

# **Crafting Identities**

**Female crafters and their expressions of  
identity through crafts**

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## **Abstract**

This research takes a closer look at the expressions of identity by contemporary female crafters in Norway. The aim of the research was to explore crafters' own experiences and understandings around crafting. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with 14 female crafters, aged mid-20s to late 50s. Their crafts include textile crafts such as sewing, knitting, crocheting, weaving, spinning, felting, and embroidery, jewellery making, painting, drawing, and paper crafts. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The study found that participants viewed crafting as a vital part of who they are. The avid use of the internet in connection to crafting implied there was an online and offline connection to crafter communities. Participants talked about actively using their crafts as ways of expressing aspects of their identity, such as being a conscientious consumer or environmentalist, being altruistic, being a bearer of traditions, and being a woman.

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## Introduction

Many crafts that historically have been a necessity are today regarded as leisure activities (Kokko, 2009; Minahan & Cox, 2007). An increasing amount of women in Norway spend their money and spare time on crafts (Hestad, 2009; Musdalslien, 2009; Murvold, 2010). Through textile crafts such as sewing or knitting, paper crafts, and jewellery making, crafters make things for themselves, to give away as gifts, or to sell. Crafting may provide individuals with opportunities for creative self-expression and personal and social identity development (Fields, 2004; Hof, 2006; Minahan & Cox, 2007). The leisure activity of crafting may be deemed a feminist activity by third-wave feminists (Chansky, 2010; Ennz, 2010; Groenveld, 2010; Pentney, 2008), and is also associated with social and political engagement, situating crafter communities in association with activism (Bratich & Brush, 2007; Minahan & Cox, 2007).

Intrigued by the claims that crafting may be an important part of an individuals' sense of self as well as a highly political activity, I wanted to meet contemporary crafters and ask them about their own experiences and thoughts around their commitment to crafts. I carried out fourteen qualitative interviews with female crafters active in textile crafts, paper crafts, and jewellery making. The aim was to look at how contemporary crafters might experience and reflect on the role crafting might play in their lives.

A key concept in this study is *identity*. Identity is understood as a concept that says something about who an individual is. I draw from a social constructionist understanding of identity (Wetherell, 1996), which implies that I understand identity as both shaped by and as shaping one's social environment,

The thesis consists of four main sections. The first section opens with a short introduction to crafts through recent history, followed by relevant literature and research on crafts in various academic fields. This is followed by an introduction to arts and crafts in psychology, as well as theories of identity relevant to the present research. In the second section, I report on the methods used to collect data through semi-structured interviews, and the methods used to analyse the data through a thematic analysis. In the third section, the main findings of the thematic analysis are reported. The main findings are discussed in the final section of the thesis, followed by a conclusion.

## **Crafts and Crafters**

A craft can be understood as anything done with a sense of skill and work, often using the hands, and often understood as creative (Sennett, 2008). In this thesis, the word craft is used about a variety of crafts which today seem to be commonly understood to be crafts associated with women. The crafts discussed are mainly textile crafts like knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting, weaving, and embroidery. However, paper crafts, jewellery making, photography, drawing, and painting are other crafts mentioned by participants.

Slåttum and Ylvisåker (2007) propose that the associations around crafts such as knitting have changed. Although contemporary crafters might view their craft in relation to its history and traditions, the associations to the home, feminine, maybe passive and low status action of woman's crafts are challenged. The authors refer to how the internet and café culture have taken crafts out of the private sphere of the home.

Crafters in Norway craft on their own or meet with their friends to craft together. The use of the internet as an arena for learning and sharing the interest in crafting implies that there is a notion of an online and offline connection to contemporary crafting. Crafters meet at knitting cafes or crafting circles, at craft conventions, as well as online in forums and through blogs dedicated to one or several types of crafts. Here, crafters can share their work, teach and learn new skills, and meet people with shared interests (Chansky, 2010; Bratich & Brush, 2007; Johnson & Hawley, 2004; Minahan & Cox, 2007). International crafting forums like ravelry.com, dedicated to knitting and crocheting, or craftster.org and craftzine.com, for patrons of a variety of crafts, as well as Norwegian forums like hobbyboden.no, strikkeoppskrift.com, and trådsnella.no are some examples of online forums where crafters meet online.

Craft blogs are in abundance, with a continuous stream of new crafters logging on to contribute to the crafting community (Murvold, 2010). A wide array of recent newspaper articles on the phenomenon of modern crafting often depicts the "new" craft movement as a trend ("Craftster press clippings", 2010; Siebke & Fredriksen, 2007). The apparent growth in interest for crafts has been picked up by the popular media, identifying sewing, knitting, and re-using as growing interest in Norwegian society (Hestad, 2009; Musdalslien, 2009). Popular media has reported on crafters who voice their opinions through their crafts (Larsen, 2011; Veiteberg, 2010), and highlighted the altruistic side of the crafting community, for example crafting for charity (Egedius, 2011).



## **Crafts in Recent History**

Throughout recent history, crafting has experienced waves of interest. The book *The Craft Reader*, edited by Adamson (2010) provides an introduction and overview of the field of crafts over time and across cultures and academic disciplines. He writes that after the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, craft-production was replaced with mass production aided by factories and machines. Crafters have been looked upon as people in opposition with modernity, as romantics wishing to go back to preindustrial days. Adamson describes how, in reaction to the mechanic mass production of products, the skills needed and the crafters' close relationship to the materials used, craft production was deemed as more humane and creative as opposed to the alienating labour of mass production. Adamson notes that as a reaction to the perceived loss of skill and the "spiritual deadness" of machine made products came the British and American Arts and Crafts movements during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where appreciation of the crafts was renewed.

Adamson (2010) and Minahan and Cox (2007) report a new wave of interest in arts and crafts in the 1960s and 1970s, a time of anti-war protests, renewed connection to nature and a fear of loss of natural resources. This was also a time when indigenous communities in the western world used arts and crafts to build identity and distinctiveness in the larger society. During the 1970s in Norway, the indigenous Sámi population experienced a revitalisation and renewed appreciation of traditional arts and crafts, called duodji (Hansen, 2007; Koslin, 2010).

Norwegian historian Mikkel Tin (2003) notes how textile folk arts and the ordinary and everyday women's crafts have mostly been met with contempt in art history. In the book *The subversive stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine*, historian Rozsika Parker (1984) demonstrate how a craft becomes culturally downgraded the more it is associated with women. Adamson (2010) and Chansky (2010) points to how the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s influenced the art-world, leading to a re-evaluation of the devalued feminine crafts. This opened for the possibility of using traditional crafts in art, as well as valuing crafted works as art.

Bratich and Brush (2007) write that in the 1990s an awareness of the exploitation of workers in the clothing industry provoked an anti sweat-shop movement and awareness of outcomes of globalization, and claim that this might have spurred the latest increase in interest in crafts seen today.

**Crafts as woman's work.** Minahan and Cox (2007) and Kokko (2009) state that crafting is gendered. Textile crafts are associated with femininity and technical crafts with masculinity (Kokko, 2009). Focusing on the gendered craft practices in the education of girls in Finland, Kokko notes the impact of history and tradition on the connection between textiles and femininity. Her study showed how girls might be socialized into gendered practices of crafts, and how skills in crafts were valued as feminine virtues and seen as part of the cultural ideal womanhood. Hof (2006) noted that crafts associated with women are also often deemed a frivolous activity. Bratich and Brush (2007) claim that, from the perspective of masculinised and capital value, women's sewing circles and knitting circles have been devalued and seen as unproductive and a waste of time, a place for idle work and gossip.

As crafting can be a time consuming activity, it is interesting to note how Døving and Klepp (2010) propose that housework has been didactically hidden because of the two incompatible understandings of time. On one side time is related to a rational economic logic, where efficiency is associated with profit, and on the other side is the logic of care, where time is related to love and comfort.

Despite the many movements re-valuing crafts, the view of crafts as old fashioned might still be something contemporary craft enthusiasts struggle with and the notion of women's crafts as devalued might still be in effect. Studying contemporary female textile artists in Ireland, Nelson, LaBat, and Williams (2002; 2005) note how women and their creative expression through textile medium tend to be undervalued both socially and economically. Nelson et al. relate the creative medium of textile arts to how individuals shape and redefine ideas of gender and creative expression in a socio-cultural context where their main medium, textiles, are associated with being ordinary and with just being a "woman's hobby" as well as considered to be of low value as "true" art. However, as Adamson (2010) note, the feminist movement's celebration and re-valuing of the trivialized and degraded women's work also regarded feminine crafts as a tool for self expression in resisting oppression.

Scholars connect the contemporary craft movement to third wave feminism (Bratich & Brush, 2007; Chansky, 2010; Groenveld, 2010; Minahan & Cox, 2007; Pentney; 2008). Psychologist Carolyn Zerbe Enns (2010) wrote that third wave feminism resists categorising, and encourages ambiguities, conflicts, individuality, and uncertainties. This makes it possible to hold several, even contradictory, social identities. She also noted that according to this view any activity that makes one feel empowered can be seen as feminist. Chansky (2010) and

Groenveld (2010) addressed previous and current views on crafting and discussed ways women today may understand and use crafts when creatively expressing themselves and their individuality. Both articles discuss the current notion of crafting being understood as a feminist pastime. This is also a topic addressed by Pentney (2008) who highlight crafts' potential for building community, how crafts can be used to show mainstream support or to fundraise for social causes, as well as its use in public protest.

### **Research on Contemporary Crafting**

Recent research on contemporary crafting points to the ways identity, emotion, gender, and politics might relate to crafts. In the article *Stich 'n bitch: Cyberfeminism, a third place and the new materiality* Minahan and Cox (2007), look at arts and crafts movements of previous centuries, and reviewed material from the popular media and the internet, as well as art theory, feminist literature and organizational change theory. They present and discuss the notion of a new global craft movement. Using the term "stitch and bitch", a term often used for knitting and crochet circles and thought to be inspired by the book *Stitch 'n bitch: The knitter's handbook* (Stoller, 2003), this contemporary movement of crafters is here said to be dominated by young women meeting online and in public café's and pubs to knit or crochet together. Minahan and Cox (2007) suggest that the movement of crafters is more than women reclaiming traditional crafts. They postulate that a global craft movement may be seen as a response to political and social changes such as globalisation or terrorism, or as a response to concerns with the environment or with the perceived dislocation of the information society.

The notion of a new craft movement, closely knit to both feminism and activism, is also looked at and questioned by scholars in media and communication. Bratich and Brush (2007) evaluate craft culture in regards to the gendered spaces of production, crafts' relationship to old and new technologies, and how crafts can be related to activism. They note that crafting might be regarded as affective labour, producing a value different from monetary value, and point to how crafting spaces have changed from a domestic activity to a public and online activity.

Sociologist Corey Fields (2004) proposes that today's crafters might construct alternative meanings around their craft in an effort to fit their crafting activity with their identities. According to this study, contemporary knitters do not accept the conceptions of knitting as an activity for old fashioned, older women who have lots of time. As a result, they redefine what a knitter is in order to fit knitting in with their identities as young, hip, career

women. Fields understands this as identity work; the contemporary knitters may regard knitting as a social, fulfilling activity that requires skill and a sense of fashion and style.

Another study within social science, looked at the relationship contemporary crafters have to their collection of crafting materials, their “stash” (Stalp & Winge, 2008). The study found that accumulating a collection of materials was an expected, normal part of being a crafter. The crafters would “collect, store, present, use, and defend the stash” (p. 215), and the interest in the collection was described as an obsession. The authors noted that the stash could be negative because the crafter would need to defend the space a stash would occupy in a home, as well as the time spent on the collection, to family members and to others. The positive outcomes of the stash were seen as the cultural transmission of skills in crafts, as well as the crafter community to share the interest and collection with.

One aspect that sets the current wave of interest in crafts apart from previous ones is the internet. Contemporary crafters are avid users of the internet. The way age-old skills are developed, not always side by side as the tradition has been (Gamble, 2010), but between strangers through a computer screen, has caught the attention of researchers in human environmental sciences as well as in information technology. Johnson and Hawley (2004) investigated the impact of technology and how quilters find and use information online. They found that the quilters adopted the technology on their own terms, maintaining the social values associated with quilting and the integrity of their work.

Researchers in information technology have looked at how the sharing of craft knowledge is facilitated by and combined with modern information technology through ways of online shopping as well as via blogs and forums containing online how-to’s with digital pictures and videos (Torrey et al., 2009; Torrey et. al, 2007). Bonanni and Parkes (2010) look at how digital media affects trends in social and environmental sustainability. They liken online craft communities’ use of open-source software to share ideas and contribute to maintaining and developing specific skills as the modern day apprenticeship. Regarding online craft communities as virtual guilds, they consider the free and open exchange of ideas done for collective benefit as important both for under-served groups and for the advancement of technology.

Bargh and McKenna (2004) note that the internet may facilitate relationships that otherwise would not be formed, and that online relationships can be likened to off-line relationships. Bagozzi et al. (2007) write that participation in online communities is believed to have a significant degree of social influence on the individual, who is thought to identify

strongly with the online group. Studying the interaction between people and computers, one qualitative study on “Ikea-hackers”, (Rosner & Bean, 2009) highlights the impact of information technology on the crafting, or do-it-yourself, culture. Ikea hackers are people who alter and make new things out of products from Ikea furniture stores and share the process and resulting products online. The study revealed that people who might not know others who share their interest in a particular craft can find inspiration and meet like-minded people online. The study also mentions these crafters’ share their interest as creative people obsessed with making, as well as using crafts to express who they are.

Through studies using technology to digitally document, store, and share the process of knitting, Rosner and Ryokai (2008; 2009) show that the process of crafting a gift to someone could be not only a time consuming process, but also an emotional one for the crafter. Given the chance to reflect and document the process of making, participants in their studies would report having the recipient in mind throughout the whole process of crafting a gift.

The notion of crafted objects as emotionally valuable is also a finding in the aptly named “*It says you really care*”: *Motivational factors of contemporary female handcrafters* (Johnson & Wilson, 2005). They write that for the crafter, a crafted gift can be understood as symbols of self as well as of her relationship to the recipient. They also note the importance of the personal histories connected to the making and use of the object, and crafters’ opinion that a crafted gift is special because it is unique and made with love rather than mass produced.

In an ethnographic study of crafter communities engaged in scrapbooking, Hof (2006) looked at how scrapbooking can be described as both a form and forum of cultural citizenship. She found that the craft of scrapbooking may offer women with ways to reflect over their identities. An ethnographic study on female quilters (Cerny et al., 1993) found that women partaking in quilting circles might use the craft and the social aspect of belonging to a crafting community to find a sense of social self. They encourage more research on how participation in textile crafts might define the individual’s identities.

### **Crafts in Psychology**

Creativity expressed through for example arts and crafts is considered to be beneficial for health (Schmid, 2005). On the matter of research on crafts within the field of psychology, most research seems to be centered on the use of arts and crafts in therapy. Some have focused specifically on PTSD (Lyshak-Stelsher et al., 2007), dementia (Gigliotti et al., 2004),

or Alzheimer's disease (Abraham, 2005). As Spandler et al. (2007) note, the use of arts and crafts as an approach in mental health recovery might provide individuals with possibilities to develop coping mechanisms, create a sense of meaning, and to rebuild identities.

The studies that are most relevant to the present research are those that engage questions of identity. Reynolds & Prior (2003) and Reynolds (1997; 2004) have found that partaking in craft activities might provide people living with chronic illness or disabilities to reclaim and maintain a positive identity by identifying with the craft rather than their illness. Reynolds (2003) postulates that the variety and choices within textile crafts, its connections to historic traditions and sense of community, as well as the accessibility and accepted use of assistive technologies, might mean that textile crafts have an exceptional value compared to other creative occupations in this context. For chronically ill persons, engaging in making art could heighten self-worth and social identity (Reynolds & Lim, 2007).

While most research on crafts in the field of psychology seems to be related to therapy, one exception is the book *Storylines: Craftartists' narratives of identity*, (1999), by social psychologist Elliott G. Mishler. He presents an analysis of in-depth interviews with five craft artists, relating their narratives to their development of adult identities. Mishler makes it clear how the socially constructed institution of arts and crafts, as well as social factors in society such as economy, is part of the context where craft artists' identity is negotiated and developed.

## **Identity**

From the review of research on crafts, it appears that crafting can be a part of an individuals' identity or used to express identities. The word identity as a term used to explain who someone is can be applied and understood quite differently, and researchers state that the many understandings and uses of identity as a phenomenon in psychology can be vague and problematic (Simon, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005). Although the term identity is used in this thesis, it should be noted that the terms subjectivity and identity have been used to inform somewhat similar phenomena (Hollway, 1989; Wetherell, 2008).

Mishler (1999) writes that the term identity has shifted from being understood as a stable, continuous and central part of an individual, both over time and across situations, to being understood as something constructed and performed through social situations and relational positions depending on context. Simon (2004) explains that in post-modern society identity is de-centered; an individual is not believed to be holding a single essential and

defining identity. Instead, identity is regarded as flexible, and contains a notion of variability and multiplicity. Seeing identity as ideological, built up through narratives and taking form in and through social experience, Hammack (2008) defines identity as “ideology cognized through individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice” (p. 230). As Howard (2000) notes, talk about identity may change and vary during a conversation, and individuals may present differing identity claims.

**Personal and social identities.** Identity is often viewed as dual; consisting of personal identities and social identities. Personal (individual) identities illustrate the self-perceptions and self-evaluations of an individual, while social (collective) identities illustrate how the individual draws identities from membership in social groups, or how these memberships are viewed by others (Simon, 2004). An identity may be considered a personal identity in one context, and a social identity in another. Verkuyten (2005) writes that an individual can hold several social identities, and through both individual and collective interpretations, some identities become relevant while others are less relevant, depending on the context. For example, being a crafter can be a prominent social identity when attending a craft fair, and in other contexts, being a crafter can be part of an individuals’ personal identity along with other self-aspects. Verkuyten notes that individuals prefer to identify with positive social identities, providing a positive self-esteem.

Mishler (1999) proposes that identities may be expressed and defined in the ways individuals position themselves in relation to others. Identity is seen as something constructed, maintained and negotiated in social settings. The way individuals can express who they are by positioning themselves in relation to others can be illustrated by a study by Freitas et al. (1997). Their study looked at how individuals through ways of personal appearance would express who they are *not*. The study explored how young adults negotiate identity through talk about who they were *not*, mainly in relation to clothes and appearance. The study found that individuals can negotiate identity through establishing who they are not. The act of avoiding an identity might be a way to avoid being thought to hold the characteristics associated with that identity.

**Gender and identity.** Crafts are often understood as gendered (Kokko, 2009) and may be seen in context with culturally and socially constructed gendered meanings. In a review article about gender in psychology, Stewart and McDermott (2004) note how feminist psychology has examined gender as a social system of power relations, as well as gender in

terms of the gendered meanings connected to social phenomena, and as identities. They note the intersectionality of identity, stressing that identities should be seen as connected, not separated, as factors that impact one identity may have an impact on another. They write that individuals may identify with more than one group, and hold several social identities, and note how the social identities may play different roles depending on the context. Frable (1997) writes that social psychology understands gender as a social category, and that gender identity can be seen as a type of social identity. For a woman, her gendered identity can constitute the meanings she attaches to the identity of being female. Frable notes the importance of being aware that the personal meanings attached to social categories, such as gender, will change over time, and should be seen in the social and historic context they are in.

**Occupation, leisure, and identity.** The relationship between paid work, unemployment, and identity is relevant to the present research as some crafters consider themselves crafters by trade, and craft with an aim to sell their products. Others may be unemployed and use crafting as a way to spend their time productively. Additionally, there may be crafters who spend a considerable amount of time doing crafts, making their interest in crafts a significant leisure activity.

Wetherell (1996) sees work as a major part of an individuals' identity. This can be in the sense that it influences the way one perceives oneself, and how one is perceived by others, as well as in the sense that it places the individual in the social and cultural world by facilitating a definition and category to be placed under. Wetherell acknowledges the current cultural significance of having a job or being unemployed, but notes that both paid and unpaid work; one's occupation, influences an individuals' identity.

Occupational science looks at the everyday tasks and activities individuals actively engage in and how these activities influence health and well-being. Through secondary analysis of three qualitative studies concerning occupation, Laliberte-Rudman (2002) focussed on the inter-relationship between occupation and identity. She found that engagement or lack of engagement in everyday occupations may have the ability to be expanding or limiting in the ways individuals perceive themselves and manage their social identities. Laliberte-Rudman expresses the idea that individuals can maintain, control and manage self- and social identity through occupation.

Many crafters may see their interest in crafts as a hobby or leisure activity. Green (1998) writes that leisure activities with others may provide the individual with affiliation and



networks which can create a sense of community and belonging. She notes how women's leisure can be a site of identity construction, empowerment, and resistance.

The relationship between crafting and gender identity may also be seen in context with the way women who craft might regard crafting as a social leisure activity shared with other women. Understanding friendship and leisure as a space where gendered identities can be constructed and maintained, Green (1998) notes how leisure can be a place for reproduction or resistance of social and cultural power structures. She comments that women can resist gender stereotypes and acknowledge power of dominant discourses about masculine and feminine identities in the same conversation.

Some crafters might regard crafting as a medium to express social and political concerns or as a feminist activity. This may be relevant to the present research as some crafters might use crafts as ways to challenge or resist commonly held conceptions and norms in relation to both a crafter identity and the way crafts may be associated with characteristics of gender identities. Shaw (2001) writes about leisure activities as potential areas of resistance. She explains how for example, women doing 'masculine' activities such as a sport associated with men, opens for the possibility to create social change, by changing discourses, behaviour, and dominant ideologies. Such behaviour does not necessarily have to be done deliberately or consciously for the purpose of resistance. According to Shaw, leisure activities that challenge dominant norms can benefit the individual by providing for an enhanced sense of self, development of new self-affirming identities, and increased feelings of self-worth.

**Use of identity in this study.** Understanding identity as both shaped by and as shaping one's social environment, I draw from a social constructionist understanding of identity (Wetherell, 1996). For the purpose of this research, I use the word identity to include both the individuals' personal sense of identities as well as their socially negotiated and experienced identities. I see identities as continuously being negotiated and managed by the individual, and expressed through talk and action. Identity is understood as flexible and multiple, and as Frable (1997) encourages, one should not regard social identities as separate, but rather embrace the multiple identities individuals may hold.

## **Method**

### **Epistemology and Reflexivity**

I have chosen a social constructivist approach to epistemology. The data collected should be read as a possible reflection of the participants' experiences, and the knowledge

drawn from the data as contextual (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Willig, 2008). This fits with the aim of the study; to look at crafters' own experiences and reflections around crafting. It has been important to shape the study to allow the voices of each participant to be heard. In this context, reflexivity has played an important role throughout the research process. As Willig writes, the researcher cannot be understood as a neutral part of the research. In this respect, I have made an effort to continuously reflect over the choices made through selection of topic, making the interview guide, recruiting participants, conducting the interviews, as well as when analysing and applying theory to the data. Prior to making the interview guide and recruiting participants, I talked to crafters and got acquainted with crafting communities and web-sites as a way to get oriented to topics that engage contemporary crafters.

**Personal reflexivity.** Willig (2008) states that qualitative research recognises the researchers influence both as an individual and as a theorist, and she argues for the importance of reflecting over the role the researcher plays when conducting a study. This implies that I reflect on potential personal biases as well as how my personal insight and understandings may facilitate the research. The topic of this thesis is of personal interest to me as crafting has been a part of my life throughout my childhood and as a young adult. I have spent a year studying arts and crafts, as well as working as an arts and crafts teacher. Making things has been a source of both personal enjoyment as well as a pastime. Although I cannot claim to be as active or skilled as many of the participants in this study, I have some understanding of and experience with crafting.

The interest in studying the topic of crafting has arisen as I observed how answering "yes" to the question "did you make that yourself?" often seems to elicit a polarised response of either positive or negative reactions. I have often wondered why some people get enthusiastic over the skills used in a crafts, while others simply cannot understand why anyone would waste their time and money on crafting. My impression has been that crafters who are involved with what one might view as traditional woman's crafts, for some reason feel a need to justify their choice to spend their time and money doing crafts. To ask crafters themselves about their views on crafting was therefore close at hand when deciding on a topic to study.

Merriam et al. (2001) argue for a more nuanced view on the notion of the researcher as an insider or outsider. They note that having or not having the same characteristics as the participants might be measured by factors such as sex, gender, culture, or ethnicity, but also by power relations, positionality, and knowledge construction. In most respects, one would

not see the individuals I interviewed as a uniform group. Participants came from different places in Norway, and a few were from other countries. They had different identities based on socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, education, work, and family-situations. Although all female crafters are not the same, as a woman interviewing other women and by presenting myself as a fellow crafter, participants may have viewed me as someone like them, an insider. Positioning myself as someone who also dabbled in crafts was a good way to come in contact with the participants. The fact that I knew at least a little about the crafts the participants were talking about made me more able to ask relevant follow-up questions. However, this could also lead the participant to assume I knew what they were talking about and thus not elaborate on certain topics. In an effort to meet this potential problem, I would try to ask participants to explain what they meant when they seemed to take it for granted that I understood what they talked about. For example, one participant was describing how some friends viewed her as dull because she knitted, but she explained it only as “because, you know”. By asking her to elaborate and explain how she had come to believe that her friends viewed her like this, she would explain her experience in more detail for me.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) point to the power asymmetry between the researcher and the participant in the qualitative research interview. They note that the interviewer sets the agenda for the interview as well as being the one to interpret it. They consider that the nature of the interview, that the researcher asks questions in order to get narratives and descriptions from the participant, is part of the asymmetry of power. Before each interview, I would make it a point to participants that there were no wrong answers, adding that since I was interested in what they as individuals had to say, they were the experts. In regards to a power dynamic between a participant and myself, all the participants had more knowledge than me about their crafts. For example, many would offer to show me specific techniques or explain the various qualities of materials to me. This was helpful in asserting the participants as the experts.

After each interview, in an effort to reflect over the answers and situation of the interview (Willig, 2008), I wrote brief field notes of my impressions and thoughts about how the interview had gone and what we had talked about.

## **Participants**

All participants were female and ranged in age from mid-20s to late 50s. The range of occupations included computer programming, law, and economics, as well as education, social, and health-care professions. Some participants were students, and a few were currently

unemployed. Some of the participants were educated within arts and crafts. Although all participants lived in or close to Oslo, some participants were originally from other parts of Norway. A few of the participants identified as Sámi. A few of the participants were immigrants, or had parents who were immigrants, from countries in Scandinavia, South Asia and Africa.

None of the participants was active in only one type of craft. Participants listed knitting, crocheting, embroidery, sewing by hand or with a sewing machine, felting, weaving, spinning, beading, jewellery making, drawing, painting, photography, paper crafts, and using computer editing programs as crafts they were doing, or had done before. Participants also mentioned making food or decorating the home as something they were inclined to see in context with their identity as a crafter. The interviews were conducted during the cold months before Christmas, and many participants were busy knitting and crocheting warm clothes for themselves or to give as gifts. As a consequence of this, several participants would talk more about knitting and crocheting, and less about other crafts they also participated in.

Participants were recruited through several channels. I got in touch with crafters by frequenting craft fairs in Oslo and talking with people who were selling their crafted goods. A few participants were recruited through friends or via other participants. By posting about my study and asking for participants to interview on several crafting forums online, I got in touch with individuals who showed interest. I also contacted participants of various crafting circles and partook in several meetings, where I had the opportunity to participate and observe, as well as recruit participants for interviews. Potential participants were given the information sheet (Appendix A) either by me in person or by e-mail. The criterion for possible participants was simply that the person was engaged in one or several types of crafts. In the information sheet, I used the Norwegian word “håndarbeide”, a word commonly used to describe crafts that are associated with women.

## **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted one-on-one, using a qualitative semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B). The interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder. While some lasted well over an hour, most interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The interviews were conducted at the participant's convenience, during the day or in the evening, at cafés, at the location where a crafting group met, or in the participant's home.

Before an interview, participants were asked to bring something they had made.

Talking about what the participant had brought was used as a way to establish rapport with the participant. This initial talk was useful as a way to, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest, set the stage before giving a short briefing of the study as well as presenting the audio recorder and explaining the process of the interview. All the participants seemed to quickly become comfortable with the interview setting and the presence of the audio recorder.

The semi-structured interview guide consisted of open-ended questions, some questions had a small vignette, and some asked for examples of events or experiences. The questions were asked in a manner that seemed useful in each specific setting and in an order that felt natural in each interview. Repeating statements or comments made by the participant proved useful in making sure I had understood what the participant had meant, as well as assuring the participant that I was listening. I experienced that stretching natural pauses between questions and answers was helpful, enabling both the participants and me to let questions or answers sink in and allowing participants to take their time in answering (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Throughout the interviews, follow-up questions were used to get participants to elaborate on answers.

As advised by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the interviews were rounded off by briefly summing up what we had talked about, and asking if the participant had anything more to say or any questions. The participants were encouraged to contact me should they have any comments or questions later on. Talking about the crafted object was also a helpful tool to end the interview in a similar manner as it was initiated and on a positive note.

### **Transcribing**

The interviews were transcribed on a computer by playing the audio recording on a slow speed while writing. Before transcribing, I would listen to each audio recording once before playing and re-playing the interview as I transcribed it. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the process of transcribing facilitates a thorough understanding of the data and see it as an important part of familiarizing oneself with the data. The transcripts were a verbatim account of all words and sounds (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the interviews. Pauses in the speech were marked with "...", laughter was marked "(laughs)", and if words or part of the interview was unintelligible, they were marked with "\_\_\_". The excerpts from the transcripts that are used in this thesis were translated from Norwegian to English. I made an effort to ensure that the translations corresponded to the original transcript.

## **Data Analysis**

The data used in this thesis are written transcripts of audio recordings of fourteen interviews with crafters. The method I used to analyse the data was thematic analysis. I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thorough description of the use of thematic analysis in psychology as an inspiration for my own analysis. They describe thematic analysis as a qualitative analytic method that allows the researcher to delve deeply into the data material. Themes within the data set are identified, analysed, and discussed. In this thesis, a data-driven analysis was used as a way to report the participants' experiences and understandings of crafting in context with their broader social existence. Using a constructionist framework, I used the analysis to look at specific latent themes across the data set.

After reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews, they were printed out and coded manually by writing codes and highlighting in the margins and in the text. Each interview was initially coded in an inductive or "bottom up" way. Acknowledging that I as a researcher could not be understood as neutral when coding (Willig, 2008), an effort was made to code each data item by using the words or expressions used by participants.

The entire data set provided more than 150 codes (Appendix C). These were constructed in an initial list of conceptual clusters. For example, codes related to the various types of crafts mentioned were listed under "Types of crafts", or codes related to talk about gender were listed under "Gender". The codes for the entire data set were clustered, organized, and re-organized as they fit under one or several potential themes.

In an effort to clarify each theme, I collected coded extracts from all interviews under the theme or themes they might correspond to. Taking advice from Braun and Clarke (2006), I included relevant surrounding data for these extracts, so as not to lose the context of the extract. These processes eventually lead to a refined list of themes with four main themes including fourteen sub-themes.

## **Ethical Concerns**

The research proposal, information sheet, consent form and interview guide was submitted and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (Appendix D). Participants were given both oral and written information about the study (Appendix A). The participants were informed that the interview would be audio taped and later transcribed. They were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the interview or before the interview was transcribed and

used in the thesis. The participants were also informed that they were kept anonymous, and that all information collected would be held confidential. Before conducting the interview, each participant would sign a consent form (Appendix E).

As semi-structured interviews may resemble a conversation, participants may experience a feeling of being used at the end of an interview, as they have talked a lot about themselves and may have shared personal information while the researcher has not (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Willig, 2008). The participants were not rewarded any compensation for taking part in the interview. However, participants expressed that they enjoyed being interviewed, and many commented that the interview had led them to look at their interest and skills in crafts as more positive and interesting than they had prior to the interview.

All information and data related to participants was kept confidential, the audio-files as well as transcribed interviews were kept on a private computer. In the transcripts, all names and other identifying factors were taken out. To ensure the anonymity of participants in the research, the participants are not given an alias, but rather reported as “a participant” when referred to in the results section. When quoting an interview, participants were given the letter “P”, and the interviewer the letter “I”. The contact information, audio-files, and transcribed interviews were deleted when the research paper was completed.

## Results

In this study, I interviewed fourteen crafters about their experiences and understandings of crafting. Through the thematic analysis of the data, I identified four relevant themes of interest to the research topic. The four main themes were labelled *Crafting Identities*, *Crafting Communities*, *Value of Crafts*, and *Gender in Crafts*.

There are fifteen sub-themes that fall under the four main themes. The sub-themes “Expressions of difference”, “Education and career”, “I have always been making things”, “I use crafts to express who I am”, “Obsession”, “I can’t sit still” and “Coping with...” fall under the opening section of *Crafting Identities*. Under the theme *Crafting Communities*, the sub-themes “Not a skill everybody has”, “Knitting became much more fun after the internet came!”, and “Sharing an interest” are presented. The sub-themes “Emotional value”, “Wasting time”, and “Taking pride in being a crafter” are presented under the theme *Value of Crafts*. The sub-themes “It’s a woman’s thing” and “Can men craft?” fall under the final theme *Gender in Crafts*.

The themes are not to be understood as standing alone, although the themes have clear distinctions, they connect and weave together in several instances. Thereby, matters falling under one theme is often related to, or included in the other themes.

### **Crafting Identities**

Applying a social constructivist view on identity (Wetherell, 1996), I do not see identity as something set in stone, but rather as something in constant change, being affected by and affecting the individual and the society that surrounds her. The notion of flexibility of identity (Hammack, 2008; Simon, 2004) is well mirrored by the fact that the participants in this study often were inconsistent in the ways they described or talked about themselves. When talking about identity, participants might not use fixed categories, and their identity claims might change or vary throughout the interaction (Howard, 2000).

**Expressions of difference.** As Mishler (1999) argued, one's identities can be expressed by positioning oneself in relation to other people. One way this can be done is by expressing sameness or difference. I asked participants if they thought there was a typical crafter, and if so, how they would describe this person. I also asked participants whether they viewed themselves as someone like that. It seemed that the participants were aware of somewhat negative associations of crafters being "old-fashioned", "uninteresting", or "hag-like", but that they did not wish to subscribe to these as characteristics they themselves, as crafters, held. Although hesitant to identify as a *typical* crafter, most participant did seem to regard themselves as crafters. Many participants did not wish to generalise and say that there existed a typical crafter "type". They suggested that contemporary crafters could be very different people with different views on crafting. As one participant noted:

I think there are very many who make, I think there are engineers and there are teachers and there are various groups of people who do crafts, or who sell at fairs for that matter... the threshold is probably very varied, of how you should..., and what you should produce.

Several participants would express individuality by saying they were not entirely like all other crafters. One participant did not seem to have a positive view on what she felt was the common view of a crafter, and stressed that she was not like them:

P: I'm not one of those 'arts and crafts ladies', really.

I: What do you think of with 'arts and crafts ladies'?



P: Well... one who...what it is? It's kind of teacher-ish. I'm a bit more vain, really. You know. In reality I prefer more...expensive pretty things. Ehhh, so... I'm probably just a completely ordinary...who makes... I'm not different, really just a completely normal person. But not an arts and crafts-type.

Studying who people say they are *not* like, Freitas et al. (1997) looked at what identities people distance themselves from. They noted that a reason for not wanting to be associated with an identity could be because of not wanting to be suspected of holding characteristics associated with an identity. This participant, who seemed to have a negative view of the characteristics or associations related to being a crafter, could emphasize her difference from these characteristics. The participant negotiated her identity as something different than “arts and crafts ladies”, by stating that she was vain and liked expensive, pretty things, implying that “arts and crafts ladies” could be women with other values. Although she did distance herself from being “an arts and crafts lady”, she did not completely deny crafting as part of her identity. The dissociation with “arts and crafts ladies” could be understood as a way to make clear what she was in comparison to what she was not.

It seemed that many participants were a bit ambivalent to label themselves as a crafter. Their reasons for this might be because of possible negative associations with the social identity of being a crafter, but it could also be because participants did not wish to be categorised as a person with only one interest. The social identity of being a crafter could be one of several social identities (Verkuyten, 2005). This can be illustrated by one participant who expressed her individuality by saying that she was curious by nature and had several interests; she did not want to be labelled as a crafter:

If I'm a typical crafter? I am not a typical crafter. No I'm not. Because it's not what I am most occupied with. I'm not the type that has that first as my, as what I am most passionate about. I have other things I am more passionate about.

Talking about other leisure activities she liked to spend her time doing, this participant showed how her identity consisted of more than her interest in crafts. Through the course of the interview, she made it clear that her interest in crafts was part of her identity as an active and curious person who held several interests. An individual may hold several identities, and is not considered to hold one main, defining identity (Simon, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005). Regarding crafting as a part of who they are, some participants referred to other social identities, such as other leisure activities, or they talked about their interest in crafts in relation to their work identity, referring to their job or choices in education.

**Education and career.** For some participants, being a crafter could be in stark contrast to their work identity. In relation to work, knitting and being understood as a professional may not be seen as compatible (Bratich & Brush, 2007). One participant, who had higher education in a largely male dominated field, talked about how others might view her interest in crafts:

Because it is, this thing with...to knit, how others understand it or react to it [...] Because you have to... I would say it is...when it comes to knitting, because it is “hag-like”, and old fashioned and you don’t really want to be seen with knitting needles... Especially since I have higher education.

The participant refers to the associations she feels others, or society at large, may have to knitting as “old-fashioned” and “hag-like”. These characteristics do not fit with her identity as a highly educated woman. The idea that higher education and crafting not were compatible was also expressed by another participant who had studied law:

P: I, well, the combination lawyer and knitter, I don’t think that is very common. [...] It could be that it is a prejudice I have, that lawyers don’t knit a lot... at least they haven’t done it before. So I’m a traditional crafter, except for the lawyer part of me.

I: When you studied, did any of your friends, or classmates, did other law-students knit, or...?

P: No, they don’t knit. I have sat at lectures and knitted, a bit hidden, because it’s not as accepted as it was. But there’s nobody else. I have never seen anybody else sit and knit during lectures.

Although this participant was not embarrassed to craft in public, she had hidden it from the view of others when she was studying. As illustrated by these two participants, being a crafter and having high education is a dichotomy. For these participants, the high status of their work identities was not compatible with the status they perceived that their craft had.

Some of the participants had education within arts and crafts. While a few of them said they had gotten support from their family and friends, others had not. Some participants said that although they had wanted to, they had chosen not to pursue a career in crafts. For some, daring to take education within crafts had been met with resistance, as one participant explained: “But still, there was always someone who told me ‘It’s not good enough, it’s not good enough, you can’t do this, you can’t make a living of it’.” She described a struggle between her interest in an education and career within crafts and the notion that crafts was not something you can make a living out of, which she felt her family and the larger society

expressed. For her, the strong urge to create had been an important factor in her pursuit of a career within crafts. Such an internal drive to be creative and to engage in crafts was mentioned by several of the participants

**“I have always been making things.”** If asked where their interest in crafts began, or even unprompted, many participants eagerly pointed out that crafts had been in their lives since they were young. When thinking about how long she had been crafting, one participant realised that: “I have always been doing, you know, always been making things.” This is something other participants also became aware of during the interviews, some saw it as an intrinsic quality: “I have always been good at crafts, since I was little, at school and stuff. [...] It’s just something I *have*. I enjoy it.” For these participants, why they felt this way seemed difficult to put into words: “It’s hard to explain, but I think I’ve had it sort of built in me.” These notions of ‘always having done’ crafts, or ‘being born this way’, could be deemed a part of a crafter identity claim. When explaining who they were, these participants positioned themselves as ‘born crafters’, inferring that crafting had always been a part of who they are. Mishler (1999) encountered a similar finding in his analysis of craftartists’ narratives, likening it to what he calls a “folk wisdom” that artists are born, not made (pp. 23-24). The participants seemed to have a notion of themselves as being creative people.

**“I use crafts to express who I am.”** By making and using handcrafted objects, most participants reported they could express their creative self, as well as expressing other important aspects of themselves to others. Clothing was mentioned as a way to express identity by several participants. Some of the participants, who belonged to ethnic minorities in Norway, shared that they expressed their difference both by crafting and wearing crafted clothes or accessories associated with their heritage. Having grown up in Pakistan, one participant was proud to be able to sew traditional Pakistani clothes for both herself and female family members. At the day of the interview, she was wearing a kamíz (long shirt or tunic) that she had sewn herself. Noting that it was common in Pakistan and for Pakistanis in Norway go to professional tailors, she took pride in being able to sew clothes herself:

I have gone to a professional in Pakistan, too. But I was not satisfied, I had to fix it myself afterwards. It takes a long time and doesn’t sit as it should. I bought fabric in Pakistan to sew with. I think it’s fun, and looks better. I am more satisfied then.

By wearing clothes she had sewn herself, she could express her identity as a Pakistani woman by for example wearing a kamíz or other clothes associated with where she was from. At the same time, she could also express the pride she took in having a skill she felt few others had.

One of the participants who identified as Sámi shared that she had experienced an interest in exploring and expressing this identity in the recent years. She explained that: “Often the ones who are very Sámi-active, they wear a Sámi-scarf or a Sámi-hat or Sámi-mittens all the time. So, it’s probably also an expression of identity.” Crafts related to Sámi traditions have been associated with Sámi identity (Koslin, 2010). One way this participant expressed her identity as Sámi was through the making, wearing, and selling of traditional Sámi clothing, an act she regarded as political:

Very many of my cousins who have been Norwegianised, or who has both a mother and father who are Sámi but who talk Norwegian, they have wished to order “luhkkas” (Sámi ponchos). When it is someone from the family who wants it, then I’ve thought that I definitely should make something for them, because I have sort of...I feel that there’s a little politics behind it... So I do it, I decide I’m going to make it for them, and I’m not going to ask for as much as I normally would, because I want them to sort of... It’s very fun, that way I feel I can contribute to making the family Sámi again, in a way.

This participant seemed to feel that it was important to be proud of her Sámi heritage, and regarded her ethnic identity as positively valued (Verkuyten, 2005). She was eager to make clothes to others, especially her family, so they too could express their Sámi identity. She regarded one of the main ways one could show that one was Sámi was through clothes:

What I think is special about the Sámi people, I think it is like, we are both Sámi and Norwegian, but the only way you see that one is Sámi, is when they are wearing Sámi clothing or if you talk broken Norwegian (laughs) [...] It is very important to maybe have a piece of clothing that is Sámi, to show it if you wish to show it. Not everyone wants to show it, still. My brother wanted Sámi-mittens, because he wants to show that he is a Sámi boy, even if he lives in Oslo.

The participant felt that since one could hold both the social identity of being Sámi, and the social identity of being Norwegian at the same time, wearing Sámi clothes was a way to express difference. By wearing and encouraging others to wear clothes to show their Sámi identity, this participant could express her identity as Sámi, as well as her identity as someone interested in indigenous traditions and politics.

The interest in craft traditions related to one’s heritage was also voiced by participants who belonged to the ethnic majority in Norway. Viewing crafts as a part of the Norwegian heritage, some crafters expressed that they were proud to be bearers of Norwegian traditions, and some stated that they identified as bearers of local traditions associated with the part of the country that they were from. The interest in crafts and techniques regarded as typical for

Norway was also noted by the participants who could be categorized as ethnic minorities in Norway. These participants mentioned that they wanted to learn to knit warm socks for the cold Norwegian winters, or to learn Norwegian techniques: “Because I would also really like to learn to knit the Norwegian way. Because I knit the English way, I’ll show you, you hold the needles differently.”

Most of the participants would point out that crafting was more than old traditions, and would give examples of how they could use their skills in crafts to make modern, fashionable clothes or accessories. Participants used their skills in crafts to follow trends: “I have made a huge amount of cowls lately...It’s very fashionable right now.” While participants said their craft could reflect who they were in relation to their heritage, or used to express themselves as people interested in traditions as well as trends, they also noted that they could use crafts to express who they were as politically or socially engaged individuals.

As the participant who regarded her interest in Sámi crafts as political, several participants expressed that crafts could be a way to voice one’s stand in political or social issues. Some participants saw themselves as someone who was concerned with environmentalism or consumerism. They discussed how they could communicate their dissent with consumer culture by making things themselves rather than buying things. For example, some participants expressed their commitment to the environment and their feelings about consumer culture by sharing that they re-used materials or found materials at flea-markets, or by way of mending things that broke instead of buying something new. One participant regarded crafting as a part of being conscious of the environment and, jokingly, that she fought commercialism by not buying new things:

P: It has a bit to do with this, well, I don’t know if it is kind of...well, gosh, a consequence of being thrifty, but it is, well, there is thinking of the environment there, and this thought of making use of the resources. Like when I grow out of clothes, I will give them away if they are still in good shape, for example. So that is re-using. I believe that is important. It is a part of it too when I go and buy yarn at flea markets, also, it affects consumerism because I don’t buy it in the stores (laughs). It probably affects people’s jobs as well, since I don’t buy Christmas gifts.

I: Do you think about the environment in all of this?

P: Yes, it is this reusing as an idealistic thing, since I believe we throw away too much, that use-and-throw mentality. That really, we buy too many things.

This participant illustrated a view several participants seemed to hold. To make gifts rather than buying them could be a way to oppose consumerism. Crafting could also be a reaction to

concerns with the environment, and the notion of a use-and-throw mentality. Several of the participants said they could express their identity as anti-consumerist or as engaged with environmental issues by being conscious of the materials they used. These participants were knowledgeable of the qualities of materials such as fabric or yarn, as well as how the various materials were produced. Many of these participants said that identifying as a conscientious consumer could lead them to feel inclined to buy materials they knew were not damaging the environment.

Some participants described themselves as a person who cared about others, and talked about crafting for charity. One participant had listened to the radio and heard a report on homeless people needing warm clothes: “I just went, ‘oh my God’, and ‘poor people, here I sit.’... And then I took all my homemade socks and a sweater and vest, and went outside and gave it away!” Other participants talked about how one could donate knitted and crocheted hats for cancer patients or doll sized clothes for premature babies. As one participant explained: “Often, it’s women who has had premature babies themselves. Who really want to sort of..... But not necessarily. [...] The motivation to do it is just..... It’s maybe just to do something nice for others.” One participant stated that donating crafted things to charity could also be a result of needing to get rid of surplus yarn and not because one was an altruistic person: “Some just have a huge production; you don’t know what to do with it all. [...] And we shouldn’t neglect the fact that there are many who has a lot of surplus yarn!” The idea that crafters could get obsessed with both the materials they used and with the amount of things they produced was talked about by several of the participants.

**Obsession.** Many participants expressed having an obsession with crafts, regarding this obsession as a part of being a crafter. The obsession could take different forms. Participants could describe it as a period of being extremely occupied with crafting, saying they got a kick or boost out of crafting:

These days there is a lot of knitting. I’ve gotten a kick, so to say ... [...] So I knit and I knit, until the clock is one and two at night and... it is kind of “Oh help, oh God, I have to go to bed!” But I’ve gotten a... suddenly it was a kick.

Some participants shared that they often felt like they never put away this obsession, looking for inspiration was described as something constant: “It’s on my mind a lot. [...] So yes, it’s in the back of my head all the time. [...] You get inspiration everywhere.” To be obsessed with crafting and to talk about this obsession with others seemed common amongst the participants.

Being preoccupied with buying yarn or fabric was, as in the study by Stalp and Winge (2008), also described as an obsession: “There are many who hoard, you’re sort of obsessed with hoarding. So that is just as important as knitting something, the hunt to get the yarn.” The obsession with accumulating materials seemed to be likened to an addiction, to be “hooked” on materials. A few of the participants used the English word “stash” of their storage of materials, a term also commonly used about drugs (Stalp & Winge, 2008). One participant explained that this obsession with materials was voluntary, but that she had to restrain herself:

There is no pressure; you don’t get pressured into buying yarn! Some people say “Do not lead me into temptation, I can do that perfectly well myself”. It’s like, once you’ve gotten hooked, you can’t walk into a yarn store in a new place [...] you walk into a store in a new city and they have yarn that they don’t have at home, it’s like “Oh my God, I have to have this yarn, because I will never get a hold of it again!” [...] So when I am in other cities, I have a kind of a... I am only allowed to go into one yarn store, to avoid buying too much!

Such talk about the accumulation of materials seemed to be especially common amongst the participants who frequented international, English-speaking craft websites. Some explained that the stash of for example yarn was a common topic amongst online-crafters, and that one would share pictures of one’s stash as well as rank the assumed length it would take to use the accumulated materials. Since it was common that family members or other “outsiders” were likely to “not understand”, or to have a negative view of one’s stash, I was told that the status of having a big stash was something one only shared with fellow online crafters. Being obsessed with finishing a craft project and with the accumulation of crafting materials might be understood as a part of the characteristic of a crafter; she is one who cannot put her interest away, she will work on a project till the late hours, and she will constantly be searching for ideas, inspiration, and materials for new projects.

**“I can’t sit still.”** Another characteristic of being a crafter that seemed to be conveyed by many, if not all, participants was that they could not just sit still. Crafting was expressed as a way to fill time or provide with something to do when sitting still: “On the bus, on the subway. When I can’t do anything other than sit, you know. To wait. Then I bring out the crochet and knitting projects, that’s guaranteed.” The need for something to do was not just to fill empty time, but seemed to be a way of *doing* something or *producing* something at the same time as something else. Many participants shared this sentiment: “I do not like to sit idle and watch television.” While many participants said they crafted as a way to fill time when

they were sitting and their hands were free, a few others said they used crafts like knitting and crocheting to stay focussed when having to sit quiet at lectures or in other situations, to be *able* to sit still:

One comment that irritates me is that “I do not have the patience to do that, but it is very nice!”... Because I don’t have any patience! So the reason why I knit is because I do not have the patience to sit still without knitting! So when people say “Oh, you are so patient to be knitting”, I am just... “Patient to be knitting? That can be discussed!” I think patience is very relative. It depends on... if you think it’s fun, then you don’t need patience, because you’re doing something you think is fun.

This comment shows how being patient and able to sit still might be a commonly held characteristic associated with the social identity of a crafter. This participant explicitly opposed this view and demonstrated that for her, it was completely opposite; she was not a patient person. Instead she was a person who used crafting as a way to cope with being impatient. It might seem as if the commonly held characteristic of a crafter as one who quietly and patiently sits and crafts was resisted, as crafters might be productive and impatient people who would rather craft than sit idle. Using crafts to cope with having to sit still seemed like an everyday use of crafts. Some participant shared how they had used crafts to cope with difficult life situations, noting how their interest in crafts had helped them.

“**Coping with...**” All the participants in this study expressed that they found great pleasure in crafting; “It’s good for me” was a frequent comment. Several participants said they relaxed when they crafted and likened crafting to meditation. Some explained that they felt good after completing a project or found joy in being creative. Participants also found pleasure in giving handcrafted gifts to others, as well as enjoying the compliments and positive feedback other people gave them for their skills. For some participants, the positive sides of crafting could be even greater.

Some of the participants shared that they had used these positive aspects of crafts as a way to cope with being unemployed or endure or recover from long-term illness. Research on people living with chronic illness or disabilities (Rosner, 1997; 2004; Rosner & Lim, 2007; Rosner & Prior, 2003) suggests that taking part in a craft activity can heighten self-worth and provide a positive identity. This was something many of the interviewed crafters talked about. One participant shared that she was unemployed due to health issues, and had initiated a craft circle to help others in the same situation as herself, and as a way to make herself a job:



So I work with this craft circle because I don't like to not work, I think it's good to have something to do, when you don't get much help from NAV to find something to do, you have to do something with it yourself.

As noted by Wetherell (1996), one's work identity may influence an individual's view of herself, as well as influencing how others view an individual. Being a crafter may provide the individual with a positive identity (Verkuyten, 2005). Not willing to identify as one who was unemployed, getting engaged in and initiating a craft circle might have been useful as a way to avoid the negative associations of being unemployed. An individual can manage her identities to achieve social recognition or avoid stigma (Laliberte-Rudman, 2002). Doing something that mattered to herself and that she felt could help others might be understood as a way to identify as an enterprising woman, and avoid having to identify as sick or unemployed.

Other participants who had been sick or unemployed shared similar experiences. One participant, who had been sick for a longer period of time, would knit during the day when her friends were at work: "I probably knit six hours every day, because I don't have anything else to do." She used knitting as a way to keep herself occupied. Other participants had experienced that it had been helpful to turn to crafts as a part of recovering from long-term illness. One participant shared that crafting had been a major part of her recovery when she had been ill:

And I think I mentioned to you, my period of sick-leave. Because I was pretty sick this autumn. And, and then... well, there wasn't much I had the energy to do while I was sick, so when I started to bear doing things again, it was kind of the first thing I had the energy to do. [...] From the time I was sick till the time I didn't have to lie in bed any more, it was handiwork. It was a great joy to feel that I had the energy for it. I started... in the beginning, I would lie, and knit, actually. And after a while I sat up more and more... It was sort of a way to feel that I started to work again. And yes... So at that time handiwork was most appealing compared to reading for example... But it was kind of about getting back to life. You can say it was the first step toward that.

In a time when her health had not been something she could control, this participant had turned to crafting and had found something she could master and that she felt was meaningful. This seems to have been of immense value to participants who had been sick for longer periods. A similar experience with crafting was shared by another participant:

P: Since I was very sick for a long while and knitting was the only thing I managed to do. And in a way, it kept me from losing my mind, really. So for periods, I have knitted an extreme amount, because it was the only thing I could do.

I: How did you discover this?

P: Well, I have always knitted... it was probably mostly because that was the only thing I could think of, that filled my days, really. And then, then when I tried to learn to crochet, it was a great boost. Because the fact that I could actually learn something new while my head was so messy and chaotic, it gave me a new drive.

Learning a new skill, to crochet, when she was ill may have provided this participant with a sense of continued growth. As described by these participants, crafting may have been a pastime that had functioned as a way to cope with mental or physical illness and with unemployment, enabling them to maintain an acceptable self-identity. This finding is consistent with Laliberte-Rudman's (2002) research proposing that occupation can provide a person with a feeling of being "normal" and socially useful.

Participants who had been 'out of the loop' because of illness or unemployment shared that being active in a community of crafters, being productive and able to help others was valuable for their sense of self-worth at the time. Being a member of a craft circle was described as something that provided them with a social network and weekly activities and responsibilities to keep themselves occupied.

### **Crafting Communities**

The social aspects of crafting seemed to be valued by most of the participants. Craft circles and online craft communities seemed to be arenas where participants could negotiate their identities as crafters. Seeing themselves as being one who was skilled in a craft might be understood as enabling participants to situate themselves in a line of skilled crafters in relation to history and traditions. Acknowledging that they were bearers of traditions, many participants articulated a concern that some aspects of these traditions were disappearing.

**"Not a skill everybody has."** Several of the participants expressed a great pride in having skills and knowledge in crafts and in doing something uncommon. Many portrayed themselves as having a skill that not everybody has: "I don't think I know too many who knits as much as I do... who makes things." Some participants claimed to be more passionate about crafts than others were and to be one of very few who kept traditional crafts alive. There were several participants who expressed concern with the fact that the interest in crafts was diminishing. After talking about family and how women traditionally were expected to know how to sew, one participant exclaimed: "But now, nobody wants to sew, everybody just gives it to a professional who sews, you know."

Delving deeper into this idea of difference, it turned out to be quite common amongst the women I interviewed that they knew few other people who were interested in crafts. Some

participants would categorise their friends as “real friends”, people they had known for a long time, and “crafting friends”, friends they had met through the interest in crafting. One participant noted: “It’s very... it becomes scary that I talk more with my knitting-friends than my normal friends. I see that. None of my friends knit.” This notion of having an interest you couldn’t share with your friends seemed to be quite common among the participants. Very few participants did not make a distinction between their regular friends and crafting friends. While a few participants would report that they did not share their interest in crafts with others on a regular basis, most participants shared that they did find someone they could share their interest with. This could be online via the internet, or in ‘real life’ via acquaintances or by seeking out communities of crafters.

**“Knitting became much more fun after the internet came!”** The online community of crafters was something most participants referred to in the interviews. By many of them, the internet was explained as a vital part of crafting. Participants said they would use the internet as a resource for recipes and how-to’s, to share or sell their work, or to buy materials and tools. Several participants would also state that they were socially active online. As one of the participant exclaimed: “Knitting became much more fun after the internet came! Because then you weren’t the only one.” Many participants pointed out how the internet facilitated the opportunity to meet crafters with shared interests. One participant believed the internet was an arena where people could share interests they had been doing alone before:

There are an awful lot of people here and there in Norway, who sit and do patch-work, or who knits [...] and they get something out of it, but there is a limit to how many socks you need, for example. [...] I think there has been many... Let’s say lonely, you’ve been sitting, they’ve all been sitting and doing these things alone. While now, what I think has happened is that now you can meet and do these things with somebody. Cultivate a shared interest.

The online community of crafters was described as a place where people could meet and share an interest, something that had not been as easy without the internet. This finding is similar to other research (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Rosner & Bean, 2009) that point to how the internet facilitates friendships between people who otherwise would not meet.

While many participants deemed their online crafter-acquaintances to be a different type of friendship, many saw them as just as valuable relationships as off-line ones. Some participants shared that online relationships were sometimes taken from an online to an offline context by meeting in crafts circles or at craft conventions. A few of the participants reported

that they would go to conventions in other cities and even other countries where they would meet online friends. As one participant expressed:

It's a bit like...that it's a bit fun to meet 'for real'. So there are... there are lots who I've met on a forum and now have a good deal to do with. Who I actually meet in private, after a while.

After forming relationships with other crafters online, this participant had taken some friendships to an offline context where she would meet her crafter-friends for more reasons than crafting. The internet seemed to be a place crafters could meet like-minded people and take part in a community they could identify with. The distinction between online and offline communities seemed to be weak, as many participants explained that they would socialise with each other both online and offline.

**Sharing an interest.** Meeting people with a shared interest in crafts seemed to be a motivation to attend craft circles or conventions. The leisure activity of crafting provided participants with a network and might be said to create a sense of belonging (Green, 1998). One participant shared that when she had moved to a new place, she had actively used a craft circle as a way to get to know new people in the area:

It's one day a week, two or three hours. And it's nice, you get to know someone and can talk to people at the grocery store, and...I don't have kids, so there's no natural way to get to know people locally. [...] You meet someone you can chat with at the store and things like that.

The social aspects of crafting seemed to open for possibilities in more than just sharing an interest in crafts, but also in creating a network and making new friends. Several of the participants shared that a big part of being a crafter was the social aspects, as one participant pointed out:

We meet and knit and things like that. And then we share ideas and thoughts about it and things like that, so we sort of sit and have a craft circle together... we meet at each other's homes. That is sort of a part of the crafting, you know. It becomes a social thing too.

Meeting others over a shared interest in crafting was expressed as a social thing, which was just as important as the crafting. One participant shared that when she was on maternity leave with her third child, she initiated a craft circle that would meet at a café: "That you met because of a shared hobby instead of you being... just babies..." She explained that this meant she could meet people who were interested in the same things as her, instead of meeting to talk about babies. The participant made it clear that at the time, she would rather identify as a

crafter at a café than as a mother on maternity leave. This is similar to the way the participants who had been ‘out of the loop’ because of illness or unemployment may have used their identity as crafters to avoid identifying with social identity they did not want to identify with.

Many participants who would meet regularly at a crafting circle, shared that they regarded the time spent there as their own time, time away from everyday chores and their family. One participant noted: “I think it is nice to get away from the husband and... get out and be a little, to have a woman thing, sort of.” She enjoyed the weekly craft circle as time spent on herself, and enjoyed sharing this time with other women. Leisure activities such as crafting may be empowering for the individual and seen as sites to maintain a sense of self (Green, 1998). Other participants shared the sentiment of craft circles as an evening away from the family:

Seeing as I have three children, it’s also somewhat of a night off. Ehhh... you sort of spoil yourself. It’s very, on my part, I think it is very open. Because I can go there and they are, well, strictly speaking, not my friends, so there isn’t anyone who gets offended if I suddenly decide to not go two minutes before it starts, or... it’s like that. I think that is very nice.

This participant explained that the positive associations to crafts circles were not only because one had fun and got time off from everyday responsibilities, but also because the attendance was less binding than when one planned to meet “real friends”.

Along with craft circles and conventions, one offline arena where participants would meet with other crafters was craft fairs. Several participants wanted to sell, or had experience with selling, their crafted goods. One of the participants, who spent time selling her crafted goods at a fair, noted that: “I really don’t think anybody stands at a fair to earn money, to say it like that. [...] It’s the excitement to be in a creative environment. An inspiring environment.” This participant valued being part of the creative and inspiring environment, but acknowledged that selling crafted goods was not a way to earn money. As it may be difficult to earn money from crafts, many participants talked about what kinds of value crafts could be given.

### **Value of Crafts**

The crafters I interviewed seemed to hold a notion of crafting as valuable, but also expressed how crafting could be devalued. The valuing and devaluing of crafting was expressed both in relation to the personal, emotional value crafting could have for an individual, as well as the value crafting was given in society. The communities who value

crafting may be minoritised, and therefore be devalued by the larger society. Even though most participants said they would usually get positive feedback from others for the things they made, participants expressed that they believed crafts associated with women was not valued highly by the larger society. The idea that women's crafts are devalued is not new. As noted in the introduction of this paper, it has been argued that women's crafts have a history of being devalued (Adamson, 2010; Chansky, 2010). The close association between crafts and gender may mean that crafting as "woman's work" continues to be devalued today (Nelson et al., 2005).

Some of the participants noted that while crafting may have been a necessity before, it seems to be thought of as an optional hobby today. As a leisure activity, crafting is often unpaid work. Some participants also noted that crafting might be associated with poverty. Amongst the participants, there seemed to be an understanding that what they were doing, crafting, was not necessarily viewed as valuable by the greater society. At the same time, many participants expressed a clear opinion that what they did was in fact *very* valuable.

With the notion of the two mismatched understandings of time (Døving & Klepp, 2010) in mind, it can look as if crafting is devalued for its inefficiency and thus valued as uneconomic. At the same time, crafting is valued for its time-consuming and thus affectionate labour. One participant illustrated what she believed was the mainstream view on handmade goods, both "before" and now:

P: It was as if "And now we have money, we can buy anything, we don't have to use this homemade stuff". Because, before, it used to be that having something homemade was more of a sign of being poor. To be able to go to the store and buy clothes, already made...you know, not something you've been stitching together yourself that would look a little... So it ended up so that the industry-made clothes were looked at as more... Well, better, you know. You had money, right, so you had to use this money... instead of the mother sitting at home sewing on the sewing machine.

I: So this was a way to show you had money? Do you think it is like that today?

P: To use handcrafted now means that you spend time, and time is what is valuable now. We have lots of money, so we can buy things, but what we can't buy for ourselves is time.

This participant shared that when one could buy things instead of having to make them, industrially produced clothes had become a status symbol, symbolizing that one had money. She believed that this view was challenged today, as it might be that today's way of showing status was by showing that one had spare time. The participant pointed to how crafting was

seen as a time-consuming activity, and to wear handmade products could be a way to communicate to others that one had spare time.

Seeing time as valuable, some participants argued against the logic behind devaluing crafting as a waste of time. Several of the crafters I interviewed seemed to be very conscious about the value prescribed to crafts. Participants referred to the workload associated with crafting something, the amount of time and money spent, as well as the skills used to craft, were seen as valuable. Many participants also voiced the idea that a crafted object had a different value than a mass produced object.

**Emotional value.** Many participants prescribed an emotional value to crafted objects. For instance, all of the participants had at some point crafted gifts for friends and family. At the time I was conducting the interviews, during the months before Christmas, many participants shared that they were in the process of making Christmas gifts. This led participants to bring up the topic of value of crafted gifts, a topic all of the participants had experiences with and thoughts about. As Bratich and Brush (2007) note, crafting may be labelled affectionate labour. The sentiment that a crafted gift has emotional value can be illustrated by this participant's thoughts around crafting gifts: "I prefer giving things I've made myself. For those who... you put part of your soul in the gift too." When asked if she could explain what she meant, she went on to comparing it to buying someone an impersonal mass produced coffee cup:

So it's like, it's not just simply a coffee cup from Åhlens, you know. It becomes a special thing. Like, while you have knitted, you've probably thought about that person, and that the person is getting it, and you've sort of spent some time to find out what this person might need of knitted things or so. Mmm. And maybe it's also nice to think that "If I knit a pair of mittens to a person, then maybe that person thinks a little about me," when they use the mittens.

The crafted object might be seen as a symbol of the relationship between the crafter and the recipient. To finish a project takes time, and while the gift is being made, the crafter might be thinking of the recipient. When the gift has been received, there is a notion that the recipient will be reminded of the giver when using the gift. The sentiment that a crafted gift is more valuable than a bought gift resonates in Johnson and Wilson's (2005) paper. They point out how the extensive handling and contact with the material that the crafter has throughout the process of making can lead to a strong emotional bond to the object. In my study, participants seemed to reflect in similar ways. Several participants provided quite emotionally loaded stories of the emotions connected to crafted objects and how these objects could be symbols

of emotional bonds between people. One participant provided an example of how a crafted gift can hold a high emotional value to the recipient:

My boyfriend, before we became a couple... He got a pair of mittens from me. And he still has them, five years later. He is very fond of them. And it's so fun that he sort of... He almost doesn't dare to use them, like when we are out travelling and things... Because he is so scared to lose them.

This participant had given her boyfriend a pair of mittens before they had become a couple. Several years later, he was still sentimental about the mittens, and was afraid to lose them. Noting how crafted goods could have this strong symbolic value associated to the bond between the giver and recipient of a crafted gift, many participants said they would only craft gifts for special occasions or, since they put so much of themselves into the work, they preferred crafting for people they knew would appreciate a crafted gift.

While many of the participants would craft gifts to people they knew, some participants talked about crafting for strangers, crafting for charity. Although some participants humorously hinted that it was a good way to get rid of surplus yarn, many seemed to feel that handcrafted donations were received with more gratitude because of the personal touch and the love contained in each handcrafted object. As one participant noted:

It's made by hand. I view things that are handcrafted as more valuable than things that are bought. You put a little of yourself, you spend time on it, you leave a little of yourself in it. That must be what makes it more real in a way.

A crafted object seems here to be given a strong emotional value, and it is expected that the recipient acknowledges this value. The idea that handcrafted objects is seen to hold a different, or even higher value than mass produced objects is also something the literature on crafts point out (Adamson, 2010; Chansky, 2010).

Another way participants linked emotions to their crafting was through their relationship with women family members and ancestors, viewing the history and tradition of crafting as highly valuable. One participant who had knitted when she learned it at school, had recently re-learned to knit as an adult. Having managed to keep this a secret from her mother, she was looking forward to surprising her by giving knitted Christmas gifts:

I'm excited. (laughs). Right now, I am looking forward to showing my mother. I'm done with the socks. But...it's the same as when you are a little kid. I've made something, [...] so I am going to show mommy. I actually feel like that.



This participant felt that her renewed interest in crafts would make her mother proud. Many participants expressed a wish to keep the traditions related to their crafts alive. This could be more than the traditional skills needed to craft; it could also be the relational aspects between people when teaching and learning a craft. In this regard, many participants referred to their grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, daughters, and nieces. These were people they identified with as crafters, and associated with the handing down of crafter traditions.

Several of the participants talked about teaching crafts to others, to teach and share one's skills in crafting seemed to be associated with being a crafter. This could be mentioned when talking about keeping the traditions alive, but was also talked about as important because of a wish to share something they found valuable and positive in their life. To teach others to knit and crochet was important to several participants, one participant who had used crafts as a way to cope with being ill, stated: "Since I get so much joy out of crafts myself. [...] Well, since I really want people to see the therapy- aspect of knitting."

For some participants, the workload going into a crafted object was important. The effort, time, and skill put into crafting something seemed to be a part of the craft that many felt was devalued. Many participants compared crafted goods to mass produced goods, and noted that many things could be bought cheaper and in less time than it would be to make them.

**Wasting time.** In contrast to the emotional aspects of the value of craft comes the monetary value of crafts. Among participants, it was evident that crafting was not seen as something one could earn or save money doing. As mentioned above, the time spent on crafts could be regarded as a way to measure value (Døving & Klepp, 2010; Bratich & Brush, 2007). Participants would describe how one did not save money by making one's own clothes, as the chain stores would sell clothing for a much lower price. In this respect, some participants seemed to defend why they would, in the eyes of the larger society, "waste time" on making things. However, this notion was often followed by a reminder that these cheap clothes would then be of poor quality, as they often were made using synthetic fibres such as acryl. Many participants claimed that although you could buy clothes, such as a knitted sweater for half the price, and in substantially less time, a hand knitted sweater would be of higher quality for more reasons than the emotional value. Many participants talked about the quality of materials used, and related it to how a conscious choice of materials was important for reasons such as environmentalism. One participant referred to an attitude she said was

shared by crafters who frequented the same craft forums as herself, and pointed out the many negative characteristics of acryl, a synthetic fibre:

Acryl. Well, nobody would admit in public on those web sites that they use acryl. It's a fire hazard and you...but it is nice, children like it. There are big discussions around that. At H&M you can get... there will be acryl in the sweaters you buy. So what you do is...you get wool of better quality compared to acryl. Because acryl isn't...you'll reek of sweat and things like that. For the price of a hundred and fifty bucks, it's worn after three washes anyway. The word acryl is taboo, at least on those websites.

By referring to other crafters who “belonged” to the same websites as her, this participant voiced the judgement that by saving money, the quality would be reduced. Many participants believed that most people knew little about such things as qualities of fibre, often stating that they themselves kept learning the more experienced with their craft they got. Labelling their craft-related knowledge as “a bit nerdy”, some participants noted that the detailed knowledge gained through being part of a crafter community might only be seen as useful or regarded as a status among others in the same crafter community. Some participants noted that the status one might gain through mastering complicated and time-consuming techniques, or by using exclusive yarn, might only be visible to other crafters who were “just as nerdy”.

Acknowledging that their interest was not shared with many others, some of the participants stressed the difference between people who appreciated crafts and people who did not.

**Taking pride in being a crafter.** The dissonance participants expressed of crafting being both valued and devalued can be illustrated in several ways. One is through the ways participants could articulate their identities in relation to profession or education. As mentioned earlier, some participants believed that higher education and crafting was an uncommon combination. These participants expressed that they could feel a need to hide the fact that they crafted in situations where their identity as a crafter could collide with their education or work identity. Another way this dissonance could be expressed was the ambivalence participants showed toward being categorised as a crafter when they talked about how they believed others viewed crafters.

Although several participants talked about the idea that one should not be seen crafting, many participants shared that they were not embarrassed to craft in public. Several of the participants would share that they often crafted in public at cafés or while waiting for someone. Many also shared that they would regularly craft when they took public transportation like busses, subways, or trains, often on the way to and from work. This could be seen as a way these participants expressed themselves as productive people who did not sit

idle, as noted earlier. However, as many participants pointed out, a reason to craft in public could also be to show others the skills they were proud to have. Participants would express that they thought it was important to craft in public: “I am proud that I can master a craft, it is important to show outward.” These crafters seemed to wish to resist what they believed was the commonly held notion of crafting as old fashioned, dull, or of little value. Many of the participants talked about “not being embarrassed to be seen crafting”, and this could be a reaction to being minoritised in a society that might not value crafting as highly.

Some of the participants shared that they had taken part in official events to promote crafts such as knitting and crocheting. Such events were described as going out in public and showing how fun it could be to craft:

I guess it is to show people that... Knitting is more than, you know, knitting is a lot more than old ladies who knit warm socks, you know. To inspire more people to join in and craft. To have fun! (laughs). And to show off. So it's kind of like advertising.

The participants who crafted in public seemed to regard both the act of crafting in public spaces and taking part in organized collective actions as ways they actively worked to re-value women's crafts.

When the participants talked about crafting in public, I would ask them if they had ever experienced any reactions from fellow passengers on public transportation or if anyone had come up to them at a café while they were crafting. Very few of them reported to have gotten any comments or attention from strangers around what they were making, but they noted that the comments they had gotten were always positive. One participant shared that: “It happens sometimes when I sit in public and knit or crochet that older people come over and are very impressed, I think that's very nice!” Participants who had seen others who crafted in public told me that although they were curious about what their fellow crafter was making, they did not usually initiate a conversation or show their interest. However, some participants shared that asking what someone was making had been a great way to start a conversation with strangers if they were at a place where they did not know anyone.

One participant shared a story of an older man who had sat on the subway doing lacework. Her story is interesting because she described what she believed was a common occurrence on public transport, a person crafting, the difference here was that the crafter was male:

I have to say my jaw dropped once. I sat on the subway, it was pretty full, and a man, around seventy years old, comes and sits opposite me. Then he takes something out of

a bag and starts fiddling with something, it looked like the wires of a walk man or something. I didn't really see what he was doing, but he sat and fiddled with something. And then it turned out... 'cause a lot of women sat there stretching their necks...he was sitting there doing lacework! The most beautiful thing, you know. So all these ladies fell completely in love. He got all that attention, you know. It was amusing. And it's great that a man in his seventies, an older man sits down on the subway and shows off this woman's work, you know.

For this participant and other passengers, seeing a man doing "woman's work" was not a common sight. The participant who shared the story seemed to be surprised but also pleased with seeing an older man doing what she regarded as low status woman's work, and noted the attention the man got from female passengers on the subway.

### **Gender in Crafts**

Amongst the women I interviewed, the common understanding that the crafts they engaged in were women's work became visible through their reflections on crafts. One question I asked participants was who had taught them the crafts they knew. These questions often lead the participant to refer to female family members who had taught her the crafts, taking the interview in a direction where we talked about traditions and how crafts might be gendered. Stewart and Mcdermott (2004) note how context may impact social identities such as identities related to gender. From the analysis of the data, gender identity seemed to be closely knit to a crafter identity, and might be seen to play a different role depending on whether one was a male or female crafter.

**It's a woman's thing.** One participant exclaimed that: "It is clear that this is seen as a 'kvinnesyssel' (woman's thing) really, I think so." Some participants had learned crafts from female relatives like their mother, sister, aunt, or grandmothers. Other participants had learned crafts in school or as adults, but they would still refer to their female relatives, confirming the notion that crafts might be seen as a tradition passed on through generations of women.

Although most of the participants readily stated that the crafting community was dominated by women, many did not feel that they as individuals were engaged in crafting *because* they were women. One participant explained her view:

Well, it has just been that I ended up liking to knit. If I had liked car mechanics, to fix cars, I would have done that. Because the fact that it is a woman's thing, it doesn't mean that much to me. It's just that it is what... well, we learned it from our grandmothers, so in a way... but it's not that it is a woman's thing, I am not that interested in continuing traditions.

The way crafting might be commonly understood as an interest closely linked to a feminine gender identity is well illustrated by how the participant demonstrated her point by referring to a possible opposite of woman's crafts; car mechanics, which might be commonly seen as an interest close to the masculine gender identity. Although she acknowledged that crafts could be seen as a tradition handed down from "our grandmothers", she said she did not feel obliged, as a woman, to continue the tradition. Although the crafting might be a leisure activity associated with female gender identity, such an association was resisted by this and some other participants. Some participants could mention other leisure activities they were interested in. For example, one participant mentioned being interested in rock climbing, providing her with a social identity with quite different associations and characteristics compared to those of a crafter. As Shaw (2001) notes, resisting dominating norms may affect an individual's identity in a positive way.

Other participants referred to socialisation to explain why there were so many more women than men who were interested in what they regarded as "women's crafts". Kokko (2009) points to how crafts are gendered, and notes that some crafts are thought to hold masculine traits, such as woodwork, and some to hold feminine traits, such as textile crafts. The characteristics one believes is contained in the identity of doing a woman's craft, might also be associated with the characteristics associated with a gendered, feminine identity.

When asked why sewing, knitting, and crocheting in particular had become such a huge interest for her, one participant expressed it like this: "And it is of course because it is what I've been taught to do... if I had had woodwork in school then maybe I would be doing that instead." This participant used woodwork as an example of a craft opposite of her interest in textile crafts. Some participants seemed to have reflected quite a bit over issues concerning traditions and gender in relation to crafting, while other participants shared that they had not thought much about these issues before. During an interview, one participant started out saying she had not spent much time crafting when she was growing up, but over the course of the interview, she exclaimed that she in fact had:

I guess I have been doing it quite a bit, because... because knitting and embroidering and weaving and all those things... I grew up with it. [...] It's probably been taken for granted, so I have always been making something. In that respect, when I begin to think about it now... When I think about it now, it's been taken for granted.

This participant was not the only one who became aware that crafting had been taken for granted as a part of growing up as a girl. Another participant shared that she was sure her brother had not been taught the crafts that she had been taught when they were growing up.

**Can men craft?** Despite acknowledging that crafting was gendered, many participants seemed to wish to reject the notion of a difference between men and women when it came to crafting. The story of the man doing lace work on the subway was the exception that confirmed the rule. The attention that male crafters would get when doing “women’s crafts” was expressed by some participants as undeserved. One participant was asked if she thought men were welcome in the predominately female crafter community: “There could definitely be more men. The men who craft tend to be in the media; they make more out of it.” She referred to a man who sold books with recipes for crocheting hats, saying she believed this was something a lot of women could have done too: “And they weren’t hats that nobody else could crochet. But he got a lot of attention because he was a man and crocheted.” Several of the participants shared the notion that the few men who did crafts associated with women knew how to take advantage of the way their gender identity as men worked in combination with the crafter identity. Talk about the difference between male and female crafters seemed to be expressed with an underlying tone of resignation over the unequal balance of power between men and women. The gendered meaning of crafting may work differently for men and women (Stewart & McDermott, 2004). It seemed that these participants’ experience or understanding was that men who crafted could take their craft further and earn money and fame from it, while this was more difficult to do for women.

Most participants reported that they did not know men who crafted, and found it tricky to explain why there were few or no men in the crafting communities they knew of. Some participants seemed reluctant to deem men as “un-crafty”, and offered the idea that men could express the same urge for creativity in other ways, for example through two-dimensional media such as photography. Some participants expressed that a man or a boy who does not want their male gender identity to hold feminine characteristics would not want to do crafts associated with women. One participant referred to a male friend:

I think it is more the men themselves who maybe see it as a “kvinnesyssel”. That they maybe don’t dare do some of the... there is one guy I know who... it took him a long time before he, in a way, admitted that he had embroidered a picture he had on the wall. That took a long time, it was hard for him. It might be because you’re looked at as... maybe prejudice comes into it.

This participant described how her male friend had not wanted to disclose that he did crafts associated with women. She suggested that it could be because he was conscious of the prejudice associated with a man who did women's crafts.

This idea that men might not want to hold an identity so closely linked to the gender identity of a woman was also expressed by participants who had sons. As many participants voiced that they believed the traditions related to their crafts were valuable, I would ask the participants what they thought about passing on these traditions. Participants who had daughters said they would teach their daughters if they wanted to learn, and that it would make them happy. One participant had a son, and after talking about the importance of teaching crafts, I asked if she would teach her son to craft. She replied:

Yes, I would do that. He is still kind of small... But, yes, I would do that... It is... But I must admit that I'm that oldfash..., and I am not sure that he... would think it was the coolest hobby to have, for example...

The initial response she gave was that she wanted to teach her son crafts, but as she spoke, she realised she might not after all, because it might be that her son would not regard crafting as a "cool hobby". It seemed like the participants who had children had not thought about their sons as possible crafters. When asked about passing on the tradition of crafts, one participant who had two sons, replied: "Well, I don't think I've thought that far. No. I know that my grandmother was very good at knitting and sewing. I know that. But I haven't thought... but then, I don't have a daughter, so..." This participant seemed to relate crafts to gender, as she mentioned her grandmother, who had been a skilled crafter, and noted that she didn't have a daughter to pass the tradition on to. As other participants, she had not thought of her sons as someone to teach her skills in craft to. It may seem as if participants were quite aware of the value crafting might have in the larger society, and that crafting was so closely associated with the feminine gender identity that it was not necessarily something a man would want to identify with.

## **Discussion**

This research gives an insight into the experiences and reflections of contemporary crafters. The ways crafting may be associated with identity has been highlighted. Being a crafter may be understood to be an important aspect of an individual's personal and social identities. Referring to their membership in crafter communities as well as to associations

between crafts and gender in a historic or traditional sense, crafters may regard their affiliation with crafts in relation to their social and cultural contexts.

Literature on contemporary crafters link crafting to the development and negotiation of identities as well as the expression of identities. Crafts are seen as associated with gender (Kokko, 2009), and crafts that are usually associated with women may hold characteristics similar to the characteristics of a feminine gender identity. The feminist movement has been concerned with the notion that women's crafts has been devalued (Adamson, 2010; Chansky, 2010), and literature on contemporary crafters has looked at how third-wave feminists may re-value crafts and regard crafting as a feminist action (Chansky, 2010; Groenveld, 2010; Pentney, 2008). Crafts as an expressive medium has also been associated with other social and political activism (Bratich & Brush, 2007; Minahan & Cox, 2007), as well as in relation to building identity for ethnic minorities (Hansen, 2007; Koslin, 2010)

The present research has found that for the individual, engaging in crafts can be valuable as more than just a pastime. First of all, crafting was regarded and valued as a pleasurable, positive, and most of all, social pastime. Participants used their identity as crafters as a way to build networks and get new friends and acquaintances. The internet was described as a place crafters could meet and share an interest, something that might not have been as easy without the internet. Several participants had used their identity as crafters to cope with and avoid having to identify with other identities such as being unemployed or ill.

From the analysis of the data, it occurred that the participants were proud to craft, but at the same time it seemed as if this pride in some contexts would be downplayed. When talking about crafts as a gendered activity, many participants referred to the low status or value crafts that are associated with women had in society. For example, participants who identified with high status work identities would note how their work identity and crafter identity were incompatible. The low status of crafter identity was also seen in the way some participants had been discouraged to pursue an education to become craft artists.

Despite the perceived low status of crafting, the participants in this study were not embarrassed to craft. It may seem as if several of the participants wished to re-value something they found to be devalued. This is a notion researchers from Australia (Minahan & Cox, 2007), the USA (Bratich & Brush, 2007; Fields, 2004), and Ireland (Nelson et al., 2002) have picked up on. Scholars have linked contemporary craft culture, which is said to re-value crafts, to third-wave feminism, valuing crafting as a feminist action (Chansky, 2010; Bratich & Brush, 2007; Groenveld, 2010; Minahan & Cox, 2007; Pentney, 2008). The participants in



the present study did not seem inclined to relate their crafts to feminism. Although some participants voiced their opinion as women, very few of them would voice their opinions explicitly as feminists. This might be because feminism is understood or talked about differently in Norway compared to other western countries. It could also be that crafting is looked upon or understood differently in Norway compared to other countries.

As described by many of the participants, the activity of crafting may be regarded as a hobby or leisure activity. Green (1998) and Shaw (2001) notes that leisure activities can intentionally or unintentionally be a space for both reproduction and resistance of dominant social and cultural behaviours, discourses, or values. Although several of the participants claimed to always having been interested in crafting, many also explained their interest being a result of their upbringing or socialisation. The way boys and girls are brought up differently and taught different crafts were used to explain the gender difference in who is interested in crafts. Leisure activities such as crafting may then be understood to reproduce social and cultural values and behaviour related to gender identity. While some participants stated they believed men and women could do the same crafts, some participants, particularly the ones who had sons, said they believed the associations around woman's craft meant that these crafts were less attractive to boys and men.

The associations to femininity related to woman's crafts could also be unattractive to female crafters. As many of the participants did not subscribe to what they saw as the commonly held notions regarding crafts, their engagement in crafts could be understood as resistant behaviour. For example, by disconfirming the view of crafters as dull or old-fashioned people, or by challenging the notion that crafters are patient people, participants in this study may be resisting common views of crafts and crafters, be it intentionally or not. Challenging common assumptions about the characteristics of a crafter could be, as Fields (2004) proposes, a way to align the identity of a crafter with other identities so that the identity as a crafter fits with who one wants to be.

### **Limitations and alternative interpretations**

Decisions made throughout the research process, such as the methods chosen to collect and analyse the data, have directed the research and its outcome. A limitation to the study may be the process of recruiting participants. Although I recruited participants on various arenas, there may have been crafters and crafting communities I did not know of. One might also argue that I could have focused the research by recruiting participants from the same craft

circle or community, or to focus the research on participants who were engaged with one specific craft. A limitation might also be the wide age-range of the participants.

As most participants expressed the joy and pleasure they found in doing crafts, the study could have focussed more on aspects of well-being. Many of the positive perceptions on crafts that were expressed by participants were addressed in their relation to participants' identities and to what I labelled as the emotional value of crafts and the community or social aspects of crafting.

### **Reliability, validity, and generalizing**

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), Mason (2002), and Willig (2008) argue for the importance of showing a study's reliability and validity as well as making appropriate generalizations. It is stressed that these terms should be seen in light of the research method, as the aims of quantitative research and qualitative research are perceived to differ. This qualitative research has relied on semi-structured interviews that have been transcribed and coded for a thematic analysis. Kvale and Brinkmann note that reliability is often understood to deal with whether the study could be reproduced and provide the same findings if conducted by other researchers at another time, something they note that researchers using qualitative methods might see as an impossible and maybe unnecessary task. In relation to interviews, Kvale and Brinkmann question whether a participant would answer the same way at a different time, and point to how the researcher might ask leading questions.

Seeing reliability as related to the consistency and trustworthiness of the research findings (Mason, 2002), I will argue that reliability can be demonstrated through my effort to be accurate, careful, honest, and thorough during the data generation and the analysis. To attain data, I used semi-structured interviews because I wanted to tap into the reflections and experiences of each individual participant, and I considered the flexibility of such an interview method to be favourable in that respect. Throughout the process, I have made an effort to reflect over my own role in the research, acknowledging that my own interest in crafts might make my analysis and interpretations biased. Using the participants' own words when coding the data was part of my effort to maintain the voices of the participants in the thematic analysis.

Validity in qualitative research can be understood as whether a method investigates what it is intended to investigate (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interviews I conducted were not aiming to generate an objective truth, but rather to extract the

participants' reflections and perceptions around crafting. I believe that by encouraging the participants to explain their reflections and showing interest in their unique experiences, the participants have been able to bring up topics they themselves saw as important, and to share their experiences and understandings during the interviews.

Generalizing can be understood in two ways; empirical generalization and theoretical generalization (Mason, 2002). It has not been my intention to empirically generalize the findings in this study to a wider population. The variety of crafts and the various ways crafts are done today means the selection of crafters in this study in no way can be said to be representative of all contemporary crafters in Norway. In this qualitative study, it may be more appropriate to apply theoretical generalization. While the experiences and opinions expressed by the participants are unique for them and their situations, one might say that, assuming the participants' experiences to be socially formed, what they have articulated in the interviews may also be available to others within the same culture or society (Willig, 2008).

### **Implications**

I believe the study of crafting as a leisure activity is an understudied topic within psychology. Although crafting may be quite common in Norway, it seems as if it is given little relevance as a phenomenon worth studying in the social sciences. Little research seems to have been done on people who craft or the reasons and motivations individuals have to engage in the creative pastime of crafting. Although many crafters seem to be interested in several types of craft, it could be conducive for further research to focus on a specific branch of the crafter community, for example knitters or people who embroider. With the strong associations crafts have to gender, it would be interesting to see research on women who are engaged in crafts associated with men, or men who are engaged in crafts associated with women. Other than craft's relation to personal and social identities and to gender, the wide uses of the internet in relation to crafting as well as the perceived emotional aspects of crafting are topics one could investigate further.

### **Conclusion**

This study focuses on crafting, gender, and identity. Being a crafter can be understood as a significant part of personal and social identity. Crafts may also be used as a creative medium to express and communicate identities. Contemporary crafters can embrace the history and traditions their craft holds, but are not stuck in time, and may use their crafts to

negotiate identities in a modern-day context. The internet is an important part of crafting, as it opens for the possibility of pursuing an interest with fellow crafters. The internet also provides an arena to negotiate a crafter identity and to build relationships in a crafter community. Today, crafting can be used to express local or ethnic identities, to convey a political stance, or be a part of an individual's engagement in social movements such as environmentalism and anti-consumerism.

In this study, crafts have been understood to be gendered, and a crafter identity seems to lie close to a gender identity. The value crafts are given in society may be seen in context with the gender the crafts are associated with. Contemporary crafters may be aware of associations society may have to "women's crafts" as a pastime of little value, or of crafters as old-fashioned or boring. Some crafters actively resist the gendered notions related to crafts.

Crafting may be devalued as inefficient and uneconomic, but does seem to hold a high emotional value. The emotional value crafts hold is explicit in the way crafted gifts and donations can symbolise affection and care between individuals. The value associated with crafting is seen in the ways being a crafter can provide an individual with positive personal and social identities. Being a crafter may offer the individual positive characteristics such as being creative and productive and crafter communities may provide a sense of belonging.

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## Appendix A – Information Sheet

### ”HAR DU LAGET DEN SELV?”

Jeg er masterstudent i kultur- og samfunnspsykologi ved Universitetet i Oslo og holder nå på med den avsluttende masteroppgaven. Temaet for oppgaven min er håndarbeide, og jeg er interessert i opplevelsene og synspunktene til folk som holder på med håndarbeide.

For å finne ut av dette, ønsker jeg å intervjuere personer som aktivt holder på med en eller flere former for håndarbeide. Spørsmålene vil dreie seg om dine opplevelser av og forhold til det å drive med håndarbeide og eventuelt det å ta del i et håndarbeidsmiljø.

Jeg vil bruke lydopptaker og ta notater mens vi snakker sammen. Intervjuet vil ta omtrent 40-50 minutter, og vi blir sammen enige om tid og sted.

I oppgaven vil du være anonym, men det kan være jeg bruker korte utdrag fra intervjuet ditt i teksten. Det du sier under intervjuet vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, lydopptaket og det nedskrevne intervjuet lagres trygt, det er kun jeg og veilederen min som vil ha tilgang. Det er frivillig å være med, og du kan trekke deg når som helst under intervjuet, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Hvis du trekker deg, vil jeg slette lydopptaket og all annen informasjon fra deg. Studiet avsluttes i mai, 2011.

Dersom du har lyst til å være med på intervjuet, skriver du under på en samtykkeerklæring når vi møtes.

Hvis det er noe du lurer på kan du sende meg en e-post til [magauer@student.sv.uio.no](mailto:magauer@student.sv.uio.no), eller kontakte meg på telefon 47 90 80 90. Du kan også kontakte min veileder Katrina Røn ved institutt for psykologi på e-post [katrina.roen@psykologi.uio.no](mailto:katrina.roen@psykologi.uio.no).

Studiet er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste A/S.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Marte Gauer

## Appendix B – Interview Guide

### Intervjuguide - ”Har du laget den selv?”

#### Innledning - Hvem, hva

- Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv, hvem er du?
- Kan du fortelle litt om hva slags type(r) håndarbeide du driver med, hva det er du pleier å lage?
  - Hva pleier du å gjøre med det du lager? (Gir du det bort, bruker du det selv, selger du det (for deg selv, til veldedighet) viser du det frem i en blogg?)
- Hvor vil du si at interessen for ... kommer fra?
  - Når begynte den, hvordan? Hvor lenge har du ...? Hvordan lærte du å ... ? Hvem lærte deg å ... ?
  - Forbinder du dette håndarbeidet med et bestemt sted/spesielle personer?
  - Du sier at du driver mest med ... Er det noen spesielle grunner til at akkurat ... på en måte er blitt ‘ditt’ håndarbeide?

#### Prosesen - motivasjon, inspirasjon.

- Jeg ser for meg at det er flere deler ved det å lage noe. Først blir man inspirert eller motivert til å lage ett eller annet, så planlegger man kanskje hvordan man skal lage det, får tak i materialer og verktøy som man trenger. Så begynner man på prosjektet og jobber med det, og til slutt ser jeg for meg den gode følelsen av å ha fullført noe, og kanskje andres reaksjon til det man har laget. Men alle tenker kanskje ikke på den samme måten som meg?
  - Jeg lurer på hvordan du ser for deg prosessen ved å lage noe (eventuelt: kanskje du kan fortelle hvordan du gikk frem da du lagde den tingen du tok med deg?)
  - Hva vil du si du liker best ved denne prosessen?

#### Grunner for...

- Jeg er nysgjerrig på hva det er som gjør at forskjellige folk driver med håndarbeide. Mange jeg har snakket med har sagt at de liker å lage helt unike ting. Noen har sagt at de er opptatt av å videreføre en gammel tradisjon, eller at de liker å gi det bort som gaver. Andre har nevnt at de heller vil lage ting selv enn å kjøpe dem i butikken, kanskje også for å spare penger? Eller for å slappe av, eller for å få utløp for kreativitet, kanskje? Det er kanskje helt andre grunner? Er det noe du vil si er viktige grunner til at du lager ting?

## Appendix B – Interview Guide

- Før lagde man kanskje ting selv fordi man måtte, mens man i dag får tak i det meste i butikken. Tenker du på det du gjør som en videreføring av en tradisjon? Kommer du til å lære dette videre til noen? Hvorfor? Er dette noe du snakker om med andre?

- Har du noen gang tenkt på/Hvordan tenker du rundt det å lage ting selv i forhold til gjenbruk, eller i forhold til masseproduserte ting? - Er dette noe du diskuterer med andre?

### Hvem driver med...

- Kjenner du andre som driver m ...?

- Hvor møter du/blir du kjent med andre som driver med ...?

- Er du med i et slags ... miljø/gruppe der du kan utveksle ideer og tanker relatert til det dere lager? Kan du fortelle litt om dette?

- På nettet, blant venner?

- Noen ganger får jeg inntrykk av at noe som er håndlaget ofte blir gitt stor verdi, samtidig får jeg inntrykk av at andre ser på håndarbeide/... som noe gammeldags eller kjedelig. Men nå er det jo kjempemange som blogger om strikking og sying og hekling og brodering og alt mulig rart, det virker som det er populært.

- Du ..., hvem er det egentlig som driver med ...? Hvordan er en typisk ...?

- Hvordan ser du på deg selv i forhold til dette, er du en typisk ...? (Eller gjør du ting på en annen måte?)

- Du pleier å .... hva tenker du om folk som gjør andre ting (eg. syr/strikker/hekler/osv)? Vil du si det er forskjell på hvem som driver med hva?

### Hva sier andre?

- Nå har vi snakket litt om hvordan du ser på ... Men jeg lurer også litt på hvordan du opplever at andre ser på at du ...

- Får du ofte reaksjoner på det at du lager ting? Har du kanskje et konkret eksempel der noen er positive til det du lager? (Har du opplevd at noen ikke er så positive til det du lager, hva skjedde?)

(- Har du familie eller venner som ikke setter pris på, eller som du føler 'ikke forstår' hvorfor du driver med ...?- Har du noen gang følt at du må forsvare interessen, tidsbruken eller pengebruken din for andre?)

- Hender det at andre forventer at du lager ting?

- Hva slags reaksjoner har du fått på ... (den tingen deltakeren tok med).

## Appendix C – Alphabetical list of codes

“Kvinnesyssel”	Felting
“Selvutvikling”	For others/charity
“Taurig”	Free evening (craft circle meeting away from family)
Access	Friends
Accomplishment	Fun
Alone	Gender
Always been making things	Gifts
Always in mind	Girl thing
At home	Good for me
Aunt	Grandmother
Beading	Having time to...
Being sick	Help with
Boost	Hide
Bus	History
Buying	Hoarding
Café,	Hobby
Can't just sit still	Housewife
Career	How-to
Charity	Ideals
Commercialism	Identity
Computer	Important
Concentration	In public
Coping with...	Indigenous
Course/Class	Insider/outsider
Craft circles	Internet
Creativity	Investing time
Crocheting	Jewellery making
Curiosity	Joyful
Daughter	Kick
De-stressing	Knitting
De-valuing	Knitting café
Development	Language
Difference	Learned from...
Domestic	Learning
Drawing	Learning new skills
Dreary	Makers/not makers
Education	Mastering
Embroidering	Materials
Emotional	Meditation
Environment	Men
Equipment	Miscellaneous
Expands social aspects	Modern
Express one self	Mother
Family	Nerdy
Father	Niece
Feedback	

## Appendix C – Alphabetical list of codes

Normal person	Spark
Not a skill everybody has	Spinning
Not like them	Stash of materials
Not something everybody can do, knows, masters.	Status
Obsession	Status in group of fellow crafters
Old fashioned	Status in society
Online friends	Stereotype
Others say	Subway
Painting	Swap
Paper crafts	Taken for granted that one knows how
Passion	Taking time to...
Patience	Teach to...
Photography	Technique
Pictures	Time
Political	Time spent
Portable	To charity
Pride	To give
Pride upon completion	To others
Profession	To receive
Progress	To self
Quality	To sell
Reactions from others	Together
Recipes	Tools
Recognition	Tradition
Referring to others	Train
Relaxing	Trend
Repurpose	Trying to lose weight
Reuse	/quit smoking
Satisfying	Typical female
Selling	Unemployed
Sewing	Unique
Sewing circle	Us and them
Sharing	Useful
Showing to others	Value
Skills	Valuing
Skills development	Weaving
Social aspects	Women's thing
Something to do with my time	Women's work
Son	Work

## Appendix D – Letter from NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Hovåki Hårlagres gate 29  
N-5007 Bergen  
Norway  
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17  
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red@nsd.uib.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Katrina Roen  
Psykologisk institutt  
Universitetet i Oslo  
Postboks 1094 Blindern  
0317 OSLO

Vår dato: 10.11.2010

Vår ref: 25358 / 3 / MAB

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 25.10.2010. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

25358	<i>Har du laget den selv?</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens overste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Katrina Roen
Student	Marte Gauer

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, [http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk\\_stud/skjema.html](http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html). Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal slje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 05.05.2011, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Venlig hilsen  
  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

  
Marte Bertelsen

Kontaktperson: Marte Bertelsen tlf: 55 58 29 53  
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering  
Kopi: Marte Gauer, Sunnmørgata 1, 0557 OSLO

Avdelingskontor / District Office:

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## Appendix E – Consent Form

### Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om masteroppgaven “*Har du laget den selv!?*”, og ønsker å delta i et intervju som blir tatt opp, skrevet ned (transkribert) og brukt i oppgaven.

Jeg forstår at jeg kan trekke meg under intervjuet, og be om at lydopptaket og annen informasjon om meg blir slettet. Jeg forstår at det ikke lenger vil være mulig å trekke seg fra oppgaven etter at intervjuet har blitt transkribert.

Jeg har hatt mulighet til å stille spørsmål om oppgaven, og vet at jeg kan kontakte studenten igjen om jeg ønsker det (kontaktinformasjon står på informasjonsskrivet).

Signatur ..... Dato .....