

I = interviewer; P1 = participant. Refer to DDM2020 dataset documentation for more information.

1 I erm so first I just have a few very quick
2 background questions to get started and to get
3 the context of the conversation

4 so you told me about erm a recent sustainable
5 design project that you were wishing to talk
6 about could you remind me what the project is

7 P1 it's erm a trestle erm so it's a trestle leg
8 table erm that I designed for the university that
9 I'm working at and erm the background is that the
10 faculty of design erm just got a new building and
11 there are about five hundred six hundred students
12 studying design at ((university name)) and the
13 task was that for the new building there should
14 be a very flexible erm solution to furniture
15 solution erm to rearrange the seminar rooms erm
16 very easily and erm yeah me and another designer
17 we were er invited to participate in this brief

18 I mhm

19 P1 and erm yeah we came up with a solution for a
20 trestle trestle leg basically

21 I okay and so the brief came so the university was
22 the client and they provided the brief to you

23 P1 yes exactly

24 I yeah okay

25 P1 and the brief was quite clear so that it erm
26 there should be I think it was like two hundred
27 and fifty tables at the end of the day so about
28 five hundred trestles should be produced and
29 there was a fixed budget and erm er certain er
30 constraints like stackability or erm yeah certain
31 sturdiness of course erm yeah yeah

32 I and was sustainability in the brief in any way

33 P1 not exactly no

34 I okay

35 P1 actually something that we erm developed out of
36 the let's say the project helped to develop a
37 certain idea about sustainability

38 I mhm okay

39 P1 and we as designers push this this idea forward I
40 would say

41 I right and what was your particular role you said
42 there were two of you doing the design together
43 is that right

44 P1 yes yes so erm I'm er oftentimes working with
45 another colleague of mine another designer and
46 erm it's just the two of us designing things
47 together

48 I together okay so you have a similar skill set and
49 training you're not working

50 P1 yeah we have the same skillset and training yeah
51 it's basically it's it's like erm he's the
52 sparring partner you know like you know we we
53 bounce ideas back and forth and erm

54 I okay

55 P1 but we both trained as designers more or less the
56 same education yeah

57 I yep okay and then this might be a little bit more
58 tricky but could you briefly tell me about some
59 of the decisions that you made so we we can go
60 into more detail afterwards but but what were the
61 particular decisions that you had to make in
62 designing this product

63 P1 erm well decisions yeah I think design is always
64 decision-making erm the whole time erm I mean at
65 the at the end of the day you have a you have a
66 certain erm there was maybe like a vague idea by
67 the university what they wanted and then it's our
68 role as designers to give this idea erm a form
69 basically to to to bring it into being and erm so
70 decision making I would say is erm well I mean
71 there are there are lots of lots of tiny tiny
72 decisions erm I mean at the very beginning you
73 you develop maybe a a rather abstract idea of of
74 how something could be and then through a
75 iterative process of model making and sketching
76 you erm you yeah you develop this idea but it's
77 oftentimes not so much that you erm only decide
78 how things should be but that you erm do
79 something and then the the thing that is in front
80 of you may be a drawing or a model erm that
81 speaks back to you and erm in a way so it's erm
82 and then then of course you react to it and erm
83 and so there are hundreds of of decisions
84 detailed decisions for example erm I mean if I go
85 a bit more into detail what the product is and
86 it's basically erm shall I show it to you

87 I oh if you've got it there yes

88 P1 okay I hope I can get it on the screen and it's
89 tricky so basically

90 I okay yeah I can see it

91 P1 yeah and you have if you have two of them like
92 you know standing like this and on the other side
93 like this

94 I yep

95 P1 then you can place a er tabletop on top of it now
96 it's it looks like er super simple shape that you
97 might think okay this already exists it's already
98 out there and it probably even is erm but really
99 it's based on erm on quite it's on the very
100 analytic and er er process I would say erm so
101 yeah I'm with with erm so one one part of the
102 brief was that erm they wanted a trestle leg
103 solution but er they wanted to be able erm when
104 you have a seminar erm to sit at a corner because
105 they want and they want to sit all around the
106 table and this is of course quite problematic if
107 you have erm let's say erm you know a normal
108 normal trestle which is more or less

109 can you see ((lifting up and showing the
110 product))

111 I yeah I can see that

112 P1 which is 'A' shape you know

113 I yeah

114 P1 then it's impossible really to sit at the er the
115 short ends of the of the table and it's erm you
116 can't really sit around and it's more or less
117 just erm a table for one person and so we had to
118 come up with a solution where you'd where it's
119 possible to sit all around so basically it should
120 be more like a table but then the the tabletop
121 should easily come off erm and so this is this is
122 this was sort of the first idea that we have that
123 we that we use the the the normal legs and then
124 we think about okay if we just get so so the this
125 this shape erm basically arrived from from this
126 requirement and then erm it went on that er they
127 wanted er it turned out that this shape is quite
128 erm nice because if you turn it to one side or
129 the other you actually get different heights

130 I mhm

131 P1 er and so as it's an art school erm oftentimes we
132 have exhibitions and er we need small pedestals
133 or erm yeah just erm small furniture that that

134 enabled the students and teachers to show their
135 work and so this also erm is not only a system
136 for the seminar rooms where you can where you can
137 have just normal tables but you can also
138 rearrange the whole seminar room to have a erm
139 exhibition where you have small pedestals erm and
140 so on and erm and then the size of the tube is
141 also not just any size of the tube but it's
142 actually erm a standard erm

143 well normally you for example you have tubes that
144 are erm inch measured in inch so you would have a
145 er two and a half inch tube but erm we went for a
146 metric er tube which is a little bit it's still a
147 standard but it's not the the the normal I would
148 say but we went for this because erm the plastic
149 tubes that are used in erm erm electro
150 installations for example that you have in
151 normally not in your in the in the basement for
152 example you would have erm plastic grey tubes and
153 there are a lot of clips and and erm little
154 fixtures that you can buy easily off the shelf
155 from the diy store and so on so erm we we use the
156 same d diameter because then people are able to
157 use this product as erm and that is also
158 conceptually what we want when I said we
159 developed a certain idea of sustainability
160 throughout the project that we thought of the
161 project the product er as we wanted it to be a
162 semi-finished product we didn't want it to be er
163 something that is all that is sort of dictating a
164 certain way of use

165 I okay

166 P1 but we wanted it to be open to be appropriated to
167 be erm adapted and so on so erm every decision
168 was made around this this idea erm that we didn't
169 want our vision of the product erm and how it's
170 used to be too dom er too dominant in the in the
171 in the use that we get yeah

172 I and did you did you explicitly in your minds
173 relate that that principle to sustainability

174 P1 yes and the the link may be erm so with design
175 and sustainability it's erm it's er it's an I
176 think a very complicated thing because erm I
177 think what what design does is basically it
178 offers alternatives and it offers erm very it
179 creates variations erm I don't think that we as
180 humans or as designers of particular I think
181 we're not really good at predicting the future
182 and erm but when it comes to sustainability there
183 is this this erm idea that you you know that we

184 that our generation should behave in a way that
185 we don't erm erm yeah sort of interfere the the
186 the with the needs and the freedom of future
187 generations

188 I mhm

189 P1 then but I'm I'm the question is how can design
190 keep up to this promise

191 I mhm

192 P1 and I think that is erm oftentimes in design and
193 when comes when it comes to sustainable design
194 erm people immediately think about the
195 materiality of the thing and is it recyclable and
196 is it erm it does it come from from er er let's
197 say good sources erm and so on and so forth and
198 but this is only one aspect and I would say
199 rather technical aspect erm of sustainable design
200 erm I think that it's it's we are actually not
201 very good at predicting how a product will
202 actually be used and let me let me give you one
203 example if you take something like the the the
204 apple iphone or smartphones I think I think it's
205 it's we can assume that a company like apple
206 probably has all the resources in the world to do
207 incredible an an incredible amount of research
208 and also about thinking about the future and how
209 their product will potentially be received how it
210 will be used and so on but I think they will
211 never ever have anticipated how smartphones have
212 changed er intimacy communication language erm er
213 ideals of beauty and so on and so forth erm it's
214 impossible to anticipate the actual effects that
215 products like this have on society and and us
216 humans and I think erm one one way of working
217 with it is not so much to try to erm control even
218 more but to do to sort of erm develop things that
219 are capable of being erm adapted

220 I mm

221 P1 and so I mean it's a very very simple er product
222 I mean it could have existed already a hundred
223 years ago looks very much like a like a Bauhaus
224 erm er kind of furniture and erm I'm pretty sure
225 you will ever you will probably find erm when you
226 look through the the Bauhaus archive er you will
227 find furniture that are very very close to it but
228 this wasn't really really that's not really the
229 point because erm er I think erm for this project
230 there was a certain there were certain
231 requirements and erm this this shape turned out
232 to be a very good fit and erm and and yeah so
233 that's that's um um yeah

234 I so it sounds like the most important decision I
235 was gonna ask which is the most important
236 decision in terms of sustainability it sounds
237 like it's definitely the form and the shape of
238 the product rather than material concerns

239 P1 yes so I mean the the problem

240 so I think there's a there's a general erm erm
241 when you have let's say you have two pens of
242 course you could probably say that one is more
243 sustainable than the other when you look at the
244 material side of it erm but oftentimes the
245 comparison is erm not that simple and I think
246 it's you cannot generally say that a product is
247 sustainable and it always depends how er what
248 kind of conceptions come along with what it
249 provokes how it will be used and so on I mean if
250 you take with coffee to go cup and you erm you
251 tur you make it recyclable then you also justify
252 drinking coffee to go and make it even easier

253 I yep

254 P1 so what so it's it's very complicated
255 relationship erm er and it's it you cannot easily
256 just say that a product in itself sort of as an
257 inherent property is sustainable the same with
258 erm with with the need or use I think erm I just
259 just recently saw also in an interview by erm a
260 tutor that I had at the ((university name)) and
261 he said that if you think about it a pen is erm
262 if you don't know about writing with a pen then
263 it's really just some material put together you
264 know it's all in our heads that this is a pen and
265 that this is er has a certain function and that
266 this may be erm er yeah responds to certain needs
267 maybe so yeah yeah

268 P1 okay so if we can talk a bit more about how you
269 decided on or came up with and kind of finalised
270 the form what process did you take working with
271 your your partner in terms of coming up with and
272 deciding on the form

273 P1 yeah well I think as erm I think furniture
274 designers er I like furniture design a lot
275 because it's you can easily erm start to work in
276 one to one prototypes erm and when you think of
277 other disciplines like maybe architecture then of
278 course and then one to one prototype would be a
279 crazy thing erm so er that was I think at the
280 beginning very often we draw erm so drawing is a
281 really really important thing but also what I
282 mentioned earlier is that when you draw something
283 it's not that you know upfront what you will draw

284 I yep

285 P1 and basically you draw something and then you
286 look at it and then you go ah okay that's that's
287 not quite how I thought about it but er and then
288 you iterate again so it's always this circular
289 erm movement if or development that you erm you
290 do something and then then this something
291 responds to you same with language I erm I don't
292 know what I would say in three sentences so I
293 developed my my thoughts yeah and hear them more
294 or less

295 I yeah definitely

296 P1 yes that erm so drawing was definitely the first
297 thing and then we very quickly went into one to
298 one model making and that erm I think in it's
299 always about erm finding quick solutions how you
300 can erm simul simulate something so for instance
301 in the office of course we don't have a steel
302 bending tube steel bending machine erm because
303 this is something that you that industry has er
304 and so we would er actually buy those grey erm
305 electro er these these plastic tubes and then we
306 three d printed the radius and erm then we put it
307 together so we already had an erm at least a
308 visual one to one representation of the thing er
309 how it will look

310 I and so you decided it was steel tubing quite
311 early on

312 p um yes I think so yeah I mean a erm it's it's I I
313 would always say that an a good idea is certain
314 things come together so erm it's if you think of
315 er design as as cooking for example then when you
316 just have salt er salt is not a very good idea in
317 itself you know but salt can be really very
318 helpful when you when you cook but you need other
319 ingredients to make to create a good dish so erm
320 and I mean I'm I'm er yeah not an not an a chef
321 er a assume that er if you develop a something
322 new that you iterate and that you start with
323 certain ingredients as and then you try it out
324 and erm some things work some things don't and
325 you then you replace things and slowly erm the
326 the sort of yeah you you you go maybe where you
327 find a certain quality that you that you er were
328 thinking of and erm so it's not that the the idea
329 of the steel tube was it was there quite early on
330 but it was also there there because we knew that
331 we had to use erm a production method that is
332 easily ex((inaudible)) that doesn't that where we
333 don't have we don't have investment for tooling

334 er we we know that it will be very sturdy at the
335 end of the day erm there are already erm erm in
336 terms of the erm other progresses are already
337 there we don't need to er invent the process to
338 production wise because we can just erm yeah
339 basically tell someone can you please build this
340 for us

341 I yes

342 P1 and that was of course very important erm this is
343 what in my in my maybe I can talk a little bit
344 about my PhD erm I'm talking and I'm er
345 interested in path dependencies

346 I uhu

347 P1 so how erm on the one hand design is always about
348 projecting erm your ideas into the future and how
349 they will possibly be erm er received let's say
350 and and erm but then it's this is always based on
351 what is already there and it erm it's it has a
352 lot to do with erm yeah you know I would say sort
353 of like weaving your er I have developed these
354 thoughts in german so it's I need to translate
355 them now for the first time but it's I would say
356 you're you're you're connecting certain certain
357 er dots that are out there and erm yeah so this
358 is what I wanted to say is that the decision to
359 to create it from steel tube erm came along with
360 certain erm potentials that we saw when we use it
361 and erm yeah

362 I yeah so you didn't er you know from your past
363 knowledge and experience that this erm is a good
364 choice and a logical choice

365 P1 yeah exactly also and then also in terms of
366 sustainability which we had in mind of course erm
367 was that with steel you have quite good erm yeah
368 recyclability rates and the the paths for
369 recycling steel are already there so when we use
370 another yeah if we would have used another
371 material then this could have been much more
372 difficult and now we know that if one day this
373 product er erm yeah I don't know will be thrown
374 away that we can be pretty sure that it's erm
375 there is a certain material value erm that it
376 will probably find its way in the right path erm
377 paths to be recycled

378 I yeah and it doesn't really need much dismantling
379 from other you know components

380 P1 yes yeah exactly I mean it another decision that
381 was erm that was made was with regards to its erm

382 the surface of the the and if so I don't know if
383 you see it but it's basically erm it's very rough

384 I yes

385 P1 but it's erm it's the same it's zinc coated

386 I uhu

387 P1 and that's the same that you will find erm er
388 very often on steel parts on construction sites
389 like scaffolding or erm yeah some fences erm and
390 so on and it's basically a material and a surface
391 that you will find outside and not so much for
392 furniture that is used inside but we deliberately
393 chose this erm this this surface because erm it's
394 it's almost an invitation not be too careful with
395 it

396 I mmm

397 P1 and that was because we the the this seemed to be
398 as I said we wanted it to be used you know it
399 should you can you can you can place it like this
400 you can place it like this [gesturing different
401 ways] and erm if if it was a was a surface that
402 would easily scratch then erm of course you would
403 be much more careful with it which also as a as a
404 erm has a sort of value of course er but for this
405 particular erm project and this context right
406 here and it was important to us that you would
407 not have too erm much let's say distance to this
408 thing we wanted it to be to be just grab it and
409 and do whatever you want with it basically that
410 erm er yeah appropriate method of use that was
411 the message that it could send and there are very
412 little of course ingredients that the product has
413 so so every little thing had to be had to to send
414 the right message in and I can I can say that now
415 that it's been used for three years here at the
416 university erm we are yeah I think we knew that
417 it would be used in ways that we couldn't think
418 of and that turned out to be true so it was used

419 I what

420 P1 sorry say again

421 I I was just saying in what way has it surprised
422 you in the way its been used in this thing in
423 what way as opposed to the way it's been used

424 P1 ah

425 I what if you've got the two different ways it can
426 go but what other

427 P1 one example was er er in the entrance area there
428 was some erm tiles damaged so one day a
429 construction company came and they had to replace
430 the tiles and as long as the tiles are put there
431 anew and they have to rest there for a couple of
432 days and the guys from the construction company
433 took these trestles to build a fence around the
434 tiles

435 I oh okay

436 P1 that you weren't allowed to step on and this is
437 just one example er for for in there I have like
438 really really a lot of examples also photographed
439 already where people just use this thing for for
440 various kind of yeah reasons and erm in
441 exhibitions and er to build a bar erm for a party
442 and so on so there are there are lots of lots of
443 different erm ways that it has been used already
444 that that we there was even one erm there is now
445 a task for the first semester that they have to
446 er when they when they learn how to three d print
447 they get the task to develop a erm an add on for
448 this trestle a clip that goes on to it to erm and
449 that is sort of their reference er which we
450 didn't think of that it would sort of become part
451 of the erm curriculum and er there are er what
452 else

453 and there there was a task by a erm professor I
454 think of photography and they they built erm sort
455 of erm how can you say like like it was a quick
456 task to create er sculptures basically so they
457 would quickly rearrange things and and erm
458 discuss it and so they also used these and lots
459 of other things

460 I yep

461 P1 and so it's just been it's just being used
462 basically

463 I yeah it must be really nice to be there to see
464 all of these these uses

465 P1 absolutely yeah that's the best compliment is
466 always when I see this thing being used that I
467 haven't thought of er and erm yeah but and
468 admitting I think erm already during the design
469 process that there will be ways that you have not
470 thought of how your thing will be used has a lot
471 to do with sustainability and because we should
472 not think that erm sustainability is a sort of
473 erm if you just plan it well enough then people
474 you know will get it and they will use it the
475 right way I think that is a very it's almost a

476 totalitarian way of thinking of design and er of
477 of sustainability I think you you should throw
478 things if you if there is the necessity to design
479 something that's not there er then it should be
480 designed in a way that it erm keeps things in
481 flux you know that it's it's er and this of
482 course is on the material side of it and it it's
483 very good if it's recyclable it's even better if
484 it's already coming from if it's already made
485 from recyclable material erm but er this is only
486 one aspect of it then the next thing is about er
487 yeah carefully thinking what are you throwing
488 into the world? also in terms of what will it
489 mean what will it what kind of effects will it
490 have on on society and yeah

491 I so you've a lot of the things you've said have to
492 me sort of indicated particular values that you
493 bring into your design I wondered if you could
494 articulate a bit a bit more what what are your
495 personal values that you think are important in
496 doing your design and making the design decisions

497 P1 um yeah I mean as I said I think erm erm wow
498 values yeah er I think we had one teacher that
499 always told that told us try to be amoral when
500 you design something don't don't try to er to to
501 er you know erm in the in I mean it's almost
502 impossible to be amoral because there are always
503 certain certain morals that your decisions are
504 based on but I think this erm as an ideal not to
505 to try to not to be very moral about your
506 decisions and is a very interesting concept I
507 think because erm erm yeah I think in the in the
508 best scenarios erm it will be the people that use
509 the things erm that bring the moral in you know

510 I so what does that mean for responsibility of the
511 designer er

512 P1 erm yeah I think that that that is sort of the
513 responsibility erm that you erm well let maybe I
514 I'm the best thing is to give you some example
515 there are some erm I don't know if you've heard
516 of it but there are for example in interaction
517 design you have these ideas of nudging and erm er

518 I yep

519 P1 and erm where basically I mean it can it really
520 depends what you make with these kind of theories
521 but oftentimes let's say there are objects that
522 or things products services that have a certain
523 erm ideal let's say we want to do something about
524 obesity and then they erm they erm find a way to
525 address obesity in that thing or service and sort

526 of push the people to become better in quotation
527 marks or let's say that they they erm a product
528 that helps you to lose weight for example but I
529 think that it's erm it's actually quite er how
530 can I say it's quite er unpolite maybe haha to er
531 to design something I mean it's it it always
532 depends how you do it if you just erm design some
533 some some weights for weightlifting let's say
534 then erm these this as a product has the openness
535 to be used in many ways but if you design erm an
536 app that I don't know maybe maybe can can track
537 whenever you eat something and then sends out an
538 alert that er you're eating again erm then are
539 this very very different way of dealing with the
540 with the problem let's say erm and in I I can
541 also tell you there are there were some projects
542 at the university where another for example saved
543 energy the one designed a lamp that would
544 constantly like after thirty minutes or so it
545 would slowly switch off so you need to switch it
546 on again and you're constantly reminded that
547 you're using energy and I think this is a this is
548 one way of becoming conscious that you're
549 consuming energy but erm that from my perspective
550 that would never be the the way to go because I
551 think it's way too erm too yeah like the hammer
552 on the head haha

553 I okay so again thinking about responsibility but
554 in a different way in this particular design that
555 you've talked about the design of the trestle

556 P1 yeah

557 I what were the lines of responsibility in terms of
558 who made decisions and signed off decisions and
559 who would take the responsibility for the final
560 design

561 P1 yeah so for the erm when it comes to erm the the
562 erm the I think yeah we made basically we made a
563 contract with the university and the erm the
564 university as the erm yeah whose running this
565 building and all the things that are inside it
566 has of course the responsibility that erm people
567 don't get hurt erm and that they would place
568 things here that yeah wouldn't hurt people and
569 that are properly tested and so on so erm if er
570 something would happen erm if someone would yeah
571 hurt them themselves with this er trestle then er
572 the university would er yeah

573 I yep okay

574 P1 be responsible basically

575 I yep and what about the sustainability impacts who
576 do you think is responsible for that

577 P1 I think there is no erm there was in the whole
578 project erm not really anyone playing the
579 advocate for nature let's say except from us and
580 the ideas that we brought into it which are of
581 course well open to be criticised haha but I
582 think the the only ones who brought in ideas
583 about sustainability were we as designers

584 I and did you discuss that did you explain that to
585 the university client and how did they react

586 P1 erm it was we erm well when you design something
587 and you have er a client then its also always
588 about erm convincing the client to some extent er
589 about what's best erm and of course you have to
590 erm erm sort of line up your interests with the
591 interests of the client and the interests maybe
592 of of society but then then again I mean it's er
593 erm yeah how can I say I mean it's erm the the
594 the let's say the sustainability card was was not
595 really played actively in the er in presentations
596 for example because we knew it wouldn't be our
597 sort of best seller er in terms of as an argument
598 I mean erm it's also not that people didn't care
599 about it erm but it it we knew that other aspects
600 erm for example that this thing had to be super
601 sturdy I mean there were a couple of meetings
602 where we had to show with prototypes erm because
603 that was just way more important and discussed
604 and a topic than than erm than the question how
605 sustainable this thing is erm

606 I yeah

607 P1 yeah yeah

608 I just wondered do you think if sustainability had
609 been a priority in the project brief do you think
610 you would have done anything differently

611 P1 erm that it depends what what you like what kind
612 of

613 I yep

614 P1 force sort of it would have been you know if it
615 would have been the erm the demand to to use a
616 certain material then then of course if it would
617 have been er erm I mean there are yeah it it
618 really depends where you er where you see
619 sustainability kicking in let's say if if er erm
620 because in at the end of the day if the client
621 had said we want this to be sustainable then you
622 er I'm then I would say er the the word has been

623 dropped but then it's still what you make from it
624 erm

625 I yep

626 P1 erm so erm I mean there are there are erm some
627 very interesting erm developments erm here at er
628 in Germany because we have the erm environmental
629 agency erm which also funds my project and erm
630 they er recently put forward erm a an idea of a
631 erm er how can it er substitution rate erm which
632 means they would like erm companies to erm sorry
633 to erm put out a number erm let's say about how
634 much recycled material is in their products which
635 is a bit erm because at the moment what erm in
636 many indust industries erm companies are er asked
637 for is that they use let's say erm recy er that
638 their products can be recycled but just that
639 because the products can be recycled doesn't mean
640 that recycling works

641 I yeah

642 P1 erm and er if you if you want to make recycling
643 work then erm it's it would be much more erm
644 important that erm er that you already have er
645 ways of forcing companies er to work with
646 recycled material

647 I mhm

648 P1 and erm so this is erm so if if for example if
649 that were would have been part of the brief that
650 you erm er yeah that it's according to this new
651 erm er rule of this the substitution rate then
652 erm this would have been erm a force within the
653 project that would maybe push it into a certain
654 direction yeah erm I mean I can also erm what was
655 quite interesting is that when we er decided to
656 zinc coat it we only thought about it in terms of
657 its well one thing was that the whole façade of
658 the building is zinc coated

659 I mmm

660 P1 so there was this element of sort of er that it
661 becomes a corporate thing erm er and easily
662 recognisable and erm it sort of unites the
663 outside and the inside it's it's maybe more of a
664 I don't know of a nice story erm but it was very
665 important to to get the project through so erm er
666 if we would have just made it in in orange let's
667 say we would have found some some er narrative er
668 where we would say okay we want this to be orange
669 because orange is the colour of the the logo of
670 the university erm then I think it would the

671 narrative would have been weaker let's say erm so
672 it was quite a strong narrative that we zinc-
673 coated this erm just because of it's visual
674 appeal

675 I yeah

676 P1 erm but also from our side because of it er er
677 how it provokes a different kind of use however
678 in terms of erm er the if you look at it from a
679 materials point of view then it's not the best
680 erm we I also presented this at the erm the
681 environmental agency and then someone immediately
682 say er said erm why did you zinc-coat it it's erm
683 relatively hard to get zine off or actually most
684 of the time you will lose the the zinc as a
685 material and you will only recycle the steel so
686 this was simply something that we just did not
687 know and erm I'm not sure if we would have known
688 if it would have changed our decision but er we
689 we certainly would have thought about it
690 differently

691 I yeah

692 P1 so yeah

693 I okay

694 P1 it's very multifaceted all this

695 I oh yeah it's complicated there's a lot of thought
696 processes

697 P1 yeah and also why why I mean at the end of the
698 day you have to make a decision

699 I yeah

700 P1 right about it so it's always about decision-
701 making and erm er yeah and then that's it I mean

702 I yeah okay I just have a couple of more kind of
703 broader questions now erm so thinking about the
704 process that you've talked me through in terms of
705 the decision-making for this product was this
706 typical was this a typical way of working for you
707 and making decisions or was it unusual

708 P1 mmmm er wha I mean depends what you what you
709 would call typical the erm the way of working in
710 general is I would say in a way typical I mean
711 there is a certain erm way that I work and that I
712 erm yeah invest sort of or investigate er er
713 let's say erm and how I erm I for example the
714 aspect of model making erm is very important in
715 my work and I in that sense it's quite typical
716 but then again er each project brings along a

717 different kind of constellation of requirements
718 and actors and erm and erm so the it will always
719 be give a very different erm dynamic I guess in
720 each project for instance for example with this
721 project you have a you know that it there will be
722 five hundred pieces erm and they will be used in
723 a certain building and you you sort of the
724 building you you almost you almost know the users
725 quite well or you can more or less anticipate
726 what will happen erm but if you let's say would
727 erm design something a piece of furniture for a
728 company that distributes furniture them erm you
729 basically you don't really know who the final
730 user will be er you most of the time you don't
731 really have a real real connection to them or
732 they erm don't play an active role in the er
733 designing of the thing I mean so erm there are
734 other dynamics I would say in the the erm and
735 then also in the process like this when you have
736 a company that produces furniture they come along
737 with er a certain erm yeah er set of machinery er
738 certain traditions certain market let's say that
739 they erm are aiming for and so on so erm you need
740 to weave your your ideas into that kind of er er
741 network let's say and erm erm which is then
742 different erm than when you're working with
743 someone who basically has the erm yeah is more
744 like so this was more like maybe like an interior
745 design project

746 I mhm

747 P1 in a sense or interior architecture erm

748 I a very similar question related to what you just
749 said erm were the lines of responsibility in this
750 project typical or unusual

751 P1 erm yeah I would say so because erm yeah because
752 I think in terms of responsibility when you work
753 with erm with the university erm the every er
754 aspect of reliability responsibility erm er is is
755 erm is very very structured and organised already

756 I mhm

757 P1 so erm there are not many er erm er loopholes er
758 form erm in in terms of let's say the law you
759 know erm everything in er every student is sort
760 of er erm yea everything is it's er it's er it's
761 er you know what I mean

762 I yeah sure

763 P1 I mean not many things not a lot of things are er
764 in a lawless erm

765 I they follow the rules

766 P1 yeah everything is sort of has some rules like
767 the the table desk that I'm working on there is
768 probably somewhere a number on it and then it's
769 er er there is somewhere a facility manager has a
770 erm a list where this desk is listed in this room
771 and erm so from from from yeah so so from that
772 point of I think the the responsibility and
773 reliability and so on I think it's very erm
774 typical in a sense yeah

775 I and if you were working for a different type of
776 client you would still see the responsibility
777 being with with the client

778 P1 I mean in erm oftentimes in product design the
779 the main responsibility erm of the erm designers
780 is that you don't infringe copyright

781 I mhm

782 P1 I think that's the that's the biggest thing if I
783 also think about contracts is that I erm have
784 with companies then the only thing where I am
785 really really erm responsible is that I don't
786 present any ideas to them that belong to others

787 I sure

788 P1 because if that happens then then they will they
789 will be erm sued then erm I think that will come
790 back to me erm but er in terms of the product erm
791 reliability er that usually erm yeah er the
792 company er yeah

793 I yeah and so year so the client is responsible for
794 the safety and ((inaudible)) aspects

795 P1 and in terms of responsibility in terms of
796 bringing sustainability in

797 I yeah

798 P1 erm I think erm yeah I mean there are some
799 companies that are erm willing to do a bit but
800 erm most of the time er the the industry just
801 does what what's within the law

802 I yeah

803 P1 everything that is possible within the law will
804 be done and erm so er you only find very few
805 companies that that are willing to do more for
806 for the environment just because of er let's say
807 goodwill goodwill or yeah

808 I so that points to responsibility being with
809 government even

810 P1 yes yes I think the erm definitely that the
811 government has to erm come up with erm certain
812 rules er I I don't see any other way of erm yeah
813 I mean cer yes there is a societal erm awareness
814 that is rising about these kinds of issues but
815 erm erm at the end of the day if if there are no
816 erm no rules erm then there are no rules haha
817 yeah yeah as long as I can just put so two
818 materials together that don't really belong
819 together and cannot be recycled but as long as I
820 can do this er and sell it

821 I yeah

822 P1 er I don't I'm not even responsible of the the
823 erm erm you know the whole process of the when
824 it's thrown away and er that it

825 I yeah

826 P1 gets to the right er channels erm then then how
827 yeah then I don't see how how we can

828 I yeah

829 P1 become more sustainable erm yeah

830 I okay well on that note haha those are all the
831 questions I had erm

832 P1 okay

833 I erm that was really really interesting so useful
834 for my project thank you so much erm was there
835 anything that you'd like to add that you thought
836 that I might have asked about but I didn't

837 P1 erm trying to think er you said yeah you ask a
838 lot about responsibility I mean the the erm one
839 thing that that I find quite interesting is the
840 that there is this erm er the question of how
841 participative design can be or has to be

842 I mhm

843 P1 then you but then of course you get into erm
844 because very often it it's said that erm you know
845 you that that the actual users the final users of
846 the erm of the product should be should have a
847 say in in the design

848 I yeah

849 P1 of things and erm and then there are these erm er
850 I mean a lot of things have been written about
851 this and also that they are that there are
852 different levels of participation that you can
853 erm you know you can just just ask the users you
854 can erm er yeah up to a point where you where you

855 don't see the as a separate community but where
856 where you are actually part of the community and
857 erm yeah but erm and that that's something that
858 er I also find very interesting erm because it
859 the question of how erm because design is
860 basically a discipline that or as a discipline
861 that erm er started to to develop erm through the
862 industrialisation and the division of labour and
863 erm and but but how erm and I think this creates
864 a lot of problems in terms of sustainability and
865 also responsibility because by the division of
866 labour you basically have a lot of specialists
867 and erm products are erm yeah going through the
868 hands of so many people the erm the before they
869 are then finally used erm and I think erm that er
870 when when nowadays we talk a lot about erm er the
871 the circular economy as an as an ideal erm which
872 to me is a little bit of the wrong image I would
873 say so the image of a circle I don't really see
874 how erm how the circle I mean as an as an a very
875 very big er erm abstract idea I I I see it but
876 erm I think if you look at it a bit more closely
877 then erm it's it's much more about a erm
878 rearranging erm the the network how we use so I
879 see it much more as a network and not erm as er
880 that we are now at a linear erm er way of
881 producing and erm

882 I yeah

883 P1 er the value chain but er er the and we should we
884 should make a circle out of it but I think now we
885 already we have certain erm paths er and I think
886 we need to find ways to more clever connections
887 that we create because erm I think it's a very
888 naïve idea if you if you have erm the circular
889 economy and oftentimes you you erm then design is
890 placed somewhere er on that circle and of course
891 plays a big role but erm I think it's a bit of a
892 naïve idea to to like design a product and then
893 release it into the world and then almost say
894 like oh alright good luck haha

895 I yeah

896 P1 you know erm and I think er it has to be much
897 more about erm bringing er all the actors that
898 are er along that circle er together and
899 connecting them and er this I don't really see in
900 in the most of the concepts on on circular
901 economy erm it's still it's er very linear it's
902 er

903 I linear circle

904 P1 being it's er

905 I yeah

906 P1 one connection is made and that's the connection
907 between er where the waste is and where the sort
908 of

909 I the end and the beginning

910 P1 right the end and the beginning is but erm it's
911 still very very all the rest is not really erm
912 working together I think we could er in yeah it
913 would be super nice to have erm projects where
914 and I and we actually have some research projects
915 here at the university where you put erm for
916 instance the erm people from the recycling
917 industry people from the waste er erm collecting
918 industry er the the actual er yeah people that
919 use the products erm you know the ways that are
920 taking care of distribution and so on and erm
921 marketing then this this the designers the
922 production side maybe even the miners and all all
923 of them together then erm come up with something
924 that erm that works in the whole system

925 I mhm

926 P1 I think that's er

927 I yeah

928 P1 because the products are really just the the tip
929 of the iceberg and er there is so much underneath
930 erm that needs to be er thought of and then in in
931 terms of I think we also need to decentralise the
932 the user so I don't think we we should erm we
933 should think of them er more like the products as
934 erm as guests I would say that are temporarily
935 for a while with us and then they they disappear
936 again and erm er we shouldn't focus too much on
937 the er user-centredness I think that er this er
938 yeah because it also it goes along with the of
939 course erm er very anthropocentric

940 I yeah

941 P1 worldview and I think that that is a bit
942 problematic because yeah

943 I yes definitely

944 well I realise we've gone over time so I don't
945 want to keep you too much longer

946 ((discussion about my data analysis approach
947 about the other methods planned for data
948 collection))

949 P1 one er one very important concept that I haven't
950 mentioned yet is the erm that I think that er
951 that erm how can I say this I think that
952 designers are quite well at erm looking at the
953 world not as something that is fixed and that
954 they saw that they see the the contingency I
955 think is the word of the of the world erm that
956 that nothing is really erm sort of has to be that
957 way and in a design process I think for a moment
958 at least at the very beginning erm the the the in
959 a way even when you design just a small thing
960 like er a cup or a door handle just for a moment
961 I think the the world is completely deconstructed

962 I yeah

963 P1 and then you you erm er think about erm which
964 parts are actually good as they are and should be
965 continued and er and also contained and er erm
966 and and yeah then you start to to slowly erm
967 weave your idea into er what is already there er
968 I would say and erm er and I I did an internship
969 at ((companyname)) which is a sort of London-
970 based er design office and they oftentimes talked
971 about their work as erm er erm a way of
972 correcting things in the world so I I quite I
973 mean the the erm if you think about for example
974 the text and you write a text and then someone
975 else proof reads it also in terms not just in
976 terms of er grammar but also in erm what is
977 actually written erm then erm this person scans
978 the text and er looks for certain errors or
979 mistakes in the argument and er and so on and so
980 forth and erm and this this process I think it
981 has a lot to do with er design it's not always
982 about er yeah creating something entirely new erm
983 er it's it has a lot to do with erm making erm I
984 I would not use the word correction erm because
985 it has yeah again a little bit of erm this this
986 aspect of I know what's better I would rather say
987 erm you do small interventions in the world you
988 you intervene in a way so to me the product is er
989 is an intervention is erm and most of the time
990 you do this inter intervention and then you you
991 are surprised what's happening

992 I yes

993 P1 erm yeah I there's this quote by erm an artist
994 called ((inaudible)) and she said erm er was it
995 'we live the surprise results of old plans' and I
996 think there's a lot of there's erm this erm can
997 relate to this very much because you when I see
998 things erm and I think this is the to me erm sort
999 of the designerly ways of looking at er at the

1000 world is that you also see the traces of other
1001 designers and you try to erm imagine what was
1002 their process and what what are they trying to
1003 tell and what are they how this how did this
1004 thing come about what were the forces behind this
1005 erm er and and yeah that you try to to
1006 deconstruct the the things that are around you
1007 and erm yeah
1008 /end/