

UTRECHT ONTRAFELD

A Framework and Concept for a Decolonial Utrecht by Challenging Colonial Patterns

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MSc Design for Interaction
2026



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17 april 2026

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Master thesis

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I acknowledge the use of generative AI tools (ChatGPT) in the writing process to support language refinement and restructuring of selected text sections. All ideas, analysis, design decisions, and final content remain my work.



foreword

I started this project with a lot of enthusiasm and good intentions to make a contribution to a more just society. At the same time, I felt nervous about the responsibilities of a large graduation project and about the confrontations regarding current inequalities in the world, that I expected to encounter. Before diving into my graduation project, I would like to thank a few people who have supported me throughout this project, on the content, the process, and my personal well-being!

First of all I would like to thank Hannah and Matthijs. I am very thankful for all the interesting and inspiring conversations we have had these past few months. You have given me the confidence and the trust that I could do this project and you made me feel safe to share all my vulnerable reflections throughout the process. I also want to deeply thank you for looking out for me and giving me the space and time I needed during this project.

I want to thank Emy for always being a good sparring partner, and for being able to ask you the stupid and practical questions. I want to thank Delilah and Fadoua for all the substantive discussions we had and for sharing your dilemma's. Your personal ambitions for Utrecht

are very inspiring! I also want to thank all the other people from organizations in Utrecht that have contributed their time and effort to think along with me and give me the critical feedback that I needed!

I want to thank Bart for putting up with all my bad moods and grumpiness when I was feeling stressed. Thank you for cooking for me, and taking care of me when I was too tired to do it myself :)))

I am thankful for all the support from my friends, especially the friends I sat with on Atlas 3! I am thankful that I could always invade your master desks and make myself feel at home ;). I continue to be surprised how much we can help and inspire each other and how just one hour of brainstorming together can make me remember where I need to go with my project!

Finally, I want to thank my parents for supporting me throughout my whole studies and encouraging me to do all the extracurricular activities I did!

executive summary

This graduation project explored how awareness of Utrecht's colonial past can be increased, while also taking a step towards breaking colonial patterns that continue in society.

When thinking about the Dutch colonial past, Utrecht is often not the first city that comes to mind. Yet its public space contains many references to colonial history, including street names. Street names influence how we relate to the past, as they reflect which histories and figures were once considered worthy of remembrance. However, many of these histories are unknown to the public. This matters because colonial structures are deeply interwoven in Dutch society, and visible in present-day forms of systemic racism and inequality. Furthermore, these public references can be painful for people with personal, cultural or intergenerational ties to the colonial past. Therefore, the Municipality of Utrecht started a project to create more awareness of the colonial stories behind street names.

This graduation project took that initiative as a starting point, but intended to move beyond awareness alone and take a step towards breaking colonial structures. A broader research was conducted using the Vision in Product design method, which starts from envisioning a likely future context and formulating a vision before designing tangible interventions. This is important, because it supports designing from values and societal understanding rather than merely reacting to existing problems. A framework was designed that describes the future context of how society relates to the colonial past. Both the framework and the tangible concept that emerges from it, are design outcomes from this project.

An important part of the process was the careful involvement of affected communities, which refers to people with personal, cultural or intergenerational ties to colonial histories. Community experts were involved at key moments to contribute lived experience, relevant expertise and

critical perspectives. Their involvement supported reflection on my own position as a designer and on existing power dynamics within the process.

The designed framework identifies nine obstacles in moving towards a decolonial future. One of these directions was selected to further develop. The chosen direction focuses on control and knowledge. It describes how dominant narratives about the colonial past are created through selective facts and framing, presenting the Netherlands as an innocent, ethical country that can take pride in their 'Golden Age'. This direction led to a design vision, setting out to break through this dominant narrative and open up space for multiple histories to exist alongside each other.

The resulting concept combines physical interventions with a larger digital platform. The interventions reveal hidden stories in everyday environments, while the platform offers space to explore these stories in depth.

Users are confronted by presenting colonial and decolonial perspectives alongside one another and are invited to reflect through thought-provoking questions.

Evaluation with the municipality and community stakeholders showed clear potential in the combination of public interventions and an evolving platform. In addition, the framework offers guidance for future action beyond the chosen concept direction by highlighting what else is needed to more meaningfully address the colonial past.

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0 introduction

In the following chapter, this graduation project concerning awareness of the colonial past in Utrecht will be introduced.

The assignment and client will be explained, as well as the context of which this assignment has originated. The assignment will be

unpacked further and interpreted in terms of design outcomes, and project scope and goals. The project will also be connected to me as a designer and I will explain choices that were made concerning the project approach. Finally, a process overview will be given.

0.1 Assignment

This project evolved from an assignment proposed by the municipality of Utrecht. It concerns the Dutch colonial past and specifically how it is expressed in Utrecht through references in street names and public spaces.

While the colonial period is a large part of Dutch history, many Dutch people know very little about it. Recently, this past is becoming a bigger part of public conversation, as a growing group of people is recognizing the harm that is done by the Netherlands, and governmental institutions are making official apologies. The municipality wants to be part of the movement opening up conversation about the colonial past.

Street names and the representation of the colonial past

The municipality of Utrecht aims to foster an inclusive, respectful, and safe atmosphere, which includes a public space that expresses respect for all its citizens. Street names play a role in how we relate to the past: they reflect which histories and figures were considered important at the time they were named, and therefore contribute to a shared culture of remembrance. At the same time, many people are unaware of the full histories behind these names. This creates a disconnect: while some citizens experience the names as neutral or familiar, others may associate them with painful histories that remain unacknowledged in public space. Therefore, the municipality wants to increase understanding of the historical context behind street names, opening up space for acknowledgement and different ways of relating to the past.

In total there are around 2777 streets in Utrecht of which around 800 have links to the colonial past, for example through geography, names of VOC generals, spices from former colonies or writers from that period. The content of street names and related colonial histories is taken very broadly in this project. It includes references to both Dutch colonial activities in the East, where the VOC established trade networks and colonial rule in parts of Asia, and in the West, where the WIC was involved in transatlantic trade and slavery.

Involving students

The municipality has initiated a student project to increase awareness about the street names with a colonial connection. In phase 1 and 2 of this project the histories behind street names have been researched. The third phase of this project, which I will carry out, concerns the translation of these

histories to the citizens in a 'visual attractive and accessible way.'

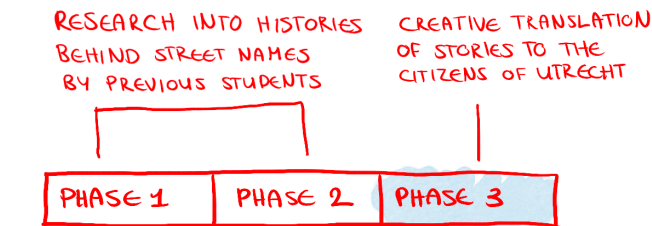


figure 1: Structure of larger project from municipality

Sensitive approach

The municipality emphasizes that this is a sensitive topic for citizens of Utrecht and that it is important to base the design on good research. When talking about 'citizens of Utrecht' it is important to recognize that perspectives range from people with roots in the former colonies, to people who feel shame about the Netherlands' role, to people who are proud of the prosperity it has brought. However, in agreement with the municipality it was decided that our main focus is to involve affected communities in the project. With 'affected communities' I refer to people with personal, cultural, or intergenerational ties to colonial histories, for whom the impacts of colonialism might still be evident in the present. We chose to focus on these communities because we want to create space for stories and perspectives that have historically been underrepresented or less visible in public discourse.

Stakeholders in the project

This project is carried out in collaboration with the organization 'Academie van de Stad', which aims to connect students to society by guiding them on societal projects. With their expertise in carrying out societal projects, Academie van de Stad serves as a link between the municipality and me as a student.

Below is a figure of the connected parties in this project. It is important to realize that the interest of different stakeholders might not always align. The municipality is representative of all citizens of Utrecht and might have different aims than the affected communities.

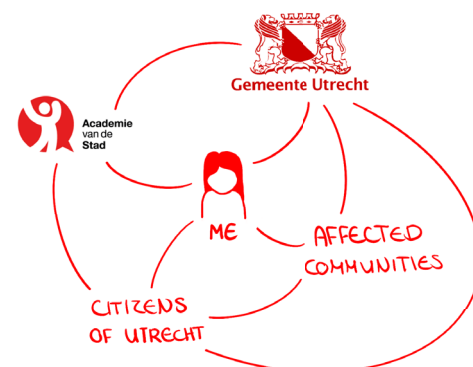


figure 2: Overview of stakeholders in the project

0.2 Scope and focus

Before the project is started, the assignment from the municipality needs to be unpacked a bit more. Firstly, it is important to clarify that as I am a student 'Design for Interaction,' this project does not concern a historical study into the events of the colonial past. Rather, it is a research into how Dutch society relates to the colonial past, now and in the (desired) future. This research is essential to be able to design a concept that fits the context and fulfills the desired goal.

That being said, I will deepen my knowledge of the colonial past, both to understand better how society relates to it now and to be able to have a grounded conversation when speaking to affected communities.

Breaking through colonial structures in society

To understand how society relates to the past, it is important to not just consider the street names, but to acknowledge the structures that are deeply interwoven in Dutch society as a result of the past. Colonialism is inherently connected to systemic racism and inequality and this cannot be ignored or avoided when dealing with the colonial past. The goal of this project is to not only present information to the public (as it could be interpreted through the assignment of the municipality), but also to make a step in breaking through these colonial patterns in society.

Design outcomes

When it comes to the design outcomes of this project, one of the results will be a tangible intervention, as expected by the municipality, which can contribute to raising awareness of the colonial past in Utrecht. However, as the goal extends to breaking through colonial structures in society, I will also develop a framework that describes how society currently engages with this past and how this could evolve in the future.

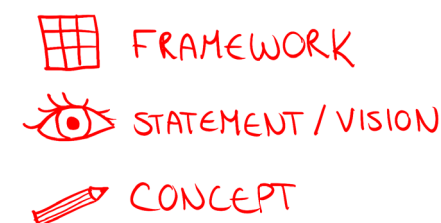


figure 3: Design outcomes

This framework is essential for understanding these underlying structures and for defining a clear vision for the future. Without this as a foundation, there is a risk that the intervention ignores complexity and reinforces existing structures, rather than challenging them. At the same time, a single intervention cannot address the full complexity of colonial structures. The framework therefore identifies multiple points for change, of which the intervention is one example of how such change can be made tangible.

Scale of analysis

Given the scope of this project, the analysis moves beyond the specific context of street names and public space in Utrecht. While it is important to understand which themes and discussions play a role locally, the underlying structures that shape how society relates to the colonial past are produced at a national (and even international) level.

In conclusion, the main focus of the project can be summarized as following:

"I want to design an intervention to raise awareness in citizens of Utrecht about the colonial past, acknowledging the past collectively and making a first step in breaking colonial patterns."

As this statement does not reflect the full complexity and scope of the project, the wider scope is visualised in the figure below.

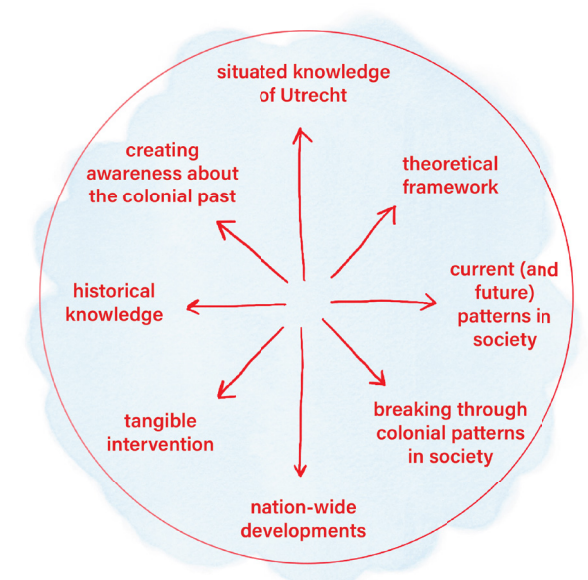


figure 4: Project scope

0.3 Personal motivation and vision

Before diving deeper into the project approach, I will introduce what drives me as a designer and what my vision is for the project.

From the start of my industrial design career (the beginning of my bachelor's) I have had a focus on user-driven design. I have always been empathic as a person and I like to use this quality in my work as a designer through user research. Throughout my studies, my focus has shifted from individual behaviour change to design as a tool for larger societal transitions. Travelling has played a role in this, as my worldview has expanded and I have become more aware of my own position in this world and the privileges I have.

During my master's, I set out to explore how (and if) I can use my privileged position, in combination with my design skills, to be of meaning to those who have received fewer opportunities in life than I have. I aim to contribute to a more just and equal society in which everyone is afforded a worthy place. From this perspective, I was strongly motivated to take on this project, as colonialism has produced structures that continue to shape present inequality and injustice, directly aligning with the kind of contribution I hope to make as a designer.

In my design process, I value a combination of a systemic perspective and attention to lived experiences. I believe it is important to understand the broader societal structures, while at the same time remaining sensitive to how these structures are experienced in everyday life. In general, I find it important to be aware of my own position as a designer and to continuously reflect on my assumptions and decisions. In this project it is specifically important, because it concerns a sensitive topic and as a white person, I am part of the system of inequality and racism. If this position is not handled with care when involving affected communities, people can get seriously hurt.

0.4 Project approach

ViP Method

For this project, the Vision in Product design (ViP) method was chosen because it supports designing from a clear vision while grounding the process in a broader societal context.

The ViP method starts from imagining a likely future context and then formulating a vision on a desirable future. This means that it focuses on underlying values and worldviews, before translating insights into tangible design interventions. For this project, this is essential, as it allows me to take a clear position on how society could relate differently to its colonial past, rather than only responding to existing structures or physical manifestations such as street names.

The future context is developed through the generation of 'context factors,' which are small pieces of information that are relevant to the domain of (de) colonialism. These factors can be principles or states about the world, but also developments or trends. This variety in factors ensures a framework that is both grounded in the present, and looking forward to the future. The context factors are clustered into 10 different 'driving forces,' which hint at larger structures or developments in society. The driving forces are then used to construct a picture of a likely future world.

From there on a position is taken within this future world and a clear vision is defined. This is what makes the ViP method especially appropriate for this project, as it supports a design process in which systemic understanding and ethical responsibility are central.

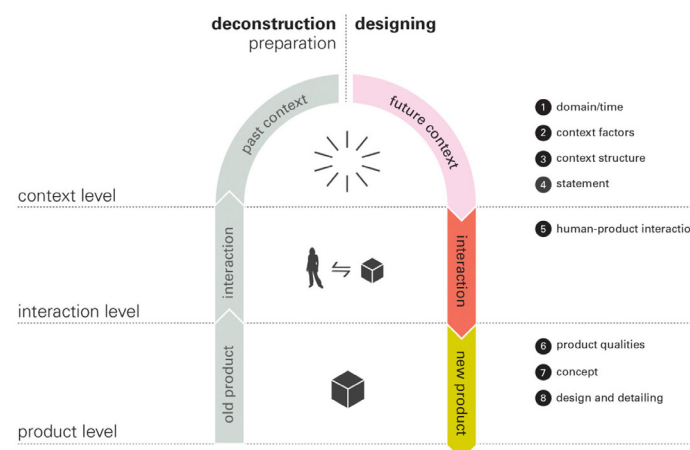


figure 5: ViP Method (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2014)

Involving affected communities and reflecting on the design process

As mentioned before, an important part of this project approach is the careful and conscious involvement of affected communities in the design process. To do this I will work with 'community experts': people who can bring both lived experience and relevant forms of expertise, for example because they are part of an organisation in Utrecht that works on the

theme of decolonisation. I involve these community experts at key moments the project, which includes development of the framework, as well as shaping a vision for the future. This process also serves as an important way to critically assess my own perspective as a designer and to remain aware of the influence of a 'white gaze.'

Throughout the project, reflection will play a continuous role in evaluating how and when I

involve participants, and how I navigate existing power dynamics. By actively seeking feedback and reflecting on my decisions, I aim to ensure that the process remains careful and just. These reflections will not only support my own design process, but may also contribute to broader discussions on how designers can responsibly engage with sensitive topics and questions of power. To take you as a reader along in my reflections, I will include them as side notes throughout this report.

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0.5 Project overview

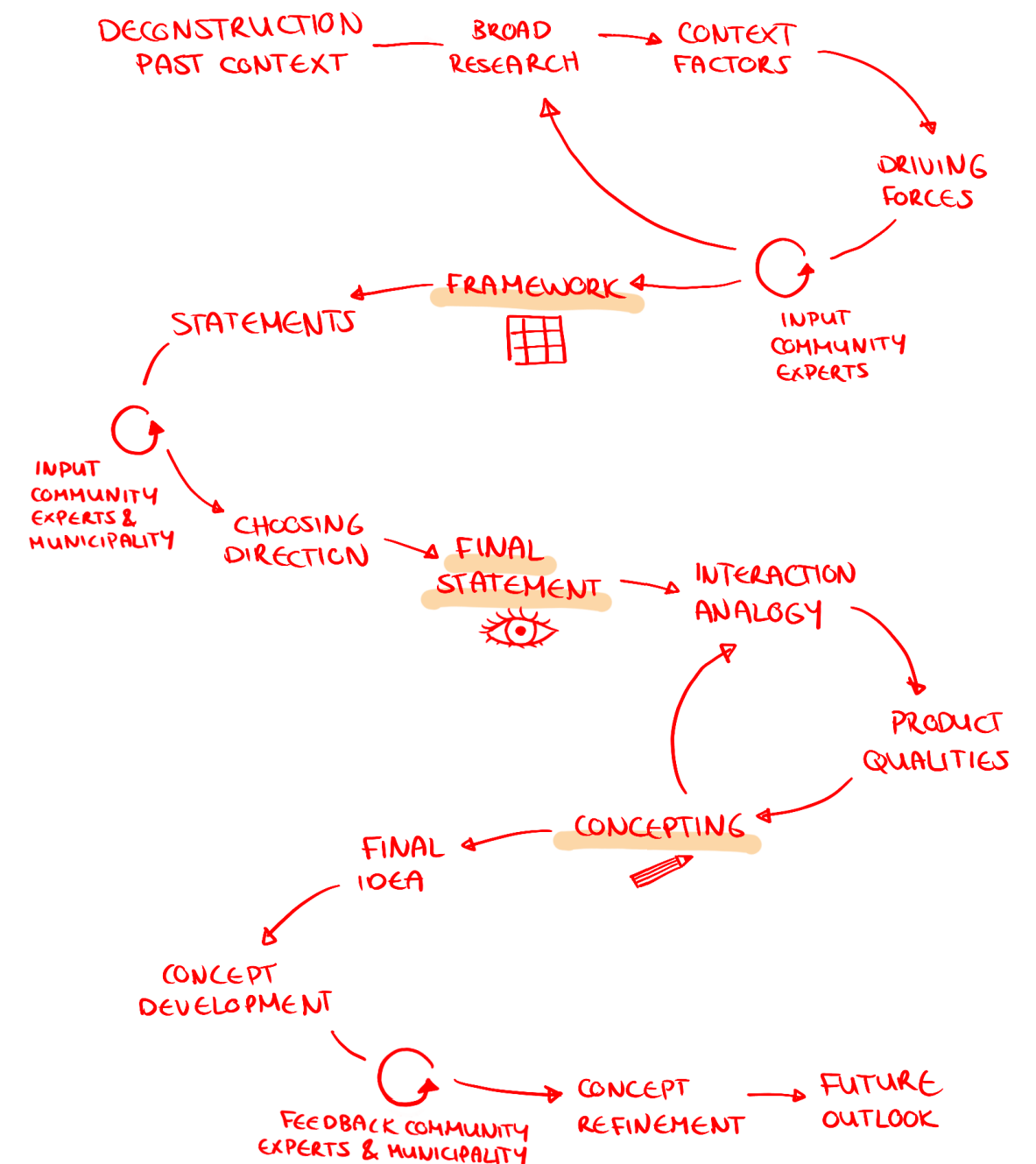


figure 6: Project overview

1 key concepts and influences

As mentioned in the project approach, much of the research informing this project is embedded throughout the context factors and driving forces. However, some concepts and thinkers have been particularly influential in shaping the perspective of my thesis. In

addition, several terms used throughout this report carry specific meanings that benefit from clarification. This chapter therefore functions as a conceptual guide, introducing key definitions and highlighting ideas that informed the design process.

Decolonization:

Decolonization is the process through which colonial rule, dependence, and the unequal systems created by it are dismantled. It not only refers to political independence, but also to the broader transformation of social structures, cultural norms, and ways of thinking that were shaped by colonial domination.



Pravini Baboeram

Nation state versus the plurinational state:

In this documentary, the nation state is introduced as a concept created by the Europeans. It entails that in one state lives one nation, with one people, one language, and one culture. This often means that people identifying differently from the state culture, are excluded. It is proposed to move from the concept of nation state to a plurinational state, where many nations can live inside one state. (Baboeram, 2023)



Gloria Wekker

White innocence:

Gloria Wekker introduces the concept of white innocence, which describes the self-image of the Dutch that they are an innocent and ethically just country. This includes that many white Dutch people and institutions see themselves as 'colour-blind' and free of racism. (Wekker, 2020)



Dori Tunstall

Decolonization of design:

Tunstall argues that mainstream design has historically been shaped by Eurocentric values and has often supported systems of domination, exclusion and cultural erasure. Decolonizing design therefore means transforming how design is taught, practiced and governed. (Tunstall, 2023)



Michael Onyebuchi Eze

Colonization of knowledge:

Michael Onyebuchi Eze describes how much of what we see as 'common knowledge' in the world is determined what is acknowledged by Western academic institutions, privileging Eurocentric ways of knowing. He argues that knowledge is shaped by power and is never fully neutral. The same 'colonization of knowledge' has happened in the debate about decolonization, as this term is often used like a 'magic wand' to solve all kinds of problems. (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)

This paper has caused me to reflect on the type of knowledge I include in my design project(s). I now pay more attention to the scholars behind the papers I read. Especially within this topic, I think it is important to include not only or mostly concepts of white thinkers, but to focus on knowledge of people of color

figure 7,8,9, and 10: Pictures of inspirational thinkers (Academie voor Theater en Dans, n.d.) (Global Social Theory, n.d.) (Liu Lectures, 2024) (Redactie, 2024)

2 researching the context of colonial past in society

In this chapter the research will be described that was done to collect the building blocks for the future context. First, the past context will be explored through analysing existing designs and from what context they were created. Then, the context factors are generated and

the resulting driving forces are explained more elaborately. At the end of this chapter, all the preparation for constructing the future context will be accomplished. In the next chapter, the framework will be presented.

2.1 Past context

Before diving into the future context of this project, the past (and present) context will be analysed. This means looking at which 'designs' are already there to increase awareness about the colonial past in Utrecht and considering from what reasons, values, opinions and assumptions (the context) this design was made. Specifically, in this chapter three designs are analysed based on product qualities, interaction and then context.

This will help me be more grounded in the situated knowledge of Utrecht and what is already happening within the theme of the colonial past. Furthermore, looking at the past context from which designs were made, will open up more opportunities and ideas for the next phase of the project, which will be about designing the future context.

2.1.1. 'Oud Zeer' Exposition



figure 11: Oud Zeer Exposition Jans Kerkhof (DUIC, 2025)

Product qualities

This is an exposition which exists of personal stories from families with roots in the former Dutch East Indies. It tells stories of experiences of the past and how these experiences still play a role in the present. The exposition is **physically large** and takes up a lot of space where it is placed, which makes it **impressive**. The **personal** quality is strengthened by the large portraits of the families. This is a travelling exposition, which means it is **temporarily** placed in the center of Utrecht and will then move to a different city.

Interaction

The interaction with this exposition is intended to be **emotional**. Through the personal quality and the graveness of the stories, users might feel emotional. The interaction is **passive** in the sense that users read the stories and that is mostly it. Of course conversation might take place afterwards, but there

is nothing in the product that specifically evokes interaction with other people, which makes it quite **individual** as well.

Context

It seems like this exposition was designed from the idea that more information about past experiences creates more understanding for present situations, people and their experiences, and that this is important. Furthermore, there seems to be the assumption that when something is personal and emotional, it creates a larger impact on people. This designer has probably opted for something physically large in public space to draw attention, with the idea that people will then take the time to read these stories. Finally, there seems to be the idea that the way to make the most impact is to spread stories in different physical locations, and that after three weeks in the same place, the exposition has reached its intended effect of creating awareness and understanding.

2.1.2. Book: Slavernij en de stad Utrecht

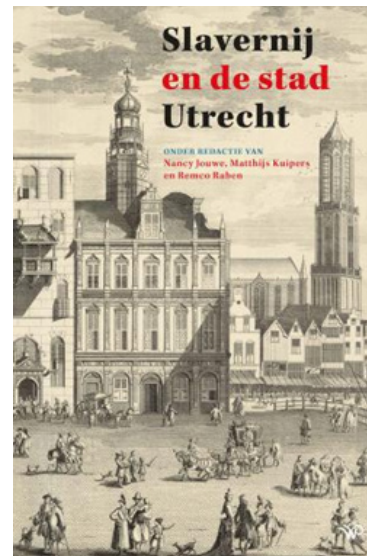


figure 12: Slavernij en de stad Utrecht (Jouwe et al., 2021)

Product qualities

This product is a book about the involvement of the city of Utrecht in the colonial past and slavery. The book is very **in-depth** and it is thoroughly researched (in assignment of the municipality of Utrecht). There are pictures here and there in the book, but mostly the book is written text in an **academic** writing style. The authors of the book and that it is academically researched and written, make it feel **trustworthy**.

Interaction

The interaction is with this product is quite **straightforward** and **dry**. The interest of the reader

might make the difference in whether the interaction is more **passive** or **focused**. The interaction is **individual**.

Context

This product is most likely written from a context where more and more countries and institutions are making apologies for slavery in the past. In a context where the colonial past is part of public conversation and where inclusivity and diversity are important topics for the municipality of Utrecht, it makes sense to do research on the involvement of Utrecht in the colonial past. The choice of a book seems to come from a context where knowledge is mostly valued and seen as trustworthy when it comes from academic research and is presented to in-depth, written text. This choice might also come from the thought that the complexity of the stories need a lot of text to explain.

2.1.3. Organisations



figure 13: Ketu Koti Celebration 2025 (Kwee, 2025)

Product qualities

In Utrecht that are multiple organizations which are related to former colonies of the Netherlands, their cultures and the shared history. Examples of these organizations are Ketu Koti, Madua, and Kumpuland festival. While some of the organizations focus more on the celebration of culture and other more on resistance and impact of the past, these organization do have many things in common. They all organize **events** as a way to achieve their mission. **Openness** is an important quality here, as it is made clear that everyone is welcome to these events, even when your not from the regarding culture. The events are **rich in culture** and often include music, dancers, artists and food. For all organizations, **celebration** is an important aspects, not solely focusing on informing or commemorating.

Interaction

The interaction with the events these organizations host is **connective** and **stimulating**. It is a **rich** interaction, with many things happening. It is **colorful**, and **respectful**.

Context

The design of these events reflects the value of community and connection. It also comes from the idea that knowing where you come from and understanding your roots is an important aspect of identity and belonging. It is likely that there is also the assumption that when people are familiar with each other's culture and cultural traditions, people have more respect towards one another. Finally, there is the idea that celebration and lightness is important (besides other things) when dealing with our shared history.

2.1.4. Conclusion

Already when looking at these three designs, different contexts can be made out. Some designs are created from the idea that more information and knowledge about the past leads to more understanding. Other 'designs' are created from the value of connection and community. These different contexts might also be related to different 'designers' as the municipality is in a different context than people with roots from former colonies.

2.2 Domain

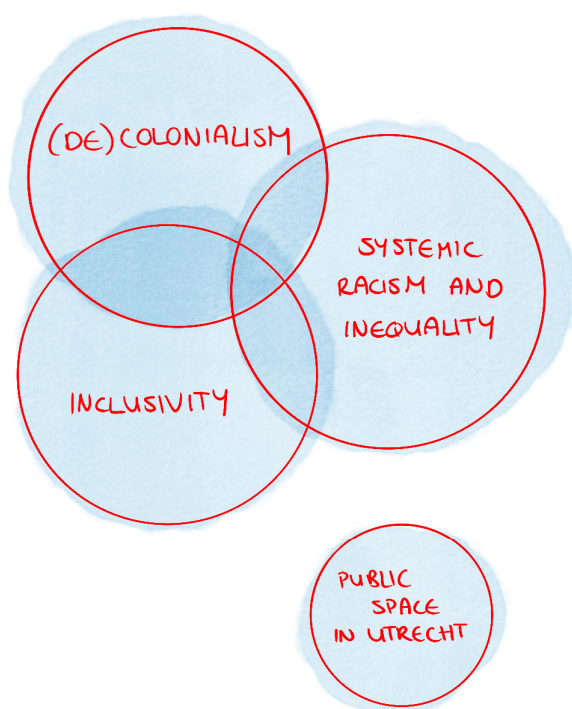


figure 14: Domain

A domain is defined in order to assess which considerations and observations (context factors) are relevant to the project. The domain describes which themes or areas are important, forming a lens through which the designer looks at the world. For this project, the following area's were chosen:

- (De)colonialism
- Systemic racism and inequality
- Inclusivity
- Public space in Utrecht

(De)colonialism is the obvious choice of theme. Systemic racism and inequality were chosen as theme in the domain, to ensure the focus on current impacts of the colonial past in our society. Inclusivity was chosen as theme, because this is what the municipality is striving for with this project. Public space in Utrecht was chosen, because of the focus on the street names and because the project is specifically about Utrecht. However, this theme is not as emphasized as other themes in the first part of research, because I think many developments are happening on a national level.

2.3 Collecting the building blocks

The building blocks for the future context (context factors) were gathered from the following sources:

- Literature
- Reports (for example CBS reports)
- News Articles
- Street Interviews

Context factors are small pieces of information that are relevant to the domain previously described. Some context factors are closely related to the domain, while other's describe phenomena from a different domain, yet are relevant. The factors can be principles or states about the world, but also developments or trends. This variety in factors, ensures a future context that is both grounded in the present, and looking forward to the future.

The full list of context factors can be found in Appendix 10.2.1.

	Principle	State	Development	Trend
Psychological	8	1	-	-
Cultural	1	29	10	15
Biological	2	-	-	-
Evolutionary	2	3	-	-
Philosophical	1	-	2	-
Economic	-	2	3	-
Technological	-	3	1	-
Demographic	-	6	10	1
Sociological	12	7	-	-
Political	2	5	6	-

figure 15: Amount of context factors per kind and theme

2.3.1 Street interviews

Street interviews were done in Utrecht to get an idea of general awareness and views on the topic of colonialism within citizens of Utrecht. As street interviews tend to be quite brief and superficial, they are not intended to draw definite conclusions from. Rather, they serve as a reflection of society and the insights found in literature. The interviews can also help in checking whether no perspectives were overlooked in the literature research.

In total, ten participants were interviewed in three different neighborhoods to address a wider audience. People were approached 'randomly' without any selection made based on possible personal or historical connection to colonialism, to ensure a broad reflection of public perspectives and keep emotional risk low.

People were asked to participate in an interview and were informed that it was part of a project aiming to advise the Municipality of Utrecht on awareness about the colonial past of Utrecht. A few neutral questions were asked about their awareness of the history behind street names from that specific neighbourhood and how they felt the municipality should deal with the colonial past. On average the conversations with people were between 5 and 15 minutes. Detailed notes were taken, from which quotes were taken.

"The street names have been there for a very long time, why would we make a problem of it now? We have more important problems in the present to worry about"

"History is important to learn from our mistakes. At the moment I don't feel like we have learnt from our mistakes"

"I never really look at street names, because I usually use Google Maps"

"I feel like Utrecht is becoming less tolerant"

"My grandchildren know a lot less about this history than I have learned in school"

"Honestly, I don't care about the colonial past and the streetnames. It doesn't concern me, does it?"

"But it (slavery) is not happening anymore in the present, right?"

"I don't think I know a lot about the colonial past. I'm not sure if I could easily find information about it if I wanted to"

In general these quotes reflect different sentiments in society about the colonial past and the place it should receive in Utrecht. The sentiment ranges from people who see the past as important for preventing mistakes in the present and future to people who do not seem to think the past is relevant for the present at all. Multiple people have expressed that they experience Utrecht (and society) as becoming less tolerant. An interesting remark from one of the interviews was that street names might be less visible (perhaps especially for the younger generation), due to use of Google Maps rather than navigating by street names. This could be taken in consideration during the conceiving phase.



figure 16: Street interviews in Utrecht

2.4 Driving Forces

The context factors (building blocks) were clustered in Miro to recognize patterns. The factors were made into clusters, called driving forces, which are explained on the following pages. These driving forces hint at larger relevant structures or developments in society and form the basis for the framework which will later be constructed.

The complete clusters with all corresponding context factors can be found in Appendix 10.2.2.

I feel a tension between 'systemic' design and more 'personal' and 'contextual' design. While the context factors and clustering helps in understanding larger patterns, it also feels a bit impersonal, because I have not yet spoken with affected communities

DRIVING FORCE 1

rediscovering connection and inclusion

In the Netherlands, an emerging societal movement criticizes the development of an increasingly individualistic society. Some people argue that solidarity, community, and social connection should be valued more strongly than material wealth.

CONTEXT FACTORS

46. Dutch people are criticizing the development of the individualistic society and would like to see more solidarity. (Miltenburg et al., 2025) [Trend]

57. Humans evolved to foster social safety, meaning: A sense of social inclusion, belonging, and connection to others (Slavich, 2020) [Principle]

108. Degrowth theory is encouraging a shift from material wealth to quality of life, leisure time, community solidarity, and spiritual well-being (Karagjozi, 2025) [Development]

DRIVING FORCE 2

the domination in development aid

New forms of colonialism are emerging globally, often referred to as neo-colonialism, in which Western dominance over other parts of the world is maintained or even reinforced. The sector of development cooperation (unconsciously) sustains the worldview of Western superiority, where ‘the colonized’ need to be saved and are seen as inferior. Foreign aid is rarely unconditional, and often comes with strings attached for the receiving countries. At the same time, new digital technologies and data-extraction practices can further strengthen existing power imbalances. Together, these dynamics reinforce global hierarchies, rather than dismantling them.

CONTEXT FACTORS

11. “Western people need to believe African people are inferior, in order to sustain the Western intellectual ego” (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024) [State]

34. “While volunteer tourism can improve the lives and environments of host communities, it is also criticized for exploiting host communities, continued neo-colonialism, and reduction of employment for local people” (McGehee, 2014) [State]

93. “Many capital-rich, natural resource-poor countries are buying user rights of farmlands in natural resource-rich, developing countries” (Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010) [Development]

98. Data-extraction practices increase the domination of the Global North over other countries. (Mouton, 2021) [Development]

DRIVING FORCE 3

the designability of modern life

Through increase in wealth and developments in technology, the mindset has risen that life is ours to deliberately design, rather than it being shaped by circumstances. This phenomenon applies on an individual level as well as on a state level. On the individual level it means that we have (or think we have) the ability to walk the path we want in life, rather than that we need to stick to the ‘traditional’ path. On a state level it means that states (and other powerful actors) are increasingly able to shape social and spatial realities through policies and digital technologies. While this growing ‘designability’ creates new forms of freedom and mobility for some, it also reinforces the power of those with the resources to design systems and environments.

CONTEXT FACTORS

65. “Digitalization increases control from the state over its citizens” (Mouton, 2021) [Development]

78. “More and more Dutch people are living as digital nomads, looking for warmer climates, low costs of living, and community” (de Ruiter, 2024) [Trend]

105. “States are increasingly pushing for gentrification to attract more talent and capital to cities, driving local economic growth” (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021) [Development]

DRIVING FORCE 4

challenging the Dutch identity

The Netherlands is currently going through a crisis around its national identity. As more events and injustices from the colonial period are being uncovered and publicly discussed, the Dutch colonial past has become a topic of national debate. However, these discussions challenge the Dutch self-image of being an ‘innocent’ and ethically just country. Furthermore, the pride the Netherlands takes in their trading success and wealth, is being questioned in light of their colonial foundations.

Because collective identities are closely tied to feelings of moral worth, confronting this history can evoke discomfort and defensiveness. People generally want to avoid feelings of collective guilt, which can lead to resistance against discussions about structural racism, colonial responsibility, or official apologies for slavery. As a result, debates about the colonial past are not only about history, but also about the ongoing negotiation of Dutch identity.

CONTEXT FACTORS

3. “When faced with social downfall, people in power are more prone to find ways to deceive themselves rather than reflect and grow” (Faber et al., 2024) [Principle]

19. “In general, there is a self-image among the Dutch that we are ethically just as a country” (Wekker, 2020) [State]

35. Recently, the ‘Prinsenvlag’ and the logo of VOC have been used during demonstrations, showing pride of the past (Van Assen, 2025). [Trend]

DRIVING FORCE 5

colonization of the
decolonial debate

Decolonization, the process of undoing the effects of colonialism, has increasingly become a trending topic of public debate, for example through hashtags like “DecolonizeTheMuseum” but also through funds that the Dutch government has released to improve education on the history of slavery. However, the production of what is considered “common knowledge” is still largely shaped by Western academic and cultural institutions.

As a result, research and publications about decolonization are largely dominated by white scholars and institutions. White people and people of colour usually have a different understanding of racism, which influences how colonialism and its legacies are interpreted and discussed. Consequently, the debate about decolonization is frequently shaped through Western perspectives, meaning that the very conversation intended to challenge colonial power structures can end up reproducing them.

CONTEXT FACTORS

23. Common knowledge in the world is largely determined by what knowledge Western academic institutions acknowledge (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024) [State]

24. “The term ‘Decolonization’ is increasingly used in the West as an ideology that offers a solution to all kinds of modern problems (climate, poverty, health, etc.)” (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024) [Trend]

116. Often, white people view racism as individual acts of prejudice or denial of rights, while people of colour view racism as something woven into culture, institutions and social structures (Miller & Donner, 2000) [State]

DRIVING FORCE 6

collective guilt as a
force for activism

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to events and injustices from the colonial period. Cultural institutions such as museums play an important role in this process, as the stories they tell influence how societies understand their past. This growing awareness can evoke feelings of collective guilt and responsibility within Dutch society.

Such collective emotions can act as a catalyst for activism and calls for reparative actions toward groups that have been historically harmed. This is reflected in rising demonstrations against racism, and actions such as museums returning cultural artifacts stolen during colonial times. Specifically in Utrecht, increased engagement can be seen in the growing attendance at the commemoration and celebration of Keti Koti. However, waves of public attention and activism are often unpredictable, meaning that the momentum created by these emotions may also fade quite soon.

CONTEXT FACTORS

124. “More and more people are commemorating and celebrating Keti Koti in Utrecht” (Jennifer Ferrier, 2025) [Trend]

112. “Collective guilt creates more positive attitudes toward the victimized group and creates support for reparations” (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014) [Principle]

DRIVING FORCE 7

earning worth in
society through
achievement

In contemporary Dutch society, a person's social worth is increasingly earned through individual achievement, talent, and self-reliance. As religiosity has declined over the past decades, belonging to religious communities or fulfilling traditional social roles has become less central in determining one's place in society. Instead, a meritocratic ideal has risen, where success is understood as the result of personal effort and ability.

This shift places a strong emphasis on individual responsibility and progress, creating growing pressure on people to continuously perform, improve, and prove their value. This logic also shapes how different groups are evaluated within society. For example, migrants are often judged based on their perceived economic contribution, with expectations for integration differing depending on their assumed economic value. As a result, social worth increasingly appears as something that must be earned through achievement rather than something that is given.

CONTEXT FACTORS

18. “In a meritocracy, people need to believe that their success is the outcome of their effort and talent, in order to feel good about themselves” (Phillips & Lowery, 2018) [State]

69. “Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that are religious, has decreased.” (CBS, 2024c) [Development]

128. “Dutch migration policy people with a perceived economic value are favoured and are not expected the same integration demands as other migrant groups.” (Van Aanhold, 2025) [State]

DRIVING FORCE 8

cultural
curiosity creates
commodification

Over the past years, interest in experiencing other cultures has grown significantly. Travelling, food trends, and digital nomad lifestyles increasingly revolve around discovering and engaging with cultures beyond one's own. However, this curiosity often unfolds through standardized routes and mediated experiences. Backpackers seeking unique cultural encounters frequently follow the same travel paths and activities, and social media trends can turn cultural practices and cuisines into widely consumable products.

As a result, cultures risk being transformed into commodified experiences rather than genuinely engaged with. These forms of cultural consumption can have unintended consequences, such as reinforcing exoticism, contributing to cultural appropriation, or creating economic pressures in popular destinations for digital nomads. This raises questions about the authenticity of cross-cultural curiosity and highlights the unequal impacts that global mobility and cultural consumption can produce.

CONTEXT FACTORS

17. “South-Korean dishes are becoming more and more popular in the Netherlands through #kfood trends on social media” (de Reuver, 2025) [Trend]

26. “Often, backpackers follow the same routes, do the same activities, and are surrounded by many other backpackers” (De Ruiter, 2024) [Trend]

61. “In popular destinations for digital nomads, rental and house prices are rising” (de Ruiter, 2024) [Development]

growing apart in the city

In contemporary cities, social divisions between groups of people are becoming larger. Economic inequality, processes such as gentrification, and the suburbanisation of poverty are contributing to spatial separation between different social groups. At the same time, people tend to gravitate toward others who are similar to themselves, both in their physical environments and in online spaces where algorithms reinforce existing opinions. As a result, people increasingly live in social and ideological ‘bubbles’ and are confronted less often with perspectives different from their own. In cities such as Utrecht, this growing separation is also reflected in higher levels of experienced discrimination and inequality, suggesting that urban diversity does not automatically lead to greater understanding between groups.

CONTEXT FACTORS

- 37. “In the city, the percentage of people who feel discriminated based on race or skintone, is twice as big as on the countryside” (CBS, 2024a) [State]
- 56. “Humans have an affinity for those most like themselves and have a tendency to be more hostile towards strangers”(Slavich, 2020) [Principle]
- 64. “Search algorithms can reinforce people’s opinions and create polarization” (Cho et al., 2020) [Development]
- 104. “In contemporary cities (including Utrecht) there is a suburbanisation of poverty, partly caused by gentrification” (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021) [Development]

media fuels fear and distrust in society

Media play an important role in shaping how people perceive society and current events. News coverage often focuses on conflict, drama, and strong symbolic language, which can create a more negative and alarming picture of reality than statistics alone would suggest. Through social media, search engines, and political communication, certain narratives are repeated and exaggerated, reinforcing existing opinions and shaping public debate. In this context, migrants, or ‘outsiders,’ are frequently portrayed as the source of societal problems, and perceptions of immigration are often influenced more by media representations than by direct experience or data. As a result, media dynamics can contribute to growing feelings of fear, polarization, and distrust toward institutions and other groups in society.

CONTEXT FACTORS

- 43. “A big part of the Dutch population, does not have a lot of trust in the government” (Miltenburg et al., 2025) [State]
- 50. “People’s perceptions of immigration are shaped not by statistics, but by their daily interactions and experiences, which are heavily influenced by their exposure to media reports and images”(Hajer & Versteeg, 2009) [State]
- 113. “Individuals are often motivated to avoid or reduce the experience of collective guilt. There is a tendency of reducing illegitimacy of ingroup behaviour by portraying outgroup members as threat or by portraying ingroup members as victims.” (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014) [Principle]
- 122. “The fear that the Netherlands will become involved in a war in the near future is increasing” (Frijters & De Lange, 2025) [Development]

3 future framework for dealing with the colonial past

In the previous chapter the research into how the Netherlands deals with the colonial past was explained. The building blocks that emerged from this research will be translated into a future framework, which describes how society relates to the colonial past.

The framework consists of two dimensions with 3 different values, together creating 9 cells which each describe a different type of societal behaviour towards the colonial past. The chapter will start by explaining the dimensions of the framework and how they arise from the driving forces described in the previous chapter. Then I will take a step back

and explain how community experts have contributed to the design of the framework. Finally, the future framework will be presented and the 9 future behaviours will be explained in more detail.

Up until now, the content has been 'objective' in the sense that I have not yet taken a position in how a desired future should look like. I have just observed and analysed what I think the future context will look like, without passing judgement. In the next chapter, together with community experts I will move to a subjective vision for the future.

3.1 Dimensions

- 1

rediscovering connection and inclusion
- 2

the domination in development aid
- 3

the designability of modern life
- 4

challenging the Dutch identity
- 5

colonization of the decolonial debate
- 6

collective guilt as a force for activism
- 7

earning worth in society through achievement
- 8

cultural curiosity creates commodification
- 9

growing apart in the city
- 10

media fuels fear and distrust in society

DIMENSION A

the different ways in which we deal with discomfort

2 3 6 8 9

AVOIDANCE – avoiding the source of discomfort

CONTROL – being in charge of the discomfort

CONFRONTATION – going right into the discomfort

DIMENSION B

layers of power in Dutch society

1 5 7 10

POWER THROUGH COMMUNITY

POWER THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

POWER THROUGH INSTITUTES

The dimensions of the framework arise from the driving forces described in the previous chapter. The driving forces have quite literally been ‘put on the table’ to see if there are any larger forces within them, which helps describing different ways the Netherlands relates to the colonial past.

On the left, the different driving forces have been listed, along with the dimensions that have evolved from them.

3.1.1 Explaining dimensions

Dimension A - Different ways of dealing with discomfort

One layer that was discovered when playing with the driving forces was 'different ways in which we deal with discomfort'. This layer explains how society reacts to the discomfort of dealing with the colonial past in different ways. For example, the driving force 'growing apart in the city' shows how people tend to surround themselves with like-minded people, thereby avoiding those perspectives that are different or painful. Driving forces 2, 3 and 8 illustrate the 'designability of the modern world' and how controlling discomfort is a way of dealing with it. Driving force 6 shows another reaction to the discomfort of the colonial past, which is based on activism and confronting the norm.

Dimension B - Layers of power in Dutch society

Another important factor in the way society deals with the colonial past was found by looking at the different layers of power in Dutch society. Several driving forces, such as 'earning worth in society through achievement' and 'media fuels fear and distrust in society' express the important role knowledge has in Dutch society. The driving force 'colonization of the decolonial debate' shows that the power knowledge is related to institutions as well, since institutions determine which knowledge holds value in the world. Finally, the cluster 'rediscovering connection and inclusion' expresses how community is becoming more important in society and can therefore also be a force for change.

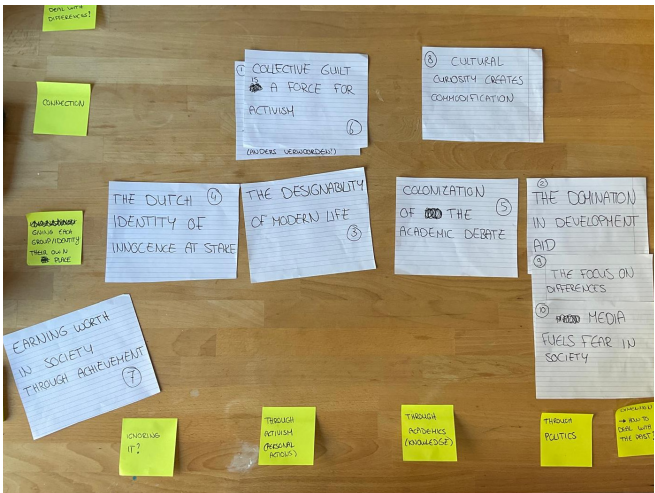


figure 17: Process of creating the future framework

3.1.2 Dutch identity at the core of the framework

As described in driving force 4 'challenging the Dutch identity', there is a strong relationship between the Dutch colonial past, Dutch identity and the way the Netherlands deals with her colonial past now.

Mercantilism and work ethic is very important to the Dutch. In the Netherlands it is not about who you are but what you can do. We want to believe our wealth is earned through our hard work. This means, that in dealing with our colonial past, we have to come to terms with the fact that our wealth is not entirely earned in a fair way.

Another part of Dutch identity is the self-image of an ethical and just country. This part of identity is also touched when dealing with the colonial past.

In general, the Netherlands has become a very multi-cultural country. However, Dutch policies have not really become more open to other cultures the past years. Generally policies focus on 'integration', meaning other cultures have to adapt to Dutch language, norms and traditions. This relates to theory about the nation state (the concept of which was formed through colonialism) versus the plurinational state. In the Netherlands, we still hold on closely to the idea of the nation state.

To sum this up, in order to come to terms with the colonial past, the Netherlands need to break open and reinvent the Dutch identity. That is why driving force 4 is central to this framework.

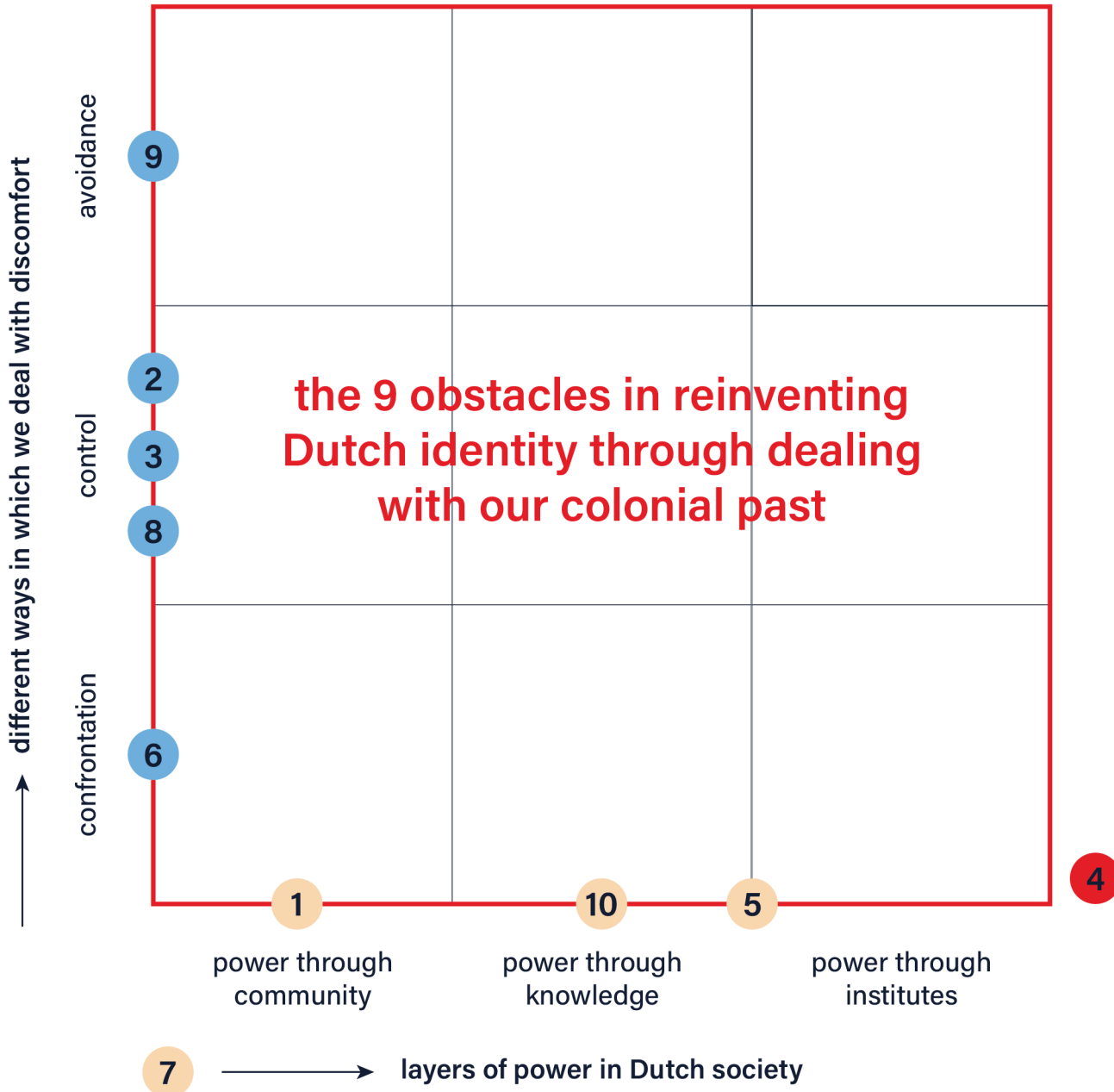


figure 18: Driving forces shown on the dimensions of the framework

3.2 Understanding the future together

3.2.1 Goal and method

The goal of these sessions (two in total) was to involve connected communities in the process of designing the future context. Specifically, during the sessions, feedback was asked on drafts of the framework.

To accommodate logistic factors and to ensure the depth of the conversation, the decision was made to do one-on-one sessions with experts from the communities. As the process of creating the framework is iterative, the content of the two sessions slightly differed. During the first session, a rough draft of the framework was presented and input was gathered both on the context factor level and the framework level. During the second session, a more mature version of the framework was presented, and the conversation mostly contributed in a better understanding of the behaviours within the cells of the framework. The materials used during these sessions can be found in Appendix 10.3.1 and 10.3.2.

In both sessions, the framework and separate cells were printed out, to start and support the conversation. Input was gathered on post-its.

I struggled a bit with how to bring the framework into a 'co-creation' session. The framework feels quite academic and abstract still, which might be difficult for participants to work with. I've tried to bring visuals and examples into the materials I brought, to stimulate the conversation.

3.2.2 Who to invite?

The goal for this session was to involve people who have a connection with the colonial past, for example through their cultural or familial background. Specifically people who also live in Utrecht.

I recruited experts from communities / organisations in Utrecht that are connected to the colonial past,

such as Ketí Koti Utrecht, Kumpuland Festival, and Tori Oso. Therefore, the people who were in my sessions were both 'first-hand experiences' in the sense that they have a personal connection to the colonial past, but they are also experts in the sense that they are professionally involved in project connected to the colonial past.

Eventually, two community experts were available to join me in a session.

3.2.3 Analysis

Feedback on the framework was gathered on post-its and afterwards the post-its were clustered to see patterns.

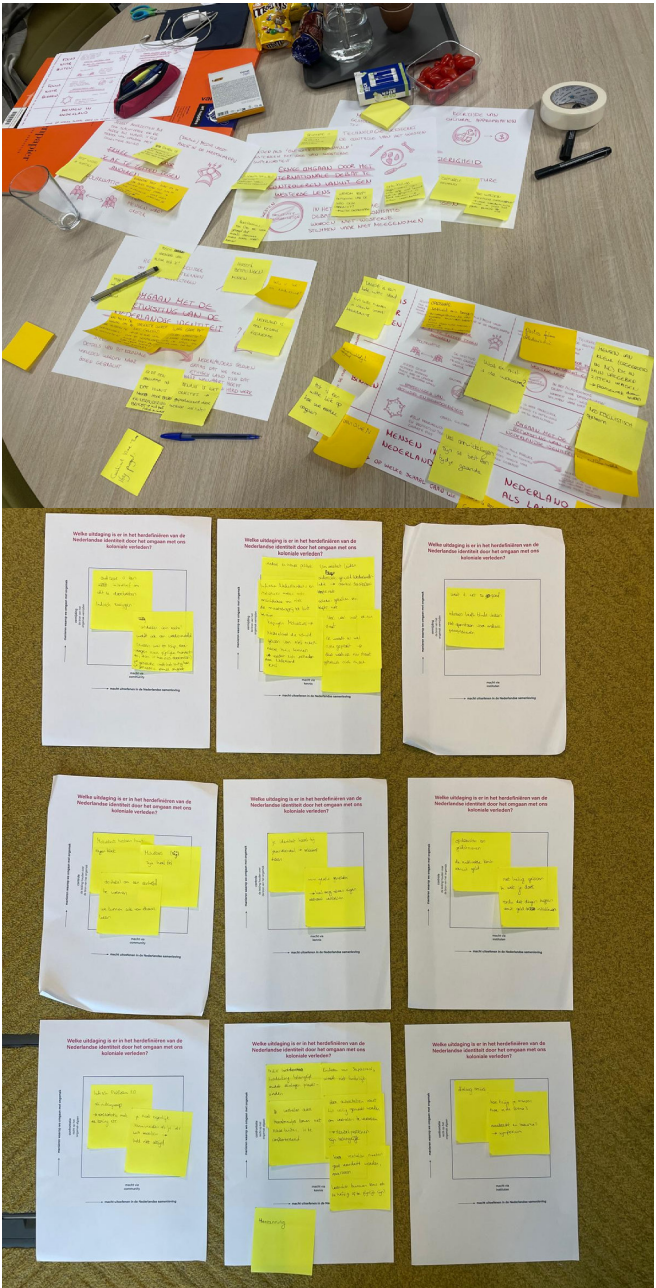


figure 19: Data gathering method used

3.2.4 Insights expert session 1

White gaze of the framework

During the session it was discussed that the presented framework is still made from a 'white gaze' as the frameworks shows how white people deal with the effects of colonialism, not how people of colour deal with it.

The power of institutes

It was discussed that institutes have the power to fix problems of racism and inequality. However, people making decisions in institutes are often (mostly) white people, which in itself is the problem. In some organisations, there is willingness to change this (for example in development organisations). However, it seems like the urgency is not felt and (white) people in charge do not know enough about colonialism and racism to execute these projects in the right way.

The power of knowledge

In the framework seems to be an assumption that more knowledge produces compassion and understanding. This is not always true. Furthermore, knowledge is often produced by Western institutions. Often, counter narratives from coloured people only last a short time and then disappear again.

Specifically about Utrecht

It was said that generally in Utrecht the conversation about colonialism and racism is still smaller than in Amsterdam for example. This could be, because in general Utrecht is a very white city.

The Netherlands becoming more right-wing

Generally, the Netherlands has become more right-wing over the past few years. This results in other narratives (counter-movements) being taken less seriously.

The difficulty to discuss racism in the Netherlands

It was discussed that some topics are very difficult to talk about in the Netherlands. For example, reparation payments is non-discussable.

Recognizing systemic racism in this project

In the session it was discussed it was difficult to enthuse participants to join an expert session and what might be the reason for this. It was explained that there might be a dynamic of systemic racism going on in this project itself. The municipality, in this case being the institute that holds power and money, has decided to collaborate on this theme with Academie van de Stad. Not only is Academie van de Stad a mostly white organisation, the goal of this collaboration is to work with students, and in this case I too am white. These things might result in affected communities not feeling taken seriously.

Where lies the solution?

The expert in this session calls for a different way of telling stories about people of colour, colonialism and racism. Current books about these topics are often very academic and do not appeal to the larger audience. Furthermore, it was discussed that showing people of colour in a victim role does not seem to work, so perhaps we should tell stories of accomplishments of black people.

This expert session was the first moment where I really felt the inequality in these kind of projects. I became more aware of my own position. I did not see myself as an actor with power, being a student. However, the expert pointed out the strong position of the TU Delft and the fact that the municipality invested in me to do this project. I realized I have in some ways power in this position, whether this is fair or not. This also means I can truly hurt people if I don't handle it well. I did think of this before, but I did not feel the weight of it until now.

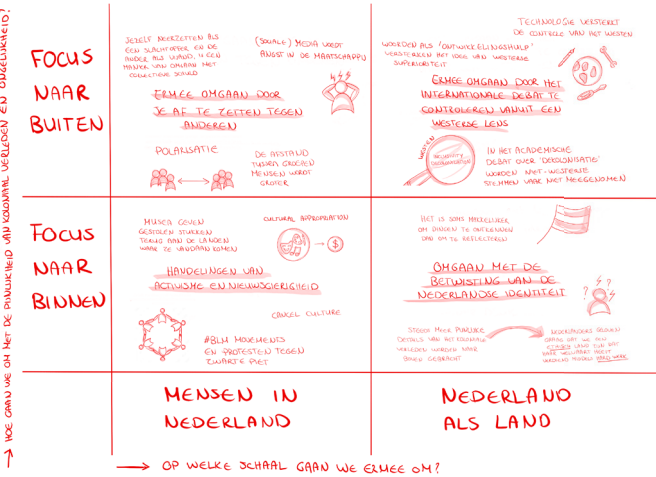


figure 20: First draft of framework used during expert session

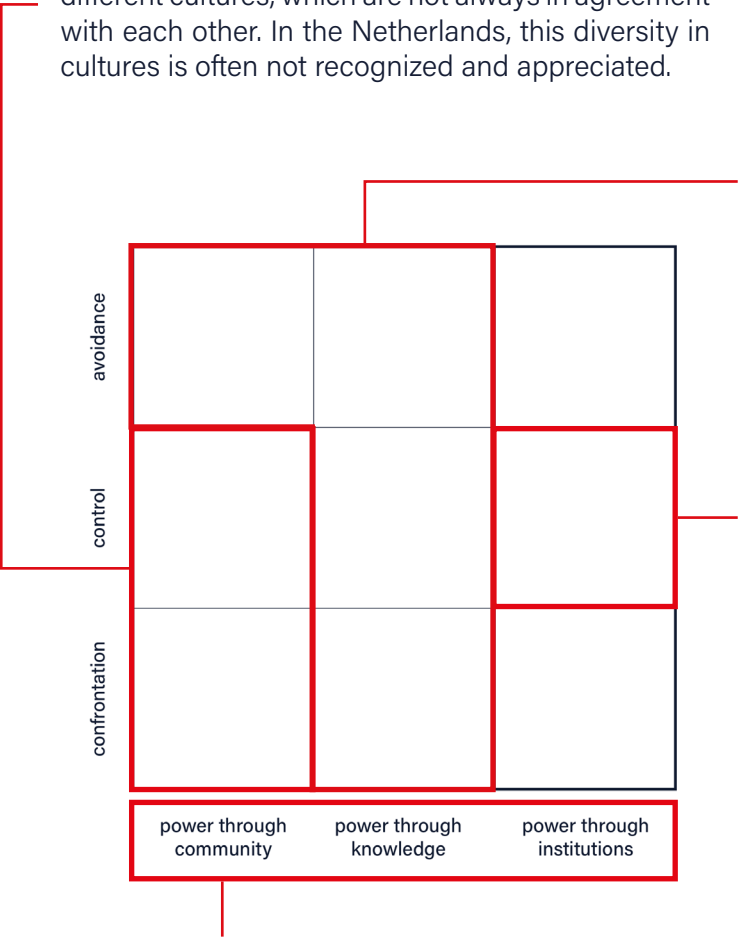
3.2.5 Insights expert session 2

Division between communities

This expert had a lot of stories on the behaviour of 'confrontation x community' (at this moment in time, this behaviour was not yet phrased specifically as confrontation between communities). It was discussed how, often, there is conflict between different communities, rather than that they work together to make impact.

This 'we' versus 'them' mindset is noticeable in this conversation as well, when the experts speaks of 'they' when talking about Dutch identity or Moluccan culture ('they can be very sharp in their communication').

The expert also mentioned that often it is forgotten that within the region of Indonesia, there are many different cultures, which are not always in agreement with each other. In the Netherlands, this diversity in cultures is often not recognized and appreciated.



Role of 'key figures'

This expert highlight the role of 'key figures': People that connect all three dimensions of power. These key figures have a lot of knowledge, are often part of a communities and have influence in institutions.

Which stories do we tell and how to tell them?

It was discussed that when we want challenge the dominant narrative, authorities need to make it safe for people and communities to tell stories. 'Key persons' can play a role in this.

Furthermore, we need to think about which stories we tell. Some stories are still too painful and end up hurting or retraumatizing people. A development which is currently happening, is that 'rediscovering roots' is becoming a model for revenue. In programs that center on this rediscovery, people are sometimes pushed too tell stories they are not ready to share. According to this expert, this is not the way to go. Often in narratives, selective truths are being told. We discussed that personal identity is always part of the story you tell, and therefore it makes sense that information is shared selectively.

The expert mentions that when telling stories, it is also important to think about how they can become nation-wide. Often these type of projects stay quite small. One important factor in this is recognition. When a story is too selective in the information it shares, it sometimes loses recognition for a wider audience.

Follow the money

The experts mentioned that money might still be missing in the framework, but that this is a big part of what is happening within institutions. Motivation comes from money and it often happens that projects come to a standstill due to financial reasons.

3.3 Presenting the Future Framework

As mentioned before, the future framework is an important design outcome of this project. So what does this 'future framework' mean and why is it important?

The aim of the framework is to describe how society might relate to the colonial past in the future, based on developments and patterns that are already visible today. In this way, the framework is not a prediction, but a tool for understanding possible future dynamics and identifying where opportunities for change may lie.

While it is the aim to first understand this world, before passing moral judgement, it has become clear from the driving forces and the community expert sessions that our (both mine and that from

the experts) view on how society is dealing with the colonial past is not necessarily a positive one. To make the framework as supporting as possible in moving towards a more desirable future, it is framed as 'obstacles in reinventing Dutch identity through dealing with our colonial past'. By making these obstacles visible, the framework helps reveal possible breakthrough points for societal transition.

The framework consists of nine cells, each describing a different type of societal behaviour in relation to the colonial past. It is important to understand that the cells do not describe fixed groups of people with typical behaviour, but that it describes behaviours that emerge in different situations. Therefore, one person may recognize themselves in multiple cells of the framework.

the 9 obstacles in reinventing Dutch identity through dealing with our colonial past

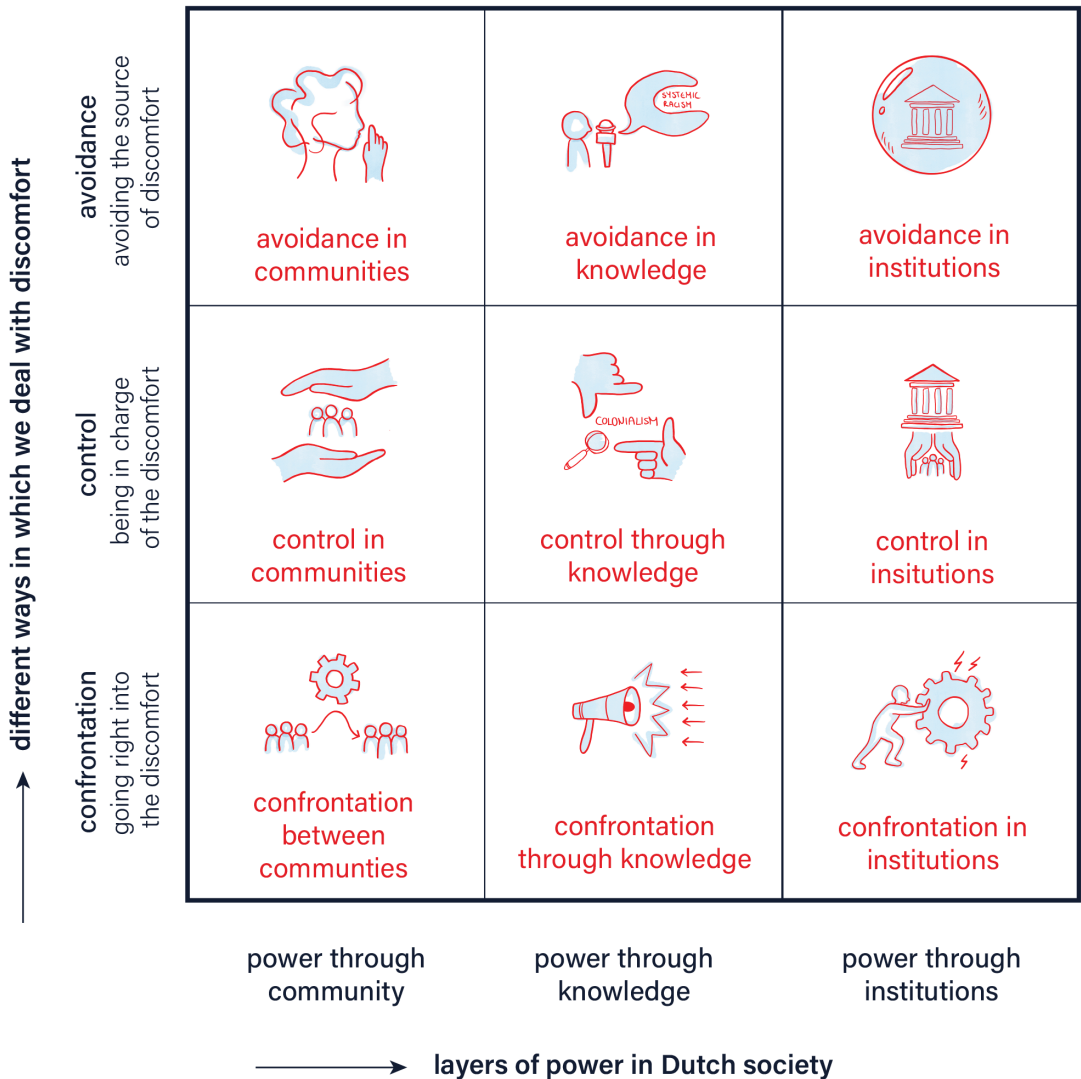


figure 21: Future framework explaining the ways Dutch society deals with the colonial past

3.4 Future behaviours

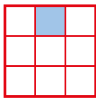
Here, the future behaviours that take place within the cells of the framework will be further explained. The behaviours have emerged through revisiting the context factors in driving forces that are related to specific cells, and through the sessions with community experts.



avoidance in communities

This behaviour reflects a tendency to withdraw from conversations about the colonial past because they evoke emotional pain or social tension. The discomfort may stem from personal histories, but also from the friction, resistance or discomfort these dialogues introduce within groups. As a result, silence becomes a coping mechanism, which reinforces gaps in awareness about the colonial past and its lasting influence on Dutch society. Avoidance can also take more subtle forms, such as adapting one's behaviour, language, or cultural expression to align with dominant norms, in order to prevent tension or avoid confronting the topic altogether.

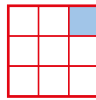
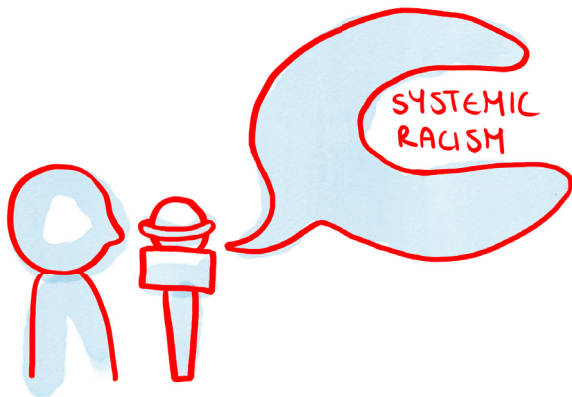
Within communities, people gravitate toward like-minded others, creating social circles where difficult topics are easily avoided and where communal comfort outweighs critical conversation. This avoidance is only becoming easier, as bubbles within society (and especially within cities) are growing further apart, spatially, economically and in mind-set.



avoidance in knowledge

This behaviour surfaces in research, education, and media narratives where systemic racism in Dutch society is downplayed or denied. It does not imply a total absence of discussion about the colonial past, but rather a reluctance to name racism and structural oppression openly. When racism is addressed, the focus often stays on individual stories or personal experiences, which allows the deeper systemic layer to remain unexamined. By avoiding explicit language, systemic inequality becomes invisible, supporting a self-image of white innocence. A fear of criticism, intensified in an increasingly digital world where statements are easily amplified or misinterpreted, encourages people to remain silent.

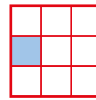
Looking ahead, this pattern may become stronger, especially within public organisations. In contexts where statements are quickly judged and widely shared, the stakes of speaking out increase. For (people within) organisations, being explicit about systemic racism can feel risky. As a result, speaking carefully or staying vague can seem safer than being clear. Conversations about the colonial past may therefore become more indirect and less precise, making it harder to name systemic racism and limiting opportunities for deeper reflection and change.



avoidance in institutions

This type of behaviour describes how people within institutions surround themselves with like-minded individuals, to avoid dealing with different perspectives and resistance when making decisions. In practice, this reproduces dominant demographic patterns, often white and male, and limits the viewpoints considered in decision-making. As a result, institutional choices often fail to reflect the experiences of those most affected by them. Increasingly, this avoidance also appears in the form of symbolic gestures toward addressing the colonial past, such as issuing apologies or statements that acknowledge harm, while leaving the underlying structures, power relations, and material consequences unchanged. These symbolic actions create the impression of progress without engaging in the deeper, more uncomfortable work of transformation.

Because institutions play a major role in shaping Dutch identity (for example through migration and integration policies, and public narratives), this avoidance obstructs the possibility of collectively reimagining that identity.

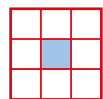


control in communities

This behaviour arises when communities fear that their cultural identity may be weakened, misunderstood, or lost. These fears can emerge for many reasons: pressures to assimilate, integration policies that prioritise certain norms over others, or the shifting cultural landscape that comes with a more diverse society and growing attention to the colonial past. To regain a sense of stability and control, communities may hold tightly to their own cultural expressions, traditions, and narratives. This protective stance can create rigidity around identity, making openness to other cultures feel risky or threatening.

At the same time, when people do engage with other cultures, this engagement is often shaped by their own comfort and terms. Elements of another culture may be embraced because they appear interesting, exotic, or personally enriching, rather than out of a desire to understand their deeper meaning. Influenced by social media and increased travel, this selective curiosity can unintentionally flatten or distort the cultural realities of others, reinforcing unequal dynamics in how culture is encountered and represented.

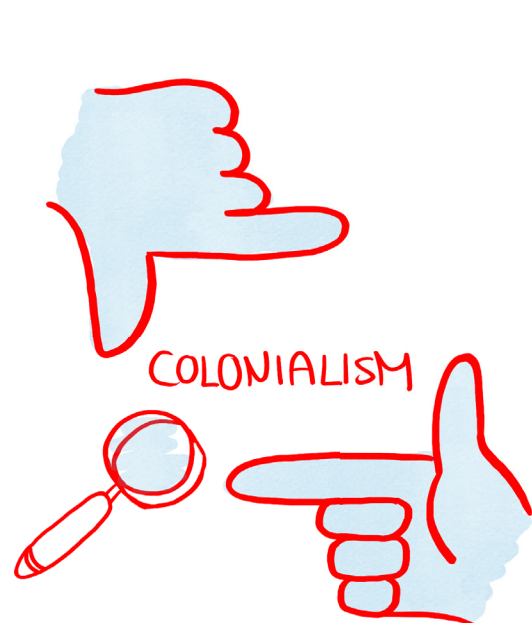




control through knowledge

This behaviour describes attempts to manage discomfort by shaping and controlling the narratives around (de)colonialism. Unequal power dynamics are reinforced through selective language and partial truths. Defensive mechanisms, often unconsciously, guide the creation of narratives that feel understandable, familiar, and emotionally manageable. Even when people recognise the colonial past as an important topic and actively give it attention, their engagement can remain safely within dominant frames, unintentionally sustaining a self-image of innocence and existing power relations rather than disrupting them. Within these controlled narratives, the experiences of others are included only insofar as they do not challenge the dominant worldview, positioning “the other” as less capable, less developed, or less legitimate.

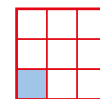
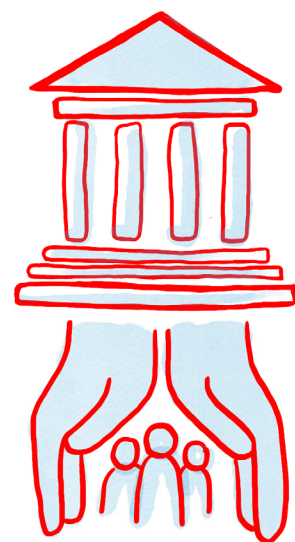
In an increasingly algorithm-driven information landscape, these tendencies are reinforced rather than challenged. People are more likely to encounter knowledge that aligns with what they already believe, allowing controlled narratives to remain intact instead of being challenged.



control in institutions

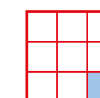
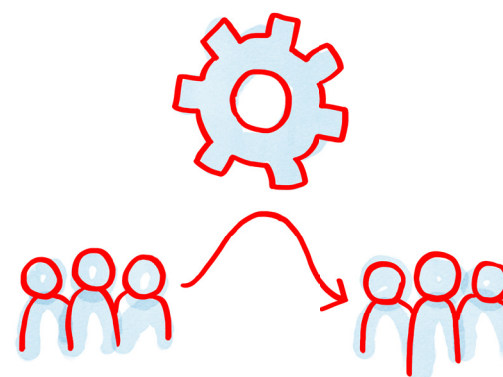
This behaviour occurs when institutions recognise the need to address the colonial past, racism, and inequality but retain control over the processes meant to address them. Those in positions of authority, especially when funding and responsibility are involved, struggle to relinquish power. This often reflects a paternalistic approach: people aim to “help” marginalized communities but limit their ownership and decision-making, keeping them dependent rather than empowered. As a result, project direction, priorities, content, and resources continue to be determined by those at the top, reducing the influence of the communities most affected. Efforts around racism or decolonisation can then shift towards demonstrating progress, rather than enabling meaningful change, allowing institutions to maintain control over how their role and responsibility are presented.

This pattern is mirrored at a global level, where power imbalances between countries are reinforced by similar paternalistic approaches. Expanding digital technologies risk strengthening existing hierarchies.



confrontation between communities

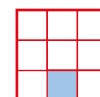
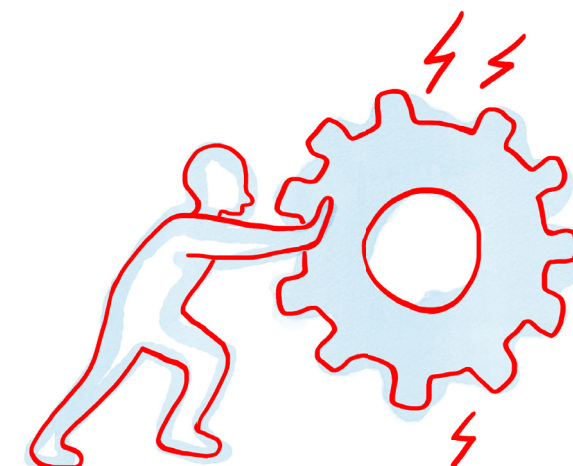
This behaviour emerges when discomfort transforms into confrontation, but the energy is redirected toward other communities rather than toward the systemic structures causing the discomfort. Historical divide-and-conquer tactics have contributed to the pattern of communities turning toward one another as the most visible “opponents,” since confronting an inaccessible system is more difficult. This misdirection intensifies division and makes collective action and impact more difficult.



confrontation in institutions

This behaviour reflects increasing attempts to change institutions from within. Those engaged in this work often encounter slow, rigid processes that limit progress. Feelings of frustration grow when change is very slow, when people feel unheard, or when the system keeps blocking change. At the same time, attempts to confront these issues can be met with resistance from colleagues or leadership, ranging from subtle pushback to actively being dismissed, excluded, or sidelined. Those who continue to speak up may be labelled as ‘difficult,’ increasing the personal risk of being isolated.

Confronting the system in this way demands continuous emotional and practical effort: repeatedly explaining, justifying, and navigating defensive reactions, often without visible results. Sustaining this effort over time can be difficult, making it harder to continue confrontation within the institution, despite holding a position from which change could be made.



confrontation through knowledge

This behaviour is characterised by efforts to challenge dominant norms through provocative or disruptive storytelling. People seek visibility and recognition for narratives that deviate from the mainstream. Social media platforms increasingly enable these counter-narratives to emerge, offering spaces where voices that are often overlooked by traditional media can gain attention.

However, this visibility comes with a dilemma: the further these stories move away from widely accepted frames, the more resistance, or dismissal they can provoke. In trying to stand apart from dominant narratives, it can be difficult to connect to a broader audience. As a result, narratives meant to confront can end up isolated rather than influential.

4 taking a position

In the previous chapter, the future framework and its 9 cells with societal behaviours was described.

In this chapter I move from 'objective' observation to taking a position towards a desirable future. Firstly, for each cell of the framework a statement (which is a design vision) is created. Then, the 'stakeholder meeting' with both the municipality and community

experts is described, where the behaviours of the framework and statements are discussed. From this session arise insights on which cell to further work out regarding the tangible intervention. Finally, for the chosen cell, the statement is worked out more elaborately.

In the next chapter, the concepting phase of the project will be described.

4.1 Statements

In this chapter, I will take a position in the framework and towards a desirable future. I will do this by defining 'statements' (or design visions) for each of the nine cells, which explain what I want to offer people with the concept that I will design. The goal of the statement is to make underlying values and beliefs explicit, as designing is never a neutral process. In this case, I find it important that these statements do not only arise from my personal beliefs and a values, but also from those of the affected communities.

For the creation of the statements I have used two tools. One of them is the 'taxonomy of human goals' (Ford & Nichols, 1987). This has helped me in making explicitly which human goals I want to offer people through my design.

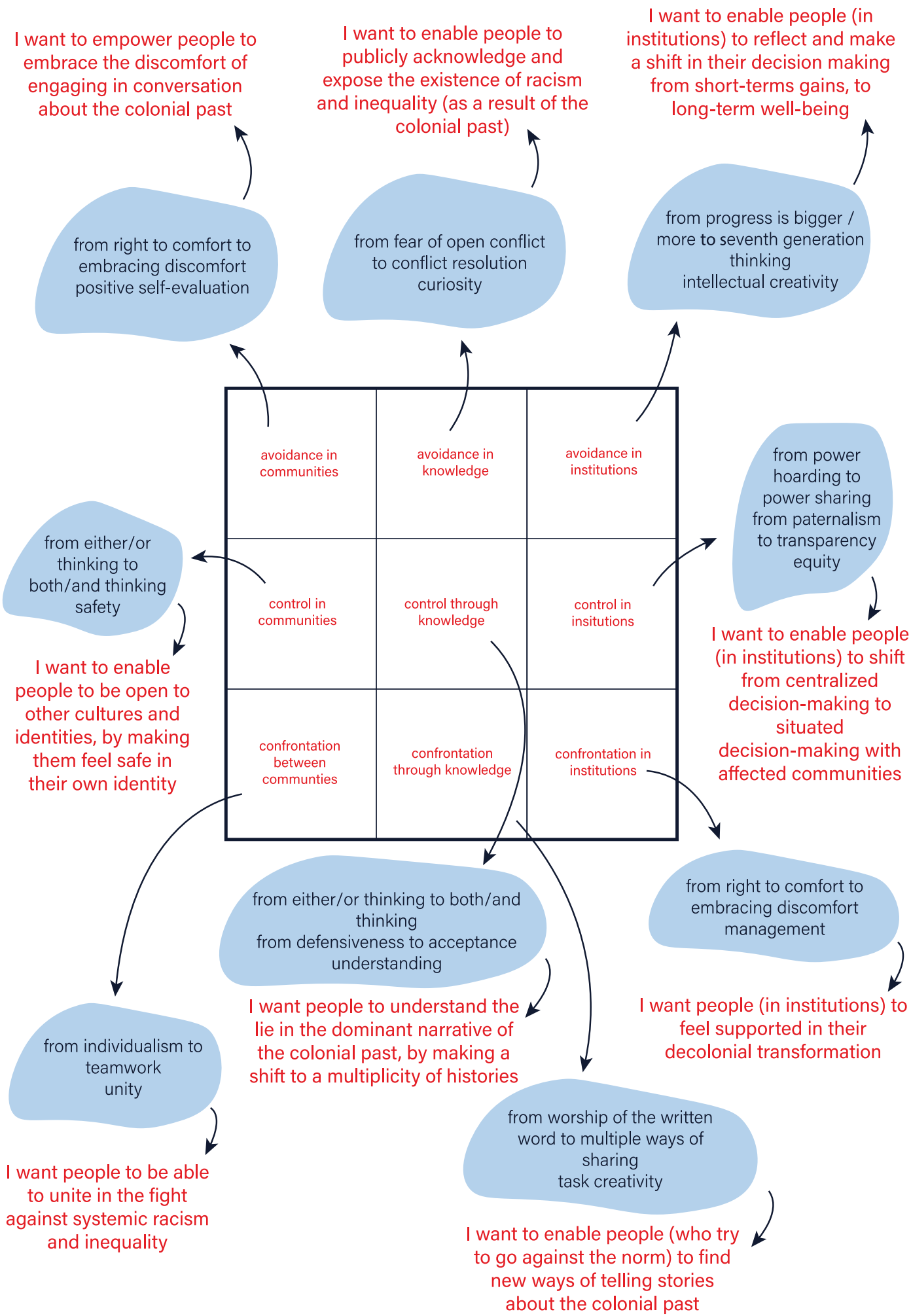
Secondly, I have used the list with 'white supremacy values' and their according antidotes from Jones and Okun, which can be seen in figure 22 (Jones & Okun, 2001). This list describes characteristics of white supremacy culture that are deeply embedded in attitudes and behaviours. It has helped me see which white supremacy values are underlying the behaviours described in the framework, as well as the antidotes values which I then integrated in the statements. I have used this list as a check against my own 'white gaze.'

On the following page the statements are presented, as well as the human goals and antidote values they were based on. To make sure the values from affected communities align with the statements, both the framework and the statements will be discussed during a session with the municipality and community experts.

White Supremacy Cultural Value	Antidote to White Supremacy
Perfectionism	Appreciation
Sense of Urgency	Realistic Expectations
Defensiveness	Acceptance
Quantity over Quality	Values and Process
Worship of the Written Word	Multiple Ways of Sharing
Individualism/I Am the Only One	Teamwork/Delegation
Either/Or Thinking	Both/And Thinking
Power Hoarding	Power Sharing
Objectivity	Subjectivity
Paternalism	Transparency
Fear of Open Conflict	Conflict Resolution
Progress Is Bigger/More	Seventh-Generation Thinking
Right to Comfort	Embrace Discomfort

Table 3.1 Jones and Okun’s list of the characteristics of white supremacy culture and the characteristics of their antidotes. From “White Supremacy Culture,” *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups*.

figure 22: Table with white supremacy values and their antidotes from tehe book 'Decolonizing Design' (Tunstall, 2023)



4.2 Stakeholder meeting

4.1.1 Goal

The goal of this session was to include affected communities in defining a (design) direction for the project. The direction will be defined by choosing one of the nine cells of the framework to continue with, as there is no time available to further work out all nine directions.

Originally, this was one of the meetings planned with the municipality to update them on the progress of the project and receive feedback. As the meetings with the municipality (five in total throughout the project) are important moments when it comes to defining project direction and content, it was decided that community experts should be invited to this meeting, to include them in the decision-making process.

4.1.2 Method

For this session, the future framework was printed out, as were 9 sheets with the different future behaviours and corresponding design directions (not the final version, the used version can be found in Appendix 10.4). Visualisations were used to make the information more easily transferable to the audience. For the same goal, several example concepts were included.

Time was allocated for the audience to get familiar with the behaviours and the directions and then dot voting was used as a way of inquiring about direction. Three different questions were used for the dot voting to gather thoughts on both importance, urgency, and scope for the project.

- Which behaviour is the biggest obstacle in dealing with the colonial past?
- Which behaviour is most urgent to break through?
- Which design direction has the most potential for the scope of this project?

Finally, the conversation was guided based on the future behaviours and design directions that got a lot dot votes. Community experts were asked why they placed their votes.

4.1.3 Who to invite?

For this session, community experts were invited, meaning I invited several organisations in Utrecht that are already doing projects about the colonial past and/or celebrate cultures of countries previously colonised by the Netherlands.

Eventually, three community experts were available to join this session. Furthermore, the two project supervisors from the municipality and the project supervisor from Academie van de Stad were part of the session.

I remain finding it difficult how to organize an inclusive session. It is always the 'active' parties that have a voice. There are also people I have invited that have never responded. This might be just because they are busy but it is also possible there is a different reason. Maybe I have handled something wrong in the process. However, when I cannot reach these people, how do I ever find out?



figure 23: Dot voting during the stakeholder meeting

4.1.4 Insights

Recognition of the behaviours

In general, the future behaviours seemed very recognizable. During reading, sounds like these were heard from the audience: "Ah yes this is so true", "Yes this is really a problem". When asked if this framework represents developments in society or if something is missing, the reaction was that time was too short to say it is representative, but also no suggestions of what was missing came up.

Institutes as the biggest obstacle

During the 'dot voting' it was highlighted by experts that the orange stickers were applicable to the institutions. The behaviours including institutions were seen as the biggest obstacles, but as not in the scope of this project to solve. Specifically mentioned about the behaviour 'avoidance in institutions' was that the higher you get in an institute, the less diverse it is. It was also said that the municipality of Utrecht itself is an example of this behaviour.

Looking at the results of the dot voting, the behaviour 'avoidance in knowledge' has also received a lot of orange stickers.

Where lies potential?

The most potential for this project was seen in cells 5 and 8, 'control through knowledge' and 'confrontation through knowledge'. About 'control through knowledge' it was said this is 'very necessary and that it fits well within this project'. About 'confrontation through knowledge' was said that the biggest problem still is that many people do not know anything about the colonial past. It was also mentioned that some previous projects which were successful (such as the 'Bitterzoete Route') slowly disappeared. All the physical parts from the Bitterzoete Route for example, have faded and are no longer visible in Lombok. In general it was said that the topic of the colonial past is not a defined project with an end date, but an ongoing process.

What is also interesting to mention is that the behaviour 'control in communities' was seen as the most urgent behaviour to solve.

Dynamics between communities

During the session it was noticeable that several experts already knew each other and that there was a dynamic going on. These experts already have ongoing collaborations with the municipality and there seemed to be frustration when one organization (and expert) was involved in a collaboration and another was not. Furthermore, frustration in earlier

communication with each other came up during the introduction round. This behaviour seems to reflect the behaviour described in cell 7, 'confrontation between communities'.

Critique on the municipality and process

During the session, experts explained that it was frustrating for them to be asked regularly by the municipality to think along with these kind of projects, while never being paid for this and not seeing concrete results.

Situated knowledge

One thing that was mentioned about the framework in general, was that it was missing specific knowledge about Utrecht. The direction seemed quite 'big' and 'general' to the experts. One expert mentioned in the feedback form that the direction felt like repetition of what was already know and that my 'specific knowledge' on the topic was missing.

This session has brought quite some critique on the municipality and on this project. It has made me think about how to deal with this critique.

On the one hand, I want to take this critique very seriously, as it comes from experts with lived experiences that I do not have. On the other hand, it happens that participants in a design process do not always understand the process or the value of a framework that is presented. So when an expert says 'what you present is repetition and not new insights', is this because the framework is not the right tool to use in such a session, or because I do not understand their lived experience?

Another point of reflection on this critique is more personal. Given the already sensitivity of this project, such critique adds more weight to this. While it is important to understand the weight, it can sometimes always create paralysis for me, which is not contributing to the design process.

4.3 Choosing direction

After defining the statements and taking a position, the next step in the process is ideation and concepting, with the aim of arriving at a tangible proposal for society. Given the time and resources allocated to this project, it is unfortunately not possible to carry out a concepting phase for all nine statements. While all nine cells are important, this project will focus on developing a concept for one selected cell.

In deciding on a direction for this project, several arguments were taken into account. I considered the conversation that took place during the stakeholder meeting, as well as my personal intuition about what feels most impactful at this moment and what aligns with me as a designer. Finally, I considered which cells fit within the scope of this project and are feasible to work on, which was also discussed during the stakeholder meeting.

Personally, I find the 'control' row of the framework the most interesting to explore in more depth. I recognize myself most in this type of behaviour, and I believe this is where the biggest pitfalls for the project itself can be found. The cells in this row describe behaviours in which people may believe they are doing something positive (for example, by giving attention to the topic because they find it important), while unconsciously contributing to the dominant narrative and existing power structures.

When looking at the types of projects that are already being carried out within the theme of 'awareness about the colonial past,' I see that a lot is happening particularly in two cells: 'control through knowledge' and 'control in institutions.' I will shortly explain how these behaviours can be recognized within this specific project. The cell 'control in institutions' is reflected in the way projects are organized within the municipality. Decisions about the municipality's position, the types of projects that are initiated, and the allocation of funding are made at the top, while the people most affected are often not included in these decisions.

The cell 'control through knowledge' might be even more present in this project. As mentioned in the introduction, students have previously written texts about the histories behind street names in Utrecht. When reviewing these texts during a decolonial workshop, we were shocked by how 'colonial' they were written, reinforcing the idea that colonization has been beneficial for colonized countries. Without pointing fingers at the municipality or my fellow

students, I think this shows how a project can be harmful, even when it is driven by good intentions.

During the stakeholder meeting, it was agreed that behaviour within the 'institutions' column forms the biggest obstacle when working towards decolonization. At the same time, it was acknowledged that designing for these cells might not be feasible or within the scope of this project. The cells 'control through knowledge' and 'confrontation through knowledge' received the most votes for 'design direction which has the most potential for the scope of this project.' In addition, community experts expressed a desire to finally see tangible results after having been asked multiple times to contribute their perspectives.

Taking all these considerations together, I feel that the cell 'control through knowledge' is the most suitable and impactful for this project to continue with. As there is already a lot of momentum within this cell, I believe a tangible intervention can help turn this momentum into something positive! Furthermore, this direction allows the project to build on the work of previous students. While their writing might not be sufficiently decolonial yet, the stories they uncovered hold a lot of value, and I believe that by concepting within this cell, this value can be meaningfully used.

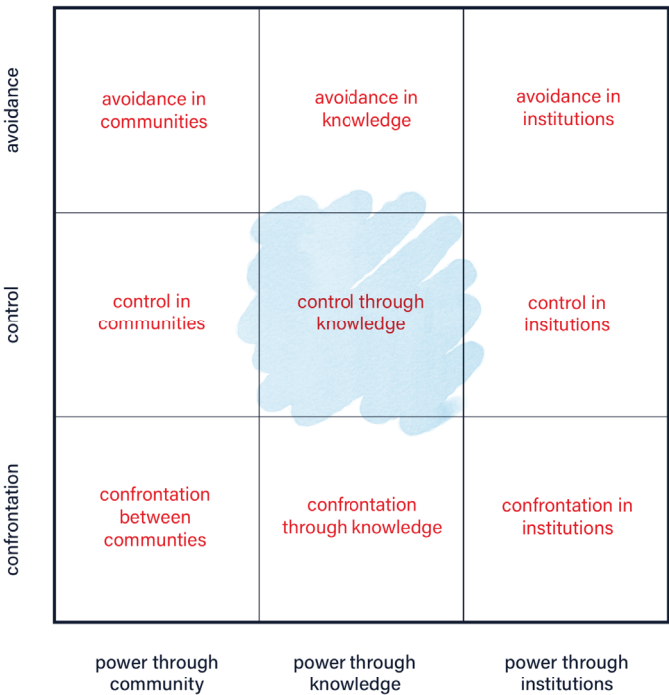


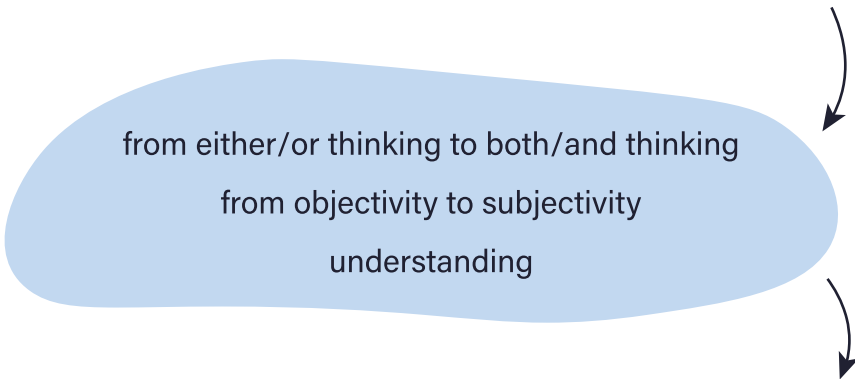
figure 24: Choosing direction

4.4 Final statement

FUTURE BEHAVIOUR

This behaviour describes attempts to manage discomfort by shaping and controlling the narratives around (de)colonialism. Unequal power dynamics are reinforced through selective language and partial truths. Defensive mechanisms, often unconsciously, guide the creation of narratives that feel understandable, familiar, and emotionally manageable. Even when people recognise the colonial past as an important topic and actively give it attention, their engagement can remain safely within dominant frames, unintentionally sustaining a self-image of innocence and existing power relations rather than disrupting them. Within these controlled narratives, the experiences of others are included only insofar as they do not challenge the dominant worldview, positioning "the other" as less capable, less developed, or less legitimate.

In an increasingly algorithm-driven information landscape, these tendencies are reinforced rather than challenged. People are more likely to encounter knowledge that aligns with what they already believe, allowing controlled narratives to remain intact instead of being challenged.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"I want people to understand the 'lie' in the dominant narrative of the colonial past by making a shift towards a multiplicity of histories."

Understanding, in this sense, means recognising the harm in Dutch coping mechanisms when it comes to dealing with the colonial past. Rather than holding on to narratives that feel controllable and manageable, I want to disrupt the assumption that the story people know is complete and accurate. This involves recognising that all knowledge is framed by perspective, and that what has long been accepted as objective truth is always shaped, partial, and positioned.

The effect of this need for control is the dominant narrative of colonialism: stories that downplay Dutch responsibility, soften violence, or frame colonialism as incidental or even beneficial. These narratives persist not because they are accurate, but because they are easier to accept and reproduce.

I want people to realise that the way the Netherlands currently makes sense of the colonial past is in itself problematic. By breaking through the need to contain history and by accepting its complexity and contradictions, I want to open up space for doubt, reorientation, and re-learning. This shift makes it possible for people to recognise that what once felt self-evident is not the whole story, and allows multiple histories to exist alongside one another as equally necessary perspectives.

5 concepting

In the previous chapter one of the cells of the framework was selected to further work out a concept.

In this chapter the concept is developed. Before directly moving to the 'product', the interaction is designed. Knowing what the human – product relationship should be like, will help in designing a product which delivers the

intended value and meaning (as described in the final statement), and fits the context. In this case, an analogy for the interaction is created with a situation from a different domain. From this analogy, fresh inspiration can be drawn for the product qualities, which will then be used during the concept development. In the remaining of the chapter, the process of the concept development is explained.

5.1 Interaction analogy

The interaction in this context can be compared to the moment you realize your parents are human: flawed, complex, and not all-knowing. When you were younger, your parents seemed like superheroes. They were reliable, certain, and protective; a stable and self-evident foundation in your life.

At some point, however, this once unquestioned image begins to shift. Imagine watching a documentary about a topic you thought you already understood, one your parents often explained with confidence. The documentary introduces perspectives, voices, and connections that were never part of those explanations, revealing aspects you were not previously exposed to. Without directly contradicting what your parents told you, it makes you aware that the story can be told differently.

This documentary is not unique, it is simply one example of an encounter that can trigger this shift. Sooner or later, such a moment is inevitable. Whether through a book, a conversation, or a theatre play, you encounter perspectives that do not align with

the explanations you received from your parents. What these encounters have in common is that they spark curiosity and invite reflection on the role your parents have played in the way you view the world.

Slowly, this realization extends beyond the topic itself. You begin to understand that your parents were not describing an objective reality, but a particular perspective shaped by their own experiences, values, and context.

This forces you to readjust the way you look at your parents. The once self-evident and comforting image you relied on no longer fully holds. Doubt and reorientation emerge, and this can be uncomfortable or even painful. Yet the shift is inevitable, because they are still your parents. Your relationship with them fundamentally changes: you start noticing complexity where there was certainty before, and you become more critical of the things they tell you. You have to accept the uncertainty that comes with parents who are human.

“like reshifting the image you have of your parents”

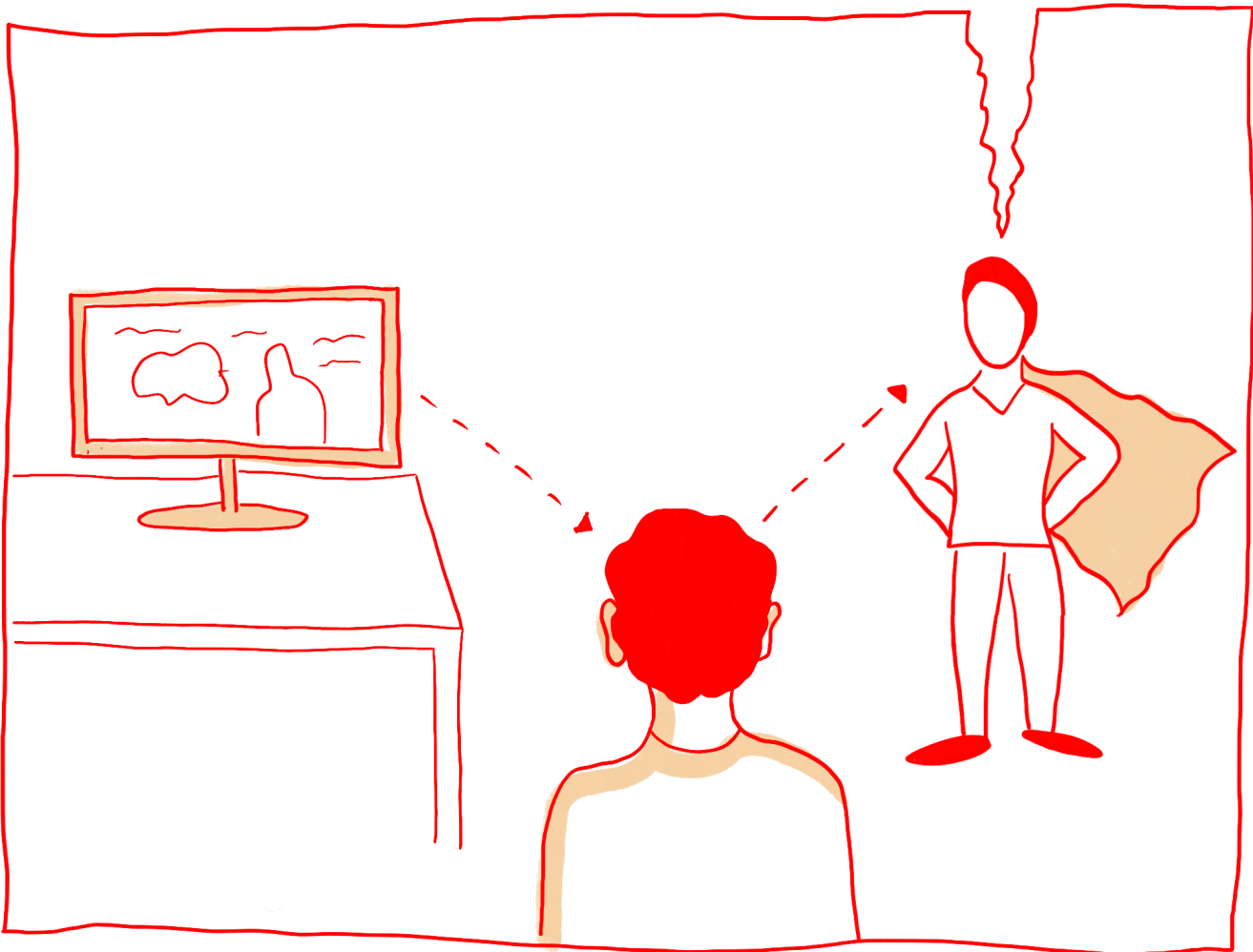


figure 25: Visualization of interaction analogy

5.2 Product qualities

From the interaction analogy, product qualities emerged that will cause the user to interact with the product in the intended way. Through concepting with the first four product qualities, it was discovered that there was still a quality missing. Therefore, a fifth quality has been added later on.

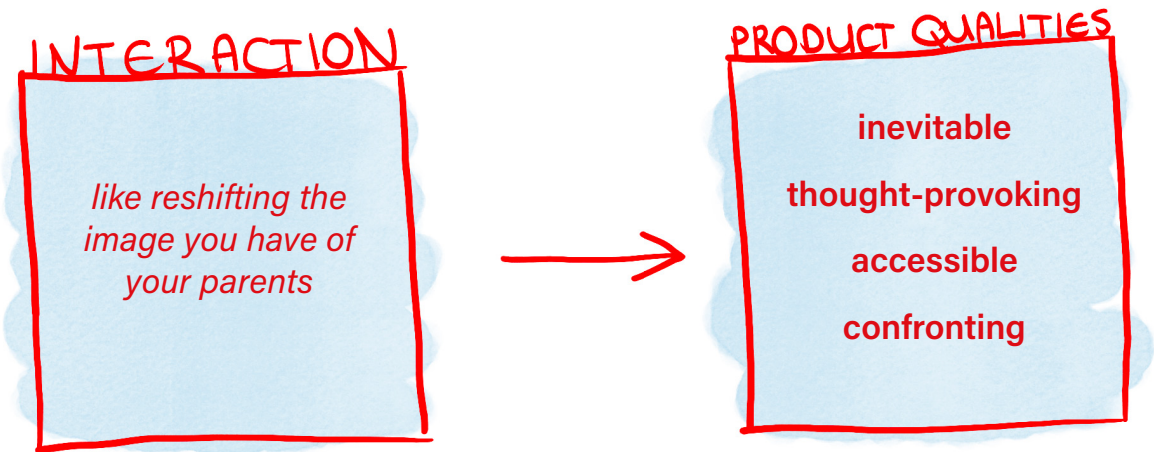


figure 26: Initial Product qualities

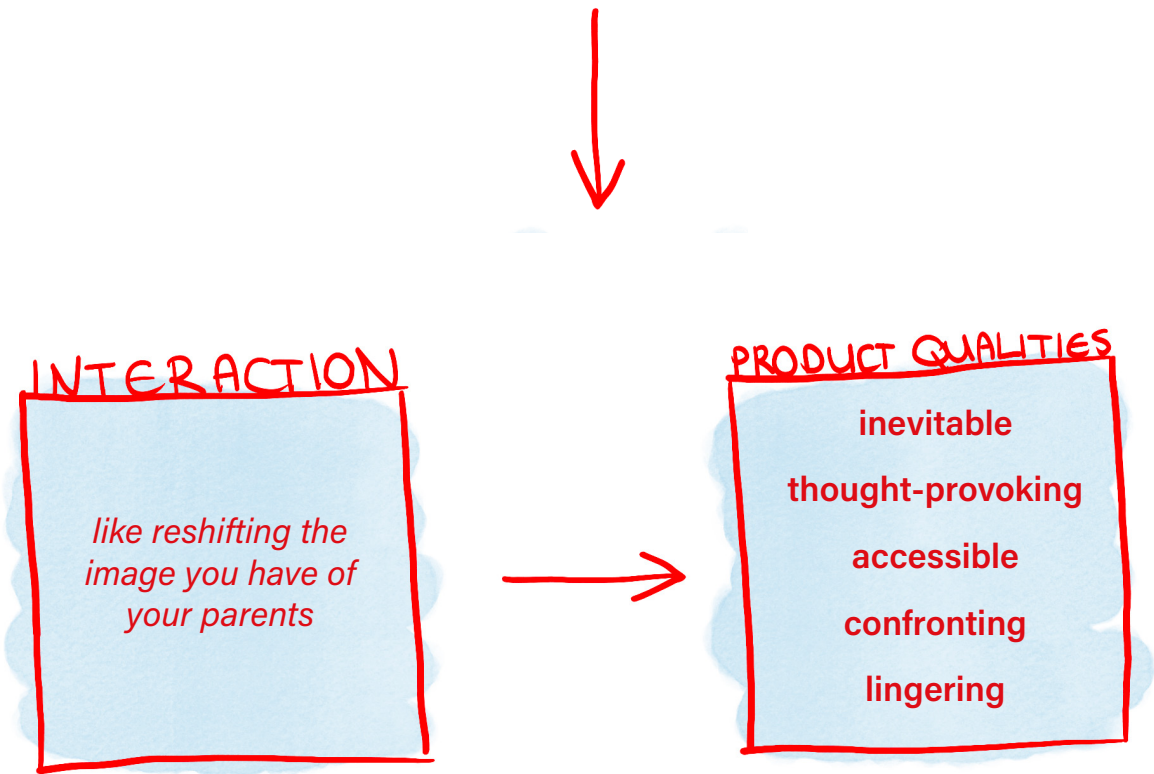


figure 27: Product qualities updated after concepting

5.3 Concepting - first round

5.3.1 Process

For this phase of concepting, words from the interaction analogy were used to stimulate brainstorming. Probing questions like "How to break through a worldview in a confronting / inevitable / reflective way?" and "What kind of interactions trigger reflection?" were used to stimulate ideas.

5.3.2 Results and reflections

When looking at the results of this concepting round (one example can be seen below in figure 28 and the others in appendix 10.5.1), it stands out that all concepts are installations for in public space. All concepts are focused on showing the difference between multiple narratives, to help people reflect on the dominant narrative.

While a public installation might be of interest to the municipality, it possibly does not fit with the vision and interaction analogy described before. For an installation you need to stop and take the time to look at it, when you pass it by. This does not really fit

with the 'inevitable' part of the analogy. Furthermore, it is questionable if reflection will take place after the moment of interaction. What might be more suitable is a concept which is woven into daily life, creating multiple inevitable encounters with the topic, like is described in the analogy.

Furthermore, these concepts are very much based on written text, which is typical for a white gaze (see the 'white supremacy cultural values' in the table in chapter 4.1). In the next round of concepting, it is good to brainstorm about including 'multiple ways of sharing'.

When I look at these concepts, I realize they are all about comparing different words and stories. This is still based mostly on written text (worship of the written word), while there are many 'other ways of knowing'. It feels like these concepts are made for white people who don't know anything about the colonial past. How can I create a concept which is not formed through a white gaze?

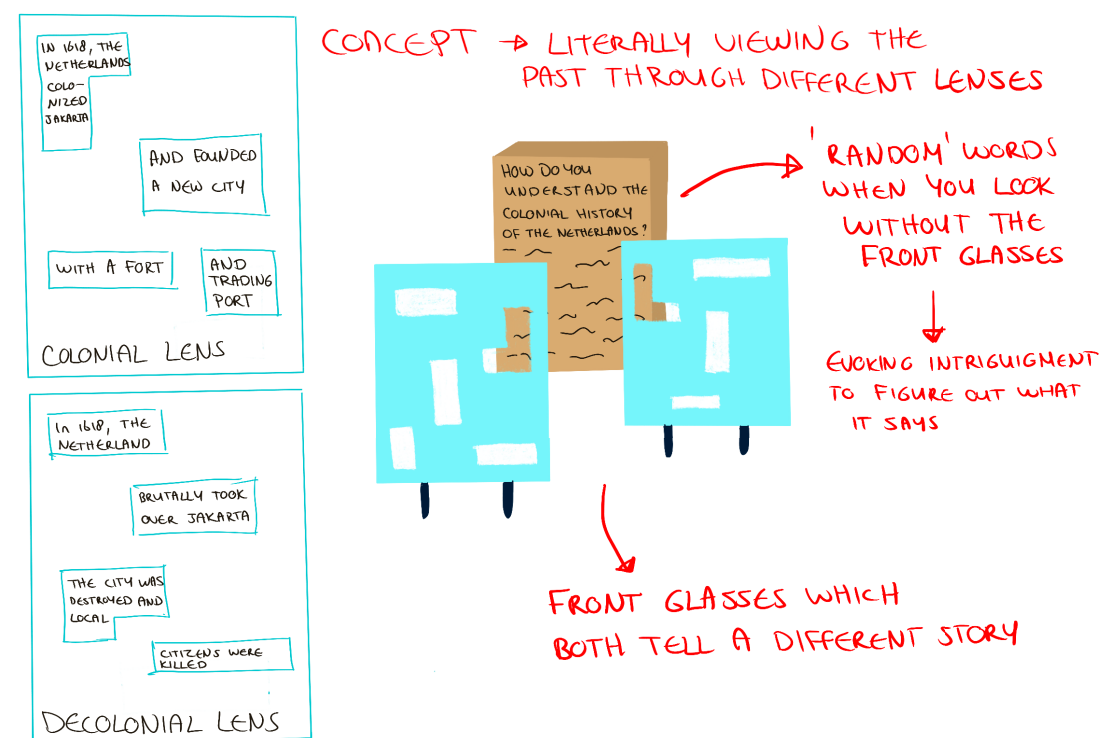


figure 28: Concept example from concepting round 1

5.4 Concepting - second round

5.4.1 Process

The first goal for this round of concepting was to explore interactions that are woven into daily life and rituals, which will trigger a reflection. Furthermore, I wanted to brainstorm on 'other ways of sharing' outside of written word, such as through art or theatre.

5.4.2 Results and reflections

During this round of concepting I struggled with incorporating the complexity of the decolonial stories into interactions that are woven into daily life. An example of a concept in this round can be seen in figure 29, other examples are in Appendix 10.5.2. While those daily interactions can be confronting, they might not be suitable to go into depth. Furthermore, I would like to create a concept which is long-term, so that these stories eventually have a strong hold in society. A daily, activist interaction might not be able to offer this.

Looking at the interaction analogy and the product qualities, it seems that there might be a quality missing, as the 'long-term' and 'strong hold' part is not embedded yet. Therefore I want to include a new

product quality, which is: **lingering**. The quality lingering expresses how the interaction remains present beyond the moment itself, just like thoughts about the documentary in the analogy linger after you have finished watching it.

What I take from the reflection of this round, is that I want to brainstorm on a concept which includes both a part that is woven into daily life, and a part which offers the opportunity to explore stories more into depth.

Looking back, I feel like I still did not really explore 'other ways of sharing' like I intended. When I tried to think of ideas that were related to art, music, or theatre, rather than written words, they never seemed like good concepts. I think it felt like it was difficult to show the complexity of the stories through these mediums, or that I was afraid that without words I could not make sure people would interpret the stories in the right way. I now realize this might be exactly what this call of the framework is about: how difficult it is to release control over narratives

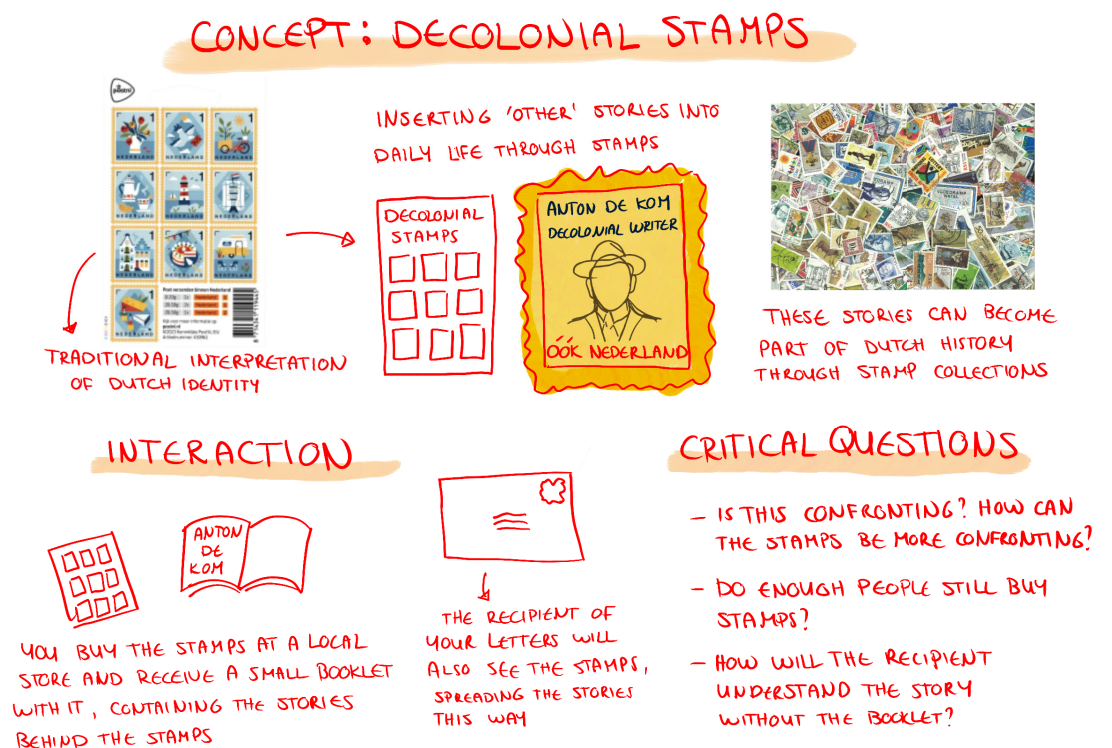


figure 29: Concept example from concepting round 2

5.5 Concepting - final idea

This concepting round was meant to come up with a concept that is both embedded into daily life and offers the opportunity to explore stories in depth.

Finally, I have landed on the idea to combine a physical intervention with a platform on which stories (or 'alternative' narratives) can be collected, which break through the dominant narrative about the colonial past.

This physical intervention is the 'inevitable' part that is woven into daily life, which confronts you about a hidden story. The intervention serves as a trigger or 'gateway' to the platform, where the user can dive deeper into the story. From there on, other stories can be explored as well.

For this project, I will design one example of a physical intervention, which is connected to a specific story. To stay close to the original assignment and previous work that was done, I will take a story behind a street name as example. I think this is a striking example of how stories can be 'hidden' in daily life, in the sense that you might walk past a street sign every day, without knowing the story behind it. I have worked out an example intervention and story for the 'Jan Pieterszoon Coenstraat' as J.P Coen is one of the most controversial figures of the Dutch colonial past right now. What the concept does is confronting people about this story through the intervention close to the street sign. The platform then links this specific story to the larger shared history and the 'alternative' narratives.

This platform is intended to be long-term and develop over time, updating with new stories. Eventually, in the desired future, these 'alternative' stories and narratives will no longer serve as 'breaking through the dominant narrative' but simply be part of our shared history.

I want the platform to be more than just an 'archive for stories,' which is something that is static and passive. I think the platform can be an umbrella for many more things, something that is dynamic and can grow over time. What the platform will offer and what it will look like will be further explained in the following chapter. To develop the concept of the platform, I have asked myself the following questions:

- How can the platform (and the stories it holds) in itself be confronting? (supposing you don't get there through a physical intervention)
- What will be the focus of the platform and how will people navigate through it? (It is easy to get lost in the sea of stories otherwise)
- How will the platform provoke thoughts and reflection?
- How can the platform not only share stories, but also create new knowledge? (for example because it can analyse the stories and find patterns etc.)
- How will the platform develop over time?

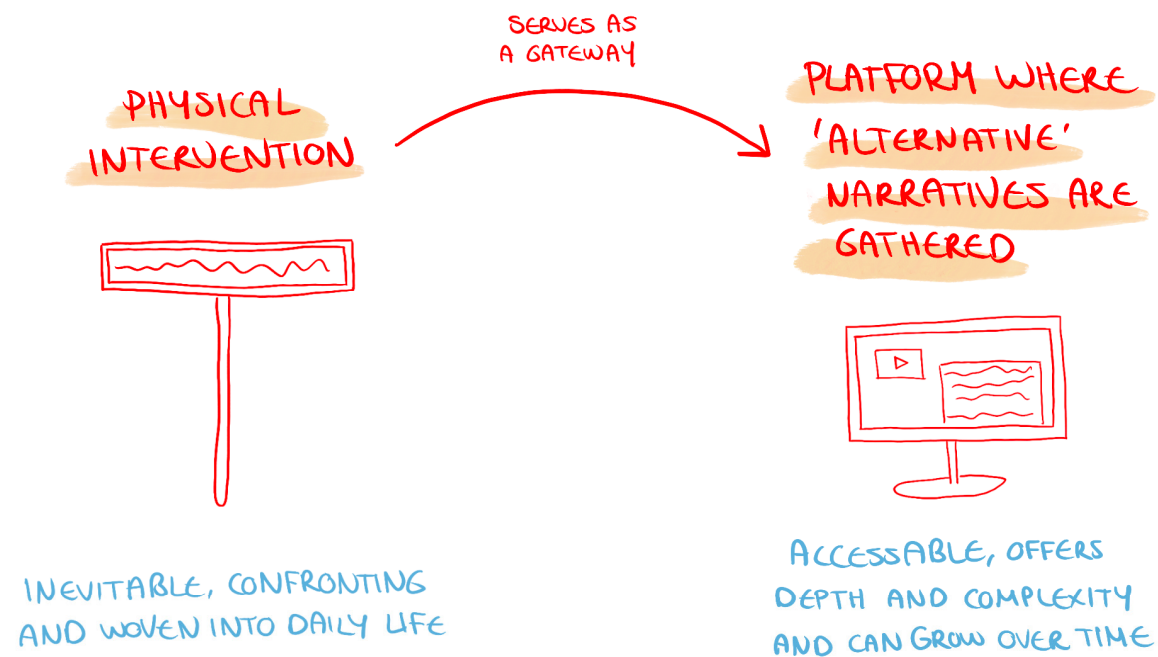


figure 30: Visual explanation of the final idea

5.6 Concept development

5.6.1 Concept Features

how to tell the story?

This concepting round was meant to come up with a concept that is both embedded into daily life and offers the opportunity to explore stories in depth.

For this core part of the platform, I have considered different ways of telling a story, with the goal of making the platform in itself confronting. In figure 31, two different designs for the 'story page' can be seen, one with a 'colonial' versus 'decolonial' toggle and the other where you can switch between stories in different themes (focus on resistance, violence, nature etc.). The idea is that by visualizing

the different ways in which a story can be told, it becomes clear that the dominant narrative is not the full story.

Eventually I decided to opt for visualizing the colonial versus decolonial perspective, not through a toggle but by putting them next to each other, because this makes it more confronting (see figure 32). By putting different words (colonial vs decolonial) next to each other, people can start to recognize stories written from a colonial perspective and start using different words themselves.

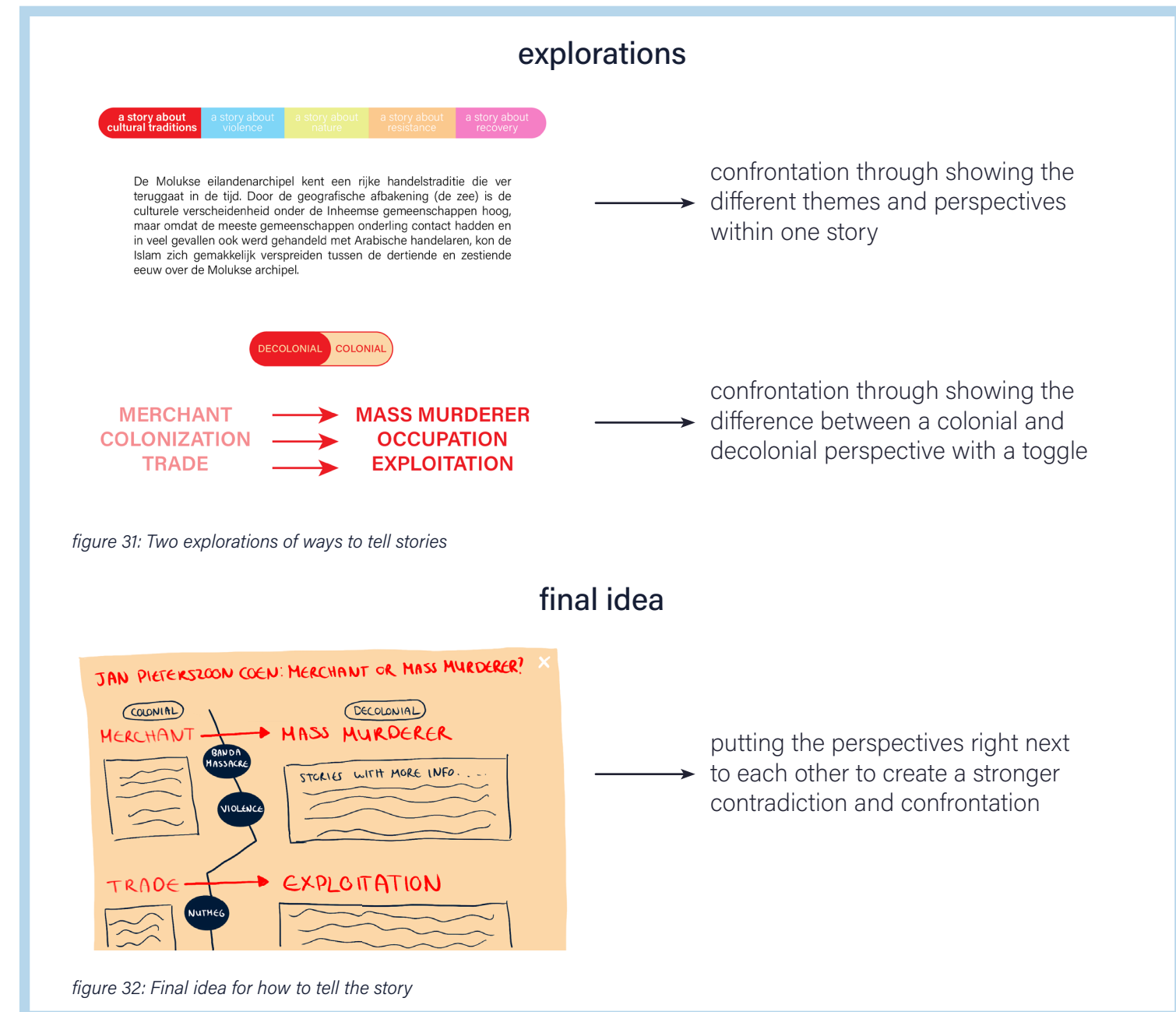


figure 31: Two explorations of ways to tell stories

figure 32: Final idea for how to tell the story

how to navigate through stories?

For the user journey of the platform, I have imagined that after reading one story (the entrance point of the platform) users can discover more stories. Eventually, the goal is that reflection will extend beyond one specific story and that it becomes clear how these stories are part of a larger narrative and system. It is also important that the navigation through the different stories is somewhat intuitive, so the platform remains accessible and the threshold for reading another story is low.

At first I had envisioned a map of Utrecht as the navigation tool, where physical locations in Utrecht are shown that hold a hidden story. While I like how this shows how many places in Utrecht have a connection to the colonial past (which can be confronting), I think it also limits the kind of stories that can be told when they need to be related to a physical place in the city. Furthermore, the map frames Utrecht as the centre of the platform, rather than the colonial system. Perhaps placing the city central is a colonial view in itself.

Therefore, I propose a node-based system as tool for navigation. This systems shows how stories are connected to each other and to recurring themes. This way, it becomes clear a story does not stand alone, but is part of a larger, colonial system. It also shows how themes like violence, exploitation and ecocide are present in many stories. Over time, it can change and develop which stories are presented on the platform, meaning the system and the most recurring themes will also change.

It is good to mention that not all nodes of the system will hold separate stories. For example, the node 'violence' is to show which stories are connected to the theme of violence, but it is not possible to click on this node for a story. In the visual design it should be clear for users where they navigate to story pages.

exploration

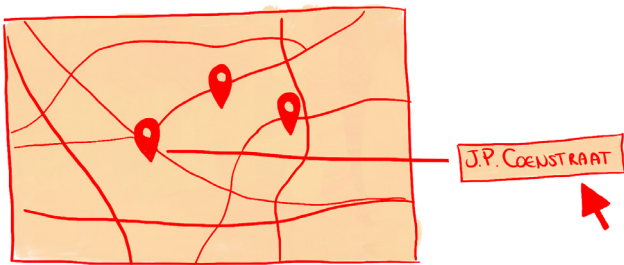


figure 33: Exploration of using a map of Utrecht as navigation tool

a map of Utrecht as navigation tool might be limiting in the kind of stories being told

final idea

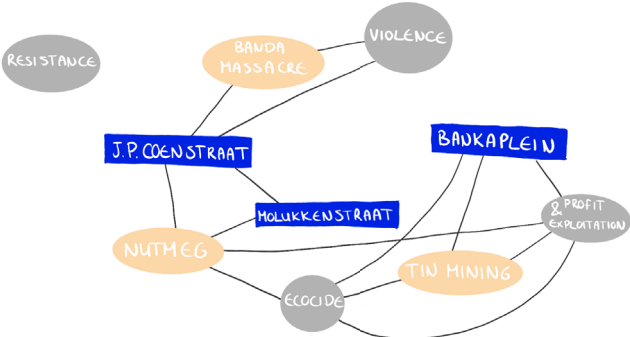


figure 34: Final idea of using a node-based system as navigation tool

system shows connection between stories and recurring themes

how to provoke reflection?

I want the platform to be thought-provoking and to stimulate reflection. I think a good way to do this is by asking people questions to help them reflect and give them the opportunity to give input to the platform. These questions will help people think about how do they look at the story they have read, how they relate to the colonial past, how they position themselves in the system and whether their view has changed through the story.

What is interesting when collecting this input, is that the platform can analyse the way people relate to the colonial past and whether this changes over time. I also want to give this analysis back to the users of the platform, so they too can understand the plurality of perspectives that is out there.

In my first exploration I envisioned a separate page in the platform where all this input is visualized through a word map. However, after consideration I decided to visualize the platform input directly on the story page (after people have submitted their input), so the reflection is more direct. Furthermore, I decided input should not be directly communicated to users, as it then becomes like a 'comment section' where comments can evoke strong emotional responses in others. Instead, I want to create an extra layer of analysis, where patterns are found in how people relate to the past. This way, the coping mechanisms people use are communicated, rather than the specific things they wrote.

exploration

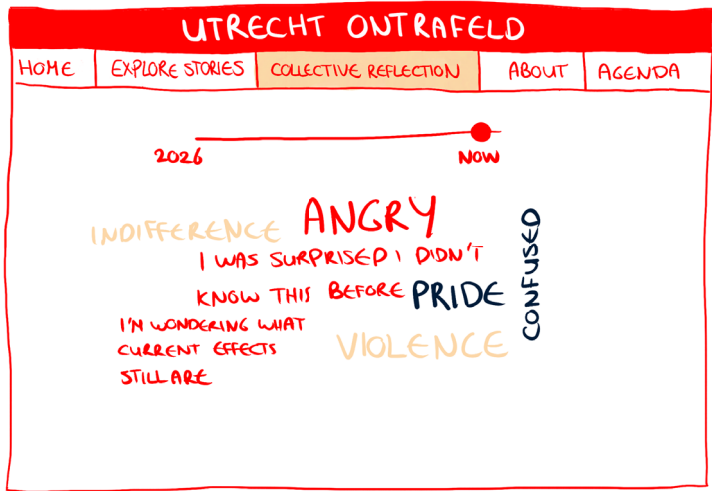


figure 35: Exploration of a collective reflection page on the platform

exploration of how user input can be visualized on the platform in a way that inspires reflection

final idea



figure 36: Visualization of input at the bottom of a story page

visualization not of direct user input, but of patterns in how people respond to the stories

physical intervention

The main goal of the physical intervention is that it is inevitable and confronting, so people will be stimulated to enter the platform. Therefore, the intervention is directly tied to the street sign, so it is seen by everyone who passes the street. A sign directly under the street name questions whether J.P. Coen should be seen as a merchant or a mass murderer. Often he is still seen as a merchant (or some people might not even know who he is) and the use of the heavy word 'murderer' will confront people about the 'bad side of history.' Through the QR-code, people can easily get to the platform.

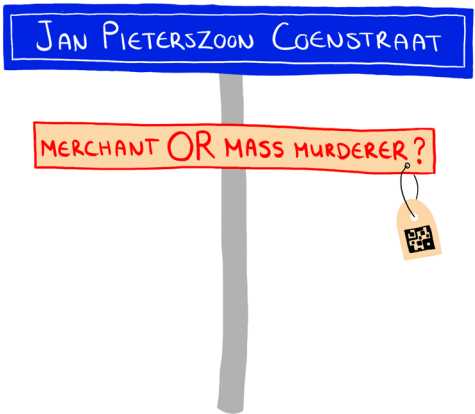


figure 37: Example of physical interaction

what else does the platform need?

A moderator

As this platform is interactive and will develop over time, it needs to be moderated. This means that one the one hand, it needs to be regularly updated with stories, just like some stories might be removed after some time. Furthermore, the input part needs to be moderated in order to keep the platform respectful. While it seems to make sense if the municipality is the moderator of the platform, since they gave the assignment, it might be better if there is an 'independent' moderator. This question will be discussed with the municipality and affected communities during the presentation of the concept.

Other pages

Besides the beforementioned pages (system page with story pop-up page) the platform will also have a home page, an about page and an agenda. The home page will help navigate users who have entered the platform not through a physical intervention but in a different way. The about page will give more background about the intention of the platform and

who moderates it. Finally, the agenda will inform users about events from other organisations hosting 'decolonial events,' for example events from Ketikoti.

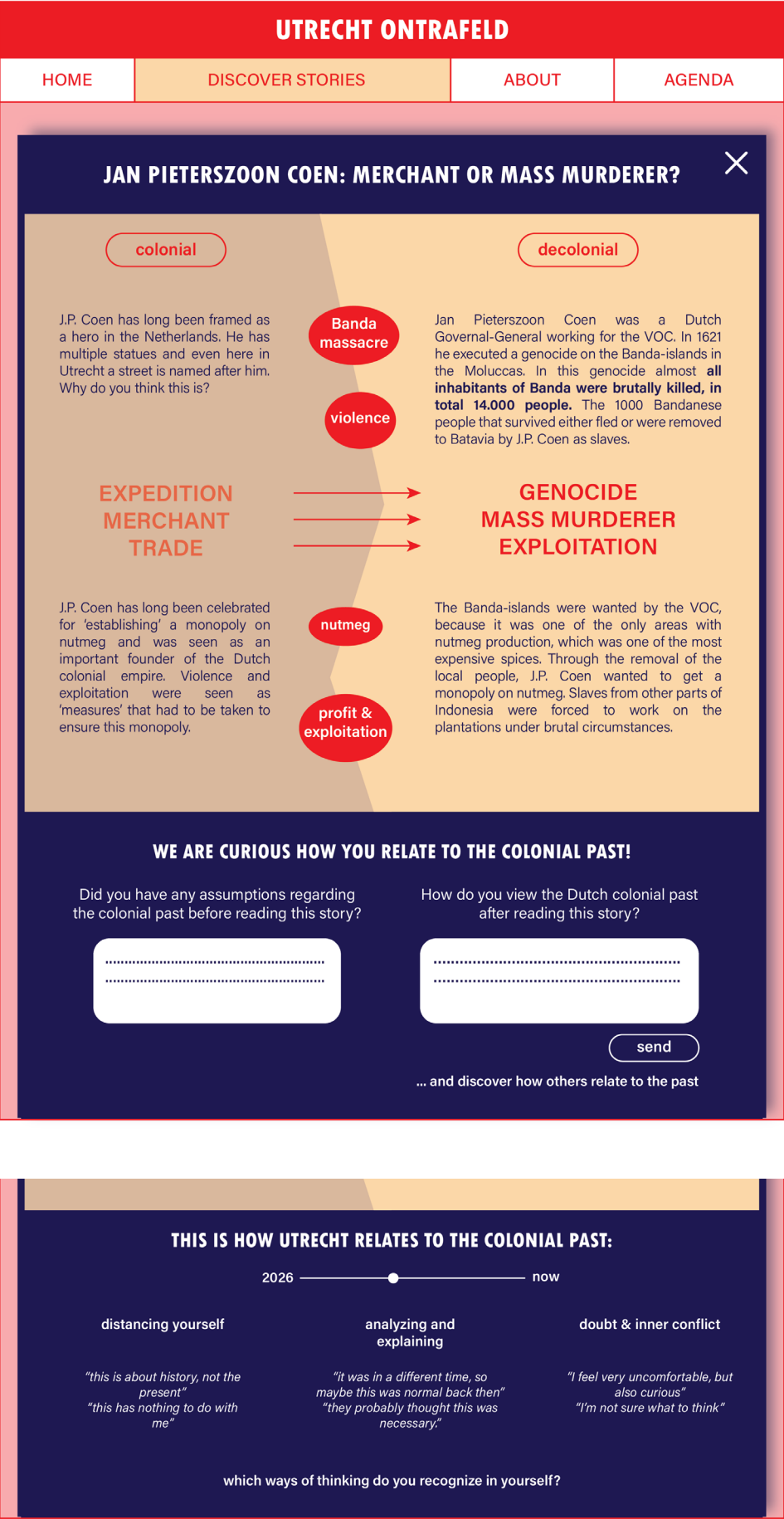
Name and brand

It is important that the platform has a recognizable 'brand' so it is clear to users that physical interventions they encounter are part of the same platform. This is partly done by having a clear visual style. What is unmissable as well is a catchy name for the platform! The platform will be called:

UTRECHT ONTRAFELD

This name does not directly show a connection to the colonial past, but it is intended to be appealing to citizens of Utrecht, as people are more curious to unravel secrets about something they feel connected to, like the city they live in. Through the recurring visual style and name, the interaction with the platform and interventions becomes lingering.

5.6.2 One story highlighted



the connected nodes in the system recur in the story page, showing which themes are connected to the story

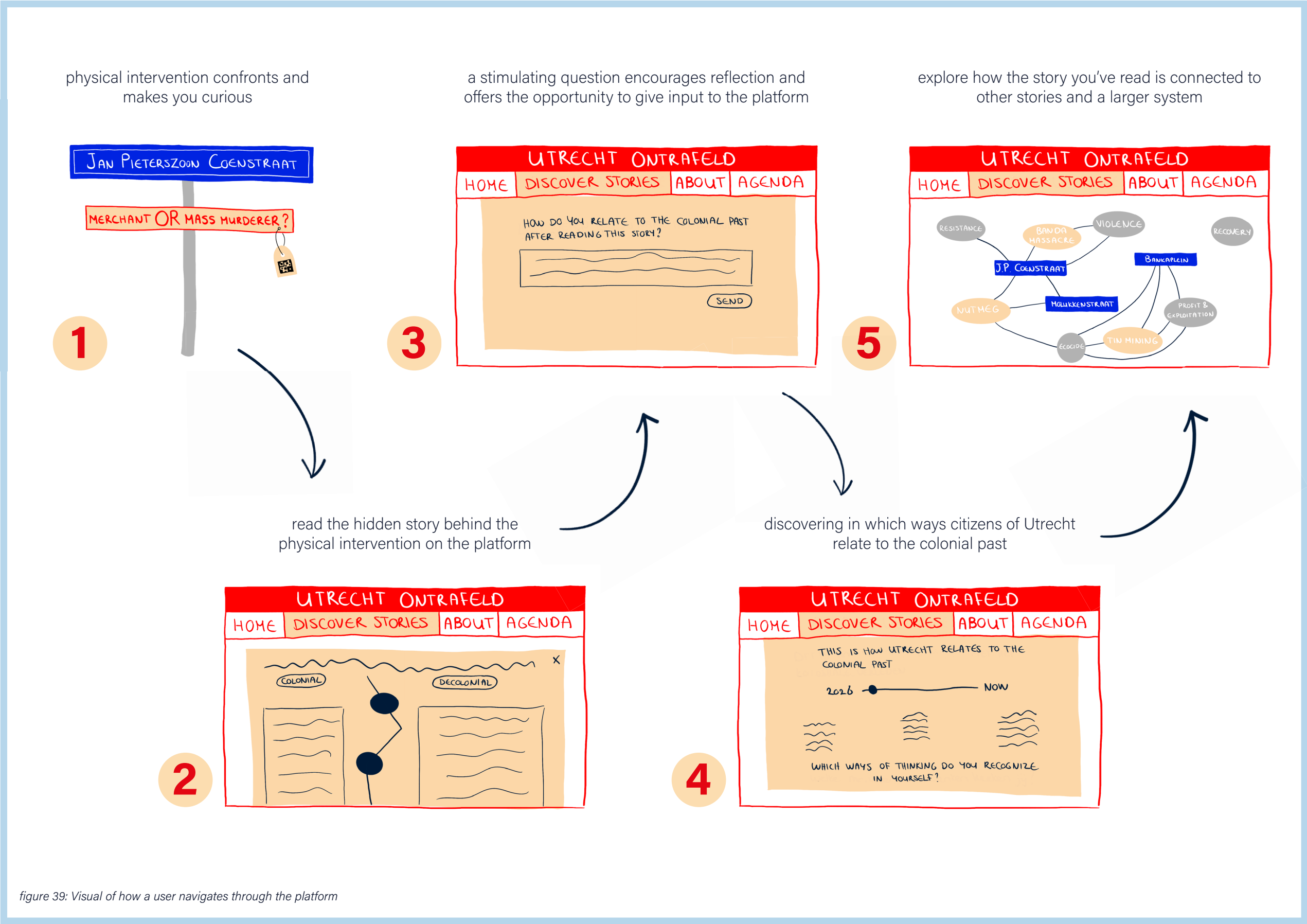
probing questions for input stimulate reflection

patterns in how citizens of Utrecht relate to the colonial past become visible after submitting your own input

figure 38: Examples of how one story is visualized on the platform

5.6.3 User journey

This visual shows the user journey, from the physical intervention as a trigger to how a user navigates through the platform.



6 concept validation and refinement

In the previous chapter, the concept was presented. In this chapter, concept validation will be gathered through a presentation for the municipality and community experts. Based on this feedback, and on aspects of the concept

that were still a bit vague or unclear, the concept is further refined. Finally, a future outlook on the concept is given. As the platform is intended to develop and grow over time, what else could it be?

6.1 Presentation Municipality and Community Experts

6.1.1 Goal

The goal of this gathering was to present the project results to the municipality and Academie van de Stad, and to receive feedback from the municipality and community experts.

Feedback was requested on multiple aspects of the project. The concept was discussed as a form of concept validation. The statement was reviewed to check whether this is the direction they want to take and whether they agree with it. Finally, there was space to discuss the municipality's future plans for this project.

6.1.2 Method

I presented my project through slides, explaining the overall process while mainly focusing on the chosen cell of the framework, the statement, and the concept. Afterwards, a structured discussion took place using slides with the feedback questions.

Physical materials were provided to support the presentation and discussion. As the presentation did not go deeply into the different cells of the framework, booklets with the complete framework and the 9 behaviours were printed (see figure 40). In addition, a feedback form with the same questions as on the slides was provided (see figure 41 and Appendix 10.6.), allowing the audience to make notes during the presentation.

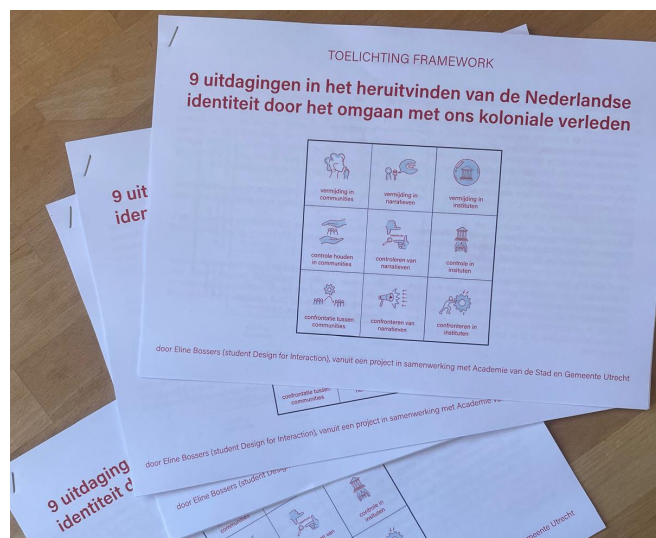


figure 40: Booklets describing the framework

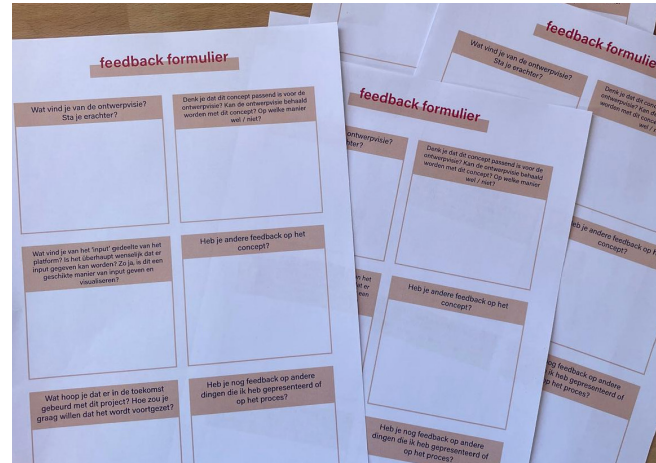


figure 41: Feedback form used during presentation

6.1.3 Who to invite?

The municipality of Utrecht and my supervisor from Academie van de Stad were invited. In addition, I invited community experts from connected organisations in Utrecht, including Ketu Koti, Madua Utrecht, Tori Oso, and Kumpuland Festival. Eventually, only one community expert was able to attend, but the other invitees will be updated through the project report for the municipality.

6.1.4 Insights

Statement validation

In general, the statement resonated with the municipality and community expert. The statement part of 'breaking through current Dutch coping mechanisms concerning the colonial past' is the core of what the municipality wants to change through these kind of these projects. There was a note made on the use of the word 'lie' in the statement, which suggests untruths in the dominant narrative, rather than that it is selective or framed.

A question came up concerning the 'we' that is mentioned in the statement, as not everyone in the Netherlands might have the same coping mechanism. This turned to an interesting conversation as I interpreted this as that it are mostly white Dutch people dealing in this way. However, the community expert brought up that people with roots in the former colonies are often raised in the Netherlands, often know very little about this history, and might have been learned these same coping mechanism.

Appropriateness of the concept

Overall, the municipality and community expert feel that the combination of a physical intervention and a digital platform is fitting for the statement and the goal of their project. They appreciate the 'sustainability' of the platform, in the sense that it can grow and develop over time. Furthermore, they see value in the confrontational part of the intervention and story page by putting a colonial and decolonial perspective next to each other. The 'input' part of the platform was the most discussed feature as they saw potential there, but risks at the same time.

What they felt was somewhat missing from the concept was the bridge between the physical intervention and the platform. They are sceptical whether people will really scan the QR-code from the current intervention. One proposition from the community expert was to expand the physical intervention with a sign with at least a part of the story that can now be read on the platform.

Moderation of the platform and input

As mentioned before, the municipality stresses the importance of careful moderation of the platform and especially the input that is given by users, because we do not want to give hate and disrespect a place. They were especially wondering who would do the moderation and where the line is drawn in which 'comment' is allowed and which is not.

It was also discussed, that while we want the platform to voice different perspectives, some voices are allowed to be given more space than others. In this case, the municipality and the community expert want to give more space to the decolonial perspective, as this has been unheard for a long time.



figure 42: Project presentation for municipality and community experts

Visualizing input

The feature of the timeline on the 'how Utrecht relates to the colonial past' page was very appreciated as it makes the process of change visible and can show growth in how people view this past. They also liked the way user's input was visualized not directly, but through patterns in thinking. This way it becomes like 'a meta-reflection of your own reflection'. However, it is not entirely clear yet how the input is analysed and how these patterns are defined.

How confronting can we be?

There was a conversation about how far we can go in confronting people through this concept. While the municipality and community expert stand for using the word 'mass murderer' to describe J.P. Coen, this might create a lot of commotion when using it in public space. They feel the intervention is allowed to make people feel uncomfortable, we should be careful to not create unsafe situations (such as people trashing the sign).

Finally, it was mentioned to not just use 'heavy words', because people are desensitized from this through media. The addition of facts of what really happened might help in evoking a feeling of discomfort in people.

6.2 Concept Refinement

Based on the feedback from the municipality and community expert, and on aspects of the concept that were still unclear, three parts of the concept are further refined below.

how does the platform and system develop over time?

One aspect of the concept that was not explained in detail, is the system, which is used as tool to navigate through stories, and specifically how this system (along with the rest of the platform) develops over time. Below will be presented an example of how the platform, its stories and therefore the living system can change.

Over time, public space in Utrecht and the kind of stories that are told on the platform might change. For example, if Utrecht truly wants to be decolonial, streets like the 'Jan Pieterszoon Coenstraat' have to disappear eventually because it is in itself not decolonial to honour someone who has oppressed and killed so many people. Instead, the street might be named after Kartini, who was a Javanese feminist and advocate for women's rights in the former

Dutch East Indies (De Wit, n.d.). The cruels that were executed by J.P. Coen might still be part of a story, but he will no longer be the main character.

Other things that could change is that a statue is built for Anton de Kom, who was a Surinamese freedom fighter and writer (Koops, 2024), or that the story of a geographical streetname focuses on the current recovery activities rather than the events during Dutch oppression.

So, the system could change over time from a focus on themes of violence to themes of resistance and recovery, or other themes that we do not even know about yet! This way, the platform will provide those kind of stories that are necessary in a certain time and it will grow along with the citizens of Utrecht.

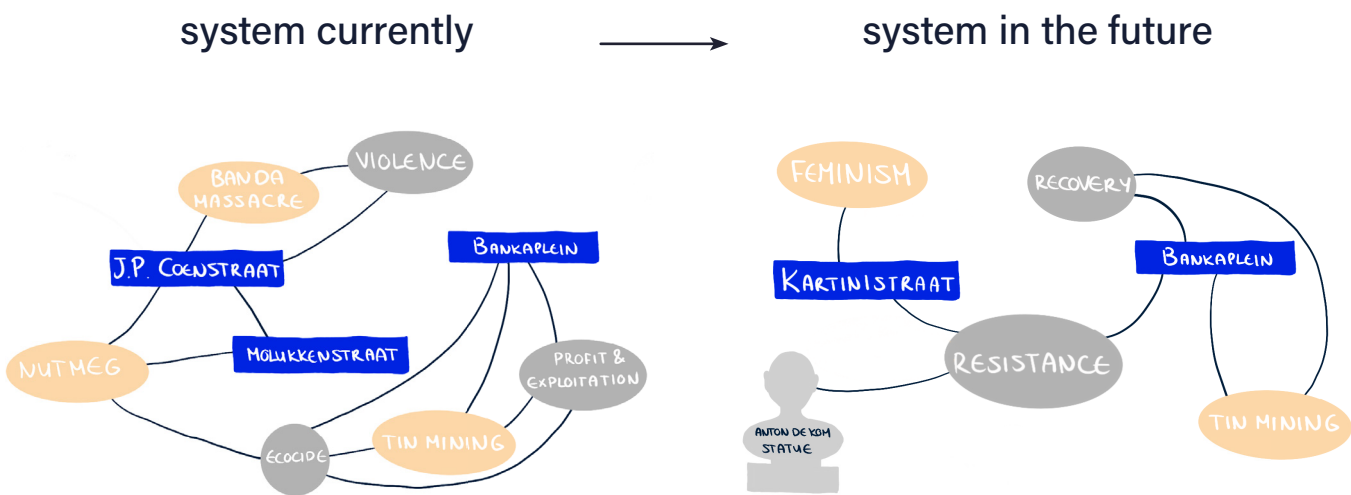


figure 43: System overview as it would look now

Stories are now focused on themes of violence and exploitation, to confront people

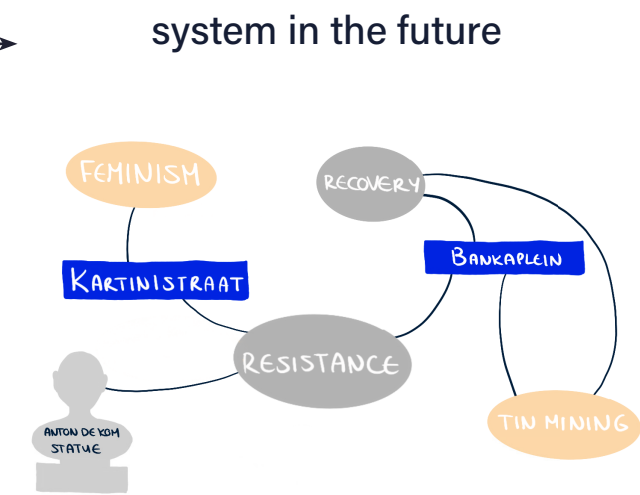


figure 44: What the system could look like in the future

The previous stories have become more common knowledge and colonial streetnames have disappeared. Stories now focus on themes like resistance and recovery

input moderation and analysis

Previously, it was explained that the input of the platform was analysed, so patterns in thinking can be found and visualized. However, it was still somewhat vague how the input is analysed and who does the moderation.

I propose to use AI as an assistive tool to help process and analyze large volumes of user input. Rather than replacing human judgement, it supports the platform by identifying recurring themes, emotional responses, and sense-making patterns based on criteria defined by the platform managers.

I would suggest that the 'management' of the platform is not done solely by the municipality but by a more independent team of people, which includes people from affected communities. Of course, the platform managers can still review the model for

bias, errors, and misinterpretations.

The input that is generated will be analyzed by the AI model through several layers:

- How people feel about the story
- How people position themselves in relation to the colonial past
- Sense-making strategies people use understand and respond to the colonial past

In this way, the platform becomes a living reflection of how people in Utrecht relate to the colonial past. Future development could include testing which reflective questions best stimulate thought and reflection. In addition, the AI model and the way it identifies patterns should be further researched and refined.

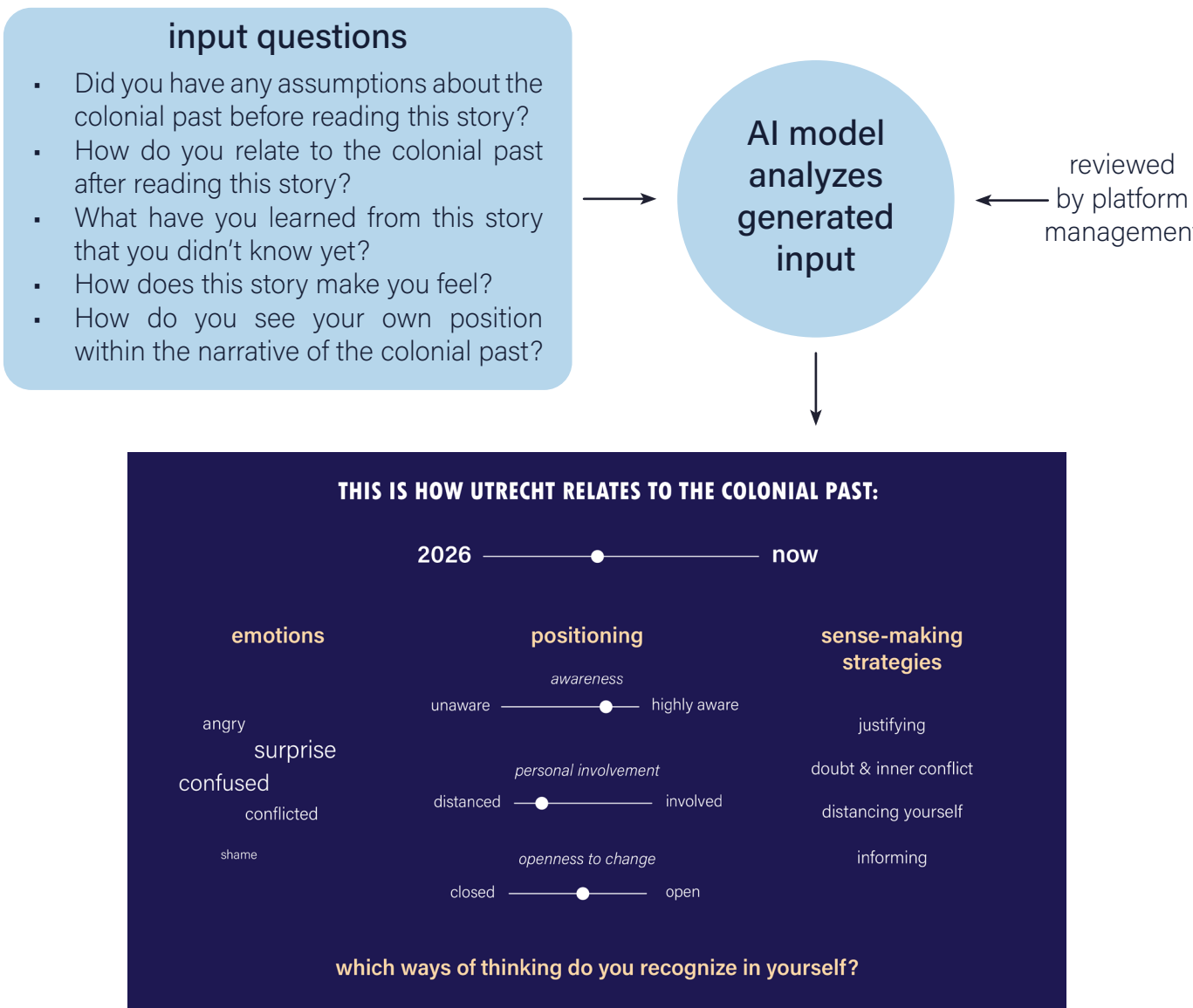


figure 45: Input generation, moderation and analysis

gap between physical intervention and platform

During the final presentation for the municipality and community expert it was discussed that there is still somewhat a gap between the physical intervention and the platform. They are skeptical whether people will scan the QR-code tot the platform from the current intervention example. I am looking for a way to make the platform feel like a necessary continuation of the interaction, rather than an optional extra step.

Inspiration might be drawn from the product qualities 'inevitable,' 'lingering,' and 'accessible.' How can the interaction with the physical interaction linger long enough for people to want to visit the platform, while at the same time the platform is so accessible, that together the visit of the platform becomes inevitable?

One possible direction is to add something to the physical intervention which makes it more 'lingering' by hinting at what the platform provides. This could be done by including an extra question beneath the current design, such as 'Why was J.P. Coen remembered as a hero for so long when he

is responsible for so many deaths? Find out on the platform!' or by hinting at the larger history through a quote like 'This is only one story hidden in Utrecht's public space, find out more hidden stories on the platform!'

A second direction is to make the platform more accessible, for example by providing physical 'business cards' with extra information and the QR-code and to the platform, so people can scan it at a later, quieter moment.

Finally, after you have visited the platform once, it could give notifications or pop-ups at the location of physical interventions, so it becomes inevitable that you come across more hidden stories.

These are initial directions for closing the gap between the physical intervention and the platform. Although this aspect of the concept is not fully resolved yet, it offers opportunities for future development.

6.3 Future outlook

The idea behind the platform is that it can continue to develop and grow over time. This means that in the future it can have many more applications than those described in the current concept. Below, I outline several possible directions for further development.

One important future application is in education. The stories on the platform could be used in primary and secondary schools to make colonial history more tangible and locally relevant. The reflective questions connected to the stories could also be used to stimulate discussion and critical thinking in the classroom.

The platform could also have value in policy-making. It can help policy makers identify which colonial symbols in the city create debate, support decisions around street renaming or contextualisation, and show which themes matter to citizens of Utrecht. In this way, the platform could provide input for policies related to inclusion, heritage, public space, or cultural funding.

Another possibility is to connect ambassadors to the platform. These could be people who become the face behind certain stories, help share them with a

wider audience, and actively seek new stories to add to the platform.

Community engagement could also grow beyond the current reflection feature. In the future, citizens might not only respond to stories, but also contribute local stories, memories, or perspectives themselves.

At the moment, stories are mainly shared through text. In the future, the platform could be enriched with other forms of storytelling, such as artworks, audio, video, or short documentaries. This would create more accessible and diverse ways of sharing knowledge.

The platform could also become a starting point for offline encounters, such as dialogue sessions or public events centred around themes that emerge from the platform.

Finally, although the concept is currently focused on Utrecht, the platform could eventually be expanded to other cities. In this way, it can grow from a local initiative into a broader network for reflecting on colonial histories.

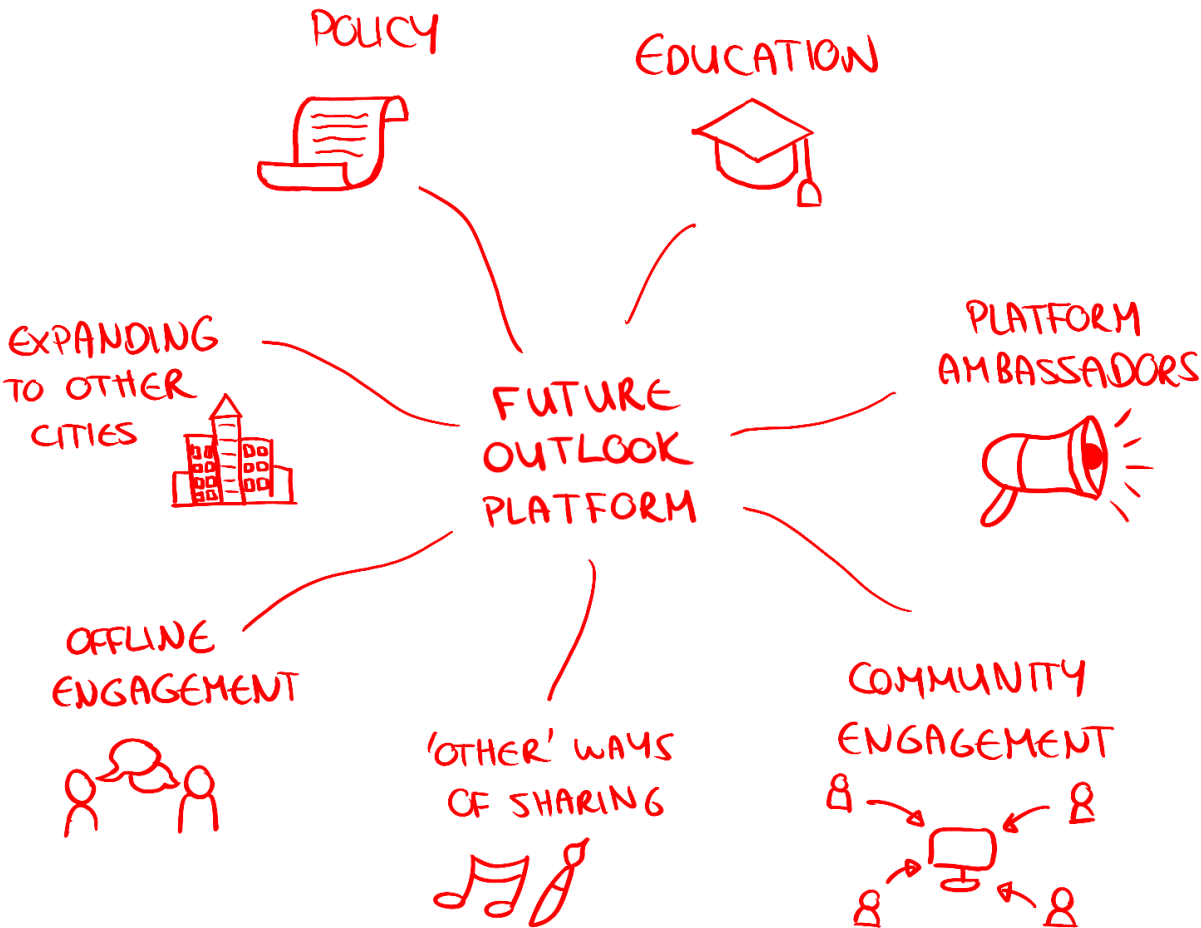


figure 46: Future outlook on the concept

7 discussion

In the previous chapters, the design process and project outcomes were presented. Throughout the report written reflection were included, which form an important basis for this discussion chapter.

In this chapter, the project is considered from a broader and more critical perspective. The discussion reflects on the racist power dynamics that became visible during the project, the way

affected communities were involved, and my own role and learning process as a designer. In addition, the recommendations for the municipality of Utrecht are briefly summarized, followed by a reflection on the contribution of the project to practice. This way, the chapter moves beyond the final outcomes of the project and reflects on what this project can mean in a wider societal and professional context.

This paper has caused me to reflect on the type of knowledge I include in my design project(s). I now pay more attention to the scholars behind the papers I read. Especially within this topic, I think it is important to include not only or mostly concepts of white thinkers, but to focus on knowledge of people of color.

Another point of reflection on this critique is more personal. Given the already sensitivity of this project, such critique adds more weight to this. While it is important to understand the weight, it can sometimes always create paralysis for me, which is not contributing to the design process.

Looking back, I feel like I still did not really explore 'other ways of sharing' like I intended. When I tried to think of ideas that were related to art, music, or theatre, rather than written words, they never seemed like good concepts. I think it felt like it was difficult to show the complexity of the stories through these mediums, or that I was afraid that without words I could not make sure people would interpret the stories in the right way. I now realize this might be exactly what this cell of the framework is about: how difficult it is to release control over narratives.

This session has brought quite some critique on the municipality and on this project. It has made me think about how to deal with this critique.

On the one hand, I want to take this critique very seriously, as it comes from experts with lived experiences that I do not have. On the other hand, it happens that participants in a design process do not always understand the process or the value of a framework that is presented. So when an expert says 'what you present is repetition and not new insights', is this because the framework is not the right tool to use in such a session, or because I do not understand their lived experience?

I struggled a bit with how to bring the framework into a 'co-creation' session. The framework feels quite academic and abstract still, which might be difficult for participants to work with. I've tried to bring visuals and examples into the materials I brought, to stimulate the conversation.

When I look at these concepts, I realize they are all about comparing different words and stories. This is still based mostly on written text (worship of the written word), while there are many 'other ways of knowing'. It feels like these concepts are made for white people who don't know anything about the colonial past. How can I create a concept which is not formed through a white gaze?

I feel a tension between 'systemic' design and more 'personal' and 'contextual' design. While the context factors and clustering helps in understanding larger patterns, it also feels a bit impersonal, because I have not yet spoken with affected communities.

I remain finding it difficult how to organize an inclusive session. It is always the 'active' parties that have a voice. There are also people I have invited that have never responded. This might be just because they are busy but is also possible there is a different reason. Maybe I have handled something wrong in the process. However, when I cannot reach these people, how do I ever find out?

This expert session was the first moment where I really felt the inequality in these kind of projects. I became more aware of my own position. I did not see myself as an actor with power, being a student. However, the expert pointed out the strong position of the TU Delft and the fact that the municipality invested in me to do this project. I realized I have in some ways power in this position, whether this is fair or not. This also means I can truly hurt people if I don't handle it well. I did think of this before, but I did not feel the weight of it until now.

7.1 Recognizing racist power dynamics in this project

This project generated reflections not only on its content-related outcomes, but also on how the municipality organizes initiatives concerning racism and the colonial past. Conversations with affected communities revealed recurring frustrations about institutional practices and broader forms of systemic racism. The framework developed in this project describes institutional dynamics through the layers of avoidance, control, and confrontation. Several observations from this project can be understood through these dynamics.

Who is chosen to lead the work?

First, the municipality's decision to collaborate with Academie van de Stad and students is notable. Both the organisation and the selected students were mostly white. From a decolonial perspective, this raises questions, as those leading the project often lacked lived experience of racism or expertise in decolonial studies. While practical reasons such as existing partnerships or lower costs may have influenced this decision, it can also be interpreted as a form of institutional avoidance: working with students may feel more comfortable than sharing space with community experts who bring stronger claims, knowledge, and critique. At the same time, such choices may give affected communities the feeling that the topic is not given sufficient priority or resources.

Temporary projects and retained control

A second observation concerns the project's phased structure, in which different students lead different stages. Although understandable within internship and graduation timelines, this limits the project's effectiveness. Because students often begin without prior expertise in decolonization, each phase requires time for new participants to understand the topic and context, slowing continuity and progress.

The involvement of affected communities within this project was mainly organized through separate dialogue sessions linked to the different project phases. As new students entered each phase, similar conversations were often repeated. Community experts expressed frustration about being repeatedly asked to contribute their time and knowledge without payment or tangible outcomes. Many already carry voluntary responsibilities in community organizations alongside other employment.

While this structure may offer learning opportunities for students, it seems to place affected communities in a consultative role rather than giving them influence over the long-term direction of the project. Because involvement takes place through separate project moments, rather than through a more continuous or structural form of collaboration, ownership, continuity, and decision-making remain primarily with the municipality. In that sense, this reflects the dynamic of control in institutions: affected communities are consulted sporadically, while resources and long-term direction remain institutionally controlled.

Seeking support within the wider institution

Finally, it is important to recognize that the municipal employees supervising this project represent only a small part of the wider institution. In meetings, they expressed ambitions for a more activist and decolonial municipal position. However, whether such ambitions are supported by broader political leadership is uncertain. This may reflect dynamics of the framework cell 'confrontation in institutions', in which actors seeking change from within encounter structural resistance and limited room to act.

7.2 Involving affected communities

For this project I wanted to involve affected communities in the design process in a conscious and ethical way. In this part I will reflect on the choices I made.

From consultation to decision-making

The initially envisioned way of involvement was through co-creation and concept evaluation sessions. However, after the feedback provided during the first expert sessions, I gained more insights in power structures that are often at play and how affected communities are often excluded from decisions moments. To break through this pattern I organized a meeting with both the municipality and community experts (chapter 4.2., stakeholder meeting) where the goal was to choose which cell of the framework was further worked out during the project. This way, I hoped to include affected communities in a 'decision-moment'

Reflection on use of the framework

During this session I noticed that it took a lot of time for the community experts to understand the framework, most likely because it is a design tool which is new to them. Therefore a lot of precious time went to explaining the framework, rather than discussing a future vision. Furthermore, the 'decision' was about which cell to further work out during this project and not about the content of the statements. This resulted in the main insight of the session being that all of the cells were important, but not all of them were feasible for this project.

Looking back, using the framework as core of the session might not be the most strategic choice for involving affected communities. Because it takes a lot of time to get familiar with the framework as a tool, it is difficult to place the feedback given by participants. It becomes unclear whether critique originates from a misunderstanding of the tool or disagreement with the content. Furthermore, by focusing on the decision about which cell to continue with, and not

discussing the content of the statements (which really hold the vision for the future), the 'decision-moment' became a bit symbolic rather than a moment of meaningful influence. A more suitable approach might have been to organize a speculative session about the future, which is about underlying values instead of practical considerations.

When is involvement ethical?

In general, I reflected a lot on when it is ethical to involve affected communities and when it may not be. While their involvement can be important for challenging existing power structures and increasing ownership over decisions, feedback from community experts also showed that 'as much involvement as possible' is not necessarily desirable. Participation places demands on people's time and availability, and conversations about racism or the colonial past can also evoke pain.

A second purpose of involvement is that conversation with affected communities can help designers develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the issue they are working on. However, empathy can also be developed in other ways than through personal conversations. For that reason, I tried to educate myself on colonialism and racism through books, documentaries, and other sources. This is important, so that affected communities are not repeatedly placed in the role of explaining basic knowledge or educating others.

At the same time, the most confronting and insightful moments of this project came from the conversations I had with community experts. While self-education is necessary, personal dialogue can create a sense of connection and understanding that is difficult to achieve through secondary sources alone. The challenge, therefore, is not simply whether to involve affected communities, but how to do so in ways that are purposeful, respectful, and not extractive.

7.3 Personal reflections

Designing from a white gaze

Looking back at my brainstorming session and the final concept, I think I still designed to some extent from a ‘white gaze.’ While I tried to explore ‘other ways of sharing,’ as reliance on the written word is often associated with dominant white culture, the final concept remained largely language-based. Although I believe the way words are used in the final concept is strong, it also made me realize how difficult it is to let go of forms of communication that feel familiar and comfortable. At the time, I felt that other media (such as art, music) might not be able to convey the complexity of the stories, or that without words I could not ensure people would interpret them in the “right” way. Looking back, this may reflect exactly the kind of dynamic described in the framework: how difficult it can be to release control over narratives and ways of knowing.

Managing my own discomfort

During this project I have become aware of my own discomfort in talking about racism, especially when talking with people of color. I was unsure of which words to use, afraid to say the wrong thing and hurt people. It was sometimes paralyzing when I wanted to involve affected communities but did not know how to approach people in a good way. Eventually, I too had to break through avoidance mechanisms. What helped a lot was reading relevant books and sources, this provided me with a broader language to talk about racism. At some point I also forced myself to reach out people, even when I was not sure I was ‘ready,’ hoping that imperfect action would be better than no action.

Situated knowledge

Looking back at the project, I feel that my situated knowledge was a bit underrepresented. I would have liked to be more aware of the specific themes that played a role in Utrecht when it comes to the colonial

past and racism. I do not think that involving affected communities more actively in the process would have been the solution but I do see opportunity in engaging with communities in a more low-threshold way. There are many organizations in Utrecht hosting events related to the colonial past. Attending these events would have been a good way of involving myself in the ongoing themes, without burdening people. As I also received the feedback that I seemed to lack some knowledge on the topic in Utrecht, I think improving this situated knowledge would help affected communities feeling more heard.

On choosing direction

Finally, I feel that there is some disconnection in the choice I made in the project direction when it comes to which cell of the framework I worked out. During the stakeholder meeting, it became clear that everyone saw institutions as the biggest obstacle in dealing with the colonial past in a better way. However, everyone also seemed to think this would be too large an obstacle to work on in the scope of this project. Furthermore, the municipality found it important that the street names and their stories received a place in the concept. For these stories, it seemed to be most fitting to choose a cell related to knowledge.

In the choice for which cell to work out, I was influenced by the strong hold of the municipality to the street names and the fear of choosing a cell related to institutions. Looking back, I think it would also have been really strong to choose for example the cell ‘control in institutions.’ Many dynamics that I observed during this project were related to this cell and it could have led to very interesting concepts supporting change within the municipality as an institution. However, a little more confidence and boldness would have been needed, as well as a tough conversation with the municipality. I hope to build this confidence and boldness in the future!

7.4 Recommendations to the municipality

A separate report in Dutch was written for the municipality of Utrecht, including a summary of the process, a description of the framework, statement, and concept, and a more detailed overview of recommendations. In this discussion, the main recommendations to the municipality are briefly summarized.

It is recommended that the municipality critically reflect on who is selected to carry out projects concerning the colonial past and racism, and to more consciously involve people with relevant expertise and lived experience. In addition, it is recommended to strengthen continuity by moving beyond separate temporary projects towards a permanent team working on this theme, including community experts.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the municipality focus not only on the content of individual projects, but also on its own internal structures and ways of working. The framework developed in this project, and specifically the row on power in institutions, offers starting points for such reflection and organizational change.

Finally, it is recommended that the municipality reconsider how affected communities are involved. If communities are asked to contribute their knowledge, time, and responsibility, this should be accompanied by meaningful influence over decisions, including priorities and budgets, as well as appropriate financial compensation.

7.5 Contribution to practice

This project contributes to practice at multiple levels: through concrete design outcomes for the municipality of Utrecht, through revived dialogue between key stakeholders, and through broader lessons for practitioners working on sensitive societal issues.

First, the project resulted in a framework, statement, and concept that can support the municipality in addressing the colonial past. The framework offers insight into colonial dynamics that remain present in society and within institutions. It helps identify where change is needed, including forms of institutional change from within. In addition, the framework can function as a tool for internal reflection and argumentation when teams working on decolonization need to justify decisions, priorities, or budgets within the wider municipal organization.

The statement contributes by reframing the original assignment. Rather than focusing only on creating awareness of the histories behind street names, it shifts attention toward challenging dominant narratives of the colonial past and creating space for multiple histories to coexist.

The final design concept offers a tangible way to engage citizens with colonial history. Even if not directly implemented, it can inspire future interventions and further experimentation by the municipality or other institutions.

Beyond these outcomes, the project also contributed to the process surrounding this theme. It created renewed exchange between the municipality and community experts, when collaboration had not always been successful. Through the organized sessions, critical perspectives from affected communities were voiced and brought into the project, which is of great value to the municipality.

Finally, my work offers broader lessons for future practitioners working on sensitive topics shaped by unequal power relations. It highlights the importance of structural rather than symbolic participation, the risks of extractive consultation, and the need to recognize institutional dynamics when designing for social change.

8 final words

Looking back on this project, I am grateful for the confrontations and reflections it has brought. I have become even more aware of my own privileged position and was confronted with the lack of diversity in my direct environment. My eyes have been opened for many inequalities in Dutch society.

I recognise that I am still in an ongoing process when it comes to recognising and unlearning colonial and racist patterns of thinking. I want to continue engaging with this process personally, and in my future practice as a designer. I hope, now that the dominant narrative has been broken through for me, I can continue to break

it for others in my environment as well. I hope to be an ally to those who have been oppressed and intend to keep telling the stories I have learned.

Finally, I am proud of what I have achieved in this project and I am thankful and happy to be doing something that I am passionate about! This experience showed me that socially engaged design not only requires sensitivity and listening, but also confidence to challenge institutional boundaries. During this project I have made first steps in developing that confidence, and I hope to continue learning and growing in this direction!

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10 appendix

10.1 Project Brief

PROJECT TITLE, INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM DEFINITION and ASSIGNMENT

Complete all fields, keep information clear, specific and concise

Project title Decolonial Compas

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

Introduction

Describe the context of your project here; What is the domain in which your project takes place? Who are the main stakeholders and what interests are at stake? Describe the opportunities (and limitations) in this domain to better serve the stakeholder interests. (max 250 words)

This project concerns how the Dutch colonial past is expressed in Utrecht, particularly through references in street names and public spaces, such as the J.P. Coenstraat. For a long time, people have been silent about the colonial past but recently it has become a topic of conversation. The critique is that these references glorify the colonial period, while in reality there was a lot of violence and oppression.

The municipality of Utrecht aims to foster an inclusive, respectful and safe atmosphere and therefore wants to create more awareness about the colonial past within citizens of Utrecht. The organization 'Academie van de Stad' is supporting the municipality in creating a social impact. Together with the citizens of Utrecht, these are the main stakeholders for this project.

A previous project is the 'Bitterzoete Route', which is a walking route through relevant places in Lombok, informing people about the past. Building on this, the municipality wants to broaden the reach and impact. An extensive data base has been created with information about street names and links to the past, offering a new opportunity.

It is important to take into account that the topic is very sensitive among some people. Perspectives range from people with roots in the old colonies, to people who feel shame about the Netherlands' role, to people who are proud of the prosperity it has brought. For the municipality it is important to create understanding and not to inflict more pain or conflict. Therefore, a careful, sensitive approach is essential. <https://bitterzoeteroute.nl/>

→ space available for images / figures on next page

Problem Definition

What problem do you want to solve in the context described in the introduction, and within the available time frame of 100 working days? (= Master Graduation Project of 30 EC). What opportunities do you see to create added value for the described stakeholders? Substantiate your choice. (max 200 words)

The first problem is the silence and unawareness of Dutch citizens about violence and oppression during the colonial period, despite its presence in Dutch culture. The main goal is to raise awareness in Utrecht by presenting this history in an accessible and engaging way.

I want to explore the different layers of this topic. This means looking not only at the past, but also at how colonial structures are still present today, for example in institutional racism. In this project, I therefore aim not only to present information, but also to create opportunities for reflection, so that existing patterns can be made visible and eventually broken. Besides designing a tangible intervention for the municipality, I want to build a theoretical framework, showing the system and the relationships and patterns within it. This framework can give some indication on how to deal with the complex problem of the colonial past and present institutional racism and inequality.

As designer, I am not neutral. I want to stay conscious of my own Dutch background and biases, and take conscious decisions of which role to take (whether as facilitator, storyteller, mediator etc.). Reflection on this role will be an important part of the project.

Assignment

This is the most important part of the project brief because it will give a clear direction of what you are heading for. Formulate an assignment to yourself regarding what you expect to deliver as result at the end of your project. (1 sentence) As you graduate as an industrial design engineer, your assignment will start with a verb (Design/Investigate/Validate/Create), and you may use the green text format:

Design an intervention to raise awareness in citizens of Lombok (Utrecht) about the colonial past, acknowledging the past collectively and making a first step in breaking colonial patterns.

Then explain your project approach to carrying out your graduation project and what research and design methods you plan to use to generate your design solution (max 150 words)

- Generative design research sessions with the target group, to come to deeper layers of the colonial period and its impact today.
- VIP method, in order to address the larger topic of racism and inequality and to rethink what we would want society to look and feel like
- Cultural sensitivity methods, to become aware of my own lenses and biases in this topic, reflect on those and adjust myself
- Theory on decolonizing design and the role of the designer

10.2 Context factors

10.2.1 Full list of context factors

Motivation and personal ambitions

Explain why you wish to start this project, what competencies you want to prove or develop (e.g. competencies acquired in your MSc programme, electives, extra-curricular activities or other).

*Optionally, describe whether you have some personal learning ambitions which you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project itself. You might think of e.g. acquiring in depth knowledge on a specific subject, broadening your competencies or experimenting with a specific tool or methodology. Personal learning ambitions are limited to a maximum number of five.
(200 words max)*

Competencies:

Organizing and facilitation generative design research sessions in a project (have practiced this before but not in an actual own project)

Proving and further developing my cultural sensitivity

Proving my ability to empathize with users, even in a project where opinions are far apart and the subject is sensitive

Learning Ambition: connecting local interventions to a larger picture, by:

Research into decolonizing design, in what way can patterns be broken

Researching the role I can take as a designer, especially since I do not have a neutral position

Considering how my insights might be used in other decolonizing projects

	Context Factor		
1	Knowledge of your own (family) history is important in forming your identity. (van Heemstra, 2023)	Principle	Psychological
2	In conversations about diversity and difference, dominant group members are likely to invalidate, question, and challenge marginalized groups by taking control of the conversation. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)	State	Sociological
3	When faced with social downfall, people in power are more prone to find ways to deceive themselves rather than reflect and grow. (Faber et al., 2024)	Principle	Psychological
4	Constant power maintains or increases self-esteem. (Faber et al., 2024)	Principle	Psychological
5	Loss of power does not necessarily result in a decline in self-esteem, because people use self-defence mechanisms. (Faber et al., 2024)	Principle	Psychological
6	Culture influences the way people interpret objects and events (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)	Principle	Psychological
7	Many of those who hold and wield power do not recognize or acknowledge that they are exercising power at all. (Faber et al., 2024)	Principle	Psychological
8	Since 2002, the Dutch population has become less negative about taking in migrants. (Coenders et al., 2025)	Development	Cultural
9	Almost 40% of the Dutch population is in favour of closing the borders to asylum seekers. (Coenders et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
10	Access to the housing market is the biggest concern of the Dutch population when it comes to migration. After that, safety and national identity are the biggest concern. (Coenders et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
11	Western people need to believe African people are inferior, in order to sustain the Western intellectual ego. (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)	State	Cultural
12	Many food dishes that came to the Netherlands from other countries are adapted to make them more accessible to Dutch people. (Steenbeek, 2022)	State	Cultural
13	Almost a third of Dutch population feels it is better for the Netherlands if people share the same customs. 37% disagrees. (Coenders et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
14	The second generation of Dutch people with a migration background feels there should be respect for each other's culture, but that it doesn't have to mean joining Dutch traditions. (Coenders et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
15	Cancel culture can empower marginalized groups by validating their experiences and encouraging collective action. (Faber et al., 2024)	State	Cultural
16	In foreign aid (in Africa), money and resources are often put into projects, without asking local people what kind of help they need. (Tedx Talks, 2021)	State	Cultural

17	South-Korean dishes are becoming more and more popular in the Netherlands through #kfood trends on social media. (de Reuver, 2025)	Trend	Cultural
18	In a meritocracy, people need to believe that their success is the outcome of their effort and talent, in order to feel good about themselves. (Phillips & Lowery, 2018)	State	Cultural
19	In general, there is a self-image among the Dutch that we are ethically just as a country. (Wekker, 2020)	State	Cultural
20	In the Western concept of decolonization, there is the idea that the colonized need to be saved from our past inhumanities. (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)	State	Cultural
21	Backpackers are travelling with the goal of getting into contact with other cultures and living a life as unusual as possible. (De Ruiter, 2024)	Trend	Cultural
22	Opponents of official apologies for slavery argue that it is too long ago and that blame is not transferable to other generations. (van der Schelde & Kanne, 2023)	State	Cultural
23	Common knowledge in the world is largely determined by what knowledge Western academic institutions acknowledge. (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)	State	Cultural
24	The term 'Decolonization' is increasingly used in the West as an ideology that offers a solution to all kinds of modern problems (climate, poverty, health, etc.). (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)	Trend	Cultural
25	With their collections, musea determine the value of certain parts of history. (Debeuckelaere, 2019)	State	Cultural
26	Often, backpackers follow the same routes, do the same activities, and are surrounded by many other backpackers. (De Ruiter, 2024)	Trend	Cultural
27	In 2023, 46% of Dutch population was against official apologies for slavery, 40% was in favor. (van der Schelde & Kanne, 2023)	State	Cultural
28	Recently, cartoons and cartoonists have been targeted for creating offensive pictures/cartoons (example: Charlie Hebdo). (Tueli�, 2023)	Development	Cultural
29	There is a rising amount of demonstration and activism against racism, such as the BlackLivesMatter movement and protests against Zwarte Piet. (Nationaal Co�rdinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, 2025)	Development	Cultural
30	More and more people participate in 'volunteer tourism', motivated by altruism and self-development. (McGehee, 2014)	Trend	Cultural
31	Especially since 2022, more ex-colonies are calling for the return of diamonds and cultural artefacts that were taken by colonial powers. (Mechkarini et al., 2023)	Development	Cultural
32	More and more events that happened during the colonial times are being uncovered and exposed. (Mechkarini et al., 2023)	Development	Cultural
33	Hashtags like #DecolonizeTheMuseum are encouraging more and more people and institutions to participate in 'decolonization'. (Debeuckelaere, 2019)	Trend	Cultural
34	While volunteer tourism can improve the lives and environments of host communities, it is also critiqued for exploiting host communities, continued neo-colonialism, and reduction of employment for local people. (McGehee, 2014)	State	Cultural

35	Recently, the 'Prinsenvlag' and the logo of VOC have been used during demonstrations, showing pride of the past. (Van Assen, 2025)	Trend	Cultural
36	In the Netherlands, archaeological finds are increasingly being returned to the countries where they originally came from. (NOS, 2025a)	Trend	Cultural
37	In the city, the percentage of people who feel discriminated based on race or skintone is twice as big as on the countryside. (CBS, 2024a)	State	Cultural
38	In the Netherlands, people who are highly educated and people with a high income experience more social trust and cohesion than other groups of people, due to social position and living circumstances. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
39	Discriminatory representation of colonised people in visual media influence their identity and create stereotypes. (Mechkarini et al., 2023)	State	Cultural
40	In race-based societies, there is an assumption that each race has distinctive cultural behaviors linked to their biology. (Smedley & Smedley, 2005)	State	Cultural
41	The material culture which is left from the past teaches us about the worldviews and mindsets of that time. (Tueli�, 2023)	Principle	Cultural
42	Social trust is relatively high in the Netherlands, compared to other European countries. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
43	A big part of the Dutch population does not have a lot of trust in the government. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
44	46% of the Dutch population finds it important to interact with people who think very differently from themselves, because they find expanding their vision important, educational, and fun. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	State	Cultural
45	There is a debate going on that the reason highly educated people are more tolerant might be because it is a socially expected attitude for them. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	Trend	Cultural
46	Dutch people are criticizing the development of the individualistic society and would like to see more solidarity. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	Trend	Cultural
47	Generally, Dutch people feel that Dutch society is intolerant towards each other and there is a decrease in respect for each other. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	Trend	Cultural
48	Less and less Dutch young people find homosexuality normal. (Meulblok, 2024)	Development	Cultural
49	News in the media is usually centered around conflict, drama and strong symbolic language, as this sells best. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009)	State	Cultural
50	People's perceptions of immigration are shaped not by statistics, but by their daily interactions and experiences, which are heavily influenced by their exposure to media reports and images. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009)	State	Cultural
51	Some people are more genetically susceptible to culture than other people. (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)	Principle	Biological
52	The outcome of specific genes (positive or negative) depends on your environment. (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)	Principle	Biological
53	Darwinism and evolution theory has led to the idea that certain races are superior to others and therefore favored in the natural selection process. (Jeynes, 2011)	State	Evolutionary

54	Evolution theory and the idea of 'natural selection' has created the ideology of human progress and improving the human species. (Jeynes, 2011)	State	Evolutionary
55	Darwinism and evolution theory has led to the idea that people with 'special needs' are worth less. (Jeynes, 2011)	State	Evolutionary
56	Humans have an affinity for those most like themselves and have a tendency to be more hostile towards strangers. (Slavich, 2020)	Principle	Evolutionary
57	Humans evolved to foster social safety, meaning: A sense of social inclusion, belonging, and connection to others. (Slavich, 2020)	Principle	Evolutionary
58	When all entities have the same ontological status, there is a tendency towards an intention to care. (L. M. Kussler, personal communication, October 8, 2025)	Principle	Philosophical
59	In the years 2018 - 2023, the amount of Dutch people with a direct risk of poverty and the amount of poor people decreased, mostly due to advantageous purchasing power development and the energy allowance. (van den Brakel & Pouwels-Urling, 2025)	Development	Economic
60	In the years 2018 - 2023, the income deficit of poor people has become larger. (van den Brakel & Pouwels-Urling, 2025)	Development	Economic
61	In popular destinations for digital nomads, rental and house prices are rising. (de Ruiter, 2024)	Development	Economic
62	In towns with a high average income and student cities, the income inequality is the highest. (CBS, 2024b)	State	Economic
63	Search engines fundamentally shape the nature and type of information people encounter. (Cho et al., 2020)	State	Technological
64	Search algorithms can reinforce people's opinions and create polarization. (Cho et al., 2020)	Development	Technological
65	Digitalization increases control from the state over its citizens. (Mouton, 2021)	State	Technological
66	The percentage of young adults (25 - 30) living with their parents is rising. (CBS, 2025c)	Development	Demographic
67	Housing prices are rising, but the percentage of income spent on housings costs are declining. (CBS, 2025c)	Development	Demographic
68	86,7% of Dutch population was content with their housing in 2024. (CBS, 2025c)	State	Demographic
69	Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that are religious, has decreased. (CBS, 2024c)	Development	Demographic
70	There is a rising amount of people living alone (in all age groups), due to emphasizing experiences and career, and a higher divorce rate. (CBS, 2024c)	Development	Demographic
71	Almost half of homeless is born outside of the Netherlands. 9% in another European country, 37% outside Europe. 33% of homeless people is born in the Netherlands, as are their parents. 21% of homeless people are born in the Netherlands, but (one of) their parents are not. (CBS, 2025b)	State	Demographic
72	Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that belongs to a different religion than Roman Catholic or Protestant, has risen. (CBS, 2024c)	Development	Demographic
73	Since 2006, the amount of immigrants coming into the Netherlands, has risen. (CBS, 2024c)	Development	Demographic

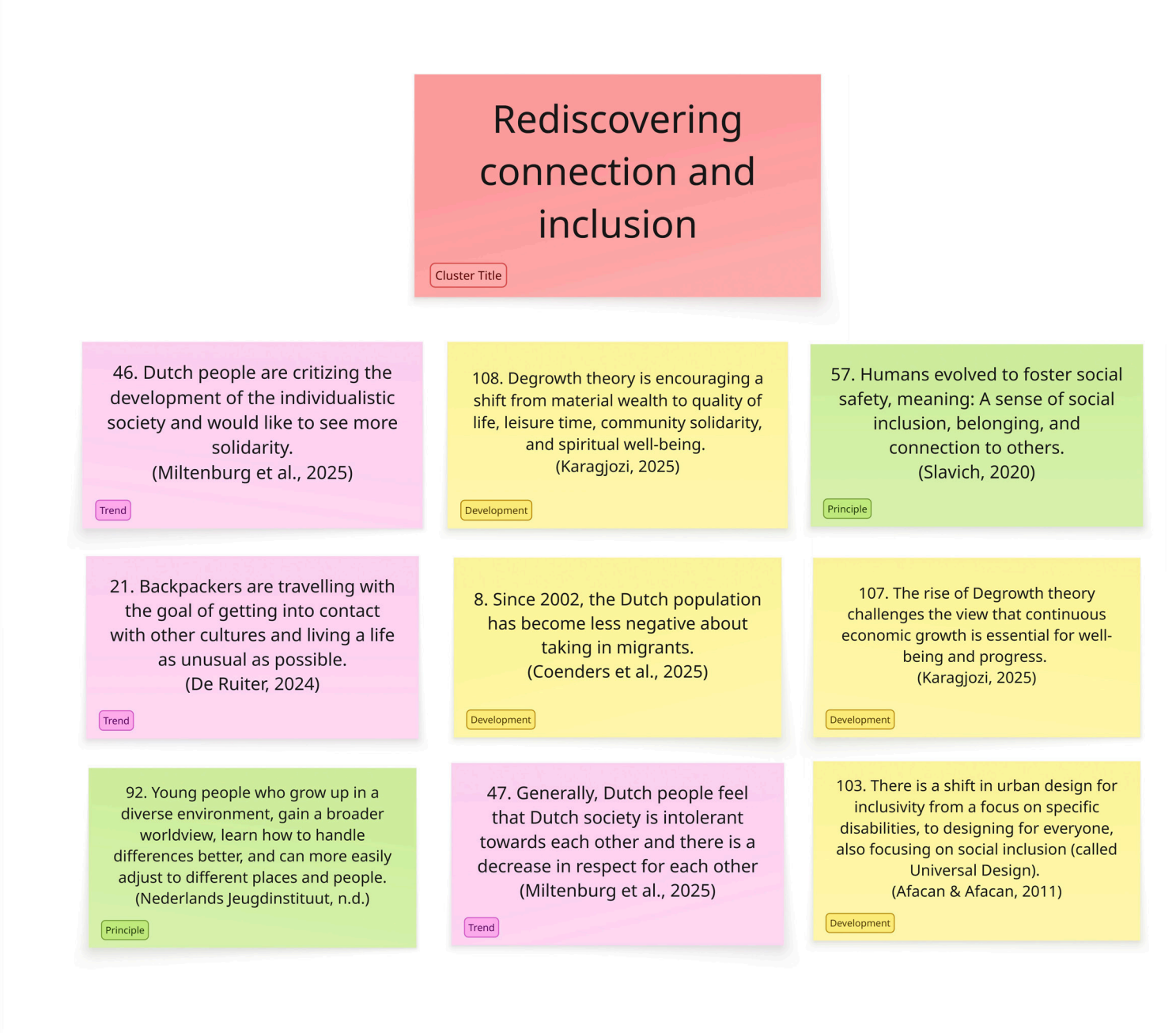
74	Migrants and people from the second generation are more often the victim of crime than people from Dutch origin (23/24% per-cent opposed to 18%) (CBS, 2024d)	State	Demographic
75	The total amount of registered crimes is decreasing over the years. (CBS, 2025a)	Development	Demographic
76	The amount of registered crimes in the categories 'public violence' and 'violent and sexual assault' are decreasing. However, the amount of registered crimes in 'discrimination' and 'rape' are increasing (CBS, 2025a)	Development	Demographic
77	The group of people with highest percentage of registered suspects of crimes is people who are born in the Netherlands, but have parents born abroad. After that are the groups of people born outside the Netherlands and the group of people who are born in the Netherlands, but who have 1 parent that is born abroad. (CBS, 2024d)	State	Demographic
78	More and more Dutch people are living as digital nomads, looking for warmer climates, low costs of living, and community. (de Ruiter, 2024)	Trend	Demographic
79	In 2023, 4,2% of the Dutch population of 15 years and older, felt discriminated based on race or skintone (CBS, 2024a)	State	Demographic
80	Of the second-generation Dutch population, people with parent(s) from Suriname are most often discriminated based on their race or skin tone (32% of people) (CBS, 2024a)	State	Demographic
81	The pain of being stigmatized can cause the oppressed to lash out against the very society that caused them pain. (Faber et al., 2024)	Principle	Sociological
82	The place where people experience discrimination most often, is on the street (CBS, 2024a)	State	Sociological
83	People can move into another ethnic group and become participants in that ethnicity, as ethnicity is external (Anthropology) Smedley & Smedley, 2005)	Principle	Sociological
84	Those in positions of power play a critical role in creating safe spaces for people in marginalized groups (Faber et al, 2024)	Principle	Sociological
85	Young people and highly educated people, report a more positive attitude towards interaction with people that think differently from themselves. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)	State	Sociological
86	Empathy and compassion are important prerequisites for social justice allyship and antiracism work (Faber et al., 2024)	State	Sociological
87	Generally, people are more inclined to share with each another person if there is a proximity in identity. (Van Oorschot 2000)	Principle	Sociological
88	In designing dialogues about racism, racial composition of participants and the context must be considered to avoid reproducing the same structural inequalities that lead to discrimination and racism in the first place. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)	State	Sociological
89	Presenting stigmatized groups in stereotypical ways increases stereotypes. (Faber et al, 2024)	Principle	Sociological
90	In society, there is no one-on-one relationship between dissatisfaction and protest. Protest is relatively unpredictable. (den Ridder et al., 2019)	Principle	Sociological
91	Social media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and collective views (Ausat, 2023)	State	Sociological

92	Young people who grow up in a diverse environment, gain a broader worldview, learn how to handle differences better, and can more easily adjust to different places and people. (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, n.d.)	Principle	Sociological
93	Many capital-rich, natural resource-poor countries are buying user rights of farmlands in natural resource-rich, developing countries. (Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010)	Development	Political
94	In order to implement policy successfully, you need to have data of your population, including statistics split on the basis of race and ethnicity. (Wekker, 2020)	Principle	Political
95	Politicians are using platforms such as Social Media and Talk Shows to build their political image. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009)	State	Political
96	In (political) conversations about racism, often personal stories and experiences are emphasized, rather than talking about systemic racism. (Wekker, 2020)	State	Political
97	Today's politics are a politics of multiplicities, as each message is relayed to other audiences and contexts, changing the interpretation. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009)	State	Political
98	Data-extraction practices increase the domination of the Global North over other countries. (Mouton, 2021)	Development	Political
99	The past few years, there have been calls for a more prominent place of the history of former Nederlands-Indië in education. (Venneman, 2023)	Development	Political
100	Since 2022 there is a new law in the Netherlands for integration of newcomers. Municipalities play a big role and newcomers need to learn the Dutch language, learn about Dutch society and participate in Dutch society. (Rijksoverheid, n.d.)	State	Political
101	More and more countries are making official apologies for slavery. (Tidey, 2022)	Development	Political
102	After the official apology for slavery made in 2022, the Dutch government released a fund of 200 million for awareness and involvement. Furthermore, the government has the intention to create a bigger place for the history of slavery in education. (Rijksoverheid, 2022)	Development	Political
103	There is a shift in urban design for inclusivity from a focus on specific disabilities, to designing for everyone, also focussing on social inclusion (called Universal Design). (Afacan & Afacan, 2011)	Development	Cultural
104	In contemporary cities (including Utrecht) there is a suburbanisation of poverty, partly caused by gentrification. (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021)	Development	Demographic
105	States are increasingly pushing for gentrification to attract more talent and capital to cities, driving local economic growth. (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021)	Development	Political
106	Since 2017, increasingly more people are moving away from the Randstad than into the Randstad. Only in the age group 18 - 25 more people are moving towards than away from the Randstad. (CBS, 2017)	Development	Demographic
107	The rise of Degrowth theory challenges the view that continuous economic growth is essential for well-being and progress. (Karagjozi, 2025)	Development	Philosophical

108	Degrowth theory is encouraging a shift from material wealth to quality of life, leisure time, community solidarity, and spiritual well-being. (Karagjozi, 2025)	Development	Philosophical
109	Power that relies mainly on coercion (as opposed to persuasion) is a weak form of power and is not sustainable in the long term. (Castells, 2016)	Principle	Sociological
110	Social actors at the source of networks, hold power over actors included in that network by imposing rules of inclusion. (Castells, 2016)	Principle	Sociological
111	People can experience 'collective emotions' based on their in-group's actions during conflict, regardless of whether or not they actually participated. This is especially when individuals within a group have much similarity and feel a strong collective identity. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)	Principle	Sociological
112	Collective guilt creates more positive attitudes toward the victimized group and creates support for reparations. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)	Principle	Sociological
113	Individuals are often motivated to avoid or reduce the experience of collective guilt. There is a tendency of reducing illegitimacy of ingroup behaviour by portraying outgroup members as threat or by portraying ingroup members as victims. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)	Principle	Psychological
114	People feel stronger collective guilt for future victimization than for past victimization, because individuals feel more responsible for future outcomes. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)	Principle	Psychological
115	In 2025, there is a rise of violent protests in the Netherlands against immigration and for more housing. (NOS, 2025b) (NOS, 2025c)	Trend	Cultural
116	Often, white people view racism as individual acts of prejudice or denial of rights, while people of colour view racism as something woven into culture, institutions and social structures. (Miller & Donner, 2000)	State	Cultural
117	Social identity theory states that group processes help people define who they are. A social category in which someone belongs and feel they belong to define who someone perceives themselves to be. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)	Principle	Sociological
118	In conversations about diversity and difference, dominant group members often emphasize harmony and the personal over conflict and the political. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)	State	Sociological
119	The use of digital technology extends and increases existing forms of colonialism. (Mouton, 2021)	State	Technological
120	There is a chance that protests for Gaza fade away when direct violence stops, as many people protest mostly against the violence but are not necessarily pro-Palestina. (Van Rompu, 2025)	Trend	Cultural
121	The past year and a half, the knowledge gap between white Dutch people and people from a Middle-Eastern or Moroccan background about the conflict between Israël and Palestina has decreased, through media attention and documentaries. (Van Rompu, 2025)	Trend	Cultural
122	The fear that the Netherlands will become involved in a war in the near future is increasing. (Frijters & De Lange, 2025)	Development	Cultural
123	Humor and irony are often used as an excuse to say racist things on television. (Wekker, 2020)	State	Cultural

124	More and more people are commemorating and celebrating Ketikoti in Utrecht. (J. Ferrier, personal communication, October 28, 2025)	Trend	Cultural
125	The sector of development cooperation is often unaware of its 'White gaze' and entrenched racism and discrimination. (Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)	State	Cultural
126	The 'White gaze' has affected people in the Global South by creating an internalised sense of inferiority and the constant struggle to prove themselves. (Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)	State	Psychological
127	Racist ideologies of the colonial project have shaped the language dominating the development cooperation. For active involvement in the sector, it is implied that you need to speak a European language. It can also be seen in specific words such as 'the field' and 'beneficiaries!' (Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)	State	Cultural
128	Dutch migration policy people with a perceived economic value are favoured and are not expected the same integration demands as other migrant groups. (Van Aanhold, 2025)	State	Political
129	In 2016, the rate of unemployment among people of colour was almost three times as high as the unemployment rate among white people (in the Netherlands). (Essed, 2018)	State	Economic
130	The percentage of Surinamese Dutch people reporting discrimination by Dutch people, is rising. (Essed, 2018)	Development	Cultural
131	In a culture of social media and new technology, individuals are becoming more and more active in voicing their opinions, even when this hurts other people. (Essed, 2018)	Development	Cultural
132	Technology generally only makes life better for some people, increasing inequality (Tunstall, 2023)	Principle	Political

10.2.2 Clusters with context factors



The domination in development aid

Cluster Title

11. Western people need to believe African people are inferior, in order to sustain the Western intellectual ego
(Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)

State

20. In the Western concept of decolonization, there is the idea that the colonized need to be saved from our past inhumanities
(Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)

State

30. More and more people participate in 'volunteer tourism', motivated by altruism and self-development.
(McGehee, 2014)

Trend

34. While volunteer tourism can improve the lives and environments of host communities, it is also critized for exploiting host communities, continued neo-colonialism, and reduction of employment for local people.
(McGehee, 2014)

State

98. Data-extraction practices increase the domination of the Global North over other countries.
(Mouton, 2021)

Development

16. In foreign aid (in Africa), money and resources are often put into projects, without asking local people what kind of help they need.
(Tedx Talks, 2021)

State

93. Many capital-rich, natural resource-poor countries are buying user rights of farmlands in natural resource-rich, developing countries.
(Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010)

Development

125. The sector of development cooperation is often unaware of its 'White gaze' and entrenched racism and discrimination.
(Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)

State

126. The 'White gaze' has affected people in the Global South by creating an internalised sense of inferiority and the constant struggle to prove themselves.
(Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)

State

127. Technology generally only makes life better for some people, increasing inequality
(Tunstall, 2023)

Principle

109. Power that relies mainly on coercion (as opposed to persuasion) is a weak form of power and is not sustainable in the long term.
(Castells, 2016)

Principle

119. The use of digital technology extends and increases existing forms of colonialism.
(Mouton, 2021)

State

125. Foreign aid is usually not 'free', but comes with conditions for the receiving country.
(Tedx Talks, 2021)

State

The designability of modern life

Cluster Title

78. More and more Dutch people are living as digital nomads, looking for warmer climates, low costs of living, and community.
(de Ruiter, 2024)

Trend

70. There is a rising amount of people living alone (in all age groups), due to emphasizing experiences and career, and a higher divorce rate.
(CBS, 2024c)

Development

119. The use of digital technology extends and increases existing forms of colonialism.
(Mouton, 2021)

State

105. States are increasingly pushing for gentrification to attract more talent and capital to cities, driving local economic growth.
(Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021)

Development

65. Digitalization increases control from the state over its citizens.
(Mouton, 2021)

Development

4. Constant power maintains or increases self-esteem.
(Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

93. Many capital-rich, natural resource-poor countries are buying user rights of farmlands in natural resource-rich, developing countries.
(Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010)

Development

106. Since 2017, increasingly more people are moving away from the Randstad than into the Randstad. Only in the age group 18 - 25 more people are moving towards than away from the Randstad.
(CBS, 2017)

Development

58. When all entities have the same ontological status, there is a tendency towards an intention to care.
(Leonardo Marques Kussler)

Principle

The Dutch identity of innocence at stake

Cluster Title

18. In a meritocracy, people need to believe that their success is the outcome of their effort and talent, in order to feel good about themselves. (Phillips & Lowery, 2018)

State

32. More and more events that happened during the colonial times are being uncovered and exposed (Mechkarini et al., 2023)

Development

47. Generally, Dutch people feel that Dutch society is intolerant towards each other and there is a decrease in respect for each other (Miltenburg et al., 2025)

Trend

35. Recently, the 'Prinsenvlag' and the logo of VOC have been used during demonstrations, showing pride of the past (Van Assen, 2025)

Trend

111. People can experience 'collective emotions' based on their ingroup's actions during conflict, regardless of whether or not they actually participated. This is especially when individuals within a group have much similarity and feel a strong collective identity. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)

Principle

53. Darwinism and evolution theory has led to the idea that certain races are superior to others and therefore favored in the natural selection process. (Jeynes, 2011)

State

101. More and more countries are making official apologies for slavery. (Tidey, 2022)

Development

27. In 2023, 46% of Dutch population was against official apologies for slavery, 40% was in favor. (van der Schelde & Kanne, 2023)

State

19. In general, there is a self-image among the Dutch that we are ethically just as a country. (Wekker, 2020)

State

123. Humor and irony are often used as an excuse to say racist things on television. (Wekker, 2020)

State

113. Individuals are often motivated to avoid or reduce the experience of collective guilt. There is a tendency of reducing illegitimacy of ingroup behaviour by portraying outgroup members as threat or by portraying ingroup members as victims. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)

Principle

5. Loss of power does not necessarily result in a decline in self-esteem, because people use self-defence mechanisms. (Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

2. In conversations about diversity and difference, dominant group members are likely to invalidate, question, and challenge marginalized groups by taking control of the conversation. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)

State

96. In (political) conversations about racism, often personal stories and experiences are emphasized, rather than talking about systemic racism. (Wekker, 2020)

State

13. Almost a third of Dutch population feels it is better for the Netherlands if people share the same customs. 37% disagrees. (Coenders et al., 2025)

State

94. In order to implement policy successfully, you need to have data of your population, including statistics split on the basis of race and ethnicity. (Wekker, 2020)

Principle

83. People can move into another ethnic group and become participants in that ethnicity, as ethnicity is external (Anthropology) Smedley & Smedley, 2005)

Principle

3. When faced with social downfall, people in power are more prone to find ways to deceive themselves rather than reflect and grow. (Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

117. Social identity theory states that group processes help people define who they are. A social category in which someone belongs and feel they belong to define who someone perceives themselves to be. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)

Principle

1. Knowledge of your own (family) history is important in forming your identity. (van Heemstra, 2023)

Principle

22. Opponents of official apologies for slavery, argue that it is too long ago and that blame is not transferable to other generations. (van der Schelde & Kanne, 2023)

State

114. People feel stronger collective guilt for future victimization than for past victimization, because individuals feel more responsible for future outcomes. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)

Principle

Colonization of the decolonial debate

Cluster Title

24. The term 'Decolonization' is increasingly used in the West as an ideology that offers a solution to all kinds of modern problems (climate, poverty, health, etc.) (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)

Trend

33. Hashtags like #DecolonizeTheMuseum are encouraging more and more people and institutions to participate in 'decolonization'. (Debeuckelaere, 2019)

Trend

64. Search algorithms can reinforce people's opinions and create polarization. (Cho et al., 2020)

Development

14. The second generation of Dutch people with a migration background feels there should be respect for each other's culture, but that it doesn't have to mean joining Dutch traditions. (Coenders et al., 2025)

State

116. Often, white people view racism as individual acts of prejudice or denial of rights, while people of colour view racism as something woven into culture, institutions and social structures. (Miller & Donner, 2000)

State

97. Today's politics are a politics of multiplicities, as each message is relayed to other audiences and contexts, changing the interpretation. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009)

State

85. Young people and highly educated people, report a more positive attitude towards interaction with people that think differently from themselves. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)

State

6. Culture influences the way people interpret objects and events (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)

Principle

88. In designing dialogues about racism, racial composition of participants and the context must be considered to avoid reproducing the same structural inequalities that lead to discrimination and racism in the first place. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)

Eline State

102. After the official apology for slavery made in 2022, the Dutch government released a fund of 200 million for awareness and involvement. Furthermore, the government has the intention to create a bigger place for the history of slavery in education. (Rijksoverheid, 2022)

Development

127. Racist ideologies of the colonial project have shaped the language dominating the development cooperation. For active involvement in the sector, it is implied that you need to speak an European language. It can also be seen in specific words such as 'the field' and 'beneficiaries' (Kapazoglou & Goris, 2022)

State

130. In public discussions about diversity, 'whiteness' is often considered as the unspoken 'default' position (Wekker, 2020)

State

118. In conversations about diversity and difference, dominant group members often emphasize 'harmony and the personal' over 'conflict and the political'. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017)

State

96. In (political) conversations about racism, often personal stories and experiences are emphasized, rather than talking about systemic racism. (Wekker, 2020)

State

23. Common knowledge in the world is largely determined by what knowledge Western academic institutions acknowledge. (Onyebuchi Eze, 2024)

State

Collective guilt as a force for activism

Cluster Title

124. More and more people are commemorating and celebrating Ketikoti in Utrecht (J. Ferrier, personal communication, October 28, 2025)

Trend

41. The material culture which is left from the past, teaches us about the worldviews and mindsets of that time. (Tueli, 2023)

Principle

120. There is a chance that protests for Gaza fade away when direct violence stops, as many people protest mostly against the violence but are not necessarily pro-Palestina. (Van Rompu, 2025)

Trend

31. Especially since 2022, more ex-colonies are calling for the return of diamonds and cultural artefacts that were taken by colonial powers (Mechkarini et al., 2023)

Development

29. There is a rising amount of demonstration and activism against racism, such as the BlackLivesMatter movement and protests against Zwarte Piet. (Nationaal Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme, 2025)

Development

25. With their collections, musea determine the value of certain parts of history. (Debeuckelaere, 2019)

State

112. Collective guilt creates more positive attitudes toward the victimized group and creates support for reparations. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)

Principle

15. Cancel culture can empower marginalized groups by validating their experiences and encouraging collective action. (Faber et al., 2024)

State

28. Recently, cartoons and cartoonist have been targeted for creating offensive pictures / cartoons (example: charlie hebdo) (Tueli, 2023)

Development

81. The pain of being stigmatized can cause the oppressed to lash out against the very society that caused them pain. (Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

36. In the Netherlands, archaeological finds are increasingly being returned to the countries where they originally came from. (NOS, 2025a)

Trend

32. More and more events that happened during the colonial times are being uncovered and exposed (Mechkarini et al., 2023)

Development

111. People can experience 'collective emotions' based on their ingroup's actions during conflict, regardless of whether or not they actually participated. This is especially when individuals within a group have much similarity and feel a strong collective identity. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014)

Principle

99. The past few years, there have been calls for a more prominent place of the history of former Nederlands-Indië in education. (Venneman, 2023)

Development

121. The past year and a half, the knowledge gap between white Dutch people and people from a Middle-Eastern or Moroccan background about the conflict between Israël and Palestina has decreased, through media attention and documentaries. (Van Rompu, 2025)

Trend

84. Those in positions of power play a critical role in creating safe spaces for people in marginalized groups (Faber et al, 2024)

Principle

90. In society, there is no one-on-one relationship between dissatisfaction and protest. Protest is relatively unpredictable. (den Ridder et al., 2019)

Principle

Earning worth in society through achievement

Cluster Title

54. Evolution theory and the idea of 'natural selection' has created the ideology of human progress and improving the human species. (Jeynes, 2011)

State

18. In a meritocracy, people need to believe that their success is the outcome of their effort and talent, in order to feel good about themselves. (Phillips & Lowery, 2018)

State

110. Social actors at the source of networks, hold power over actors included in that network by imposing rules of inclusion. (Castells, 2016)

Principle

69. Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that are religious, has decreased. (CBS, 2024c)

Development

52. The outcome of specific genes (positive or negative) depends on your environment (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)

Principle

123. Humor and irony are often used as an excuse to say racist things on television. (Wekker, 2020)

State

55. Darwinism and evolution theory has led to the idea that people with 'special needs' are worth less. (Jeynes, 2011)

State

100. Since 2022 there is a new law in the Netherlands for integration of newcomers. Municipalities play a big role and newcomers need to learn the Dutch language, learn about Dutch society and participate in Dutch society. (Rijksoverheid, n.d.)

State

60. In the years 2018 - 2023, the income deficit of poor people has become larger. (van den Brakel & Pouwels-Uriling, 2025)

Development

126. The mental pressure on people is increasing, due to individualism and the expectation to perform better and faster. (NOS, 2025d)

Development

129. Emancipation of women is more and more seen as an individual choice, rather than a collective battle (Wekker, 2020)

Development

128. Dutch migration policy people with a perceived economic value are favoured and are not expected the same integration demands as other migrant groups. (Van Aanhoud, 2025)

State

129. In 2016, the rate of unemployment among people of colour was almost three times as high as the unemployment rate among white people (in the Netherlands). (Essed, 2018)

State

Cultural curiosity creates commodification and exoticism

Cluster Title

17. South-Korean dishes are becoming more and more popular in the Netherlands through #kfood trends on social media. (de Reuver, 2025)

Trend

26. Often, backpackers follow the same routes, do the same activities, and are surrounded by many other backpackers. (De Ruiter, 2024)

Trend

21. Backpackers are travelling with the goal of getting into contact with other cultures and living a life as unusual as possible. (De Ruiter, 2024)

Trend

12. Many food dishes that came to the Netherlands from other countries, are adapted to make them more accessible to Dutch people. (Steenbeek, 2022)

State

61. In popular destinations for digital nomads, rental and house prices are rising (de Ruiter, 2024)

Development

30. More and more people participate in 'volunteer tourism', motivated by altruism and self-development. (McGehee, 2014)

Trend

44. 46% of the Dutch population finds it important to interact with people who think very differently from themselves, because they find expanding their vision important, educational, and fun. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)

State

45. There is a debate going on that the reason highly educated people are more tolerant, might be because it is a socially expected attitude for them. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)

Trend

73. Since 2006, the amount of immigrants coming into the Netherlands, has risen. (CBS, 2024c)

Development

51. Some people are more genetically susceptible to culture than other people (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)

Principle

7. Many of those who hold and wield power do not recognize or acknowledge that they are exercising power at all (Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

72. Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that belongs to a different religion than Roman Catholic or Protestant, has risen. (CBS, 2024c)

Development

128. Black women (and men) are being sexualized in Dutch society; they are seen as having a 'wild' sexuality. Asian women on the other hand are being seen as 'ultra feminine' and submissive. White sexuality is seen as the 'neutral' form (Wekker, 2020)

State

Growing apart in the city

Cluster Title

87. Generally, people are more inclined to share with each other person if there is a proximity in identity. (Van Oorschot, 2000).

Principle

60. In the years 2018 - 2023, the income deficit of poor people has become larger. (van den Brakel & Pouwels-Urling, 2025)

Development

82. The place where people experience discrimination most often, is on the street (CBS, 2024a)

State

80. Of the second-generation Dutch population, people with parent(s) from Suriname are most often discriminated based on their race or skin tone (32% of people) (CBS, 2024a)

State

86. Empathy and compassion are important prerequisites for social justice allyship and antiracism work. (Faber et al., 2024)

State

89. Presenting stigmatized groups in stereotypical ways increases stereotypes. (Faber et al., 2024)

Principle

37. In the city, the percentage of people who feel discriminated based on race or skintone, is twice as big as on the countryside. (CBS, 2024a)

State

39. Discriminatory representation of colonised people in visual media influence their identity and create stereotypes. (Mechkarini et al., 2023)

State

56. Humans have an affinity for those most like themselves and have a tendency to be more hostile towards strangers. (Slavich, 2020)

Principle

48. Less and less Dutch young people find homosexuality normal. (Meulblok, 2024)

Development

52. The outcome of specific genes (positive or negative) depends on your environment (Sasaki & Kim, 2017)

Principle

72. Since 1971, the amount of people in the Netherlands that belongs to a different religion than Roman Catholic or Protestant, has risen. (CBS, 2024c)

Development

104. In contemporary cities (including Utrecht) there is a suburbanisation of poverty, partly caused by gentrification. (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2021)

Development

38. In the Netherlands, people who are highly educated and people with a high income, experience more social trust and cohesion than other groups of people, due to social position and living circumstances. (Miltenburg et al., 2025)

State

62. In towns with a high average income and student cities, the income inequality is the highest (CBS, 2024b)

State

40. In race-based societies, there is an assumption that each race has distinctive cultural behaviors linked to their biology. (Smedley & Smedley, 2005)

State

64. Search algorithms can reinforce people's opinions and create polarization. (Cho et al., 2020)

Development

92. Young people who grow up in a diverse environment, gain a broader worldview, learn how to handle differences better, and can more easily adjust to different places and people. (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, n.d.)

Principle

71. Almost half of homeless is born outside of the Netherlands. 9% in another European country, 37% outside Europe. 33% of homeless people is born in the Netherlands, as are their parents. 21% of homeless people are born in the Netherlands, but (one of) their parents are not. (CBS, 2025b)

State

130. The percentage of Surinamese Dutch people reporting discrimination by Dutch people, is rising. (Essed, 2018)

Development

Media fuels fear and distrust in society

66. The percentage of young adults (25 - 30) living with their parents is rising. (CBS, 2025c) Development	122. The fear that the Netherlands will become involved in a war in the near future is increasing. (Frijters & De Lange, 2025) Development	43. A big part of the Dutch population, does not have a lot of trust in the government. (Miltenburg et al., 2025) State	63. Search engines fundamentally shape the nature and type of information people encounter. (Cho et al., 2020) State
79. In 2023, 4,2% of the Dutch population of 15 years and older, felt discriminated based on race or skintone. (CBS, 2024a) State	76. The amount of registered crimes in the categories 'public violence' and 'violent and sexual assault' are decreasing. However, the amount of registered crimes in 'discrimination' and 'rape' are increasing (CBS, 2025a) Development	10. Access to the housing market is the biggest concern of the Dutch population when it comes to migration. After that, safety and national identity are the biggest concern. (Coenders et al., 2025) State	67. Housing prices are rising, but the percentage of income spent on housings costs are declining. (CBS, 2025c) Development
49. News in the media is usually centered around conflict, drama and strong symbolic language, as this sells best. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009) State	113. Individuals are often motivated to avoid or reduce the experience of collective guilt. There is a tendency of reducing illegitimacy of ingroup behaviour by portraying outgroup members as threat or by portraying ingroup members as victims. (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014) Principle	109. Power that relies mainly on coercion (as opposed to persuasion) is a weak form of power and is not sustainable in the long term. (Castells, 2016) Principle	77. The group of people with highest percentage of registered suspects of crimes is people who are born in the Netherlands, but have parents born abroad. After that are the groups of people born outside the Netherlands and the group of people who are born in the Netherlands, but who have 1 parent that is born abroad. (CBS, 2024d) State
9. Almost 40% of the Dutch population is in favour of closing the borders to asylum seekers (Coenders et al., 2025) State	50. People's perceptions of immigration are shaped not by statistics, but by their daily interactions and experiences, which are heavily influenced by their exposure to media reports and images. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009) State	131. The mental health of the Dutch population is decreasing, especially among young people. (Haanstra, 2025) Development	42. Social trust is relatively high in the Netherlands, compared to other European countries. (Miltenburg et al., 2025) State
68. 86,7% of Dutch population was content with their housing in 2024. (CBS, 2025c) State	59. In the years 2018 - 2023, the amount of Dutch people with a direct risk of poverty and the amount of poor people decreased. (Mostly due to advantageous purchasing power development and the energy allowance) (van den Brakel & Pouwels-Urling, 2025) Development	91. Social media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and collective views (Ausat, 2023) State	8. Since 2002, the Dutch population has become less negative about taking in migrants. (Coenders et al., 2025) Development
75. The total amount of registered crimes is decreasing over the years. (CBS, 2025a) Development	95. Politicians are using platforms such as social media and talk shows to build their political image. (Hajer & Versteeg, 2009) State	74. Migrants and people from the second generation are more often the victim of crime than people from Dutch origin (23/24% percent opposed to 18%) (CBS, 2024d) State	131. In a culture of social media and new technology, individuals are becoming more and more active in voicing their opinions, even when this hurts other people. (Essed, 2018) Development

10.3 Materials Expert Sessions

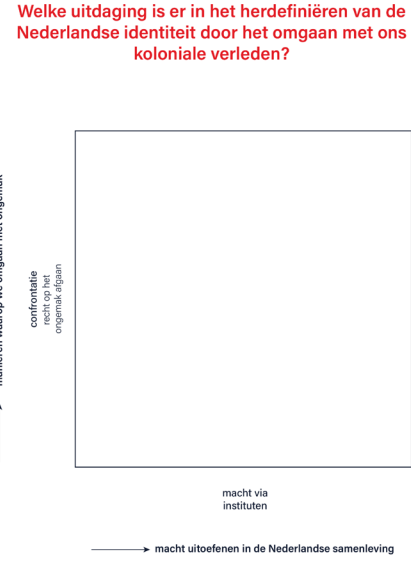
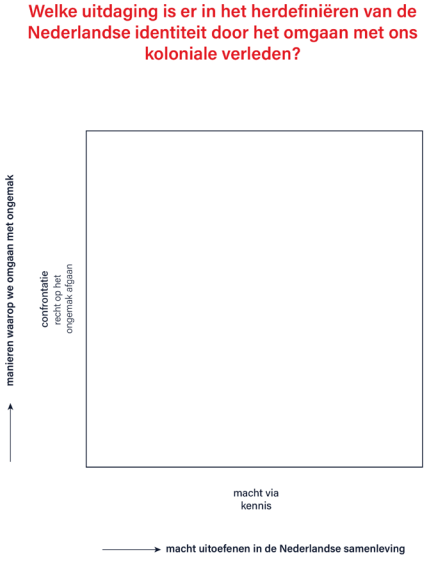
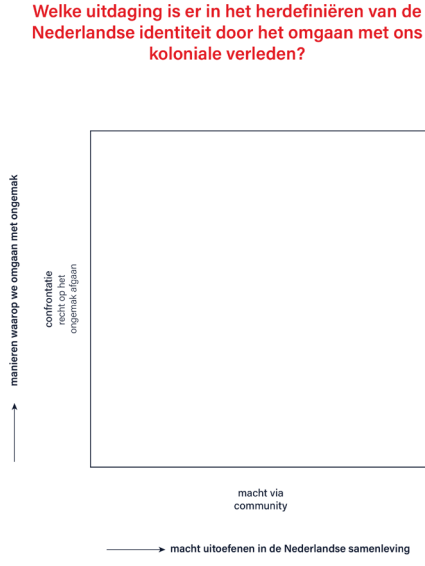
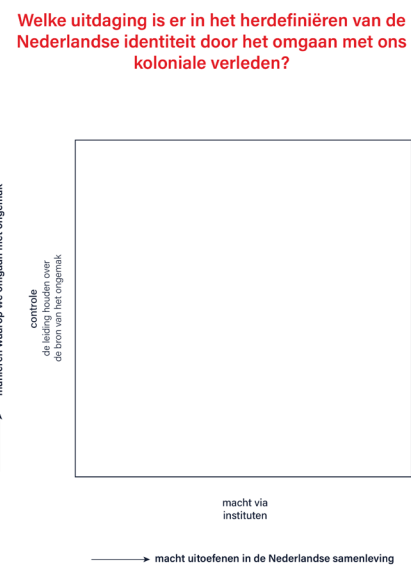
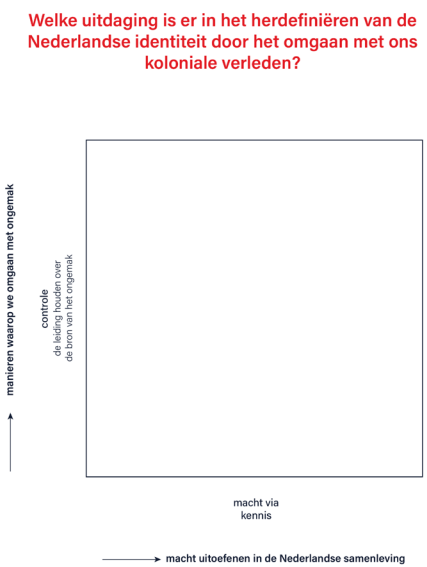
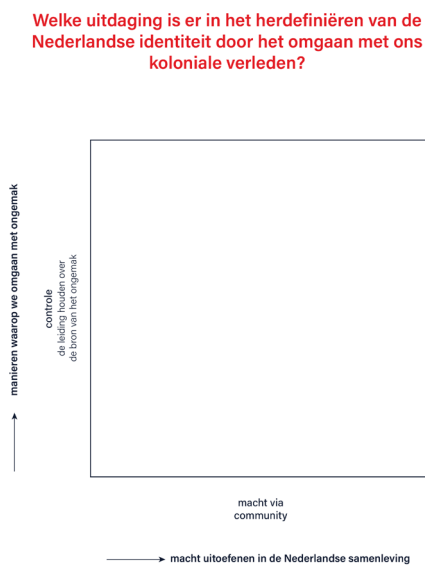
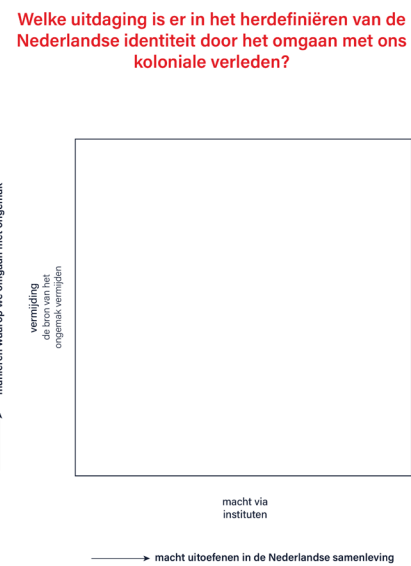
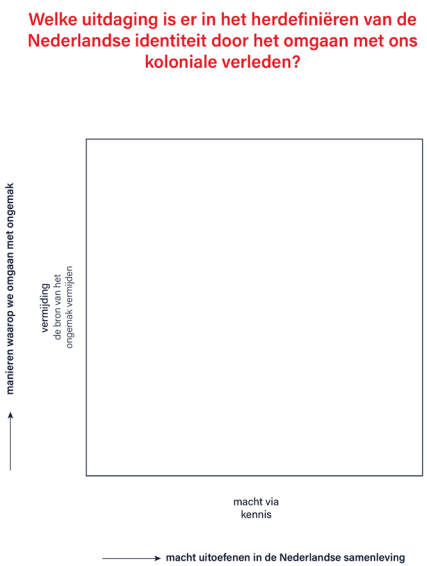
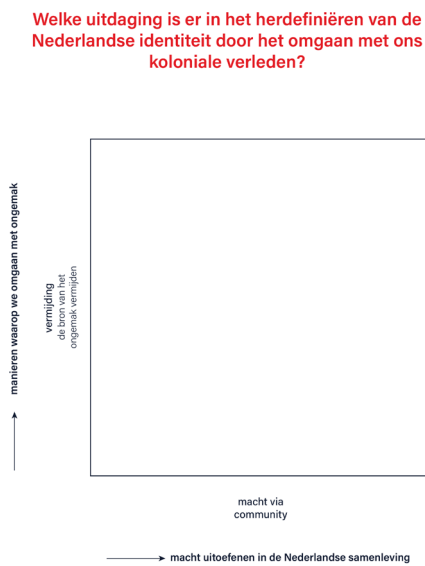
10.3.1 Material Expert Session 1

→ HOE GAAN WE OM MET DE Pijnlijkheid VAN KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN EN ONGELUKHEID?

Focus NAAR BIJEN	Focus NAAR BIJEN	Focus NAAR BIJEN
MEUSEN GEVEN GESTOLEN STUKKEN TEUG RAB DE LIJDEN WAAR ZE VANDAAN KOMEN HANDELIJGEN VAN ACTIEVIEKE EN NIEUWSGIERIGHEID #BLU MOVEMENTS EN PROTESTEN TEGEN TWARTE PIET CANCEL CULTURE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION	MEUSEN GEVEN GESTOLEN STUKKEN TEUG RAB DE LIJDEN WAAR ZE VANDAAN KOMEN HANDELIJGEN VAN ACTIEVIEKE EN NIEUWSGIERIGHEID #BLU MOVEMENTS EN PROTESTEN TEGEN TWARTE PIET CANCEL CULTURE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION	MEUSEN GEVEN GESTOLEN STUKKEN TEUG RAB DE LIJDEN WAAR ZE VANDAAN KOMEN HANDELIJGEN VAN ACTIEVIEKE EN NIEUWSGIERIGHEID #BLU MOVEMENTS EN PROTESTEN TEGEN TWARTE PIET CANCEL CULTURE CULTURAL APPROPRIATION
MEUSEN IN NEDERLAND	MEUSEN IN NEDERLAND	MEUSEN IN NEDERLAND
OP WELKE SCHAAL GAAN WE ERKE OM?	OP WELKE SCHAAL GAAN WE ERKE OM?	OP WELKE SCHAAL GAAN WE ERKE OM?
NEDERLAND ALS LAND	NEDERLAND ALS LAND	NEDERLAND ALS LAND

9 uitdagingen in het herdefiniëren van de Nederlandse identiteit door het omgaan met ons koloniale verleden

manieren waarop we omgaan met ongemak	vermijding de bron van het ongemak vermijden	zwijgen over het verleden, omdat het pijnlijk is om over te praten	in media en onderzoek vermijden om over het koloniale verleden en haar impact te praten. In narratieven krijgen specifieke groepen mensen de schuld van problemen in Nederland, om niet naar binnen te hoeven kijken	structuren in instituten hetzelfde houden (vaak voornamelijk witte mensen) zodat er niet om hoeft te worden gaan met andere perspectieven tijdens het maken van beslissingen
	controle de leiding houden over de bron van het ongemak	het beschermen van het culturele erfgoed van je eigen community	actief het narratief over het koloniale verleden onder controle houden en hierbij selectief informatie te delen (bijvoorbeeld in onderwijs)	openstaan voor de input van nieuwe perspectieven, maar niet op het besluitsniveau
	confrontatie recht op het ongemak aangaan	communities die opkomen voor hun eigen rechten (of de mensen van anderen) door middel van confrontatie (bijvoorbeeld demonstraties)	alternatieve narratieven verspreiden die de norm uitdagen	vanuit een instituut verandering proberen te creëren door mensen in een instituut uit te dagen
		macht via community	macht via kennis	macht via instituten
→ macht uitoefenen in de Nederlandse samenleving				



10.4 Materials stakeholder meeting



1. vermijding in communities

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag laat zien hoe mensen **gesprekken over het koloniale verleden vermijden omdat deze pijn, spanning of ongemak oproepen**. Die pijn kan voortkomen uit persoonlijke ervaringen, maar ook uit de frictie of weerstand die zulke gesprekken binnen groepen kunnen veroorzaken. Stilte wordt daardoor een manier om met dit ongemak om te gaan, waardoor blinde vlekken over het koloniale verleden en de blijvende invloed ervan op de Nederlandse samenleving in stand blijven.



ONTWERP RICHTING

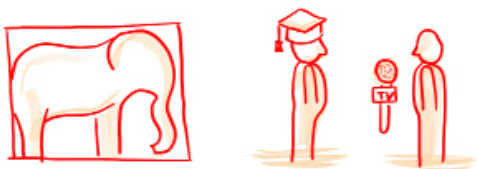
Het ontwerpen van omgevingen die mensen aanmoedigen om verhalen en ervaringen in hun eigen tempo te delen. Het creëren van ruimtes waarin dialoog veilig, gesteund en welkom aanvoelt.



2. vermijding in narratieven

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag komt naar voren in narratieven in onderzoek, onderwijs en media, waar het **bestaan van systemisch racisme in Nederland wordt afgezwakt of ontkend**. Dat betekent niet dat het koloniale verleden helemaal niet besproken wordt, maar wel dat er **terughoudendheid is om racisme en structurele onderdrukking expliciet te benoemen**. Door deze termen te vermijden blijft systemische ongelijkheid onzichtbaar, wat bijdraagt aan een zelfbeeld van 'wit onschuld'. Een angst voor kritiek, versterkt door een digitale wereld waarin uitspraken snel uitvergroot of uit context gehaald worden, belemmert mensen om zich uit te spreken.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het ontwikkelen van nieuwe woorden en begrippen die het mogelijk maken om expliciet en concreet te spreken over racisme en ongelijkheid in onderzoek, onderwijs en media. Het ondersteunen van narratieven die benoemen wat vaak onuitgesproken blijft, en die onderliggende structuren zichtbaar en bespreekbaar maken.

VOORBEELD CONCEPT



WOORDENBOEK MET WOORDEN EN PLANTJES DIE HET BESPREKEN VAN RACISME EN ONDERDRUKKING MAKELIJKER MAKEN



3. vermijding in instituten

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag beschrijft hoe mensen binnen instituties zich omringen met gelijkgestemden om **weerstand of botsende perspectieven te vermijden bij het maken van beslissingen**. Daardoor worden bestaande dominante patronen (vaak wit en mannelijk) in stand gehouden en blijft de diversiteit aan perspectieven in besluitvorming beperkt. Hierdoor sluiten beleidskeuzes of institutionele handelingen vaak niet aan op de ervaringen van de mensen die er het meest door geraakt worden. Omdat instituties een belangrijke rol spelen in het vormgeven van Nederlandse identiteit (bijvoorbeeld via migratie- en integratiebeleid en publieke narratieven), belemmert deze vermijding de mogelijkheid om die identiteit gezamenlijk opnieuw vorm te geven.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Ontwikkelen en introduceren van instrumenten die institutionele zelfreflectie stimuleren en blinde vlekken zichtbaar maken. Instituten inspireren om in te zien dat diverse perspectieven de kwaliteit en legitimiteit van hun werk versterken, en het openen van nieuwe wegen om die perspectieven betekenisvol te integreren in besluitvorming.



4. controle houden in communities

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag ontstaat wanneer mensen en gemeenschappen **bang zijn dat hun culturele identiteit verkeerd begrepen wordt of verloren raakt**. Deze zorgen kunnen voortkomen uit druk om zich aan te passen, integratiebeleid dat bepaalde normen boven andere stelt, of uit een veranderend cultureel landschap door een diverser Nederland en meer aandacht voor het koloniale verleden. **Om stabiliteit en grip te herwinnen, houden gemeenschappen sterker vast aan hun eigen tradities, verhalen en culturele uitingen**. Deze beschermende houding kan leiden tot een starre omgang met identiteit, waardoor **openheid naar andere culturen als risicovol of bedreigend voelt**.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het ontwerp van manieren om voorbij het idee van één nationale identiteit te gaan. Het vieren van de rijkdom en onderlinge verbondenheid van de vele culturen en identiteiten die in Nederland samenkomen.

VOORBEELD CONCEPT

CULTUREEL FESTIVAL IN DE Wijk WAAR VERSCHILLENDE CULTUREN EN TRADITIES GEVIERT WORDEN





5. controleren van narratieven

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag beschrijft pogingen om ongemak te beheersen door **grip te houden op het verhaal over kolonialisme**. Ongelijke machtsverhoudingen worden versterkt door selectieve taal en selectieve waarheden. Verdedigingsmechanismen sturen, vaak onbewust, de vorming van verhalen die bekend, begrijpelijk en emotioneel behapbaar aanvoelen. In een informatiesysteem dat steeds meer door algoritmes wordt bepaald, krijgen mensen vooral kennis te zien die hun bestaande wereldbeeld bevestigt, waardoor gecontroleerde narratieven blijven bestaan in plaats van doorbroken te worden.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het zichtbaar maken van door welke lenzen kennis wordt geproduceerd en gedeeld, en erkennen dat academische bronnen niet volledig objectief zijn. Het ontwikkelen van alternatieve criteria om kennis te beoordelen, zodat er ruimte ontstaat voor stemmen en geschiedenissen die tot nu toe weinig gehoord zijn.

VOORBEELD CONCEPT



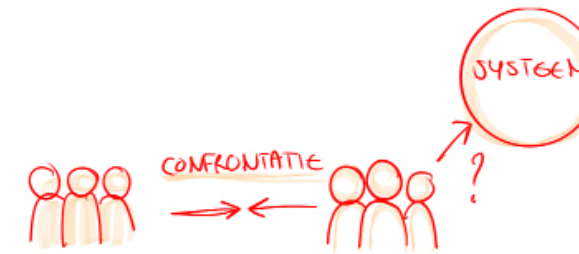
PLATFORM VOOR ALTERNatieve NARRATIEVEN, DAT DU BRONNEN LAAT ZIEN VANUIT WELKE LENS HET IS GESCHREVEN



7. confrontatie tussen communities

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag ontstaat wanneer ongemak omslaat in confrontatie, maar de woede of energie niet wordt gericht op de systemen die het probleem veroorzaken. Door historische 'verdeeld-en-heers'-strategieën **richten gemeenschappen zich sneller tegen elkaar (zichtbare 'tegenstanders') dan tegen het systeem zelf, dat vaak minder tastbaar of toegankelijk is**. Deze omleiding vergroot verdeeldheid en maakt gezamenlijke actie en impact moeilijker.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het verplaatsen van confrontatie naar de onderliggende bronnen van onrecht. Het helpen van communities om zich te verenigen in de strijd voor gelijkheid en rechtvaardigheid, en versterken van collectieve actie in plaats van interne verdeeldheid.



6. controle in instituten

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag ontstaat wanneer instituties wel erkennen dat het koloniale verleden, racisme en ongelijkheid aangepakt moeten worden, maar de **controle over deze processen toch bij zichzelf houden**. Mensen in machtsposities vinden het lastig om controle los te laten, zeker wanneer geld en verantwoordelijkheid meespelen. Daardoor blijven **richting, prioriteiten en middelen van projecten bepaald door degenen aan de top en is de invloed van de gemeenschappen die het meest geraakt worden beperkt**.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het ontwerpen van nieuwe systemen voor publieke projecten en financiering rondom koloniale geschiedenis, racisme en ongelijkheid, waarbij de besluitvorming wordt gedecentraliseerd. Het verplaatsen van controle naar de gemeenschappen, zodat zij de richting en uitvoering van projecten kunnen bepalen op basis van hun eigen behoeften en doelen.



8. confronteren van narratieven

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

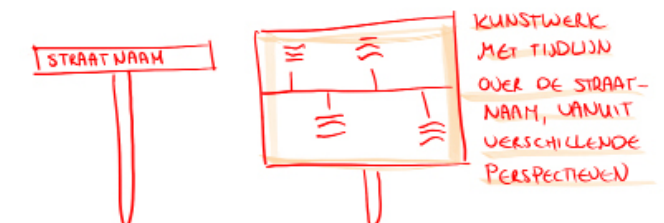
Dit gedrag wordt gekenmerkt door pogingen om **dominante normen uit te dagen via alternatieve narratieven**. Mensen zoeken erkenning en zichtbaarheid voor perspectieven die verder van de mainstream afstaan. Wanneer deze verhalen sterk botsen met dominante denkkaders, roepen ze vaak weerstand, polarisatie of afwijzing op. Daardoor raken verhalen die juist bedoeld waren om te confronteren soms eerder geïsoleerd dan invloedrijk.



ONTWERP RICHTING

Het creëren van ruimtes, vooral in de publieke omgeving, waar meerdere verhalen en identiteiten naast elkaar kunnen bestaan. Stimuleren van een verschuiving van gefragmenteerde geschiedenissen naar gedeelde, meervoudige geschiedenissen, waarin confrontatie juist bijdraagt aan verbinding en erkenning in plaats van verdeeldheid.

VOORBEELD CONCEPT

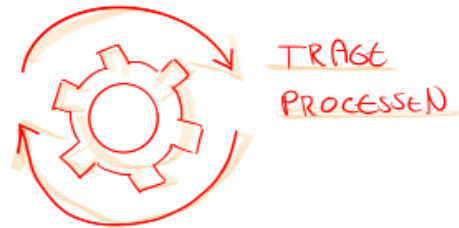




9. confrontatie in instituten

TYPISCH GEDRAG IN OMGAAN MET HET KOLONIAAL VERLEDEN

Dit gedrag verwijst naar de **groeïende inspanningen om instituties van binnenuit te veranderen**. Mensen die dit proberen lopen vaak aan tegen **trage, starre processen die vooruitgang blokkeren**. Frustratie neemt toe wanneer verandering traag gaat, wanneer mensen zich niet gehoord voelen of wanneer het systeem herhaaldelijk in de weg staat. De benodigde emotionele en praktische inzet kan uitputtend worden, waardoor het moeilijk is om binnen de instelling te blijven, terwijl je juist vanuit die positie verandering zou kunnen realiseren.



ONTWERP RICHTING

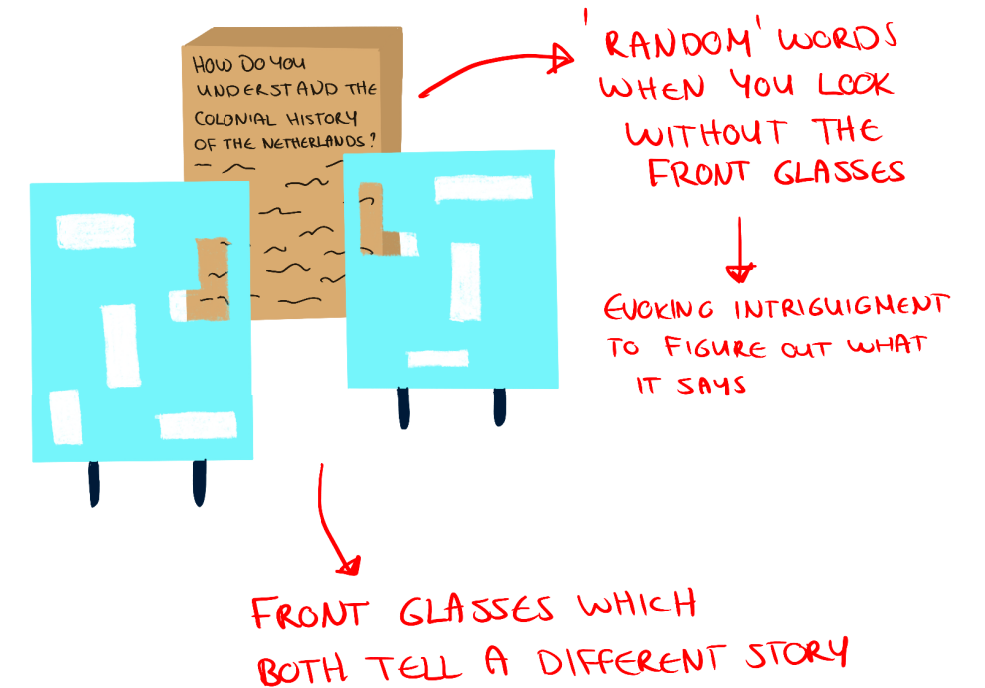
Het ontwikkelen van kaders en modellen voor dekoloniale verandering die institutionele processen ondersteunen. Verdelen van verantwoordelijkheid over de hele organisatie, zodat de last niet op individuen terechtkomt en gezamenlijk eigenaarschap van verandering kan ontstaan.

10.5 Concept ideas

10.5.1 Concepts Round 1

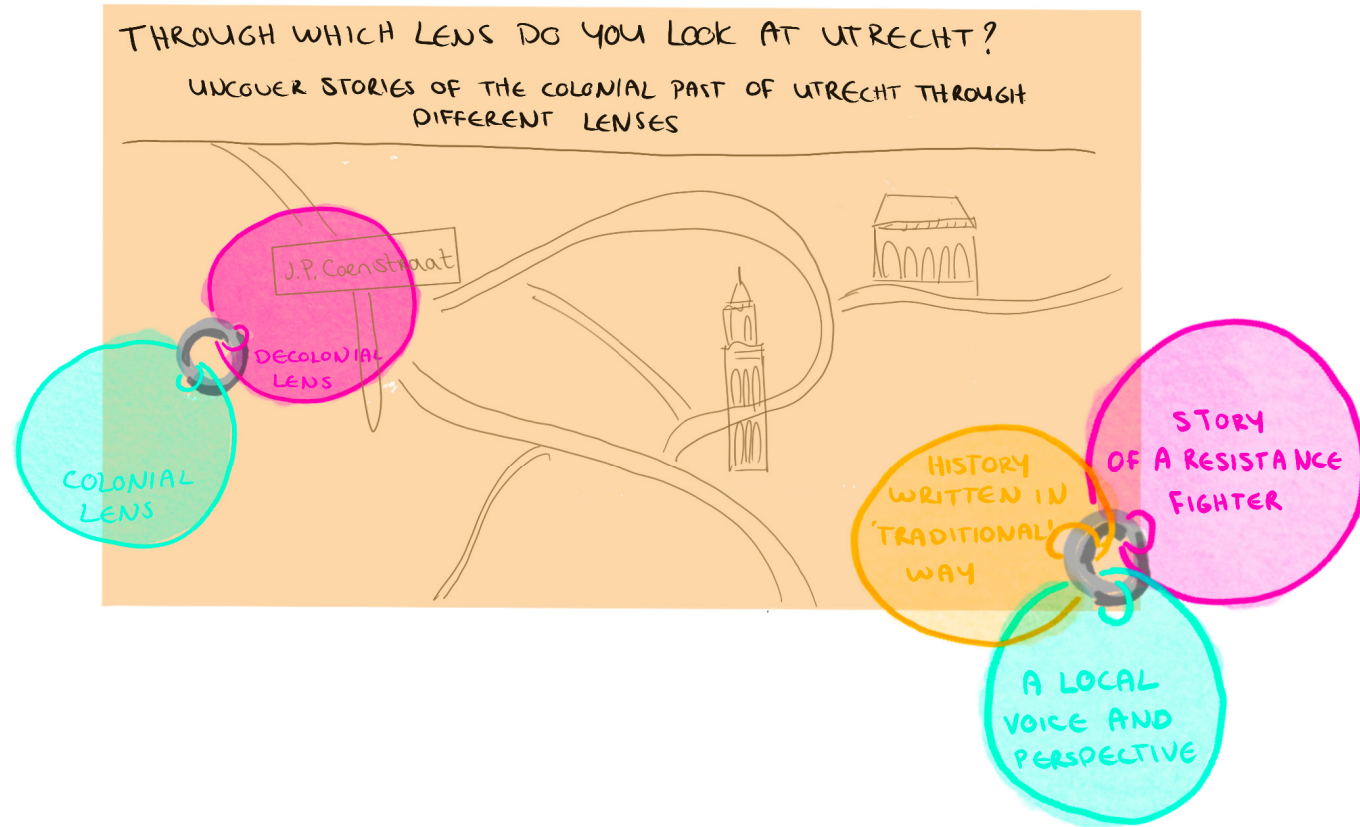


CONCEPT → LITERALLY VIEWING THE PAST THROUGH DIFFERENT LENSES



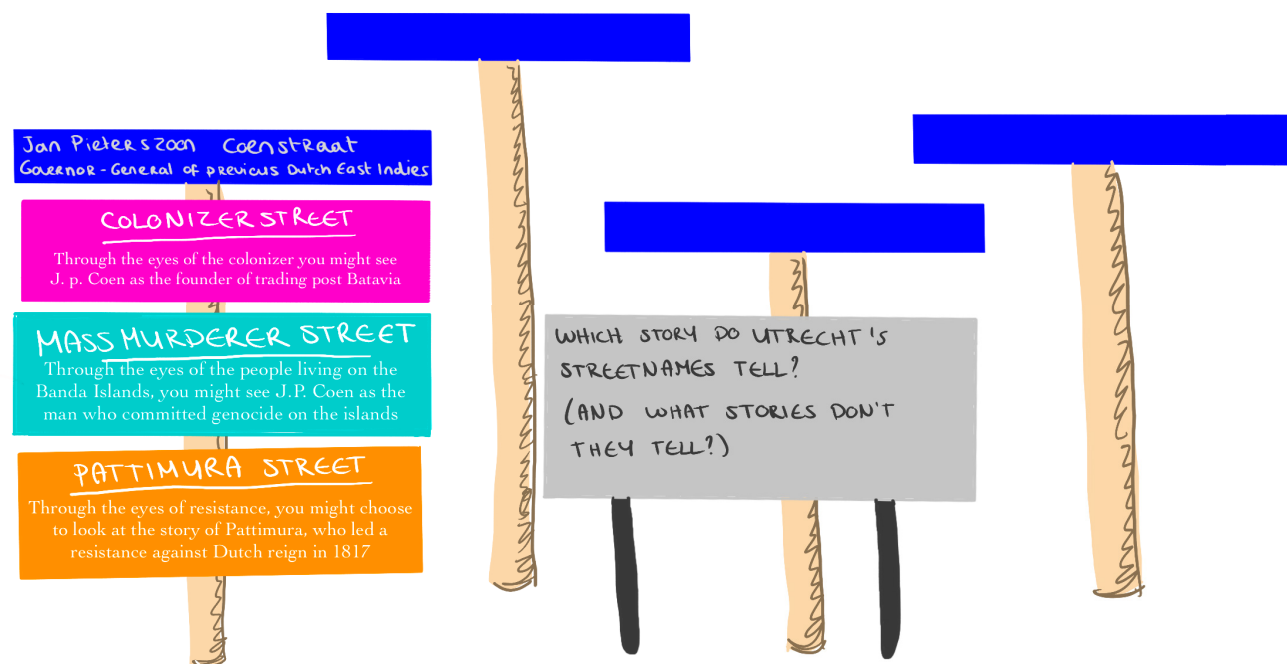
CONCEPT → UNCOVERING COLONIAL STORIES OF UTRECHT THROUGH DIFFERENT LENSES (THESE CAN BE STORIES BEHIND STREET NAMES, BUT ALSO BUILDINGS, INSTITUTIONS ETC.)

VIEWING HISTORY THROUGH DIFFERENT LENSES



CONCEPT:

SPECULATIVE INSTALLATION TO MAKE PEOPLE REFLECT ON WHICH HISTORIES WE CHOOSE TO TELL AND TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THE STORIES WHICH ARE IGNORED

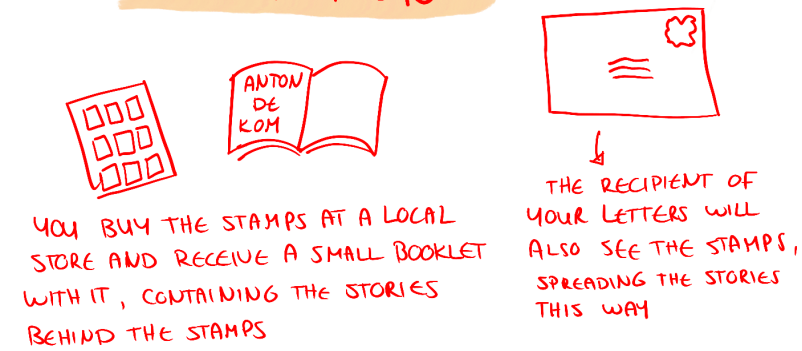


10.5.2 Concepts Round 2

CONCEPT: DECOLONIAL STAMPS



INTERACTION



CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- IS THIS CONFRONTING? HOW CAN THE STAMPS BE MORE CONFRONTING?
- DO ENOUGH PEOPLE STILL BUY STAMPS?
- HOW WILL THE RECIPIENT UNDERSTAND THE STORY WITHOUT THE BOOKLET?

CONCEPT: DECOLONIAL BOOKMARK

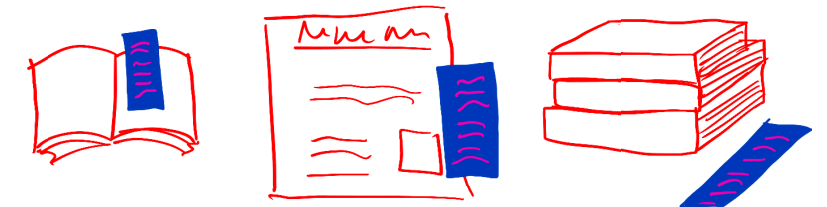
DECOLONIAL READING CHECK!

- FROM WHOSE PERSPECTIVE IS THIS STORY WRITTEN?
- WHO BENEFITS FROM THIS STORY?
- WHOSE VOICE DO YOU NOT HEAR IN THIS STORY?

ALARM WORDS

- COLONISING → WHO WAS OCCUPIED?
- CIVILIZATION → WHO DEFINES 'CIVILIZED'?
- TRADE → WAS IT REALLY VOLUNTARY?

IDEA: YOU RECEIVE A BOOKMARK AT A BOOKSHOP, WITH YOUR SCHOOLBOOKS OR WITH THE PAPER. IT WILL SUPPORT YOU IN READING THEM MORE CRITICALLY AND DISCOVERING SUBJECTIVITY



CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- IT DOESN'T REALLY FIT WITH THE ANALOGY IN THE SENSE THAT IT DOESN'T INTRODUCE NEW STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES

10.6 Feedback form presentation municipality

feedback formulier

Wat vind je van de ontwerpvisie?
Sta je erachter?

Denk je dat dit concept passend is voor de ontwerpvisie? Kan de ontwerpvisie behaald worden met dit concept? Op welke manier wel / niet?

Wat vind je van het 'input' gedeelte van het platform? Is het überhaupt wenselijk dat er input gegeven kan worden? Zo ja, is dit een geschikte manier van input geven en visualiseren?

Heb je andere feedback op het concept?

Wat hoop je dat er in de toekomst gebeurt met dit project? Hoe zou je graag willen dat het wordt voortgezet?

Heb je nog feedback op andere dingen die ik heb gepresenteerd of op het proces?