Exploring communal design through the development of care alternatives project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date   20 - 03 - 2023   18 - 08 - 2023   end date

INTRODUCTION **
Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

Design evolves in synchrony with the values of the societies from which it emerges. Said values are represented through essays and methods, but mainly through the artifacts it produces: Products, services, and most recently systems express the values of the people that design them and the companies that sponsor them (Hekkert & Van Dijk, 2011). However, there is a specific set of macro values that drive most design practices, as they drive mainstream western culture: rationality, individuality, and growth (Escobar, 2018).

We can see how the paradigm of rationality, individuality, and growth dictates, for example, our transportation, educational, and care systems, with extremely negative consequences for our world (Illich, 1973). For Escobar (2018) these consequences include the devastation of our environment, the degradation of our social fabric and our well-being, and most crucially the loss of diversity in ways of being. This phenomenon, where one specific way of being dominates over all others for such an extended period of time that its negative outputs scale up to apocalyptic levels, is called a civilizational model crisis.

Social studies have been aware of our civilizational model crisis for a while now but design less so. In fact, design thrives under the values of growth and individuality, (innovation and user research are our favorite words), and it s we who have replicated and perfected the machine, the way of being that consumes our world (Papanek, 1972). To challenge our current civilizational model and address its consequences, Escobar (2018) makes a call to designers, to help develop a world where divergent ways of being are possible. Escobar (2018) defends that design has an ontological quality to it. This means that design has the ability, not only to condense values into products, services, and systems; but to challenge said values, contributing to societal change. For design, challenging the current civilizational model means supporting ways of living where, for example, emotion is valued over rationality, community over individualism, relations over institutions, and stability over growth.

Community as a living alternative is particularly interesting for addressing the crises that stem out of our current civilizational model. Within social innovation, organizations focused on humanitarian design recognize that community appropriation of projects is key for achieving long-lasting societal change (Butterfly Works, 2021); and when individuals within strong communities are given growth opportunities, the benefits tend to be distributed to the whole group. The term community is used flexibly, but in broad terms, a community is a network of individuals, that gather consistently around a common belief or goal, and that offer non-commercial support to one another. From the perspective of Escobar s (2018) approach, it is also possible to argue that strong communities are fundamental for diversity because they offer specific and unique solutions to local problems.

The support that community members give to each other is a form of care, which is the act of providing the resources needed for a person s or group s welfare. Interestingly, under the current paradigm the domain of care has been constrained into a series of transactions and institutions; care authorities that provide detached assistance in our most vulnerable moments (Illich, 1973). However, our commercial and institutionalized approach to care is not the only viable alternative. Care, especially the one provided amongst close relationships, challenges by nature the dominant paradigm (Lorde, 1984) because its difficult to quantify and trade with (de La Bellacasa, 2017). In communities, care generates resilience, which is key in a world that is designed to facilitate individual ways of being.

For these reasons, in this project, I would like to try and challenge traditional design (understood as the Design that thrives by understanding and commercializing individual perspectives) by exploring an approach to design that highlights communitarian and relational perspectives within the domain of care.

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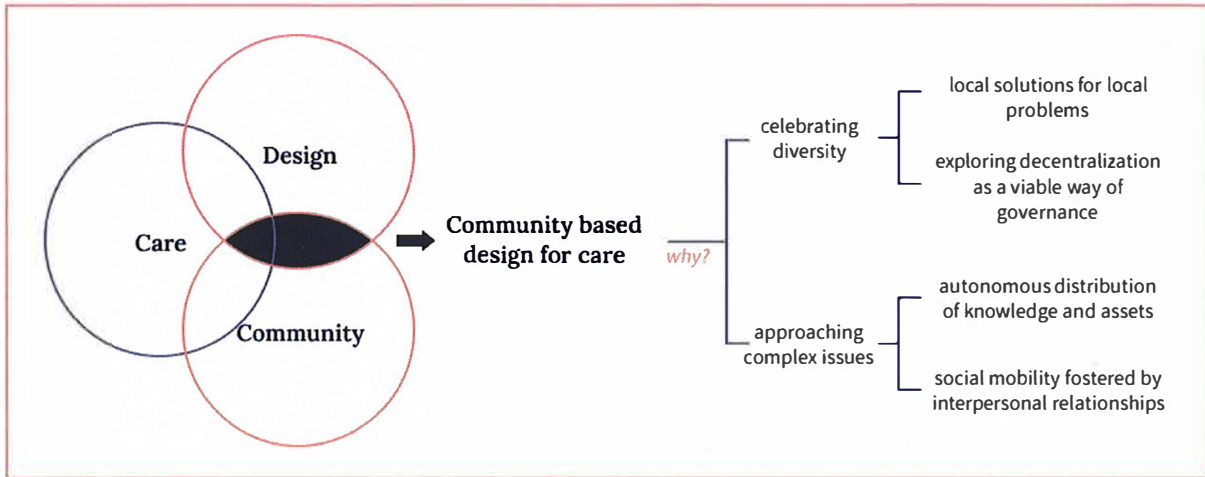
introduction (continued): space for images

image / figure 1:   Space of interest: Community-based design for care

TO PLACE YOUR IMAGE IN THIS AREA:
- **SAVE THIS DOCUMENT TO YOUR COMPUTER AND OPEN IT IN ADOBE READER**
- **CLICK AREA TO PLACE IMAGE / FIGURE**

PLEASE NOTE:
- **IMAGE WILL SCALE TO FIT AUTOMATICALLY**
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image / figure 2: _____

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

PROBLEM DEFINITION **
Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

The problem that I will address throughout my graduation exists in two scales. From a design-ethics scale, the problem that I will address throughout my graduation is the dominance of design for individuality, rationality, and growth in design practice. This problem is deeply rooted within design academia. As an example, the Desirability, Viability, and Feasibility model (one of the most well-known models to evaluate a project s quality in design education) is underpinned by these values. Even if specializations like collaborative design, emotional design, and design for happiness open a place for emotion and subjectivity, they often do so under the same paradigm that Escobar (2018) criticizes. For example, the introductory video on the TU-Delft s website on Design for Emotion and Happiness Master Class (2019) states ... emotions are critical to our design discipline because if it doesn't feel good they won't buy it , which communicates that emotions are relevant mainly because they serve commercial (and thus seemingly rational) purposes. In light of the implications of perpetuating the current paradigm, I consider it important to purposefully explore and report the challenges of developing projects with an alternative perspective to traditional design .

To accomplish this objective, I ll start this exploration by initiating a design project within a community. On this practical scale, the problem that I ll address is the effects of the current paradigm on the community's expectations of care. A specific challenge, however, will be pointed out by the community itself, respecting their knowledge and autonomy. The exercise of understanding care within the community, and addressing a specific care challenge through design, should inform my understanding of design from a communal perspective, and ultimately, inform the development of a design ethic that values community over individuality.

ASSIGNMENT **
State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, ... In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

I will explore the possibility of developing a design process outside of the values of rationality, individuality, and growth, by building and analyzing a case with a community interested in exploring care alternatives. The main outcome of my project will be a reflective document that describes and analyzes the tools and artifacts used during the care exploration, and that maps the challenges and the moments of breakthrough I find during this process.

To fulfill this main objective, I will pursue the following sub-objectives: 1. Build an informed conceptual base on communal and/or relational design perspective and on care. 2. Generate tools and guidelines to exercise design from a communal perspective based on said conceptual base. 3. Initiate and participate in a community-focused design process that explores care alternatives from a communitarian perspective. 4. Test and iterate the tools from objective 2 during said process. 5. Analyze the challenges and insights to design practice during the project.

Initials & Name LC _____   Student number S_____

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PLANNING AND APPROACH **

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date   20 - 3 - 2023   18 - 8 - 2023   end date
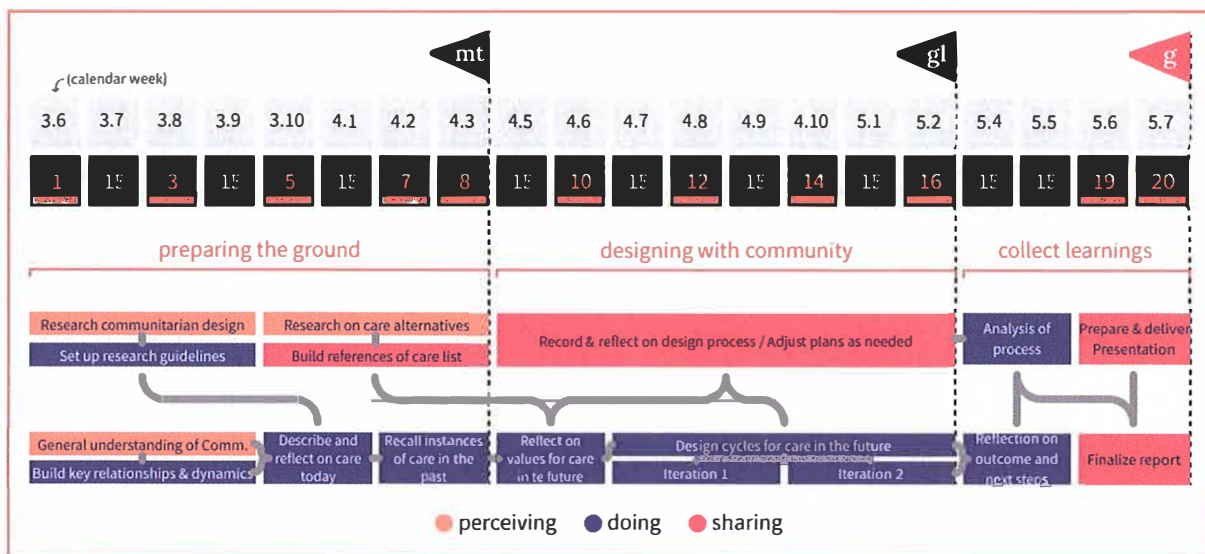
The project will be divided into three phases. In the first phase there are two main objectives. First is to build an informed conceptual base that allows me to discuss and propose activities from a communal and/or relational design perspective. This will be archived through an exploration of existing literature on communal design, participatory design, and architecture for communal spaces. This theoretical base will inform the creation of tools and guidelines that will be useful in the attempt to exercise design from a communal perspective. The second main objective is to improve my general understanding of the participating community and strive to build a level of trust with the group that allows me to continue with next steps of the process. After that, weeks 5-8 will be dedicated to exploring the existing situation regarding care within the community. First, there will be space to describe care, as it is currently practiced, and then space to recall situations from the past. In the meantime, I should research existing communitarian care activities, with this I ll build a reference list that should inspire people in the community during the second phase.

The second phase is dedicated to Initiating and recording a community-focused design process that explores care alternatives from a communitarian perspective. I ll conduct three key design activities with the community: a reframing session and two conceptualize-prototype-test cycles. Before and after each cycle I should propose and generate tools for communitarian discussion, that will be iterated upon after each session.

In phase three I will analyze the challenges and insights I found during the design process with the community. For this, I expect to do at least one reflection workshop with the community, who will be invited to the final presentation. A report synthesizing the process and learnings should also be elaborated in this phase. Since this phase is rather short, excellent documentation during the process will be key to synthesizing the project efficiently.

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS
Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, ... Stick to no more than five ambitions.

This project touches upon multiple subjects that have interested me for the last couple of years. The desire to explore a community perspective is something that I ve concluded after reflecting on inequality, a very prominent part of daily life in Latinoamerica. I believe that communities enable social mobility and allow for the creation of projects with long-lasting impact; and that smaller communities are better at managing assets, distributing gain, and caring for their members. I also had inspiring experiences with communities, like sharing briefly with Indigenous communities from the Colombian Amazon and Tayrona, experiencing and enjoying family networks at home, and recognizing the privileged communities I belong to as a student of the TU Delft. I d like to see a world where we acknowledge more often how the relational networks around us shape us and our opportunities, and where the myth of meritocracy is seen for what it is (Sandel, 2020).

My interest in care has also been present for most of my path as a designer. I dislike the idea of perpetuating current care systems and I'm aware of the privilege that access to health care entails, especially in developing countries and marginalized communities. I also consider that even in the best scenarios our healthcare systems lack a broad focus on well-being and the relational perspective that should be at its core. I'm happy to explore ways of generating alternatives to current, widespread solutions. For this project, got inspired by midwives of the Colombian Pacific, with a long tradition in relational care, where each midwife belongs to their community and to the people that trust in them.

Process Objectives
I would like to build a strong research case around design from a community perspective for four main reasons: first, to build a strong philosophical argumentation from which to derive future practice; second, to exercise collaborative ways of designing; third, to understand if it s possible to design from a community perspective (and to get hints on how to do it); and finally, to exercise my storytelling skills in communicating this complex (and still blurry) topic.

I think I will consider this project successful if I am proud of the process (regardless of how far I actually get with the learning objectives) if I do something I ethically believe in (at least from the brief it should be ok), and if I build good relationships with the people and the communities around me in the project.

FINAL COMMENTS
In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

de La Bellacasa, M. P. (2017). Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more than human worlds (Vol. 41). U of Minnesota Press.Butterfly Works (2021). Humanitarian design in practice. Workshop in TU Delft.
Design for Emotion and Happiness. (2019). TU Delft. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from
https://www.tudelft.nl/io/studeren/ide-design-master-classes/previous-master-classes/design-for-emotion-and-happin essEscobar, A. (2018). Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds. Duke

Initials & Name   LC ▇▇▇▇▇▇   Student number ▇▇▇▇▇▇

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