, a 'good' frame should be written in a way that challenges the current view by bringing something new, but also resonates and they should give (inspiration for) opportunities.

Areas of pportunity
These frames open up for a range of opportunities to elaborate further upon and with different levels of actions that could be taken by the Ministry. The full list can be found in Appendix E, Also some were taken as advices of action for the Minsitry, see chapter 11.

main purpose of the city centre

Figure 24: Theme structure that led to the three frames.
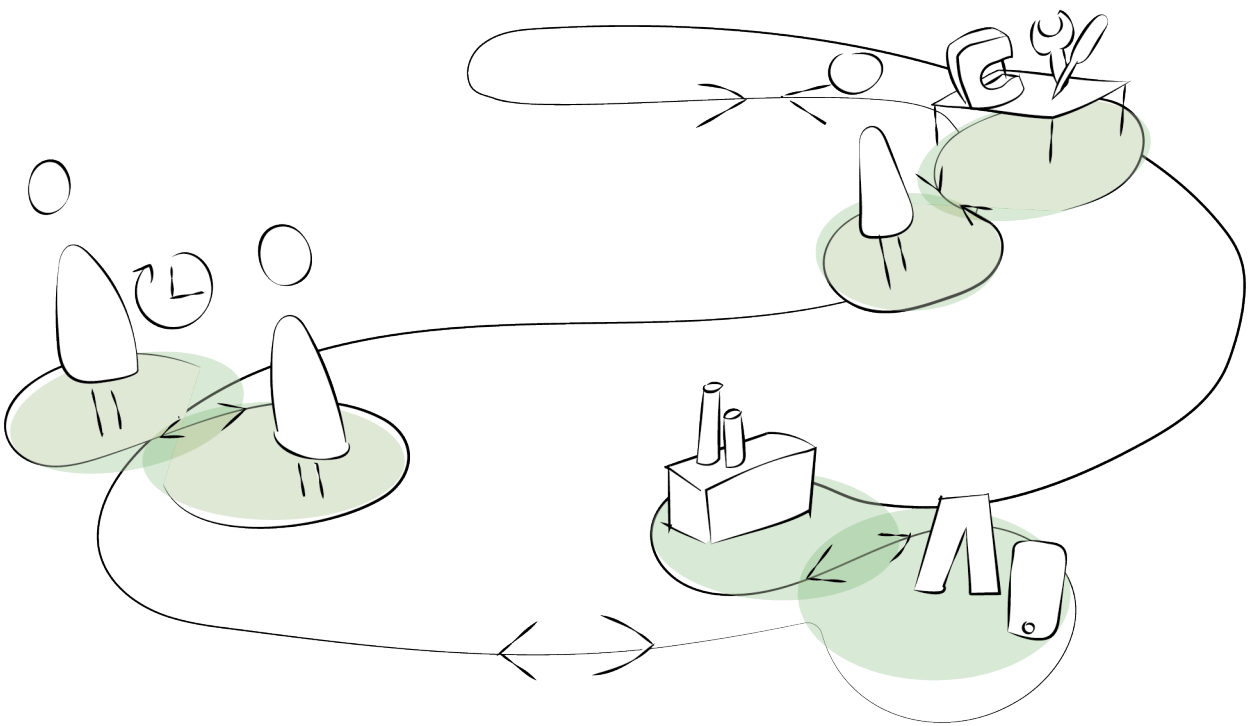
FRAME 1· It's a two way street

In 2050, shopping has changed from a one-sided transaction of providing goods to a paradigm of 'give and take'. This has manifested itself in multiple forms. Before going into the city centre, someone's habit is to first check at home if they want bring something that needs to be repaired or that they do not use anymore and therefore want to hand in.

When someone acquires a product, the person is conscious of the expected lifetime of the product, both by the estimation indicated by the company and own approximation depending on situation of use. This person agrees together with the retailer on the purchase and its lifetime. When this time is due, they can either return the product or decide to extend it and upgrade/get maintenance if desired. If the product is broken or the person recognises the product is not really used anymore earlier than the expected lifetime it can get it (self-)repaired or give back.
Retailers collections depend on what people bring back. This also creates dynamic collections naturally. Stores contain display, collecting and repair facilities. Retailers have little cost on production, this has shifted to repair, refurbishment and reselling.

Someone can also be members of a store/brand: in this case they can lend things without owning it. This is often done when the use is intended for shorter periods of time in comparison to buying products for longer periods.

Finally, everything has an electronic passport and which indicates origins of (recycled) materials, history of use of parts and product as a whole. As such, there is no difference between old or refurbished and new anymore.

Why does it lead to consuming less?
There is more responsibility from both consumer and companies, which has resulted in new practices that let products circulate an have longer lifetimes. The disappearance of old versus new also has led people being less impulsive in buying.

FRAME 2· Dynamic and equal environment

In 2050, the perception of a what a physical store is, has changed. Retail spaces serve multiple functions. It can serve as a formal and informal meeting place, be an experience area, kitchen, garden or room for product services like rent, advise, repair and (re)distribute. This has also led to more collaboration; instead of one shop owner that manages and has knowledge over it all, a store has multiple owners or sub renters, which together define what the store's purpose and looks. This also requires some flexibility both in space and in organisation. This has partly been enabled by real estate companies that don't focus on solely monetary income anymore, instead they monitor sustainable and societal contribution of the store.

Secondly, a ban by the government on discounts and sales resulted in new ways of supply-demand models. Collections stay in-house longer or are reused the next season and leftovers that retailers really want to get rid of are used for other purposes or distributed to another store. This has forced retailers to optimise for consumer demand, which has led more dynamic supply chains. With the incentive to minimise unsold stock, prevent storage overload or cost of recycling of never used products. Technological products have become more modular, allowing for updates to be done per

product element, or in case a product cannot be improved through modularity, the materials will be recycled to use for newer versions. These changes also led to less space needed in stores for products and in turn made room for other functions.

In addition, the government regulated ads and promotion of products that score below a sustainability meter or do not apply true pricing. In addition, in online environments, people can only see ads or sponsored products if they turn on a so called 'ad-show' button, which is by default turned off . Most people leave it off, which has greatly influenced the attractiveness of use of ads by companies. Instead, the money that was formerly used for advertising budget, is now attributed to fair pricing for labour and resources.

Why does it lead to consuming less?
The city centre serving multiple functions creates less input of all kinds of new products that can be acquired. The ban on discounts will not only lead to less impulse buying, the change in collections reccurring over seasons, will also lead to decreased need in having to keep up with everything 'new' every time. The turned off ad function leads to less seductions.

FRAME 3· Happiness is all you need

In 2050, society has put forward of what really brings happiness: Relations with others, purpose and self-acceptation contribute to peoples satisfaction with life and the role of material value has changed. People pursue this happiness, through doing and sharing experiences, emotional connection, relaxation, being active in institutions to your taste. This is mainly through a shift of seeing the acquisition as the ultimate goal towards retrieving pleasure from the process.

The city centre is one of the spaces that accommodates this, it consists of greenery, relax areas, places to engage and connect and there are multiple free and open source cultural venues. People come to experience, without the need or focus to acquire a product. There is a mix in (retail) stores where some have become more like 'community places' or 'story tellers'.

These can be an experience on its own and it shows the way things are made and why, creating transparency in an engaging way. Their purpose is clear and based on the broad prosperity guidelines, which has led to more unique offers. This does not mean that each retailer is an independent designer or creative, but (global) collaborations mediated through digital platforms have led to combining

strengths. It's a new form of chain stores: instead of all having the same offer, they form a group that expresses the same kind of values, but product offer can vary and redistribute.

When someone desires a product is goes to a store to hear the story and express their own fantasies to personalise the product. The latter is a process of its own; by spending time on personal expression it also allows for self-reflection and appreciation. In addition this personal time investment also makes people more accepting with waiting a little longer for the product to arrive on demand. If no longer used, the product can be brought back and redistributed/ repurposed.

Why does it lead to consuming less?
Emphasis on experiencing and being together for people instead of acquiring. The city centre being a place for citizens instead of consumers, with less sotres and more leisure activities. Prosperity guidelines lead (all) stores to care for the whole process of a product, higher prices but also more purposeful, taking into account the process and personalisation. Consumers therefore only purchase products for long term use and less overall.

7. Direction for design

This chapter defines what will be the focus for the design phase and why. The previous chapters gave a lot of insights and opportunities, but these cannot all be addressed within this project. Therefore a chosen frame together with key insights from earlier research will provide an inspiring direction and form this into a design goal together with its requirements as a result from earlier research.

7.1 From opportunities towards design direction

This section brings the different insights from the current and future practices together and provides arguments for the choice of focus.

Choosing a frame for future direction
The frames that were the outcome of the Exploring phase, give three different views on the future of city centre practices. These different views give different opportunities, thus it is best to choose one of them to scope.

Taking a step back and looking at the introduction of this research, it was emphasized that the Ministry knows it should focus on 'Refuse, Rethink, Reduce', but doesn't know how yet.

In consultation with part of the behavioural team of the Ministry, they saw the 'Happiness is all you need' as most inspiring as it also taps in with one of the few 'Refuse' strategies mentioned in the latest CE behavioural strategy (Ministerie van Infrastructuur & Waterstaat, 2023), which was noted that it has yet to be researched more in depth:

"... Dit past bij het streven naar consuminderen. Met onderzoek moet worden nagegaan of het bevorderen van emotionele intelligentie en geluk routes zijn die passen binnen een lange termijn strategie richting een circulaire economie."
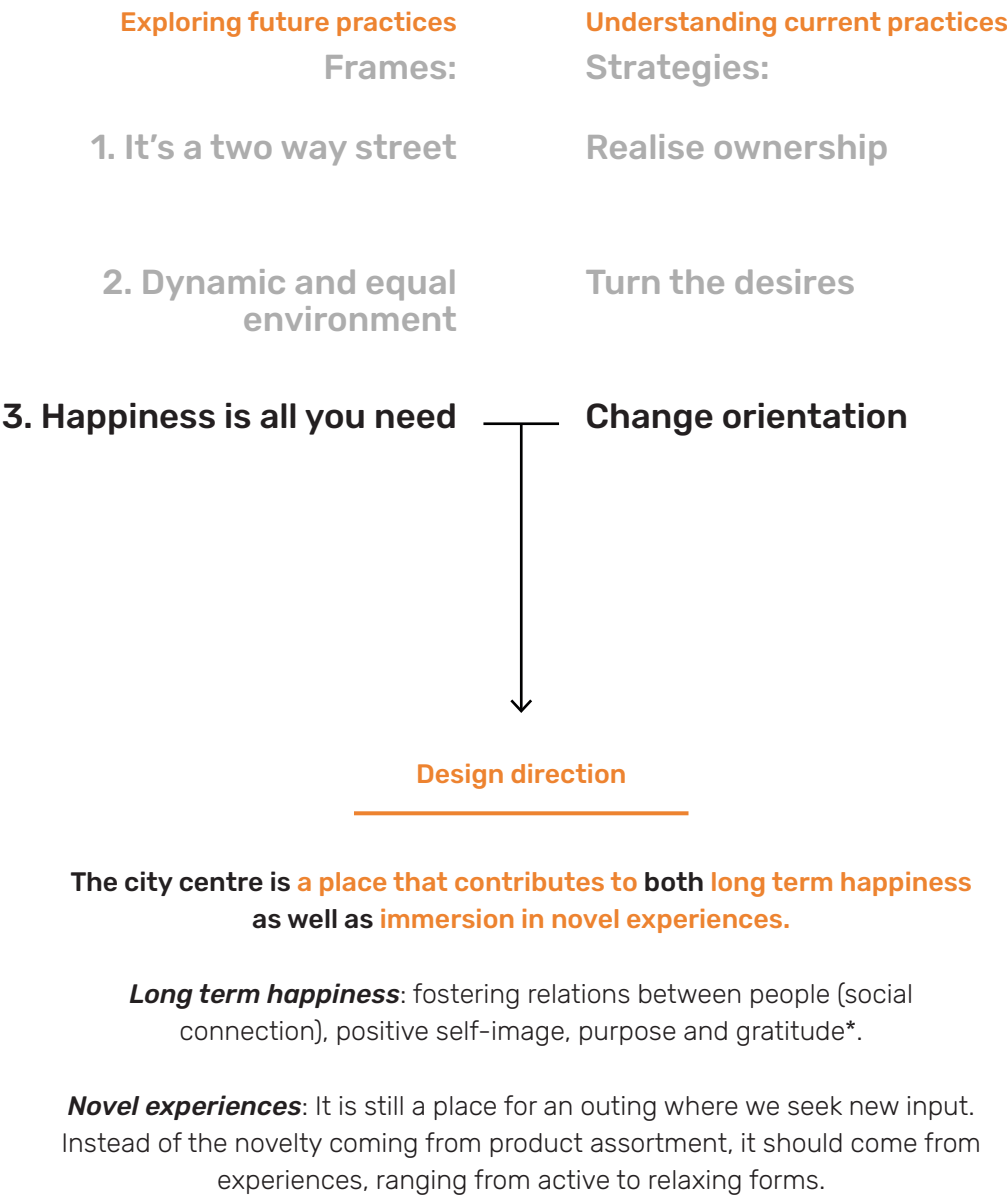
Strategy to change current practices
Next to the frames, the Understanding phase also suggested, with the model on page X, that the strategy '*change orientation*' is most promising to pursue further with regards to absolute reductions. The other insights from current practices will fuel the requirements (section 7.3) to connect the design goal with current situation.

Design Direction
With the strategy 'change orientation' in mind, one of the identified opportunity areas from the frame 'Happiness is all you need' could be selected; *change in perception of purpose of city centre towards sharing experiences, relaxation and serving purpose* (see Appendix E for all opportunity areas).

A possible question that could arise is why the city centre should facilitate long-term happiness and wellbeing? In one of the interviews, a sustainable (fashion retail) expert of Municipality of Amsterdam firmly stated that it would never be the role of the city centre nor retail to 'solve' peoples wellbeing problems – but why would it not take such a position? The city centre is the heart of a city full of people who all want to live a happy life. This can be facilitated by themselves or within neighbourhoods, but a centre is there to bring people together. Therefore, I propose it should be one of the main roles of the city centre (facilities) to support wellbeing.

To conclude, (the philosophy of) the chosen direction is stated on the right page.

Exploring future practices   Understanding current practices
Frames: **Strategies:**

1. It's a two way street   **Realise ownership**

2. Dynamic and equal environment   **Turn the desires**

3. Happiness is all you need ——— **Change orientation**

Design direction

The city centre is a place that contributes to both long term happiness as well as immersion in novel experiences.

Long term happiness: fostering relations between people (social connection), positive self-image, purpose and gratitude*.

Novel experiences: It is still a place for an outing where we seek new input. Instead of the novelty coming from product assortment, it should come from experiences, ranging from active to relaxing forms.

*these four themes were defined based on different literature sources, see Appendix F.

7.2 Design goal

Whereas the direction shows where we want to move towards, the design goal gives a more concrete starting point for the creation of concepts. The design should translate the current situation to the new goal.

With the main research question in mind, we now should make clear how to connect the design direction to a shift in practices for people (i.e. consumers) in the current situation.

The first step is that the city centre *is seen as* a place that can contribute to long-term happiness. This requires a change across all stakeholders. However, as this research was mostly focussed on the visitors and their practices, the design goal will be directed to them.

Therefore, the **aim with the design is to change the meaning and perception of the shoppers that visit the city centre**. So, it allows them to see that shopping is not the only activity that can be done. This could be a first step to support the direction. The design goal can be seen on the right side of this page. The orange highlighted parts of the design goal will be pointed out below for a more concrete understanding.

Returning visitors
They have their most established practices in the city centre and can see it as a place to spend their pastime, therefore it would be interesting to see if their practices can change to refrain from product stores and buy unexpectedly, but still enjoy the city centre.

Discover perspectives for mindset change
First, in order to make sure that people will see the city centre as a place that fosters long-term happiness, their mindset about the purpose of the city centre should change. Refering back to section 4.4, it was stated that it does not work to create awareness or change the attitude of the people in order to let behavioural change happen. It should be the other way around. Therefore the design should change the visitors behaviour towards 'putting attention to' their long-term happiness, but let them realise that only later on.

Secondly, as discovered in the research phase,

people often go with a companion to the city centre, with whom they also talk and share experiences about things going on in life, next to engaging in shopping. People always have different opinions and perspectives, therefore this aspect can be leveraged to change their mindsets.

Mechanism: playful and reflective engagement
Finally, long-term happiness can be an abstract topic that people often do not consciously address in their everyday lives (or do not want to). It can be seen as quite a heavy topic that requries much cognitive effort, which does not fit the context and intentions of current shopping practices as explained in section 4.3.3. So 'putting attention to' this, should be done in a way that is more lighthearted, i.e. fun, but also allows to learn from it so it has an effect in their lives, i.e. reflective.

7.2.1 Analogy

To clarify and inspire what is meant with the goal, the new interactions emerging from the design can be seen as the following analogy (figure 25):

Visiting the city centre should be like freefruning through the city. Where **you use the city differently** then intended. Have **fun together** and always **try out new tricks** to learn.

Figure 25: Analogy of freerunning together through the city. (Free runners practicing, n.d.)

Design goal

I want returning visitors to see the city centre as a place to discover perspectives of others and themselves about long-term happiness through playful and reflective engagement.

Long-term happiness: relations, purpose, gratitude, positive self-image

This shift in focus creates an alternative practice in the same space and fosters resilience towards unforeseen desires for products and seductions from companies to buy.

7. 3 Requirements

As mentioned in the introduction of this project (section 2.2), changing a practice can happen under various circumstances by either re-crafting practices or substituting practices (or changing interlocks but that does not apply). Moreover, it is most effective when changing different elements at the same time (Shove et al., 2012). The design goal aims to substitute the shopping practices as most elements will change to prevent people from buying. However, the key elements from the current practices, defined in section 4.5, should be connected with elements of the design as they are open to reconnect and can be leveraged to move people away from shopping. Therefore, these form the requirements, see figure 27.

In addition, as people are used to their own practices, getting them to change does not go suddenly, unless you force or restrict them. People need some time to adapt to new things.

Therefore the requirements are supplemented with aspects from behavioural theory, to get people to engage in this new type of practice and make it stick, see the green requirements.

Behaviour change
The first encounter(s) should disrupt current habits to open up for change. The design should trigger people to engage in the new practice and make it easy (ability) to engage, which is in line with the Fogg behaviour change model (figure 26) (Fogg, 2007). Moreover, maintaining motivation through commitment and repetition is important in order for people to re-engage with the design during subsequent city visits.

Secondly, as indicated, a mindset change should happen and mindset follows behaviour. However, this does not mean someone will automatically behave like it the following visits as gaining a different mindset is a gradual process. Following the Change Mindset Model of Van Baaren & Van Leeuwen (2020, see also Appendix G), repitition and commitment are essential here and the process should facilitate people to internalise the thought that they prefer to pursue happiness through non-material focussed activities.
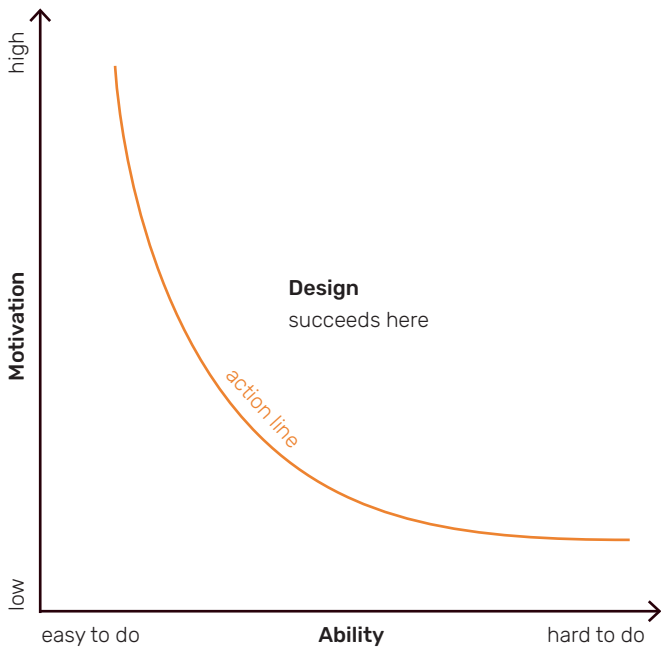
Figure 26: Fogg Behaviour model - The person should have a certain motivation and ability to engage.
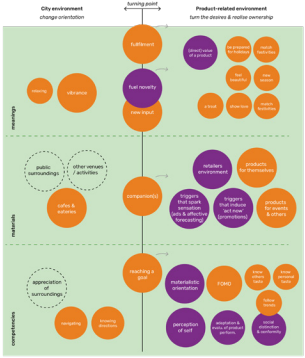
Figure 27: Model from page X from which key elements are derived: fuel novelty, enhance bonding, achieve fullfillment

Requirements

For starters

Disrupt city visit habits
- provide the ability for visitors

Motivate to engage
- spark curiousity

Engagement with design

Fuel novelty
- ensure dynamic & variety

Enhance bonding
- create something to stimulate bonding
- allow free rein to chat and act

Achieve fullfillment

Over time

Mindset change
- create repetitive engagement and commitment
- internalisation: seeing oneself as someone who pursues non-material happiness

8.

The concept: Wend

This chapter presents, explains and evaluates the design concept, WEND. It communicates the design through a storyboard. Secondly, it shows how the design gives body to the design goal and its requirements, and how it could be brought to reality. This chapter starts with a short explanation of the preceding process and insights that came out of the ideation phase.

8.1 Approach

The concept precedes a phase of ideating, testing and conceptualising through multitude of activities, see the list below.

- ideation sessions with behavioural experts and designers, see Appendix H

- literature insights on behavioural mechanisms

- prototyping and testing in the city centre

- feedback sessions on several ideas

8.2 Ideation & Iterations

After the first ideation sessions, the ideas were clustered and a pattern was discovered in different approaches that could be taken for the design goal. These approaches were used as axes for further ideation, see figure 29. The figure also describes several ideas.

Moreover, some learnings and design decisions made during designing, testing & iterating are interesting to share as the final concept is built upon them. Three of them are shared on the next pages: first one is about the perspectives; second one about showing the 'worth' of buying nothing and enjoying; and the last one is about city tours and storytelling.
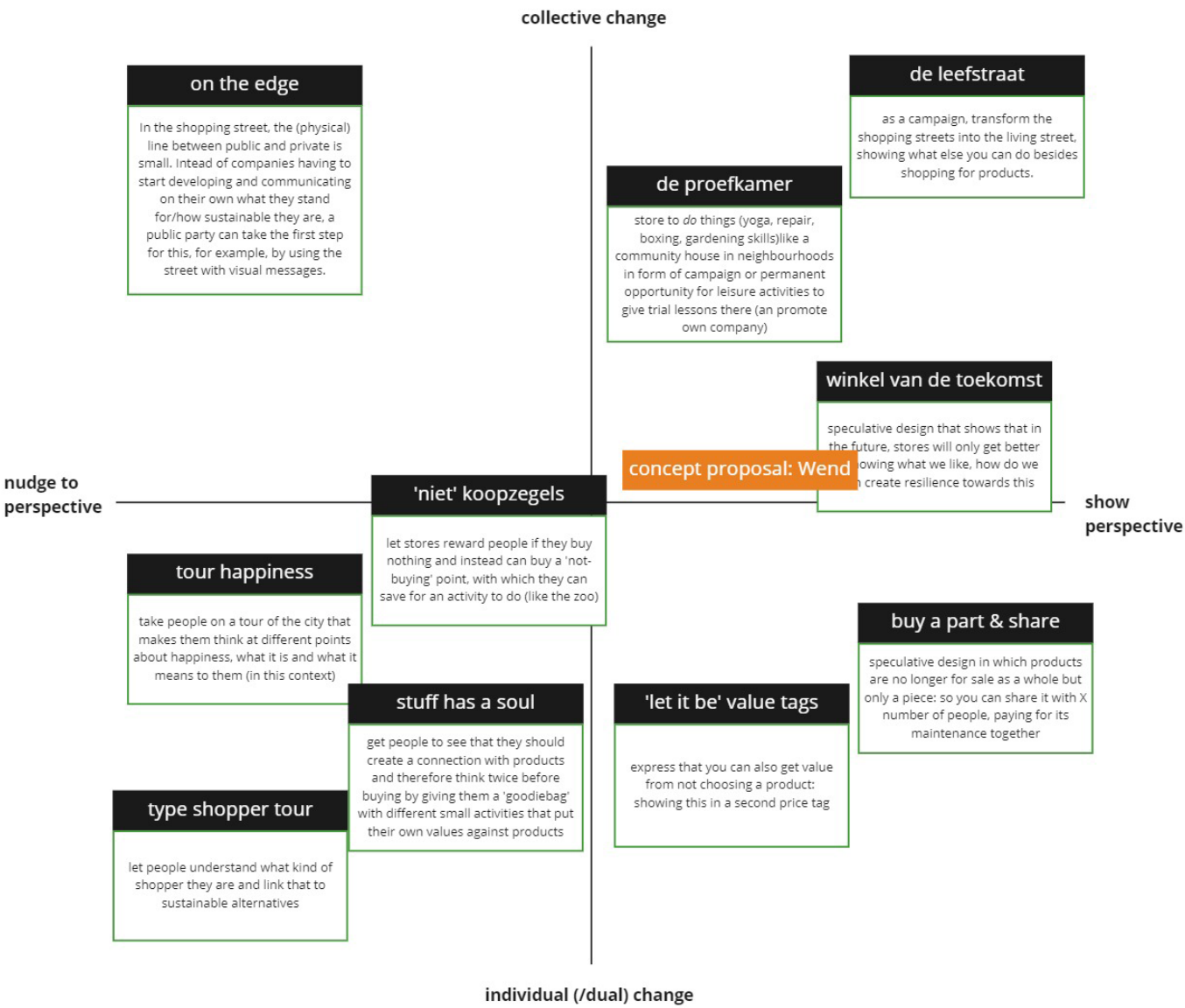
Figure 28: Ideation session with behavioural experts

collective change

on the edge
In the shopping street, the (physical) line between public and private is small. Intead of companies having to start developing and communicating on their own what they stand for/how sustainable they are, a public party can take the first step for this, for example, by using the street with visual messages.

de leefstraat
as a campaign, transform the shopping streets into the living street, showing what else you can do besides shopping for products.

de proefkamer
store to *do* things (yoga, repair, boxing, gardening skills)like a community house in neighbourhoods in form of campaign or permanent opportunity for leisure activities to give trial lessons there (an promote own company)

winkel van de toekomst
speculative design that shows that in the future, stores will only get better owing what we like, how do we n create resilience towards this

nudge to perspective ———— **concept proposal: Wend** ———— **show perspective**

'niet' koopzegels
let stores reward people if they buy nothing and instead can buy a 'not-buying' point, with which they can save for an activity to do (like the zoo)

tour happiness
take people on a tour of the city that makes them think at different points about happiness, what it is and what it means to them (in this context)

stuff has a soul
get people to see that they should create a connection with products and therefore think twice before buying by giving them a 'goodiebag' with different small activities that put their own values against products

'let it be' value tags
express that you can also get value from not choosing a product: showing this in a second price tag

buy a part & share
speculative design in which products are no longer for sale as a whole but only a piece: so you can share it with X number of people, paying for its maintenance together

type shopper tour
let people understand what kind of shopper they are and link that to sustainable alternatives

individual (/dual) change

Figure 29: Different types of tours on axes. Pictures are from left to right top: city walking tour; storytrail; escape tour; geocache.

The axes explained:
Nudge to vs show perspective: The design could either implicitly or explicitly give new perspectives (regarding elements of long-term happiness). Later on saw that 'nudging' was not effective enough, see insights on page 84. therefore decided to design around the 'show perspective'.

Collective vs individual change: This is not about who is the target group, but whether the design is visible within the public environment or is visible upon enganging with it.

Triggering perspectives
In one of the tests, I used a set of trigger cards with a mix of questions about peoples intentions to go shopping and the happiness topics (relations, purpose, gratitude and self-image), which could for example be put on a table of a cafe. The trigger cards showed during a test that it did trigger people to start asking questions and to start a conversation, but the conversation did not change anything about their opinions or intentions. This could be due to:

- The questions were not triggering enough or;
- The fact that friends are often on the same page already on certain topics,

so learning about perspectives should also involve peoples opinions.

Show the 'worth' of (buying) nothing and enjoying
A difficult aspect, is that products are physically and visually attracting someones values, whereas not-buying and putting your attention on other activities is also valued, but this is not recognised in such a concrete way. Because of this disbalance, people tend to forget the latter. It could be interesting therefore to make and communicate the values of abstaining from purchase and doing something else instead, e.g. showing what you can do with the 'saved' money, or more symbolic, e.g. indicating you can have more attention for each other (when shopping together).

I tested this in the city centre by making two 'giftcards'; one for clothing and one for having a nice experience with a friend. I asked companions if one could choose a giftcard for their friend and see which one they would choose. During the testing it came to light that the cards were not always understood well. More importantly, people did not get why they had to choose a giftcard for their friend.

Giving them the choice is not the best way, engage them in an 'enjoying' activity and let them realise afterwards.

Tours and storytelling give perspective
During ideation, inspiration came from tours, as they, as it were, put different glasses on people in how they look at places. Though classic city tours, whether they're about food, architecture, history, are often one-time (touristic) activities. What they do well however, is giving the participants a new perspective on the place(s). Therefore an exploration was done on different types of tours, these were plotted against each other to see which do a good job at fueling novelty and in what way, see figure 30. City tours are often seen as an activity to do in an unknown city to learn something. In a known city, people rarely do such tours, they are used to their practices and

don't (literally) see tours as an option. Moreover, too much guidance or education would not fit the intentions of people to stroll through a city as it would require a too high attention span, see also what was discussed in section 4.3.3.

Another 'tour' that does very well at fueling novelty is Geocache: which gives people an activity that is different from the primary purpose of that space. This can be done at any time and at your own pace. Geocache is dynamic and flexible due to the wide variety to choose from, which results in people repeating the activity.
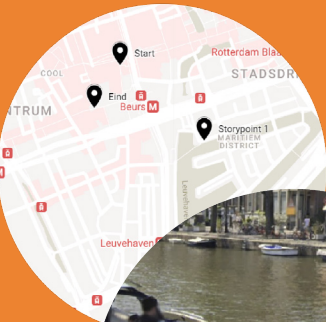

Figure 30: Different types of tours on axes. Pictures are from left to right top: city walking tour; storytrail; escape tour; geocache.

What's in a name?

wenden: een andere richting geven

wendbaar zijn of worden: geeft vrijheid

WEND

A new practice that creates a (mental) space for long-term happiness in the city centre and beyond through:

App that fuels with new routes to do together and allows people to build on the happiness themes

Hi,
Hoe is het met je vandaag?

Ira spoort je aan!

activiteit

vrienden

Stap van de dag

Vraag het lievelingsrecept van een vriend(in) om vanavond te maken. Misschien zelfs samen?

Verhalen

Rotterdam centrum

zelfbeeld | dankbaarheid

sociale relaties | zingeving

Steven
Korte omschrijving van het verhaal kan langer zijn dan wordt het geknipt en gaat ...

Kaya
Korte omschrijving van het verhaal kan langer zijn dan wordt het geknipt en gaat ...

Follow up (app)
motivate to re-engage, gradual change in mindset

Story routes
discrupt city habits, fullfilment, give perspectives

Stories that navigate through city and disrupt normal practices

Stories around themes of wellbeing told by average people, like you and I

Activities
fuel novelty, give perspectives, enhance bonding

Activities that provoke thinking about the themes in fun ways and connects or exposes opinions and thoughts of other people

Over time tendency to go shopping (impulsively) reduces by shifting attention to long-term happiness
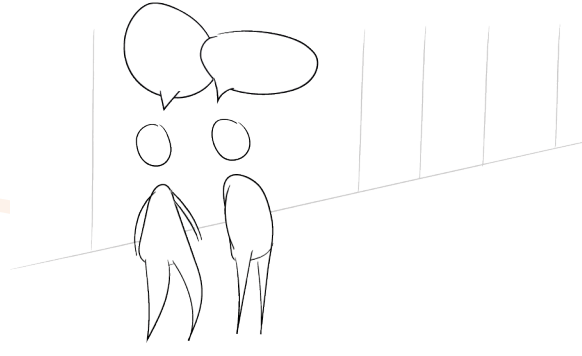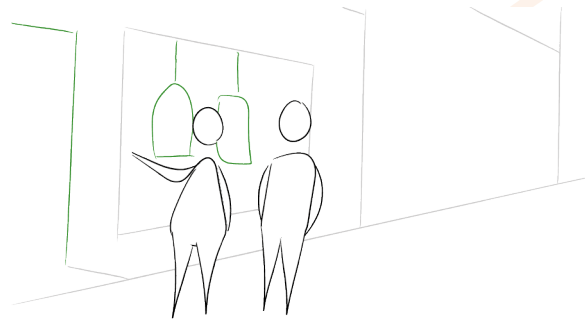
8.4 Storyboard

The storyboard illsutrates the use of Wend in detail. It explains the interactions and experiences.
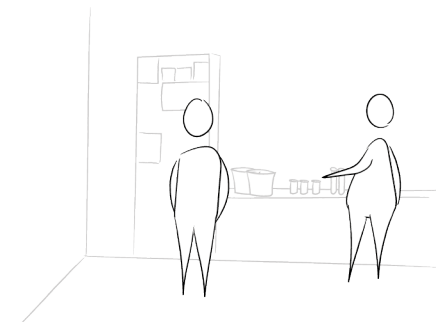
Kaya has nothing to do and decides to call Zeynep: 'wanna go into the city?' 'Yes for sure! I had rough week can use some chatting and shopping', Zeynep answers and they decide to meet at 14 o'clock in the city centre.
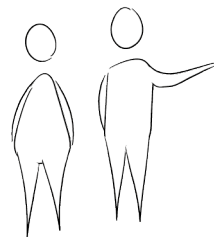
They meet, start walking randomly, chatting about their week, what they have done and experienced.

In the booth, only a QR code is shown with a message to scan it. 'Shall we try it?', Kaya asks. 'Sure', Zeynep responds.

After scanning the QR code a play button pops up. They tap it and they hear the intro of a story. Then, it shows that this is the starting point of a storyroute they can follow.
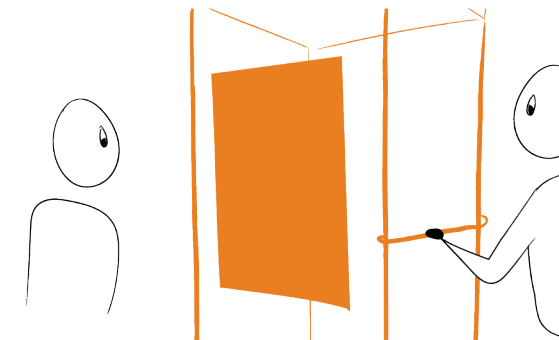
Zeynep stops Kaya when she sees a store she usually goes to: 'Shall we go in for a bit?'

They're strolling around, Zeynep points things out she would like, while Kaya is walking behind her half agreeing half looking for herself.
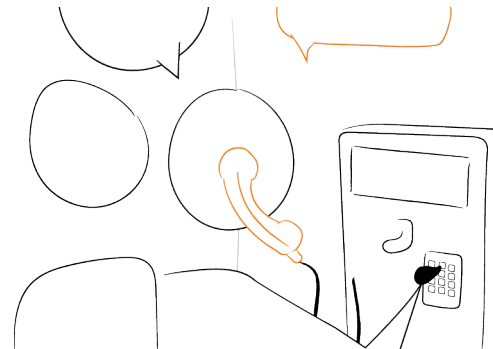
Before the route starts, they get a small task: They have to enter a number in the phone, which asks them a question: 'What would you like but are afraid to do?' After a bit of thought they both speak a message into the phone.

Then they start the route. The directions navigate them easily, while they're discovering the new surroundings: 'I've never been in this street actually', Kaya mentions.
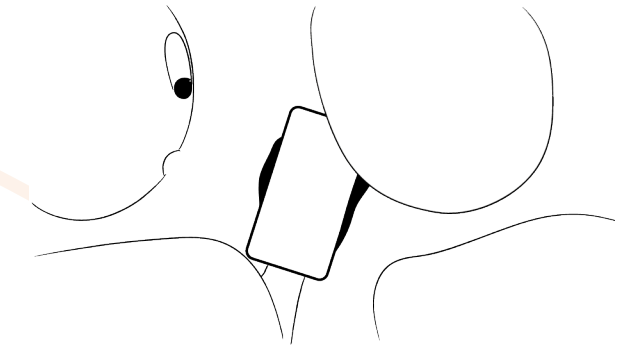
After a while they get out on the streets again, there was nothing nice enough to buy. Suddenly Kaya spots some kind of telephone booth 'Whats that?', she points out to Zeynep.
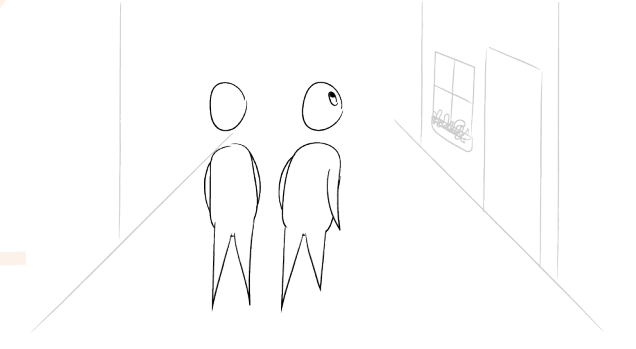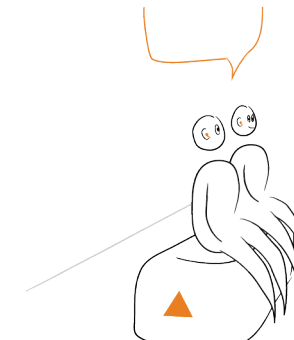
They're drawn to the telephone booth and read the poster on it that invites them to enter, Kaya steps in.

Once arrived at the first storypoint, they recognise the logo on the bench and sit there. They put in their earphones and start listening to a story told by someone named Chanelle.

Once it has finished the app shows the directions to the next point. While walking, they start talking about what they thought of it, speculate about what would happen next with Chanelle and share their own experiences in relation to her story.
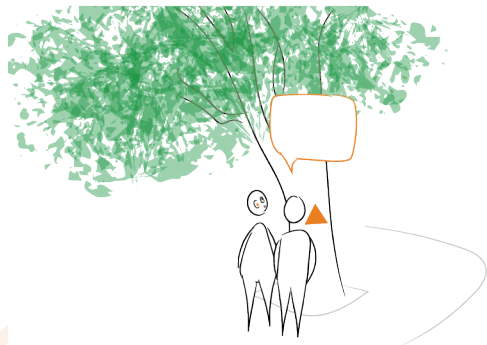
They visit the other point, this time it's under a tree. They listen to the second episode of the story; This time Chanelle revealed her fear to someone ...

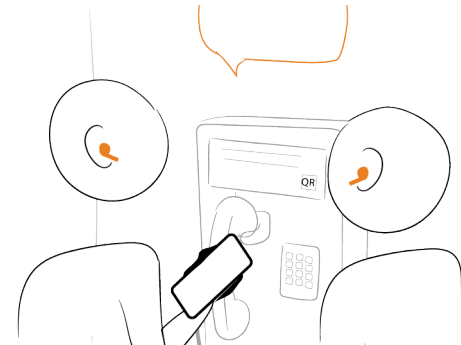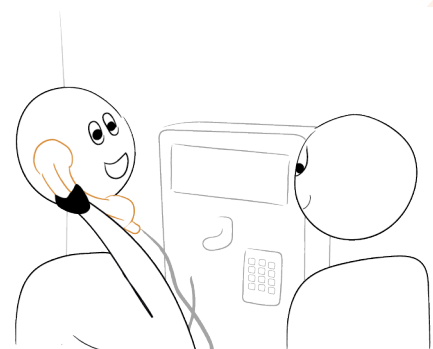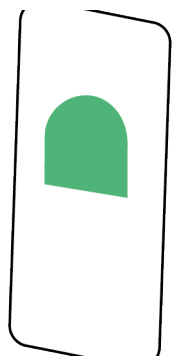Now they're directed to the last storypoint, They arrive at a phone booth again, they enter and listen to the last part.

Then, they're out on the streets again. 'Shall we just go for a coffee? ' Zeynep says. In the café they chat further about the topic and share experiences until they both find it time to go home.

At home Kaya tells to her husband what she did today and shows him the recorded message(s) - what would you say? she asks him. Meanwhile, Zeynep is exploring the app and checks the follow up assignments (i.e. 'steps') in there.

Finally they're asked to give their own confidence advice. They can also listen to other peoples answers. The app shows different (phone) numbers for the different options. They like to hear others advices- laugh and talk about it.
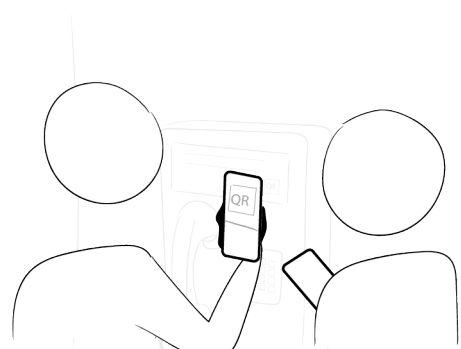
The app also asks some reflective questions to write down what they've done, so they can take a look at it at home again. Now Zeynep also scans the QR.

Zeynep continues to check the 'steps' in the app for the next days. She likes the 'steps' and finds herself noticing little things, like today she dared to mention something during a formal meeting.

A month later they want to chill again - this time Zeynep asks immediately: 'Shall we try out another story route?'

On the last page an overview pops up with the icon of the route and a message from Chanelle: 'thanks again for listening my story! '. It also states that by completing they've become a bit more confident.
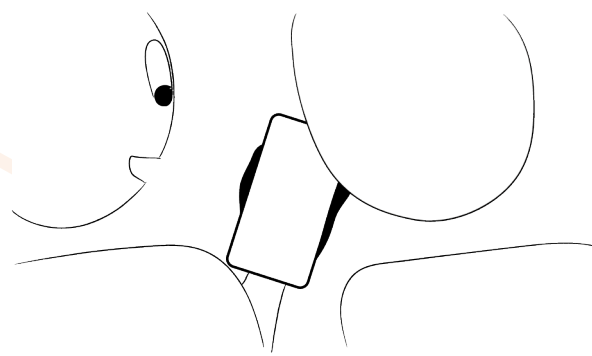
Kaya is already checking out other parts of the app: 'Ah nice, there are a lot of different routes, we can do another one next time', says Kaya.

8.5 How Wend shifts shopping practices towards sufficiency

This section elaborates on the different elements of the concept by reflecting if and how the concept fits the requirements and initial design goal. An elaboration is given how the design approaches each of the requirements (engagement, fuel novelty, fullfillment and bonding) and how it aims to achieve the project goal (to design an intervention that shifts shopping practices in city centres towards sufficiency) and therefore also the design goal.

8.5.1 How it motivates to (re)engage
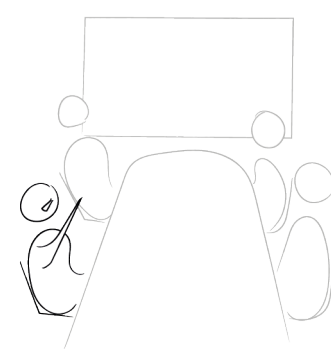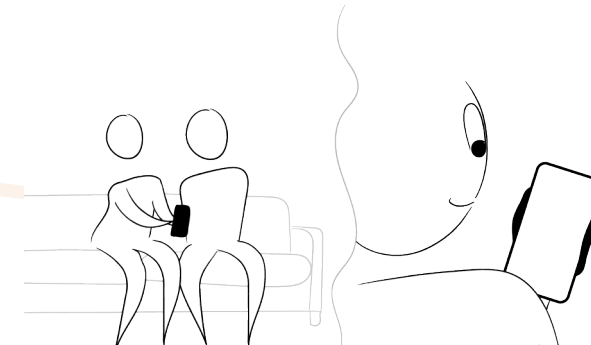
The aim was to spark curiousity and create commitment for people to engage. In the city centre this is done through different street furniture and the first call to action. In other places (once familiar with Wend), the app functionalities engages users by showing new routes, small everyday activities (see page 93) and trigger to let friends invite each other.

Attention poster & Street furniture
The poster and street furniture attract people in the city centre with a clean design and a clear question, figure 32. The street furniture (figure 34 next page) differs depending on the story it matches with, they serve as the start and the end of each route and facilitate the acitivities. On page 91, the activities with the street furniture will be discussed more in depth.
A quote that illustrates attraction (to novelty):

> *Ik heb het hier nog niet eerder zien staan dus ik dacht ik ga even kijken.* - street test participant

App design
Then, on the street furniture a QR code can be scanned, which contains minimal information. The landing page shows only a play button (figure 31), when clicked, the intro of the story will play. The minimal but clear touchpoints create curiousity and before the users realise, they will be engaged in the story. After the introduction, the page shows information about the storyroute and asks to move along with the story, pushing their curiousity.

Prominant play button, with little surrounding info: must be clicked right?

Follow up to encrease probability of engagement

Gratis | op eigen tempo | Ideaal om samen te doen

Het verhaal van Kaya

Leuk dat je hier bent!

Dit is **het begin** van het grappige en bijzondere verhaal van Kaya.

Een nieuwe manier **om jezelf** én de stad **beter te leren kennen**

Benieuwd hoe het verder gaat?

Op drie andere punten in de stad kunnen jullie het verhaal verder luisteren.
Jullie kunnen kiezen:

Het verhaal volgens de route doen
Als jullie het leuk vinden om de bijbehorende plekken te ontdekken   ± 45 min.

Het verhaal naar eigen invulling volgen

WEND

Figure 31: App design to motivate to engage

Hee, Mag ik je wat vertellen?

Dit is de start van een verhalenroute die jouw en je dag een stukje mooier maakt!

Hee, Mag ik je wat vertellen?

Dit is de start van een verhalenroute die jouw en je dag een stukje mooier maakt!

Kom kijken →

Hee, Mag ik je wat vertellen?

Dit is de start van een verhalenroute die jouw en je dag een stukje mooier maakt!

Kom zitten →

Hee, Mag ik je wat vertellen?

Dit is de start van een verhalenroute die jouw en je dag een stukje mooier maakt!

Kom kijken ↓

Figure 32: posters (around A0 size) that hang next to street furniture to grab attention - depending on what kind of story is told, the corresponding poster and colors will be used. Topleft and right: 'relations' and 'self-image'; Bottom left and right: 'gratitude' and 'purpose',
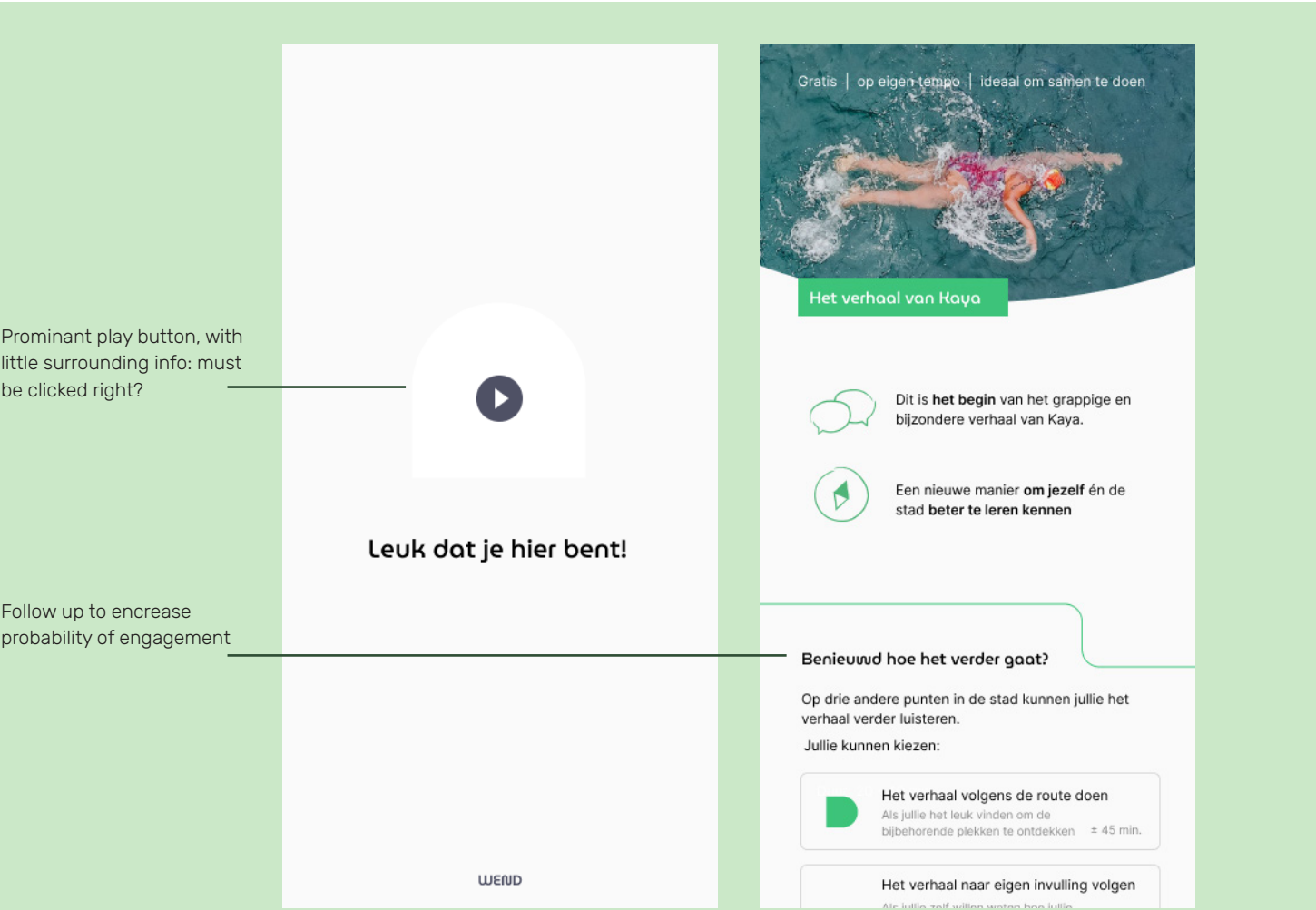
App:

tinyurl.com/Wend-thefinalconcept

connects with first question to reflect

Takeaways in app

Starting activity   Storypoint   Storypoint   Reflective final activity

time for chatter

"Ik vond het ook goed dat je aan het begin al een call to action had. Hierdoor zaten we er al helemaal in."
- tester storyroute

Figure 33: Storyroute setup

phone cell

mechanism:
(indirectly) talking to & hearing strangers

examples of final activity:
• what advice would you give?
• what would you say to ...
• by hearing others: how would you do that?

talking bench

mechanism:
discussion with cards openly allows for honesty & trust.

examples of final activity:
• have you ever ...
• what do you think about ...

tiles (art) wall

mechanism:
forming or making with intention

examples of final activity:
• what elements can you mention/name that ..., for each place a [tile]
• what do you think about ...

hanging tree

mechanism:
adding you(rs) to the group

examples of final activity:
• what would you like to ... (future)
•

Figure 34: Street furniture activities
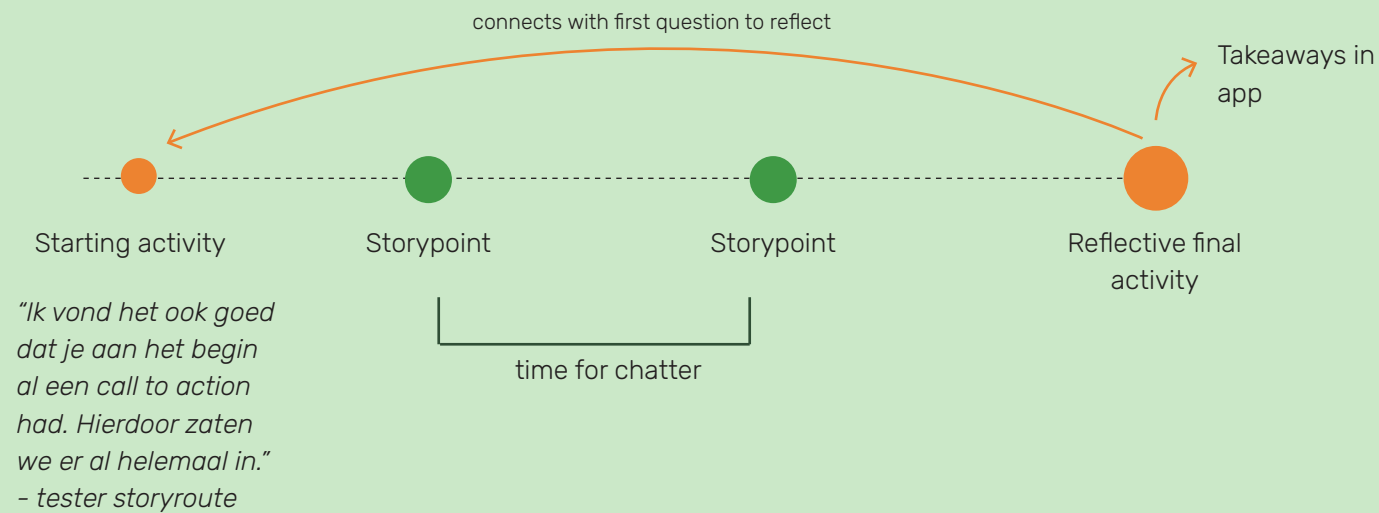
8.5.2 How Wend fuels novelty

Storyroutes
The storyroutes are key element of the design to fuel novelty. Storytelling is a powerful way to convey a message as a teller and see new perspectives as a receiver. As stories play into peoples emotions, the educational element does not feel like a lot of rational (system 2) effort. The stories are written by experiences of ordinary people within subthemes of long-term happiness (gratitude, relations, self-image and purpose), There are new storyroutes added every month in different places, so people have new material to engage with. Also, as mentioned in the previous section, the activity differs per story, making it a surprising element.

The route splits the story in a few short episodes and therefore also cuts up the attention, which on one hand allows for self-directed chatting and wandering, just as people like to do during shopping. On the other hand it also gives more time to process and discuss the content.

The episodes are placed in different parts of the city, i.e. storypoints, ideally in a place where the surrounding somewhat matches the story. E.g. when talking about sitting, the point will be a bench or when talking about work, the point will be looking out to an office. This physical connection enhances the story, people will get to new places and these will also serve as a memory point for people if they pass by again sometime.

App:

tinyurl.com/Wend-final-concept

For the episodes of an example story:
tinyurl.com/Wend-story-episodes

8.5.3 How Wend enhances bonding

The activities and story make room for companions to talk about subjects that might not be talked about every day. It let's them open up to each other and by discussing and empathising it creates connection. Moreover, as explained earlier, the route allows for self-directed wandering of conversations, so they can still catch up with each other about the week or so.

Street furniture activities
The route starts with a more low key question or acitivity to get people engaged. The end contains a reflective question or acitvity about the happiness topic of the story, see figure 33.

In both cases it is explicitly stated that they should express their answers or thoughts to each other, which leads to:

"gaf ook meer gesprekstof hoe je beiden tegenover zelfvertrouwen staat en daarmee om gaat." - tester storyroute

The mechanisms used per activity differ, see figure 34 for examples. However, some people automatically get more engaged, discussive and reflective than others. It also greatly depends on the persons openness regarding the topic, both in general and towards the companion. This can be an interesting element to do further research on to see whether it can be directed more in an unobstrusive way.

Story
As the companions hear opinions of strangers, they can commonly discuss and create an opinion on something that does not directly concern themselves, which creates bonding and is a good starting point to put their personal thoughts and reflections against it.

"... liet me ook beter nadenken aan het einde hoe ik mijn eigen advies zou kunnen plaatsen naast de issue van Kaya." - tester storyroute
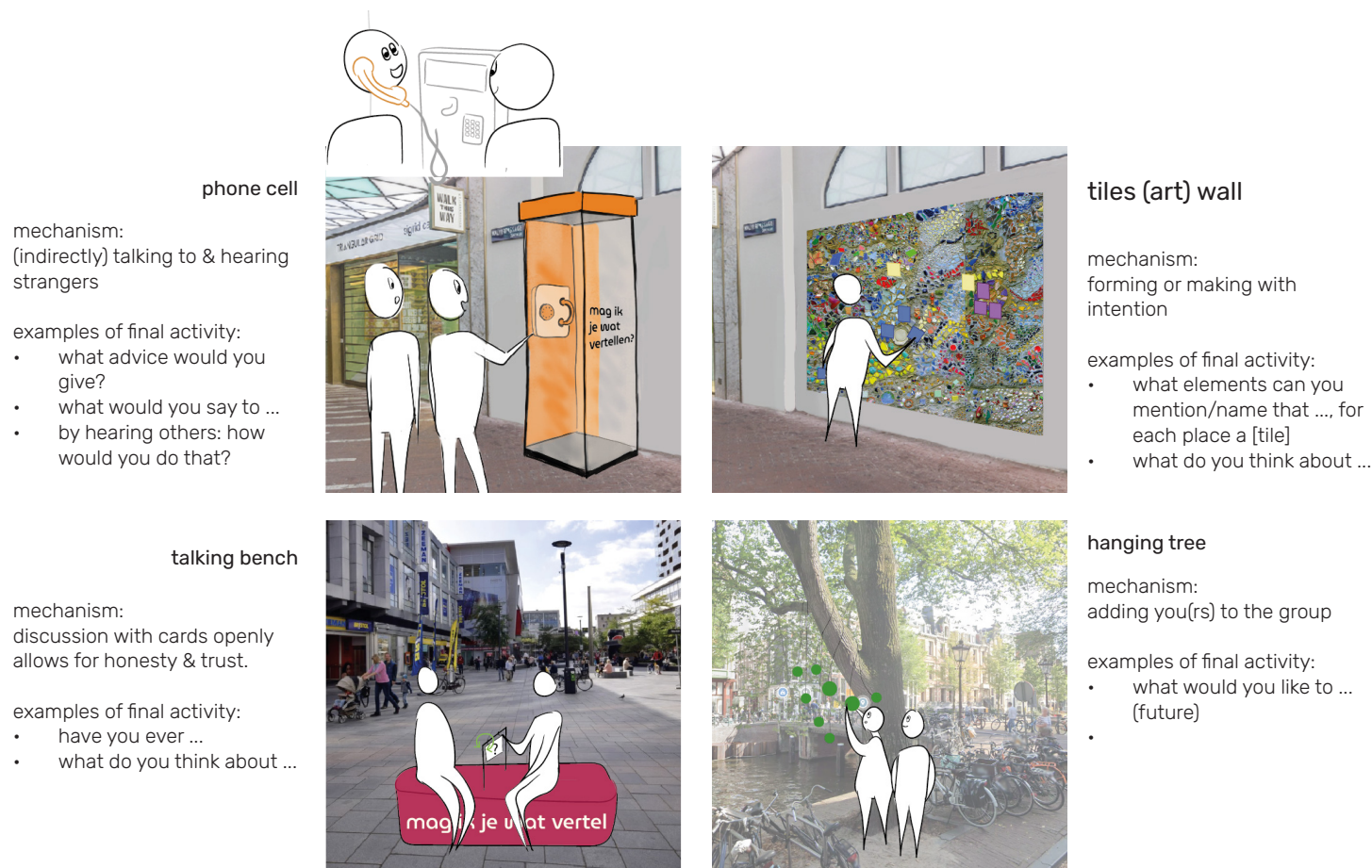
8.5.4 How Wend fullfills a trip to the city centre

First of all, stories create fullfilment. By completing a storyroute people get the feeling they have experienced something. Also, this experience is something they can share and talk about at home or with friends. People like to reshare stories.

Thirdly, something that is less directly noticed but does give fullfillment, is the learnings about themselves through the topic and reflections. This is emphasized in the final screen of the route in the app, see figure 35. This was support by someone during the test:

> *'mensen willen altijd wel iets over zichzelf horen of leren'* - tester 'engaging materials'

8.5.5 How it leads to absolute reductions of consumption

Last, but certainly not least, this section discusses how Wend might lead to absolute reductions of product consumption by creating resilience towards (unforeseen) desires. It is stated as 'might', because this is something that cannot easily be tested. However, several arguments can be given to show the possibilities.

How it disrupts normal practices
People who engage with Wend, will simply not use that time for shopping. This significantly decreases the chance that they will buy on impulse. Ideally, people will use Wend more often to see as a pastime activity to do with someone in the city or even as a day out activity in unknown cities.

> *"als ik er van te voren vanaf weet en gepland dit een keertje lekker in het weekend kan doen!"*

However, people that already have a clear goal in mind are less likely to engage. How to motivate them to engage could be researched further, but it also greatly depends on what the goal is. Whenever people are in need of a certain product and therefore get into the city centre it is very difficult to change their actions, see section 4.2. They should either be targeted earlier, or the topic below however, describes how Wend aims to change this indirectly.

How it increases long-term happiness
The aim was to eventually and slowly trigger a mindset change amongst users of Wend on the importance of long-term happiness subjects and strenghtening those. The idea behind this is that it lowers the need for people to purchase non-essential goods (see also section 4.6) and builds resilience towards desires. Wend aims to facilitate this in several ways:
- *The final message of every route* is written using the internalisation technique of identity endorsement (D&B & Rijkswaterstaat, n.d.): stating *the person* is [the happiness theme], see figure 36.
- *The stories* are very personal and also show the mistakes and imperfections everyone makes. With this, it changes peoples perception of others and possibly also extends to situations outside the story.
- *The little reflective assignments* provide a low-threshold way for people to engage and spend time on the topics. Step by step people can improve themselves, that is why in the app, they're also called 'Steps of the day', see figure X.

Moreover, there are already a lot of happiness, self-improvement, mindfullness apps, books and stuff out there, such as (a very popular one) Headspace. So the question is also, how does Wend position itself in this field? What is noticed among these, is that they are often very consciously reflective and individually oriented, see figure 37. This can feel like more effort and more motivation is needed to bring this up. Also, people often learn much more by exchanging experiences than just doing things individually.

It is also interesting to contrast this 'conscious focus' to the Minimalist mindset mentioned in section 3.5. They state they are happy not because they're more mindful of the things they have, but because it gives them the feeling of freedom. This way of framing is powerful as people like to have (the perception of) freedom - they feel more 'wendbaar'.

Therefore, Wend aims to change this by:
- making this 'self-improvement' journey an oportunity to do together.
- framing it as small fun steps instead of conscious assingments.

All in all, Wend aims to change the mindset towards focus on long-term happiness by changing the behaviour in a lighthearted way and as an effect, their attitude will follow.

Figure 35: Example of final message of a route - creates fullfilment & interalisation
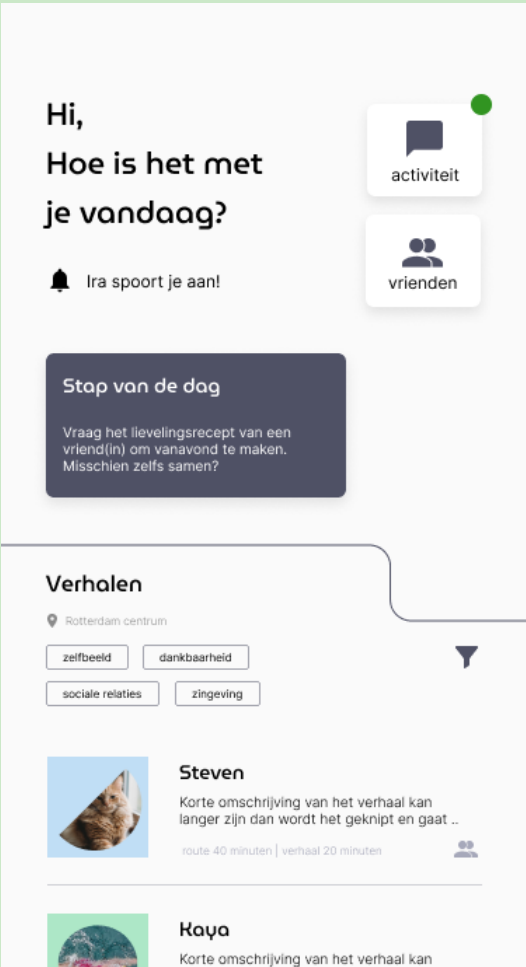

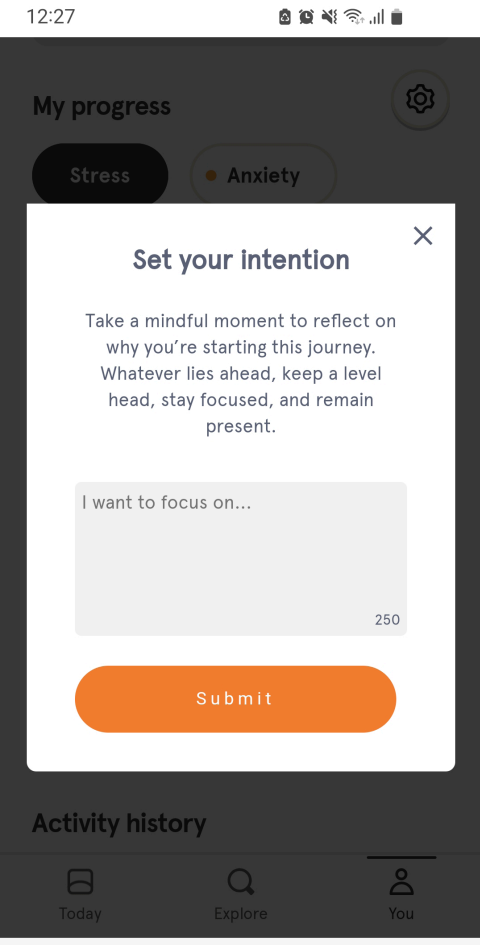Figure 36: Fun reflective assignment at home page called 'stap van de dag'

Figure 37: Headspace app, upon opening it shows a message that is very thoughtfull and individual.

8.6 Implementation

Wend as an independent initiative
This section discusses the feasibility and viability of the concept by showing how it could be implemented. Figure 38 shows the structure, the different stakeholders that would be involved and the value exchange.

This is just a first proposal for implementation, it is based on constructs of several existing initiatives (see Appendix H) and evaluated with some parties as a starting point (section 9.3), but would need further development and validation. Especially the making of the stories and using the street furniture for activities (preferably using as much of the

furniture or objects that are there already). Moreover, it currently does not contain the Ministry as a party in the implementation map. They are not the party that can execute this, as they don't have the right resources. Therefore it was chosen to approach it as an independent initiative, but with close connections to another governmental party, the municipality. Via this way, the Ministry could fund municipalities to support such initiatives. More about this in the chapter 10.

8.7 Concluding: a new practice in the centre

All in all, Wend facilitates a new practice in the city centre that still fits with the key elements that form shopping practices, but utilises them in another way. See below for an overview.

For implementation however, more validation should be done to assess the viability.
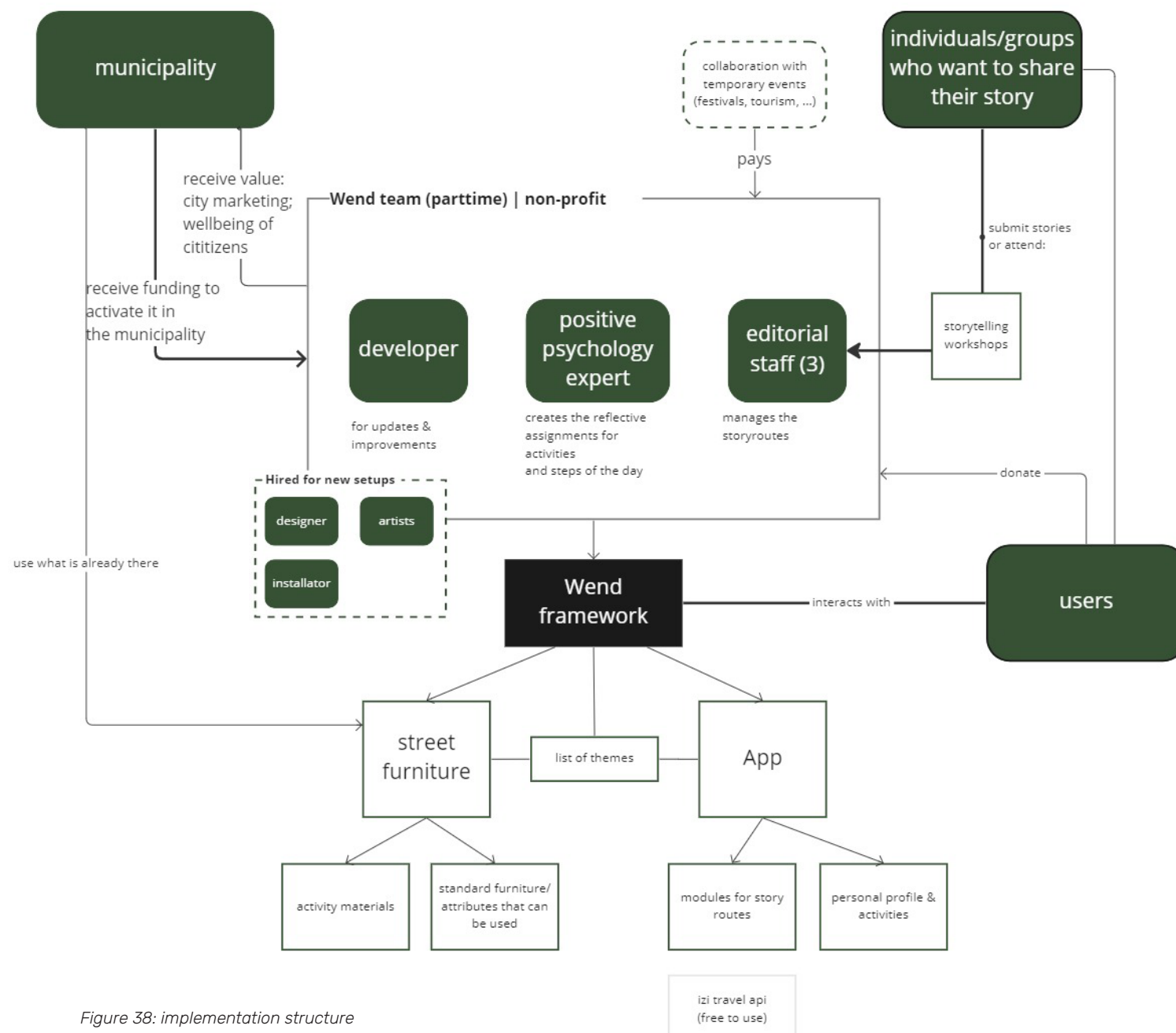
Figure 38: implementation structure
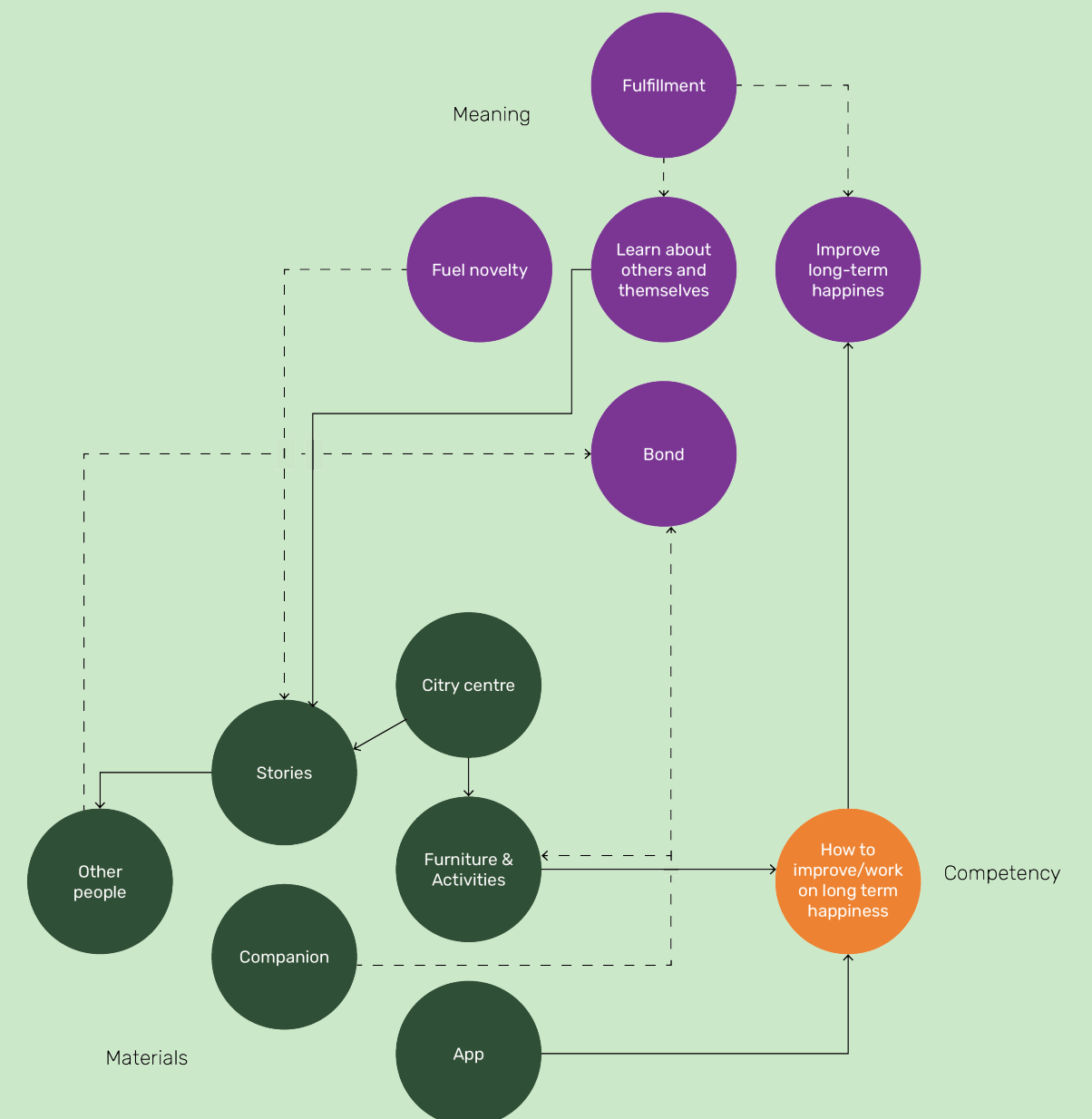
Figure 39: Schematic overview of the elements of Wend. The striped lines show the (newly made) connections to the key elements of shopping practices.

9. Evaluation of the concept

In this chapter, the concept is assessed using assumptions derived from the design and requirements. It is worth noting that the design, which was presented in the previous chapter, is already an iteration based on the feedback received from testing. As a result, the insights presented in this chapter primarily emphasize the key learnings and adjustments that were made. Moreover, the chapter gives recommendations for further testing and developing the concept.

9.1 Method user test

This section describes the assumptions that were tested and the set-up used to validate the desirability of the concept.

Assumptions to test

There were multiple assumptions based on the requirements defined in the design direction, Appendix J shows the full overview. Some were more risky than others, therefore the most important ones were the main goals of the test, see figure 40.

User tests for desirability

The assumptions were tested in two ways. See the right page. This was done because during the street session, no one wanted to participate in the 'route' - which is changed in the new design. So, to test the route that included the story and activities, I asked other people (friends from friends) to test it. Since not every one could walk the intended route, I made a different version where they could define their own route. The materials for concept testing can be found in Appendix K.

Small experiment

In addition, since the design is a lot based on peoples perspectives and people nowadays are quite materialistically oriented, happiness topics like confidence are often related to products. For example, people might answer that wearing certain type of clothes gives them confidence. Therefore I had an additional question that I wanted to be answered: *Do people have or give perspectives (i.e. advises or stories) that are materialistically oriented?*

To get an idea, I conducted a small experiment, where I posted two questions about their advice and experiences on self-confidence on Instagram , without any intro (to prevent biased answers). Ten people gave an answer. Since this is a small experiment, no valid conclusions can be taken from this. Nevertheless it is still an important aspect to discuss.

◎ Testing the concept. Thursday afternoon in Rotterdam city centre, 2 hours, see pictures ->

◑ Testing the storyroute - 8 people

Alternative version to define their own route

tinyurl.com/Wend-storyroute-test

Is there motivation to engage?	(What) do the activities and story spark?	Would they re-engage?
• In what way? • Is there a 'desire' to participate?	• Does it start a conversation? • Does it lead to a realisation or a different perspective on the subject?	When and how often would they like to do this when they go into the city centre instead of shopping or anything else? To what extent are interested in being actively involved in this? (with the app)

Why?

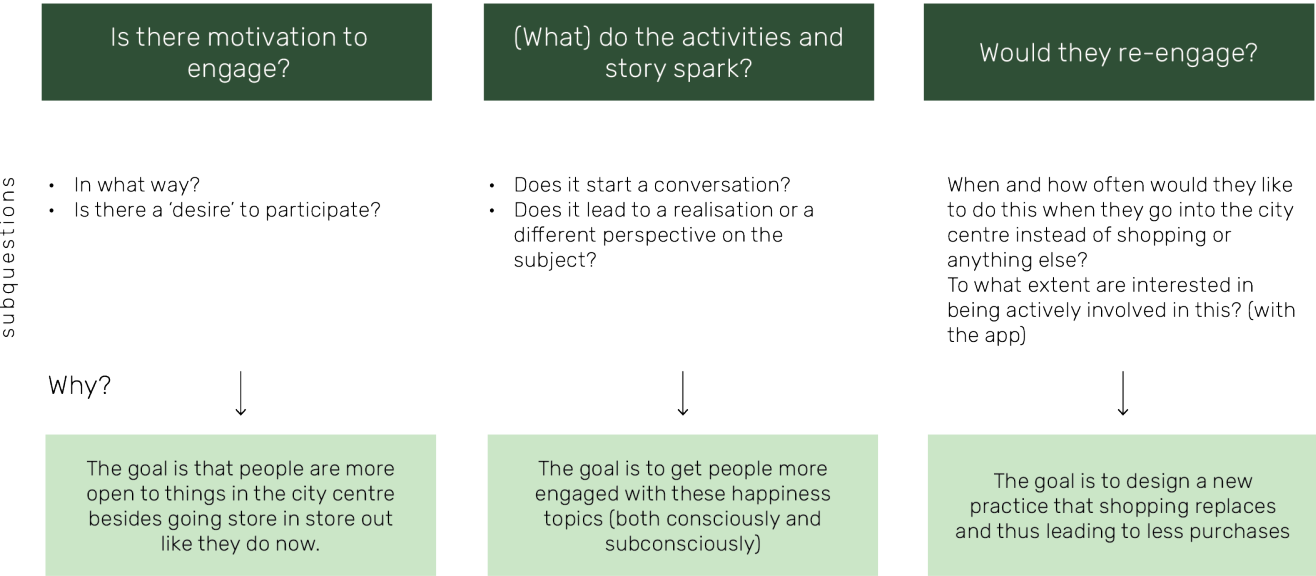| The goal is that people are more open to things in the city centre besides going store in store out like they do now. | The goal is to get people more engaged with these happiness topics (both consciously and subconsciously) | The goal is to design a new practice that shopping replaces and thus leading to less purchases |

subquestions

Figure 40: Goals for testing

9.2 Desirability outcomes

This section provides insights on the desirability of the concept from a user (consumer) perspective.

9.2.1 Which goals were achieved/ assumptions validated

is there motivation to engage?	(what) do the activities and story spark?	would they re-engage?

Interest & activity: Yes
Nine people approached of which 3 were solo the others in duo's.

Motivation to engage in storyroute: not enough
Main reasons were:

"Oh daar heb ik heb er geen tijd voor."

"Ik wil weten waar het over gaat, voor ik m'n tijd verspil."

So, it felt like too much effort and restrictive. Also, it did not trigger curiosity enough. See next section for improvements made upon this.

It sparks conversation about the topic:

"Grappig en een mooi invulling, gaf ook meer gesprekstof hoe je beiden tegenover zelfvertrouwen staat en daarmee om gaat."

Open to interpretation:
What was also interesting to see, is when the question was asked: what do you take from the story? All participants gave different answers.

Make the opening question smaller:
Now the opening question was: 'what advice would you give to a friend who needs to gain more self-confidence?' Which was a bit too serious and effortfull for a start. It would be better to make the starting question lightly reflective and more fun and the final question/assignment more reflective.

mostly unanswered:
Since the route was not tested with people who voluntarily engaged, it is hard to answer this question. The people who tested the storyroutes indicated that it was not always a replacer but:

"Het lijkt me leuk als afwisseling. Als ik bijvoorbeeld uitgepraat ben met vrienden lijkt het me leuk om dit erbij te pakken en samen de discussie aan te gaan."

"Niet: als ik een doel heb in de stad en weinig tijd heb. Wel: als ik er van te voren vanaf weet en gepland dit een keertje lekker in het weekend kan doen! (Zoals bij de test)"

9.2.2 Insights for improvements

The full overview of all insights can be found in Appendix K. Since most insights are already incorporated in the redesign, they will not be discussed extensively here. Therefore, this section discusses some insights are generally relevant and quite important to validate with further testing.

Engaging them before realising what the concept is
The information on flyer and landing page were not triggering enough. Consequently, some improvements were made that give a little more info, but not too much, because then the curiosity fades. The info should be more like a trailer or a description of a movie, it tells a bit, but leaves a lot of room for interpretation and questions. Within the city context, I want to engage people before realising what it is about. To illustrate what I mean with that, inspiration is taken from a concept I encountered some time ago, see below.

So, engaging people could be even more effective when the person only later on realises or knows what it is about. The person is then already invested as it already acted and is more likely to engage. This is not new actually, social media is very good at this: a video automatically plays and people are engaged without consciously noticing.

> This is incorporated in the new concept; upon opening with the QR people directly hear a start of the story and only afterwards tell about the concept and how they can engage, see section 8.5.1.

Case of guerilla gardening camera:

Vanessa Harden designed a camera that can shoot seeds when clicking the button, with the goal secretly plant flora on places where it is not alllowed, i.e. guerilla gardening. This can be used by the owner, however people often also ask others to take a picture of them, using this camera in this case, the asked person then instead of shooting a picture also shoots the seed. Only afterwards the purpose is explained and they have already engaged before knowing.

Give the feeling of flexibility and autonomy
Secondly, the 'route' felt too fixed and a set thing for people in the city. As I also made a version where people could define their own route, more out of practicality, I accidentally discovered that giving that flexibility, people had a more autonomous feeling about the concept.

This also made me realise this an important aspect of shopping practices: while shopping, even though people may walk the same streets over and over, they do have the flexiblity to decide what to do and where to go at any time; there is no commitment at all, which also makes it a good pastime activity.

> Therefore, the iterated concept includes a choice at the start:

The last option still contains the end point and shows the points of the route, but the user has more freedom to decide on their own.

These options also add value with follow up use: if someone knows upfront she wants a more directed activity it can choose for option one, but if flexibility is preferred the user can choose for option two.

Planting first seeds for mindset change
Lastly, whether people would also start using the app for (reflective) acitivities remains mostly unanswered. The testing was mainly focussed on the storyroutes and participants also saw that as the main part of the concept. The app that they were directed to afterwards did not always make sense, see figure 41. Several reasons can be attuned to this, the most important one is that someone's needs to have a certain kind of motivation to start reflecting themselves. With the route this behaviour is activated almost automatically and done in a fun and engaging way, but the solo reflective activities and open notes in the app seemed like more serious effort. So, the way these are set up should also be more fun and engaging as the routes are.

Additionally, it is best to keep the concept to its core – reflecting and learning through different storyroutes than extending it too much with different kind of functionalities.

> Therefore the app should primarily convey the storyroutes and the notes function can be removed.

Antwoord van florinesreeram

Ja, ik voel me meer mezelf als ik
dingen doe en deel (met anderen) die
ik leuk vind

9.2.3 Results experiment: People's view on happiness topics
None of the answers of the experiment were (directly) related to materialistic values. Which also relates to some of the street interviews conducted in the very beginning, where conversations with people at the end also wandered into how we do not need all the stuff and immaterial things like family and friends are more important, but that we do not get reminded of that enough. It shows that quite some people know what makes them happy and that this is not material stuff, but in other contexts, i.e. everyday life, they do still get drawn or pulled to materialism. Which refers back to the question from the literature review 'when are people materialistic?'

Therefore, making a clear link between improvement of happiness to lesser consumption through the activities and reflective techniques should be researched further.
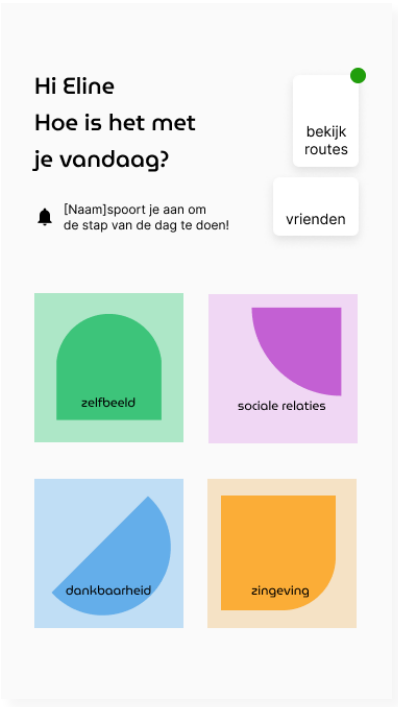

Figure 41: Earlier version of the app, where it was originally intended as a digital notebook to let users elaborate further on their reflections on the topics they'd experienced during the storyroute. However, the 'notes' and activities feld too open and the connection with the engaging storyroutes missed.

9.3 viability & feasibility

Next to whether people desire the product, it is also important to assess the viability and feasibility.

For this, I aim to validate the viability based on multiple assumption of which two were seen as priorty, all can be found in appendix J. The most important goals to test were:
- How can Wend be managed with incoming stories and setting those out?
  - This is tested through an interview with manager from a podcast that is based on peoples stories: Echt Gebeurd (number eight most listened to podcast, 2020).

This is important since a test participant also indicated:

> Het lijkt me best moeilijk om het 'verhaal' even te bedenken. Ik zou eerder input willen geven misschien, dat een professional er een (fictief) verhaal van maakt. - test participant

- Can it be set out in cities and what is the [best] way to do that?
  - This is tested through an interview with street managers from the Kalverstraat, Amsterdam. They are hired by the municipality to manage, help and implement all kinds of things more direclty (from collaborations between retailers to issues of citizens to popup repair cafés), therefore they have a good understanding of how things are implemented in the shopping streets.

Insights are stated in the boxes on the right. This is just to get a first idea, further validation is still needed.

(Municipal) streets managers Kalverstraat & surroundings
call 40 minutes

Main topics; how do they manage (incoming) stories, would they see a collaboration?

Insights;
- Always open to work together with new initiatives, adding street furniture not per sé a problem and can be requested through them (instead of higher up in municipality)
- Very open to sustainable initiatives as it is good for their city marketing
- They never thought about (working on) wellbeing in the city centre

Takeaways for Wend:
- Should be considered how to market it to municipalities and other business stakeholders: as a sustainable or wellbein concept

Echt gebeurd podcast – Hannah ebbinge
call 20 minutes

Main topics; how do they manage (incoming) stories, would they see a collaboration?

Insights;
- They are with editorial staff of three people working oncea week on this, to manage, select and curate incoming stories
- It is not so easy to receive (and find) good' stories: especially people who want to, dare to tell it on a stage ánd have a nice story,
- keep it to one core concept
- look for local support and subsidies to start off

Takeaways for Wend:
- make editorial staff part of the team
- for Wend people do not have to tell on stage, removing a (big) barrier, but receiving good stories could be improved through giving storytelling workshops, which also gives participants opportunity to learn.

9.4 Limitations of the evaluation

It was a small test, therefore valid conclusions cannot be made;
- Storyroutes were not tested with people who were initially shopping.
- Reengagement was asked, but not tested over a longer period of time.
- Measuring if the happiness topics would create lesser attention to products and resilience to attractions of products (e.g. ads) is not done and hard to measure, but is an important aspect of the concept.

9.5 Recommendations for further development

First of all, more testing is needed to get more detailed insights on all the different aspects of the design, the desirability and viability.
Some recommendations for further development and testing are:
- Important aspect to test is if the improvements of the first engagement do trigger people to walk the route or if it still remains something that feels like an effort or inflexibility.
- Some people automatically get more engaged, discussive and reflective than others. It also greatly depends on the persons openness regarding the topic, both generally and towards the companion. This can be something to research further to see if it can be directed more in an unobtrusive way.
- Wether or not to mention at the start of a first time engagement that it is a certain happiness topic that the story is about should be tested further: it can immediately feel serious, but it also gives insight on the contents.
- The design will not appeal to every individual, but probably attract certain groups. It would be interesting to see whom that may be, what characteristics they share and if those are indeed the ones that otherwise (often) engage in shopping.
- Developing story workshops or story guide and create framework for the different themes of happiness that can be addressed.
- Developing a set of 'steps of the day' for the app and test how people engage with this, how commitment can be created.
- The design assumes that people have earbuds with them, this can mainly be a hurdle for first timers that do not have that as listening through phone speakers is not ideal. This could be explored further.
- Also, participants indicated they also like to walk while listening. It could be researched further how the storypoints could maybe be a small story 'path' (e.g. part of a street) or have some kind of activity while listening.

10·

What role can the Ministry play

This chapter elaborates on the role of the Ministry regarding the quest to shift shopping practices toward sufficiency. While the Ministry cannot directly develop or execute the concept, this chapter elaborates on the insights that arose from this research and concept that can give direction to the role of the Ministry. Specifically, the chapter delves into two main topics: A view on the city centre and shopping practices and; A view on sufficiency and working towards absolute reductions. These insights are compiled in slides to advice the Ministry's Circular Economy team and the behavioural team on actions they can take.

10.1 A view on city centres

Focus on everyday lives

This research took the city centre as the context and focus, which allowed to uncover consumption habits from an everyday practices perspective. During the research, it became clear that the way the NPCE, particularly the consumer product category, is organised along product groups (such as clothing, electronics, furniture), may not be sufficient from a sufficiency standpoint. Peoples lives revolve around the habits they are used to and share socially, which consume resources as part of it. For example, the newest electronical gadgets shows wealthiness amongst a certain social group, or someone treats someone with a present as an act of showing love. To these people that gadget or present can be all kinds of products and can differ every time. Whereas the circular product category perspective implicitly assumes people have a need for all those products, the practice perspective can show that the need is embedded in our ways of doing and if we change those ways, the need can fade or shift to non-material alternatives.
A quote by Irwin et al. (2020) about the importance of everyday practices in sustainable transitions illustrates it well:

> *Everyday life's unsustainability can be ascribed not to wayward individuals who need to be 'nudged' by policy makers into becoming environmentally conscious citizens (to be made to feel guilty, essentially), but to inertial practices that have to some extent have a life of their own. In relation to such inertial practices, individuals only have limited degrees of freedom or choice.*

Regarding the Ministry's plans to research what leads to (over)consumption (NPCE Ministerie van Infrastructuur & Waterstaat, 2023), I therefore urge them to look into people's everyday practices and make change in there.

Change city centres

Building upon the previous section, a quick look into the shopping practices of the city centre shows that people will just buy more as long as it is there and captures all of their attention.

However, it does not need to be like that.

In the context of the broad prosperity tool (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat & De Argumentenfabriek, 2022), policy makers should ask themselves: 'What is the effect of the policy on the attractiveness of the public space?'. A circular and sufficient future brings consequences for the surroundings where products are in use ánd purchased/acquired. However, instead of framing it as a consequence, the Ministry can play a role in defining what those (shopping) environments look like. By changing this environment, e.g. make CE apparent or provide other leisure activities, the practices of people will change too.

One way to approach this, is to include guidelines for product companies to integrate CE in their retail spaces. Another way is through collaboration with municipalities and other parties, which brings us to the next section.

Broaden stakeholder perspective

Lastly, during the research it was also noticed that policy now mainly concerns product companies and the (CE) supply chain (recycling, production, reparation etc). However, there are more stakeholders concerned with the business of product companies. Therefore a recommendation for the Ministry would be to map out these stakeholders further, identify what their relation is towards product businesses and how this could be leveraged. See also section 5.2.

10.2 A view on sufficiency and working towards absolute reductions

Element of long-term happiness

This might seem quite a vague and broad topic to address and one might not know how to start with it from a policy perspective. Nevertheless it is an important topic, as multiple literature studies have shown the negative correlation between subjective wellbeing and non-essential product consumption (see section 4.6).

Therefore the first step would be to actually set up a research. In the behaviour strategy of the NPCE a start is written for this, which is focussed on integrating happiness science ('gelukskunde') in education for children. However, instead of putting this in direct educational context, it can also be approached in other ways. Such as the

concept design aims to show: seemingly unrelated pleasurable experiences can also let people learn about happiness science.

Another step could be to investigate if and what aspects of happiness and wellbeing are often associated with products. Such as, giving presents to sustain relationships or that self-confidence is defined by looks. These can then be targeted more effectively.

Tackle social embeddedness in events

Another element that was identified as one of the reasons buy products, is 'for events' (such as a birthday or holidays, see section 4.3); which is a strong determining factor in peoples orientation towards products. These events are very diverse and therefore would need a more concrete categorisation before diving into the practices around it. However, a few different events and possible opportunities to research are already identified along this project, these are included in the advises (see next section) to serve as examples.

10.3 Actions to take

These above-mentioned insights for the role of the Ministry regarding sufficiency, are compiled in slides to share with them, see Appendix L. They were made in consultation with the behavioural team to fit them with the Ministry's focus and language.

11.

Conclusion, discussion and reflection

The concluding chapter of this thesis provides a summary of the work undertaken, followed by a discussion of the project approach and concept, which includes insights and recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with a personal reflection.

11.1 Conclusion

The goal of this project was to design an intervention that could provide a possible answer to the following question:

How can recreational shopping practices of city centre visitors shift towards sufficiency, in particular absolute reductions, and what role can the Ministry play here?

It is evident that people tend to purchase more than they need due to the various values that products evoke, which companies are well aware of how to play into those. Some might argue that people should be made less materialistic, but people are not per sé materialistic by themselves, it is more the embeddedness in our society that also gives body to a better fitting question of 'when are people materialistic?'.

Through the practice perspective taken on recreational shopping in the city centre, it was found that people perform it as a day out, as pastime, for a target or unplanned. Such a trip to often leads to unplanned purchases.

The key elements that underpin this practice include: fueling novelty; bonding of companions; and expecting a certain fullfillment. Moreover, people enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of the city centre, which offers a slow-paced activity that provides new experiences without demanding one's full attention.

Although the city centre environment is the facilitator of this practice, it is mostly perceived as a place that only serves shops and cafés, ignoring other activities in place. This led to the project taking a stance in the strategic path to 'change orientation' of the recreational shopping practices. Other interventions could look into 'turning desires' and 'realise ownership' amongst shoppers.

From a systemic actor perspective of the retail-CE system, it was shown that a future sufficient city centre can be approached in various ways. One way is to view it as a place that supports long-term happiness instead of only short-term satisfaction, where the focus shifts from products to building relationships, self-image, purpose, and gratitude. This perspective resonates with a new envisioned path of the Ministry's behavioral team to tackle overconsumption.

Based on these insights, the aim became to make the city centre a place that can support long-term happiness, whilst keeping it a place to fuel novelty in a low key way and *let visitors see it as such*. This resulted in the development of the concept Wend.

Wend offers story routes that allow people to engage in specific happiness topics and discover other perspectives together, creating a space for happiness in the current city center context, without feeling like it is a serious and effortful activity. This leads to two things:
- On one hand, the storyroutes creates a new practice in the city centre that can substitute the engagement with stores, but preserves the key elements of novelty, fullfilment and bonding.
- On the other hand, the acitvities engage people with happiness topics, thereby improves their wellbeing and develops resilience towards materialistic tendencies.

While the first tests of Wend showed wilingness to engage from people on the streets and positive reactions on the storyroutes, there is still a long way to go in putting long-term happiness as a focus of city centres. Taking this perspective is quite far from the current CE discourse of the Ministry. However, I advise that this perspective is key for the Ministry to take on the challenge to get society to 'consume less' and really reduce overconsumption. Not only to help the planet, but also for a better society.

WEND

Which route to take next ⟶

11.2 Discussion

The discussion will first revolve around the concept then the project approach, what it adds to literature, for the Ministry and beyond.

Discussion of the concept

Desirability
People will still see a city centre with a lot of shops that have a luring effect. Thus, the level of motivation needed to engage with Wend rather than all the shops remains a question. Also, whom it exactly appeals to is still a question to be answered, the first testing showed an interest from different types of people, but some are probably more attracted than others.

However, I also want to address some mechanisms in the concept that I think work well concerning the desirability:
- Using perspectives and different stories for reflection instead of only looking (back) at your own experiences to learn. Especially for topics around long-term happiness that often get quite serious quickly (like the Headspace app).
- Leveraging the bonding of companions that is already part of the practice .

Sustainable feasibility
Another aspect that I wish to emphasize is the importance of considering the sustainability of the concept itself. With regards to the street furniture, it would be ideal to reuse and repurpose existing materials as much as possible. Otherwise, it would be quite controversial if the concept aims to reduce consumption but ends up creating more stuff. Additionally, it should be noted that the use of an app and it's data exchange also consumes energy, which should be assessed and optimised to ensure that it has minimal impact.

Viability
First of all, it is a concept that is more suited to arise bottom up. Other initiatives have shown it is viable, like Echt Gebeurd, but for Wend to get live and gain traction more research is needed. The combination and dependability on different elements (the stories dependent on people, the furniture dependent on municipalities) make it tricky.

Secondly, I should address: why did I even make a concept that the Ministry cannot work out themselves? Well, in terms of direct consumer interventions, resources are limited. Therefore, in line with some behavioural intervention (research) projects from the behavioural team, it serves more as an exemplary project that in this case can show how shopping practices can shift and could be picked up or further implemented by other parties.

Nevertheless, I could've chosen for small interventions, that for example shifts a choice and can show behavioural effect, or campaigns, but it did not feel like that could achieve the desired effect (design goal). However, there were also lessons learned for how to approach this differently the next time (see Reflection).

Long-term happiness
The long term happiness topics are part of the core of the concept. The research found about long-term happiness and wellbeing in relation to consumption are very general stating there is a relation but not which factors are more determining than others. It would be interesting to research if certain happiness aspects are currently more attuned to products and how (and can therefore be shifted) than other aspects. Such as, as mentioned, self-confidence is currently often linked to clothing and could thus be treated differently in the activities, i.e. more directive in moving away from products, than let's say purpose.

Additionally, it is worth further investigating whether the emphasis on consuming less should be more explicit. While the current approach hints this through stories and activities, it may be beneficial to explore whether a more direct message about the value of engaging in non-consumption activities for one's happiness (and giving tips for activities accordingly) would be received well and more effective.

Discussion of the project approach

The concept of absolute reductions of products, also known as "Refuse" in Circular Economy (CE) terminology, has been relatively unexplored by the Ministry and in existing literature.

In this section, I will discuss the approach taken in this project and highlight the key findings that emerged. By adopting a practice perspective

and focussing on a context where products ar purchased instead of looking at a product (category), this project has tread a path different from the ordinary way of working for the Ministry's behavioural team and CE team and myself. Therefore I want to discuss this road taken.

Shopping context
The decision to take the shopping context as the starting point of the research generated a lot of question marks and comments from supervisors and others: it is so big and diverse, why not focus on a product group? Honestly, for a long time I also didn't really know why exactly, it just resonated with me.

Also, literature regarding sufficiency is mostly focussed on product groups or new ways of doing business (and marketing) (Sandberg, Bocken et al., 2020). Or living consciously, like Minimalists, which needs strong values and a lot of motivation to live like that.

Moreover, as Sandberg (2021) also stated in her literature review on sufficiency, where she adressed barriers: '*the political system and the physical environment have received less attention*.'

From the design and road taken towards the future frames (CH 6) I can now reflect back and see that it is actually also the physical environment of the city centres that greatly influence our practices.

A centre full of shops with products (however sustainable they may be) will just not be suitable in a sufficient future. If a product category was chosen instead for this project, say clothes, the stores would probably have been more part of the focus, leaving the public surroundings the way it is. Now instead I could look at the bigger picture of the city centre and see what effects that had on the practices.

I don't wan to say that focusing on specific products is not valuable; even from a shopping practice standpoint, it is possible to focus on a specific product category. This is just an alternative approach toward sufficiency, with which I hope to inspire others.

Social practice theory (SPT)
The use of SPT has had both its pros and cons. In analysing current practices it helped to see all the different elements related to shopping and explicitly defining what meanings, competencies and materials were apparent. However this insight on all the different elements and links sometimes also felt like it unneccessarily complicates the analysis and creative process. Especially in compiling and defining what is key or what to change, it could feel overwhelming.

What I did like about SPT, was that I felt like it opened up for new views. However as Kuijer (2014) also mentioned, it can sometimes be too disruptive

to gain traction amongst stakeholders. As such, it can lose the people that make such a practice happen, out of sight.

Lastly, I also learned a great deal about the behavioural approach from the Ministry's team and had some discussions in relation the broadness of my practice perspective. So, I visualised the differences between behavioural approach, practice theory and human-centred design from my perspective, see figure 42.

In hindsight, folllowing their behavioural approach would've probably had a higher chance of designing something that they could develop further and gain more direct feedback from their expertise. However, in a session with one of the experts I tried to define a target behaviour, but that felt like a step too early since I didn't know what the alternative could be for 'consuming less'. With the practice perspective I was able to imagine an alternative.

Social Practice Theory & Systemic perspective
What I found lacking in literature around changing social practices was some way to know where it should move towards. If the project would be to change driving to cycling in the practice of commuting, it is clear, but sometimes (such as with this project) it was not clear yet what the

alternative could be.

Kuijer (2014) focussed on reducing impact of a practice, like bathing, through recrafting elements. She did this by retrieving inspiration from historic and alternative (similar) practices, but what if those are not ideal for a sustainable future?

Here it helped to use a more systemic perspective (in combination with ViP) to define what future practices could look like by also taking into account perspectives of stakeholders and other developments.

Systemic design
The systemic design approach that really includes different stakeholders was only tapped into a little, but I think for the Ministry it would be very fruitful to devote a whole project to it. This Circular transition requires a lot of different stakeholders to come along and now the Ministry has been mainly focussing on product businesses and their production chains and parties directly related to or benefitting from CE.

All in all, the balance between a radical and disruptive view of practices that include absolute reductions, and at the same time creating something that could start implementation with the Ministry or other stakeholders now, has been and is still a journey.

11.3 Reflection

Well that's it then. The end of half a year with so many learnings I could write another report. For now, I'll keep it short and share the main things.

To scope or not to scope
I was so eager to tackle this subject and get to the core of the situations, problems and all information out there to try to find or see something that could be an idea for a possible answers, but ofcourse thats not there to pick up. This is also what got me stuck in the ideation where I had all the different insights and elemetns in my had and couldn't really scope. Or I scoped and then went back again several times. This led to not being able to do as much testing and iterating as I wanted within the desired direction.

Take my time
In relation to the previous learning, I also felt like I was rushed the whole time, which sometimes overtook my time to reflect, work things out and then go on. This is definitely something I have to take care of next time, so be it that I retrieve less insights then.

Behaviour change or practice change
Before the start, I remember I was very eager to apply behavioural science to the project. But somewhere in writing my project brief I came along the social practice theory and somehow it got me.

I'm not sure if it was the best decision for this project as it took me some time and reading to get into it, making distinctions between the different elements was an iterative process. However, I do think it gave me a new perspective on how to tackle a problem and in a next time it can only get better.

Systemic design perspective
Sytemic design with stakeholders I did not use as much as I would've liked. However, I think in hindsight, in generating and selecting opportunity areas from the future frames, it would've been interesting to engage the Ministry's CE and behavioural team to hear their opinions (now it was mainly done about the future frames in general). As I could've made them more 'part of the future' and therefore have a higher chance of designing something that they could see implemented by themselves or with stakeholders.

Thanks Ministry and good luck
I really liked the team meetings to hear and see what projects the behavioural team and others were working on, what kind of topics are discussed and tackled. Even though behaviour change was not core of my project I learned a great deal about the approach from the Ministries team, which I am very grateful for.

My message for now
Let's just all be a bit more like these kids: 'I don't care about all the stuff I just want to have fun'.

Behavioural change is about **understanding what and why people are doing something**, getting all the different factors and then **selecting and targeting** a few that are most prominent and promising **to change** behaviour.

SPT is broader, it is about **understanding all the combined actions and why are they performed** and than see how something else could be **put in place** on one or multiple elements **to change** the practice.

Human-centred design is more messy, it is about **understanding the person in relation to the context** and gathering all kinds of insights, then combining (some of) these into *a* **new design that helps in that specific context.**
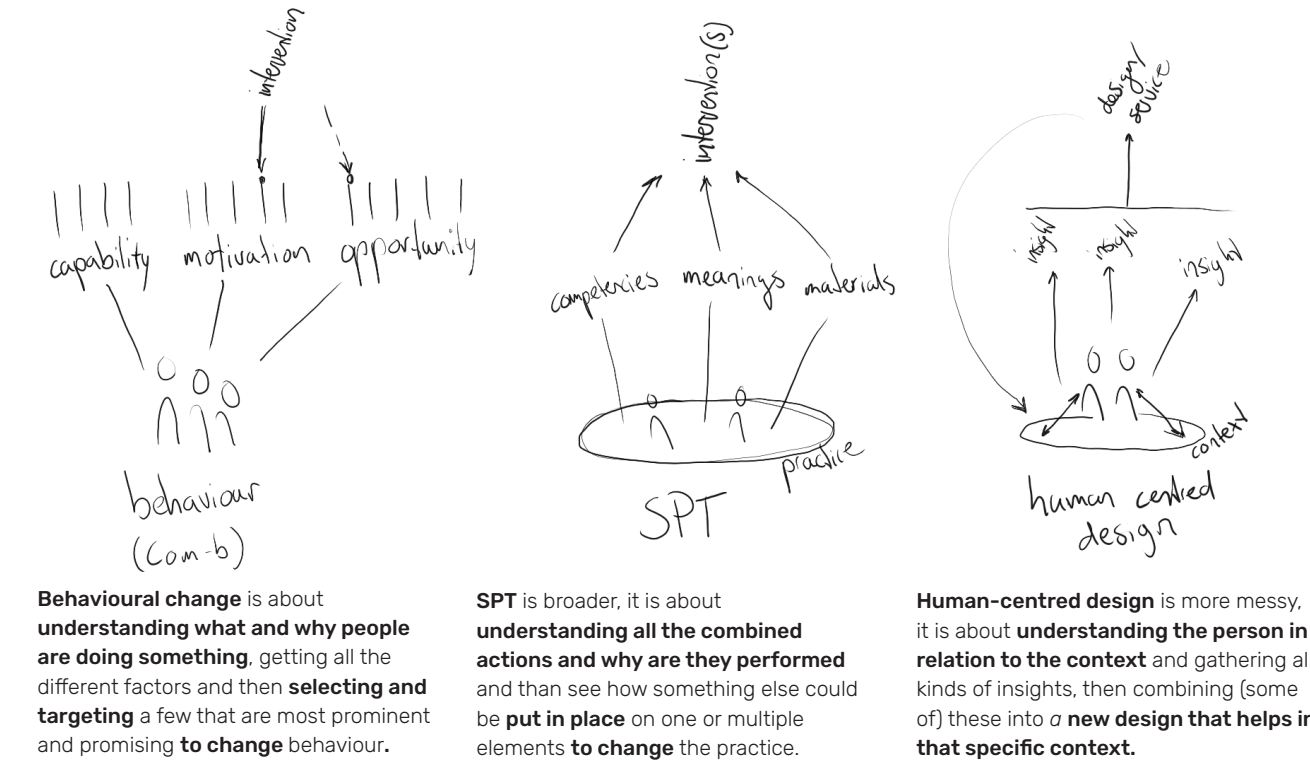
Figure 42: Own interpretation and observation of differences in ways of approaching a project, but in execution they are often more intertwined and mixed

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