

APPENDIX

Balancing Power

Explorations towards a more decolonial Participatory Design process

Master Thesis

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APPENDIX A

Project Brief

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

Handing over power: Socially just design process exploration _____ 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 06 - 07 - 2020 _____ 04 - 12 - 2020 _____ 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, ...).

In the last decade, a world-wide debate has grown around issues of social injustice and its relationship with oppressive systems and the reproduction of violence towards some groups in society. Social oppression is the action by which a group of individuals uses its access to power to mistreat, abuse, and discriminate other groups of people. The consequence of this oppression is a social hierarchy (by class, gender, race, religion, income, etc) in which the dominant group benefits from the oppressed or marginalized through their access to privileges, like the access to certain rights, resources, and in general better life quality. The oppressed groups, on the other hand, have less access to the same rights, fewer resources, less quality of life, and less access to power and participation in the processes that lead to their own marginalization and that are instead guided by the dominant groups.

Of course, this is a global and systemic problem that has been in our society for centuries and has been tackled from many disciplines and fields. Nowadays, there is still a lot of work to do, and also a lot to do in the design realm, especially if we realize how much design mediates in our realities and in the shaping of our world. Some authors like Arturo Escobar (2018) and Sasha Costanza-Chock (2020) have highlighted the importance of working to examine and transform design values and practices so they do not reproduce the same system of inequality mentioned before but they boost a more inclusive and plural reality. These efforts should not be limited to more just design outcomes but also in the processes and dynamics used to achieve those outcomes (Vink, Rodrigues, Wetter-Edman, 2017). Especially when talking about social design, the intentions of the designers are to have a "positive impact" in society and specifically towards the most vulnerable. These good intentions, however, are not always easy to accomplish. When designing with societal ambitions, wicked problems represent a challenge especially in the process of engaging different stakeholders within a co-design approach in which political agendas and power imbalances still play a fundamental role in decision making (Keshavarz, 2015).

In this light, when working with marginalized communities, a democratic and just process of design is not always reached. Some voices tend to have more influence than others, and sadly the voices that end up having less influence in the project are the same voices that have less power in society and that are more affected by social oppression and by the conditions designers claim they are trying to change (these voices are human voices but the oppression can also be towards the environment and other non-human beings). This means that even when participatory and social design proclaims to include in the process the communities they are designing for, it still exists a vertical relationship between the "expert designers" hired by an institution with power and the individuals of the community (Figure 1). This vertical relationship needs to be changed for two main reasons: firstly, the marginalized communities do not have the leadership and enough control in the projects that are designed for and with them. Secondly, the knowledge and practices of the communities involved cannot determine the end result but in a very superficial way, because methods, goals, and expectations following the mainstream definition and theory of design practice are imposed on them. This imposition can be considered a form of colonization in design by which the dominant way of doing and thinking is forced on a community affecting the research and design practices. This type of colonization ends up reaffirming the power of the dominant groups mentioned at the beginning of this introduction and oppressing the already marginalized.

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Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

introduction (continued): space for images

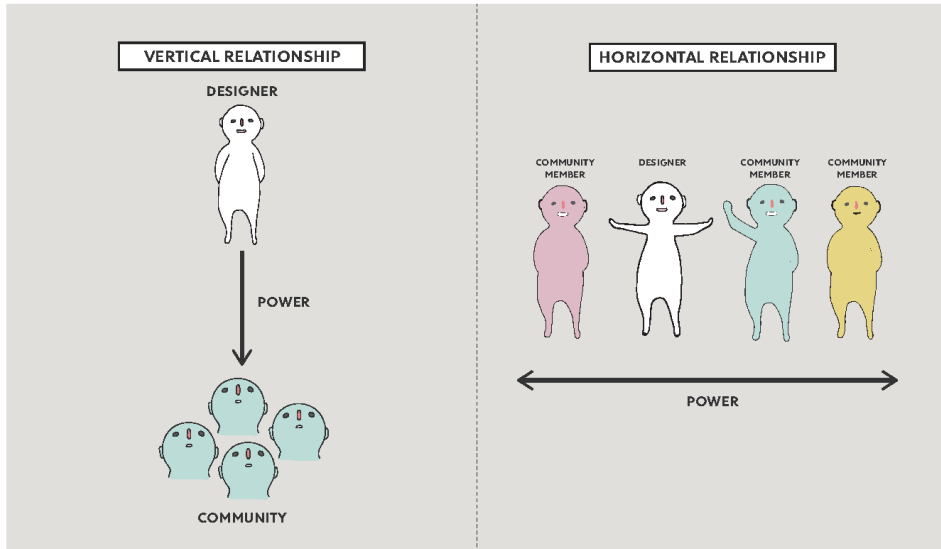


image / figure 1: Vertical and horizontal relationship in participatory design processes

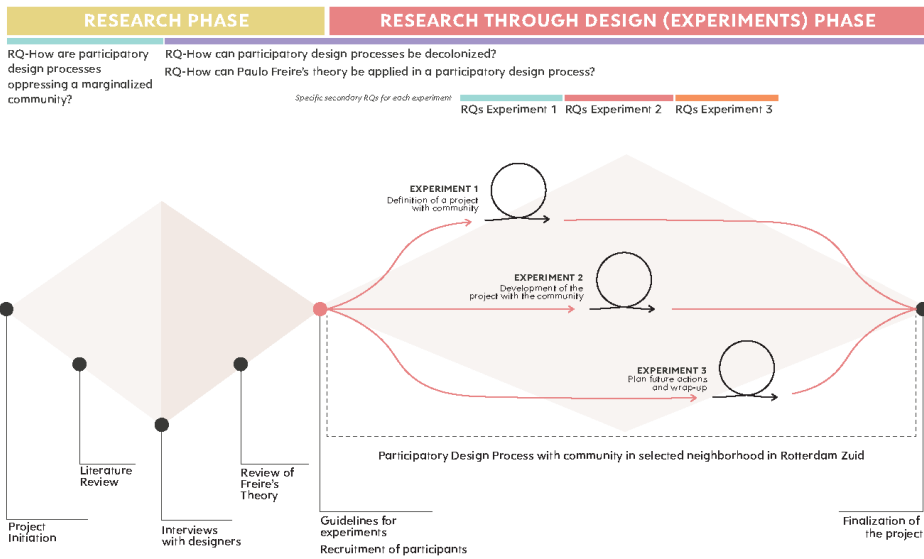


image / figure 2: Project Approach (referenced in the "planning and approach" section)

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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.

This project will focus on the power relationship between the designer and the community when developing participatory design processes. The project aims to decolonize* these processes looking for a more inclusive and democratic practice when working with marginalized communities and will propose interventions that look for the community control and ownership of the design process and its outcomes. Instead of having a vertical relationship between the designer and the community members, this project will look for strategies to create a horizontal relationship where power is distributed to all the participants of the project (Figure 1). To develop this horizontal relationship, the project will examine the education theory of Paulo Freire and apply it to the social design practice. For example, in his work, Freire develops different strategies to position the teacher (the designer) at the same level as the students (the participants) creating a space where everybody teaches and everybody learns (Freire, 1970). In this way, any type of power hierarchy is abolished and everyone's voice has the same influence in the creation of a project. This framework will then be tested in a neighborhood in Rotterdam Zuid, where the majority of inhabitants is composed of immigrant families. Rotterdam Zuid generally deals with a low social index compared to the rest of the city and this means that the neighborhood has low levels in indicators like basic human needs, well-being, and opportunities to progress. This graduation project will elaborate upon and benefit from previous participatory design projects done by the Participatory City Making Lab (PCM) with marginalized communities, among others in Afrikaanderwijk, Rotterdam and Schilderswijk, the Hague (Mulder, Pucci and Havenaar, 2018)

*In this context, decolonizing design refers to the recognition that the practice of design can be a form of oppression and colonization and it proposes new ways of doing design outside the the margins of mainstream discourse (Ansari, 2018).

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.

The assignment for this project is to develop a participatory design process that aims to be more democratic, and socially just when working with marginalized communities. The exploration has to be done by extrapolating principles from Freire's theory on pedagogy that should be translated to the design practice and tested in a real-world case scenario.

The main research questions for this assignment then are the following:

RQ1: How are participatory design processes oppressing a marginalized community?

RQ2: How can participatory design processes be decolonized?

With the sub RQ2': How can Paulo Freire's theory be applied in a participatory design process?

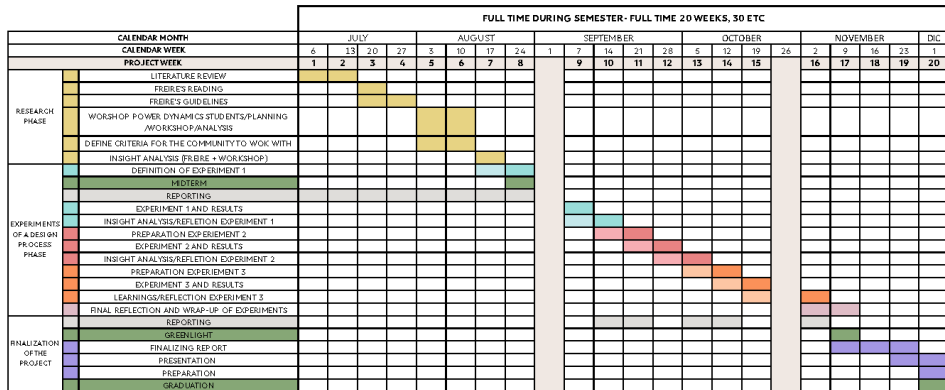


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PLANNING AND APPROACH **

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 6 - 7 - 2020 end date 4 - 12 - 2020



As shown in Figure 2, this project will be developed in a double diamond process. In the first diamond, called the research phase, I will do a first literature review and semi-structured interviews with design students to answer the research question: How are participatory design processes being oppressive with marginalized communities? After this, I will go more in-depth on Freire's theory answering the research questions of: How can design processes be decolonized? and How can Freire's theory be applied to participatory design processes? This first phase ends by extrapolating the guidelines that will inform the set-up for the second phase and also ends with the recruitment of the participants to work with in Rotterdam Zuid.

In the second diamond, a Research through Design Approach will be taken. In this phase, I will investigate which of the principles and practices from Freire's theory found earlier can be relevant in the social design context. For this, I plan to develop a participatory design process through 3 iterations called experiments in Figure 2.

Through the iterations, I will find how the principles extrapolated in the first diamond are relevant for the practice of design and more specifically for participatory design practitioners that are looking for a more democratic and just approach when working with marginalized communities. To be able to analyze and reflect on how the practices are applied in a real case, a relevant project that builds engagement will be defined with the community of Rotterdam Zuid in experiment 1, leaving space for developing the project, establishing a plan of action, and concluding it in experiments 2 and 3.

As shown in the Gantt chart, the research phase (in yellow) will take 7 weeks. After that, in week 8 the midterm meeting is planned and also the first experiment has to be defined. From there, every experiment takes 3 weeks (blue, red and orange) till the green light that is planned for the beginning of week 17 leaving the last four weeks for the finalization of the project and the graduation ceremony for the first week of December. Two breaks are also considered in the project, one in the week after the midterm meeting and the other one in the last week of October.

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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.

I believe design can have the ability to transform the values we have into tangible and concrete experiences. In this way, design is quite a good manifestation of what we are and what we believe in. However, during this master and even in my work experience before that, I also noticed that even if design mediates so much in our realities and has such a big impact on our lives, it does not reflect everyone's views. I realized that many times we designers choose how people's lives should be defined and developed. And the worst part of it, is that many times we don't even take into account the people that is getting more affected by design decisions by perpetuating and reproducing mechanisms of inequalities.

I see this project as my attempt to try something different. The opportunity to be critical and aware of how we designers work and the consequences that our profession implies. I don't want to feel that, by doing what I do with my profession, I take away the right of others to define themselves and their life projects. On the contrary, I would like to support others in their self-determination so we can reach collective change. And for this, I need to start "small". I need to start by understanding how we as designer relate to others and how this relationships affect the outcome and the systems we make part of.

The goals and skills I want to achieve in this project are: 1. Design Research competences, 2. Reflective and critical attitude to my work and profession, 3. Be able to present in a coherent and professional way the outcomes of a design research, 4. Explore the impact of design processes in the social justice field.

References:

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- Escobar, A. (2018). Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds. Duke University Press.
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- Vink, J., Rodrigues, V., and Wetter-Edman, K. (2017). Designing Good(s)? Exploring the Politics of Social Design Processes. Design Management Academy Conference, Hong Kong, 3, 961-977.

FINAL COMMENTS

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

APPENDIX B

Matrix of domination

Chapter 2 - Section 2.1.1

The matrix of domination “is a conceptual model that helps us think about how power, oppression, resistance, privilege, penalties, benefits, and harms are systematically distributed” (Costanza-Chock, 2020, p. 20). According to this theory, every individual receives benefits and harms at the same time based on their location in the matrix. In this model, the identities that usually have privileges in the system are the ones in the green section of the circle. In the other hand, the identities that experience oppression are in the pink side.

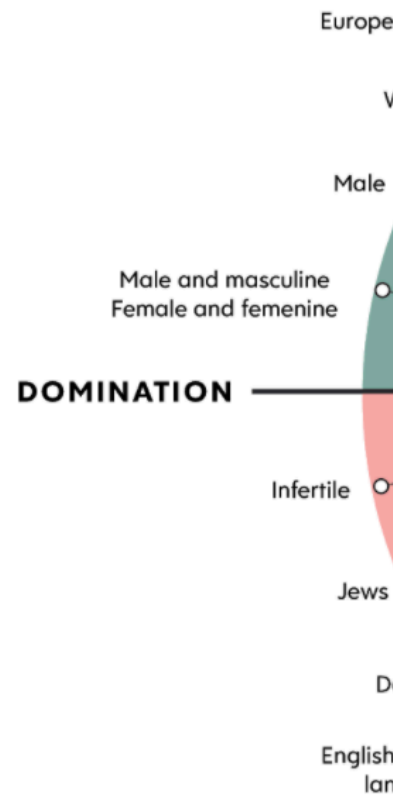
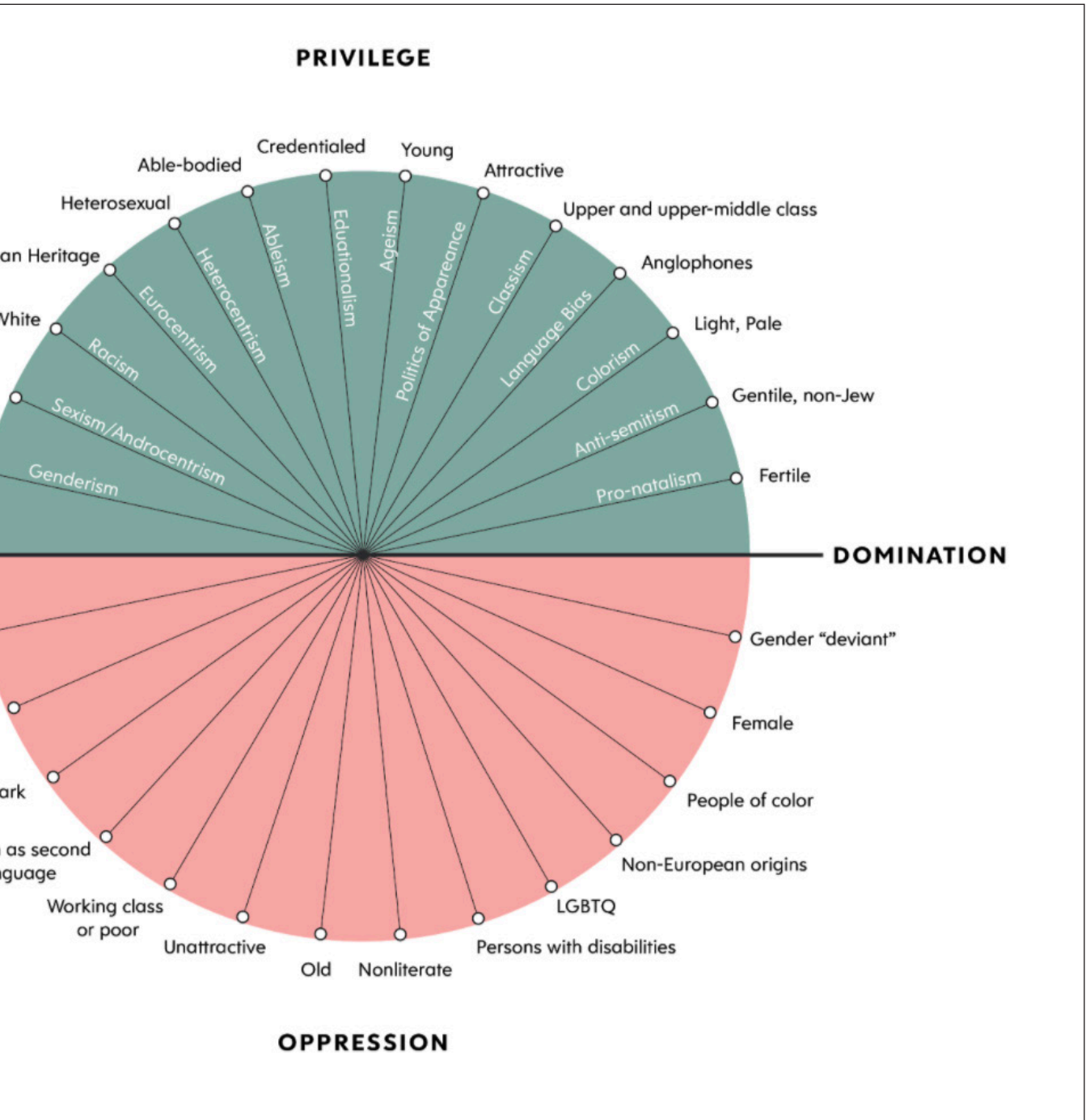


Figure 1: The matrix of domination.
Adapted from: Erete et al., 2018.



APPENDIX C

Interviews with design practitioners. Procedure and analysis

Chapter 2 - Section 2.1.2

This section of the appendix describes more in detail the interviews carried out with students, mentioned in Chapter 2 in the report. More specifically, the structure and procedure of the interviews is explained together with the analysis procedure of the data gathered showing one interview as an example.

Procedure

The interviews started by asking the participants some questions about the general meaning of power and their own experience with it (Figure 4). Some of the questions in this section were:

What does power mean to you?

When was the last time you felt powerful?

When was the last time you felt powerless?¹

After this first part of the session, participants were asked to recall a project where they worked in a participatory design process with a marginalized community. They named the main stakeholders of the project to identify then who participated in the design process, who benefited from the design, and who they thought was harmed or experienced a negative outcome with the design. For the last part of the interview, a model was developed based and modified on an analysis of community participation made by Costanza-Chock (2020, p. 91). In the model (Figure 6), the X-axis represents all the steps of the design process based on the five phases model, including also the first phase of the set-up and the last phase of continuation of the project. The Y-axis represented the level of participation of the less privileged participants based on the ladder of participation developed by Arnstein (1969) being Inform the lower level and supporting community initiatives the highest. In the interview, participants were asked to mark the level of participation of the

1. The questions about the general idea of power were inspired and borrowed from the article written by George Aye, "Design Education's Big Gap: Understanding the Role of Power" that can be found on <https://medium.com/greater-good-studio/design-educations-big-gap-understanding-the-role-of-power-1ee1756b7f08>

SECTION	PU
1	Sensitize par concepts of p and what th
2	Recall a pro stakeholders th project. Who harmed. Who h proj
3	Identify the lev the communit process based par
4	Identify good p lessons learned the marginalize th

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEWS		
PURPOSE	EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTED
Participants about the power and oppression they meant for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What does power mean to you? - What is the best thing about having power? - When was the last time you gave power away? -When was the last time you felt powerless? 	Ideas, thoughts and quotes wrote on digital post-its
Project, identify the stakeholders that participated in the design process, who was benefited, who was harmed, who had more power in the design process and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write down the stakeholders of your project - Who participated in the design process? Who was harmed, who benefited? - Who do you think had more power and why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideas, thoughts and quotes wrote on digital post-its - Venn diagram with the stakeholders that participated in the design project, who was benefitted and who was harmed
Level of participation of the community in every phase of the project on Arstein's ladder of participation	Value the level of participation of the community in every phase of the project	- A curve of participation
Practices, strategies and methods to give more power to the community and communities during the design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Do you think the community had enough power during the process - How could you have give the community more power and control? - How do you think the project might have been different if the community had more power? 	Ideas, thoughts and quotes wrote on digital post-its

Figure 2: Summary of the activities done during the interviews. The table shows the different sections of the interviews, the purpose, some examples of the questions and finally the type of data collected for the analysis.

1. What does power mean to you?

2. What do you like about having power?

3. What is the worst thing about not having power?

4. When was the last time you gave away power?

5. When was the last time you took power away from someone?

6. In what situation do you don't trust yourself with a lot of power?

7. When was the last time you felt powerful?

8. When was the last time you felt powerless?

9. How do you think power manifests in design projects?

less privileged members in the project to reflect later how that was related to the notion of power.

Finally, some last questions were asked to reflect on better practices and how to balance power in the PD processes. Some of these questions were: Do you think the community had enough power during the process?, How do you think the project might have been different if the community had more power? And What would you do differently in the process to give more power to the community?

A table that summarizes what was done in the interviews can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 3: The supporting material for the four sections in the interviews before using them.

1. Can you recall your last design project with a marginalized community?

2. Write down the main stakeholders of your project

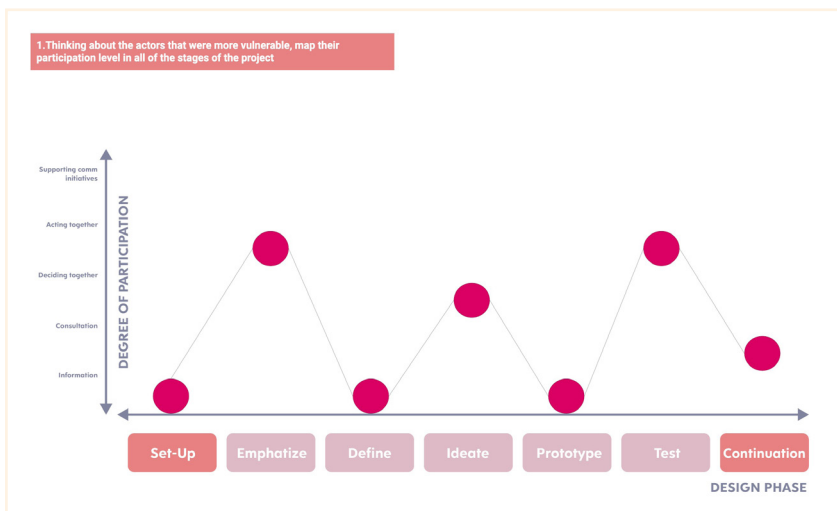
3. How was power manifested during the project?

4. Who do you think had the most power and why?

Who participated in the DP?

Who was harmed from the design?

Who benefited from the design?

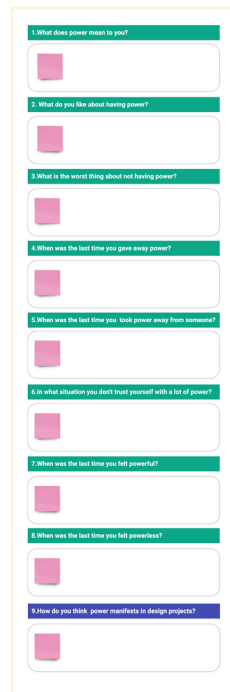


2. Do you think the community had enough power during the process?

3. How could you have give the community more power and control?

4. How do you think the project might have been different if the community had more power?

5. Lessons learned



1. What does power mean to you?

being in control having authority over others or your surroundings money/ means to do things influence role model energy physical power

2. What do you like about having power?

you feel in control autonomy about your life I dont like power over others

3. What is the worst thing about not having power?

situation when your friend is depressed but you do know how to help or you can't be sure you don't have the means to do it you can't do something

4. When was the last time you gave away power?

someone is the host of a meeting give someone else more rights and control my boyfriend decided where to eat also during sex

5. When was the last time you took power away from someone?

intent to moderate meetings, you take power because you decide what way to go what topics to talk about playing playstation and take the control (you are not doing this right)

6. In what situation you don't trust yourself with a lot of power?

in situations when I am uninformed taking a decision and then you are not inform impact on others if it could affects other people negatively with a bag of chips next to you

7. When was the last time you felt powerful?

making decisions that influence others, choosing a roommate. You have the control to choose find a spider and you decide to leave it you feel like God.

8. When was the last time you felt powerless?

When I know other people suffering or I shared with corona affected places and you can't help them situations happen there yourself. You can not change the overall situation. You have not control on corona how other behave for a common good not being able to open April 2020 when you physically care. You are not capable and you can't understand what you want to do asking for help

9. How do you think power manifests in design projects?

design has to do with power because trying to accept them all nudge no matter what you design interactions that influence identifying stakeholders not involving stakeholders asking the right questions

know the context get the right answers be in the context, live in there, observation methods.

Figure 4: First section where the general idea of power is explored.

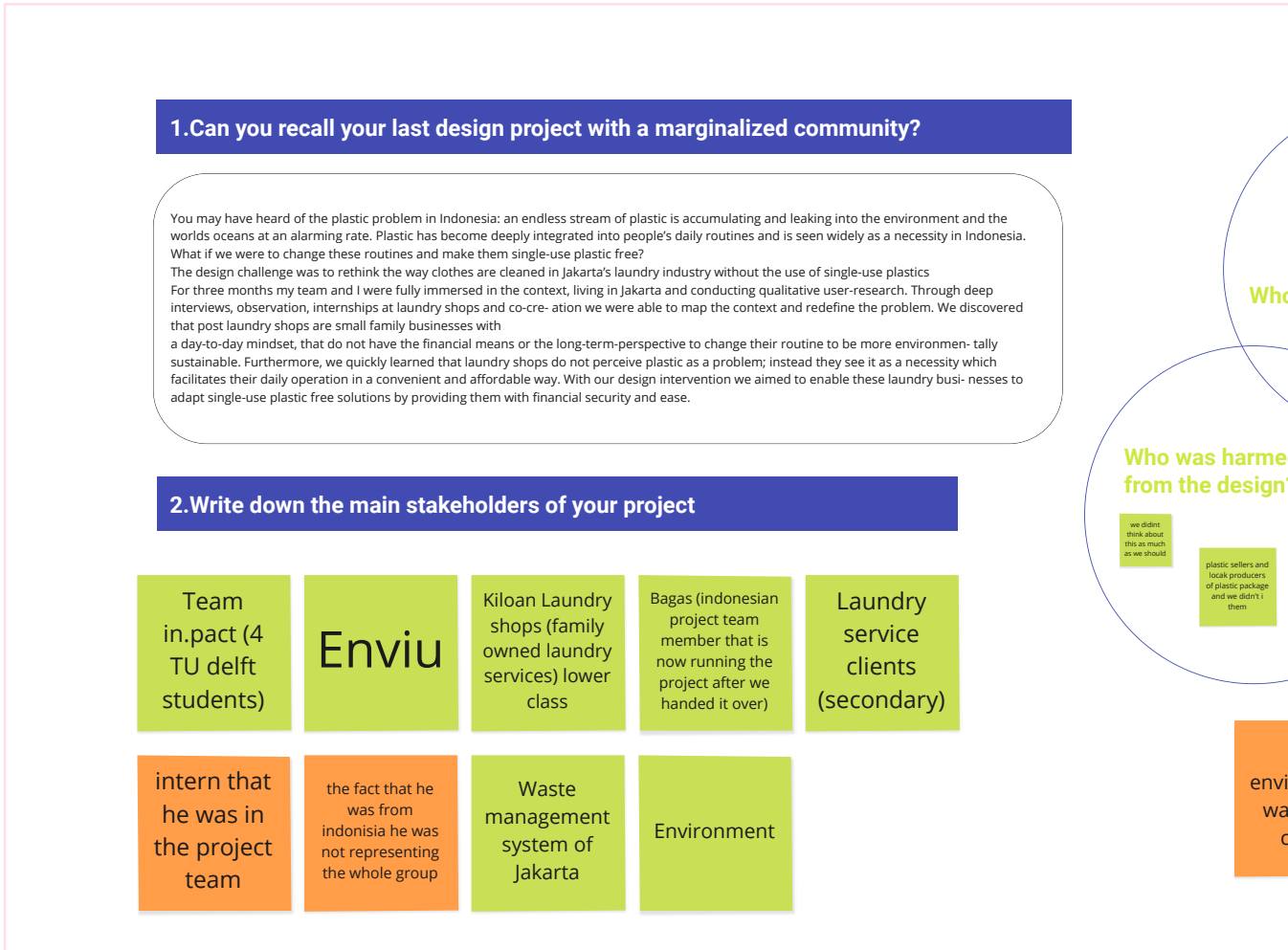
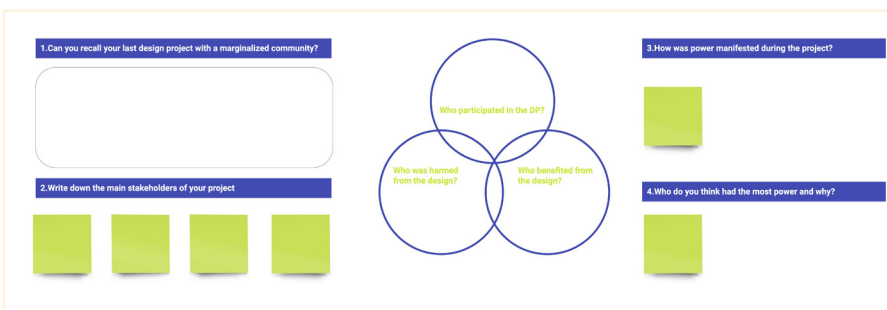
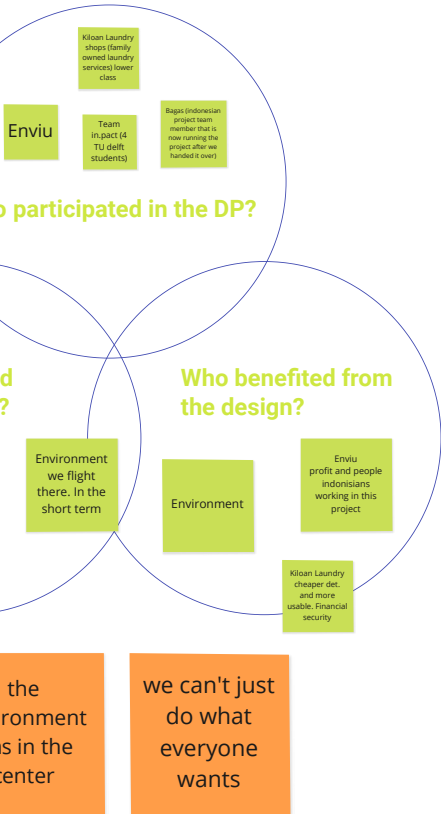


Figure 5: Section 2 of the interviews where the participants were asked to recall a project and reflect on them with the lens of power dynamics





3. How was power manifested during the project?

we had a lot of power

time is esensial

"Bule" white stranger

they wouldn;t say no to us

4. Who do you think had the most power and why?

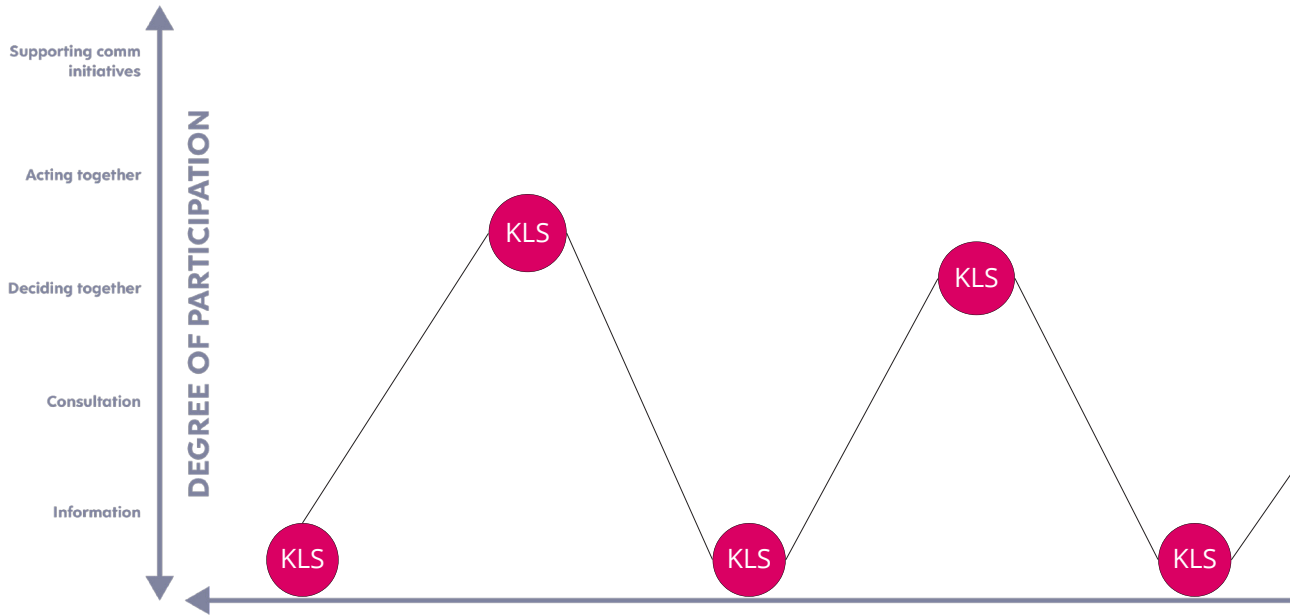
we made big decisions. Decide which direction to go in

We just involved Enviu

we had two main directions

he wanted the other direction and we had our own goals we neded to decide and be done with the time left

1. Thinking about the actors that were more affected by the design, map their participation level in all of the stages of the project



Set-Up

we set-up the project with Enviu and we explored the problem

Emphatize

we talked to them to find about the context

being informed by them

Define

we didn't involve them

logistics

because they didn't see plastic as a problem

hard to make them come together

Ideate

this one was cool

pictures

drawings

base to communicate

Prototype

I wish it could be high

we were using prototypes to ideate

final design we didn't involve them

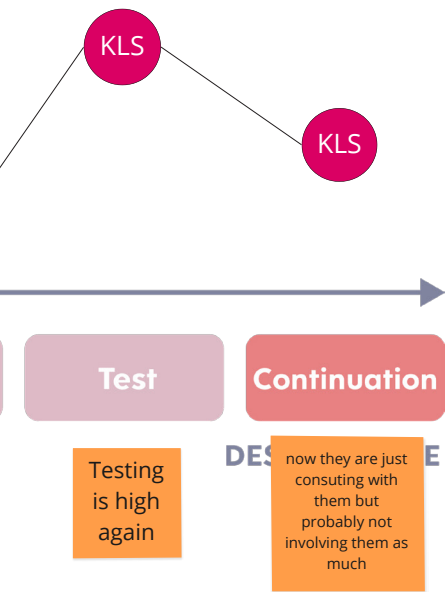


Figure 6: The model to represent the level of participation of the community in the different stages of a project

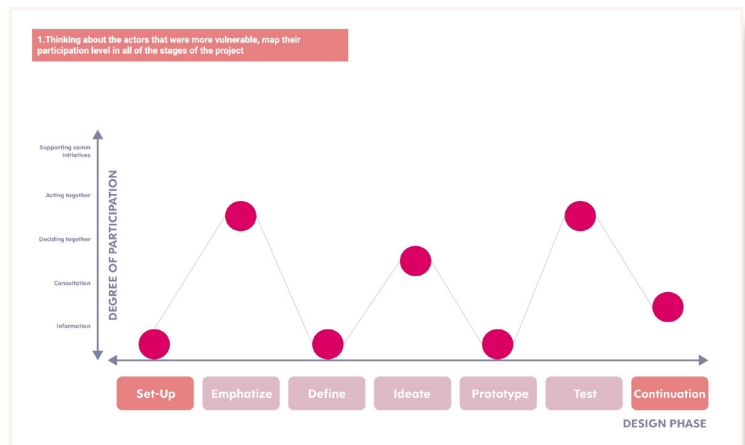




Figure 7: Last section where participants reflected about good practices and lessons learnt.

2. Do you think the community had enough power during the process?

means to an end

the goal was the environment

it would have been nice to know how to give them more power

enviu hired one of them to give them more power

goal of the environment

3. How could you have give the community more power and control?

4 white girls but it would have been nicer to involve them in the team a

community finding the alternatives to this

we dont know what would happen if we were not who we are

they woould not tell us to go

white strager negative and positive

nor comfortable talking to us. Associated us with something

4. How do you think the project might have been different if the community had more power?

maybe he main focus would have shifted

the goal would have been different

scared to hand control because we had our own goal with environment

more engagement

both goals satisfied

but time was a problem

5. Lessons learned

a lot of power dynamics are in the communication. The language barrier was a big thing

it is fundamental to critically reflect own your own involvement and goals

racism

solve a problem that has so many requirements power and justice is not on the list, adding more things will make the project imposiible

in the perfect world it will be like that

prioritize goals

Analysis

After all the interviews were conducted, all the qualitative data (quotes, anecdotes, notes, etc) were interpreted and analyzed with a digital adaptation of the on-the-wall method (Sanders & Stappers, 2012) using the same online platform Miro. The insights were categorized in different clusters giving valuable information about power, how it manifests in design processes, and what could be good practices to horizontalize relations and balance power dynamics. An image of the digital on-the-wall analysis is shown in the next pages, Figures 8 and 9.

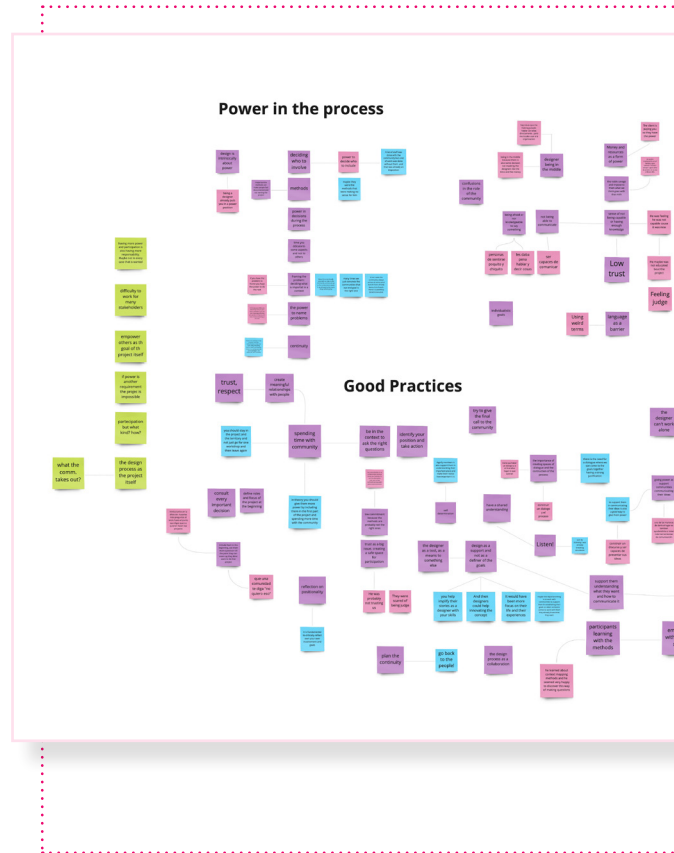
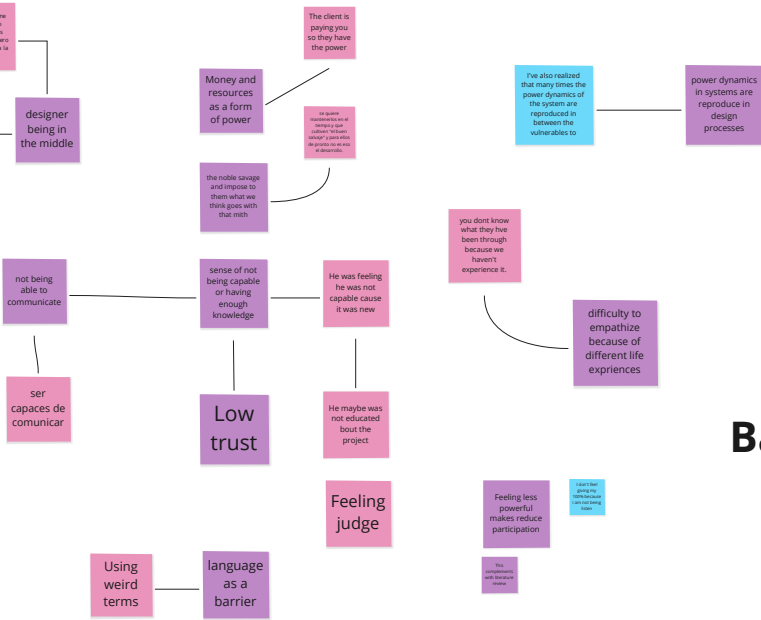
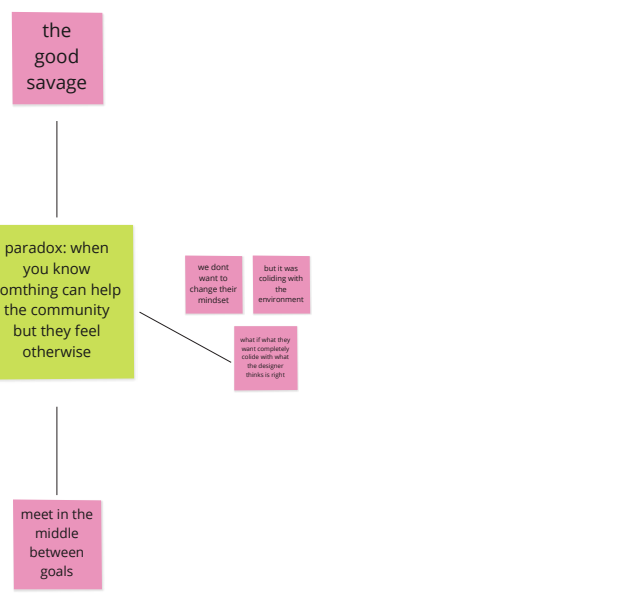
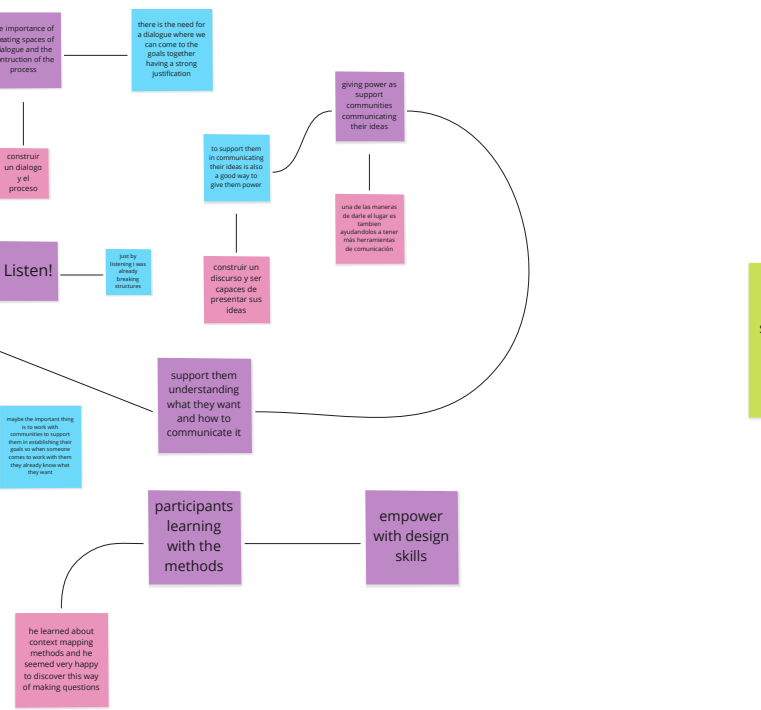
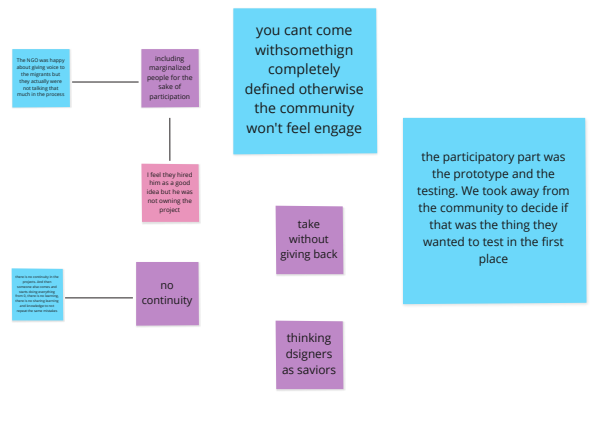


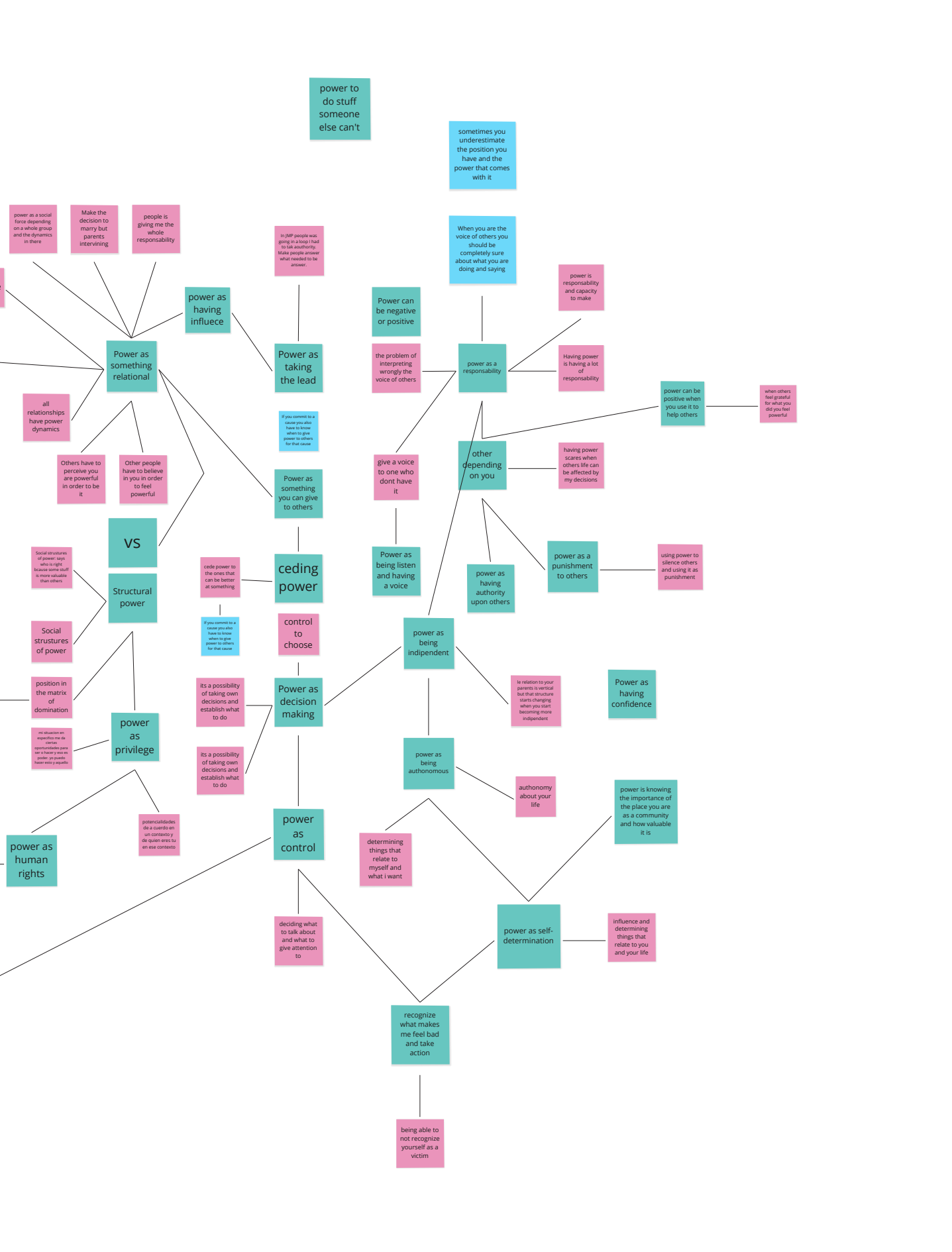
Figure 8: Analsis on the wall with the clusters found.

Challenges



Bad practices





APPENDIX D

Freirian concepts in detail

Chapter 2 - Section 2.2.3

His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this they have to be partners with the students. For the role of student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation (Freire, 2000, p. 75).

Co-Learning (teacher-students, students-teachers)

One of the most important aspects of problem-posing education is the relationship developed between students and the teacher. In this method, by establishing a non-hierarchical relationship, students are empowered by receiving advice and support but in a non-directive way (Campbell and MacPhail 2002). In the education that seeks for liberation, there is no complete knowledge possessed by the teacher. In Freire's words: "the teacher must know that both learning and teaching are in a contradictory dialectical process, in which the better one learns, the better one can teach, and the more one teaches, the more it is possible to learn" (Freire in Freire et al, 1985, p.9). This notion means that Problem-Posing education promotes spaces where all participants (teachers and students) can learn equally during the process of co-constructing knowledge, becoming responsible for a process in which all grow. The situation does not mean that the teacher does not have previous knowledge or cannot propose any topic to the students but it means that the educator cannot impose any view or choices without consultation and reflection with the students.

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

In PD processes this concept could inspire to foster democratic activities of mutual learning and collaborative work that can bring to community-led solutions that are not determined from a top-down approach. As it was also mentioned in the analysis of the interviews, tailoring the process and adjusting the methods used seems to go in line with Freire's propositions. Participants should be able to discuss the methods and adapt them based on their own needs, desires, and capabilities. When getting in contact with the community, the designer needs to have an open mind and a sense of incompleteness (Freire, 2000) to be able to engage with participants and have the complete trust of entering a space of learning from others and not "teaching" as an expert.

Dialogue

Related to the concept of co-learning, Freire specifies that cognition is impossible without dialogical relations (Freire, 2000). According to the philosopher, for students to be co-learners in the process, all the actors involved have to engage in a process of dialogue. In the learning space there can't just be one person talking (as what happens in the banking model), but all the actors have the right to speak. In PO, Freire explains that there are some preconditions to enter dialogue. In the first place, Freire talks about love for the world and humanity. The second precondition for dialogue is humility which means respecting the experience, the knowledge, and the expectations of others (Freire, 1985). Faith is the next requirement for dialogue which means believing in the power of people to intervene in the world before even meeting them. This type of power relates to the concept of "power to", as the inherent capacity and ability of all beings to intervene in the world. The next precondition is hope; because it is just with hope that the dialoguers can continue working as they expect something coming out of their efforts (Freire, 2000). Finally, a true dialogue is impossible without people engaging in critical thinking (for a visual summary of the concept of dialogue and its preconditions, see figure 10).

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

Dialogue (with its preconditions) is the way to create trust between participants (Freire, 2000). As was mentioned in the interviews, the lack of trust can be a problem when engaging communities in participatory design practices. One good strategy discussed with the interviewees suggested that spending time with people could be a good practice to develop trust. In this case, Freire's theory adds one more strategy, as dialogue creates a horizontal relationship between social actors. Looking for spaces of dialogue seems crucial to build trust and power-balanced relationships. In addition, as one of the preconditions of dialogue is faith on the capacity of the people to change reality before even meeting them. This concept could be interesting for the design practice as it presupposes an attitude of humility from the designers who, because their trust in the community and their creative power, have the capability to value others' knowledge even when different from theirs.

Because dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation. (Freire, 2000, p.89)

Men and women who lack humility (or have lost it) cannot come to the people, cannot be their partners in naming the world. Someone who cannot acknowledge himself to be as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he can reach the point of encounter (Freire, 2000. 90)

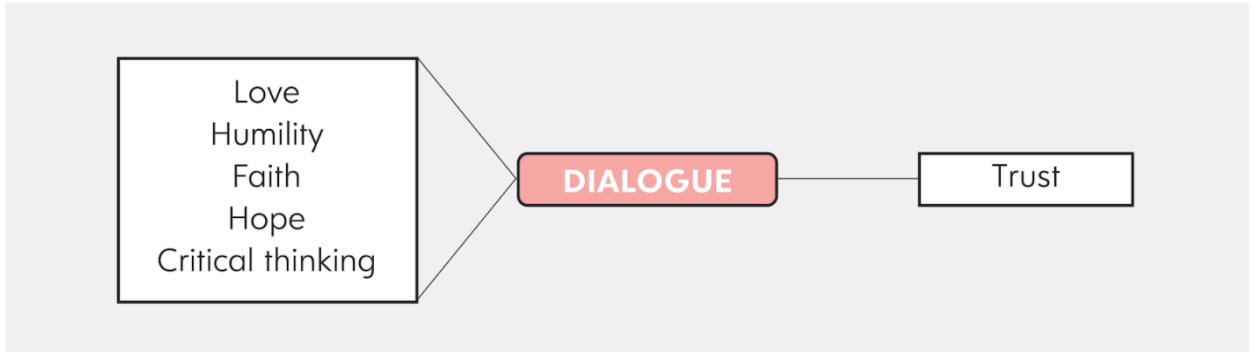


Figure10: Dialogue with its preconditions and the result: Trust

Critical Reflection: examination of ourselves and our reality

Most scholars seem to agree that critical reflection in Freire refers to examining everyday realities and to analyze the relationships between individuals in their contexts and structural oppression (Jemal, 2017). For Freire (2000, p. 86), “not oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question: Why?” and this means to think about underlying structures that determine many of our experiences in our specific contexts. Ultimately, critical reflection requires participants that can discuss the status quo in their socio-cultural context and question the power dynamics surrounding their social identities (Jemal, 2017).

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

Critical Reflection can be related to some of the research done about oppression in the previous chapters of this report. As was noticed, oppression is a situated experience depending on the position of social actors in the matrix of domination and can be experienced in three different levels (personal, community, and systemic). Under this principle, a PD process inspired by Freire should look for critical reflection and the possibilities to ask ourselves the question “Why?”. By analyzing the contexts and promoting a deep understanding of its situations, all the actors involved can see the complexity of reality and start proposing solutions and ideas that question the status quo.

From individuality to collectivity

For Freire, critical reflection becomes the vehicle for the development of critical consciousness among people. For the philosopher, it is necessary to realize one's power to then be able to engage in collective action for the transformation of the oppressive reality. That is to say, that after acknowledging one's situated experience of oppression and understanding the interdependence we have with others, we can develop a sense of belonging and a collective voice.

“While no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others,” (Freire, 2000, p.66)

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

When not just the members of the community but also the designer can think about the project as a collective effort, it is easy to see the designer as an actor that supports the process, rather than the person that individually leads it. A PD process inspired by Freire would probably look for strategies to value everyone's skills and knowledge and see how they can be implemented in the project as a common effort.

Meaningful thematics from the context

For Freire, the starting point for the whole pedagogy program is the thematic research done by reflecting on the daily life of individuals in their context. After the research, the teacher can use explanatory examples and information from the students' lived experiences to continue the process and propose solutions to the problems. In a critical pedagogy framework, students are empowered to shape the course of their own education towards addressing themes that affect them the most in their daily life. This means that students can determine the projects that they want to work on by engaging in discussions, brainstorming, and feedback (Noel et al. 2019).

“The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (Freire, 2000, p.95)

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

In chapter 3 was already discussed the necessity to frame the problem with the community as one efficient way to balance power.

“Is an overcoming I feel that the beginning of an educational practice must be the understanding of the world that the learner has or has had, and not the world-view and the knowledge system of the educator” (Freire in Freire et al, 1985, p.8)

With Freire, by prioritizing the community context and life experiences, the designer gives the possibility to the community to take the lead in determining the situations they want to work with and frame the problem based on their understanding and experience in the context.

Solving problems as a challenge

“We must pose this existential, concrete, present situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response—not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action”. (Freire,2000, p.95)

Paulo Freire affirms that problem-posing education must be challenging. Students will feel challenged when they are posed with problems relating to themselves and their context. “Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed” (Freire,2000, p. 81). In PO, the teacher is not assigned the task to give answers to the student’s problems. Instead, educators have the duty to challenge participants to explore the problems and the situations and create themselves solutions for it. In this way, students identify the “limit-situations” that oppressed them and then, imagine the possibility of new makings or what Freire calls “untested feasibilities” (see Figure 11)

“This struggle is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed. [...] In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. “

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

A PD process inspired by Freire gives importance not only to the understanding of reality but also to find solutions that can be translated to actionable plans never tried before. In accordance with the idea of praxis, according to Freire the reality can be changed just by the continuous cycle of reflection and action (praxis).

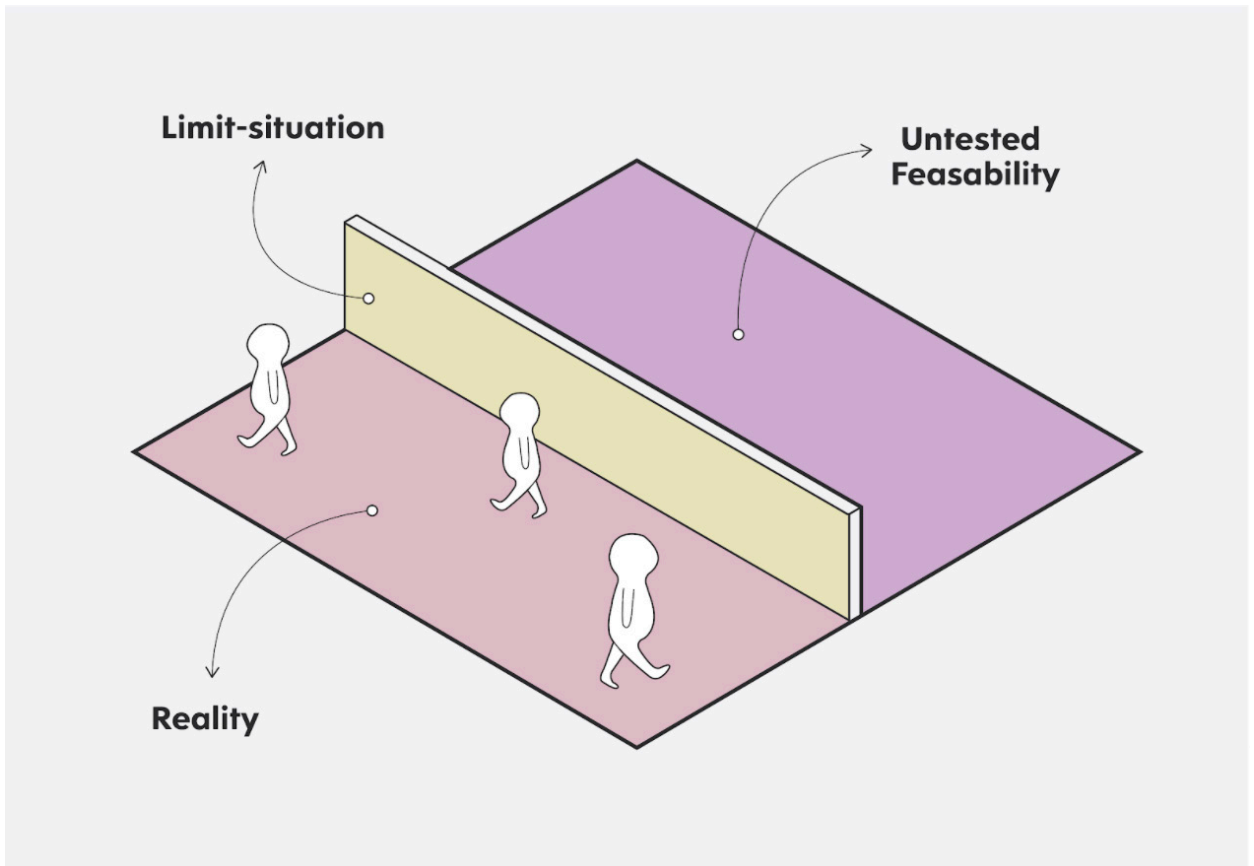
Liberation comes from the oppressed

One of the most interesting concepts in PO is that liberation from oppressive systems comes from the oppressed and not from the oppressors. In fact, the oppressed, in an act of love opposed to violence are the only ones that liberate both social actors from the oppressive system. Not to become themselves the new oppressors but to restore the balance in the relationship building a new identity outside the binary oppressor-oppressed.

The contribution of this concept to the alternative understanding of a decolonial PD process:

By understanding that the project should envision social change and as a consequence the liberation from the oppressive structures of power, the community involved in the process is empowered to change those structures. In this way, by reflecting and acting, the members of the community should be able to liberate themselves from the system but also liberate the designers as they also make part of those same structures.

Figure 11: Representation of reality where once individuals find a limited situation they can also see spaces in the untested feasibility.



APPENDIX E

Slides for co-reflection activity

Chapter 3 - Section 3.2

The next images are the slides to support the explanation of the failed activity that was not developed in the context but that was used as material for reflection. In the slides, it can be found the goal and the purpose of the activity, the the main timeline and the relation with Freire's theory. After that, the slides showed what was going to be explained to the participants about the matrix of domination. Finally the presentation showed the axis from which the participants could choose a stamp and an idea of how the poster would look like.



Exploration 1



Goal of the Activity

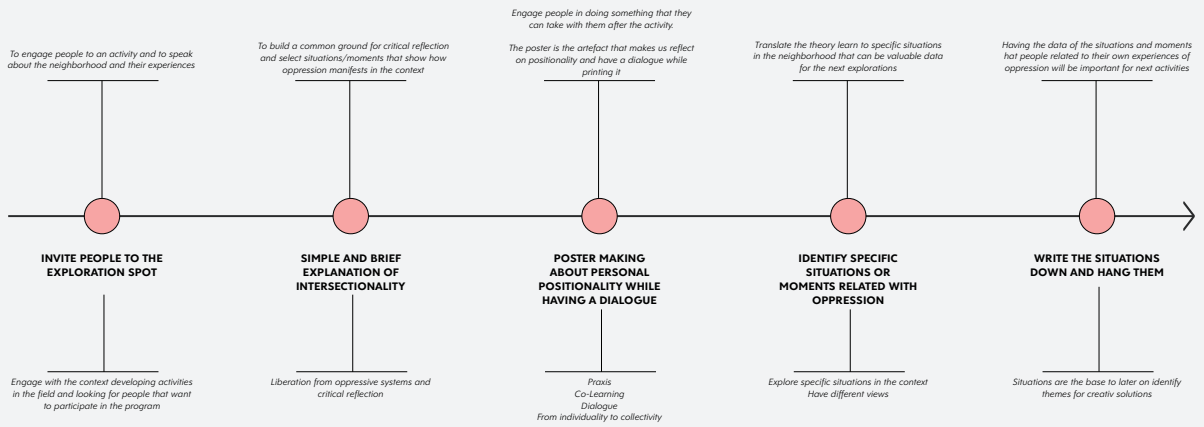
Support participants to become aware of oppressive systems and practices by developing consciousness of their social identity and reflecting on how it shapes their lives in specific situations/ moments in the neighborhood.



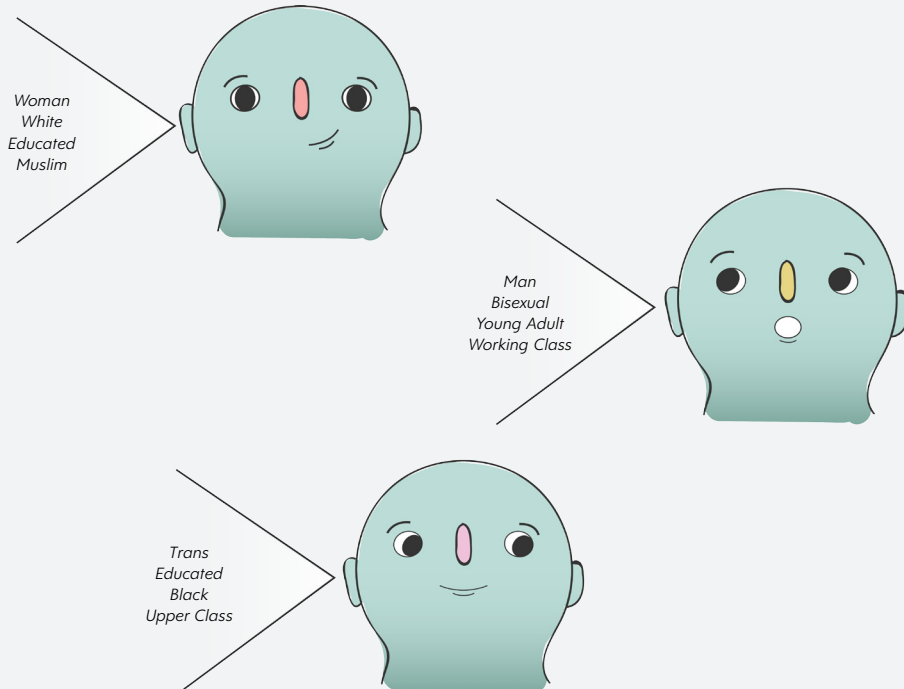
Purpose of the Activity

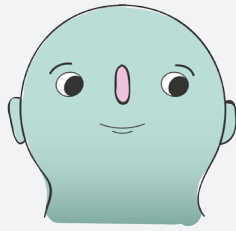
- 1. Have a first approach to the inhabitants of the neighborhood, break the ice from a bottom-up perspective*
- 2. Collect data about situated experiences in the neighborhood*
- 3. Gather volunteers that want to engage in the next activities of the project if possible*

WHY?



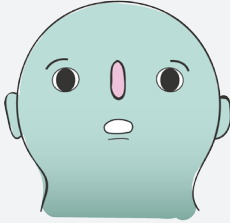
FREIRE PRINCIPLE





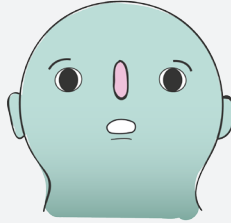
AGENT

DISCRIMINATE



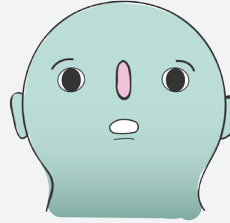
TARGET

OPPRESS



TARGET

MARGINALIZE



TARGET

Adapted from: <https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege>

AGENT



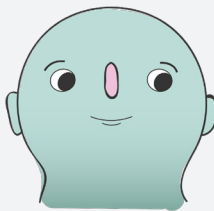
TARGET

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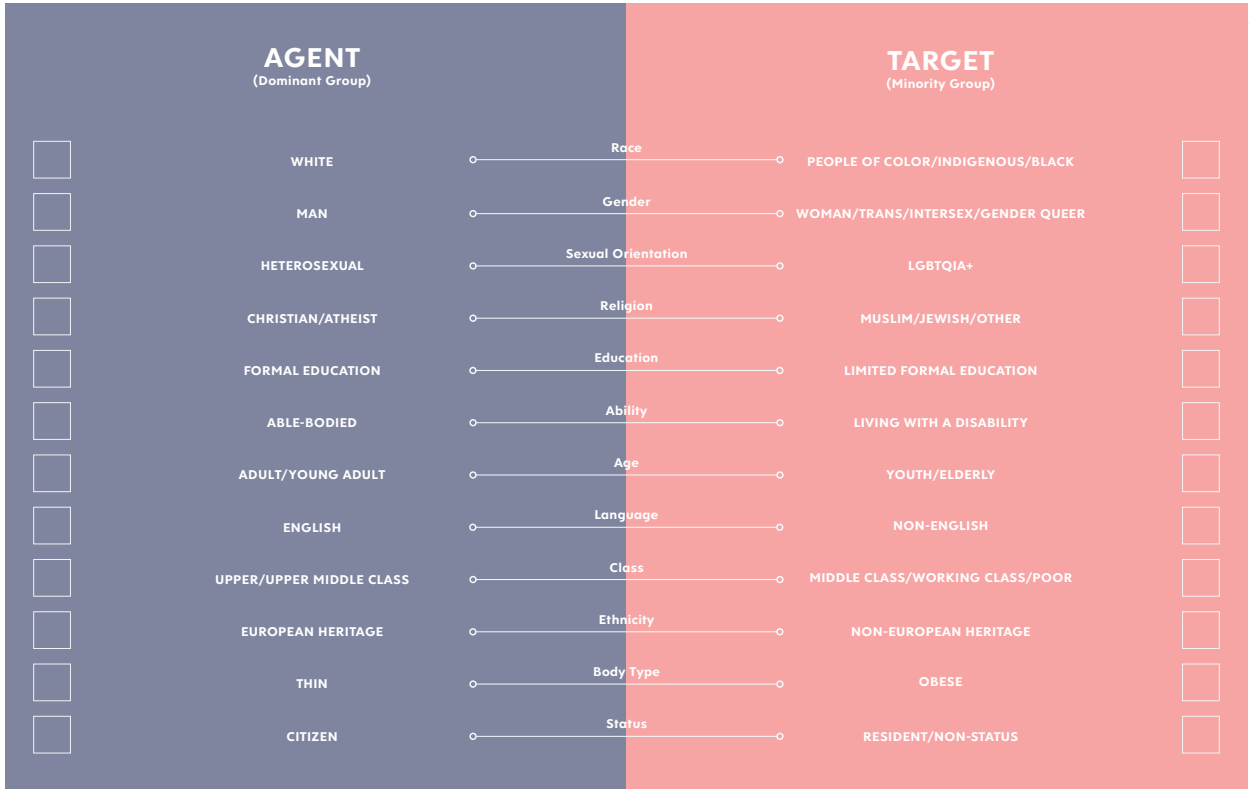
TARGET

AGENT



TARGET

Adapted from: <https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege>



QUESTIONS DURING THE POSTER MAKING

What privilege/discrimination have you experience with this identity?
 What advantage/disvantage have you experience as a result?

CARDS TO FILL AND HANG

I HAVE EXPERIENCE _____ BECAUSE
 OF MY _____ IDENTITY

IN THIS SITUATION IN THE
 NEIGHBORHOOD:

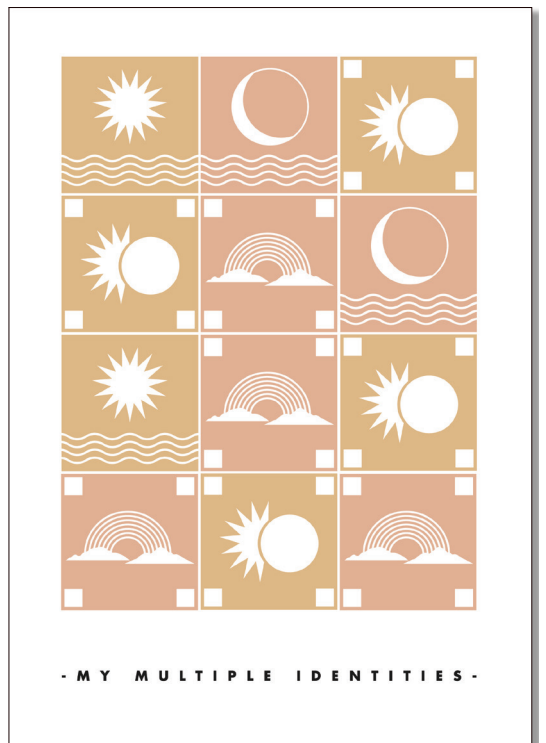
BECAUSE...

REFLECTING ON MY EXPERIENCE I HAVE
 LEARN THAT...

I want to keep in contact and participate in more
 activities like this one!

My name is:

My phone number/email is:



APPENDIX F

Final analysis of the takeaways

Chapter 5 - Section 5.1.1

Figure 12 shows a summary of the findings of each exploration. They are clustered in three different levels. There is the level of “the process” that represents the ways and practices in which as a designer I entered into a power balanced relationship with the community. The second level is the level of the “manifestations’ or the level of “what the process allows to happen” in which I make explicit some situations I experienced or knowledge that can be gained thanks to this new way of entering in relationship with the community. The third level is the level of the “knowledge of the context” in which the content does not depend on the process but just makes explicit the topics and the problems the community is facing and that I discovered thanks to this project and the dialogues I had with the community.

As can be seen in the figure, the explorations from 1 to 5 are mapped with their relevant findings. The Iteration 1 is just included to remember that that activity was framing the designer as a facilitator but the findings are not included here. Those findings were crucial for the new understanding of the process and determined the new approach for the project but they don't show how this new approach can be carried out. Exploration 6 is also not included as it was not necessarily an interaction with the community and the reflections regarding that exploration were related to the impossibility to meet because of the circumstances.

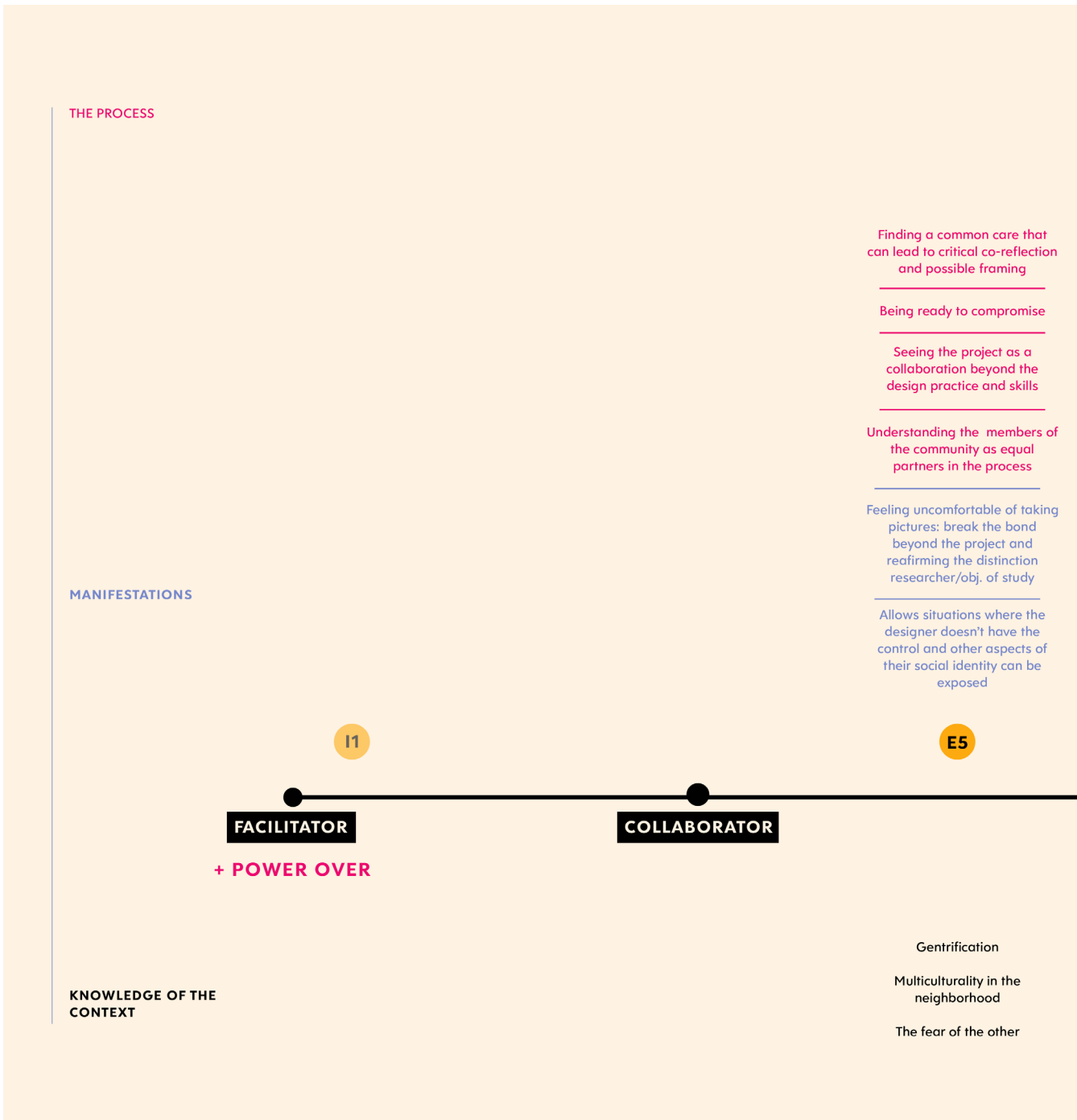


Figure 12: Findings of the explorations gathered in the three different levels

Seeing the process as a collaboration talent based: everyone brings different expertise to the table.

Allowing the community to be the one inviting the designer to participate. Be part of activities framed and developed by the community, their understandings, experiences and values

Allows to engage with people in a more personal and closer level that is not reached between facilitator-participant but just by sharing the same experience

Allows the possibility to see other ways and expressions of participation not conceived by the designer (or design)

Allows the possibility to see how the community frames their own problems and how they perceive their current reality

Allows more desirability and openness for change

Allows to avoid the engagement to be framed by the designer biases and assumptions

E4

Being in the back seat: the process of discovering the context is guided by the community

Adhering to social movements in the context, looking for volunteering opportunities.

Acknowledging and valuing the relationships with the members of the community

Allows switching the roles: the members of the community being the ones who help the designer

Allows participate in private activities of the community that otherwise would not be reached

E3

Identifying moments and situations in daily life in the context that designers could join

Valuing people's stories and personal experiences by giving them the opportunity to show themselves as they want and not mediated by a designer activity

Allows to experience and learn from situations that could not be reached with a workshop or a session prepared by an "outsider"

Allows to encounter new ways of thinking and being in the world that could broaden the understanding of the context

E2

Going without a structure

Avoiding disruptive interventions in the context

Looking for opportunities to engage with people in a natural way

Allows being aware of pre-conceptions and biases

Allows using methods from other fields as an opportunity to avoid biases, labeling, etc

E1

PARTICIPANT

- POWER OVER

Reparation of public gardens in the neighborhood by some of the inhabitants

Aspects of Subaas life: his childhood, the different jobs he had in The Netherlands, his spiritual believes, etc

Gentrification topic

Aspects of the life of some inhabitants in the neighborhood. Some of those themes could be related to topics of oppression and equality even if not framed in that way in that particular moment.

Richness of the context
Main activities
Main places for interactions

APPENDIX G

On the wall analysis for reflective questions

Chapter 6 - Section 6.1.2



Figure 13 shows the analysis on the wall conducted to develop the reflective questions. Some of the findings were used as material for the introduction and the explanation of the process, while others to understand the role of the designer, how to develop power balanced activities, etc.

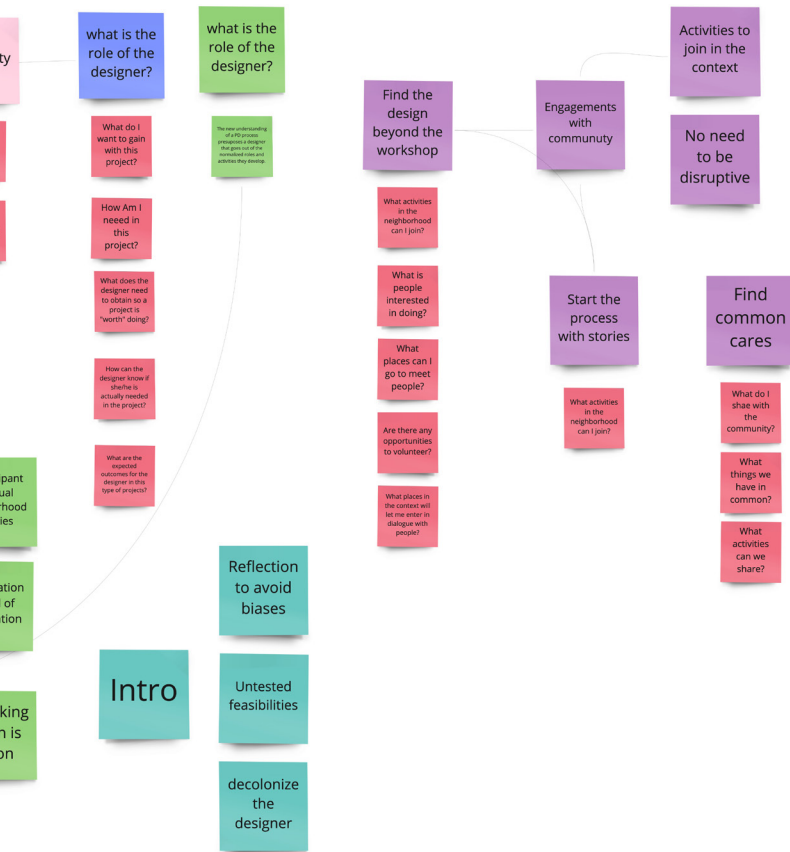


Figure 13: Analysis on the wall with the findings and the questions gathered from them

APPENDIX H

Reflective questions for other designers

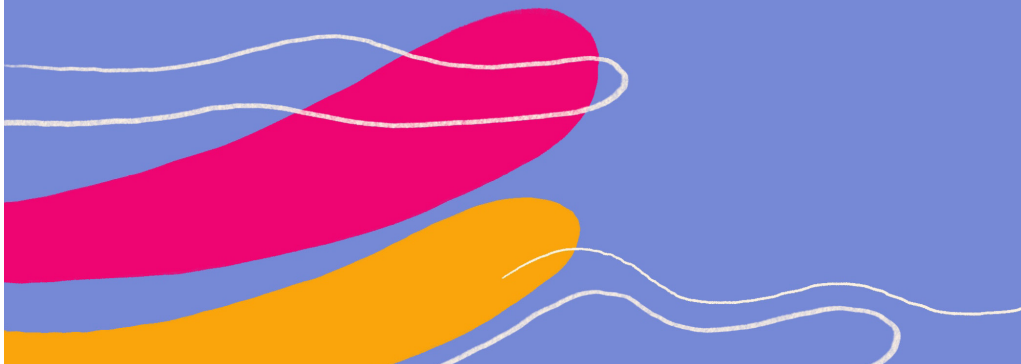
Chapter 6 - Section 6.2

The next images are the ones that make part of the final document of the reflective questions. The document includes an introduction to the topic and the idea of a decolonial PD process. Next the questions are divided into three main groups: (1) How to conceive an alternative understanding of a PD process (2) How to position myself as a designer is this process (3) How to engage with the community.



**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS
FOR A DECOLONIAL PD PROCESS**

CONTENT	INTRODUCTION —————	1
	THE PRE-PROJECT —————	2
	1. CONCEIVING AN ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF A PD PROCESS —————	4
	The call for joining the project Collaboration instead of participation Seeing design as a support for something bigger	
	2. POSITIONING THE DESIGNER IN THE PROJECT —————	8
	My own stand and expectations Defining my role Considering other actors with power	
	3. ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY —————	12
	Knowing the community Looking for dialogue spaces The designer as a participant The designer as a collaborator	
	CONCLUSIONS —————	18



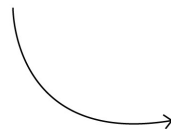
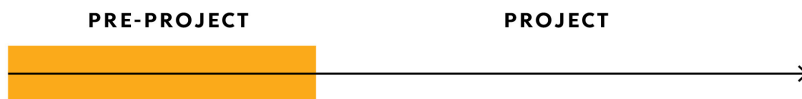
INTRODUCTION

Participatory Design is usually understood as an approach that aspires to include in the design process the people intended to use the outcome. Especially when PD is used to work for societal change, this practice attempts to address inequality issues and intends to have a “positive impact” in our society and the most vulnerable. However, this is not always accomplished especially when engaging different stakeholders in a complex context in which political agendas and power imbalances still play a fundamental role in decision making and the reproduction of oppression. Even so, PD can indeed be a powerful tool to balance power and give voice, agency, and ownership to the marginalized communities we work with. As designers, we can help this purpose by giving attention to the power dynamics in the PD process and especially in the way we engage and build relationships with the members of the community.

These questions are made for design practitioners who are interested in finding new ways of doing PD delinking their role from the normalized practices for a more power-balanced and socially just practice when working with marginlized communities.

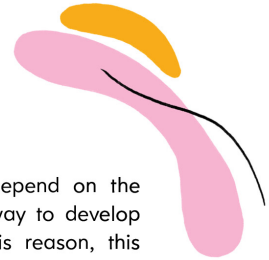
THE PRE-PROJECT

A new understanding of PD suggests that for a power-balanced and democratic project, the structure of the process including the goal, the framing, and the phases among other elements, should be defined with the community in the context. Imposing a project structure without any consultation with the people we are going to work with, can already have power disbalances as many designer's assumptions and biases would be already embedded in it. To build a plan with someone trust and open communication are needed. Taking this into account, building strong relationships with the community based on mutual understanding is a crucial step before the planning of any PD project that aims to contribute to social change. How we enter into a project and engage with a community will determine the dynamics of the rest of the process. So, starting with the right foot will facilitate a more just and democratic next phases.



The questions in this document will focus on the pre-project phase. This means that the questions posed here are going to support you in reflecting on the following levels:

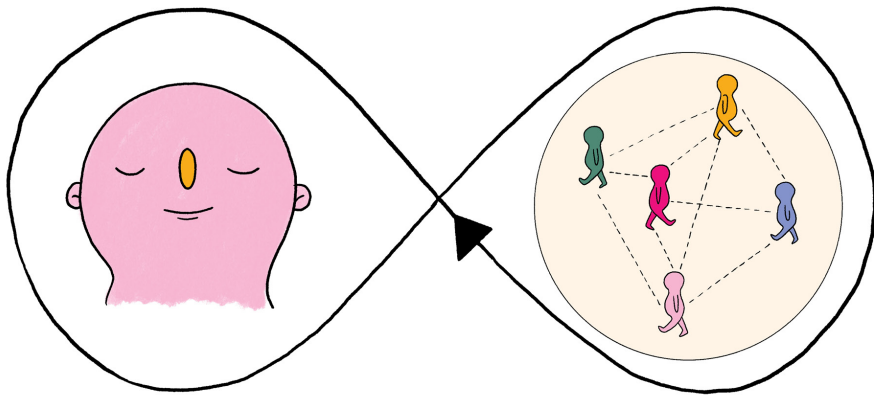
1. Conceiving an alternative understanding of a PD process
2. Positioning the designer in the project
3. Engaging with the community



As the PD process is going to depend on the community, there is not just one way to develop a power balanced project. For this reason, this document is not aiming to impose any specific way of doing things but to pose some questions to reflect on the process and challenge our normalized assumptions. Hopefully, the questions will support you to think about your role as a designer and in this way reflect on the dynamics with others inside the context.

This reflection can be seen as a loop. Once you redesign your role as a designer, also the dynamics inside the project will be redesigned, changing you back again.

So, let's start!



RE-DESIGN OF THE DESIGNER

RE-DESIGN OF THE DYNAMICS



**CONCEIVING AN ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING
OF A PD PROCESS**

The call for joining the project

Reflecting on how a PD project is initiated and why could help you realize your position and the community's in the process. Sometimes as designers we expect to have a fixed group of people to work with without questioning the motive or the dynamics under which the participation is being framed. These questions may support you in analyzing the power dynamics behind the call for participation.

- » **Who is making part of the PD process?**
- » **How is the community contacted to join the project?**
- » **Who is deciding who participates in the process? Why?**
- » **Who is making the call for participation? Is it someone from the community? Is it an outsider?**
- » **Under which circumstances is the community participating? Can they be feeling obligated to do so?**
- » **Do the members of the community have the possibility to say no to the project or activities?**
- » **What are the reasons the community has to join this project? Am I assuming those reasons? How can I corroborate them?**
- » **What role am I expecting the community to have in the project? Is it a primary role? Secondary? Why?**

Collaboration instead of participation

In a power balanced process thinking about just participation can be a bit limiting. Participation can give the idea that the project is based on something that the designer creates and the community takes part afterward. The ownership, in that case, seems to be on the designer's side. However, for more balanced dynamics, understanding the project as a collaboration with the community could help in sharing control and ownership to the people we are working with.

» **Am I prepared to change the project direction if needed after starting my work with the community?**

» **Am I willing to build a plan and a project structure with the community I am going to work with?**

» **Am I prepared to share the decision making in this process?**

» **Am I willing to consult the community in all the stages of the process?**

» **Am I willing to give credit and recognition to the community for this project?**

» **Am I prepared to trust the people I am going to work with and their creativity?**

» **Do I trust a valuable outcome even if it does not match my initial expectations?**



Seeing design as a support for something bigger

To level the power dynamics in a PD process it is important to understand that a project that tackles social issues in a complex system cannot revolve only around the design practice. There are many other kinds of knowledge and expertise that could support social change and is our task to acknowledge them. Understanding that design skills are something we bring to the table together with other practices and capabilities is recognizing that we are working with others as equal partners in the process.

- » **What kind of knowledge is this project giving priority?**
- » **What other skills or capabilities could be needed in this project?**
- » **Do I trust the skills and knowledge of the community?**
- » **How can I ensure to give space to the knowledge of the community in this project?**
- » **Am I willing to see my design skills as a support for the community?**
- » **Am I prepared to step out when the situation requires me to do so?**
- » **Am I willing to postpone or cancel any plan or activity I planned because it might harm the community or is not adequate for the context?**



POSITIONING THE DESIGNER IN THE PROJECT

My own stand and expectations

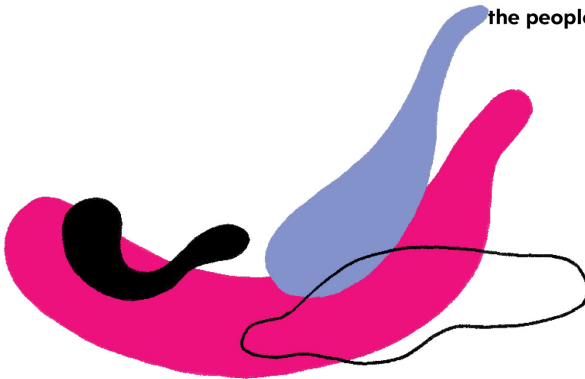
Expectations and stands towards PD projects can largely determine the ways in which designers relate and engage with the communities they work with. Reflecting on the intentions and beliefs we have before starting a project can help us to be more conscious about the ways we engage with the members of the community. The next questions can support you reflecting on the value you want to bring to the project and your own expectations from it.

- » **What does participation mean for me?**
- » **Why Am I interested in joining this project?**
- » **What do I want to gain with this project?**
- » **What are the outcomes I expect?**
- » **How am I needed in this project?**
- » **How can I contribute to this project?**
- » **What is determining my expectations?**

Defining my role

A new understanding of a more socially just and power balanced PD process entails changing the perspective we have about our role as designers and give away part of the control we normally have in the design process. Giving control to the community we are collaborating with, will give them more accountability and ownership which is ideal for processes that aim to trigger and maintains social change.

- » **What is my role in this participatory process?**
- » **What power or privilege my role has?**
- » **Who is giving me this role?**
- » **What tasks does my role entail?**
- » **Am I prepared to re-evaluate my role with the community?**
- » **Am I prepared to adapt my role to what the community needs?**
- » **Am I prepared to negotiate my tasks with the community?**
- » **Am I willing to give control of the process to the people I will work with?**



Considering other actors with power

When designing with societal ambitions, as designers we will also have to engage with other social actors besides the community. Whether these actors are a private or public institution, a university, an ONG, etc, they will exercise power over the project, the designer, and the community. Being conscious of those power dynamics may help you to understand how they affect your relationship with the community and how your actions and attitudes could be a consequence of those dynamics.

- » **Whose agenda is following the project?**
- » **Who is benefiting from the project? In which way?**
- » **Who is taking the decision in the project? Who has the last call in a decision? Why?**
- » **What is being required and expected from me? Who is requiring this from me?**
- » **How those requirements can affect my attitude in the project?**
- » **How can these requirements affect my relationship with the community?**
- » **Are the expectations of other actors aligned with the ones of the community? In which ways?**
- » **Can the community be harmed by the expectations of the other actors? In which way?**

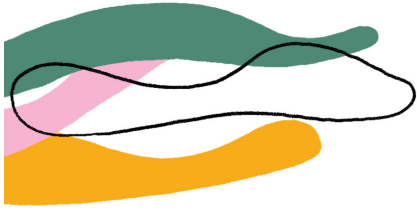


ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Knowing the community

If as designers we are aiming to level the power dynamics between ourselves and the community, we first need to take the time to know the people we are collaborating with as equal partners in the process. This means considering their knowledge, their values, but also what are they already doing in the context. In this way, it should be easier to establishing a collaboration based on mutual desirability for change.

- » **What is the background of the community?**
- » **What is important for this community? What does the community care about?**
- » **What are they doing already around this care?**
- » **How can I support them with what they are already doing?**
- » **How do my values align with theirs?**
- » **Why collaborating with me could matter to the community?**
- » **What do I have to offer in this collaboration?**



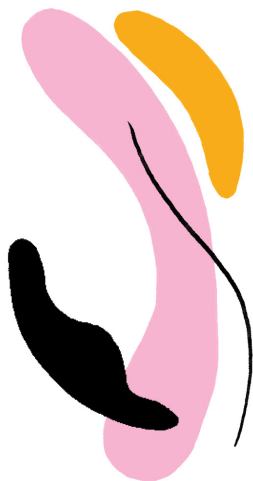
Looking for dialogue spaces

Looking for spaces for dialogue with the community is a basic but fundamental element when engaging in a power balanced PD process. Having open communication with a member of the community without the mediation of a design activity can help both to broaden the understanding of the other without limiting the identities to the aspects that fit a determined activity.

- » **What places in the context can I go to meet and talk to people?**
- » **Am I considering the time in the project for dialogue and relationality?**
- » **Am I prepared to leave judgment aside and be an open listener?**
- » **Am I willing to spend time with the community outside the design activities?**

The designer as a participant

Being invited to be part of activities already happening in the context can help us to perceive the context as the community does. Based on the member's understandings, values, and beliefs, the context can emerge as something more complex and rich than the design view. These simple questions may help you reflect on strategies to look for spaces for your participation



- » **Are there any activities in the context prepared by the members I can join as a participant?**
- » **Why are those activities relevant for the community?**
- » **How can these activities make me be more familiar with the members of the community and the context?**
- » **Is there any possibility of volunteering or offering my support in activities already happening in the context?**

The designer as a collaborator

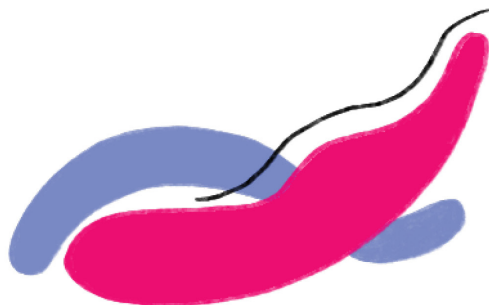
Engaging in a power-balanced way does not mean the designer cannot propose any activity for the community. As we saw till this point, it is first necessary to sense the context and be part of it in a non-disruptive and respectful way. Once the designers have established valuable relationships with the community it is possible to start thinking about activities to carry out in collaboration with the members and in this way scope down the project. The next questions may help you think about different aspects when planning activities with the community in a power balanced way.

How are the the activities framed?

- » **What is the goal of the activity?**
- » **Who is framing the problem or the activity?**
- » **Is there any bias in that framing? How?**
- » **What words are being used to define the problem or frame the project? Are there any underlying assumptions in those words?**
- » **What could be harmful/incorrect assumptions I am having about the identities of the members of the community or the context?**
- » **How can I prove or challenge those assumptions?**

Who defines the benefits and relevance?

- » **Who is leading the activity? Why?**
- » **Who is benefitting from this activity? How?**
- » **What is the benefit for the community with this activity?**
- » **How does this activity matter for the community?**
- » **What may be the expectations for the community with this activity? How can I know them?**



Is the activity fitting the context?

- » How does this activity fit the context's practices and dynamics?
- » Who is choosing the time and the location? Why?
- » Is this activity considering the ways of living in the context?
- » Am I being available and reachable for the community?
- » Is the place accessible for the community?

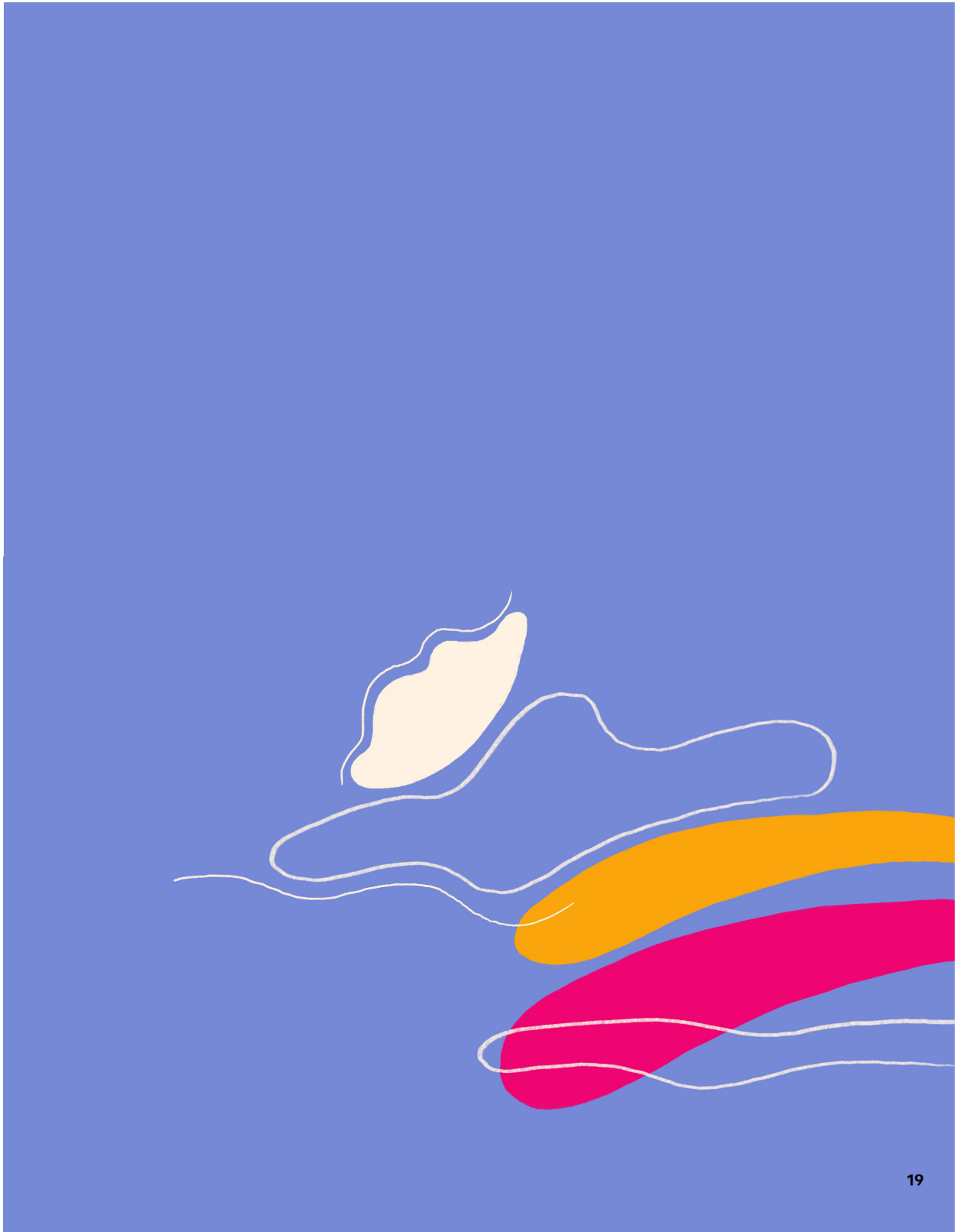
Are other worldviews and types of knowledge being considered?

- » What kind of knowledge is needed to collaborate in this activity?
- » What other kind of knowledge could manifest during the activity?
- » Is the activity/interaction representing the identities of the community?
- » Is the activity exposing members? Is making them share information they don't want to share? Or making them do things they may feel uncomfortable doing?
- » How is the activity representing the values, culture or beliefs of the community?

CONCLUSIONS

Because of the complexity that a PD process entails, thinking about power dynamics in the process and how to balance them is not an easy task. The practice of design has embedded a big number of assumptions and prejudices that need to be dismantled if we want a more socially just practice. And we can do it little by little. Hopefully, these questions can be a small contribution to the alternative understandings and narratives we as designers need to create to use our practice for collective liberation.

Thanks for reading and reflecting!



APPRE

END

IX