POLITICS OF THE KNITTING PATTERN: ETHNOGRAPHY OF KNITTING PRACTICE AND A WOMEN'S KNITTING COMMUNITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BURAK TAŞDİZEN

IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

SEPTEMBER 2017

Approval of the thesis:

**POLITICS OF THE KNITTING PATTERN:
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF KNITTING PRACTICE AND
A WOMEN'S KNITTING COMMUNITY**

submitted by **BURAK TAŞDİZEN** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of **Master of Science in Industrial Design Department, Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Gülbin Dural Ünver
Dean, Graduate School of **Natural and Applied Sciences** _____

Prof. Dr. Gülay Hasdoğan
Head of Department, **Industrial Design** _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Harun Kaygan
Supervisor, **Industrial Design Dept., METU** _____

Examining Committee Members:

Assist. Prof. Dr. Naz Börekçi
Industrial Design Dept., METU _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Harun Kaygan
Industrial Design Dept., METU _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gülşen Töre Yargın
Industrial Design Dept., METU _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Besim Can Zırh
Sociology Dept., METU _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şebnem Timur Öğüt
Industrial Product Design Dept., Istanbul Technical University _____

Date: **08.09.2017**

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Burak TAŞDİZEN

Signature :

ABSTRACT

POLITICS OF THE KNITTING PATTERN: ETHNOGRAPHY OF KNITTING PRACTICE AND A WOMEN'S KNITTING COMMUNITY

Taşdizen, Burak
M.Sc., Department of Industrial Design
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Harun Kaygan

September 2017, 177 pages

This thesis aims to understand how knitting practitioners organize around knitting know-how and knitting patterns, which exchanges they have with regard to knitting know-how and knitting patterns and what meanings they associate to these exchanges. The fieldwork of this thesis is an ethnography of a community of knitting practice, the knitting course, through participant observations with the aim of first developing insights into practitioner's production process by practicing knitting, and second into the dynamics of the knitting course. Based on the literature review and findings of the fieldwork, this thesis offers five main conclusions regarding knitting practice and the knitting course. Firstly, knitting practice is a skilled practice. Secondly, knitting practice is a creative practice, for it is based on the creative modification of existing patterns. Thirdly, for skill acquisition is based on observation and imitation, knitting practice helps build communities of practice and helps create third places for the practitioner, informal gathering places in urban environments other than home and work. Fourthly, because of the emancipatory and hierarchical practices it embodies in the way it is organized, knitting course is part of a wider fabriculture, which

harbors both the very traditional and the very radical practices in textile. Fifthly, as knitting patterns are adjusted through creative modifications and new patterns make their way into the knitting course and knitting know-how is cultivated and spread, knitting course emerges as an unfolding archive of knitting patterns and knitting know-how. The findings and conclusions of this thesis have implications for design practice. Design practice, as in making practices, could focus more on archives of patterns and instructions to which access is offline and collective, helping to build communities of practice and third places for the practitioner.

Keywords: ethnography, knitting practice, knitting pattern, communities of practice, third place

ÖZ

ÖRGÜ ÖRNEĞİNİN POLİTİKASI: ÖRGÜ PRATİĞİNİN VE BİR KADIN ÖRGÜ GRUBUNUN ETNOGRAFİSİ

Taşdizen, Burak
Yüksek Lisans, Endüstri Ürünleri Tasarımı Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Harun Kaygan

Eylül 2017, 177 sayfa

Bu araştırma, örgü örenlerin örme bilgisi ve örgü örnekleri etrafında nasıl organize olduklarını, örme bilgisi ve örgü örnekleri etrafında nasıl alışverişler yaptıklarını ve bu alışverişlere ne anlamlar atfettiklerini anlamayı amaçlar. Bu araştırmanın saha çalışması bir örgü pratiği topluluğu olan örgü kursunun etnografisinden oluşur. Yapılan katılımcı gözlemler ilk olarak örgü örenin üretim sürecini, daha sonra da örgü kursunun dinamiklerini anlamayı hedefler. Kaynak taraması ve saha çalışmasından örgü pratiğine ve örgü kursuna dair beş temel çıkarım yapılmaktadır. İlk olarak, örgü pratiği bir beceri pratiğidir [*skilled practice*]. İkinci olarak, örgü pratiği, mevcut örgü örneklerine yaratıcı müdahaleyi temel aldığından yaratıcı bir pratiktir. Üçüncü çıkarıma göre, beceri aktarımı gözlem ve taklite dayalı olduğundan, örgü pratiği, pratik toplulukları [*communities of practice*] ve kentsel çevrede enformel buluşma noktaları olan üçüncü mekanlar [*third places*] oluşumuna olanak sağlar. Dördüncü çıkarım, barındırdığı özgürleştirici ve hiyerarşik pratiklerden dolayı, örgü kursu içerisinde hem geleneksel hem de radikal pratikleri barındıran geniş bir tekstil kültürünün [*fabriculture*] parçasıdır. Beşinci çıkarıma göre, örgü örnekleri

yaratıcı müdahalelerle değiştirilip yeni örgü örnekleri örgü kursuna dahil oluyor ve bu esnada örgü bilgisi harmanlanıp yayılıyorken, örgü kursu bir örgü örneği ve örme bilgisi arşivi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu tezin bulgu ve çıkarımlarının tasarım pratiği açısından çıkarımları vardır. Tasarım pratiği, yapma pratiklerinde olduğu gibi, örneklere ve yapma bilgisine erişimin toplu ve fiziksel ortamda olduğu ve dolayısıyla pratik toplulukları ve üçüncü mekanlar oluşmasına olanak sağlayacak şekilde yeniden düşünülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: etnografi, örgü pratiği, örgü örneği, pratik toplulukları, üçüncü mekan

To *Sabiha* whose knits still keep me warm…

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor *Assist. Prof. Dr. Harun Kaygan* for his endless support and guidance throughout this challenging process. I am thankful to *Dr. Smita Tewari Jassal,* for this thesis is built upon the pilot field work I conducted as part of her course Anthropological Theory and Method, within the scope of which she provided invaluable insights regarding my conduct at the field work. I am also thankful to *Dr. Özlem Savaş* who as a commentator helped me in the formation of this thesis. I would like to extend my gratitude to the members of the thesis committee; *Naz Börekçi*, *Şebnem Timur Öğüt*, *Gülşen Töre Yargın* and *Besim Can Zırh* for their comments and suggestions. A special thanks goes to *Dr. Şenöm Yalçın* for her inspirational gift "The Manly Art of Knitting."

Special thanks go to knitting course tutor *Nergis,* knitting course participants and yarn store workers, who welcomed and befriended me, and helped me as much as possible in my knitting projects. They not only provided invaluable insights, but also made my ethnographic inquiry very enjoyable. Without them this thesis would not have been possible. I appreciate them very much.

I would like to thank my mother, *Ayşe Taşdizen,* for she taught me how to knit before my ethnographic inquiry. After I left the field, she answered my questions regarding knitting whenever I ran into trouble during writing. I would also like to thank my maternal grandmother, *Habibe Coşkun*, who enjoyed watching knitting tutorials with me and who accompanied me during my visits to another local yarn store in my neighborhood.

I would like to thank my friends who made my thesis journey bearable. *Korhan Konuklar* was always a phone call away when I needed to talk away and clear my mind. *Sarper Erinç Aktürk* guided me with his anthropological knowledge as I wrote this thesis. *Gizem Çakır*, *Helin Eren* and *Emine Karabulut* accompanied me during my early visits to the field, which facilitated my participation at the knitting course. My colleague *Yasemin Yıldırım* helped me relieve during the occasional talks we had. *Ender Yıldızhan* came up with funny pseudonyms when I needed a creative twist. *Sadi Güran* commented on the illustrations in this thesis, helped me enhance them and made a good company. *Büşra Soydemir*, *Merve Midilli* and *Buse Onur* accompanied me during happy hours, evening walks and night-outs in Moda when I needed to talk or dance away my pain throughout this challenging process.

And those with whom our paths have crossed at work, at home or anywhere else, who made this challenging journey much harder to bear through minute obstacles, thoughtless and unkind behavior—I forgive you.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my paternal grandmother *Sabiha Gökçe*, whom I lost as I was writing this thesis. She was one of the most industrious knitters I know of, and definitely the most sharing one. I miss her so much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 9.1 (a) is the knitting pattern I found in one of the knitting magazines at the knitting course and used as a template for my jumper project. (b) is the final version of the jumper.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An unbalanced account in design history

> It will be my contention that design history, by acknowledging the truth of the concept of everyone as a designer without dismissing it as a "truism", and by complementing the study of professional design with recognition of the prior and current activities of non-professional designers, can encourage the design profession radically to redefine its role vis-à-vis people at large, for the enrichment of all concerned. (Pacey 1992, 217)

When one thinks of mainstream design history, a collage of design classics comes to mind. As a result of the scholarly attention paid exclusively on commodities designed by professional designers, design and making practices have become neglected, unrecorded and marginalized. This results in a lacking and an unbalanced perspective. Pacey (1992) argues that a design history that acknowledges non-professional design is crucial in order for design literature to move beyond conventional, professional boundaries in design practice and "designer" commodities. Therefore, it becomes significant to address design and making practices that are also prevalent among amateur designers and makers; those practitioners who are not educated in design.

The divide between professional and non-professional is further layered: Amateur design and making is discussed to take place within domestic sites of production outside the professional production sites, where professional designers' efforts result in the acknowledged, professional design that the masses know of. The division of domestic and professional sites of production

adds a gendered dimension to this neglect in design history. Buckley (1986, 7), in her article “Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design”, states: “To exclude craft from design history is, in effect, to exclude from design history much of what women designed.” Buckley (1986, 6), talks on how to write a feminist history of design that takes into account the perspectives, experiences, and products of women designers, and does not favor the professional site of production over the domestic site of production, as favoring the professional site of production is a notion that acknowledges the value of design as long as it contributes to exclusionary politics. Buckley (1986) argues that design history has regarded mass-produced objects as more worthy of attention, neglecting the domestic making practices, its practitioners and its outcomes.

These calls for an inclusive understanding of design become more pronounced in the face of recent interest in co-design. If we are to accomplish an approach to design that does not exclude and marginalize amateur making practices, we need to look ethnographically at how people create with their resources and how they organize around amateur practices. A good starting point is grassroots organizations and whether and how they collaborate, share, and create places.

To sum up, design history still has favored the outcomes of professional design carried out in professional production sites. On the other hand, making practices have been neglected, contributing to their marginalization. By making knitting practice and women practitioners of knitting objects of academic inquiry, the study aims for recognition of craft, which is devalued due to its assumed feminine gender and domestic site of production. By carefully tracing the knitting pattern and the relations around it, the positive literature surrounding making practices is challenged.

1.2 Research questions

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions.

Main research question:

- How do knitting skill, knitting patterns and knits exchanged in communities of knitting practice, and what are the meanings and values associated with those exchanges?

Secondary questions:

- How can we understand knitting as a skilled practice? What are the steps of knitting practice that knitting practitioners go through? How is its vocabulary?
- How do practitioners of knitting organize around knitting practice? What role do making, learning and sharing play in this? What economies do they create around knitting skill, knitting patterns and knits?

1.3 Scope of the study

Firstly, this study explores knitting practice from a designer's perspective as practiced within a community of knitting practice. It introduces the vocabulary of and maps out the steps of knitting practice. By doing so, knitting is regarded as a practice that has its own terminology, materials and phases of making, which are similar to and yet different from design practice.

Secondly, this study employs an ethnographic perspective and thus looks at the internal dynamics of a community of knitting practice and focuses on their exchange practices; exchange of knitting skills and know-how, exchange of time at the knitting course, exchange of values around knitting practice and exchange of knitting patterns and knits. Thus, this thesis looks at how knitting practitioners

organize around knitting patterns, how they learn and teach how to knit, and which values they reproduce in the meantime.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of nine chapters: “Introduction”, “Theoretical framework”, “Making practices as an area of inquiry in design”, “Methodology”, “Introduction to the field”, “The organization and conduct at the knitting course and the yarn store”, “Making and unmaking propriety in knitting practice at the knitting course”, “Between open-source and commerce: Economies at the knitting course” and “Conclusions.”

Following the introductory chapter of the thesis, the following two chapters are based on literature reviews. The second chapter provides the theoretical foundation upon which this thesis is built. It first introduces practice theory, and practice-theoretical approaches to consumption. The third chapter explains the significance of making practices for design. The fourth chapter is the methodology chapter and interrogates the ethnographic approach that is employed in this thesis, explains the data collection and analysis processes and reflects upon researcher’s position at the field. In the remaining chapters I present my findings based on the analysis of my field notes. The fifth chapter introduces the field in which I carried out ethnographic research and explains the practice of knitting with its vocabulary and steps. The environment and the participant profiles are delineated, knitting course and the shopping experience are introduced. Following the introduction to the field comes introduction to the practice of knitting; its vocabulary and the steps surrounding the practice. The introductory section is the background to the analysis I present in the upcoming chapters. The sixth chapter looks at how the knitting course and the yarn store organizes. First, it explains the hands-on, informal learning that took place at the knitting course and how a community of knitting practice was cultivated. Then, it looks at forms of interdependencies present at the knitting course in tutoring, sales and running errands. The seventh chapter focuses on the propriety making

and unmaking at the knitting course through participants' comments on and interventions in others' works and their originality endeavors. The eighth chapter discusses the economies at the knitting course. The concluding chapter summarizes the study, presents and discusses the conclusions and provides suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review covers emergent practice-theoretical approaches to the study of consumption, and employs practice theory as a theoretical framework as it later focuses on amateur practices of making. In the following section, an overview of past approaches in consumption studies are summarized. Then, practice theory and emergent practice-theoretical approaches to consumption are discussed, which are used as the conceptual framework for understanding amateur making practices and accompanying consumption.

2.1 Contemporary approaches to consumption

A departure point for consumption studies is when Michel de Certeau, in his prominent work entitled *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), calls for a holistic approach that looks at the representations of a society and its modes of behavior together. He gives the example of television; and argues that, in addition to the images broadcasted by television, the study should incorporate what the consumer "makes" or "does" with these images. De Certeau's word choice points to "*another* production called 'consumption'" (De Certeau 1984, xxi), which he elaborates as follows:

> The latter is devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order.

Consumption then, according to de Certeau, is a *secondary production* that occurs during the implicit utilization of the image broadcasted by TV (De Certeau 1984, xiii). He points out the necessity to look beyond what happens after consumers buy products and to look at what consumers make of them, and what their *ways of using* are. Later on, the productive capabilities of consumers are further elaborated and the consumption-production dichotomy is further blurred (Miller 2012).

Consumption has also been regarded as an individual act and positioned against community and leisure, as something external but not constitutive of everyday life, which reinforces its surrounding negative connotations. However, consumption is not necessarily an individual act (Miller 2012), rather it entails social connectedness (Cook 2006). Julier, in his book *The Culture of Design* (2014), argues that seeing consumption as an individual act misses the point that consumption is also socially constituted. He finds it useful "for the study of design culture to think of consumption not solely in terms of the actions of individuals and using singular objects, but as a shared social practice that engages constellations of artefacts" (Julier 2014, 67). Julier (2014, 70) criticizes Slater (1997), whose work regards consumption as an anonymous, private and politically passive act; whereas products are customized according to and by the consumers, who embody productive capabilities. This requires the adoption of a new perspective on consumption, one that does not end after the moment of acquisition, but continues as a process with the productive everyday practices of consumers as a shared social practice.

Moving from the notion of consumption as the moment of individual acquisition to the notion of consumption as a shared, productive practice, Warde (2005) argues that all practices entail consumption. Julier (2014), too, looks at how consumption and practice converge. He argues that when consumption is considered as a practice, "the analysis is shifted away from thinking about the transactions between individual user and singular object" (Julier 2014, 83).

Rather, consumption is then seen as a constellation of different practitioners and artifacts, as a socially constituted practice.

Warde draws the attention to the lack of theoretical consolidation in consumption studies, in which, despite the large amount of work produced, "favorite, but restricted topics" emerge as examples of conducted case studies (2005, 131-132). This presents "a partial understanding of consumption" (Warde, 2005, p. 132) and thus "an unbalanced and partial account" (Gronow and Warde 2001, 4). However, practice-theoretical approaches emerge as an alternative theoretical framework for understanding consumption. To Shove and Pantzar (2005, 45), there is a need to reconsider consumers as active and creative practitioners taking part in the reproduction of practice. They argue that the notion of using and appropriating either presents consumers as passive users, or ascribes only a partial activeness in the sense that they *could* appropriate the objects. However, they argue, instead of the language of using and appropriating, a new theoretical approach is needed to better grasp the truth of today's consumers, who are also producers. Practice theory offers such a theoretical framework, for it focuses upon everyday practices shaping and being shaped by the societies. In the following section practice theory is introduced and elaborated to better explain what it has to offer for consumption studies.

2.2 Practice-theoretical approaches

In the introductory chapter of *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) provide a brief history of practice theory, explaining how it emerged and how it developed until today. Practice theory emerged as a response to agency-structure dualism, and argues that neither social structures nor agencies alone help explain stability and change in everyday life. Instead, an emphasis on practices will avoid prioritizing agency or structure (Shove et al. 2012). Schatzki (2001), in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, discusses dispersed approaches to practice theory and makes a starting point. Reckwitz (2002, 244) reviews these diverse approaches

to practice theory in his article "Toward a Theory of Social Practices", in order to build up a "distinguished" and an "ideal type of practice theory." Thus, it is significant to look at what Reckwitz' review reveals, to develop insights into the practice theory.

Reckwitz (2002) positions practice theory in relation to other forms of social theory. He argues that social theories can be categorized under three categories: purpose-oriented theory, norm-oriented theory, and cultural theory in general. According to him, these theories differ from each other regarding their unit of analysis. Purpose-oriented theory takes human action as its smallest unit of analysis and interprets social world based on personal interests, whereas norm-oriented theory takes social values and norms as its smallest unit of analysis. Cultural theory, on the other hand, stays at a distance to this opposing dichotomy and places the social in collective structures of knowledge. Practice theory is one of the four approaches under cultural theory. The other three approaches are mentalism, textualism, and intersubjectivism. These approaches differ in where they place the social; their understanding of the smallest unit of analysis. These units of analysis are the human mind (mentalism), discourses (textualism), communication (intersubjectivism), and practices (practice theory) (Reckwitz, 2002). In practice theory, a practice (*Praktik* in the original German text) is

> a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. (Reckwitz 2002, 249)

Shove et al. (2012) narrow down the interconnected elements which constitute a practice to the following three: materials, competence and meanings. According to them, practices come out of the links made and broken between these three interconnected elements. Practice theory does not favor individual agency, but rather defines practitioners engaged with many practices that are not necessarily related. According to Reckwitz (2002, 256), an individual is "a unique crossing

point of practices." However, individuals who carry out practices do not and cannot have practices, but can only participate in them and become *carriers* (*träger*) or hosts of practices.

Material artifacts, for they are one of the interconnected elements that constitute a practice, result in a material dimension to social theory. A common view is that artifacts have a constitutive role in everyday life, meaning that they enable and shape practices. Julier (2014, 82) explains that practice incorporates both material and immaterial processes. Materials include designed artefacts that enable uses, spaces that define, and images that communicate. Immaterial aspect of a practice includes the ideas as to how practices are carried out and what their potential meanings might mean.

In Science and Technology Studies (STS) the role of material artifacts in shaping of practices is further underlined. According to Latour (2000, 113), "artefacts construct, literally and not metaphorically, social order." He emphasizes the significance of material artifacts in enabling and shaping practices by saying that material artifacts "are not 'reflecting' it, as if the 'reflected' society existed somewhere else and was made of some other stuff. They are in large part the stuff out of which socialness is made" (Latour 2000, 113). However, Latour's view on the role of materials is regarded as "a step too far" by Shove and Pantzar (2012, 9). Overall, practice-theoretical approaches have not yet reached a consensus on to what extent artifacts enable and shape practices (Kuijer 2014) and the relation between material artifacts, the "missing masses of social theory" (Latour 1992), and practices remain under-theorized (Shove and Pantzar 2005).

In sum, practice theory aims to make sense of social phenomena through the lens of practices, staying at a distance to agency and structure dualism, without prioritizing either of them. Practices are taken into account as the shaping force behind social life instead of social structures or human agencies with their supposedly independent and rational choices. Inclusion of material artifacts themselves, which have often been neglected in social theory, underline the

theory's implications for design and consumption research because they are regarded as one of the interconnected and constitutive elements of any practice.

This is why practice theory has gained popularity among design research circles in recent years. To exemplify, Ingram, Shove and Watson (2007) acknowledge that consumer practice is a major source of design opportunities, yet design consumption cycle is missing from design theory. They state that "design practice and design education champion a creationist approach in which the creativity of the designer is promoted as the major driving force in forming new products" (Ingram et al. 2007, 15). The design and consumption processes, they discuss, are regarded as a directional linear order (Figure 2.1), with consumption having no impact on design. For instance, this is not the case when one considers how user appropriations and shortcut solutions could be sources of inspirations in new product development processes. So, the authors offer a new model which they call "cyclical model of designing and consuming", in which "consumer practices stimulate design and ... new products stimulate new practices" (Ingram et al. 2007, 3).

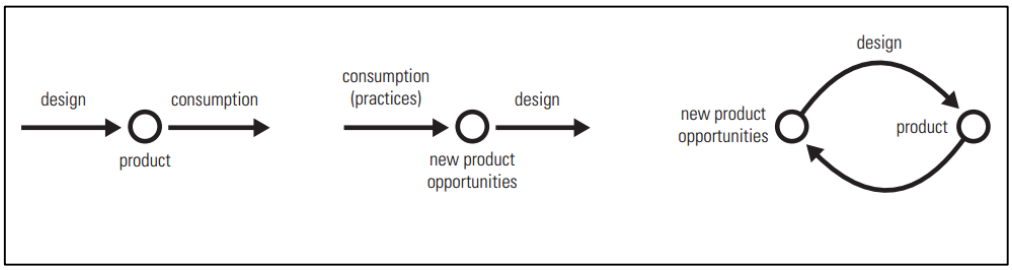

Figure 2.1 Design and Consumption Representations (Ingram et al. 2007)

The implications of practice theory for design and design research start with its unbiased approach to the co-production of practices, an ongoing process that includes rather than excludes each constituent element such as material artifacts as well as humans, who may be designers, consumers, amateurs, or a combination of these. A new focus on practices, going beyond the isolation of human practitioners or artefacts themselves, offers a comprehensive take on how

practices are produced and reproduced, how change and stability occur in societies, all of which have far reaching implications for design and consumption research, least of all for our understanding of users. The idea of practice, with its carriers in the form of human practitioners and material artifacts illustrate a network in which each carrier is connected, and help constitute and reproduce that very practice. Therefore, practice theory points towards a socialness, in terms of how practices are shaped. A shift from the individual towards the social is helpful in studying design and making practices, because it moves the attention away from individuals' intentions over a finished artifact, and rather focuses the attention on the production process in which practitioner and material engage with each other. In the next section, I introduce and discuss Campbell's concept of craft consumption, for it provides a good example of how the boundary between consumption and production is blurred.

2.3 Craft consumption

Campbell advocates an additional image to the consumer, who has been regarded as either "dupe", or "hero" (Slater 1997, 33), or as an "identity-seeker." Campbell suggests a whole new term named *craft consumer*, who both designs and makes things, and is motivated by self-expression (Campbell 2005). Craft consumer is "a person who typically takes any number of mass-produced products and employs these as the 'raw materials' for the creation of a new 'product', one that is typically intended for self-consumption" (Campbell 2005, 27-28). Meanwhile, she brings in skill, knowledge, judgment and passion into the consumption process.

To better illustrate what craft consumption is and is not, Campbell (2005) draws a line between craft consumption, personalization and customization by focusing on how they differ after purchase. He argues that not all the activities consumers engage in after purchase fall into the category of craft consumption. Personalization is when modifications such as adding name tags to products occur to indicate the subjective appropriation of the product. However, since the

modification is not significant in so far as it does not result in any changes in the nature of the product, these examples are not craft consumption. Customization is closer to craft consumption, because it is beyond adding mere name tags on existing products. It is tailoring of products so that they better respond to user needs. However, since customization is also offered by retailers, Campbell states that customization, too, becomes questionable as to whether it is craft consumption or not. For an activity to be called craft consumption, Campbell (2005, 31) reminds that "the consumer must be directly involved in both the design and the production of that which is to be consumed."

Campbell discusses that customization of individual objects is not typical of most contemporary craft consumption. Rather, what is more common is the *ensemble-style products*, which is the creation of an object out of raw materials that are themselves mass-produced objects. So, rather than customizing a finished object, the larger part of craft consumers engages in ensemble-style products, by taking raw materials and building upon an object from scratch. In that sense, Campbell's craft consumer, who is engaged in creating ensemble-style products, is in line with Ingold's (2009) argument in which objects are "becoming", which I discuss later (see Section 3.1.1).

To conclude, craft consumption is the bringing together of various artifacts that are mass-produced, which are then used to create new assemblages to be consumed by the craft consumer. Craft consumer is involved in the production process of this new assemblage from the conceptualization to realization phases. However, Knott (2013, 57) criticizes Campbell's concept of craft consumption for its utopianist vision saying that maintaining control from start to finish is "heady idealism", and it would require great amount of resources even for the most enthusiastic. In line with Knott, I avoid prioritizing of the individual agent that is craft consumer for it is against practice theory. Rather, I look to the production process in which craft consumer and materials are involved in a dialogue.

2.4 Conclusion

Practice theory, the theoretical framework for this thesis, takes practices as its unit of analysis. In line with Warde and Julier, I see consumption as a practice, in which *competence*, *materials* and *meanings* come together and form the practice that is consumption. Consumption is not a mere individual act of purchase. Rather, it is a shared practice that continues after purchase. Because consumption is not a mere act of purchase but continues with the productive capabilities of consumers, that is, their *competences*, the concept of *craft consumer* is defined by Campbell to explain those consumers who, by bringing together different objects, that is, *materials*, create new assemblages for new uses. However, because I focus on consumption as a practice, individual practitioners, their motivations and the products of their labor do not constitute the central concern of this thesis. What this thesis aims to explore is the process of making, and how making creates communities and what happens within those communities. In the following chapter, I discuss making practices.

CHAPTER 3

MAKING PRACTICES AS AN AREA OF INQUIRY IN DESIGN

In this section, I elaborate on making practices as a valuable area of inquiry in design. First, I define and differentiate design and making. Then, I introduce the concept of *tacit knowledge*, present phases of making process and discuss skill and skilled practice. Later, the surrounding discourse regarding amateurs are discussed through the concepts of imagined amateur and *fabriculture*. *Craftivism*, a craft-related political movement, is presented along with theoretical concepts such as *new domesticity*, for it focuses on the transition of the domestic practices into the public space, and *third place*, for it elaborates on the appropriated places and cultivated communities in public spaces. Finally, *community of practice theory* is introduced to open up space for informal learning.

3.1 Making practices and toward an *extended notion of design*

According to Atkinson (2011), amateur practices in design are strongly rejected by institutional bodies in design, resulting in a tension between the amateur and the professional. Still, there are scholars who highlight the significance of amateur practices, and who argue for design activity as a human activity. Papanek (1971, 3), in his prominent book *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social World*, writes in the introduction: “All men [sic] are designers. All that we do, almost all the time, is design, for design is basic to human activity.” In the “Making/Crafting/Designing: Perspective on Design as

a Human Activity" conference held at Akademie Schloss Solitude in 2011, Franke and Owens call for an *extended notion of design*, which does not exclude making and crafting practices. They write: "Within an extended notion of design almost all human activity is, to a significant degree, a design activity."

The distinction between design and making is hard to draw and definitely the relation in-between is not that of black and white, but rather it is a spectrum of gray. Daniel Charny (2011), the curator of the "Power of Making" exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, draws a general picture of making practice. Unlike the conventional design process, making does not need to start with a preconceived idea. The course of making could be where "thinking by making" could occur. Practitioners, as they reflect on the mistakes encountered during the course of making, do innovate, "constantly unfolding new possibilities within the process" (Charny 2011, 37). Yet, not all making requires high level of know-how with regards to materials and making techniques. Making, Charny (2011, 30) states, "is something almost everyone can do. The knowledge of how to make—both everyday objects and highly skilled creations—is one of humanity's most precious resources." What is common in all making practices is that it entails tacit knowledge, practitioners go through a production process. In what follows, to better understand the making process, I first introduce Polanyi's (1958) concept of tacit knowledge and continue with Keller's (2001) approach to phases of making process.

3.1.1 Defining and differentiating design and making

The term, tacit knowledge, is coined by Michael Polanyi in 1958. It describes the kind of knowledge that cannot be articulated verbally. However, this does not mean that such knowledge does not exist. Its verbal articulation is not necessary in order for tacit knowledge "to be conceptualized and controlled by the practitioner or seen and interpreted by an observer" (Keller 2001, 35). Tacit knowledge describes the kind of knowledge in making process that cannot be verbalized but can only be understood by making. Groth, Mäkelä and Seitamaa-

Hakkarainen (2013) argue that practitioners could think through their hands, and give the example of deaf blind makers' clay throwing process, and how they, together with the clay practitioner researcher, communicated through hands when they were not able to communicate verbally. Tacit knowledge becomes transferrable through hands; another means of communication besides language (Groth et al. 2013).

The production process of the practitioner involves three parts; namely, *anticipation*, *playing out*, and *finishing up* (Keller 2001). Anticipation is the mental rehearsal phase that occurs within the practitioner's mind. She plans her steps, including the materials to be used and the production methods to be employed before going into execution. Keller (2001) argues that the better the quality of this mental rehearsal, the better the outcomes of the production process. However, in order for this thought process to be of good quality and to be fast, the practitioner needs to be experienced. Keller (2001, 37) states that in the case of an experienced smith, "this determination may happen more frequently as a mental calculation." As experience increases, so does the dexterity of the practitioner. This means that the production process becomes more automatic, more instinctive, more unconscious and more taken for granted. During this phase of playing out, there is a constant checking of the actual state of production with regard to the desired one. Through comparisons, the practitioner aims to capture the desired state. Thus, "thought and act are equal and interdependent parts in its execution" (Keller 2001, 39). This checking occurs via the "active integration of visual and kinesthetic images, analytical judgments and practical acts which in combination direct an agent's progress toward a goal" (Keller 2001, 39). Near the completion, the form appears, and the practitioner focuses more on the details. After comparing the physical outcome with the mental plan she has in her mind, and taking the necessary action, the practitioner finishes the production process. The decision of when to finish depends on the experience of the practitioner. To Keller (2001, 40), this is "one of the things which separates the expert from the novice." The practitioner needs to be aware of *overworking* the material (Keller 2001, 40).

Keller's argument that practitioner first anticipate a plan before execution is rejected by some scholars. In line with Charny's argument that making does not need to start with a preconceived idea, Ingold (2009), too, argues against the *hylomorphic* model of creation, which regards creation as bringing together matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*) in the sense that a practitioner with a design in mind, by acting upon the material world, will create the form. Ingold reverses this understanding by stating that creation "is a question not of imposing preconceived forms on inert matter but of intervening in the fields of force and currents of material wherein forms are generated" (2009, 92). The practitioner, by engaging with the matter in an ongoing, iterative creation process, intervenes fields of forces and flows of material. Ingold asserts that we can only follow the materials.

> However, neither brick nor mortar, nor soil, nor the ingredients in the kitchen, nor paints and oils, are objects. They are materials. And what people do with materials, . . . , is to follow them, weaving their own lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld. (Ingold, 2009, p. 96)

Thus, the material world, Ingold (2011, 94) writes elsewhere, "is not passively subservient to human designs." On the contrary, since they are exposed to "currents of lifeworld" (Ingold 2007, 1), materials are active and are always "becoming." Drawing upon their ethnographic research in England on practices of object maintenance, Gregson, Metcalfe and Crewe build on Ingold's argument of object becoming and state that material artifacts are "regarded as continually evolving, positioned within and affected by an ongoing flow of consumer practice, as well as enabling of practices" (Gregson et al. 2009, 250). This continual becoming of objects could be discussed in line with what Campbell (2005) calls as *ensemble-style products* in his concept of *craft consumption* (see Section 2.3). In craft consumption, this "becoming" corresponds to what happens to material artifacts in their lives after the moment of purchase, and in which ensembles they are brought together with other objects for new uses.

Ensemble-style craft consumption, for it focuses on the assemblages created by bringing together different material artifacts all of which are mass-produced, appears as an area that could be looked to better understand this object becoming.

Arguing against the hylomorphic model of creation (Ingold 2009), Ingold (2000, 352) defines skill according to five dimensions. Firstly, practice, Ingold argues, is the use of body and tools. According to Ingold, skilled practice does not consist of an individual with skills and intent, rather it is a practice in which practitioner, tools and material each play a role, and final form gradually appears. Thus, following Ingold's first point, skill cannot be thought as a property of the individual human body as a biophysical entity, a thing-in-itself. The constituents of the surroundings are as essential for the skill as the body and mind. This brings an ecological sensitivity to the definition of skill. Ingold (2000) argues that body cannot be thought separately from the agency that put it into work, and the surrounding environment. The third dimension that Ingold argues is that skilled practice is not mere application of mechanical force to exterior objects, but it also includes *care*, *judgment*, and *dexterity*. Among these, dexterity, he argues, does not lie in bodily movements, but it is the responsiveness of the body to ever-changing conditions. He references Bernstein (1996; cited in Ingold 2000, 353), according to whom, during a process of making, control should be defined as the "continual adjustment or tuning of movement in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of the emergent task" (Ingold 2000, 353). The fourth dimension of skill Ingold introduces is about how skills are learned and passed from generation to generation. He agrees with Bernstein (1996; cited in Ingold 2000) that skilled practice is not a formula, but involves observation and imitation. Observation is the forming of internal, mental representations of observed behavior, whereas imitation is the conversion of these representations into manifest practice. By making trials and drawing upon her observations, the novice gets the feel of things, that is, she fine-tunes her movements. Ingold (2000) reveals this is what Gibson (1979, 254) calls as *education of attention*. Ingold's (2000) last point is that the activity itself generates the form, not any design prior to actual making. Because skilled practice is an attentive

engagement, not a mechanical coupling, the making process is not a mere transcription of what the maker had in her mind as a design. In that sense, Ingold argues against hylomorphic model of creation.

In sum, making is a universal human activity (Papanek 1971; Charny 2011; Franke and Owens 2011). In all making practices, practitioners go through a production process, a reflexive dialogue with the prior plan or the engaged material. According to Keller (2001), practitioners first *anticipate* their plan, then *play out* during production. Only then, they *finish up*. However, prior plan in the mind of the practitioner can never be captured for production process is not a mere transcription of what the maker had in her mind as a design and practitioner is not the only determinant during the making process (Ingold, 2000). This brings us to how Ingold defines skill and skilled practice.

Making is a skilled practice and involves tacit knowledge. According to Ingold (2000), there is no such thing as skilled practitioner with an intent. Together with the practitioner, materials and tools shape the making process and thus the artifact. Thus, making process is not hylomorphic (Ingold 2000). Skill does not belong to practitioner as a property of the human body, it is the use of body and tools. Therefore, skilled practice is an ecological practice, in which surroundings play a vital role. Skilled practice involves continual checking and adjustment of bodily movements according to ever-changing environmental conditions. Because skilled practice involves tacit knowledge and is not a formula, it should include observation and imitation on part of the learner to be taken up.

The fact that tacit knowledge in making requires observing and then doing to develop skill is significant because it points to a socialness based on making practices. Therefore, communities are formed around making practices to exchange skills, which I discuss later (see Sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5). However, in this thesis, staying in the line of thinking espoused by the authors, we can alternatively think of amateur practices as not constituting a homogeneous group. In the next section, I discuss the implications of prioritizing design over

making, professional over amateur practices and highlight making practices' community building potential.

3.1.2 Prioritization of making process over the artifact

Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 140), in *The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, traces the original meanings of the two Latin words "amateur" and "dilettante." Slightly derogatory in contemporary language, the original meanings of these two words reveal and remind the significance of experience over accomplishment in amateur practice. In their original meanings in Latin, amateur, which derives from the Latin verb *amare*, "to love", and dilettante, which derives from the Latin verb *delectare*, "to find delight in", refer to those individuals who loved what they did or enjoyed a given task. Therefore, the experience, the process of making, is revealed as more valuable than the outcome. The author continues:

> The earliest meanings of these words therefore drew attention to experiences rather than accomplishments; they described the subjective rewards individuals gained from doing things, instead of focusing on how well they were achieving. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 140)

The above explanation of the original meanings of the word amateur is telling in the sense that it discloses how in contemporary society, design practice being no exception, the outcome of practices is regarded as more valuable than the process. To pay attention to amateur experience rather than amateur accomplishments not only pays tribute to the word's original meaning, but avoids the marginalization of amateur practice.

Looking at the process parallels Ingold's (2009) discussion of lines. Ingold references Bryson (2003), who discusses that oil painting is taken as a finished object for what makes the oil painting cannot be traced due to its density and opacity. Line, on the other hand, "has no end-point: one can never tell when a drawing is finished," (Ingold 2009, 99) similar to "the embroiderer's thread

loops over and under in stitching" (Ingold 2009, 100). Similar to line when compared to oil painting, the artifact, too, is never finished, always becoming (Ingold 2007). Thus, looking at the outcomes of amateur design and making practices only arises the risk of widening the gap in-between, because outcomes of amateur practice are likely to look unfinished and imperfect when compared to the outcomes of professional practice. This, in return, runs the risk of developing a reductionist, stereotypical perspective regarding amateur practices of making and design. Therefore, a comprehensive look at amateur making practice should avoid focusing on the outcome of making process, at the end of which a comparison between professional design and amateur making outcomes will be inevitable. Rather, an approach that looks at the process of making, the process of designing, instead of assessing the quality of finished outcome is called for (Brown 2008; Jackson 2010; Knott 2013; Von Busch 2013). Brown (2008, 360) states that simply to compare the outcomes of professional and amateur practices is to "miss the point entirely." He continues:

> Amateurs are concerned with outcomes, but it is within designing and making processes that skill and knowledge is developed, experiences are absorbed and expressions of the self are materialized. (Brown 2008, 360)

Thus, looking at the making process discloses the making process of not only the outcome, but also the production and dissemination of knowledge and skill.

Another significant reason lies in the individual and community dichotomy. In the case of craft, Von Busch (2013) points out the missed potential of craft in mobilizing community capabilities, when focused on the craft outcome only. He calls for "doing it together" instead of "doing it yourself." He also argues that wrong questions have been raised such as whether or not the object in question is really craft, whereas, he suggests, the questions regarding craft should focus on the empowering potential of craft when it's practiced as a community. The making process, as it entails the network of skilled practitioners of various experience, reveals how the production and dissemination of skill and knowledge occurs within making communities, and how communities could be

formed around shared making practices. Bringing amateur making into focus will also cast an alternative approach to consumption studies, blurring the dichotomy of production and consumption.

3.2 A different kind of politicization: community building through craft

So far I have discussed practice-theoretical approaches to consumption, introduced the concept of craft consumption, and elaborated on the making process and an extended definition of design that entails. Through such an extended definition of design and making, we can see the potential of craft in creating communities. In this section, I discuss how craft creates communities and the political impacts of it. First, I make a brief summary of craftivism. Then, I reflect on the literature and talk on how craft literature creates an imagined amateur. Later, I introduce the concepts of new domesticity and third place, and conclude the section by discussing community of practice theory.

3.2.1 Overview of craftivism

Craft production, Bratich and Brush state (2011, 236), "creates slow space, a speed at odds with the imperative toward hyperproduction." Due to craft's tendency towards the slow rather than the fast and mass-produced and its potential in creating communities, scholars have underlined that craft can provide an alternative to the current state of production. Therefore, craft becomes politicized due to its slow nature and collaborative potential, and so is appropriated by a politically engaged movement as in the case of craftivism.

Betsy Greer, who coined the term *craftivism* in the early 2000s, recalls what inspired her in bringing together the two words *craft* and *activism*. Following the "war on terror" after September 11, Greer "started cross-stitching teeny, tiny pieces that were based on war iconography" (Greer 2011, 180). Over time, the word craftivism had started to be used among the wider craft community, taking on different meanings with each use. To Greer (2011, 183), craftivism is "more

than just craft plus activism; it meant something more akin to creativity plus activism. Or crafty activism." Von Busch and Palmås interpret craftivism as a kind of hacking; a "reinvention of craft, by updating or hacking tradition" (2006, 33). Craftivist practices, according to Buszek and Robertson (2011), result in micro utopias, in which community participants work toward a common goal during which the process is more significant than the product. This is another parameter underlying the already political nature of craft, because it moves the attention from the outcome towards the process, where collaboration is at stake and which is not hurried but rather slow.

However, craftivist history remains rather dispersed and scattered. Robertson (2011, 186) argues, in the writing of craftivist history, much of the activist craft practice is rarely cited and there remains a need to write a connected history of craftivism taking into account the global instances in which craft took part in activist praxis such as "Indian Independence Movement, ... patchwork *arpilleras* made in Pinochet's Chile, and remembrance quilts created in post-apartheid South Africa." The convergence of craft and activism is therefore not new, and has been on the stage in the Periphery before it gained popularity in the West in recent decades.

In summary, craftivism regards craft as political because craft is posited as an alternative means of production that is collaborative and that creates communities. In the next section, the empowering discourse surrounding craft and how this contributes to an imagined amateur will be discussed.

3.2.2 Emancipatory character of amateur making practices and its critique

Making practices are celebrated by various scholars in literature for different reasons. First reason regards making's position against consumerism. Practitioners of DIY are discussed as emancipated, active consumers stepping out of the passivity of consumerism (Atkinson 2006; Mulder 2011). Atkinson

(2006) argues that DIY democratizes production, because consumers who are engaged with DIY practices are not passive but are agents of design. This is because they have become independent from professional help. Mulder (2011, 181) argues that "both DIY production and open design empower the user by putting professional tools in the hands of the masses." According to Mark Hatch, the author of "Maker Movement Manifesto", the key constituents of maker movement, are making, sharing, giving, learning, tooling up, participating, supporting and changing (Uribe Del Aguila 2016). Therefore, those who make not only stand against consumerism by doing-it-themselves, but also share what they make and how they make.

Second reason regards DIY practice as a form of everyday creativity and self-expression (Edwards 2006; Myzelev 2009). Edwards (2006) argues that DIY allows space for self-expression and point out that the individual maker is also its consumer. Myzelev (2009) touches upon the creativity debate regarding women's handicrafts and argues that execution of patterns, kits and templates, which are looked down on by some scholars, is indeed a creative process. She argues that the outcome is always singular and never a copy of a pattern. Thus, DIY practices are discussed as a creative pursuit, whose results are unique. Overall, DIYers are regarded as autonomous individuals moving away from being passive consumers towards becoming agents of design, which is creative to some authors, and not so creative to others.

This celebratory literature on DIY practice and its practitioners is criticized by Morris (2016), who develops the term *imagined craft worker*. Morris (2016) points out that the imagined craft worker embodies attributes such as altruism, morality, resistance, self-determination, authenticity and skillfulness, all of which confront capitalist ideals, which, in return, help reinforce the radical position of craft against today's neoliberal capitalism. Solomon (2013, 19) opposes the postulate that DIY is an anti-capitalist mode of production and argues that "conventional models for DIY culture often represent a conservative and tacit support of patriarchal and consumerist institutional structures."

Solomon (2013) lays out the fact that mainstream online DIY platforms remain depoliticized, unaffected by the political world. Morris (2016, p. 8) argues that the crafts movement, despite its radical roots for it builds an archetype of rebellious crafter against the capitalist ideology, "will leave the political and economic systems intact." This is because, she discusses, craftspeople and the organizations representing them are dependent upon political and economic conditions for their survival (Morris 2016, 12).

Amateur practices do not and cannot isolate themselves from the economic regimes they exist in. This, too, complicates amateur practices' relations with capitalist mode of production. To exemplify, Bratich and Brush (2011, 246) argue that "much of DIY culture has been fully integrated into consumer culture." Amateur making is co-opted by consumer culture as a marketing element, tamed and divested of any real impact. The same is discussed to be true for DIY, whose radical ethos has been eradicated by capitalism (Auerbach 2008). For Knott (2011), although amateur making practice is surrounded by a discursive power, and determined amateur practitioners with their subjective agencies, this is not always the case. He (2011, 200) states that:

> Amateur time might appear to be a temporal zone where criticisms of capitalism, commercialization and patriarchal hegemonies are common, or where powerful subjective agency is expressed, but its practice is often less ideological and less utopian.

In summary, in the literature surrounding amateur making practices, there emerges a very positive and empowering portrait. DIYers are regarded as empowered consumers resulting in a more democratic production. The discourse is very celebratory and the practices are placed against professional design, which is implied to be not as democratic and empowering when compared to this emergent movement. However, there might have formed hierarchies already within communities of making practice. As an alternative to industrial production with their hands and 3D printers, amateurs are imagined as radicals that could change the capitalist economic system. However, this romanticizing

and totalizing lens is rejected by some scholars. In the next section, I discuss the resurgence of making practices in public space through the concept of *new domesticity* as a specific example of DIY and craftivism.

3.2.3 New domesticity and its relation to craftivism

The emergent politicization of craft owes very much to its appearance in public space. Crafts are not only practiced as a solitary activity in private settings such as homes (Jackson 2010), but are also carried into public space by craft practitioners (Minahan and Cox 2007). This emergence of crafts in public is interpreted within the framework of new domesticity, which, against the old domesticity that regard domestic spaces and practices as the site of female subjugation and devalued labor, aims to make sense of this new phenomenon of domestic practices in public space. Craft practices, through which this emergent public visibility is captured, do "not belong to the home any more than it does the factory" (Bratich and Brush 2011, 240). At this point, Robertson (2011, 194) raises the following question: "Is it possible that the way that knitting, embroidery, and quilting are used to make political change in some spheres requires their subjugation in others?" Could it be that crafts, with its roots at domestic settings and female subjugation, become a political voice for it moves the invisible, domestic, devalued, gendered labor into public?

Bratich and Brush avoid limiting craftivism within "issue-based quilting, radical knitting circles, and public knit-ins" (2011, 248). Instead, they draw our attention to one of the key aspects of craft as exercised today: Community building and space-making. Therefore, when one talks on the politics of craft or craftivism in short, she needs to acknowledge the communal aspect and spatially transformative potential of craft practices, and their political impact. According to Bratich and Brush (2011), the political impact of craft practices is one that is against hegemonies and hierarchies. They argue that the past unions and uprisings had to organize themselves through hierarchy and leadership in the hegemonic space that is the factory. Contrarily, those who engage in craft do not

need to *organize* as a separate activity, for this is at the core of their everyday practices.

To talk about the political impact of crafts requires a shift from the explicitly political practices which derives from crafts' subjugation and thus use it as a medium, towards a more implicit politicization; one that focuses on crafts' ability to create communities, transform spaces into places, cultivate democracy, all the while imagining alternative making and design relations. In the next two sections, I introduce two theoretical tools that can be used to realize this shift towards implicit politicization: the concept of *third place*, and *the community of practice theory*.

3.2.4 Third places: New domestic places of consumption

Third place, a concept coined by Ray Oldenburg (1989), refers to the social spaces distinct from home and work (first and second spaces, respectively), where individuals gather as they escape from everyday life's burdens. The gatherings that occur in third places are *regular*, *voluntary*, *informal*, and *happily anticipated* (Oldenburg 1989, 16).

Johnson (2010) argues that third places are a mixture of both public and private. Referring to how people appropriate urban consumption places for socialization, she states that they are regarded as public spaces by most of their patrons. Third places are public for they are places for socialization, however, the appropriation of a public space resulting in a third place could happen to such an extent that domestication of the public space could occur. Oldenburg (1989) argues that the result of such appropriation would be *a home away from home*, where individuals feel at their most comfortable as they would in their private homes. In his study *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2004) points out that third places respond to the need for human contact, which is lacking due to today's demanding and isolating jobs. Drawing upon his personal experience, he reveals that he himself takes a break from work to head to the local coffee shop to

recharge, adding that "many people I interview say they do much the same thing" (Florida 2004, 226). According to Florida (2004), individuals turn to third places to allay their sense of isolation, just as they do with group of friends whom they consider their family.

There are key characteristics of third places. Firstly, third places exist on a neutral ground. Neutral ground refers to public places which do not have a host and to which access is easy; environments that are inclusive for newcomers. Secondly, third places usually do not have a traditional host as in private places such as homes, they have *regulars*. These regulars are people who visit third places on a regular basis and whose presence helps cultivate a community. For a newcomer to become a regular, she needs to gain the trust of and be accepted by the regulars. Thirdly, third places are levelers. This means that regulars of diverse backgrounds who gather in third places become equal, independent of the statuses they may have in their everyday lives. Fourthly, third places are unimpressive, plain looking places. This lack of evoked impression protects it from outsiders, especially middle class visitors. Last but not least, the main activity that sustains third places is conversation.

To better explain the concept of third place, I present three examples of third place from the literature. Although emphasized as *conversational zones* by Oldenburg (Simon 2009, 249), conversation does not need to be the only activity that takes place in a third place. Stitch'nBitch groups are an example to this as discussed by Minahan and Cox (2007). Stitch'nBitch is a term used to describe the movement where women meet virtually or physically, on the Internet or in local cafes or pubs to socialize and do crafts, in short "to stitch and bitch." Important characteristics of the Stitch'nBitch groups are that they are social, based on craft production, predominantly female and provide a third place for the practitioner. These groups gather in places such as pubs which are public and masculine, yet practice a craft that is "aesthetically marginal and negatively gendered" (Minahan and Cox 2007, 12), through which they build and sustain a community. The authors point to the resistant aspect of these groups, for knitting

practice, the core activity of Stitch'nBitch groups, steps out of its domesticity into the public and gain a new visibility, as women today reclaim public spaces for themselves (Turney 2009).

Another example is the Kitchener Market; "a consumption-driven third place market" (Johnson 2010, 176). In her dissertation entitled "Consumption Communities", she argues that the Kitchener Market is dependent upon acts of consumption, because, according to the informants in her ethnographic study, the availability of food at the market is as significant as the existence of a community there. Thus, the study reveals, consumption practices and third places are very much intertwined to an extent that consumption becomes as central as conversation regarding its role in bringing life to and sustaining of third places. On top of Oldenburg's statement that conversation is the main activity in third places, consumption practices such as knitting in Stitch'nBitch groups and acts of purchase in the Kitchener Market emerge as defining characteristics of third places.

Annie's Garden & Gift Shop, a retail store in Amherst, Massachusetts, is another example of third places, presented in Oldenburg's later book *Celebrating the Third Place* (Oldenburg 2001). Cheatham, the owner of the shop, explains her starting point in the business as reducing the strains in the lives of people who, even though they have enough money and are comfortable physically, still medicate for relieving their stress (Oldenburg 2001). With the aim of going beyond knowing people and making them laugh when they drop by, Chetham offers a place that provides its visitors "spiritual food" (Oldenburg 2001, 18). Cheatham, through organizing a series of learning workshops, helps disseminate gardening knowledge and creates an open environment in which knowledge is not kept exclusive, on the contrary, shared. For instance, in case the staff does not have the answer to a customer's question, regular customers run for help, Cheatham explains. Customers are welcome by their names, which trigger the sense of community and familiarity. The case of Annie's Garden & Gift Shop reveals that third places are where socially disconnected individual customers

form a community and become regulars of a third place as they engage in activities revolving around gardening. Passers-by, who are not regulars, also receive a helping hand in the store during their shopping, for both the staff and the regulars become willing to share their expertise if needed. Annie's Garden & Gift Shop is yet another example of a third place which is cultivated by practices other than mere conversation, helping its regulars become more self-sufficient and stress-free.

Due to the positive connotations surrounding the term, the Starbucks coffee chain has used it to promote its cafes as third places. However, as Simon (2009, 243) refutes, Starbucks cafes tell us what third places are not, for Starbucks "creates the appearance—without the substance—of a public space." The author claims that, although the company builds upon coffeehouse culture and the concept of third place, the usual Starbucks cafe is a safe and controlled environment where individuals go for they know they will not be bothered. Simon gives an example from his field study in different Starbucks cafes, in which he and his friend started playing Scrabble and no one, except for a couple of people commenting on the game, were willing to play. He argues that in third places this would not occur, for what forms third places is the community and interaction. In Starbucks, "no one talked with anyone they didn't know or anyone they hadn't come there to meet" (Simon 2009, 248).

Simon's conversation with Oldenburg, who first coined the term, reveals that third places are conversational zones, where people "talk freely and openly, to sound off and to entertain" (Simon 2009, 249). In Starbucks, however, opinions are welcome unless they create controversy. Simon gives the example of a takeaway cup design of Starbucks that was pulled back because the quotation on it, which was put on cups to trigger conversation and promote tolerance, was found "too gay" (Simon 2009, 253). Because the quotations were not meant to "generate conflict" and because they "understood their environment," Starbucks removed these particular cups (Gonzalez 2005). Third places, on the contrary,

are places where there is conflict, because they are sustained by the ongoing conversation in which people participate openly and freely.

To sum up, third places are conversation *and* consumption-driven gathering points of people in the city, where people come and go as and when they wish other than home and work. Visitors know that they would see familiar faces when they drop by in third places. Conversation, being a significant constituent of third places, help strengthen social bonds between individuals. However, as Annie's Garden & Gift Shop, Stitch'nBitch groups and the Kitchener Market examples discussed above reveal, third places entail mutual practices such as gardening, crafting and acts of purchase. In addition, third places witness informal learning practices, for they provide people with other people with whom they can exchange skills in an environment outside the formal learning settings. In the next section, community of practice theory will shed light on how communities are formed around a certain practice, and how these communities foster skill acquisition among members in informal settings.

3.2.5 Community of practice theory

Community of practice theory (COPT in short) takes into account a social way of learning that occurs outside formal settings. Moving away from the cognitivist notion of learning in which knowledge is transmitted from "teacher to student" in a classroom setting and in which learning is "the mirror of teaching" (Duguid 2008, 3), COPT stands for learning that is *situated* and *social*. Learning is not confined within the limits of classroom, around a teacher; rather, learning shifts from the notion of "teaching and pedagogy, to engagement in practice" (Duguid 2008, 3). On the contrary, learning occurs *in situ*, among communities such as "a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques" (E. Wenger-Trayner and B. Wenger-Trayner 2015, 1). These communities, which gather around a shared concern and in which learning is cultivated, are called *communities of practice*. According to E. Wenger-Trayner and B. Wenger-

Trayner (2015, 1), “communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”

Three characteristics are essential for any community to be regarded as a community of practice. These are *domain*, *community*, and *practice*. *The domain* is the shared interest that binds individuals together. These individuals, by interacting on a regular basis form *the community*. During these regular interactions, the community, through *practicing* the shared interest, help cultivate a learning environment (E. Wenger-Trayner and B. Wenger-Trayner 2015).

Looking back at the concept’s inception and use throughout time, Duguid (2008, 2) observes that many of the papers regard the concept as “the outcome of management fiat, and not of practice.” He reminds that the communities of practice exemplified in Lave and Wenger’s work *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991) vary from American butchers to Liberian tailors, from Yucatec midwives to American alcoholics. Yet, he points out most scholars using the concept focus on “Xerox technicians”, implying the shift from learning that takes place within marginal communities towards learning at corporate settings. The theory, Duguid (2008, 6) claims, ended up becoming a “management tool.”

To better understand COPT, a review of the essential features of any community of practice is necessary. Firstly, communities of practice are not always self-organized. Often, communities of practice have leaders who make decisions and take strategic actions. Secondly, these communities of practice can be either formal and informal. Thirdly, although they share existing knowledge, they also create new knowledge and innovate. Fourthly, in order for people to participate in a community of practice, good facilitation is not enough. Members of the community need to see the results of their participation, otherwise they may not participate (E. Wenger-Trayner and B. Wenger-Trayner 2015).

Communities of practice are not conflict free. Wenger (1998) argues that communities of practice are not all harmonious and can involve conflict. If a community of practice is harmonious, it points out that some voices may be silenced (Wenger 2011). However, in some communities of practice, conflict can constitute the very base of the community of practice (Wenger 1998, 77). He states:

> A community of practice is neither a haven of togetherness nor an island of intimacy insulated from political and social relations. Disagreement, challenges, and competition can all be forms of participation. […] In real life, mutual relations among participants are complex mixtures of power and dependence, pleasure and pain, expertise and helplessness, success and failure, amassment and deprivation, alliance and competition, ease and struggle, authority and collegiality, resistance and compliance, anger and tenderness, attraction and repugnance, fun and boredom, trust and suspicion, friendship and hatred. Communities of practice have it all. (Wenger 1998, 77)

Since they cannot isolate themselves from the dynamics of interpersonal relations, communities of practice are harmonious but conflictual, entail diversity but never homogeneity. Wenger (1998, 76) states that "homogeneity is neither a requirement for, nor the result of, the development of a community of practice."

Power relations, which cause conflicts in communities of practice, remain an underdeveloped area in the study of COPT (Fox 2000; Paechter 2003). For Fox (2000), the issue of power and inequality which were prominent in Lave and Wenger's 1991 work, are not addressed in Wenger's later work in 1998. Paechter (2003), who argues for an approach to the learning of particular forms of masculinities and femininities as communities of practice, claims that the impact of power/knowledge is ignored by both Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Paechter (2003 71) states that

> such relations are themselves gendered and clearly have an impact on which communities of practice are constructed, become established and achieve dominance, as well as on which communities of practice particular individuals want to and are permitted to participate in.

Wenger's (Farnsworth et al. 2016) response to the criticism that COPT is lacking an emphasis on power is that COPT is a learning theory, not a theory of power. Yet it is not denied that learning could be a vehicle for the reproduction of power (Farnsworth et al. 2016).

Concepts of identity and community are closely linked in communities of practice. Identity formation in communities of practice is a dual process, which means that identity is both personal and social. Identity is how we see ourselves as well as how others see us. As learning occurs in time and space, identity, too is an ongoing process. Wenger (1998) argues for an approach that does not focus on the individual or the community per se, but rather their mutual constitution in forming the identity. Psychological notion of individuality "misses the interconnectedness of identity" (Wenger 1998, 146); yet, membership in a community of practice should not lead to generalizations and stereotypes with regard to identity. "Engaging in practice" is a significant aspect of identity formation in communities of practice, and neither individual choices nor the social category gained through belonging to the community are enough to gain insight as to how identities are formed. Wenger (1998) emphasizes practicing, and moves away from the individual and community dichotomy by arguing that both should be taken into account. Such a perspective has similarities with practice theory, in the sense that practice theory aims to bring forth practices as the unit of analysis, and discusses that individual agency and social structures are not helpful in understanding social phenomena.

Identity, according to Wenger (1998) is produced through the daily experience of participation in communities of practice. Identity is formed both through participation (practices), and reification (discourses). He recognizes that discourses do have a part to play in identity formation, including what is said

and thought regarding a community of practice as well as what members of the community think or say about themselves. Wenger (1998, 154) defines identity as not a fixed object, but rather a "constant becoming"; "a continuous motion—one that has a momentum of its own in addition to a field of forces." Members of a community of practice keep negotiating their identities, as they engage in specific situations. As they learn in practice, they negotiate their individual identities.

In his article "Mapping Craft Communities of Practice", Stevens (2011) argues that field of craft consists of multiple communities of practice, for each has its own shared repertoire of communal resources, routine sensibilities, material artifacts, vocabularies, styles and so on. So, he categorizes craft communities of practice under categories based on the prominent material each community is engaged with such as textiles, ceramics, woodworking, etc. For this study, I will narrow communities of textile practice further, and focus exclusively on a community of knitting practice.

A study conducted with over 2,600 DIY practitioners using online platforms such as Etsy has revealed that a third of its respondents (34%) attend meetings in person in addition to their participation in online platforms (Kuznetsov and Paulos 2010). Although there is an increasing participation of communities of practice on online platforms, face to face meetings are found to be still preferred by a considerable number of practitioners. This underlines the significance of in situ meetings of communities of practices.

Overall, characteristics of COPT that are discussed in this section can be summarized as follows: Community of practice theory takes on an alternative approach to learning, which is situational, informal and social. Members of a community of practice share a *domain* of interest, around which they gather to *practice*, and thus form a *community*. As the members of a community of practice engage in practices, they learn how to better do what they do. Thus, COPT takes a closer look into how learning shapes identity formation process.

Yet, COPT emphasizes that communities of practice are never homogeneous, but diverse. Though members of a community engage in the same practice, each develops an individual identity, which is subject to outside influences, such as those of other communities of practice. Because the communities are heterogeneous, conflicts and divergences are inevitable.

3.3 Conclusion

To conclude, because of the tacit nature of skill, and because taking up skill requires observation and imitation, making practices enable and encourage practitioners to come together and form communities. This is significant for it moves the attention away from the artifact to making's potential in creating communities and transforming places. The concept of *new domesticity* explains the resurgence of crafts in public space, and how they create *third places*—places of conversation and consumption in urban environments other than home and work. As third places are cultivated, so are *communities of practices*, in which practitioners of shared interest gather together to practice, and create an informal learning environment. By looking at the making process and internal dynamics of and value reproduction within communities of making practices, we may hope to avoid further stigmatization of *made* artifact due to its possible unfinished look when compared to *designed* artifact, and scrutinize a more implicit politicization. Being wary of the celebratory discourse surrounding making and DIY that discusses making and DIY as an alternative, democratizing mode of production to capitalism, I look inside communities of making practice to see what is going on in practice.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I explain the methodological approach that I adopted throughout the research to gain insight into and write about the knitting practice and the knitting course. This research favors a qualitative approach and adopts ethnography as its methodology. Firstly, I present an overview of and explain the background to this study. Secondly, I continue with ethnography as my methodology. Thirdly, I explain how I accessed the field and developed rapport. Then, I explain my data collection and data analysis phases in detail. I conclude the chapter by explaining my concerns regarding reflexivity. I explain how I choose to present my data, and reflect on my position as the researcher.

4.1 Overview of the study

Revisiting the research question, this research aims to discover how knitting know-how, knitting patterns and knits are exchanged in a community of knitting practice and what are the meanings and values associated with those exchanges. To gain insights into and find answers to this research question, I participated at a women's knitting community ("knitting course" from now on, because this is how they define themselves), practiced knitting along with other practitioners, observed the knitting practice as practiced by the community, talked to knitting practitioners so that I understand their practices and values.

The community of knitting practice I chose for this study gathered at a yarn store, and it was not a formal course. Although there are courses on knitting organized by the municipalities around Turkey, the reason I opted for this particular community of knitting practice was that it was informal, which made it a suitable

environment to observe knitting practitioners' natural way of organizing around knitting practice.

Before my entry into the knitting course, I was not a knitter myself. However, I was familiar with the practice: Both of my grandmothers were experienced knitters, who have knit for their beloved ones for years. In addition, my mother is a knitter and a crocheter, who taught me how to knit before my entry into and during my participation in the knitting course. Therefore, I learned how to knit from my immediate family before my entry into the knitting course and during my participation at the knitting course from participants.

I conducted the field work from November 2015 to April 2016 for six months, the first two months of which was part of the graduate course "Anthropological Theory and Method I" delivered by Prof. Dr. Smita Tewari Jassal at the Social Anthropology program at METU during 2015–2016 Fall Academic Year. The ethnographic research lasted six months, two months of which I spent as pilot field work as part of my graduate course. In the following section, I present the research stages.

4.1.1 Research stages

This research consists of four main stages: Literature review, ethnographic inquiry at the field and interpretation of data and drawing conclusions from these interpretations (Figure 4.1). Literature review and ethnographic inquiry parts were simultaneous—I conducted my field work as I did my literature review. After I collected sufficient amount of data at the field, I left the field and started the analysis of data, during which I continued my literature review. Lastly, I wrote my concluding arguments. In what follows, I explain ethnography as my methodology.

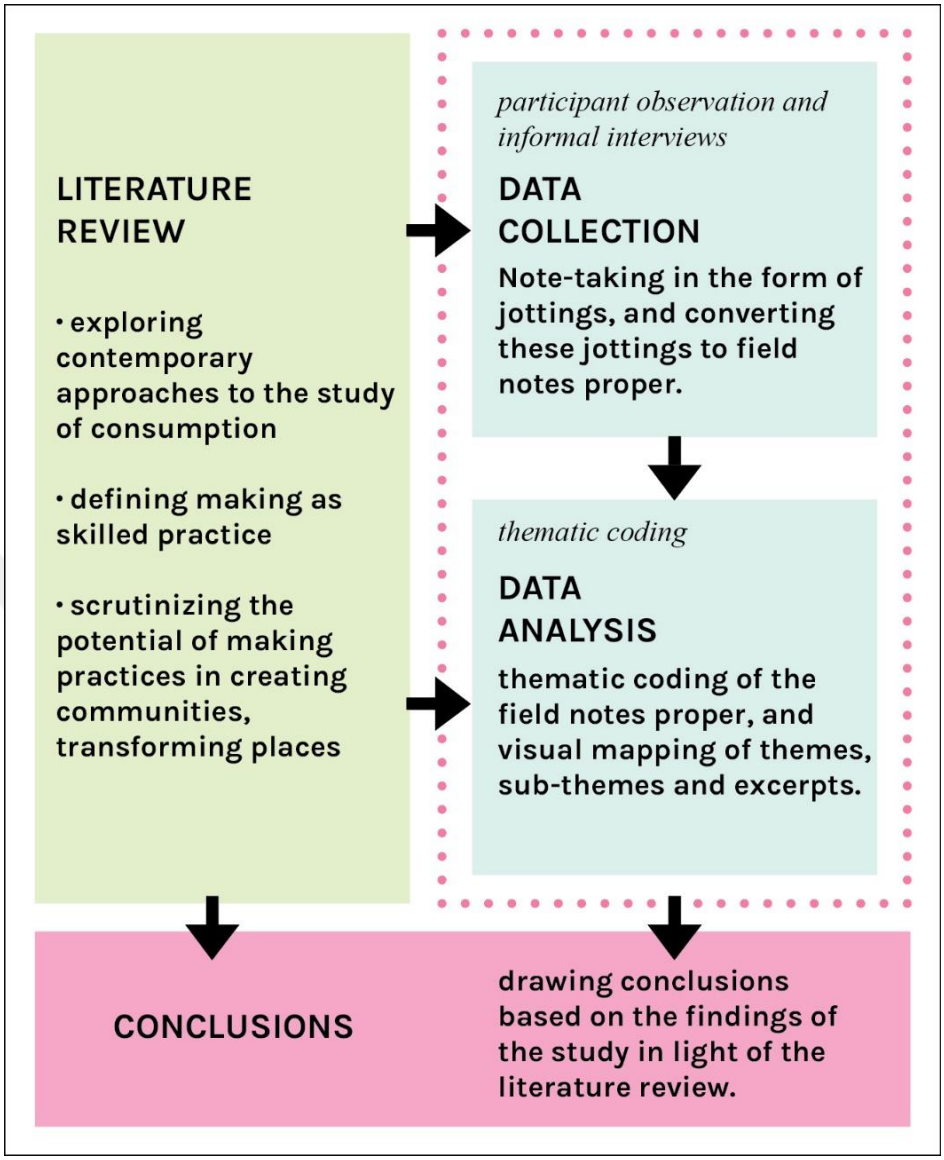

Figure 4.1 Research stages.

4.2 Ethnographic approach

The distinctive feature of any ethnography is that it prioritizes the *native's point of view* (Geertz 1974; Blomberg et al. 1993), and presents it through *thick description* (Geertz 1973) of peoples and activities under microscope. This means that an ethnography goes beyond presenting facts, but interprets the observations made and finds meaning structures.

Ethnography involves observation, informal interviews, and varying degrees of participation (Bernard 2011) in the activities being studied. Depending on participation, ethnography differs: complete participant, participant observer and complete observer (Bernard 2011). Complete observer chooses to observe only, and neither participates in the activities she studies nor interacts with her informants. On the other hand, complete participant participates in the activities she studies without revealing the fact that she is there for research (Bernard 2011). These observational roles are two extremes along a continuum—Ethnographers move between varying degrees of participation not only in different field works, but also during a field work (Blomberg et al. 1993). Participant observer, which, according to Bernard (2011), is the most common role taken at the field, both participates in the activities she studies and in the meantime makes observations. In participant observation, participant observer delves into and experiences the everyday lives of other peoples, becomes one of those people she studies by participating in their activities, gains their trust so that people can feel comfortable around her, and observes and records data. As Bernard (2011, 344) writes, participant observation is "stalking culture in the wild—establishing rapport and learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up."

In this research I participated in what constituted the central practice of my informants; knitting. Since I was an outsider in terms of gender, age, knitting experience and capability, and occupation, knitting alongside my informants provided me an easy access to the knitting course. Immersing myself in the knitting course by knitting not only eased my access to the field as a male, from which I would be denied access under normal circumstances, but also helped develop empathy for my informants, and understand their production processes and their values. Ingold (2007, 2) underlines the significance of such engagement with materials in anthropological enquiries:

> As anthropologists, I thought to myself, might we not learn more about the material composition of the inhabited world by engaging quite

> directly with the stuff we want to understand: by sawing logs, building a wall, knapping a stone or rowing a boat? Could not such engagement – working practically with materials – offer a more powerful procedure of discovery than an approach bent on the abstract analysis of things already made? What academic perversion leads us to speak not of materials and their properties but of the materiality of objects? It seemed to me that the concept of materiality, whatever it might mean, has become a real obstacle to sensible enquiry into materials, their transformations and affordances.

In addition to Ingold, Keller (2001) explains that understanding practitioner thought is significant because the observer has a wider perspective on the practitioner's production process. However, Keller (2001) continues that it is not easy to create those situations in which practitioners are able to articulate their thought that underline their production. To take it one step further, and to step out the outsider limitations that of observer, the researcher herself needs to become a practitioner, as well as an observer, to better understand and reflect upon production process. Conducting a research on a production process and its practitioners requires insider reflexivity to move beyond observer and become a practitioner, for, as Keller argues, "the intentions and thought of the practitioner(s) of an activity differ from the interpretations of those observing the activity" (Keller 2001, 40).

Ethnography, participant observation in particular, does not only enable the design researcher to become an insider and develop insights by practicing and observing. Murphy and Marcus (2013) draw similarities between design and ethnography. They argue that both exist as product and process, which means that both design and ethnography are the enquiry and the outcome of that enquiry. Both are people-centered, research-oriented and reflexive (Murphy and Marcus 2013). Lastly, they argue, both are at the service of more than one thing. In design, success is pronounced, whereas in ethnography, ethical considerations are more at front (Murphy and Marcus 2013). In addition, designers are encouraged to employ ethnography for they might design for settings they know little about and for their designs shape the user practices (Blomberg et al. 1993).

To conclude, in this thesis, I adopted ethnography, and in particular participant observation, as my methodology, for it provides a thorough understanding of the knitting practice as a design researcher. Using ethnography as my methodology, I was able focus on actual processes and materials, become a practitioner of knitting practice within a community and avoid an exoticizing discourse, which only marginalizes crafts within design academic circles.

4.3 Access and developing rapport

I was introduced to the knitting course by my thesis supervisor Harun Kaygan. Upon Kaygan's suggestion, I made my first visit to the knitting course in November, 2015. The knitting course was gendered; all participants were female except for me (see Section 5.1.1.1). The yarn store, on the other hand, had two male workers; Alper and Mete; Alper was the co-owner of the store together with his sister Ayşe, and Mete was a salesperson. Bearing this in mind, for an easy access to the knitting course, I had three woman friends of mine who accompanied me during my early visits to the knitting course: Mavi, Gümüş and Altın. Contrasting with Gümüş and Altın, Mavi was very enthusiastic about the course. She stayed with me during my participant observations and socialized with other participants, store workers and the knitting course tutor. Because I was the friend of Mavi, whom they regarded as very positive and willing, it became easier for the knitting course to accept me and befriend me.

During the six-month ethnographic research, I felt that with each day I became more accepted and beloved. The attitude towards me was very positive and welcoming, to an extent that I sometimes felt overwhelmed by other participants' interest in me. Therefore, I believe that I did not have problem accessing the knitting course. Although I was welcomed at the knitting course, I still did my best to develop rapport: I visited the field often, entered into everyday dialogues, became a knitting course participant, started and finished knitting projects, gave and received feedbacks, made friends and became one of them. As I practiced knitting through different projects I undertook, I became a more experienced

knitter. This helped me feel more comfortable around the knitting course and the yarn store. I remember having joined the knitting course proudly when I was halfway through my jumper project, which I was knitting in fisherman's rib pattern. Because of my enthusiasm into knitting, I gained other participants' respect and trust. They tutored me voluntarily, and asked my designerly opinion on colors and accessories. If I were in need of knitting material, the tutor of the knitting course would let me orientate myself at the yarn store. As I became a knitter and a friend, I blended into the environment better.

At the knitting course, I was never uncomfortable but always alert. This was possible with the friendship I had developed with the tutor, the store owner and some of the participants of the knitting course. However, in my first participation at the knitting course, the course was very crowded with no empty chair for Mavi and I to grab. Therefore, we were left outside, sitting at the corner. However, this changed in time. Having been directed towards the corner of the knitting course in our first visit, I started being offered chairs by the tutor near her later on, so that I could easily ask her questions. When I arrived, they started greeting me by my name. Sometimes, a participant knew me before I knew her. I became a popular face at the knitting course. If I were to leave, they told me to come back. When he was not busy, the store owner approached the knitting table for a quick chat with participants. With me, however, he acted sincerer for I was a male. Standing by the knitting table, he would rest his hand on my shoulder, asking me how I was doing. One of the participants, namely, Birgül was very friendly with me. Upon my arrival after a one-month break, I remember that Birgül, together with the tutor, stood up and kissed me by the cheek[1]. Being called by my name, and kissed by the cheek are examples of how my informants regarded me as an insider. Later, when I left the field, Birgül added me on Facebook, and later followed me on Instagram. Sometime later, I added the tutor on Facebook. We still keep in touch on social media. In the following section, I explain how I collected data at the field.

[1] Kissing by the cheek is a sincere greeting between same-sex friends. However, it is not as common between different sexes.

4.4 Data collection

During my ethnographic inquiry, I visited the field twenty-two times on different days (weekdays and weekends), and in different times in days (at noon, in afternoons, after work). Like in most ethnographic research, I made participant observations and informal interviews during my time in the field. During my participant observations, I knit, did knitting shopping, talked to other participants on anything including knitting. In selecting my informants, I made *purposive sampling* (also known as *judgment sampling*), where researcher relies on her judgment (Bernard 2011). My informants were women except for the store owner Alper. The majority of them were middle-aged housewives, whereas some were older, and retired (see Section 5.1.1.1). I chose participants who were talkative and therefore more willing to chat with me. This helped me to retrieve as much as insight I could during my participant observations. I did not insist on talking with those participants who were shy, and not as comfortable with my presence or with socializing. Yet, I used certain strategies to facilitate conversation. These strategies spanned from looking at the shelves as customers in need of guidance to asking participants general questions about their knits or to introducing them knitting materials and design ideas. I was never rejected for a conversation—participants readily and willingly talked to me about their knitting, their everyday lives or myself.

4.4.1 Note taking

The data I collected through participant observation were in the form of field notes (Bernard 2011). The field notes collected during participant observation can vary from jottings to diary or a log (Bernard 2011). My field notes consist of written notes I took at the knitting course, revised written notes I uploaded on my thesis blog, pictures I took at the knitting course and illustrations I made based on pictures taken after I left the field.

In my field notes, I noted down even the smallest details as I knew each individual excerpt could initiate a code, link with other codes and help develop categories and theories. In addition, I sometimes took pictures using my smartphone to help me remember the setting, the informants, etc. as I convert my jottings into proper field notes.

4.4.1.1 Jottings: In-situ note taking

During my participant observations, I used my smartphone (iPhone 6) and its built-in camera and note taking applications. Owning a smartphone was very common at the knitting course for purposes such as dissemination and decoding of knitting patterns. Therefore, the common use of smartphones in the field was turned into an advantage in note taking, because it did not disrupt the environment, say, as a note-book would do. Rather, it blended into the field: My informants never asked me what I was typing, probably thinking that I was instant messaging. Similar to instant messaging, my field notes were mostly in the form of broken sentences and sometimes due to difficulties I encountered in note taking (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 A screenshot of my field notes that I took on my smartphone. Some of the information is concealed to protect anonymity.

Most of the times I had difficulty in note taking, for I was a participant observer at a commercial setting which was visited by customers. Often, I was engaged with knitting and learning how to knit. When I was busy knitting, I needed to switch between tasks. However, even when I was not knitting, it became difficult to keep track of participants' wording and gestures due to crowd and noise. In addition, competing with the pace of spoken language as I typed proved to be difficult. For this reason, I typed jottings, or sometimes consulted my memory, aiming to keep some things in mind, and note down in detail later (but not too late). Note taking was a challenge throughout the ethnographic research, which I attempted to overcome through aiming to capture the essence of what was being said.

4.4.1.2 Thesis blog: Writing field notes proper

Every evening during my ethnographic research, I removed myself from the field, and revised my jottings and created proper field notes. To keep my field visits in chronological order, I created a log; a private blog for my research process called “Thesis Journey” (Figure 4.3). The blog is private because it includes raw data.

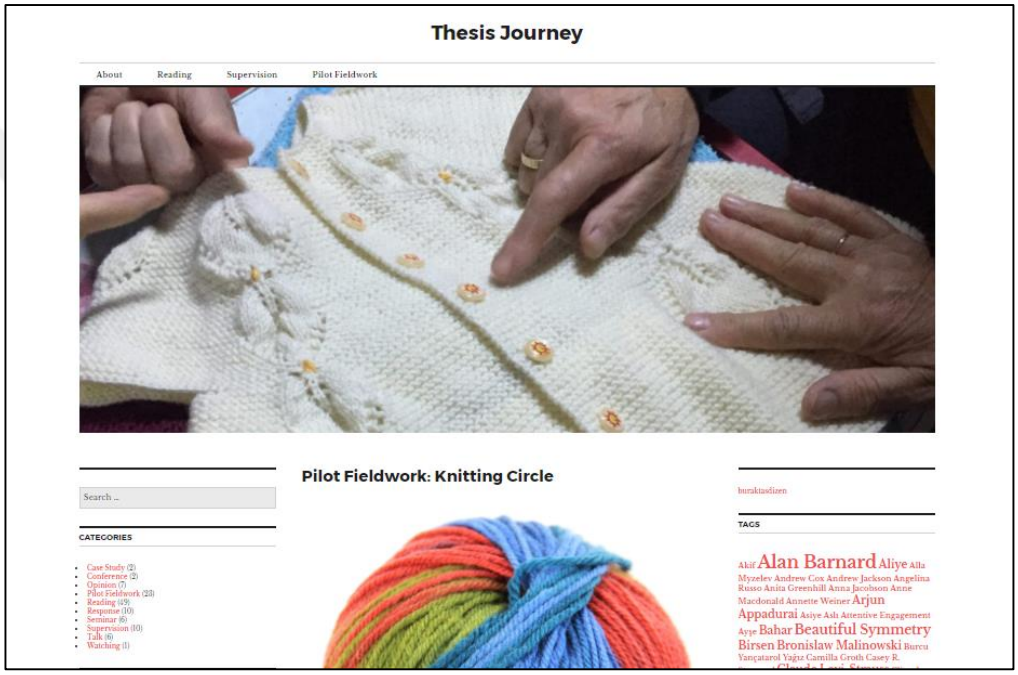

Figure 4.3 A screenshot of my thesis blog “Thesis Journey.”

In addition to keeping field notes in chronological order, a blog opened a space where I was able to gather relevant and inspirational data such as annotated readings and links and reflect on my research process. The use of categories, tags, and the search box enabled a fast and efficient way to retrieve data later on in data analysis phase which I discuss in the following section.

4.5 Data analysis

I made thematic analysis of my data. In thematic analysis, data is coded and patterns are found, through which themes emerge and shed light on the topic

being explored (Boyatzis 1998). The researcher first collects data of various sort such as field diaries, observational data, pictures/video, etc., codes these data and validates them to avoid researcher bias. Only then she creates themes and sub-themes out of the patterns that emerge from the data. In this thesis, I first coded my field notes, then made a visual mapping to better approach my data. This was an iterative process, so I updated my codes as I moved back and forth between coding and visual mapping processes. During these phases, themes and sub-themes emerged-clusters of field notes according to themes. Later, these themes and sub-themes provided the foundation upon which I built my thesis chapters and sections. In the following sections, I explain how I coded my field notes and created a visual map by using them.

4.5.1 Coding the field notes

In order to analyze my field notes, I first coded them. Because I knew each excerpt from the field notes could lead into an insight, I did not take out any sentence from my field notes. "If it moves, code it" (Richards and Morse 2007, 146) became my motto, as I converted my twenty-two field visits into over two-hundred meaningful excerpts.

My coding approach was descriptive coding, also known as topic coding, which, according to Saldaña (2009, 70), "summarizes in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data." Descriptive coding enabled me organize huge corpus of data. Still, I approached my field notes very intuitively in an iterative process: Codes were made and unmade, separate data were connected with imaginary arrows and disconnected. My approach resonates with that of Saldaña's (2009, 8), who argues that "coding is a heuristic (from the Greek, meaning to "discover") —an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas to follow."

Although the amount of data for analysis was beyond measure, my approach to analysis was very hands-on and individual: I did not use any particular software

tailored to qualitative research, rather I opted for the software I already knew, so that the frustration of learning a software would not intervene in the analysis process. In creating a *codebook* (Saldaña 2009, 21), I worked on Google Sheets (Figure 4.4). The reason I opted for Google Sheets is because, similar to Microsoft Excel, it allowed me work between columns, and access, edit and share the file online with my thesis supervisor. On Google Sheets, I first created four columns for different purposes. I allocated the first column for each excerpt, that is, the smallest meaningful data taken from my ethnographic field notes. I color-coded each field visit so that I could conveniently retrieve the original time of excerpt when I needed. I allocated the second column for my codes. The codes were more than one as in *simultaneous coding* (Saldaña 2009, 62) for I did not yet know under which theme I would use, say, a particular quotation of an informant. I named the third and fourth columns as "Themes" and "Subthemes", respectively. As I coded my field notes, themes and subthemes emerged, which later shaped the chapters of this thesis.

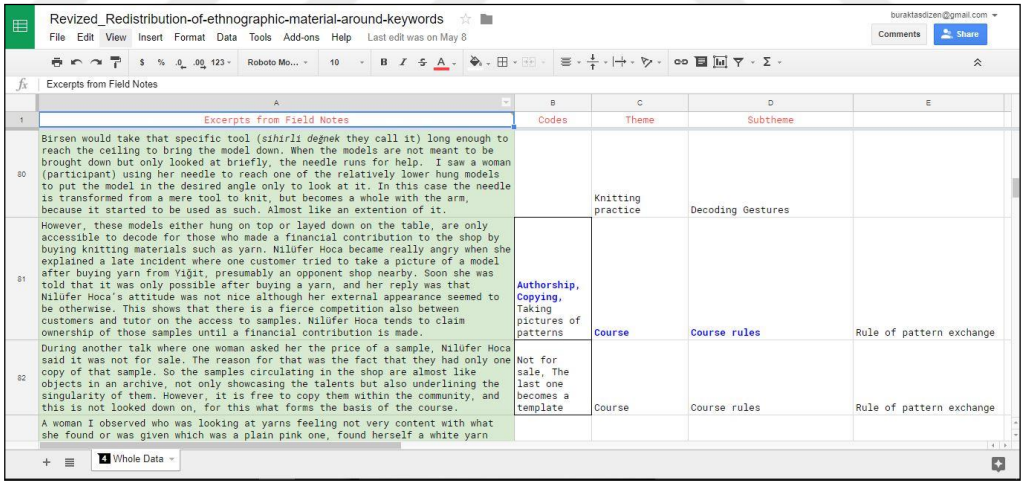

Figure 4.4 Coding the field notes on Google Sheets.

However, in the coding and creating a codebook phase, my analysis was not finished. Because Google Sheets, similar to a blog post, provides a linear perspective on data, I felt the urge to create a more interrelated mapping in which I would make various connections, and annotations. In the next section, I explain how I created the visual map.

4.5.2 Visual mapping the field notes

In order to create the visual map, I used VUE (Visual Understanding Environment) (Figure 4.5), which helps to map out field notes visually by creating nodes and links. With the map, I was able to see and approach my data corpus holistically. Such a holistic approach was lacking in coding and writing phases. Visual map helped me imagine better connections between data, which enriched my interpretation of my field notes and outline of my analysis chapters and sections.

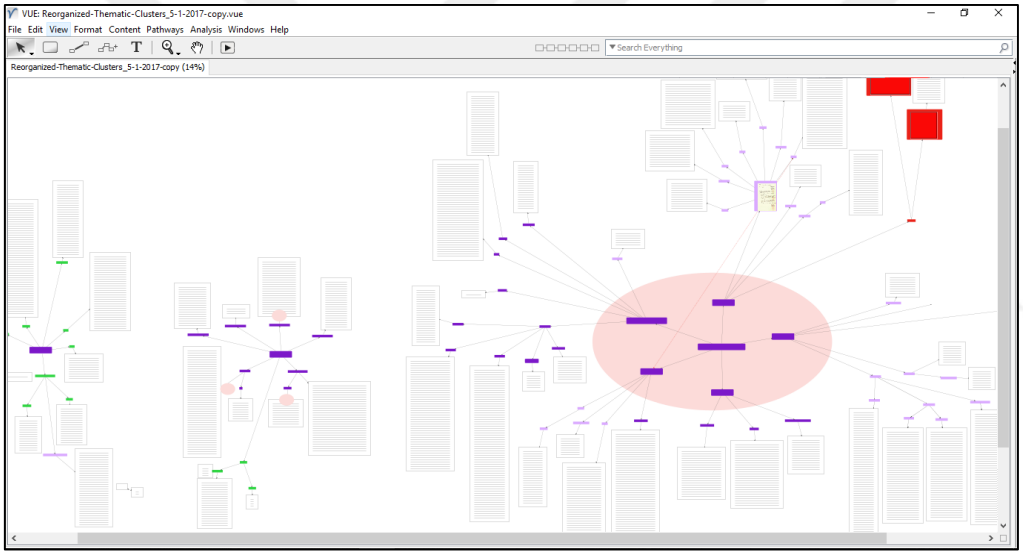

Figure 4.5 Visual mapping of field notes according to themes and subthemes using VUE Software.

Visual mapping of my field notes was a transitional process, after coding and before writing, whose boundaries were very blurred. For instance, the visual map helped me see new connections and update my codes. During writing, every time I felt lost in data, I went back to the map, found where I was at that moment and how that excerpt was connected to other data. Therefore, the visual map became the compass I depended on when I was lost in data or when I needed a fresh perspective.

In order to validate codes, themes and subthemes and prevent researcher bias, my supervisor and I collaborated in revising the codes. Visual map not only became a visual tool in helping us navigate in the large amount of data, but also acted as a communication tool between me and my supervisor, which, we then used to double check codes. In the next section, I explain my ethical considerations during research and how I choose to present my data.

4.6 Ethical considerations and presentation of data

Throughout the thesis, I employed certain strategies to better present my data. Firstly, I translated the field notes from their original Turkish and presented them in block-quote format. I tried to incorporate the words of my informants in Turkish by staying true their wording as much as possible to keep the original tone and impact of some quotes. The original Turkish quotations follow English translations in italics in brackets. Secondly, because I developed rapport, informants of my study openly talked to me about anything. This was invaluable for the research, yet I needed to protect anonymity. In order to ensure anonymity, I created pseudonyms for the informants of the study and for the store (see Section 4.7). By doing so, any information that might provide hints as to who an informant could be at a particular instance or where the ethnographic field research was conducted are carefully considered and eliminated. Thirdly, I converted the pictures that I took during participant observations into illustrations to secure anonymity and eliminate any ethical problem that might arise. Fourthly, because there were too many informants, I added a glossary of informant names that supply short descriptions for each informant of the study in order for the reader to follow (see Appendix A). In this way, I hope for a better organization throughout the thesis and a just representation of knitting practice and knitting course participants.

4.7 Researcher's position

The ethnographer needs to be aware of her position as the author, and the implications of this position in order to *speak about* instead of *speaking for* (Abu-Lughod 1991). In this research, the ethnographic authority is twofold. First one regards the authority of researcher as the author; the person who represents the people she studies. Second one regards the researcher being a designer and a design academic, and the informants being knitters who do not hold design degrees. In order to overcome the tendency to assert authority and create stereotypes, throughout my participation at the knitting course, I have become a participant at the knitting course and a friend of the course tutor, and yarn store workers. From time to time, I caught myself giving hand to the tutor and the staff in everyday tasks (see Section 6.2.3). In this way, I was able to develop empathy with my informants because I was an insider. Being attentive to my position at the field, becoming one of the people I studied, runs the risk of identifying with my informants' points of view.

Second one is related to the hierarchical relation between professional and non-professional design practices. Because I, as someone who was trained in design and who works in design academia, speak in and represent the voice of professional design practice. However, non-professional design practices, such as knitting practice as practiced by knitting course participants, stay voiceless within design academic circles: It is merely an object of study, let alone being recognized as a design practice (see Section 3.1). Due to my designer background, I had a biased opinion of knitting practice, which was unmade as I participated at the knitting course. Reflecting upon my own journey throughout the research, I aimed to amplify the voice of knitting practice for its recognition as a design practice. For that, I made a mapping of knitting in my analysis chapter, namely, "Introduction to knitting practice at the knitting course." By going through steps of and propriety making and unmaking around knitting practice, I hope for a just representation.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD

In this chapter, I make an introduction to the fieldwork environment, myself as the researcher and the knitting practice. Firstly, I introduce the yarn store and the knitting course. Secondly, I discuss how I was perceived at the knitting course. Thirdly, I introduce knitting practice with its vocabulary and steps prevalent at the knitting course.

5.1 Introduction to the knitting course and an overview of the yarn store

The knitting course gathered in a yarn store called *Yün Dünyası* which was located in an arcade/gallery building [*pasaj*] in a downtown area in a city in Turkey every day except Sundays. The store had two owners, who were brother and sister (Alper and Ayşe, respectively), and there were two knitting tutors, who were sisters (Suzan and Nergis). Only Alper and salesperson Mete were every day at the store, whereas Ayşe visited the store as often as she could after her daytime teaching at a local high school. Knitting tutors shared their tutoring on a day-to-day basis: Nergis, whose days I attended, taught on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Suzan taught on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On Sundays, the store was closed and it was a day-off for all.

At the yarn store, there were different tasks that needed to be done. In running of the store, tasks revolved around the yarn store customer. Customers were welcomed and helped in what they needed. Depending on whether they did any shopping, customer questions regarding the knitting course, or any knitting pattern was explained or denied. At the cash register, money transactions were made with the customer. In running of the knitting course, tasks revolved around

knitting patterns: Instructions for any knitting pattern were given to knitting course participants, or to customers in case they made any prior payment at the cash register.

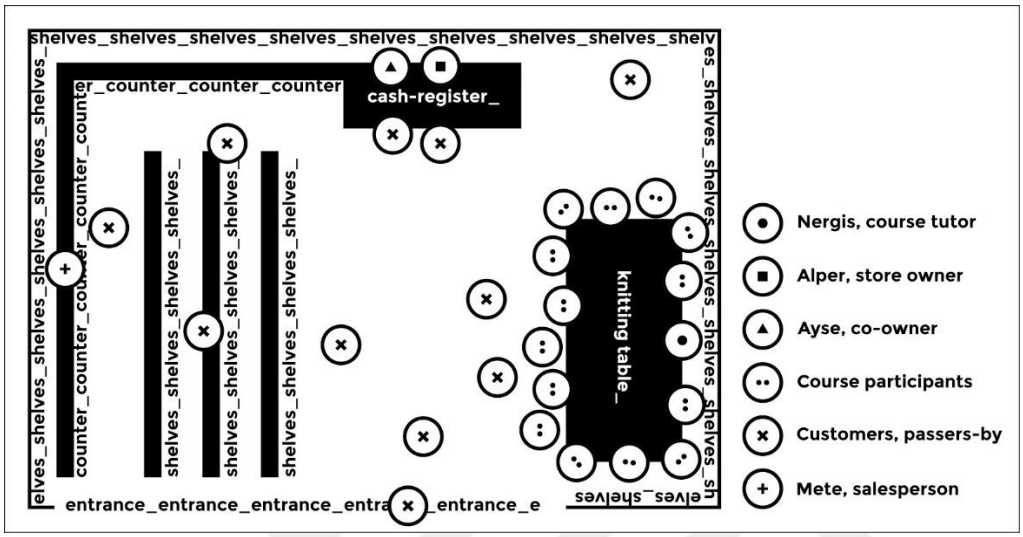

Figure 5.1 Unscaled Drawing of *Yün Dünyası*. (Illustration by the author)

The yarn store was not spacious, which means that it did not offer a quiet, peaceful shopping experience. The store became quiet only during the beginning and end of working hours, which were the brunch hours around 11am, and evening hours around 7pm. The store consisted of three main sections; the knitting table, the cash register and the accessories section. The knitting course (the right part on Figure 5.1) emerged as the most vibrant one among these three sections. There was an ongoing pursuit at the store, which happened mostly around the knitting table. Those who were on the pursuit were participants of the knitting course, or the passers-by. Some people watched over a new knitting pattern for a jumper, some customers could not decide the appropriate color of a yarn and thus were after suggestions, some were trying to match buttons for a baby suit. At the cash register (the upper middle on Figure 5.1), transactions were made. The store-owners Alper and Ayşe were found there. Here was the store's inventory, that is, Ayşe's knitting supplies placed in a drawer, which Ayşe sometimes lent to participants. Sometimes Nergis left the knitting course to help the cash register during busy moments or in the absence of Alper and Ayşe. The

cash register, too, got crowded from time to time, yet, the crowd was only temporary. Passers-by made their payments, asked quick questions if they had any, and soon they left. The back part of the store (the left part on Figure 5.1), was home to the accessories section. Separated from the knitting course with shelves, customers were not as distracted as when near the knitting course, due to the more individual shopping experience created. Mostly the salesperson Mete was found here. The accessories section was very silent, and sometimes empty of visitors, which contrasted with the vibrant atmosphere of the rest of the store.

Considering the different sections that resided at the store, and the different individuals who visited it, the environment was always vibrant. It could be overcrowded and hectic from time to time. Thus, it became hard to trace the roles of individuals and relations between them. Below is an excerpt from my field notes that I took during one of my early visits, which shows how an outsider can feel upon her first visit.

> The environment was very chaotic. For instance, I couldn't tell who was a participant, who was a customer and who was a salesperson and who ran the store. The boundaries were *very* blurred. Customers were suggesting each other types of yarns, and Suzan was also making customers feel at home by guiding them. There was constant noise, and people were moving around all the time.

To sum up, *Yün Dünyası* was not a typical yarn store due to the organization and the conduct of the store (see Section 6.2). The accessories section, although it offered a conventional shopping experience, lapsed into silence most of the time, whereas the knitting course and the surrounding shelves were much visited and never decreased in popularity. This is telling in the sense that the knitting course played, and was desired to play, a central role at the yarn store. This is because the knitting course helped a commercial space thrive with community spirit, cultivated through knitting practice, dissemination of knitting patterns, knitting skill and knitting know-how. In the rest of this chapter, I introduce the knitting course.

5.1.1 Knitting course

The knitting course gathered around the knitting patterns showcased on knit artifacts, which were provided primarily by the course tutor Nergis, and the dissemination of knitting skill and know-how, which were cultivated by both the tutor and the participants. Passers-by were usually drawn to the knitting table for a quick learning session of new knitting patterns and know-how. The regular participants kept an eye on new patterns for their future knitting projects before they finished the project they were busy with. In the following sections, I introduce the profile of the knitting course participants and discuss how the knitting course enabled learning, support and socialization among participants.

5.1.1.1 Profile of the knitting course participants

The participants of the knitting course were exclusively middle-aged women knitters (see Appendix A for a list of participants). Most participants were full-time housewives. Majority of them were retired women. There was a minority of working women visiting on later hours in the evening and on Saturdays. The participant profile was diverse regarding class background, worldview, knitting experience and capabilities, and motivations for knitting. Some were more experienced, whereas some others like myself were novices. Some knit only for pleasure, some for herself and beloved ones, whereas others knit for economic purposes. The knits were exclusively garments to wear, baby clothing being very popular and making the majority of the knits being produced.

5.1.1.2 The knitting table

Despite the vibrant and sometimes chaotic environment, the knitting course gathered in a somewhat defined area, around a table, which held a central position at the store. Nergis always sat on the same chair, facing the store entrance and the cash register, whereas the position of participants changed with

each gathering. Although it was a plain one, the table was enhanced visually, as revealed in my description taken from my field notes.

> We sat around a rectangular table on which there was a colorful knit. This knit was being protected by a transparent, plastic coating placed on top of it. While being displayed, the beautiful knit formed the base of the knitting course without being damaged. There were different knits placed on the table, which some participants were using as templates.

The knitting table was positioned to the left of the store entrance (Figure 5.1), making it visible for the passers-by. In this way, the knitting table grabbed the attention first, inviting the passers-by into the store. Potential customers were drawn into the table, followed by their comments on the knitting course.

> I heard two passers-by talking as they made their way into the store. Referring to the knitting table, one of them said: "It's a knitting school, here. [*Örgü okulu bura.*]" The other replied: "Indeed it is, how wonderful! [*Örgü okulu gibi ya, maşallah!*]"

Knitting table was presented to curious passers-by as "knitting course" [*örgü kursu*] or "free knitting course" [*ücretsiz örgü kursu*], because there was no participation fee. On the other hand, the participants were required to buy their material from the store, and this meant that participation was not completely free of charge. More or less, the course was described as follows: "Here we have our knitting course. Our course is free. You buy the materials at the store, and our tutor gives instructions on patterns. [*Burada örgü kursumuz var. Kursumuz ücretsiz. Malzemeleri buradan alıyorsunuz, Hocamız*[2] *size örnekleri gösteriyor.*]" I have observed many times that when the knitting course was introduced, the core rule of the course was always mentioned, with "course" [*kurs*] and "tutoring/introducing patterns" [*örnek/model göstermek*] emphasized. The following instance reveals how the knitting course was introduced to customers at the yarn store.

[2] *Hocam* is a Turkish way to address teachers in an educational setting.

> As we were sitting and knitting, a customer came towards the table and asked whether they knit traverse patterns. Nergis confirmed in a distant manner, probably to keep her distance so that the customer would not directly ask for know-how. Then the customer, who probably had prior knowledge on how the store was running, asked what she needed to do to learn those patterns. Then Nergis gave the customer the days she taught at the store including the hours. Ayşe did not add those days that Suzan taught. Nergis said that she could come on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 11am and 6pm. Then the customer replied by asking whether it was possible to join in between these hours, thinking that the course followed a conventional structure. This conventional idea of the course might stem from her experience from another knitting course. Then Ayşe replied: "Our course is not like that. You buy a yarn from the store, and in return we show and teach you knitting patterns." [*Bizim kursumuz öyle değil. Önce buradan bir yün alıyorsunuz, ondan sonra Hocamız size model gösteriyor.*]"

The table was surrounded by chairs and stools, chairs being the favorite of participants. Participants preferred chairs, because they had a larger sitting area and a back, onto which they could lean. I have witnessed many times that a participant left her stool for a chair that became available upon another participant's departure. Sometimes, an empty chair was occupied, although its user was still around the store. There was a constant competition for chairs.

Participants clustered around the table, although not each and every participant had the chance to claim space at the knitting table each time. The table was not spacious enough to allow space for each participant, rather it was a space for the display of knitting patterns on knit garments. To put it more clearly, the table was not defined and encouraged as the working area for participants; it was where the knitting materials were placed for display purposes. From time to time, participants were warned if they occupied the space for too long, that is, if they started putting their knit or their knitting needles on the table. Tea glasses were kindly requested to be moved away from the table, for they could destroy knitting patterns in case they spilled.

When the table was fully occupied, a participant requested another one to allow some space for her so that she could also join. There were those participants who did not make it a problem when they could not join the table; they positioned their chair somewhere at the back of other participants towards the shelves. As participants were kept at a distance, certain things were deliberately chosen to occupy this central position at the store: the knit fabric placed on table, knitting patterns displayed on the table and a handful of papers and pens to note down the details of a pattern. However, participants' position and the knitting patterns changed. With each new day, a different combination of sitting arrangement and knitting patterns emerged. The entrance of the store was never occupied.

At first glance, the knitting table seemed to be a working area of participants, as they gathered around it knitting. However, participant interaction with the knitting table was carefully controlled by Nergis, for the table was a place for the display and the decoding of knitting patterns placed around the table. The table was meant to be the hub of the store, both as an attraction point and as the center of all activity, and not a (mere) crowded working table. In the following sections, I focus on the knitting course as a place for learning, affirmative support and socialization.

5.1.1.3 Knitting course as a place for learning

The knitting course did not directly communicate itself as a conventional course would do. Rather, passers-by who saw the knitting course for the first time, stopped where they were (usually at the entrance), felt puzzled and tried to understand what this gathering was about. Then, an explanation was made to the passers-by by the course tutor, and seldom by the store owners, as mentioned in the previous section. The knitting course was not self-explanatory, because it was not conventional in the sense that a commercial store was not a formal learning environment. In this sense, the course was a community of knitting practice—knitters gathered on a shared interest that was knitting, formed a community, and cultivated an informal and social learning environment as they

practiced knitting. I discuss learning practices at the knitting later in more detail (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2.1). The learning was the learning of general knitting know-how and of knitting patterns.

5.1.1.4 Knitting course as a place for affirmative support

Since the knitting course hosted a wide variety of knitters regarding their knitting capabilities, interactions occurred between the novice and the experienced. The environment was very affirmative, as revealed by supportive comments given to the novice, which helped make the store a place for support. The novices, in case Nergis was busy or absent, consulted those who had more experience than themselves. The experienced supported those who were less experienced, yet willing to learn. As I was and still am a novice knitter, who gets puzzled during encountered mistakes, I have experienced the help of and welcomed the suggestions from those more experienced participants. The following instance illustrates how during my early days at the knitting course I received positive and encouraging feedback on a rather basic scarf project.

> I showed them [other participants] the scarf I finished, which I had started out during the previous session. Because I knit in stockinette stitch, the edges of the scarf were coiled up. When I told them [other participants] about this, one of the participants who was sitting next to Nergis said to me in a supportive way that the piece was really nice. She showed the white baby bootie she was knitting and said that she could not even knit that small one she had. I told her that knitting booties was more difficult and what I knit was a plain pattern from start to end.

Despite the unintended consequences of my finished knit garment (coiled-up edges), one participant commented on my work in a positive and affirmative way to the extent that she devalued her own work (in order perhaps to make me feel better).

> Meanwhile, I was doing the seed stitch [*pirinç örgü*]. Maybe I should say that I was trying to. Although it is seemingly an easy stitch, one stockinette followed by a reverse-stockinette [*bir ters bir düz*], it is very

> difficult to accomplish consistency in tension as well as staying on the right track by not confusing the two stitches. At some point, Ayşe came near me only to say: "Oh, you are really knitting the seed stitch? Isn't this the one stockinette, one reverse stockinette? That I cannot do. [*Resmen pirinç örüyorsun? Bu bir ters bir düz değil mi, işte ben bunu öremiyorum.*]" My answer to her astonishment was that the piece was started out by my grandmother, and I have only started to build on top of it, which I was kind of failing.

The knitting course enabled an informal learning environment of knitters with diverse levels of knitting capabilities and knitting know-how. Some participants had years of experience in knitting, whereas some were beginners. Some knew the techniques, others had an eye for the colors. Because there was no rule regarding seating arrangement, the beginner participant might sit next to the most experienced participant and benefit from her knitting know-how. So thrived the knitting course as a community of knitting practice through the informal interactions of participants, each of which had a unique level of knitting know-how. This diversity is what made the knitting course a community of knitting practice, for homogeneity is not necessarily a feature of any community of practice (Wenger 1998). I discuss learning practices at the knitting later in more detail (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2.1). The knitting course participants were affirmative of other participants' works which created a positive and supportive atmosphere for the development of the novice. It also contributed to propriety making at the course, which I discuss later (see Section 7.2.3). In the next section, I explain how knitting course was a means to socialization for the participants.

5.1.1.5 Knitting course as a means of socialization

Beside learning, the knitting course enabled socialization. Knitters met new knitters, talked of everyday problems, offered suggestions, formed social bonds. There were times when snacks popped up, guests were hosted over Turkish coffee followed by fortune telling sessions, and tea offers were made by the tutor,

or by the participants. Towards the evening, Nergis smoked one cigarette. Sometimes I overheard gossiping.

Snacks were very common and significant constituents of sociality at the knitting course. They were never consumed individually, and were always shared with others. It was very often that a participant who had food with her brought it to the table spontaneously, and shared it with those who were hungry. One second participants were knitting, tutoring, and chatting, and the other second they were eating, having paused their routine knitting steps. Sometimes the food was a proper meal such as fried peppers with yogurt [*yoğurtlu biber kızartması*], sometimes it was a mere loaf of bread. Pop-up snacks revealed the spontaneous and unforeseeable nature of eating at the knitting course.

The sociality at the knitting course was also apparent in drinking tea together. There was a tea shop [*çay ocağı*] nearby, which served the whole floor, from which tea orders were made. Tea orders, too, were never made individually. When the tea order was to be made, a question was raised: "Who wants some tea? [*Kim çay istiyor?*]" Then, some participants were asked by their name whether they would like to have tea: "Burak, would you like some tea [*Burak'çığım sen çay alıyor musun?*]" After deciding on the exact number of teas to be ordered, one of the participants would go to the tea shop to make the order. Soon, a waiter would appear with a tea tray, and deliver it to those who ordered. The payments for the teas were made by a voluntary participant either during the order or as the tea arrived. We drank our teas as we knit and chatted, with some people drinking as they knit. Those who preferred sugar added the sugar cubes that came with the teas. Those sugar cubes that were left were spared carefully in her personal bag by Nergis for later consumption.

In this sense, the yarn store and the knitting course it embodied is an example of a *third place*, a mixture of public and private space (Johnson 2010, see Section 3.2.4), because it was a separate place in urban environment, away from home and work. Although it was a public space, the yarn store was appropriated by

knitting course participants and was domesticated by user practices, resulting in a cozy, informal atmosphere. Knitting course participants felt very comfortable at the store—Üzüm, despite the presence of me, Alper and Mete, would take off her headscarf at the knitting course, and wore it back as she left. Informality of learning, and socialization it brought along differentiated the store not only from its competitors, but also from any store. The store had an unpretentious look and a warm and welcoming attitude, which contributed to its third place characteristics. Most participants were regulars; they would visit the place on an ongoing basis. For instance, I saw the same faces during my visit, which occurred months after the ethnographic field work. Conversation, the main activity of third places, was a significant constituent of the knitting course, too. In addition, similar to Stitch'n Bitch groups (see Section 3.2.4), the knitting course, too, witnessed craft production.

Introduced as "knitting course" to the passers-by, the knitting course was attributed names such as "ladies' coffeeshop" [*bayanlar kahvesi*] and "knitting café" [*örgü kafe*]. Depending on the person and on the context, this café-like socialization of the knitting course, enriched by pop-up snacks, tea and ongoing conversations, was criticized or celebrated. The vibrancy that prevailed was not always welcome among the participants of the knitting course and was criticized as "crowd" by some of them.

> Pembe, one of Nergis' friends in the course just like Birgül and Seden, was complaining about the crowd at the store on Saturdays. She was saying that they told the housewives not to come on Saturdays but rather let the working women come on that day. She said: "If three of them [participants] are working women, thirty of them are housewives. And they come to sit and chat. I wouldn't mind if they drop by to ask something and leave… [*Üçü çalışansa, otuzu evhanımı. Hayır bir de gelip oturuyorlar, bir şey sorup gitse neyse…*]" One of the participants replied: "It has become a ladies' coffeeshop here. [*Bayanlar kahvesi oldu burası.*]"

Although the socialization at the knitting course was criticized by a regular participant such as Pembe, Alper and Nergis put forward socialization as one of

the unique attributes of the knitting course, and used it for the promotion of the store, naming the knitting course "knitting café" [*örgü kafe*] during a radio broadcast with a local radio channel.

> Alper: For example, if you had come on Saturday and seen here. It was like a knitting café here. There is knitting, there is food, there is everything. [*Mesela cumartesi gelseydiniz, burayı bir görseydiniz. Örgü kafe gibi bir durum oldu yani. Hem örgü, hem gıda, hem yiyecek her şey mevcut.*]
> (...)
> Nergis: We have great parties here. Ladies bring cakes, pastries, *kısır*. We eat and we drink tea. So, this place is really a knitting café. [*Elbette, ha burada çok güzel partilerimiz oluyor. Hanımlar sağ olsunlar pastalar, börekler, kısırlar getiriyorlar. Çay içiyoruz. Pasta, börek yiyoruz. Yani burası bir nevi örgü kafe gibi bir yer.*]

Nergis, although she drew a positive portrait of the sociality at the knitting course, attempted to govern the crowd when it became louder than she could handle. Similar to Pembe's complaint of the environment's crowdedness, Nergis' "Ladies, be quiet! [*Hanımlar, lütfen sessiz!*]" requests could not create a lasting impact. During such instances, she raised her voice to attract attention (once I saw her clap her hands), speaking out loud her request towards a quiet environment. What followed was a silence that was only temporary. After a certain time, the knitting course went back to its usual rhythm, with participants covering a wide range of conversation topics from knitting to daily chores, from politics to magazine figures.

> Two women's dialogue was mostly revolving around stuff other than knitting. They talked about [an actress] and how she was willing to kiss a man in a series, for this was what was required from an actress. Almıla despised the actress claiming she had a drug addiction and was therefore irresponsible. However, that man she was willing to kiss was a "family man."

As the above instance shows, there were times when participants neither exchanged know-how or ideas on knitting, nor gave or received advice on knitting patterns. Sometimes, knitting was only a means to socialization, an

allocated time after work, which was not confined within the boundaries of home and work. However, socialization, which the knitting course enabled, was not limited with participants. Course tutors and store owners, too, spent their idle time around the knitting course, being chatty as they maintained their friendships. For instance, Nergis hosted spontaneous guests from time to time, accompanied by a combination of tea, Turkish coffee and a cigarette. Her guests were woman friends of hers, who were outsiders to the knitting course. When Nergis hosted guests at the knitting course, participants kept quiet. They were not as quiet when Nergis tutored participants. Guests deserved respect. The tutor needed to be able to carry on a peaceful conversation with her guest without having to think about problems of novice knitters. Participants also paused their socialization for a while and focused on their knitting, listening to Nergis and her guest. Participants' giving ear to the conversation between tutor and her guest seems to be a covert activity: They knit, and they did not say much. A guest was one of the most effective ways to silence the knitting course. Even the presence of Alper, who was both male and the owner of the store, did not create the same impact. On the contrary, Alper, too, joined the knitting course towards the end of the day from time to time to find company.

To sum up, knitting course enabled, encouraged and sometimes discouraged socialization of those gathered around it, be they tutors, participants, customers or store owners. Knitting appears as a means to get through the day by meeting other people. Sometimes it was criticized for it resulted in an overcrowded place, yet individuals did not refrain from socialization which contributed to the store's and knitting course's liveliness.

5.1.2 The shopping experience

The walls of the store were covered with built-in shelves from the ground to the ceiling. The shelves were box-shaped to stow the yarns, and materials to be sold were placed into these box shelves. There were neither orientation signs regarding material category, nor price tags. If there was any sign, it was hand-

written on the back of a found paper. The lack of organization in material display added to the store's plain and unpretentious look.

The display of knit garments did not take place only at the knitting table. Some were hanging on the rope above the table, attracting attention from the very entrance. This type of display added a domestic feel to the store, in the sense that it was a similar way of hanging laundry at homes. When a certain material such as a yarn or a knit garment was not within reach, "magic wand" [*sihirli değnek*] would run for help. Magic wand was a stick whose tip helped to grab a material that was beyond reach. Sometimes the magic wand failed and the yarn fell to the ground, or on a participant's head. I have never seen a knit garment fall. They were rarely brought down from the rope.

The store did not choose to inform its customers through price tags or orientation signs. What they offered was an unconventional shopping experience, enhanced through the assistance of experienced knitters, be they course tutors or course participants. Ayşe, too, assisted customers during their shopping, however she was not as willing or as artful as Nergis. Sometimes, course participants stood up and took care of those customers who were in need of guidance. The guidance that was offered at the store differed from that of a typical salesperson relationship in the sense that the guides were practitioners of the knitting practice, and the customers of the very store. So, they had the ability to reflect on the materials, critically evaluate and make their suggestions accordingly. Customers and salespersons entered dialogues during which they commented and critiqued, exchanged ideas, and made informed shopping decisions. The available guidance of those who were themselves practitioners of knitting and customers of the yarn store, and the available outcomes of the knitting processes during which the store materials were employed provided an unconventional shopping experience.

5.1.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the knitting course was a community of knitting practice that gathered at a yarn store, cultivating a third place for the knitting course participants. It was a community of practice because knitting course cultivated learning in an informal way. The yarn store was a third place because it was an informal, and unpretentious looking place, with low barrier for entry. Participants, or regulars were women coming from diverse backgrounds regarding age, occupation, knitting capabilities etc. This created a heterogeneity which enriched the knitting course both in terms of learning opportunities and socialization. The presence of knitting practitioners at the yarn store differentiated the store from its competitors as it enabled the everyday interactions between customers who were shopping and who were making. In the following section, I discuss the steps of and values around knitting practice for a thorough understanding of the practice before moving further.

5.2 How I was perceived at the knitting course

A young participant like myself was very rare. This was revealed during my first visit to the store and the knitting course, when Suzan said: "Look, youngsters are interested, too! [*Bakın gençler de ilgileniyor!*]" following my interest at the knitting course. In order to emasculate my presence at the knitting course and pave the way towards my acceptance, there were certain strategies that I employed. One of them was during the early phases of my participation. When asked what or for whom I was knitting, I told my informants that I was knitting a scarf for my grandmother. In this way, I reminded them of the fact that I was the grandson of a woman just like them, so my presence at the knitting course was not a threat. This kind of mother-son, grandmother-grandson relationship was apparent in how they approached me, too. Once, a customer whom I saw for the first time, became surprised to see me knitting. Caressing my head, she said: "Are YOU also knitting? [*Sen de mi örüyorsun?*]" Besides, my physical appearance and the fact that I was a university student contributed to the notion

that I was just a boy. If there was a threat at the knitting course, it was naughty jokes made by other participants, not my male presence. The following instance illustrates how I was regarded as a kid.

> Shop owners were recycling old packages as price tags by simply tearing them apart, and writing on their blank backs. Gökçen found one such price tag on the floor and started showing it to everyone. On the front part, there was a handwritten sign which gave information on yarn name and price. At the back, there was a model posing with a bra. Gökçen started laughing at the absurdity of the combination of the model with a bra with a price tag which read "Baby candy, three liras [*Bebe şekerim, üç lira*]" Nergis, too, enjoyed the joke. Thinking that this was a naughty joke, Nergis then said: "Gökçen, please decrease your volume. [*Gökçen, lütfen volümünü düşür.*]" This was followed by a warning made by another participant. Implying me, she said: "There is a kid. [*Çocuk var.*]" Gökçen then replied: "He is not a kid. [*O çocuk değil ki.*]"

During my participant observations at the knitting course, I got into dialogue with various participants, who were surprised to see me knitting. Their surprises were often followed by encouraging words frequently in the form of examples of different men they knew, who were also knitting. These examples included their close family members such as brothers and sons and media representations of male knitters. One example was a woman, sitting around the knitting table, smiling at me and saying: "Don't get me wrong, I really like that you are knitting. In fact, it was my older brother who taught me how to use the sewing machine. [*Yanlış anlama, örgü örmen çok güzel. Bana da abim dikiş makinasını öğretmişti.*]" In addition to their close family members, there were also examples of men they saw on TV. Once, one participant gave the example of male knitters in an Anatolian village who knit socks, and how this used to be a tradition, which was now forgotten. Another participant talked about Cemil İpekçi, an openly gay fashion designer in Turkey. Implying his sexuality, she said that it was a *loss* for Turkish women. One participant did not understand what she meant by *loss*. Then, she elaborated by using the words "different choices [*farklı tercihler*]" pointing his homosexuality in an implicit way. Despite the ongoing efforts of participants to neutralize the gender of knitting practice, one participant implied a male interest in knitting as a homosexual thing to do.

Although participant examples of men who were engaged with feminine crafts varied, Nergis drew a certain archetype of man, who had a prestigious job, and knit. Their occupations changed with each dialogue, however Nergis' efforts to build reputation around knitting remained the same. She mentioned a male architect friend who knit so good that he and Nergis used to collaborate in designing knitting patterns. A couple of times, she gave the example of male doctors of a well-known national hospital who knit before operations because knitting was believed to relieve stress. Nergis paired knitting with selected masculine figures who had respected occupations. In this way, it could be argued that she not only aimed for a recognition of knitting as a genderless, and intellectual practice, but also helped me feel more comfortable knitting at the knitting course. She once justified my knitting to a participant by giving the example of a fabricator who knit. Examples of men who knit were changing, but her urge to somehow "protect" me remained. The justificatory sentences sometimes revolved around knitting's meditative impact on knitters. The commentaries on my knitting could be interpreted as participants' endeavors to normalize the previously gendered environment which was disrupted by my male presence. In the following section, I make an introduction to knitting practice by going through its vocabulary and steps for a thorough understanding before moving further.

5.3 Introduction to knitting practice at the knitting course

In this section, for a better understanding of the thesis throughout, I make an introduction to the knitting practice as I observed at the knitting course. I first discuss the knitting vocabulary that was prevalent among the participants of the knitting course. The vocabulary involved the names given to knitting steps and knitting patterns. Later, I go through a typical knitting process as practiced by knitting course participants, by starting from casting on and ending with steaming.

5.3.1 Knitting vocabulary

Knitting that was practiced at the knitting course was hand knitting[3]. Participants used their hands and knitting needles to knit the thread coming out of a yarn. Knitting needles came in different sizes, and their diameter increased directly proportional to their sizes. Yarns, too, differed in terms of weight, color and fiber. Some were thicker, some had decorations on the thread such as pompoms. Some were variegated [*ebruli*], that is, their colors did not follow a monochrome order, but were mixed in colors and resulted in a colorful, variegated look when knit. Colors and decorations depended on maker's taste, whereas weight did not. Each yarn came with an information label in which there was suggestion on which sizes of knitting needles to prefer with that particular yarn's weight. This was significant to accomplish the desired tension, that is, the drape of the fabric. Hands, too, determined the tension of the knit created. Bearing this in mind, I observed that Nergis often asked customers, or knitting course participants the same question: "Is your hand tight or loose? [*Elin sıkı mı gevşek mi?*]" Depending on the answer she received, she either continued suggesting the knitting needle size mentioned on the yarn label, or revised the information by suggesting a smaller or larger knitting needle.

As the sizes of knitting needles and weights of yarns varied, so did the types and names of stitches. Various names were given to individual stitches, revealing the dominant imagination of knitting practice. The names I have encountered were sometimes as plain as *nohut* [raspberry stitch, literally "chickpea"] and *pirinç* [seed stitch, literally "rice"]. Sometimes, they were more illustrative: The Belly of Zeki Müren [*Zeki Müren'in Göbeği*] and The Eyelash of Türkan Şoray [*Türkan Şoray'ın Kirpiği*]. The names given to stitch types are telling in the sense that it pointed to the creative imaginary of the knitting practice in giving names in addition to designing patterns and making garments.

[3] For a coherent flow in discussion, I prefer the word knitting instead of hand knitting.

Knitting steps, too, had their own names, which might sound unfamiliar to outsiders. To name a few, these were decoding a pattern, casting on stitches, hiding tails and so on. Aiming to illustrate the typical knitting process, in the following section, I go through knitting steps that I observed at the knitting course.

5.3.2 Knitting steps

The essentials for any knitting project were a thread (coming out of a yarn) and knitting needles (two or more, depending on the project). During my ethnographic inquiry, I observed that each yarn had a different weight, as knitting needles varied in their diameters, resulting in different sizes [*şiş numarası*] ranging from one to ten[4]. First, on one needle, participants "casted on" [*ilmek atmak*] a certain amount of "stitches" [*ilmek*]; that is, knots were made repeatedly on one needle, creating "a row of stitches" [*bir sıra ilmek*]. A "row" [*sıra*] was a repeated number of stitches that followed each other on the same line. The number of stitches on a row depended on the project, and varied[5]. The rows could follow the same number of stitches as in a typical scarf project. Mostly, participants needed to enlarge or narrow down the width of their working knit based on the knitting pattern. Then, they worked additional stitches by "increasing" [*artırmak*] or they worked fewer stitches by "decreasing" [*azaltmak*]. At the last row of stitches, knitters "casted off" [*kapatmak*], that is, they finalized their knit by knitting a selvage.

Having introduced the more prominent steps of knitting practice, I now scrutinize those steps that were more hidden, yet were as routine as casting on and off: decoding a knitting pattern, adjusting the dimensions of the decoded

[4] Based on my experience, the most widely used knitting needles ranged between one to ten. The popular ones at the knitting course were in sizes four, five and six. The rest were either found too thin, or too thick, denied due to reasons related to knitting capability, project deadline, and the desired tension.

[5] Depending on the yarn weight and stitch type, a typical scarf project requires roughly twenty stitches knit in knitting needles of size six.

pattern, knitting and sometimes unknitting, rehearsing occasionally, hiding the yarn tails towards the end, steaming the finished knit, and in the meantime tutoring and being tutored, disseminating knitting skills, building community and transforming places, making and unmaking propriety.

5.3.2.1 Decoding

Decoding [*örnek çıkarmak*] was the starting point of a knitting process. Participants were usually tempted by the available knitting patterns brought by knitting tutors. Nergis provided instructions [*numaralar*; literally "numbers"] for each knitting pattern, that is, the numbers of stitches and rows of stitches to be knit including where to increase and decrease. Then, participants tried to estimate whether they could accomplish the appealing pattern. Fingers were stretched, questions were raised to Nergis or another participant and notes were jotted down: The pattern was read and decoded. This was followed by a decision. Sometimes a pattern was avoided, having been found too advanced for the participant. If not, the pattern was knit.

Note taking often accompanied decoding. Participants noted down the instructions of a pattern on white square papers of a note pad found on the knitting table (Figure 5.2). They wrote the instructions for a pattern on the paper in order to consult as the knitting unfolded. In addition to note taking, I have encountered many participants at the knitting course who took pictures of garments to remind themselves of how the finished knit looked when they were not at the knitting course. They went through the instructions they wrote, and zoomed in and out of their pictures. Notes and pictures taken of the pattern helped participants stay on track when tutor was not near.

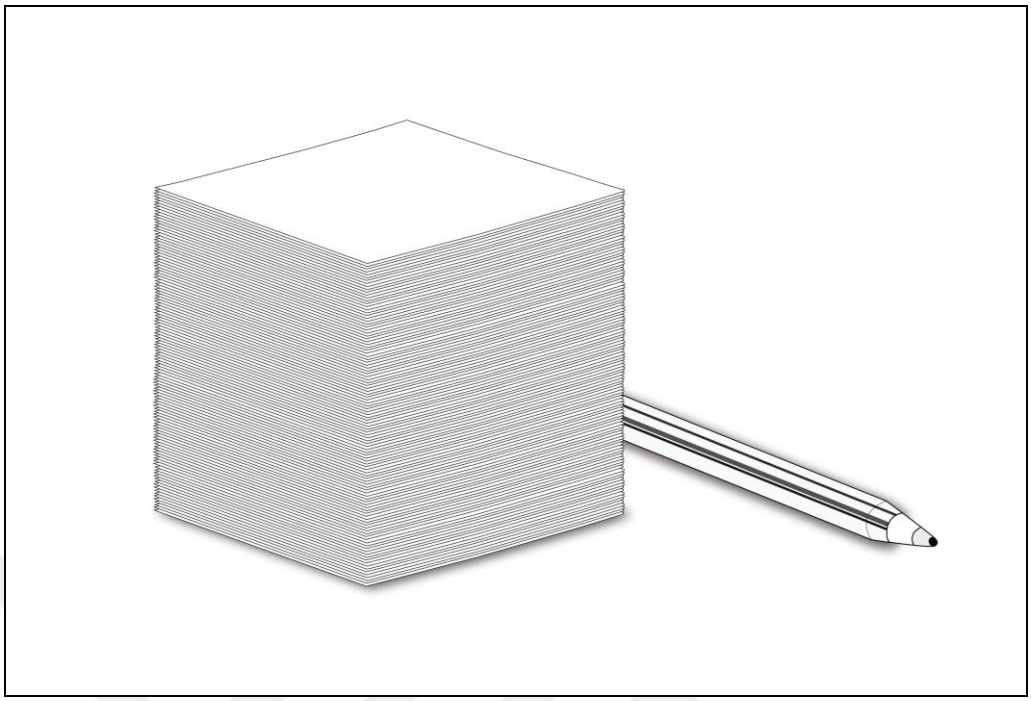

Figure 5.2 Papers and pen for decoding. (Illustration by the author)

Decoding was a key practice in knitting process, which cannot be bypassed, for every knitting project was based upon a knitting pattern. I do not go deeper into decoding in this section because I discuss it in detail later (see Section 8.1.1). Mostly what followed the decoding of a pattern was adjusting it according to individual taste and calibrating it for participant's hand.

5.3.2.2 Adjusting a pattern

Each individual knit was made by Nergis with an imagined wearer in mind, whether that body be a baby's, a toddler's or an adult's. There were times that the knitting pattern was taken as it was. More often, the dimensions of the knit available on the knitting table that was decoded, did not have the desired dimensions for the intended wearer or participant's tension did not match Nergis'. This required the dimensions of the knit to be reconsidered and adjusted by and for whom the knit would be made. For instance, participants consulted Nergis as to how they should reconsider the dimensions of a knit baby cardigan for a toddler. Nergis not only revealed the *how-to* of any pattern, but also guided

the participants in estimating dimensions of any knit for different knitting hands and intended wearers.

Although deciding on the dimensions was essential for and common in knitting practice, not every participant calculated very much during the adjustment of a pattern. One participant confessed that, in adjusting knitting patterns for babies, she used her hand span and improvised on the dimensions according to what she thought would be good for the baby: "There is no need for numbers in baby garments: I just use my hand span. If there is rib stitch and stuff, then that's added on top of it, and that's it. [*Bebek şeyinde numaraya gerek yok ya, ben karışla ölçüyorum. İşte sonra lastik mastik ne ekleniyorsa o kadar.*]" Adjusting the dimensions of patterns, too, did not include strict calculations on part of Nergis.

The need for an adjustment did not always spring from the different bodies of the imagined wearer and the intended wearer. Sometimes, it was due to the weight of the yarn. Because some yarns were thicker, they required less number of stitches to reach the desired dimension. In such cases, the pattern was adjusted accordingly. Once, one participant asked Nergis how many stitches were needed for a plain beret project, to which Nergis replied eighty. Then, Nergis revised the required number of stitches as ninety upon learning the weight of the yarn to be knit with.

To sum up, adjusting the numbers of a knitting pattern became crucial during the application of the pattern by a participant whose tension differed from Nergis', or for a wearer whose body size did not match the imagined wearer of the original knit, or when the pattern was to be made with a yarn of different weight and color. Decisions were made through negotiations with whoever was available near, and experience rather than strict calculations was consulted. Negotiations enabled the necessary skills to come to surface and get disseminated through that knitting project with those who did not yet embody the required skills.

Adjusting a pattern also reveals the creativity in knitting practice at the knitting course, because it enabled Nergis and participants to personalize the patterns they adopted. A pattern could be liked and wanted to be knit, yet the pattern produced its own alternatives in the knitter's imagination.

5.3.2.3 Trying on

Following long hours of knitting and chatting, knit fabric gradually appeared. Participants, together with Nergis, had already decided on the pattern and adjusted it. Still, there was the individual knitter hand, which had a direct impact on the tension created and which was prone to make mistakes. So, the tension needed to be checked, whether it was as desired or not. For that, I observed, participants tried on [*denemek*] their knit numerous times throughout their projects, on themselves, on other participants, and on passers-by. The following instance illustrates the significance of rehearsals in knitting process.

> During our talk, Şirin said (referring to the jumper I had been knitting): "Isn't that big for you? Stand up, let's measure it. [*O sana büyük değil mi? Kalk, ölçelim.*]" I stood up, and held my needles close to my body. The front part of my jumper indeed turned out to be larger: The sides of my knit were moving towards my back. However, the sides needed to stop just at my waist. Nergis replied: "We'll make the back part [of the jumper] ten stitches less. [*Arkayı on ilmek eksik yaparız.*]"

As the above instance shows, the rehearsals were vital in order to check whether the knit in progress was going as desired. If not, participants made design decisions by reflecting upon the current situation of the knit, as Nergis decided to "make the back part [of the jumper] ten stitches less." Rehearsals point to the need to control the process, yet the following decision of Nergis reveals the improvised nature of decision making during knitting process at the knitting course. Without strict calculations, a rough number of ten was given as the required amount of additional stitches to be worked. So, the kind of rehearsal that took place at the knitting course was one that was not with measuring tape

but with hand span. Rehearsals were fast and spontaneous, and bodies on which the knits were rehearsed did not have to be the potential wearer's. During my field work, I noted two separate instances where participants rehearsed their knits on daughters of passers-by.

Sometimes, rehearsals were followed by a feeling of content, because the knit, it was observed, had been developing as planned. Other times, participants needed to intervene; they had to unknit to reknit their work in the correct way, so that the knit looked and fitted better.

5.3.2.4 Unknitting

Not everything went as planned during knitting. Many times, I have witnessed participants (including myself) unknit [*sökmek*] what they had been knitting only to knit it again. This was because what was knit did not always turn out to be as expected, and there emerged a need to reknit the piece. Unknitting involved separate steps: Unravelling the knit, wrapping the unknit yarn into a ball, and reinserting the needle into the stitches. During unknitting, I observed, one hand held the knit, as the other hand pulled the yarn over and over. When enough yarn accumulated, a ball of yarn was made by wrapping the yarn on fingers. Unknitting and making a ball of yarn needed to be simultaneous so that it would not result in messy situations such as tangled threads.

Unknitting, as with all the other knitting steps, could be practiced individually. However, participants chose to collaborate, especially as a novice participant unknit. In separate occasions, Nergis and Birgül guided me during my unknitting processes. Because unknitting could turn into a frustration due to tangling threads, an experienced participant, who could lead the process, was highly valuable for me.

Most of the times, I observed that the reason underlying unknitting was out of aesthetic concerns. The following instance is an example of one such case, in

which I became discontent with how the connection part of two different yarns looked and decided to unknit.

> As I was knitting my scarf, there were times that I needed to connect yarns, for I had run out of the ones I was using. The first time, Sakız helped me out and created a smooth connection. However, the second time I needed to connect yarns, my knit was handed over to Atiye and Sema by Nergis, for Nergis was busy. When I arrived home, I realized that there had been a mistake in the connection of two yarns, which made a one-row bump on one side and a one-row dimple on the other. Atiye and Sema did not manage to create the smooth transition, which Sakız had earlier managed. So I unknit.

Unknitting was a way to bypass the mistakes, because it allowed the participants to reknit. In this sense, knitting was a forgiving practice. There was always the option to unravel the knit, and redo it. If, after many trials, the mistake could not be overcome, there was the chance of using that yarn for another project. The material was never wasted. However, unknitting and reknitting had a drawback: the infliction of harm on the yarn due to overworking.

5.3.2.5 Hiding tails

Following many mistakes during knitting, and overcoming them through unknitting and reknitting, participants approached the finalization of their knits. At the last row, the knit was casted off; it was finalized. However, one found herself facing an excess thread, the tail, coming out of the last knot that was made. Cutting was no help in this case, because it increased the risk of the knot being disentangled. To prevent disentangling of the knot, and to get rid of the excess thread, the tail needed to become invisible. This was managed through hiding tails [*ipi içine çekmek*]. With the help of a crochet, the tail was embedded in the stitches in an attempt to blend it into the knit. If the yarn tail was long, the action was repeated three to four times, for crocheting occurred on top of an already existing row, which made it a bit thicker than the rest of the knit. Following the crocheting of the tail, some of the tail was seen as excess, and cut

by a scissor to avoid making it too thick and therefore visible. At the knitting course, upon finishing my scarf, I was told by Bilge to hide my tail.

Hiding tails aimed to eliminate the unfinished look of the knit. Participants were concerned with creating knits that did not look handmade. They competed with the prêt-à-porter garments available on the market. I discuss these efforts in detail later (see Section 7.1.3). Another step that was in line with these endeavors was steaming, which I introduce in the following section.

5.3.2.6 Steaming

Steaming [*buhar vermek*] was the final step, made after the finalization of knitting process. Because the knits might not be internally consistent, in other words, the stitches might not be homogeneous regarding tension, size, etc., steaming was done to homogenize the knit. It was basically ironing of the knit, but with a careful and expert eye, in order not to over-steam the knit. After steaming, the knit loosened and softened up, as its stitches approached uniformity. The steam washed away the heaviness of the piece, and resulted in a looser outcome. The following instance explains my first experience in steaming.

> As I complained about the coiled up edges of my finished scarf, Ayşe directly took my scarf and went to where she steamed the finished garments. When she returned, the coiled up edges were now flat, and the scarf felt softer and better. It was as if the knit lost some pounds. I was enjoying the result by touching. Then, Ayşe, in order to prevent any coiling up again, folded the scarf and suggested to leave it as it was for a while.

After my knit returned from steaming, I remember feeling amazed at the outcome. Five minutes earlier, I had been wondering whether my knit was too stiff, and whether it would irritate the neck for being not as soft. When I was handed over my knit, it was soft as a cushion, tempting me to touch it. However, Ayşe warned, my novice hands could harm the knit. It needed to be left as it was

for a while. This moment taught me as a knitter that steaming needed to be gentle, not only during the process but also after the steaming.

Steaming, similar to hiding tails, was a means to avoid the handmade look. It helped uneven stitches to settle more, resulting in a more consistent, homogeneous knit. In addition, steaming softened up the knits, increasing the sensual quality of interaction.

5.3.3 Conclusion

To conclude, knitting practice had its vocabulary, which was vital for the communication before, during and after the making process at the knitting course. The shared terminology set the common ground, on which participants were able to communicate the same concepts.

A participant of the knitting course went through various steps as she knit: decoding, adjusting, trying on, unknitting, hiding tails and steaming. Participants went back and forth by knitting and unknitting. In this sense, knitting emerges as an iterative practice. A participant at the knitting course first chose a knitting pattern that she liked, and decoded it or had it decoded. If the imagined wearer of the pattern in question did not match the intended wearer's body, she adjusted the pattern, aiming for a good fit. Bearing in mind the desired tension, she adjusted the pattern's instructions [*numaralar*] considering the individual knitter hand. She adjusted the colors, too, depending on the imagined wearer's gender and taste. Decoding and adjusting phases in knitting required a creative, skilled practitioner, for these phases were about modifying and personalizing the already existing pattern into a more desired state. These phases were copying, but in a skilled and creative manner.

Only then did the participant start her project. She casted on a certain amount of stitches on her needle, and started knitting rows of stitches. Depending on the pattern she was working on, she increased and decreased the number of stitches,

giving shape to the width of her knit. Throughout the whole making process, she rehearsed and unknit, and she rehearsed again. She contemplated on the current situation of her knit, reflecting on her mistakes, and unknit when necessary. She went back and forth in an iterative process, aiming to capture the knit she desired. Starting from decoding and adjusting phases, a participant gave and received feedback, tutored and was being tutored during the knitting process. Therefore, knitting, as practiced at the knitting course, was social.

Towards the end, participant casted off, hid the yarn tail and steamed the knit. She steamed her knit with the desired amount of steam, so that the stitches dispersed evenly, and the knit felt softer. Knits were fondled, both during the knitting process, and after steaming, pointing to the sensual aspect of the practice. Knits not only pleased the eye, but also created sensual feelings upon touching. Participants touched knits (theirs or others') not only for purposes of pleasure, but also for decoding, measuring, rehearsing and unknitting. Hands provided a quick way to measure and check their knit so that they could reflect upon the current situation. Thus, knitting is a tactile practice.

To sum up, knitting at the knitting course appears as a processional making practice in which participants went through certain phases in an iterative way. It was a tactile and sensual practice, for hands appeared as a significant medium in decoding, measuring, testing and fondling. Nergis and participants did not make careful calculations in decoding, adjusting and testing. Rather, they used their fingers, hands, hand spans. Thus, knitting was practiced by rule of thumb and was based on tacit knowledge.

5.4 Conclusion to introductions

Overall, the knitting course was a community of knitting practice, cultivating a social and an informal learning environment in a third place, a place of conversation and consumption other than home and work. Knitting course participants were regulars, that is, they visited the course on a regular basis,

creating a sense of familiarity. The presence of a knitting tutor and knitting course participants, resulted in an unconventional shopping experience for it brought customers in close contact with knitting practitioners who also did their shopping at the store.

My participation at the knitting course disrupted the gender of the knitting course. This was aimed to overcome by participants' ongoing examples of men who knit or did crafts of some sort. These men spanned from family relatives and magazine figures to men who held prestigious jobs. Therefore, the examples of men who knit not only aimed to normalize my presence at the course but also were a means to gain knitting recognition as an intellectual practice.

At the knitting course, knitting was a social and a creative practice. It connected participants through comments, rehearsals and exchange of knitting patterns and instructions. It was a creative practice because knitting patterns formed the template from which adjustments were made in terms of dimensions, colors, yarns etc. Every knit was a variation of its original pattern. It was a tactile practice because hands played a vital role in decoding, measuring, rehearsing and fondling. Because measurements were made with hands, knitting at the knitting course was practiced by rule of thumb. Because knitting included different phases between which participants went back and forth by knitting and unknitting, knitting was iterative. In the following chapter, I discuss how participants at the knitting organized around knitting know-how, knitting patterns and knits.

CHAPTER 6

ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT AT THE KNITTING COURSE AND THE YARN STORE

In this chapter, I elaborate on the organization and conduct at the knitting course and the yarn store. Firstly, I start with learning practices at the knitting course. I present that knitting practice incorporates tacit knowledge, and this creates a competition for the tutor. Then, I present forms of tutoring at the course. Lastly, I move to interdependencies present at the yarn store and the knitting course with regard to tutoring, sales and running errands.

6.1 Learning practices at the knitting course

Beside socialization (see Section 5.1.1.5), learning was the prominent reason for why women gathered at the knitting course on a routine basis. When one searches the Internet using the keyword “knitting”, one comes across numerous platforms for learning how to knit and finding design ideas on knitting. The same applies for magazines, in which one finds models posing in knitwear, next to which appear the instructions to the knitting pattern in question. Despite the availability of knitting material both online and in print, participants gathered at the knitting course day after day. In this section, I first discuss why knitters preferred to gather at the yarn store and how this relates to knitting knowledge, and then explain the content and organization of tutoring and learning that took place at the knitting course.

6.1.1 Knitting knowledge is tacit knowledge.

Before detailing the kind of content and organization of learning that was cultivated among the knitting course, it is necessary to elaborate on the nature of knitting knowledge. Knitting is a bodily practice; hands, arms, and eyes are concentrated and connected as the thread is turned into a textile. Thus, knitting cannot be instructed, and it cannot be taught verbally because it is a tacit knowledge. It requires a hands-on approach; learning practitioners need to engage with the material to learn. Because of the tacit nature of knitting knowledge, participants always demanded a more one-to-one teaching.

Throughout my participation at the knitting course, I have witnessed my own development as a knitter. I started as someone who was not able to hold the knitting needles properly, let alone knitting a row. Little by little, I became able to knit a couple of messy rows composed of uneven purl stitches [*ters örgü*]. Soon, I found myself in a flow during knitting, as I knit my jumper project in fisherman's rib pattern [*yalancı selanik*] until the end of my participation at the knitting course.

As a novice knitter, I was able to observe to a great extent the interactions that occurred between a tutor and with a learner. Those who were learners at a particular instance often demanded a more hands-on learning experience. They did not want to be just shown, but watched and guided as they themselves knit: "Let's do it as I hold the needles (as I knit and you guide me), I cannot learn from you (as you yourself knit, and I watch) [*Benim elimde yapalım, senden öğrenemiyorum.*]" was the request of one participant named Selma, after having been "shown" by Nergis on how to accomplish the then given instruction. Although verbal communication fails in the transfer of tacit knowledge, hands appear as an alternative means. Similarly, what Selma was asking for was not a representation which could be found on any YouTube channel, but a significant kind of guiding in which Nergis would guide her as she held the needles in her

own hands. However, Nergis tutored her as she knit and Selma watched. Similar to Selma, I experienced a similar situation as I was being tutored.

> I was first watching Bilge casting off from across, which confused me. Then, to see her hand movements better, I sat on another chair which was more near her, not before her. I asked if I could continue casting off and took over the knit. She was observing my hand movements and guiding me verbally on what and what not to do.

Although Bilge took her time to show me how she casted off, I was confused. I suggested her that I tried knitting under her guidance. In a way, I was putting myself into her position first creating a *mental representation of observed behavior* (Ingold 2000, 353). Then I turned this into *manifest practice* (Ingold 2000, 353) by knitting. Only then I learned how to do it. Learning encounters of Selma and mine prove that knitting can neither be taught or learned by watching from across, or by being instructed. The kind of guidance that we needed was one in which Nergis would not just watch and instruct but intervene when necessary. The tacit knowledge which cannot be transferred verbally from Nergis to participant explains why knitting course participants gathered around Nergis: watching tutorial videos or reading knitting pattern instructions are not as efficient.

6.1.2 Competition for Nergis

Learning at the knitting course occurred in the form of tutoring: face-to-face learning with the tutor in a hands-on way. Because knitting knowledge is tacit in nature, it requires one-to-one tutoring. However, given the crowd of the knitting course and the yarn store, and Nergis' tasks in sales (see Section 6.2.2), this was not always possible. I observed that some participants did not get their share of Nergis' tutoring, or hesitated when they were about to pose questions to her. The following is one such instance.

> Sema, a participant at the knitting course, came towards Nergis with her knit button. When Nergis was busy for a second, Sema turned to me giggling: "I hope they won't dismiss us from here. [*Bizi buradan kovmasalar iyi.*]"

Sema hesitated because she knew Nergis complained when she received too many questions. Once, after a customer who asked way too many questions left, Nergis complained: "She exhausted me today! [*Ay, bitirdi bu bugün beni!*]" Although there occurred this tension between participants and Nergis as to when and to what extent participants could ask for help, Nergis still cared for her participants. Knowing this, I joined the conversation in an effort to let Sema know this was an OK situation.

> Following Sema's words, I mentioned how crowded Suzan's days tended to become, to which Nergis replied: "Hers is like *gün*. Nobody attends it for learning. [*Onunki gün. Kimse öğrenmeye gelmiyor.*]" This was followed by Jale's words: "[On those days] knitting is only a means for chatting. [*Örgü bahane, sohbet şahane.*]"

Gün events are daytime gatherings of women in domestic settings, during which they feast, socialize, and fundraise. Nergis implies that participants attend her days mainly for learning purposes, and so differentiates from those days of Suzan's, which she likens to *gün* events. *Gün* events were also carried out at the knitting course, which I discuss later (see Section 8.3).

There was a constant competition for Nergis, and for that, participants were trying to be as close as possible to her. This happened when participants were not able to find chairs around the knitting table, but sat on stools scattered at the periphery. When they found a space between chairs around the knitting table, participants grabbed their stools near her, or left their stools for an available chair. This enabled not only a more strategic location to access knitting know-how and patterns, but also a more comfortable seating throughout the participation.

> After some participants arrived and sat between Şirin and Nergis, Şirin started having problems in asking questions. She then grabbed her chair

> and said to me: "I'm moving there; it turns out that I won't be able to ask from here. [*Ben şu tarafa gidiyorum, buradan soramayacak gibiyim.*]"

Participants not only competed for a strategic seating, they also aimed to eliminate other participants whom they thought took Nergis' time. One of them was Selma, who was not happy that a novice participant like myself took all Nergis' attention as she became neglected.

> As Nergis knit my fringes, Selma was suggesting me that my mother or my grandmother could help me out with that. Though adding fringes could be quite simple, my interpretation of her suggestion is that she was trying to have Nergis all to herself. She also mentioned that she could no longer read the newspapers, or scroll the Internet but was always occupied with knitting. This was visible in her attempt to exclude me at the knitting course.

Although Nergis complained that she received too many questions, she still cared for the knitting course participants, especially for those who were close to her as friends (participant-friends from here on), some of which helped her as tutors (participant-tutors from here on). Therefore, the dissemination of knitting know-how was constantly produced and shared by not just Nergis, but participants, too (see Section 6.2.1).

Thus, learning at the knitting course was unconventional; it did not take place at a formal tutoring setting, and it did not occur in one direction; rather in multiple directions: Nergis guided participants, more experienced of whom also guided less experienced ones. The knitting course was a community of knitting practice, in the sense that practitioners of knitting gathered together regularly, and cultivated an informal learning environment. Nergis was not the only knitting tutor, she was one among the many who tutored in never-ending learning instances at the knitting course. As learning took place at a yarn store, a public space, it remained open to the constant interaction of passers-by, who were also involved in learning. Even Ayşe, who co-owned the yarn store was involved. What follows is a detailed discussion of how tutoring at the knitting course took different forms.

6.1.3 Forms of tutoring at the knitting course

Tutoring at the knitting course occurred in four prominent ways: giving instructions and watching over participants, intervening in their work, making design decisions on behalf of them, and caring for them. Throughout the knitting process feedback was given and received. On what and when these feedbacks were offered varied: before the knitting started, as the knitting unfolded and after the project finished. In the sections that follow, I discuss these various forms of tutoring.

6.1.3.1 Giving instructions and watching over

> Two customers were looking at yarns. When the two decided on the type of yarn they needed, they asked Nergis how many yarns would be required for an over-the-knee cardigan. Without thinking much, Nergis answered: "Six [*altı*]." Then, another customer consulted Nergis regarding how to adjust a knitting pattern (for a two-three-year-old) to her grandchild who was a toddler. Nergis had the knowledge through experience, which participants valued and tried to benefit from.

A common way to tutor was through instructions given from a distance, directing the novice verbally on what to do, or not do. As a novice knitter, I usually ended up with mistakes, not knowing how to overcome them. There were more experienced participants who explained me briefly what I needed to do. As a novice knitter, I was easily lost during knitting. Nergis or participants, from whom I was learning, knew this very well, and watched over me knitting after they gave me instructions on how to knit. What follows is a similar experience I had with Sakız, who guided me on my tension and the position of my arms, and who watched me knit for a while.

> Throughout my knitting, I felt Sakız' supervision although she was sitting behind me. She was making noises as both confirmation of each of my moves, and an encouragement for the next one. Because my tension was very tight my needles started squeaking. Sakız suggested me to hold the needles parallel to my fore arms, and to the ground. I needed to loosen up a bit, and while moving from one stitch to another, let the

> knits slide on the needle. This would result in the required tension. She also suggested that I stretched the knit from time to time in order to create internally consistent stitches.

However, being instructed how to knit and being watched over later on often ended up with yet another mistake on part of the learner. This was natural, because novices learned by making mistakes and reflecting upon them. So, learning through instructions required a certain competency in knitting. When instructions failed, tutors took my needles and intervened in my knit.

6.1.3.2 Intervening in another's work

> During my first encounter with her, Nergis was very surprised to find out that I, as a male, knit. She wanted to see what I had been knitting, and I showed her my knit. As she held my knit, she spotted some loose stitches in my work, and asked me if it was OK to unravel and reknit it. Feeling unsure and discontent, I agreed. One participant said Nergis did not do this very often, implying that she cared about my work. Her enthusiasm made me think that, if I did not let her intervene, she would insist on my knitting's improper condition and convince me of the necessity of an intervention by the experienced. She would find a way to get their hands on that bad knitting that needed taming. So I let her. The knit on which I spent hours all too easily unraveled, as I felt like stopping each second. Then, she reknit in the same pace as they unknit, leaving me amazed at her flow.

Young and inexperienced participants like myself, especially when considered in terms of gender, stand out as a unique individual to whom help was willingly offered. The participant's reaction when Nergis took my work to reknit herself was marked as a rare occasion, because, tutoring through comments from a distance was how Nergis preferred to tutor (see Section 6.1.3.1). This was because the knitting course participants were knitters who were not complete beginners. On the other hand, I was requesting help even for casting on before I started my projects. This was how Nergis preferred to tutor me—She knew that I was very inexperienced and would be baffled when instructed on what to do. Still, even when I did not ask for help, there could be volunteer participant-tutors willing to intervene in my work to correct it. Experienced knitters felt the urge

to discipline the novice hand, which was not yet able to knit even stitches on a uniform tension. The following instance is an example of how Biber, during my early days at the knitting course, tutored Mavi and I although we did not request help from her.

> When Mavi and I started knitting our scarves, a woman approached to us. We soon introduced ourselves to each other. Her name was Biber and she was fifty-one years old. She said she had been knitting since the age of five. Apparently, she was a knitter who liked to comment and teach, because she guided us throughout our knitting, standing near us, without us asking for any guidance in the first place. Biber would stop us whenever we had sloppy and uneven stitches only to unravel our last row to reknit it again. Sometimes, she would take our knit and show us how we needed to knit.

The way Nergis and Biber tutored me had a nurturing aspect; they not only cared, but also bothered to intervene in my work. What's more, Nergis made the design decisions on behalf of me, and on behalf of other novices who lacked competency. The following section discusses such interventions.

6.1.3.3 Making design decisions on behalf of another

Once, Nergis intervened a participant's naive attempt at decoding, having seen that the participant was interested in a knitting pattern that required advanced knitting capabilities. Knowing the required competency for that knitting pattern, for which the participant was too novice, Nergis said: "You cannot do that. We need to make it together. [*Sen onu yapamazsın. Birlikte yapmamız lazım.*]" Nergis did not directly eliminate knitting patterns that were too complicated for a novice participant. Rather, she suggested to make it together.

Nergis was not only very comfortable in intervening participants, but also made design decisions on behalf of them, without participants knowing they had a design decision to make. The following instance illustrates one such case where I, as a novice knitter, did not know that I had a design decision to make, because Nergis had already decided for me.

> I decided to knit my scarf based on the suggestion Nergis made: one side in purl stitch [*ters*], the other side in two purl stitches followed by two knit stitches [*iki ters, iki düz*]. Then, Ayşe started casting on for me. Meanwhile, one participant raised a question for Nergis: "*Hocam*, isn't that supposed to be one purl stitch followed by one knit stitch? [*Hocam, o bir ters bir düz değil miydi?*]" to which Nergis replied: "That also works. But Burak could alternate two purl and two knit stitches more easily. [*O da olur. Ama iki ters iki düzü Burak daha kolay yapar.*]"

Nergis' tutoring involved not only intervening in the case of mistakes or complicated knitting patterns, but also making design decisions, for the novice was not able to imagine the impact of her choices. This was part of her teaching; she cared for her novice participants.

6.1.3.4 Caring

The ways Nergis cared for knitting course participants differed. Once, I was knitting next to Nergis with my yarn in my bag right next to our feet. As I knit, I was consuming my yarn, which was increasing the tension of my thread. Having observed this, Nergis, loosened up my thread as I knit by pulling more thread from the yarn. By doing so, she was clearing away an obstacle in my knitting process, helping me with my tension. I felt that she was not only challenging more experienced knitters by assigning them tutoring tasks (see Section 6.2.1), but also giving a hand to a novice knitter like myself during actual knitting. In a way, she was balancing her intervention to her students. This shows that she knew the different levels of each participant, and that it required different strategies.

To sum up, learning occurred at the knitting course through four prominent ways: Giving instructions to and watching over, intervening in the work of, making design decisions on behalf of, and caring of participants. Before the start of actual knitting, Nergis directed participants, giving them specific instructions regarding knitting patterns. Sometimes, when the participant was novice, Nergis

made design decisions on behalf of them. Throughout the knitting process, the comments were made on knitter's tension depending on the use context of the knit or its internal consistency so that the final result would attain the desired look. During this process, Nergis' tutoring was balanced with participants' tutoring of each other. Knitting tutors or participant-tutors intervened in each other's work during the selection of a knitting pattern, and in the case of an encountered mistake. In the following section, I discuss the interdependencies at the yarn store and at the knitting course.

6.2 Interdependencies at the yarn store and at the knitting course

During my time at the knitting course, I have witnessed interdependencies among the yarn store, knitting tutors and knitting course participants. The subjects on which people became interdependent on one another were twofold; running of the store and running of the knitting course. In running of the knitting course, tasks revolved around tutoring. Yarn store's tasks involved sales and running errands. In the following section, I discuss interdependencies in tutoring at the knitting course.

6.2.1 Interdependencies in tutoring at the knitting course

One of the prominent practices in which interdependencies came to the forefront was tutoring. The most prominent tutor was Nergis, the official knitting tutor of the knitting course. Often, Nergis could not respond to each and every participant's question regarding knitting. In such cases, experienced participants were often asked by Nergis to provide a helping hand in sharing the heavy workload of tutoring. Still, Nergis did not ask for help from *any* person. She was selective, and there were certain people, from whom she asked for help, her participant-friends. Nergis requested help especially from her participant-friends (see Section 6.2) and while doing so she addressed them by their names. Sometimes, participant-tutoring occurred voluntarily; a more experienced

participant answered another one's question, or showed her how to overcome her problem.

As a novice knitter, I could not help out in tutoring except for a couple of times, once when I explained the difference between rib stitch pattern [*lastik*] and fisherman's rib pattern [*yalancı selanik*] when I was knitting my jumper in fisherman's rib pattern. I was almost always the one being tutored. I was tutored by various participants, because I was making very simple mistakes, which the majority of participants were comfortable in overcoming. Still, there were times I welcomed and navigated customers, and provided color suggestions. In what follows, I discuss three cases in which tutoring was shared among Nergis, Ayşe and two participant-friends.

Participant-tutors not only helped Nergis in running of the knitting course, but also themselves for they were doing exercises of what they, too, were not fully expert at. The following instance is an example of how Nergis delegated a tutoring task to Atiye, who consulted Nergis as she knit.

> As I was knitting, I ran out of my yarn and needed to connect a new yarn to my working yarn. However, I did not know how to do it. I asked Nergis, but she was busy. Soon, Atiye took over my work from Nergis, as Nergis requested this from her. This, I thought, was not only a request, but also a way of Nergis' challenging the relatively more experienced participants; a part of her tutoring. So it helped both Nergis because she was very busy, and Atiye, who was on her way to mastering the skill. Soon, when Atiye finished connecting the two yarns, she handed over my knit. As Atiye was connecting the yarns, she said: "Do I now cast on from here? [*Şimdi buradan mı ilmek alıyorum?*] "*Hocam* I'm casting off. [*Hocam, kapatıyorum ben.*]"

Because I was a less experienced knitter than Atiye, it would require much more time of Nergis to understand my mistake and teach me how to overcome it. So she asked for Atiye's help. Although Atiye knew the knitting steps of casting on and off, she still consulted Nergis in the accomplishment of the knitting pattern, for she did not know the instructions for the particular pattern I was working on. This reveals one of the main reasons why Nergis received too many questions

than she could handle: The questions were often not about how to knit, rather they were about how to knit a particular knitting pattern. Being the provider of the knitting patterns, she knew the instructions, which led to many questions on part of the participants regarding patterns.

Not all participant-tutors to whom Nergis delegated tutoring tasks consulted Nergis throughout the tutoring process—they could be as competent as Nergis, or the tutoring subject could be easy. Seden was one example; one participant even called her *hocam*. My interaction with Bilge was another, during which Bilge did not consult Nergis. She knew how to overcome my problem, and she helped me accordingly.

> When I reached the desired length in my scarf project, I wanted to cast off. I told Nergis that I had finished, and she posed the following question: "Do you know how to cast off? [*Nasıl kapatacağını biliyor musun?*]" I did not know. Since she was busy helping a customer, Nergis directed me to Bilge, an elderly participant who sat next to me and who had problems with her hearing. Contrasting with Atiye, Bilge did not consult Nergis. In this way, unlike Atiye, she tutored me. After demonstrating how to cast off, she accepted my offer and watched me do it. She affirmed and commented on my movements, and intervened when necessary. On the other hand, Nergis' tutoring, similar to the one I had with Atiye, was mostly in the form of taking my knit, correcting it, and giving it back. Often, explanatory sentences accompanied her intervention, which, I often felt, would require competency in knitting to comprehend. Bilge's tutoring was better suited to my novice needs.

Bilge tutored me when Nergis was not available. Although she did not volunteer for it, but was only given it as a task, she took her time in guiding a novice, doing her best to explain the essentials of knitting practice; knitting gestures, casting off etc.

I was also tutored by Ayşe, who was mostly at the cash register as a salesperson, when Nergis was busy tutoring other participants or dealing with customers (see Section 6.2.2). The following instance illustrates one such case:

> As I had finished my scarf in the previous session, I didn't have anything to do. However, I had earlier decided to knit a patchwork blanket, in which I could try all sorts of stitches in different yarns of varying colors. I already had two square knits and I wanted to start another one. First, I asked Nergis to help me get started. She casted on twenty stitches, but I panicked in the second row. This time, Ayşe ran to my help. She decided to knit a couple of rows, skipping the problematic parts for me, so that I could just build upon it.

Ayşe, knowing how occupied Nergis was, offered to help me out when I needed an intervention of an experienced knitter. Similar to Ayşe's support for Nergis in tutoring, Nergis supported Ayşe in dealing with customers. In the next section, I discuss the interdependencies in sales at the yarn store.

6.2.2 Interdependencies in sales at the yarn store

Many times, the yarn store got more crowded than one could handle within the given amount of workforce. Knitting tutors, whose main task was to provide knitting patterns for the knitting course and to tutor knitting course participants in the accomplishment of those patterns, helped store owners in running of the store by welcoming customers upon their arrival and helping them on what they needed. In my first encounter with Suzan, she was standing by the cash register helping Ayşe in welcoming customers. After I showed her my knit, I remember having found myself in the middle of a quick tutoring session on foot.

In my first encounter with Nergis, she was at the knitting table, sitting and knitting among participants. I was with my friend Altın, who wanted to buy yarns for two different knitting projects. When Ayşe could not respond to Altın's questions at the cash register, Nergis ran for help:

> Altın told Ayşe at the cash register that she was looking for yarns of warmer colors for one friend and something cooler for another one. Ayşe replied to Altın's request: "What is a warm color? [*Sıcak renk ne demek?*]" Then, Altın exemplified by saying "like red, orange, yellow. [*işte kırmızı, turuncu, sarı gibi.*]" We were shown one or two examples, but Altın felt discontent. Then a voice emerged from the knitting course.

> We soon learned that it was Nergis, the sister of Suzan, who was tutoring in the previous session I attended. Nergis asked what we needed, and then she wanted to know for whom the scarf would be knit. This was generally asked before making any suggestions or comments, because participants differentiated colors according to gender. After listening to our needs, about which we were not so clear, Nergis summarized the problem in a very analytical way by saying that we needed warmer colors for one friend, and pastel colors for the other. Later in the selection process, she put us on the track when were again confused. This attitude of hers was not only comforting, but also nurturing. In addition, she recommended that we avoid using more than one color for that friend who were not into lively stuff. She suggested that we match different colors for the "warmer" scarf. She affirmed my choice of mustard and brown, and suggested for the other friend stone color.

Just as Altın and I were unimpressed with Ayşe's salesmanship, Nergis ran to our help in no time, proving herself to be more competent in responding to customer requests. While Ayşe was baffled about (or simply indifferent towards) what meant warm in colors, Nergis not only understood the request, but also verbalized by employing the word "pastel." The instance reveals not only how knitting tutors took on salesperson tasks, but also could serve the needs of customers in a better way, proving to be more competent, as they were themselves practitioners of knitting. Ayşe, too, was a knitter; however, she was not as passionate as Nergis towards knitting.

Sometimes, Nergis was called from the cash register by Alper or Ayşe to help in money transactions. In one such instance, I visited Nergis by the cash register for a quick tutoring.

> Nergis was absent since I arrived at the shop. She was busy at the cash register. When I made a mistake in knitting fisherman's rib pattern [*yalancı selanik*], I went to the cash register, and kindly asked her whether she could help. She took my needles, and corrected my mistake while standing at the cash register behind the counter. I was before the cash register, where a customer would stand.

There were times when Nergis' visits to cash register (and her resultant absence at the knitting course) created frowned faces among the participants. Some

participants did not attend the knitting course for a whole afternoon, but rather for a quick session of sometimes half an hour. Customers, too, stayed relatively shorter when compared to regular participants. In short visits, Nergis' tutoring was demanded even more. Nergis, on the other hand, had her excuses regarding time management. Once, when Nergis was away at the cash register, one of the participants complained in a teasing way. Nergis attempted to justify her absence by saying "I've been at the cashier all day though. [*Bugün hep kasadaydım ama.*]" In such cases, participants tutored each other (see Section 6.2).

Nergis, being the official tutor of the knitting course, already tutored participants. Yet, as Ayşe revealed during an encounter on a subway in the city, she did not help unless one asked for it [*Çok yardım etmez sen sormazsan*]. This stemmed from the nature of the yarn store, knitting course making up a central aspect of it. Centrality of the knitting course put extra responsibilities on Nergis' shoulders such as helping in sales (see Section 6.2.2) and running errands (see Section 6.2.3) beside tutoring. In order to keep up with the pace of participant and customer demand, she often depended on her participant-friends to act as participant-tutors. Similar to participant-tutors, Ayşe, too, volunteered for tutoring kept an eye on knitting course's tutoring needs, and acted accordingly. Both Nergis and Ayşe had their primary tasks, yet each one kept an eye on the other's space of control, and intervened when necessary, namely when either the participant or customer demand was more than one of them could handle. This interdependence between Nergis and Ayşe balanced the demand, and helped in the maintenance of both the knitting course and the yarn store. In the next section, I discuss interdependencies in running errands at the yarn store.

6.2.3 Interdependencies in running errands at the yarn store

Some participants were already old colleagues of Nergis, who was a retired civil servant [*emekli devlet memuru, devlet emeklisi*]. Gökçen was one of them, who was running for Nergis' help more often than Nergis tutored her on knitting. Other participants such as Birgül and Seden became friends with Nergis as they

attended the knitting course on a daily basis. Birgül helped Nergis in running errands such as bringing down the knits hung over the rope, and in tutoring novice participants—she tutored me many times. She was one of Nergis' most trusted helpers around. Once, Nergis even asked Birgül if she could help her in one of the orders she needed to fulfill.

Having attended the knitting course on a regular basis over an extended period, I became one of Nergis' participant-friends, whom she requested help with tasks such as placing knitting supplies on shelves. Following instance illustrates how Nergis regarded me beyond a mere participant whom she could speak sincerely.

> I had just arrived and was standing by the knitting table. As usual, participants were knitting and chatting gathered around the table. It was a busy moment at the yarn store and Nergis was at the cash register talking with two customers. Handing me over two yarns with their information labels on them, she said: "Dear Burak, could you find the copies of these in the storage?" [*Burak'çığım depodan şunları bulabilir misin?*]. She meant if I could find where the rest of these yarns was being stored, so that the customer could go and choose a different color. I turned to the shelves looking for the storage. The two customers followed me. Alper, having understood that I didn't know where the storage was, ran to my help. He reached below the cash register and found the same type of yarns with different colors stacked.

Although Alper was present, Nergis asked for help not from Alper, but from a participant-friend, me. This points to the hierarchy between Nergis and Alper: Alper was the store owner and thus the employer of Nergis. In addition, cash register was not Nergis' main responsibility but the store owners' (Alper and Ayşe). Second, she assumed that I knew the storage of the yarn store where they kept the rest of the yarn in question. That is because she regarded participant-friends as insiders, who would know where the storage was. Nergis also did not treat her participant-friends as customers; I was not assisted in my shopping as I was in my earlier days at the knitting course. The following instance reveals Nergis' easy attitude towards her participant-friends.

> I took out my knit, and said that I need just one more mustard yarn to extend the scarf to that length I had in mind. Nergis, as I then knew the area well, did not get me any yarn, but rather let me orientate myself in the area. I took one yarn from the shelf from which I had bought the previous yarn, and moved to the cash register.

What these instances reveal is the nature of two interdependencies; Nergis and the cash register, and Nergis and the participant-friends. However, help was not always demanded from participant-friends, but also offered. Sometimes, I found myself talking with customers during their shopping, exchanging ideas on yarn choices. Customers were usually indecisive when it came to color choices, and I used these moments to intervene, and bend gender norms—I often suggested color blue for baby girls, and color pink for baby boys.

6.3 How Internet supported the knitting course

> Mavi and I approached Suzan, who we first thought was a salesperson. She asked us what we were looking for, to which I replied showing the screen of my iPhone, on whose screen there was the knitting loom [*örgü çemberi*], a knitting tool designed to help novice knitters in knitting. Suzan said: "This didn't come to Turkey yet. I'm seeing it for the first time. I should look it up on the Internet. [*Bu henüz Türkiye'ye gelmedi. İlk kez görüyorum. Internetten bakayım*.]"

This was a moment when Suzan, who worked at a yarn store and made her living through knitting and tutoring knitting, became aware of a knitting tool. It is revealing in this instance that, just as she encountered a new tool, she was willing to learn about it. She felt the need to look it up on the Internet. She regarded the Internet as a place where one could find answers to her questions. However, not all knitting course participants were Internet-literate. The following instance illustrates varying degrees of Internet literacy and engagement.

> I was sitting next to Şirin, who was extremely talkative and very friendly. At some point, Duru and Şirin were talking about a TV program that came to an end. Because of this, Şirin "wrote a message on the Internet [*internetin altına yazdım.*]" suggesting the program producers to "move" to another channel. [*Internetin altına yazdım lütfen başka bir kanala*

> *geçin diye.*] Duru, who was slightly older than Şirin, told her: "Please, write in my name, too. [*Lütfen, benim adıma da yazın.*]" Şirin did not respond to Duru's request, probably because she did not hear it. Then Duru told Şirin: "I should tell my daughter and my son so that they write in my name, too. [*Ben de kızıma söyleyeyim, oğluma söyleyeyim, benim için de yazsınlar.*]"

The above instance is an example of the different motivations for Internet use and varying degrees of Internet literacy prevalent among the participants of the knitting course. Şirin used Internet as a medium to raise her voice on issues concerning her as a TV audience. Duru, on the other hand, did not. She looked for persons who could "write in her name", for she did not use Internet platforms for such purposes. Although, Internet might not be actively used by Duru, she still believed in Internet's potential in making an impact. This was true in Ayşe's case, who, with the help of an Internet article, had started questioning gender norms.

> A customer was looking at yarns and trying to match colors for her granddaughter. The criterion was appropriate colors for a baby girl. She was holding one white and one pink yarn and was looking for a third one to match. I suggested a blue yarn, to which she added that the knit would be for a baby girl. Then, Ayşe replied: "Recently I read something on the Internet, which was saying that such attitudes like blue for boys and pink for girls should be avoided. [*Geçen bir yazı okudum internette. Erkeğe mavi, kıza pembe, öyle yapmayın diyor.*]"

As the two instances reveal, Internet was not merely a tool for finding new knitting patterns and acquiring knitting know-how. It helped knitting course participants to acquire a critical outlook regarding social norms such as gender, and empowered them through raising their voices. In addition to the development of critical thinking and making impact, self-promotion and recognition of participant's labor were as significant as the former two, if not more. Once, one participant named Pamuk mentioned that she posted one of her knits on the Internet, which, she later revealed, was Facebook. She said that she broke sharing records in a way to emphasize how popular the post became. She added: "I'm famous in Ağrı. [*Ben Ağrı'da meşhurum.*]" With the help of

Internet, Pamuk had the ability to upload her knits online, which enabled self-promotion and recognition of her own labor. Her happiness as she revealed the Facebook story, is an example of how individual participants would like to stand out through their knits.

To sum up, Internet acted as a major enabler at the knitting course that paved the way towards self-improvement. First, it opened participants up to a whole world of new materials; knitting patterns, tools and tutorials, through which they developed their knitting vocabulary and helped widen the scope of what was possible. This helped participants enrich their knitting imaginary, simultaneously unmaking the propriety, which moved them away from much desired originality, which I discuss in detail later (see Section 7.2). Second, Internet enabled an easy access to shared know-how that was not readily available at the knitting course (see Sections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3). It bridged participants to learning tutorials, helping them acquire knitting know-how. All in all, Internet helped participants in self-improvement in knitting and in general: Not only originality was spread through new, not-yet-tested knitting patterns, but also new know-how was disseminated. Meanwhile, participants promoted their works on social media, developed critical outlooks and raised their voices.

6.4 Conclusion

To conclude, learning appears as one of the primary motives for joining the knitting course, beside knitting patterns, finding affirmative support (see Section 5.1.1.4) and socialization (see Section 5.1.1.5). Learning occurred at the knitting course through four prominent ways: Giving instructions to, intervening in the work of, making design decisions on behalf of, and caring. Learning at the knitting course occurred in multiple directions and was a never-ending process. Although Nergis was the knitting tutor, a circle of participant-friends practiced as participant-tutors, cultivating a community of knitting practice. As Nergis tutored mainly on knitting patterns, participant-tutors tutored on knitting steps

such as casting on and off. With each minute interaction participants learned from the knitting tutor Nergis, and from participant-tutors.

Although instructions on knitting and knitting patterns were abundantly available both online and in print, participants chose to meet in physical around a knitting tutor, demanding a more hands-on approach to the dissemination of knitting know-how, for knitting knowledge is tacit knowledge. Knitting magazines and online knitting platforms were not enough as learning materials; they could not offer the hands-on learning the knitting course offered. Still, Internet enriched knitting imaginary through knitting patterns, connected them to knitting know-how and helped develop a critical outlook and self-confidence.

Sometimes, the unconventional organization of the yarn store (knitting course being at the center of it) created a vibrant environment in which workforce were not able to meet participant and customer demand from time to time. The response to this problem was interdependencies in tutoring participants, assisting customers in sales and running errands around the yarn store. Firstly, participants, including myself, were tutored by not just Nergis, but by other experienced participants as participant-tutors and sometimes by Ayşe. This not only took off some responsibility from Nergis' shoulders, but helped cultivate an informal learning environment, a community of knitting practice. Secondly, Nergis and participants assisted Ayşe, Alper and Mete in assisting sales: They welcomed customers, answered their questions, and navigated them around the store. In this way, customers had the chance to interact with the practitioners of knitting, who provided firsthand information based on experience, creating an unconventional shopping experience. Thirdly, participants helped Nergis, Ayşe and Alper in small tasks such as placement of yarns. All in all, conventional hierarchies were unmade through interdependencies and a more horizontal organization and conduct was attained. In the next chapter, I discuss how propriety was made and unmade regarding knitting practice at the knitting course.

CHAPTER 7

MAKING AND UNMAKING PROPRIETY IN KNITTING PRACTICE AT THE KNITTING COURSE

Underlying the knitting projects, there was a silent ongoing production at the knitting course: normative values regarding how to knit, how a knit artifact needed to look, and how to approach a finished knit artifact. Participants of the knitting course were engaged in this constant making and unmaking of propriety through their works, their comments and suggestions on others' works, and others' ways of knitting. In this section, I discuss this propriety making through artifacts and gestures. Then, I reveal the originality pursuits within the knitting course, and discuss how originality was framed by this propriety.

7.1 Making propriety

Knit artifacts constitute the most common material with the help of which propriety making comes to surface. Knitting projects were shaped by their use contexts, the common taste that prevailed, and the ideal feel of a fabric that was aimed at. The propriety that surrounds the knit artifacts throughout the production process is discussed in the following section.

7.1.1 Internal consistency

Propriety making occurred through the ongoing efforts to create an internally consistent knit, whose stitches were dispersed evenly, which left no trace of the hand. During my earlier visits to the knitting course, when I was not yet a regular

participant, Suzan showed me how I could accomplish internal consistency throughout my knit. As we were standing by the cash register, she tried to correct the ends, that is the turning points of my row, which produced a neat line at neither end, but were rather sloppy looking. The tone of the tutoring my friend Mavi received from Biber, on the other hand, was relatively more judgmental for she was a woman, who was not able to conform to the proper knitting. Biber, not only expected Mavi to unknit and reknit, but also shamed her through her rhetoric.

> Biber was so obsessed with knitting tight that she had both Mavi and I unknit for several times because we were not doing it as correctly as possible. She had this aesthetic vision for the ideal knit in which each stitch was uniform on a row that was as tight as possible. I caught Biber several times catching on Mavi's mistakes from afar, and stopping her only to ask: "Do you think this is good now? [*Sence bu olmuş mu şimdi?*]" Biber's suggestion was to unknit the mistaken part to re-knit it in the proper way. She pursued the "correct" way of knitting to the extent of attaining a prêt-à-porter aesthetic: perfect, machine-like, tight, not loose etc. This was in a way hiding the fact that this piece was produced by hand.

For a knitter, it was important to find one's flow in knitting in order to create a uniform knit. Participants, including myself, never paused a knit without finishing a row. Once, as the knitting course was receiving the tea that was ordered, Şeker, a novice participant like myself, asked the waiter if it was possible that she paid later on so as not to lose track [*şişi kaçırmamak için*]. "Şişi kaçırmak" is literally translated as losing needle. It means to lose the flow of knitting when the needle slides off the knit. This was problematic for the novice, because it required the replacement of the needle in the stitches. She was afraid of damaging the uniformity of her stitches in case she stopped. At the knitting course, knitting internally consistent was significant and urgent. It was one of the earliest feedback I had received in the course. Participants did not forgive sloppy stitches, and always unknit to knit it in the proper way.

7.1.2 Appropriateness for use

The use context determined the feel of a knit artifact. The feel is a general term, so I shall elaborate on what this corresponded to in knitting practice at the knitting course. There was no such thing as an ideal surface of a garment that was knit. The feel [*gevşeklik*] of a certain artifact was determined by its use context. Participants never went experimental; they followed the unwritten yet expected everyday sensibilities about garments. To illustrate, a scarf needed to have a drape, and fall nicely on shoulders. It could never be stiff and hold still, say, as a neck protector would. The following instance is one of my earliest encounters with the knitting course and its tutors.

> Probably because my piece felt more stiff than a usual scarf should and did not have any drape, Suzan suggested me to knit my stitches looser, so that the scarf felt right. Then she showed me how I could loosen up by knitting half a row.

The first tutoring that I received from Suzan was based on the feel of my knit. The feel was strongly related to the tension that was created, which depended on individual knitter's hand along with the choice of yarn and knitting needles. For example, you should not knit a thick yarn with thin needles, because it would be very stiff, and would not have the desired draping effect.

One of the participants with whom I was chatting revealed what would be undesired. Comparing crochet knitting with needle knitting, Gökçen showed her dislike of crochet work, for crochet could not create draping fabrics and instead resulted in stiff knits. She said: "Too tight stuff resembles peasant craft. [*Çok sık şeyler köylü işine kaçıyor.*]" Arguably the reason why Gökçen did not like about crochet knitting was that it resulted in tight knits [*sıkı örgü*] that lacked drape and did not correlate with the use context of individual knit. In addition, she associated stiff garments with lower classes and their taste, with which she did not identify.

Beside the use context, the feel was found significant and worked towards, because a stiff garment was found to grow away from prêt-à-porter look. So, attaining a prêt-à-porter look was more than welcome since it was a recognized look, but attaining a craftier look was not. Throughout my visits to the knitting course, I have witnessed a considerable amount of situations in which participants praised finished knit artifacts that looked like prêt-à-porter clothing, and knitting methods that enabled such a look. In the next section, I discuss how this normative aesthetic understanding was produced by the participants of the knitting course.

7.1.3 Prêt-à-porter aesthetics

During my visits to the knitting course, the most common type of propriety making revolved around what looked good, what was tasteful, and what needed to be followed and avoided. What determined the standard was prêt-à-porter aesthetic. The following instance is an example of how ready-to-wear clothes were praised.

> Gökçen, whom I observed talking to Almıla commented how hard it was to knit brioche pattern [*hakiki selanik*] She further said that once it was accomplished, especially with two colors, it attained a prêt-à-porter look. Her exact wording was: "When you knit it in two colors, it becomes like prêt-à-porter, it becomes very beautiful. [*İki renkte yaptığın zaman hazır gibi oluyor, çok güzel oluyor.*]"

What Gökçen appreciated was the intricacy and precision of prêt-à-porter garments, which hand knitters faced a huge challenge in producing. This was a mastery only a few could develop. For this reason, I observed that participants categorized, favored or avoided patterns based on their mimicry of prêt-à-porter aesthetic as in the case of favoring brioche pattern [*hakiki selanik*].

However, knit garments were found superior in certain aspects, too. The following instance explains my encounter with Şirin, a talkative one-off

participant, who revealed the advantages of handmade knits over prêt-à-porter garments.

> I went back to my chair, and Şirin and I started talking until Nergis came. She said she could not wear knit jumpers, because it made her look thicker than she actually was. She preferred those shawls knit in the mesh form (loose, and with visible holes). She said that these mesh form shawls became so soft and like prêt-à-porter [*satın*]. Meanwhile, she was looking at Pembe who was wearing a cardigan similar to what she had been describing. She said that when worn on top of a black top, they hid body fat." She mentioned this looseness could be accomplished by using thin yarns on thick needles. What followed was a warning that this was more feminine, and thus not suitable for me. Şirin also told me that handmade knits kept warmer than a usual prêt-à-porter one. As an inferior example, she pointed at the basic jumper [*triko kazak*] she was wearing, which she had bought from [a high street shop].

Implying that the prêt-à-porter was made out of yarns which were of poor quality and cheap, Şirin praised handmade knits, for one was able to choose the finest quality during knitting. Prêt-à-porter sets the standard for the desired look, yet Şirin enjoyed her option to choose between yarns the garment was made out of. Similar to Şirin, Bilge, too, favored or avoided yarns based on their pilling tendencies, which happens when small fibres create balls on the fabric due to wear. The following instance reveals how the dated look of a jumper was carefully avoided.

> Bilge was knitting with a cotton yarn, a warm-weather yarn that did not pill. I asked her why she did not knit with yarns such as merino or cashmere. She replied she didn't prefer them, as they tended to pill after wearing. When she was saying this, she looked at my jumper, which had indeed pilled.

Although she could choose any yarn that appealed to her, Bilge's choice was still determined by the mainstream aesthetics that prevailed, both outside of and within the knitting course. At this point, it is helpful to refer to the common steps of hiding tails (see Section 5.3.2.5) and steaming (see Section 5.3.2.6) in knitting, and how these practices were more about a perfect, finished look and feel. On the other hand, when overdone, steaming carried the potential of harming the

drape of a garment. Still, knitting course participants continued to hide yarn tails and steam their finished knits to accomplish the desired look and feel.

The taste was a collective work that was reproduced on an ongoing basis at the knitting course. What set the standard for good work, what was found to be tasteful, was measured by either how ordered the garment's basic geometry was, or how close it looked like mass-manufactured garments, one that you would find in a retail store. In order to attain the desired look, participants carefully chose certain yarns and avoided others according to whether they were prone to pilling, they considered patterns based on the degree of their potential sagging. All the while, they endeavored to avoid a handmade look, leaving no trace of imperfections of hand-making. By consciously eliminating the DIY-look, participants reproduced a perfection regime, in which their own hand-making was aimed to be invisible.

To conclude, participants at the knitting course adjusted knitting patterns by changing the original yarn type and yarn color. Yarns were employed during the knitting process after a thorough consideration of their potential tendencies in the future, such as pilling and sagging. Any yarn or pattern that stood in the way of accomplishing a finished, almost prêt-à-porter look was avoided. As choices were made accordingly, the hand was trained to keep up with this desired aesthetic; stitches were made even, mistakes were unknit and reknit with patience, yarn tails were hidden on the knit fabric. In the end, the closer it got to a prêt-à-porter look, the more admiration it received and the more sales there were as in Biber's case, who once said she had to make each piece perfect because she sold what she knit. Apparently, perfection was what was selling. Throughout and following the laborious making process, participants' maker agencies were not considered significant and hand traces were avoided. On the contrary, knits were aimed to be looked as the result of mass-production; a standardized process from start to end resulting in precise dimensions.

7.1.4 Tendency towards the ordered

Beside the worn out, sloppy look that was carefully avoided, disorder was found tasteless by the knitting course participants. The following instance is an example of how the arrangement of accessories followed an ordered geometry. Without making any measurements, Birgül stood up and decided on where the button needed to be positioned in an improvised manner.

> Birgül was sewing a baby cardigan Nergis knit. She also wanted to add buttons. At some point she stood up and asked whether the tentative order she created was OK, meaning that if they were placed in equal intervals. I asked why it mattered, and her response was: "*Göz var, izan var*."

Birgül made clear that the positioning of the buttons in an irregular order was not acceptable and she fortified her argument by applying the proverb "*Göz var, izan var*." [literally, "One has eyes, one has intelligence."], which is used to communicate that peoples' eyes will discern the irregularities. A strong rejection of irregularity contributed to propriety making at the knitting course, to which every participant was expected to conform to.

> As I had finished my scarf in the previous session, I didn't have anything to do. However, I had earlier decided to knit a patchwork blanket, in which I could try all sorts of stitches, yarns and colors. I already had two square knits, so I wanted to start another one. First, I asked Nergis to help me get started. She casted on twenty stitches, but I could not accomplish the second row. So Ayşe ran to my help this time. She decided to knit a couple of rows, skipping the problematic part for me, so that I could just build upon it. I wanted to do the basketweave pattern [*kesmeşeker*] (Figure 7.1), which I had done in one of the two knits to be used in my patchwork. As she was helping me get started on another patch, Ayşe asked me about the dimensions of my previous squares. I said that it didn't matter how many I did in the previous example, I thought I could do a different square this time. She said: "Yeah, but still. [*Olsun.*]"

This meant that, although I could knit any pattern in any color by using any yarn and still make a patchwork by combining them, for patchwork exactly embraces this bricolage attitude and mixed look, Ayşe favored coherence and sameness over diversity, imposing an ordered aesthetic on a patchwork. The employment

of the same pattern, even if that be with a different yarn, would attain the ordered look.

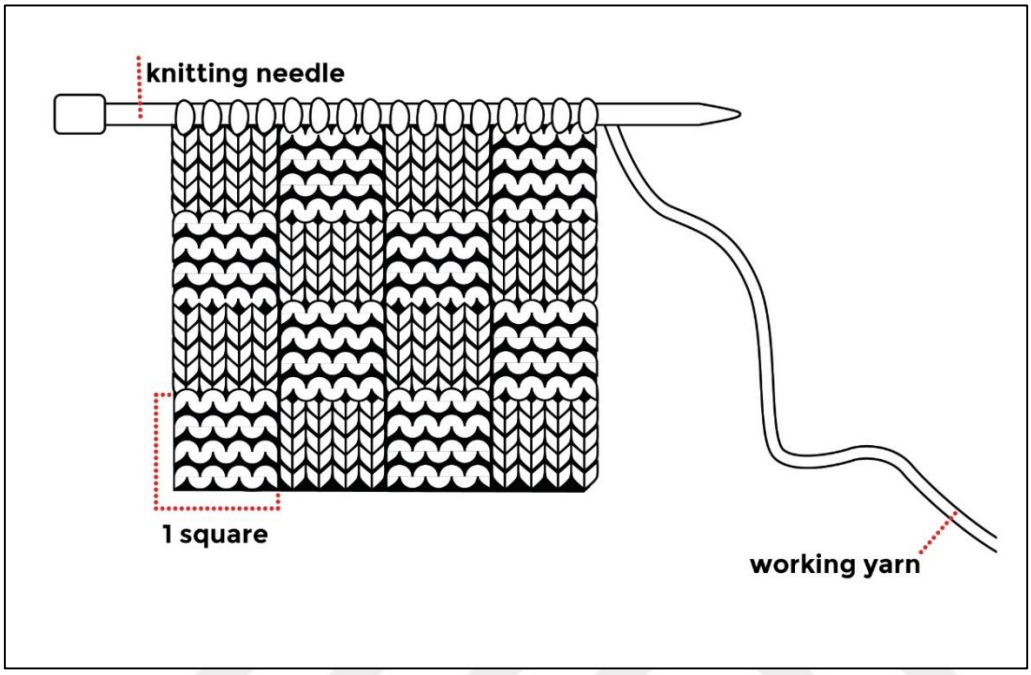

Figure 7.1 The basketweave pattern. (Illustration by the author)

My dialogue with Ayşe points to the boundaries of knitting patterns, in determining the ordered geometry participants followed. Compared to other participants, I was on the more experimental side: I was picking up materials and juxtaposing them only to see what would come out. I neither developed a taste within knitting, nor recognized the taste of other knitters. Participants, on the other hand, knew what they liked and did not like, making it explicit through their comments and suggestions on their and others' projects.

During one of my scarf projects, I witnessed the extent to which order was a determining factor for the knitting course participants. In knitting projects, you knit and knit, until that very moment you find yourself having to make a decision. These decision moments were more frequent if the participant was a novice knitter, and the project exceeded participant's capabilities. So, she consulted the experienced ones, as to what she needed to be doing next. This was

when other participants' comments and suggestions usually arrived, simultaneously disclosing commenters' aesthetic sensibilities. During my scarf project, I have witnessed two instances which uncovered participant tendencies towards order. The first scarf I knit included two different colors; brown and mustard. First, I knit the brown part, then continued with the mustard yarn. As I ran out of my mustard yarn, I took a break from knitting, and started thinking about where I needed to continue knitting: Should I knit the second mustard as a continuation of the first mustard (Figure 7.2.d), or on the opposite site as a continuation of the brown (Figure 7.2.c)? Then,

> Nergis suggested that we knit the extra mustard not as a continuation to the mustard I started (Figure 7.2.d) but the other edge (Figure 7.2.c), so that it created symmetry. This was also suggested earlier by my grandmother, and when I told her that I believed what would look good was like a half mustard, half brown, not brown in the middle with mustard halves in both edges. So both my grandmother and Nergis found the symmetrical option more appropriate.

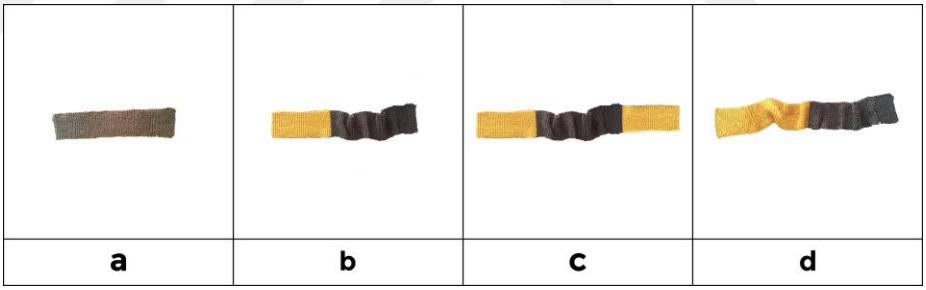

Figure 7.2 The scarf project I knit. (a) and (b) are from the making process, whereas (c) and (d) are the two possible options on which I received feedback. (d) is the final version of the scarf.

> Later on, I happily and proudly finished my first knitting project (Figure 7.2.d). I had created this chunky scarf, thicker than I expected, yet, was able to keep warm. Then, I thought about adding fringes, which some participants discouraged, for, they said, it was an outdated thing to do. Yet, I insisted on it. It was now a question of which colors the fringes would be, and how to place them on both sides. Meanwhile, I was done with my scarf (Figure 7.2.d), but I wanted fringes. Nergis helped me out with that. But before that, Bilge told me that I needed to knit mustard fringes on brown side, and brown fringes on mustard side. A perfect symmetry! Again this emphasis on order was suggested as the way to go because it was regarded as proper. I told Bilge that I wanted them on both

> sides mustard, at one side making a gradual transition, and at the other making a sharp contrast.

Order played a vital role and came to the surface during the arrangement of knits of different colors and patterns, and in the matching of accessories and finished garments. Although order was aimed at, there was no proper calculation made. Participants decided on the arrangement in an improvised manner, by rule of thumb.

To sum up, order was favored by knitting course participants, adding to propriety making regarding knitting practice. Arrangement of colors and patterns was made in an ordered, symmetrical manner, and accessories such as buttons were placed on a knit in equal intervals. Although order was found significant during knitting process, participants never used any measurement tool. Rather, they made these decisions by rule of thumb. In the following section, I discuss how constant efforts in creating internally consistent knits contributed to propriety making in knitting practice.

7.1.5 Proper gestures of/in/around knitting

Knitting practice, like any other making practice, has its own set of established rules regarding how to handle the tools employed during making, how to handle the material to be transformed, how to handle and keep good maintenance of the finished artifact and so on. The knitting course practiced various forms of knitting gestures, during which they either encouraged or discouraged these gestures. In what follows I explain two discouraged gestures through two instances.

> As my failings continued, one participant from across the table said that the problem could be overcome once I used my finger to wrap the yarn around the needle. Gökçen said she avoided teaching me that for it was not appropriate for men. I remembered how I had found Nergis' wrapping the yarn with her finger both fluent and feminine. It was femininely fluent, like drawing curves in the air.

At the time of the instance, I was trying out the seed stitch, which you knit as one stockinette stitch followed by a reverse stockinette stitch. So, one needs to alternate between two different stitch types with each stitch, and this takes a longer time to adjust to, and threatens the flow of knitting. My method of knitting is hand-knitting. However, as I knit, I cannot use my fingers as actively as Nergis did. Rather, I use my knitting needles as a driver uses her steering wheel: As I knit, the direction the tips of my knitting needles changes: They enter a stitch, widen it up, and borrow my working yarn from where I hold it with my thumb and index finger. My fingers do not stand out in an exaggerated gesture. However, Nergis along with many experienced participants, knit without moving their knitting needles too much. As they knit each stitch, they tied the knot with the yarn they wrap around the needle exaggeratedly. This occurred very quickly and stood out as a feminine move. Their way of knitting flowed much better as compared to mine. So occurred the gendering of a gesture, by keeping certain bodily practices exclusive to female participants, whereas a male participant was not granted access to the feminine way of practicing. Through the calculation of what not to teach, a queer attempt at knitting, which might gender-bend the knitting gesture, was prevented. Thus, the femininity surrounding the knitting practice was maintained.

There were various styles in knitting, depending on how the working yarn was held in participant's hand. The working yarn was held in hand to create a tension necessary for knitting even stitches. There are knitting styles called the English, the Continental and the Balkan (also called as Portuguese, Turkish, around-the-neck knitting [*boyunda örmek*]). My mother and my grandmothers knit in Balkan knitting style, wrapping the yarn around their necks to create the necessary tension. The participants of the knitting course did not wrap the yarn around their necks, and created the tension using their fingers only. Because my mother taught me how to knit (see Section 4.1), I picked up the Balkan way of knitting, which became a matter of subject at the knitting course.

> First they [participants] talked about the absurdity of the fact that I whipped my yarn around my neck. I was doing it because it was creating a tension in the yarn, which I needed. As I was knitting, the knitting needles and my knit came closer to my face with each stitch for the yarn was consumed as I was knitting. A participant laughed and said: "Take that away from your face! [*Çek şunu yüzünden!*]" Sakız, a participant sitting behind me, advised me not to do it, and instead get used to hand-knitting, because, she claimed, it was easier. She showed me that I could manage to create a tension by holding the yarn between my thumb and my index finger, as I held the two needles in two hands.

Another way of propriety making was through ridicule and training of the novice male participant. Participants, by mocking my way of creating tension in the yarn and suggesting to avoid it, consciously eliminated different styles within the knitting course, and consciously or unconsciously attempted at standardization for a making activity.

The training of the body is only natural when one is engaged with making, yet gestures of/in/around knitting were active in gendering of knitting practice, eliminating differences in style between the experienced and the novice, and thus contributed to propriety making within the knitting course: Participants, through gestures, maintained the feminine gender of the practice, which was not gender-bent despite the inclusion of a male participant. Through excluding the different, participants approached a proper gesture of knitting—they were still comfortable with minute differences in fingers. Overall, the knitting course practiced various forms of propriety making, which kept the knitting course as it was: gendered and regulated.

7.2 Originality endeavors: Making and unmaking propriety

Despite the ongoing practices within the knitting course towards the making of the proper, participants actively pursued originality in their knitting projects and sought to improve themselves as knitters. In the following section, I first talk about the materials and means of originality; yarns, knitting patterns and Internet. Then, I introduce how, through display and affirmations of knits,

original efforts were made to contribute to the general taste, rather than disrupt it.

7.2.1 Search for originality

Most of the time, the backdrop to the vibrant environment of the yarn store was an ongoing search for knitting materials, the most common of which were yarns and knitting patterns. It was a quest for the new; the unseen, the not-yet-tested. The yarns and patterns that were familiar to the participant were found dull, sometimes resulting in a frustration of not being genuine enough.

> A customer was looking at yarns, feeling not very content with what she was holding in her hand; a monochrome pink yarn. She then found herself a novelty yarn; a white one with nubs[6]. She became so impressed with this yarn that she had to ask Nergis: "Ms. tutor, what is this? [*Hocahanım[7] bu nedir?*]" Then, Nergis showed her a knit that was made out of that yarn. Later, the customer dropped the pink yarn by saying: "These are all too common. [*Bunlar görülmüş şeyler.*]" She then took the white yarn with nubs.

This could be interpreted as a way to capture originality in the work that would be knit. The customer dropped the monochrome yarn, once she encountered a more decorative one—its decorative nature, she must have trusted, would lead to more novel results. She revealed her lack of appreciation for the "common" by simply opting out of using it. The discontent towards the more common materials is also discernible in Şeker's approach to knits and knitting materials. Şeker, a younger participant who was not as experienced as the rest of the course participants, often ended up with undesired results, complained and quitted, and was always on the search for unique colors in yarns and accessories to match her knit. She frequently came to me to see what I knit, how I knit what I knit and what I thought on what she knit.

[6] Yarn with nubs, or nub yarn, is a type of novelty yarn on whose thread there appear small balls of fiber for decoration purposes.
[7] *Hocahanım* is a word made up of two separate words; *hoca* (teacher) and *hanım* (lady).

> Şeker liked my knitting so much that she became discontent with her knitting. She was knitting a baby cardigan by using the cheap yarns she bought from [a nearby competitor shop]. She looked at the yarn I was using which was tinted grey. She was looking for some color that could not be found and she asked my opinion on colors. I suggested her to try the pink in the same series of yarns. She rejected my suggestion and insisted that pink could be found anywhere. She liked the tinted green version and bought one. She then asked me about my knitting pattern. I was knitting fisherman's rib pattern [*yalancı selanik*]. She said she would try her newly bought yarn knitting the fisherman's rib pattern.

The search for the new shows itself during the ongoing material quest at the yarn store. Participants felt indifferent towards and sometimes neglected the familiar knitting materials. They shunned away from primary and secondary colors because they "could be found anywhere." Şeker, carefully and consciously eliminated the pink; an overly used color for baby girl garments. She preferred a tinted green, willing to emphasize the color's rare use for a baby garment project. By doing so, she must have hoped, she attained originality. The search for and use of unconventional yarns and colors also showed itself in the praise of variegated [*ebruli*] yarns, which were mixed colorwise.

In addition to yarn types and colors, knitting patterns, too, enabled participants to attain novelty. The following instance reveals how patterns could be found outdated, and thus looked down on.

> Ayşe and Nergis started mocking another knitting course. Feeling curious, I asked what that other course was. Ayşe said in an ironic way: "You pay sixty liras per month, and they teach you knitting patterns. [*Ayda altmış lira veriyorsun, onlar da sana model gösteriyor.*]" Nergis then replied: "This year they increased the fee, it is now seventy-five liras [per month]. [*Bu sene fiyatı artırmışlar, şimdi yetmişbeş lira.*]" I couldn't help myself but ask: "What's special about it? [*Ne özelliği var ki?*]" In an allusive manner, Ayşe replied: "[It is] jet set. [*Sosyete.*]" Nergis took the criticism one step further: "And they teach the patterns we used to teach. [*Bir de bizim eski modelleri gösteriyorlar.*]"

This dialogue sheds light on the fact that knitting patterns have their own fashion; they become popular at a certain time, and fade in popularity as new

patterns replace them. Therefore, just as new yarns of different colors and decorations, new patterns, too, emerge as a way to capture novelty in knits.

To sum up, knitting course participants aimed at originality in their knitting projects. Their originality endeavors became most visible during their choice of knitting patterns and yarns, whose colors, color distributions (whether the yarn was monochrome or not), and decorations became significant aspects. In the next section, I move beyond the confines of the yarn store, and introduce Internet as an alternative source of originality for the participants of the knitting course.

7.2.2 Internet as one means to attain originality

> Then Gümüş took out different knits from her bag; a plastic bag right next to her feet on the ground. One of the knits was a pink overcoat, another one was a pink hat. The last one was especially striking: A baby hat in neon orange, which looked as if it jumped out of a fairy tale. The hat was in conical shape, and once worn, would drape over the shoulders of the baby. It was embellished with stars of three different colors; white, dark blue, and green, grouped and left hanging from the two edges of the hat with yarns of different lengths, one over the forefront and the other at the other end. I asked her where she got her ideas for these knits, "the Internet," she replied. She even specified the address by saying Nako TV[8], an online platform of a wool firm, where not only materials were displayed and sold, but also knitting patterns were provided along with instructions on how to accomplish them. Nako TV was mentioned by yet another participant on that very day.

For Gümüş, in addition to the knitting course, Nako TV was where she also searched knitting patterns for new knits. She was one of the many participants who benefited from the Internet during pursuits of new ideas. Internet was often at the end of fingertips thanks to smartphone technology, accessible to most of

[8] Nako TV is the online learning platform of a wool firm Nako. On Nako TV, there are tutorial videos, which often include one experienced knitter sitting at the center of a domestic setting, explaining step-by-step as she knits her way. Sometimes, only the knitter's hands are visible, accompanied by a background voice. The videos are categorized as follows: easy methods (*kolay teknikler*), beginner (*başlangıç*), intermediate (*orta*), advanced (*uzman*), felting (*keçe yapımı*), crochet (*tığ işi*). This categorization sorts learning into two: First, according to difficulty levels of methods and, second, according to materials used. The videos are available at: http://www.nako.com.tr/nako-tv.php

the participants. I have come across many times that a participant came to Nergis with her smartphone, whose screen showed a new pattern. The URLs to the knitting patterns were copied or their screenshots were taken (Figure 7.3). These links or screenshots were then shared via WhatsApp.

Figure 7.3: An example of how knitting patterns found online were copied on smartphones for later use. (Illustration by the author)

> Often, I observed, participants were astonished at the knitting-related material available on the Internet. Upon their reactions, I sometimes found myself wondering whether they were not aware of the fact that knitting patterns and ideas were abundantly available on the Internet. On the contrary, they knew platforms such as Pinterest, and used Facebook groups related to knitting. I soon learned that it was not that they did not know the abundantly available material on the Internet. Their reactions were stemming from pure admiration for the original knits, revealing their passion towards knitting practice. Once, I showed participants Birgül, Pamuk and Şeker thick yarns and needles that were used to create chunky knits. I could read it from their faces that they were quite impressed with the unique character of these knits. The aim seemed always to be to knit the unforeseen, unknit.

To sum up, participants continued their search for knitting patterns on the Internet beside the knitting course. Although they were content with, and competed for the knitting patterns Nergis provided, they craved for new ideas and aimed at originality. They collected the found knitting patterns on their smartphones, and introduced them at the knitting course, first of all to Nergis. The making of originality at the knitting course shows that participants embodied the appetite that characterized the growth and standing out of a knitter. At the end, participants tested their current knowledge of knitting patterns and developed new know-how, challenged or reproduced their aesthetic sensibilities. In the next section, I talk about how knitting course presented their original knits in need of approval, and the significance of displaying and approving of knits contributed to making of the proper.

7.2.3 Making propriety: Presentation of knits and affirmation

Apart from yarns, knitting patterns and the Internet, with the help of which originality was created, I have observed that participants frequently presented their knits proudly, and sometimes anxiously, to the knitting course. If the participant believed in her project, she was willing to do so because she knew only appreciation would follow, which would make her proud of the outcome. Sometimes, on the other hand, participants were discontent with what they had created; judging their work before others judged it. In such cases, they did not wear it proudly before each and every participant, for they could not expect an entire appreciation from the knitting course. So they avoided displaying their knit. The following instance illustrates one instance, during which one participant only dropped by at the knitting course to showcase what she knit, before she joined her *gün* elsewhere.

> A participant, whom I recognized from previous sessions, came there only to show what she knit. She approached the knitting table, unzipped her coat and revealed the cardigan she was wearing. It was a white piece with a glitter effect on it, presumably because of the yarn it was made out of. There were also pearls shining. I thought it was a bit overdone,

> especially considering her very humble outfit in general. The knitting course, on the other hand, appreciated her effort emphasizing how stylish [*şık*] it was. Later, the woman said: "Today we have our *gün*." [*Bugün günümüz var.*] The passing-by participant did not grab a chair. She left the knitting course soon after she received positive feedback.

The participant made a small visit to the knitting course, although she was not to participate at the knitting course because she had another plan later that day. Her knit needed appreciation, before she joined her *gün*. Positive comments made her feel self-confident as a knitter, and proud of the outcome of a laborious process. Her knit, which easily stood out with its glitter and pearls, was appreciated by the entire knitting course, which was the prominent sign of a knit's being proper.

At the knitting course, affirmations of knits varied in positivity: A knit could be adored or it could be liked to a lesser extent. But it could never be disliked. I have never encountered an explicit dislike towards the work of another participant. This is telling because it shows how feedback practices were always affirmative and polite. This created the necessary supportive environment for the development of novice knitters (see Section 5.1.1.4). Once, one participant carefully praised the craftsmanship of Nergis, before asking for the yarn which was used to create the knit in question. She said: "Setting aside your knitting which is very neat, which yarn did you use in making this? [*Yünü ne bunun? Sen muntazam örmüşsün o ayrı da.*]" The participant was careful to not assign the success of the work directly to the yarn, for it would offend the tutor.

To sum up, practices of presenting the finished knit before the knitting course, and practices of affirmative commenting not only point to the supportive and affirmative environment of the knitting course, but also discloses how the proper was produced and sustained.

7.3 Conclusion

To conclude, there was a constant making and unmaking of propriety at the knitting course; normative values around and originality pursuits in the knitting practice. The propriety could be read on artifacts and gestures.

Regarding artifacts, participants' approach to knitting was framed by certain unwritten expectations from finished garments. Firstly, a knit needed to be internally consistent, namely that, each stitch ought to be evenly dispersed. Secondly, a knit's tension needed to resonate with its use scenario: A scarf ought to fall nicely off shoulders. Thirdly, a knit needed to be like prêt-à-porter [*satın gibi*], without the trace of knitter hand. Lastly, a knit needed follow a knitting pattern that was ordered.

A more hidden propriety that was reproduced at the knitting course was through gestures. Knitting was expected to be practiced through certain gestures. Firstly, as I was a male knitter, my tutors carefully considered which gesture to teach me: A more feminine way of wrapping the yarn around needle was avoided. Secondly, I was ridiculed for having knit in Balkan style, in which the knitter wraps the yarn around her neck to create the desired tension. Through tutoring and ridicule, certain gestures were avoided, contributing to propriety making also in gestures.

Despite the constant making of propriety through tutoring, suggestions and comments, originality was much celebrated, helping to unmake the propriety production. Participants pursued novel yarns and knitting patterns, and for that, they were not limited with the knitting patterns brought by Nergis. They also searched the Internet for knitting patterns. Still, however original their knits became, participants felt the need to be confirmed by Nergis and other participants; they proudly wore their knits, or showed their knits' pictures on their mobile phones. Comments were always polite and affirmative and contributed to the course's positive atmosphere.

Looking at originality pursuits complicates the knitting course's position regarding creativity. On the one hand, propriety making limited differences and prevented potential original approaches through the conditioning of the different and creating an imperative the novice could only follow. On the other hand, originality pursuits opened up space for individual expression through design and for self-improvement. Propriety was cultivated and conformism was expected, yet individual participants strived for standing out.

CHAPTER 8

BETWEEN OPEN-SOURCE AND COMMERCE: ECONOMIES AT THE KNITTING COURSE

In this chapter, I present and discuss the economies at the knitting course. Firstly, I introduce the knitting pattern and elaborate on how knitting patterns were decoded. Then, I discuss the politics surrounding the knitting pattern at the knitting course by first introducing the pattern rule, and then exemplifying violations of it. I explain an instance where the pattern rule was violated which caused a conflict at the yarn store. Lastly, I present the exchange of knits and knitting materials and *gün* events that took place at the knitting course.

8.1 Knitting pattern

A knitting pattern is basically how the yarn is made to repeat with the help of hands and knitting needles. As the movements are repeated, this repetition forms a uniform look and tension; a knitting pattern. The concept of pattern at the knitting course included the stitch type, and the calculated arrangement of the (sometimes more than one) stitch types on a knit artifact. Each knitting pattern had its own set of instructions [*numaralar*[9]; literally "numbers"]. Without an exception, participants at the knitting course followed the knitting patterns

[9] The numbers correspond to the numbers of stitches on a row, and the numbers of rows to be knit. The stitch type is mostly visible if it is not a very unique one, but how different stitch types are brought together in one piece require information on the numbers of the stitches. Numbers are crucial. For the sake of a fluent language, I will use "instructions" throughout the thesis.

Nergis provided, and worked according to the instructions she provided. Thus, knitting patterns lay at the core of what drew me, as well as the other participants, to the knitting course.

Before going further into the politics of the pattern, it is necessary to elaborate on the decoding practice. Individual or collective, decoding of any knitting pattern was where the design process started (see Section 5.3.2.1). Knitting practice, as it was practiced at the knitting course, was based on decoding, copying and modifying the knitting patterns. The following section discusses decoding practice in detail.

8.1.1 Decoding knitting patterns

> Biber showed us [Mavi and I] a magazine including knitting patterns for various baby clothes. She did it to show how she usually worked on a pattern she had not yet tried. She said she first looked at it [the pattern], and then drew it [the pattern] on a paper. Only then she started to knit.

During the knitting process, participants first decided on a knitting pattern, understood it, and only then began executing it. The methods of understanding varied; some drew the pattern on a paper, some others jotted down its instructions. Whatever the method, the pattern was first understood. Participants, in order to understand the pattern, looked carefully at the garment, touched its surface, closed in on it by stretching it with their fingers. They decoded the pattern embedded in the garment and noted it down on blank white papers found on the knitting table. Their notes were mostly in the form of jotted down instructions as in "Knit three rows in stockinette stitch, then increase two stitches. [*Üç sıra düz ör; sonra ikişer artır.*]" Participants aimed to capture the knitting process of a particular pattern in a step-by-step order with numbers of each step carefully considered. Because knitting is a process that takes time, participants could not memorize the instructions and felt the need to go back to the pattern. For that they used their jotted down instructions, and sometimes pictures of patterns they took with their mobile phones.

In decoding, there were certain gestures. In order for a pattern to be decoded, the knit was made flat, often by laying on the surface of the table. With the help of hands and needles, the pattern was touched, its stitches were stretched with fingers, its surface was manipulated. Participants tried to disclose how that visually appealing pattern was made. What follows is an instance where my grandmother and I visited a local yarn store, where

> attractive knits for babies were presented on the counter. My grandmother, together with the salesperson and her friend began talking on the knits and decoding them. During the decoding process, I observed the movements of the hands and fingers. To better understand the stitch type, the knit was held in hand, between thumb and other fingers. The piece was held between the thumb and index finger which was at the back side of the knit, which enabled the stretching of the knit and a higher resolution for the analysis. Another gesture was to stretch out the stitches with two adjacent fingers (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Knitters decode a baby garment during a visit to a local yarn store (Photographs by the author).

Decoding of a pattern was central for the social relationships at the knitting course, as well as the conduct of the store. There were times when the decoding became a collective endeavor during which receivers of the decoding receivers became decoders, working together in reading of the pattern. In the following section, I discuss how knitting patterns were collectively decoded.

The understanding of a knitting pattern did not have to be an individual process as in Biber's case mentioned above. At the knitting course, it was mostly a collective endeavor, during which help was requested and offered. In the presence of Nergis, the process was more directional, as she provided the answer to a participant's question regarding knitting pattern. Nergis memorized all the knitting patterns she brought into the knitting course. When asked of the instructions for a knitting pattern, she replied in a somewhat foreseeable manner, most of the times giving a precise number of stitches on a row along with how many rows there needed to be (Figure 8.2). She mentioned where to increase and decrease stitches, too. Because the touch of each participant was unique, the numbers of stitches could be reconsidered depending on the tension each individual participant created in the knit artifact. Nergis made a rough calculation based on the answer she received from the participant, as in "I knit tight. [*Elim sıkı*.]" or "I knit loose. [*Elim gevşek.*]." Nergis was approached as an all-knowing figure, especially for she provided the very patterns to be executed.

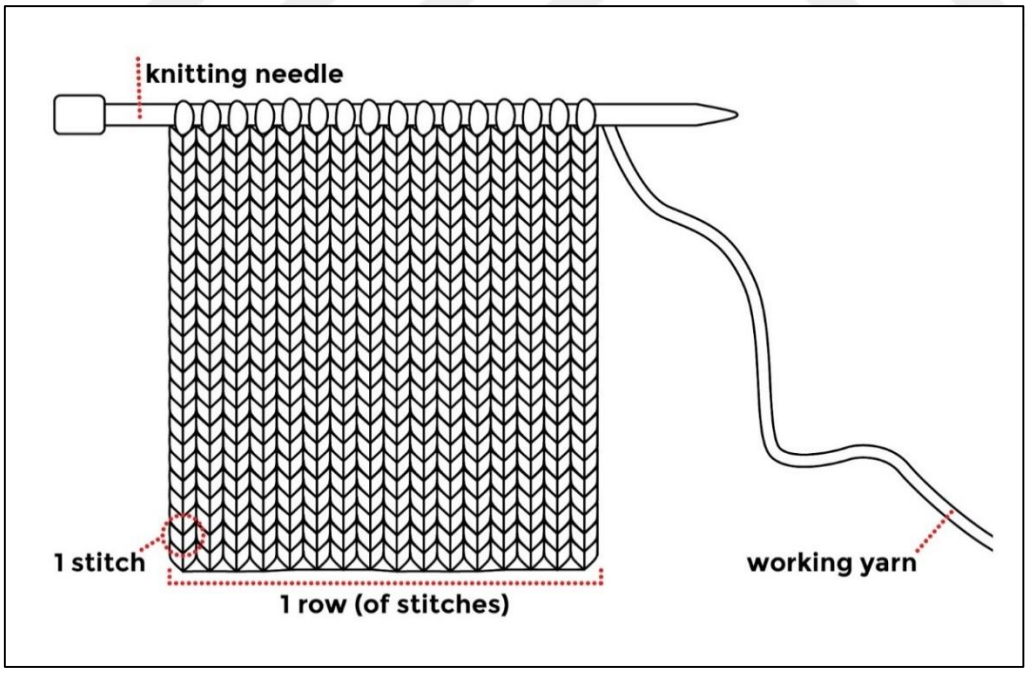

Figure 8.2 The stockinette pattern. (Illustration by the author)

Sometimes, the understanding of a knitting pattern became a collective process among participants. In such collective endeavors, stitches and rows were counted

by a temporarily formed team of participants. The counting was done with the help of knitting needles and fingers to keep track of the stitches, and if possible, the resulting number of stitches. Only after a consensus was reached over the correct numbers, were the instructions noted down to guide the knitting process.

> A participant was standing by the table and looking at a knit garment. It was a green dress with red details here and there. She was counting the rows from the top of the dress to the bottom using her needle to assist her in her counting as a way of keeping track. She counted fifteen stitches in the main body part, and then she asked Nergis how many rows there were in another part of the dress, to which Gümüş became willing to help. Then, the two went onto some sort of a collaboration to find the answer.

This kind of decoding practices were very explicit at the knitting course, in the form of participants counting rows, writing them down on a square white paper along with the type of stitches such as garter stitch [*haroşo*], seed stitch [*pirinç*] etc., and adding the numbers of the rows when necessary. Decoding collaborations included Nergis, too. She was mostly in the central position as the provider of the knitting patterns, responding to or being expected to respond to any question at any time. Nergis either intervened the decoding and started leading or she was asked questions. More rarely, Nergis asked for help during the decoding process. She consulted participants like myself when she had trouble not in decoding the pattern but in overall calculation of numbers. Once, as she was decoding a jumper brought on the knitting table from the ceiling, where different models were hung, she asked me to add the numbers of rows of different parts.

To sum up, decoding was a key practice in knitting that uncovered the nature of knitting practice at the knitting course. In decoding, participants used their fingers, their knitting needles, pens and papers to count stitches and rows, and to note down the information for later use. Decoding is first understanding existing garment's materials (yarn type, needle used for knitting), its overall structure (how individual parts brought together), and its fine details (pattern type, how

that pattern is made). Then, it is modifying the pattern according to individual participant's taste, tension and weight of the yarn.

Nergis, for she brought knitting patterns to the knitting course and had the required know-how for the execution of those patterns, was a central figure, as knitting patterns constituted the core of the knitting course. Therefore, knitting patterns were accomplished only by an experienced knitter such as Nergis, whereas participants followed her lead. Decoding, be it individual or collective, was always under control: Nergis watched silently those who decoded, and intervened those who were not allowed. In the following section, I discuss how and why rules were constructed and maintained in an attempt to prevent *any* decoding.

8.1.2 Politics of the knitting pattern

> During one dialogue in which one customer asked her the price of a garment, Nergis said that it was not for sale because she had only one copy of it. So the garments circulating in the store were almost like objects in an archive, not only showcasing the talent of its maker but also underlining the singularity of the knit. However, it was free to copy them within the knitting course, and this was not looked down on, for this formed the basis of the knitting course.

Display of knit garments (thus knitting patterns) at the knitting table opened them up to decoding practices of various sorts: individual or collective, solely mental or in the form of jotted down notes or pictures taken. Whatever the method, once the decoding was done by the participant, the pattern had its place in knitter's skill set. It became ready for any future project, during which it would be modified, built upon, shared, modified, built upon and shared again. This was the life of a knitting pattern. Therefore, once the knitting pattern was put on the table by Nergis, it became vulnerable to copying. Thus, a rule regarding pattern exchange had been defined. Many times I have witnessed Nergis introducing the rule to the passers-by as the following case reveals.

> When a customer came looking at the knit garments and wanted to know how she could have them decoded, Nergis explained as follows: "You first buy a yarn. Then you are allowed to take a picture of them. *I* provide you with the instructions. [*Önce yün alıyorsunuz. Daha sonra fotoğraf çekebilirsiniz. Numaraları da ben size veriyorum.*]"

The participants or the passers-by first indicated their interest in the decoding of a pattern. In order to have access to a knitting pattern, which included its decoding, participants and customers were required to purchase material from the yarn store. This material was often a yarn, whose price spanned a range from two liras up to six liras. Once Nergis was sure that the receiver of the decoding had already made or was to make the related payment, she gave the instructions for the pattern. Taking pictures of patterns was strictly controlled by Nergis since it would make the patterns open to later decoding. The following instance illustrates how Nergis, under certain conditions, allowed her knits' pictures being taken.

> Nergis, as she would soon leave and Mavi had a business with her, asked me if Mavi would also come. Mavi, on our previous visit, had ordered baby booties for her ex-colleague. I said she would make it on Saturday to take the booties. But the problem—or some might call it opportunity—was that there were different garments, and Nergis was willing to sell one of those that Mavi would prefer. I suggested that I could take pictures of the garments between which Mavi could choose and send them via WhatsApp. Nergis agreed.

This could be explained through mutual trust; Nergis allowed me because she knew I would not copy or distribute her knitting patterns without her permission. However, she knew that anything that was shared once, was shared forever. Arguably the reason she allowed the sharing of her knits' pictures was because she needed to know right away which knit to reserve so that she would not sell the reserved one by mistake, as she might have as well sold another one and make more profit.

In order to maintain full control over the distribution of knitting patterns, Nergis employed certain strategies. The first strategy regarded the rule of pattern

exchange: Nergis was the leading proponent and implementer of the pattern rule. The second one was keeping the knitting patterns where they were, on the table or over the rope, where Nergis could watch over them. She often said: "Ladies, let us not have the patterns off the table, please! [*Hanımlar, modelleri masadan almayalım lütfen!*]" She warned people when the rule was violated. Sometimes, she got angry with those who violated the rule. She was always alert to passers-by moving around, in order that the knitting patterns were not decoded by anyone. The maintenance of the rule required an ongoing performance. Nergis gazed, reminded of the rule, took action when necessary. She waited for the right moment to intervene, and this moment was when a customer was about to take a picture of a pattern. I felt that the reason underlying this choice of moment was not to offend and bore potential customers through rules and regulations; she rather let them enjoy the knitting patterns, be drawn into them, and do their shopping thanks to them.

Despite Nergis' careful calculations regarding the time to intervene, the pattern rule was not always welcome among potential customers, and even offended and irritated some. I could discern that this was due to the tone of Nergis: She sounded authoritarian and distant when she reminded of the rule. As a response, passers-by sometimes reacted explicitly as if they were accused of stealing. Once, Nergis explained, a customer, who was told about the pattern rule said to Nergis: "Although your appearance seemed to tell the opposite, your attitude is unseemly. [*Dış görünüşünüzün aksine tavrınız çok çirkin.*]" Thus, not all customers who were reminded of the rule happily and readily conformed. To the contrary, some contested the rule, thinking that keeping patterns exclusive and sharing them only after a fee was paid was an "unseemly behavior" [*çirkin tavır*].

Although the customers sometimes contested the rule, this was never the case with knitting course participants. Participants recognized the pattern rule; they asked for permission and even confessed their previous wrongdoings. The following instance illustrates such a confession.

> Nergis must have maintained such an authority that participants acted very carefully not to upset her. One participant, shortly after her arrival at the knitting course, came near Nergis. As she was standing, she revealed that she took the picture of one of the garments without permission. It was a like confession of a sin. Nergis said: "It's fine. I didn't tell you not to. [*Olsun. Ben sana çekme dedim mi.*]"

The above instance shows that even participants who did their shopping at the yarn store developed hesitations as to whether they could take pictures of the patterns anytime, or that they needed to ask for permission every time. So far, I explained how the pattern rule was defined, reminded of and enforced at the knitting course. In what follows, I discuss the violations of the pattern rule, and narrate at length one case in which a violation led to a conflict at the knitting course.

8.1.2.1 Violations of the pattern rule

However hard Nergis tried to maintain the pattern rule, difficulties arose during its enforcement. This was due to the conduct of the course and the yarn store. The conflicts resulted from the fact that the knitting patterns were used for various purposes. Firstly, they were used as promotional material to invite customers, displayed on the table and over the rope. Because the knitting table (thus the knitting patterns) was positioned very central at the store, patterns became very vulnerable to copying. Anyone who dropped by could decode the pattern if she had the necessary skills. Secondly, they were used as teaching material for knitting course participants, available at the knitting table to be constantly consulted during knitting process. Therefore, it became a forced control to suggest participants not to take the patterns off the table. Participants felt the urge to engage with the learning material by touching and stretching the pattern to better understand it. However, this did not always occur within the boundaries of the table, for the table was not very spacious. Thirdly, they were used as exchange material for the economic maintenance of the store. Yet, since there was no organized, conventional way of shopping, and due to the store's crowd, it became hard to trace if the customer had made any prior payment. This

was the core reason why conflicts arose. If there occurred a communication problem between Ayşe (who usually worked at the cash register) and Nergis (who was usually by the knitting table), there would occur a conflict regarding pattern exchange. The conduct of the store, and the implementation of the rule, was very informal similar to the knitting course. This resulted in grey areas out of which conflicts were born.

> One customer was holding a yarn she was going to buy. Because of this, she was provided instructions for a pattern. She took notes of Nergis' instructions on a paper. After a while, she said: "I decided not to buy the yarn, so I'm giving you the instructions back. Please do not get me wrong. (giving Nergis the papers on which she took notes) [*Ben yünü almamaya karar verdim, numaraları size geri veriyorum. Lütfen yanlış anlamayın.*]" As the customer put the yarn in the shelf, Nergis overtly and loudly creased the paper. It was apparent that she was discontent with customer's decision, because it was after being provided the instructions. Following this situation, I raised the following question to Nergis: "What if the customer memorized the instructions for the pattern? [*Ya numaraları ezberlediyse?*]" Nergis replied: "This is up to her conscience. [*O artık onun bileceği şey.*]"

To Nergis, this was a moment of violation, because the customer could have memorized the instructions. In such cases where the customer kindly explained their change of decision, accepting the situation was all Nergis could do. If the customer were "not nice", the instance could turn into a conflict. Following this dialogue, Nergis continued illustrating another similar instance to me.

> Once, one customer, after taking a yarn but without paying for it, took the picture of a pattern. Then, Nergis continued, the customer dropped the yarn and left with the pattern instructions, when Nergis was at the cash register.

Although Nergis forbade taking pictures of knitting patterns before buying any yarn, taking pictures of patterns was not the only way that paved the way for violations of the pattern rule. Experienced knitters, who were competent in reading patterns, easily bypassed this rule. The following instance illustrates one such case.

> The saxe blue shoes, which became very popular at the knitting course, caught the attention of one customer who approached the table and grabbed the knit. Since she did not attempt to take a picture of it, Nergis did not intervene, for she was a potential customer for the yarn store and for herself. However, when Nergis understood that the customer was indeed decoding, she placed the garment near her when the customer was looking at the shelves. The customer then reached the garment to continue decoding. Her husband was standing behind her, to whom she said: "I committed it to memory. [*Ben aklıma yazdım onu.*]" The customer, by not taking a picture of the pattern but merely looking at it carefully, employed a tactical act, towards which Nergis could not really do anything other than moving the garment away from her but still keeping it on the knitting table for it was both a course and a display material.

Despite her ongoing efforts, instances happened where Nergis could not do anything other than leave it to the customer's conscience. For Nergis, the knitting patterns she provided were her own labor come to life. She demanded anyone to respect the time and skills put into creating a pattern, and respect the rule established by their provider. This demand of respect for the rule was very passionate on her side. A similar attitude towards "protecting" came from participants, although not as passionate or frequent as Nergis'. Once, in the absence of Nergis, Kiraz intervened an instruction sharing between a participant and a customer by reminding of the pattern rule, and suggested the customer to consult to the tutor. This, too, resulted in a conflict. In the next section, I discuss this conflict in detail which exemplifies how knitting patterns became the object of struggle, and furthermore of the multiple hierarchies knitting course embodied and different opinions on the pattern rule at the yarn store.

8.1.3 A conflict at the knitting course

> That afternoon, three customers came towards the knitting table and started talking with Hale, a participant who was having her first day at the knitting course. Hale was knitting a baby cardigan according to one of the patterns on the table. The customers started asking questions to Hale about the instructions for the pattern. Then, Kiraz, a regular participant of the knitting course, intervened the dialogue and reminded

> the customers of knitting course's rule that in order to have instructions for a pattern, one had to buy a yarn. One of the customers, having felt that she was accused of being cunning, increased the volume of her voice. Kiraz and the customer started discussing which soon led to a quarrel. At some point, the quarrel was intervened by the shopkeeper Alper. Alper tried to silence Kiraz and sided with the customer.

Due to the vibrant environment, interactions between customers and participants were inevitable, both in absence and presence of Nergis. When Nergis was present at the knitting table, she watched over the table for any exchange regarding instructions for or selling of patterns (see Section 8.1.2). However, when she was absent as in the above case, Kiraz, a participant-friend of hers, intervened in instruction sharing and reinforced the pattern rule. This intervention is telling in the sense that it was not only Nergis but also Kiraz who believed in the controlled dissemination of patterns. Arguably the reason for this was Kiraz' support for Nergis' intellectual and manual labor, which, in case of the violation of pattern rule, would be invisible.

Participants, as an earlier dialogue between Alper and Nergis revealed, did not contribute to the store economically as Nergis. Once, when Alper had been complaining of decreasing sales (around one hundred Turkish Liras of yarn sales per month), Nergis had replied: "And *I* buy the half of it. [*Yarısını da ben alıyorum.*]" The pattern rule, which aimed to cultivate shopping at the yarn store through encouragement of buying yarn, was not enough. Alper and Nergis, who had a business relation based on mutual merit, did not always reach a consensus, but discrepancies occurred.

> Shortly after Alper intervened in the conflict between Kiraz and the customer, Nergis arrived. Kiraz told her about the instance and the quarrel at the yarn store rekindled. As Kiraz explained herself to Nergis, Nergis trusted the information she provided. Then, a quarrel between Alper and Nergis started. When Hale confirmed Kiraz by saying that "it was just a reminder to the customer that there was a rule" [*ben sadece hocanın kuralını hatırlattım*], Alper said: "Who could establish a rule here other than me? [*Allah allah kuralı kim koyacak burada?*]" This was replied by Nergis: "*I* establish the rule. No one is allowed to take a picture

(of a pattern) without asking for my permission. [*Kuralı ben koyuyorum. Tabi ki yün almadan kimse model çekemez.*]"

Although Alper was authoritarian towards a regular participant, he balanced his attitude with Nergis when she asserted herself as the person who was to regulate the sharing of knitting patterns if there was any sharing. This was supported by what Alper said later on to participants: "I advised on this many times. I said do not intervene when the tutor is absent. Do not act like you own this place. [*Ben defalarca tembih ettim. Hocanın olmadığı zamanlarda müdahale etmeyin dedim. Burayı bu kadar sahiplenmeyin.*]" Together with Kiraz, Alper, too accepted Nergis' authority over patterns. Still, he was not happy that the participants appropriated the yarn store to an extent that they intervened customers. The space which was allocated to Nergis was not given to participants. Alper felt the need to restrain participants, for what made the knitting course and the yarn store vibrant, could repel some customers as it attracted some others. This was supported by what Ayşe said later on:

> The [customer] has already done shopping and was paying at the cash register. I mean, it can happen, she could ask (about the pattern), she can be curious. The customers are overwhelmed by participants when participants do such a thing. [*Kadın alışverişini yapmış zaten, kasada parasını ödüyor. Olabilir yani, sorabilir, merak edebilir. Üzerine birden biri atlayınca müşteri de kendini kötü hissediyor.*]

On top of Alper's suggestion that participants should not act as if they governed the place, Ayşe explained Nergis that participants *overwhelmed* the customers when they were involved in rules and regulations. Both Alper and Ayşe believed participants should not intervene. As the quarrel between Alper and Nergis continued, the pattern rule and its strict regulation became subject to questioning.

> Alper contested Nergis: "*Hocam*, for God's sake, do not say 'rule, rule'. We are applying this rule, but it does not have to be like a military rule. Do not insist on this." [*Hocam Allah aşkına, kural kural deyip durma. Tamam, bu kuralı uyguluyoruz da, illa ki bu da askeri kural gibi bir şey*

> *değil.*] Then Nergis' voice made a peak: "Alper *Bey*[10], I do not hold any rule from now on. They [customers] can go and buy yarn from [another competitor store], and have the patterns here, that's it! I will not care about the sales. I have been doing this only for your benefit… [*Alper Bey, bir şey söyleyeceğim sana. Tek ve net bir şey söyleyeceğim. Hiç karışmayacağım bundan sonra. Faruk'tan yünlerini alsınlar, gelsinler buradan modellerimizi alsınlar. Bu kadar basit. İster satılsın, ister satılmasın. Ben sırf senin için, yoksa…*]"

By likening the reinforcement of the rule to the military regulations, Alper revealed that he did not believe in the strict regulation of the pattern rule. For Alper, it seemed more dangerous that the knitting course participants create a negative image of the yarn store in customers' minds than having the participants purchase from another yarn store. This is because, he revealed, it was the customers who sustained the store economically despite the pattern rule, which was exercised by Nergis "only for his benefit. [*sadece senin için*]"

> Later on, regular knitting course participants Kiraz and Hava made gossip about Alper and his reaction. Hava, who provided a lunch for the knitting course that afternoon, said: "We shall go, get our yarn from another yarn store then. [*Öyle yapacaksın aslında. İpleri başka yerden alıp geliceksin.*]" Kiraz continued: "I don't mind the live radio broadcast. [Alper] should go, get those two customers for interviews. [*Ne canlı yayın, bana ne! Çağırsın o iki müşteriyi, onlar canlı yayında röportaj yapsınlar.*]" Although Kiraz overtly discussed with Alper, Hava did not talk out loud and chose to gossip. In addition, she suggested Nergis not to make her knitting patterns available on the knitting table. In a silent, weary tone, Nergis replied: "That would not work [*Olmaz ki.*]"

Hava's response showed that participants' feeling of belonging to the knitting course and the yarn store weakened when the pattern rule was ignored and regular participants of the knitting course were treated equally with *any* passing-by customer. This was suggested by Kiraz' response regarding the live radio broadcast that would soon take place at the yarn store. Participants, let alone avoiding a conflict with Nergis, sided with Nergis to the extent that they took Alper on. Nergis, when compared to Alper, seemed to be a more respected

[10] Similar to Mr. in English, *Bey* is a formal way to address a man.

authority figure among the participants. Being a woman, having knitting know-how and providing knitting patterns seem to have gained the participants' favor, which sustained the knitting course, thus the yarn store. Even Ayşe, by explaining the situation and justifying customer reaction to Nergis later on, showed her sensitivity to Nergis' rule about patterns.

These conflict and post-conflict comments show that participants at the knitting course appropriated the yarn store to an extent that they began reinforcing tutor rules and challenging those who did not conform, whether they be customers or the store owner. However, Alper denied participants the right to intervene, and valued passing-by customers as much. Alper did not see it necessary to reinforce the authorship over knitting patterns, because it only did harm to the yarn store, although it might benefit Nergis by recognizing her labor. The pattern rule was found necessary by Nergis and the participants to keep the yarn store attractive and to sustain it economically in the long run. Although a conflict occurred at the knitting course, that lasted only for a while.

> The same day, a telephone call had been made to the yarn store from a local radio channel crew, who was willing to visit the knitting course and interview them during a live broadcast. Nergis had agreed. Then cleaning occurred around the knitting course. Nergis and Kiraz cleaned the mess, and updated the knitting patterns that were being displayed. Some of them were found to be too outdated. Kiraz helped Nergis with replacing these sample garments. At times Nergis asked participants for help, which were happily answered. The tutor asked participants not to leave early, and stay for the radio broadcast. The knitting course was to be presented both tidy and lively.

Although conflicts arose occasionally from the violation of pattern rule, the knitting course demonstrated their strong ties during working for a common goal, that is, cleaning and arranging the space for outside visitors. During the radio interview, Alper, Nergis and Hale were interviewed. Although a conflict occurred between Alper and Nergis that very day, none of this was reflected during the interview and a very positive portrait of the knitting course was created. When describing the knitting course, Nergis repeatedly referred to the

adjective “pleasant” [*hoş*], and evoked a positive and proud feeling about the knitting course in general. Alper, too, mentioned that he was happy to be surrounded by women, and celebrated the informal nature of the knitting course. Alper was referred as a “ladies’ man” [*kadın dostu*] by Nergis, to imply his friendly attitude towards participants of the knitting course. To sum up, the yarn store and the knitting course were described very friendly, lively and yet tidy, which evoked pleasant and positive feelings in participants and thus help them to relieve. By not mentioning any conflicts, the store and the knitting course were implied to be conflict-free.

8.2 Exchange of artifacts at the yarn store

Besides knitting patterns, certain artifacts were subject to exchange at the yarn store. The exchanged artifacts included knits to be sold and tools to be lent for knitting. The exchange of these artifacts created economies that were at times conflicting. One of them was an economy in which a more centralized approach came to the forefront—Nergis was the only one who benefited from the selling of finished knits. The other was a sharing economy: lending of knitting materials such as knitting needles based on mutual trust. In the following sections, I discuss the exchange of artifacts and the economies they created.

8.2.1 Selling of finished knits

Beside knitting supplies, a prominent type of artifact exchange was the selling of finished knits, which were hung and displayed over the knitting table. The knits Nergis provided were promotional material for the yarn store and the knitting course, course material (as knitting patterns) for knitting course participants, and commercial products for Nergis. This display was governed by Nergis and the store owners. Certain rules regulated who were allowed to showcase and sell their work at the yarn store.

> One participant who was sitting next to me started talking about this beautiful garment she knit using many balls of yarn, only to be rejected by her daughter. Silently, she added: "[The garment] could be sold well over two hundred Turkish Liras. [*İki yüze gider en az.*]" However, she expressed her hesitations as to how Nergis would react if she wanted to sell it at the store. Without speculating, I encouraged her to ask the tutor.

This instance points to the ambiguity regarding the store's conduct on part of the participant. The participant was well aware that there was a certain control on who was allowed to sell her works at the store, yet she remained unsure and questioned whether she would be allowed to sell her knits. She presumed that the right to decide would go through the course tutor, not the store owner, for she wondered about Nergis' reaction, not Alper's or Ayşe's. Even though the yarn store was owned by Alper and Ayşe, they neither produced, nor sold knits. What they were responsible for were knitting supplies, not the actual production process or its outcomes. They provided the space for that purpose, assigning an expert who knew the craft to manage the latter. The production and selling of knit garments was Nergis' mastery and responsibility. Thus, the knitting table and the economy organized around it, was Nergis' space of control.

> I asked Üzüm whether she finished the cardigan she had been knitting. She confirmed, and told me that she gave it to a friend. Recalling the session she was upset over the fact that the cardigan required too many balls of yarn, I asked how many yarns she used. She said eight. Assuming that it turned out to be an expensive project, I said she could as well have it sold instead of giving it as a gift. "No, it turned out to be too large [*Yok, büyük olmuştu*]," she added, implying that there was no way such a large garment could have a market. As I was telling her she could have sold it, Nergis came to the table. Having overheard our conversation, she asked: "What could have been sold? [*Ne satılırdı?*]"

Just as she kept an eye on upcoming customers and the circulation of knitting patterns, Nergis also kept track of the possible exchanges to take place at the store. She wanted to know "what could have been sold" and understand whether the knit in question was hers or someone else's. In any case, the exchange intrigued her; she would either enable or eliminate the exchange.

> Nergis encouraged Birgül to take the money Ürün offered. As Ürün was offering her the money, Birgül said to Nergis: "I didn't do it for money. [*Para için yapmadım ki.*]" Nergis insisted and said: "Ürün *Abla*[11] respects labor [*Ürün Abla'nın emeğe saygısı vardır.*]" Only then Birgül accepted the money.

Although participants developed hesitations as to whether they could sell their knits at the yarn store, this instance shows that Nergis did not claim herself as the only person who was allowed to make economic profit through knitting at the store. Perspicuously, she encouraged Birgül towards monetary gains, for knitting was a "labor" that required respect. In this case, respect was shown to pay for the mental and manual labor put into producing the knit garment. It should also be noted that Birgül was a participant-friend of Nergis at the knitting course, who maintained close ties with Nergis. The right to exchange knits was not exclusive to Nergis, yet she determined who was allowed to sell or not, depending on the position of the participant according to herself and the knitting course.

8.2.2 What the course provided

Beside the exchange of finished knits, there was the exchange of knitting tools. During my visits to the knitting course, I have come across a number of instances in which participants lacked the required knitting tool. These tools ranged from knitting needles and scissors to be employed during knitting process to pens and papers for decoding process. Often knitting needles were lacking, the need for which emerged at the beginning of a new knitting project, just after buying a yarn and receiving the decoding of a knitting pattern. Customers would have liked to start their project as they had Nergis by their side. The following instance is an example of how the yarn store practiced sharing with participants of the knitting course at the early stages of participation.

[11] *Abla* is an informal way to address women who are older. Its literal translation is "older sister."

> After two and half an hour intense knitting at the knitting course, Mavi and I moved towards the cash register. Mavi was going to buy the yarns and materials she used. She paid for the yarns. Alper asked Mavi if she wanted to buy the knitting needles, which she was lent by the store owners when we first arrived. Mavi said she didn't want to. Then, Alper charged her only for the yarns. So, in a way, Mavi neither rented nor bought the knitting needles, even though she used them for two and a half hours.

According to Alper, a payment needed to be made when the knitting needles were to be bought as in the case of pattern exchange. However, a payment did not need to be made if the customer had already paid for other merchandise; in this case yarns. In order for her to get started, knitting needles were shared with Mavi. Following instance illustrates the exclusive treatment to new customers.

> At some point, Mavi found herself a knit hat and put it on her head, and came towards me smiling. Alper was around and said: "If you like it, it can be yours. [*Beğendiysen senin olsun.*]" He gave the hat as a gift to Mavi without really knowing her, and warned her that the hat could need cleaning for it had been circulating around the store for a while. When we were leaving the store, Suzan gave her suggestions on how to clean the hat. I found it quite interesting that on top of giving a handmade hat as a gift to an individual they barely knew, they were suggesting how to use it best by employing proper cleaning strategies.

As I mentioned earlier, there were times when customers were treated in a special manner, to the extent of spoiling them with gifts and lending knitting materials. However, sharing was not always encouraged. Sharing of knitting materials was practiced within knitting course, albeit in a controlled way. When any required knitting tool was lacking, participants asked for its availability among the knitting course, and sometimes within the store's inventory, which was positioned at the cash register, to which only those who worked at the cash register could have access. This was at most times Ayşe. Ayşe, in contrast to Alper, was not too willing and giving when it came to sharing knitting materials. She did not give them away, and waited for them to be returned at some point. Once I did not have needles of size eight. Then, Ayşe lent me hers. In one of my later visits to the knitting course, I gave back the needles Ayşe lent me, which Ayşe did not seem to have forgotten. However, this was not a given situation at

the knitting course. On the contrary, there were hand-written signs posted where visible warning the participants to not ask for borrowing stuff (Figure 8.3). Rather, participants were encouraged to bring their own. Still, Ayşe, lent me when I was in need. This was because of a mutual trust that we had developed, an exclusive right only given to some.

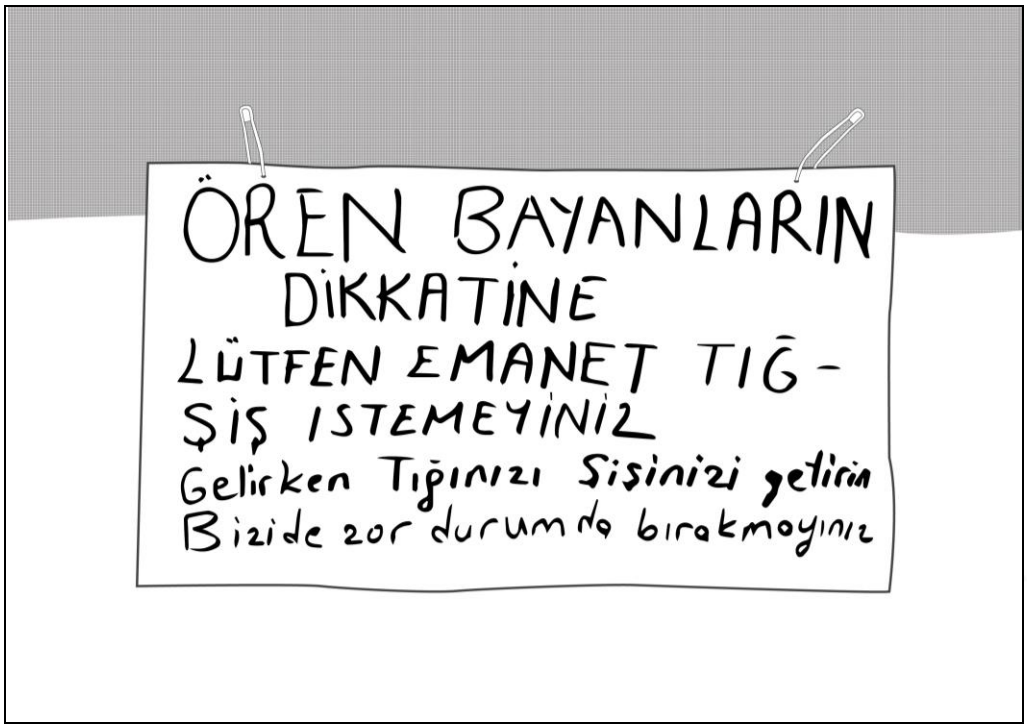

Figure 8.3 Sign reads: "To the attention of women who knit: Please do not ask for any knitting needles and crochet needles. Bring along your own and do not leave us in a tight spot." (Illustration by the author)

To sum up, artifacts such as finished knits and knitting tools were exchanged at the yarn store. Finished knits of Nergis (and of her participant-friends) were sold to potential customers such as passers-by or knitting course participants. Knitting materials were shared only with participant-friends such as myself. The economies of artifacts were controlled, and this left knitting course participants disadvantaged when compared to knitting tutors or store owners. In order for participants to receive a share in the profit, they needed to be trusted; they needed to become participant-friends such as Birgül or myself. In the next section, I discuss how a selected circle of participants created economic solidarity led by Nergis.

8.3 Economic support through *gün* events

Beside the economies organized around knitting patterns, finished knits and knitting tools, there was an economic solidarity among participants in the form of traditional *gün* (literally, "day") events. Although conventionally carried out at domestic settings, *gün* events were carried into the knitting course. However, *gün* events at the knitting course were different than the ones that occur at domestic settings, for what was meant from *gün* was gathering of money, leading to economic support within a certain group of people at the knitting course. Therefore, *gün* events created an inner circle within the knitting course including certain participants around the tutor. Taking part in economic solidarity with other participants emerged as an exclusive right, denied to some participants. Arguably, the reason for

8.4 Conclusion

To conclude, different forms of economies were organized at the knitting course around knitting patterns, finished knits, knitting tools and *gün* events. The most visible economy was organized around Nergis' knitting patterns and finished knits, in which Nergis exercised an authorship and profitability regime, from which she benefitted the most, sometimes followed by her participant-friends. She prevented the free sharing of her knitting patterns, and obliged a certain free for the distribution of a pattern. This was mostly in the form of buying a yarn at the yarn store. In addition to acting as knitting patterns, finished knits were also sold to customers. However, the displayed finished knits at the knitting course were Nergis' knitting patterns, so it was Nergis who built, maintained and profited from the authorship regime. Still, there were times when Nergis could not meet the customer demand, and handed some orders to her participant-friends such as Birgül. Therefore, the economy organized around knitting

patterns and finished knits were a centralized economy, with Nergis and a close circle of her participant-friends getting most of the share.

Knitting tools were shared with participant-friends, creating an inner circle of solidarity. Still, this was practiced in a controlled way—Reckless sharing of knitting tools was avoided with, say, handwritten signs reminding participants to bring along their own knitting needles. *Gün* events, too, were a means to solidarity. Similar to the sharing of knitting tools, *gün* events, too, were held within an inner circle of participants; Nergis and her participant-friends.

Because of the unconventional organization and conduct of the yarn store and the knitting course, it was hard to trace and reinforce the pattern rule, which required tracing of whether the receivers of the decoding had made any prior payment. Also Nergis wanted to have the knitting patterns as stable as possible, not leaving the knitting table. Still, knitting patterns, engaged with for decoding purposes, were demanded by course participants and yarn store customers, making it difficult for Nergis to maintain control over them. Conflicts at the knitting course stemmed from these difficulties. Conflicts showed that there was another part to the story, those who did not believe in the necessity to reinforce a pattern rule, for they were not able to see just how much labor knitting practice involved and so required recognition. For them, knitting, like any other women's making practice, was invisible.

Despite the ongoing knitting and learning process, knitting at the knitting course was not exploratory regarding the engaged material and the practiced method. Participants neither proposed nor practiced different types of experiments with regards to making and design. Throughout my field work, I have not observed anyone who proposed a design idea from a scratch, without following a pattern. The fact that design ideas were not developed or mentioned is telling, because it helps imagine how powerful knitting patterns were at the knitting course. Despite their revisions' being minute, each knitting pattern Nergis brought on the knitting table was her own labor, which was the result of a years-long knitting

experience. A dedicated knitter with an interest in, and respect for design, Nergis believed knitting practice was a laborious design practice. For that, she demanded respect and wanted everyone with an interest in knitting patterns to understand just that. Her participant-friends were those who understood and stood by intellectual and manual labor put into creating knits. "Ürün respects labor [*Ürün Abla'nın emeğe saygısı vardır.*]" was how Nergis crowned Ürün, a participant who did not accept a knit from Birgül as a gift, and insisted that she wanted to pay for it.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I present and discuss the conclusions of this research. Firstly, I make an overview of the research. Then, in light of the theoretical framework of this thesis along with introduced concepts, I discuss the findings of the research. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by reflecting upon the limitations of this research and make recommendations for further research.

9.1 Overview of the research

The aim of this thesis is to understand knitting practitioner's production process and the exchange of knitting know-how, knitting patterns and knits that occur among knitting practitioners. In order to achieve this aim, I have conducted an ethnographic study of a women's knitting community and of knitting practice as practiced by that community.

In *Chapter 1*, I make an introduction to the thesis. Firstly, I explain the significance of the research by reflecting upon current design history literature and how it has favored professional design practice and its outcomes. Then, I introduce my research questions and sub-research questions and present the structure of the thesis.

In *Chapter 2*, I introduce practice theory and practice-theoretical approaches to the study of consumption—the theoretical framework for the thesis. I present the concept of craft consumption, for it provides a good example of how

consumption is a productive practice that continues after the moment of purchase.

In *Chapter 3*, I elaborate on making practices as a valuable area of inquiry in design. Aiming for an extended notion of design, I interrogate what making is according to relevant literature. I introduce the phases of making process, define skill and skilled practice. Then, by reflecting on the current literature, I discuss how the outcomes of making process are favored as research topics, whereas the making process itself, its potential in creating communities and transforming places lack attention. I introduce the concept of craftivism, and criticize the emancipatory discourse surrounding the amateur. Moving towards a more implicit politicization, I present the concepts of new domesticity, third place and community of practice theory.

In *Chapter 4*, I explain my methodology. I introduce the ethnographic approach and present my research process by going through data collection and data analysis phases. Then, I reflect upon the research and interrogate my position at the field together with its implications.

In *Chapter 5*, I make an introduction to the yarn store and the knitting course where I conducted this study. I make a brief discussion of how the knitting course was a place of learning, affirmative support and socialization. Then, I discuss the impact of my presence at the knitting course, and how my presence disrupted the gender of the course, which was aimed to overcome through participant comments of men who knit and did crafts. Following the introduction to the store and knitting course, I introduce knitting practice as practiced by the knitting course participants, and present its vocabulary and steps for a better understanding of the thesis.

In *Chapter 6*, I discuss how knitting course tutor, knitting course participants and yarn store workers organize at the yarn store and at the knitting course. Firstly, I analyze learning practices at the knitting course and forms of tutoring.

Then, I present and discuss the interdependencies formed at the knitting course and at the yarn store in tutoring, sales and running errands.

In *Chapter 7*, I discuss the making and unmaking of propriety in knitting practice at the knitting course. Firstly, I present making of propriety through knits and knitting gestures. Then, I discuss participants' ongoing efforts to attain novelty in their works. I introduce Internet as a means to capture originality besides the knitting course and the yarn store. I conclude the chapter by elaborating on the participants' presentation of their works in need of affirmation.

In *Chapter 8*, I make an extended discussion of the knitting pattern, and elaborate on the politics surrounding it at the knitting course. I discuss the economies organized around the pattern, and knits. I present a conflict at the knitting course which illustrates the struggle around the knitting pattern.

In *Chapter 9*, I present the conclusions. This thesis has four main conclusions, which I present and discuss in the upcoming sections.

9.2 Prominent conclusions

The main purpose of this research was to experience knitting as a skilled practice by practicing it and to gain insights into the exchange and meaning making practices of a community of knitting practice. The literature review has revealed the contemporary practice-theoretical approaches to the study of consumption, which regards consumption itself as a shared, social and creative practice that continues after the moment of purchase. In addition, studies on making practices which do not employ a practice-theoretical approach tend to prioritize the individual maker, her motivations and the outcome, and thus fail to acknowledge the significance of making process itself. Therefore, this research has adopted an ethnographic approach to understand practitioners' making processes and their exchange and meaning making practices surrounding making. For this reason, the research question was formulated as follows:

> How do knitting skill, knitting patterns and knits exchanged in communities of knitting practice, and what are the meanings and values associated with those exchanges?

In order to provide answers to the research question, I conducted an ethnographic study of a women's knitting community over a period of six months, during which I made participant observations. Based on the findings of this fieldwork, this research draws five main conclusions.

1. Knitting practice is an *iterative*, *processional*, *social*, *bodily*, *sensual* and *skilled* practice.
2. Knitting practice is a *creative* practice for it is based on the creative modification of existing patterns.
3. Because learning of any making practice requires *observation and imitation* on part of the learner, knitting practice helps build *communities of practice* and transform places by creating *third places* for the participant.
4. Knitting course embodies both horizontal and hierarchical structures, and is part of a wider *fabriculture*.
5. Because knitting patterns at the knitting course are updated by new patterns and ongoing modifications onto existing ones, knitting course is a *unfolding* archive of knitting patterns. In addition, knitting course is an archive of knitting know-how, for knitting know-how is cultivated and spread as participants work on their knitting projects.

In the following sections, I present the main findings of this study. Firstly, in the light of the findings and relevant literature, I discuss knitting as a skilled practice. Secondly, I discuss how knitting acts as a community builder and transforms spaces. Thirdly, I introduce the concept of fabriculture, and discuss how the knitting course embodies both a horizontal and a hierarchical structure and how this challenges the emancipatory discourse surrounding DIY practices. Forthly,

I elaborate on the knitting course as an archive, and how this resonates with contemporary open and collaborative approaches to design, yet differs. Lastly, I discuss the implications of the findings of this study for design research and design practice.

9.2.1 Knitting practice as a *skilled* practice

One of the research questions that this research aims to understand is the knitting practice itself. For this reason, I participated at the knitting course by knitting (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2), and simultaneously contemplated on the practice. Throughout my observations and contemplations during the research, knitting emerged as a skilled practice. In this section, I present my conclusions in that respect.

Firstly, knitting practice at the knitting course was a *processional* (Ingold 2001) and *iterative* practice, comprising of different steps such as decoding, adjusting, knitting and unknitting, trying on, steaming (see Section 5.3.2), through which participants went by going back and forth. These steps were not separate and discontinuous, rather, to cite Ingold (2001, 53), knitting process was "processional," that is, "… every step is a development of the one before and a preparation for the one following."

Secondly, knitting practice at the knitting course was flexible in the sense that although participants started out knitting using patterns, the outcomes never matched the patterns they started out with. This can be explained by Ingold's argument that making is not hylomorphic, and making process involves not only the practitioner with her intent such as a knitting pattern, but rather it is a process in which practitioner, materials and tools engage with each other as the final form appears. For instance, the jumper I knit as part of my participant observation is an example to this. Although I started out with a pattern I found in one of the knitting magazines at the yarn store (Figure 9.1.a), the resulting outcome (Figure 9.1.b) was completely different. In this sense, prior design

within practitioner's mind, that is, knitting pattern or its imagined modified version, was flexible. I discuss how flexibility regarding knitting patterns contributed to creativity later (see Section 9.2.2).

Figure 9.1 (a) is the knitting pattern I found in one of the knitting magazines at the knitting course and used as a template for my jumper project. (b) is the final version of the jumper.

Thirdly, knitting practice at the knitting course was a *social* practice. Because learning of a skilled practice requires observation and imitation (Bernstein 1996; cited in Ingold 2000), learning of knitting know-how and knitting patterns brought together knitting course participants. As a result, knitting practice, which could be practiced in an isolated way at the comfort of one's home, was a social practice at the knitting course, paving the way towards the exchange of knitting know-how, knitting patterns and knits.

Fourthly, knitting practice at the knitting course was a *bodily* and *sensual* practice throughout the whole knitting process. Participants used their hands in both during and after knitting: decoding and adjusting a pattern, knitting and unknitting, trying on, steaming and fondling. Participants touched the knits in decoding to zoom into the pattern by stretching the knit or basically holding the knit, turning knit's back etc. Hands were the most immediate way to read a knit's pattern, check whether a knit was progressing as desired, or simply enjoying a knit by simply caressing.

In sum, knitting practice at the knitting course was a creative practice consisting of different steps that were iterative and processional. Because of the conscious and improvised adjustments to knitting patterns and because making process is not hylomorphic, knit outcomes were never a copy of the original pattern and were always singular. Knitting was a bodily practice for hands were employed during and after the knitting process in decoding, adjusting, knitting, unknitting, steaming and fondling. Knitting at the knitting course was practiced in a social way because it encouraged gathering of participants around shared know-how and knitting patterns.

9.2.2 Knitting practice as a *creative* practice

Knitting practice at the knitting course was a *creative* practice in which prior design within practitioner's mind was prone to modifications and thus flexible. Because Nergis and participants modified the already existing patterns (see Section 5.3.2.2), copying at the knitting course was not mere copying; it was a creative practice taking into consideration the wearer's body and taste. This was due to design decisions, because participants at the knitting course adjusted the available knitting patterns regarding their dimensions, colors, and yarns (see Section 5.3.2.2). Therefore, although participants could have executed the very same pattern, outcomes of knitting practice are always singular (Myzelev 2009) for they are the outcomes of different design decisions and go through different hands, result in different tensions and imperfections. Also, the adjustments to

knitting patterns was made by rule of thumb, without any careful calculation. Improvisation in adjusting, too, contributed to singularity with regard to knit outcomes. In addition, the practitioner could not have utmost control over the production process, for making process is not hylomorphic (Ingold 2009). This, too, added to singularity of knits, and contributed to creativity.

9.2.3 Knitting practice as community builder

One of the research questions that this thesis aims to uncover is how knitting practitioners organize around knitting practice. Throughout my ethnographic inquiry knitting emerged as a significant practice that enabled practitioners to build a community, the knitting course, and transform a place, the yarn store *Yün Dünyası*. As knitting course participants came together to exchange knitting skill, knitting patterns and knits, they cultivated an informal learning environment, a community of knitting practice. As they gathered on a regular basis, they transformed the yarn store through their practices, and created a *third place*, "a home away from home" (Oldenburg 1989). Learning of knitting skill and knitting patterns was a significant facilitator in that respect, for learning of skill requires first observation and then imitation (Bernstein 1996; cited in Ingold 2000). In order for a novice practitioner to first observe, she needed to be near advanced practitioners such as Nergis. The fact that knitting patterns were showcased on the knitting table or over the rope above the table created a locality of patterns, an attraction center at the yarn store, to which participants and customers were attracted. Because the patterns were updated by Nergis regularly, this, too, helped sustain the community at the store—its *regulars* continued participating at the course and there was a constant visit of passing-by customers who had an interest in patterns.

Pointing to the political potential of craft's community making capability, Von Busch (2013) suggests that we should move away from looking at craft from the perspective of the lone genius crafter, and instead look at the *bodyhood* of craft, its being practiced among a wide range of people as a shared activity. By seeing

craft skills as a "do-it-together" practice rather than a "do-it-yourself" one, he raises the following question: "How can craft interconnect to actualize new action spaces, open new vistas, and turn skill dissemination into a sociopolitical force of empowerment?" (Von Busch 2013, 145). Von Busch emphasizes that we need to abandon drawing distinctions between amateur and professional, or craft and art in order to better address how craft becomes "a tool to liberate and release new potentials of capability and even freedom." (2013, 145)

In sum, *Yün Dünyası*, a yarn store in a downtown area, was domesticated through user practices, resulting in a third place that hosted a community of knitting practice, which blurred the boundaries between public and private (Johnson 2010).

9.2.4 Knitting course as part of wider *fabriculture*

Although participants organized around the knitting course with the aim of learning knitting skills and knitting patterns, the knitting course harbored both horizontal and hierarchical structures. This means that participants of the knitting course *made, shared, gave, learned, tooled up, supported* and *changed* (Hatch 2014), yet their sharing was regulated through the pattern rule (see Section 8.1.2), they dissented on this rule and had conflicts (see Section 8.1.3), formed exclusive acts of solidarity within the knitting course such as *gün* events (see Section 8.3). Therefore, the knitting course challenges the emancipatory discourse that regard DIY practitioners as radicals who could change the capitalist system (see Section 3.2.2). The knitting course, which harbored both emancipatory practices such as skill dissemination and hierarchical practices such as regulated sharing of knitting patterns and related know-how, can be understood through the concept of *fabriculture* (Bratich and Brush 2011), which takes into account whole range of domestic making practices from the very traditional forms of these practices to their more activist versions. This encompassing approach to making practices is supported by Turney (2009, 3), who, in case of knitting practice, states: "knitting is indeed a culture, but it is not

monolithic." In sum, the knitting course is part of a wider fabriculture, for it embodies both horizontal and hierarchical practices.

9.2.5 Knitting course as an *unfolding* archive

Although a socialization place at first glance, the ethnographic inquiry has shown that the knitting course is an *archive*. Firstly, it is a physical archive because it is a collection of knitting patterns, which appealed to participants and passing-by customers. As one of my dialogues with Ayşe revealed: "Some only drop by to look at patterns, they shun away when suggested to buy a yarn. [*Bazıları sadece örnek bakmaya geliyor, birer yün al deyince kaçıyorlar.*]" The physical archive of knitting patterns was updated with each gathering as Nergis brought new knitting patterns (see Section 5.1.1), or participants contributed to the archive through knitting patterns they found on the Internet (see Section 7.2.2). In addition to creative interventions into knitting patterns such as adjusting of dimensions for different bodies or changing of colors and yarn type to make it appeal to another's taste, the physical archive of knitting patterns, too, was updated and therefore enlarged and diversified.

In sum, knitting patterns were taken from the archive, adjusted and knit as new patterns found online or created by Nergis made their way into the knitting course. The fact that the physical archive of the knitting course changed day by day can be understood through Ingold's approach to materials and materiality. Ingold (2007, 1) argues that materials are active for they are open to "currents of lifeworld." Knitting patterns, as well as the archive that consisted of those patterns, were subject to the interventions of Nergis and knitting course participants.

Secondly, knitting course is an immaterial archive of knitting know-how, that is produced and shared at the knitting course, for which participants and customers approached to the knitting course. What this knitting know-how covers is knowing how to actually knit, how to knit a particular knitting pattern, how to

decode and adjust that pattern etc. Knitting course was a community of practice, cultivating learning in an informal setting, that is, the yarn store, around a shared interest in knitting. Nergis and participants gathered on a regular basis, practiced knitting, exchanged and explored knitting know-how (E. Wenger-Trayner and B. Wenger-Trayner 2015), and helped developed the immaterial archive. Participants participated at the knitting course regularly, for they were able to see the outcomes of Nergis' labor and theirs, which sustained the community.

9.3 Implications for design practice

This research has focused on the making practice that is knitting and discussed it as a creative, social practice. The design decisions in knitting are adjusting a pattern for a different wearer's body and taste. However, the purpose of this section is not to align making practices towards the axis of design practice by spotting designerly practices within knitting practice. On the contrary, I would like to elaborate on the significance of grassroots making practices for design practice. Based on the literature review and findings of the fieldwork, knitting practice emerges as a field which design practice could learn from.

Firstly, the archive of knitting course in which knitting patterns were mobilized and knitting know-how was cultivated and shared, points to a possible, alternative source for design practice, which design practitioners could borrow from and give back to, as they exchange know-how. This is similar to contemporary open approaches to design practice, yet platforms such as *Instructables*, in which instructions on how to make an artifact from scratch, may not realize their full potential for they offer instructions for individuals and not necessarily encourage or facilitate community building, place-making and in-situ know-how exchange.

This brings us to the second significance knitting course practices point to: Community building and place-making. When these practices take place in offline settings such as a yarn store as in the case of knitting course, communities of knitting practice are formed which result in informal learning environments and third places for the participant, where a better acquisition of tacit knowledge becomes possible.

Thirdly, knitting course and the yarn store draw an alternative type of organization among knitting course tutor, knitting course participants and yarn store workers. Stemming from the fact that the workforce could not meet participant or customer demand, interdependencies were formed at the knitting course based on competencies. This was a fluid type of organization based on who was good at what and could offer help at that particular moment when she was needed. The interdependent nature of the yarn store and the knitting course helped in the formation of a community of knitting practice and a third place. What design practice could learn from this interdependencies is that participatory and collaborative approaches to design in which user involvement is prioritized could be considered according to competencies instead of fixed positions and expertise of different stakeholders.

9.4 Research limitations

This research is an in depth study of a community of knitting practice gathered in a certain setting. Therefore, the research findings do not apply to whole knitting practice, or the whole knitting course. There could be other contexts in which once could find other relations around knitting practice. Firstly, this research presents one half of the knitting course—it discusses the knitting course which was led by Nergis. I participated on Suzan's days only once and then quitted; because, it seemed, Suzan was more popular among the participants and therefore it wgas hard to find a chair at the knitting course, which would require much more time and effort for me to develop rapport and build sustainable

relationships. Secondly, being a male designer at the knitting course had its implications. Because I was a male participant, I did not have direct access to each and every participant. I interacted with participants who were comfortable around and who were willing to chat with a male person. Therefore, my informal interviews represent a partial account of participant opinion, and it cannot be generalized to the whole knitting course. In addition, because I was an educated male who is trained in design, it could be that participants modified their responses in a way that would be more acceptable. For instance, Nergis, when introducing me, repeatedly made the same mistake. She would say: "Burak is doing PhD on design. [*Burak tasarım üzerine doktora yapıyor.*]" Although I corrected her as "I'm doing masters [*Yüksek lisans yapıyorum*]" a couple of times, she insisted on saying PhD in later instances. She either regarded me as more educated than I already was, or wanted to introduce me so. So, because knitting course participants knew me as a trained designer, this might have influenced their dialogues with me, making them feel they should respond in a more *cultured* way. Thirdly, because the knitting course was centered around the knitting table (see Section 5.1.1.2), there remained certain areas at the yarn store to which I was not introduced and thus did not navigate. The area where steaming was done is one of them. Forthly, because this research adopts a practice-theoretical framework, motivations of individual practitioners and the outcomes of their production processes remain unstudied. Last but not least, because of the scope of this thesis, gender relations at the knitting course are not dealt thoroughly in this research.

9.5 Recommendations for further research

Because this study focuses on one half of the knitting course (see Section 9.4), a follow-up study can be conducted with the other half of the knitting course led by Suzan, or with other courses that take place in different settings, for a comparative perspective. The informants of this study were exclusively women except for Alper, who was the owner of the yarn store and who did not practice knitting. Thus, this study presents the practices, discourses and values of women

practitioners of knitting, who do not associate themselves with any political movement. A further study could take as its object of study feminist and queer communities of knitting practices of mixed gender. It would be interesting to see how politically conscious making communities organize around and practice knitting, how they make and unmake their own propriety etc. Such a study would help understand whether similar patterns exist between different communities of knitting practice, which may seem at either extremes at first glance. A similar study can also be conducted with maker communities which are praised to democratize production. Although they differ in terms of engaged material and tools, makers form their own communities, which can be problematized as in the case of knitting course.

This thesis has revealed a repertoire of practices around knitting, which will hopefully provide starting points for further similar work. Design today can learn a lot more through in-depth work on non-professional design and making practices that take into consideration their idiosyncracies, their organizational, learning-based, (sub)cultural challenges and the solutions they have developed. By choosing to look at what these grassroots communities and their practices could offer, can we hope for a design practice and discourse that do not exoticize or marginalize, and are reflexive and inclusive.

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. “Writing against culture.” In *Recapturing anthropology: Working in the present*, Ed. Richard G. Fox, 466-479. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Atkinson, Paul. 2006. “Do it yourself: Democracy and design.” *Journal of design history* 19, no. 1: 1-10.

Atkinson, Paul. 2011. “Orchestral manoeuvres in design.” In *Open design now: Why design cannot remain exclusive*, Ed. Bas van Abel, Roel Klaassen, Lucas Evers, and Peter Troxler, 24-31. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Auerbach, Lisa A. 2016. “D.D.I.Y.—Don't-do-it-yourself.” Accessed September 8, 2016. https://www.joaap.org/6/lovetowe/lisa.html.

Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.

Bernstein, Nicholai A. 1996. “On dexterity and its development.” In *Dexterity and its development*, Ed. Mark L. Latash, and Michael T. Turvey, 3-244. Psychology Press.

Blomberg, Jeanette, Jean Giacomi, Andrea Mosher, and Pat Swenton-Wall. 1993. “Ethnographic field methods and their relation to design.” In *Participatory design: Principles and practices*, Ed. Douglas Schuler and Aki Namioka, 123-155. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bratich, Jack Z., and Heidi M. Brush. 2011. “Fabricating activism: Craft-work, popular culture, gender.” *Utopian studies* 22, no. 2: 233-260.

Brown, Roni. 2008. “Designing differently: The self-build home.” *Journal of design history* 21, no. 4: 359-370.

Buckley, Cheryl. 1986. “Made in patriarchy: Toward a feminist analysis of women and design.” *Design issues* 3, no. 2: 3-14.

Buszek, Maria E., and Kirsty Robertson. 2011. “Introduction.” *Utopian studies* 22, no. 2: 197-200.

Campbell, Colin. 2005. “The craft consumer: Culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society.” *Journal of consumer culture* 5, no. 1: 23-42.

Charny, Daniel. 2011. “Thinking by making.” In *Design & making*, Ed. Max Fraser, 28-37. Copenhagen: Danish Crafts.

Cook, Daniel T. 2006. “Problematizing consumption, community, and leisure: Some thoughts on moving beyond essentialist thinking.” *Leisure/loisir* 30, no. 2: 455-466.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 1990. *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

De Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Duguid, Paul. 2008. “Prologue: Community of practice then and now.” In *Community, economic creativity, and organization*, Ed. Ash Amin, and Joanne Roberts, 1-10. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Edwards, Clive. 2006. “‘Home is where the art is’: Women, handicrafts and home improvements 1750–1900.” *Journal of design history* 19, no. 1: 11-21.

Farnsworth, Valerie, Irene Kleanthous, and Etienne Wenger-Trayner. 2016. “Communities of practice as a social theory of learning: A conversation with Etienne Wenger.” *British journal of educational studies* 64, no. 2: 139-160.

Florida, Richard. 2004. *The rise of the creative class--revisited: Revised and expanded*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Fox, Stephen. 2000. “Communities of practice, Foucault and Actor-Network Theory.” *Journal of management studies* 37, no. 6: 853-868.

Geertz, Clifford. 1974. ““From the native's point of view”: On the nature of anthropological understanding.” *Bulletin of the american academy of arts and sciences* 28, no. 1: 26-45.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gonzalez, Analiz. 2005. “BU Starbucks pulls cups due to homosexual quote.” Accessed July 31, 2017. https://www.baylor.edu/lariatarchives/news.php?action=story&story=35546.

Greer, Betsy. 2011. “Craftivist history.” In *Extra/ordinary: Craft and contemporary art*, Ed. Maria Elena Buszek, 175-183. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.

Gregson, Nicky, Alan Metcalfe, and Louise Crewe. 2009. “Practices of object maintenance and repair: How consumers attend to consumer objects within the home.” *Journal of consumer culture* 9, no. 2: 248-272.

Groth, Camilla, Maarit Mäkelä, and Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen. 2013. "Making sense. What can we learn from experts of tactile knowledge?" *Form akademisk–research journal for design and design education* 6, no. 2: 1-12.

Hatch, Mark. 2014. *Maker manifesto*. New York, NY: Mc-Graw Hill Education.

Ingold, Tim. 2000. Of string bags and birds' nests. In *The perception of the environment*, 349-361. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Ingold, Tim. 2007. "Materials against materiality." *Archaeological Dialogues* 14, no. 1: 1-16.

Ingold, Tim. 2009. "The textility of making." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34, no. 1: 91-102.

Ingold, Tim. 2012. Making culture and weaving the world. In *Museum objects: Experiencing the properties of things*, Ed. Sandra H. Dudley, 368-384. London and New York: Routledge.

Ingram, Jack, Elizabeth Shove, and Matthew Watson. 2007. "Products and practices: Selected concepts from science and technology studies and from social theories of consumption and practice." *Design Issues* 23, no. 2: 3-16.

Jackson, Andrew. 2010. "Constructing at home: Understanding the experience of the amateur maker." *Design and Culture* 2, no. 1: 5-26.

Johnson, Amanda J. 2010. "Consumption Communities: An examination of the kitchener market as a third place." PhD diss., University of Waterloo. Accessed July 31, 2017. https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/5279/johnson_amanda.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Julier, Guy. 2014. *The culture of design*. London: Sage.

Keller, Charles M. 2001. “Thought and production: Insights of the practitioner.” In *Anthropological perspectives on technology*, Ed. Michael Brian Schiffer, 33-45. University of New Mexico Press.

Knott, Stephen D. 2011. “Amateur craft as a differential practice.” PhD diss., Royal College of Art. Accessed July 31, 2017. http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/1132/1/L-Res-Amateur_Craft_as_a_Differential_Practice.pdf.

Knott, Stephen D. 2013. “Design in the age of prosumption: The craft of design after the object.” *Design and culture* 5, no. 1: 45-67.

Kuijer, Lenneke. 2014. “Implications of social practice theory for sustainable design.” PhD diss., Delft University of Technology. Accessed July 31, 2017. https://repository.tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid:d1662dc5-9706-4bb5-933b-75704c72ba30?collection=research.

Kuznetsov, Stacey, and Eric Paulos. "Rise of the expert amateur: DIY projects, communities, and cultures." *Proceedings of the 6th nordic conference on human-computer interaction: Extending boundaries*. ACM, 2010.

Latour, Bruno. 2000. “When things strike back: A possible contribution of ‘science studies’ to the social sciences.” *The British journal of sociology* 51, no. 1: 107-123.

Latour, Bruno. 1992. “Where are the missing masses? The sociology of a few mundane artifacts” In *Shaping technology/building society: Studies in sociotechnical change*, Ed. Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law, 225-258. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press.

Minahan, Stella, and Julie W. Cox. 2007. “Stitch'nBitch: Cyberfeminism, a third place and the new materiality.” *Journal of material culture* 12, no. 1: 5-21.

Morris, Kathleen. 2016. “You are not a lemming: The imagined resistance of craft citizenship.” *The journal of modern craft* 9, no. 1: 5-14.

Murphy, Keith M., and George E. Marcus. 2013. “Epilogue: Ethnography and design, ethnography in design . . . ethnography by design.” In *Design anthropology: Theory and practice*, Ed. Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith, 251-268. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Myzelev, Alla. 2009. “Whip your hobby into shape: Knitting, feminism and construction of gender.” *Textile* 7, no. 2: 148-163.

Oldenburg, Ray. 1989. *The great good place: Café, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day*. Cambridge, MA: Paragon House.

Oldenburg, Ray. 2001. *Celebrating the third place*. New York, NY: Marlowe & Company.

Pacey, Philip. 1992. “'Anyone designing anything?' Non-professional designers and the history of design.” *Journal of design history* 5, no. 3: 217-225.

Paechter, Carrie. 2003. “Masculinities and femininities as communities of practice.” *Women's studies international forum* 26, no. 1: 69-77.

Reckwitz, Andreas. 2002. “Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing.” *European journal of social theory* 5, no. 2: 243-263.

Shove, Elizabeth, and Mika Pantzar. 2005. “Consumers, producers and practices: Understanding the invention and reinvention of nordic walking.” *Journal of consumer culture* 5, no. 1: 43-64.

Shove, Elizabeth, Mika Pantzar, and Matt Watson. 2012. *The dynamics of social practice: Everyday life and how it changes.* London: Sage Publications.

Simon, Bryant. 2009. “Consuming third place: Starbucks and the illusion of public space.” In *Public space and the ideology of place in American culture*, Ed. Miles Orvell and Jeffrey L. Meikle, 243-262. Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi.

Slater, Don. 1997. *Consumer culture and modernity*. Cambridge, Oxford, Boston, MA and New York, NY: Polity Press.

Solomon, Elena. “Homemade and hell raising through craft, activism, and do-it-yourself culture.” *PsychNology journal* 11, no. 1 (2013): 11-20.

Stevens, Dennis. 2011. “Validity is in the eye of the beholder: Mapping craft communities of practice.” In *Extra/ordinary: Craft and contemporary art*, Ed. Maria Elena Buszek, 43-58. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.

Turney, Joanne. 2009. *The culture of knitting*. London: Berg.

Uribe Del Aguila, Veronica. 2016. “The subversive capacity of do-it-yourself instructions.” *The MA design studies journal* 3, no.1: 36-51.

Von Busch, Otto, and Karl Palmås. 2006. *Abstract hacktivism: The making of a hacker culture*. London and Istanbul: Lightning Source.

Von Busch, Otto. 2013. “Collaborative craft capabilities: The bodyhood of shared skills.” *The journal of modern craft* 6, no. 2: 135-146.

Warde, Alan. 2005. “Consumption and theories of practice.” *Journal of consumer culture* 5, no. 2: 131-153.

Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger-Trayner, Etienne, and Beverly Wenger-Trayner. 2015. “Communities of practice: A brief introduction.” Accessed November 14, 2016. http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/07-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

List of key informants (in alphabetical order)

Almıla was an experienced participant who dropped by towards the evening hours for she worked as a judge. She was very talkative and had a friendly attitude. I once saw here despise an actress from a moralist perspective.

Alper was one of the two owners of the yarn store. He was the brother of Ayşe. He was one of the three male figures present at the yarn store. The other two were Mete and me.

Altın was a friend of mine, who wanted the visit the yarn store for shopping purposes. I met Nergis when I was with Altın.

Atiye was a regular participant at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She was posher when compared to the rest of the course. She had a Russian bride, whom she brought to the knitting course.

Ayşe was one of the two owners of the yarn store. She was the sister of Alper. She worked as a high school philosophy teacher at a local high school, and worked at the yarn store after the school ends.

Biber was an experienced participant that tutored Mavi and I voluntarily. She knit internally consistent and tight stitches and sold what she knit. She liked to talk about her son, whom she left at an internet café nearby as she participated at the course.

Bilge was an experienced participant that taught me how to cast off. She was relatively older and had a calming voice. She preferred cotton yarns for they did not pill.

Birgül was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. The yarn store and the knitting course was a place that she appropriated also as hers. She was an experienced participant and tutored me when I needed. Together with Nergis, Birgül was more friendly than the rest of the knitting course. Similar to Nergis, she would kiss me on the cheek during greeting. She was usually the second person after Nergis who had welcomed me when I arrived. We still follow each other on social media.

Gökçen was a friend of Nergis, who I came across once. Gökçen and Nergis worked together as officers before their retirement. She did not ask for instructions. Rather, she helped Nergis when Nergis needed help, and socialized with other participants.

Gümüş was a colleague of mine from my previous workplace, who accompanied me to the knitting course once.

Hale was a one-off participant, who became a central figure on the day she visited the knitting course: She was interviewed by the radio crew. She knit throughout the hardships in her life, and knitting helped her overcome these hardships.

Hava was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She was slightly older than other participants, and brought food to the knitting course. She stood up against Alper and sided with Nergis during a violation of the pattern rule.

Kiraz was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She had a sense of humor, and occasionally made jokes which made me laugh. She

helped Nergis in tutoring and in running errands—she helped Nergis clean and prepare the yarn store for the radio crew.

Mavi is a close friend of mine, with whom I made my first visit the yarn store. She accompanied me a couple of times, especially during the early phases of my participation at the knitting course. She participated in the course too, and was tutored by Biber, who teased her for her lack of knitting skills. Mavi bought knits of Nergis, was spoiled by Alper with gifts.

Mete was the salesperson at the yarn store. He remained distant to the knitting course and worked mostly at the accessories section. He did not interact with course participants—He was the only person who did not show an interest in me. He was one of the three male figures present at the yarn store. The other two were Alper and me.

Nergis was the knitting course tutor, who brought knitting patterns to the course along with instructions. During the knitting processes, she tutored participants. She was beloved and respected at the course.

Pembe was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She was talkative, but her talk included gossip, criticism, and complaint. Once, she complained of the knitting course's crowd. She did not interact with me much.

Sakız was an experienced participant who visited the knitting course often. As I was being ridiculed for knitting around the neck, she taught me how to knit with my hands, creating the necessary tension with fingers only.

Seden was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She was called as "Hocam" by some participants. She did not talk much and remained distant.

Sema was a regular participant at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis.

Suzan was the other knitting course tutor, who brought knitting patterns to the course along with instructions. She, too, tutored participants during the knitting processes. It was her who tutored during my first two visits to the knitting course.

Şeker was a young, novice participant, who often ran into troubles as she knit. She regarded me as her equal, and was curious about what pattern I knit and which yarns I used. Once, I explained her how to knit fisherman's rib pattern [*yalancı selanik*], and she bought the yarn I used when knitting fisherman's rib pattern. Most of the times, she seemed discontent with what she knit, and was critical towards her own work.

Şirin was a one-off participant, who visited the knitting course upon seeing it on TV. She was very talkative and confessed that she "normally would not come to such places." She was visiting her daughter at the city. She advised me to not tell people that I knit because a male knitter could be criticized.

Ürün was a regular at the knitting course and a participant-friend of Nergis. She was an experienced knitter, who mostly knit for children. Compared to the rest of the course, she was more upper class, and lived in a richer part of the city. Once, she showed her appreciation of a knit gift from Birgül by paying for it, and was praised by Nergis for doing so.

Üzüm was an average knitter who was a regular at the knitting course, and a participant-friend of Nergis. She had economic problems, and knit on a tight budget. When the cardigan she knit, which required many balls of yarn, did not turn out as she expected, she became very upset. Although she covered her head, she took off her headcover at the knitting course.

APPENDIX B

ABBREVIATIONS

COPT: Community of practice theory

DIY: Do-it-yourself

SPT: Social practice theory