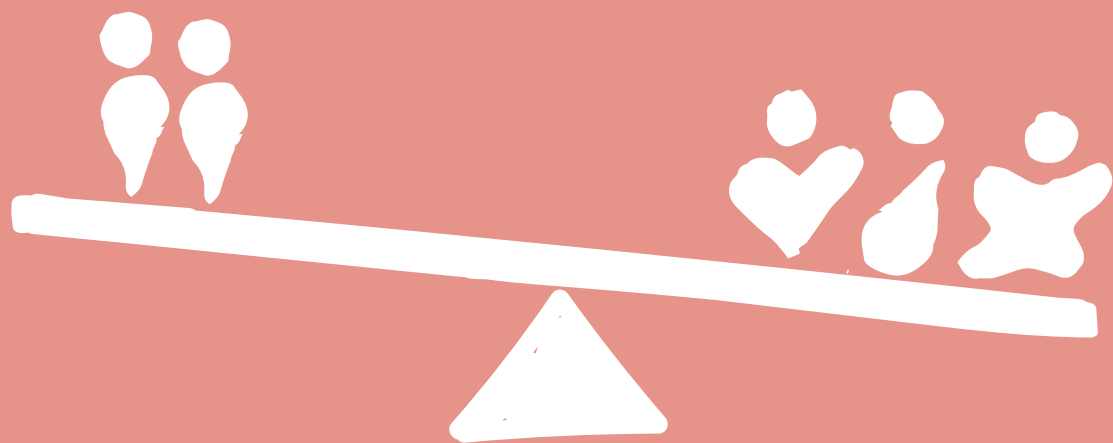# Power Literacy:
Towards a Socially Just, Decolonial & Democratic Design Process

Masters Thesis
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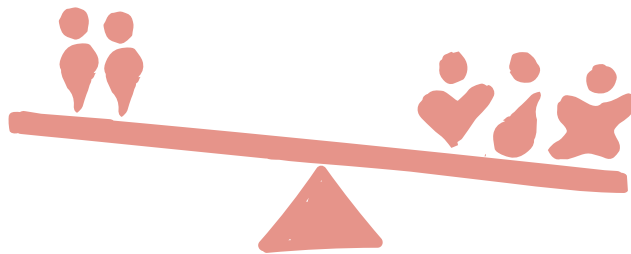
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"It is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves or figments of their imagination, indeed, everything and anything except me."

– Ralph Ellison

To all of the bodies that have been continuously marginalized, objectified, ignored, abused and/or discarded—

whether you reside in a body that is

black,
brown,
indigenous,
muslim,
seeking refuge,
queer,
trans,
gender non-conforming,
femme,
disabled,
mad,
sick,
neurodivergent,
fat—

this is for you.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the design process, research activities and results of a graduation thesis on power and privilege in multi-stakeholder public and social sector design processes. Due to a perceived gap in the design field, both in education and practice, the aim of this project is to support designers in becoming more aware of power dynamics in their work in order to motivate them to challenge, rather than reproduce, existing inequities.

As the result of a number of research activities, a framework for power literacy was developed to meet this aim. In the context of design, power literacy is the ability to be self-aware of, sensitive to and understand the impact of power in the design process, and to then act in a way that aligns outcomes with intentions. The framework focuses on the development of power literacy through the practice of reflexivity—the capacity to identify underlying social structures internalized by yourself and others around you, and to then recognize their impact on power dynamics and equity. By building these skills and making these underlying dynamics more visible, designers will be better equipped to create design processes that are socially just, decolonial and democratic. The framework includes four power literacy skills (recognize, name, understand and act) and five forms of power in the design process (privilege, access power, goal power, role power and rule power).

Based on the research and the resulting framework, a design goal, target user group and a number of design requirements were set at the start of an iterative design cycle of ideating, designing and testing. Subsequently, a field guide for power literacy was designed as the final deliverable. The field guide helps designers navigate through the power literacy framework in an educational, interactive and impactful way, supporting them in the development of a number of reflexivity skills. From initial evaluations of the field guide detailed in this report, the design has been able to provoke a deeper (and at times uncomfortable) awareness of power and privilege for designers working on social and public sector projects. Moreover, it has brought about a number of 'aha' moments for designers, sparking a greater motivation to challenge inequities within their own design practice.

Chapter 1, "Project Set-up," introduces the project, including its context, motivation and support provided by Kennisland, a non-profit social innovation and action research agency. This chapter also outlines the scope, goals and approach selected. As well, the focus of the project—design that is in the social and public sector, process-centric and participatory—is laid out. The main research question, "how can social designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?" is also discussed.

In Chapter 2, "Understanding Power," two research activities, a theme workshop and an extensive literature review, are outlined in order to answer the sub research questions: "what is power and privilege?" and "how does power and privilege show up in the design process?" Theory from the social sciences, gender studies, communication and black feminist thought are used in tandem with insights from design theory and practice in order to draw a number of conclusions that will be used to develop the power literacy framework.

Chapter 3, "Power in Design," details two empirical research activities that were undertaken to answer the research question, "how does power and privilege show up in the design process?" First the set-up and results of seven interviews conducted with practicing designers are described in detail, and finally an exercise that maps power across a generic design process is laid out. The resulting insights will be used to inform the framework and field guide.

Next, the power literacy framework is laid out in Chapter 4. This chapter first details a vision for a more socially just form of social design, outlining why design is never neutral and pulling from concepts of reflexivity and positionality found in social, design and systems theory. Next, the idea of literacy is introduced and applied to the context of power in design. Finally, the framework is laid out, including four skills for power literacy and five forms of power in the design process.

In Chapter 5, "From Framework to Field Guide," the design activities undertaken, the motivation for and a description of the final design deliverable, a field guide for power literacy, are outlined. The field guide supports designers in building up their power literacy skills by introducing them to the five forms of power, and prompting reflexivity "in the field." Included in this chapter is a clear design goal, a list of design requirements and a detailed description of the target user group. The field guide, an educational booklet which includes a number of worksheet activities to be done individually and in groups, is laid out in detail.

Afterwards, in Chapter 6, two tests undertaken to evaluate the field guide are discussed, including their set-up, limitations and results. Finally, the report closes with a reflection on the project, including its achievements, limitations and recommendations for next steps to take this work further.
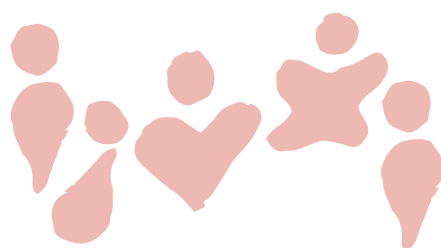
Chapter 1:
Project Set-up
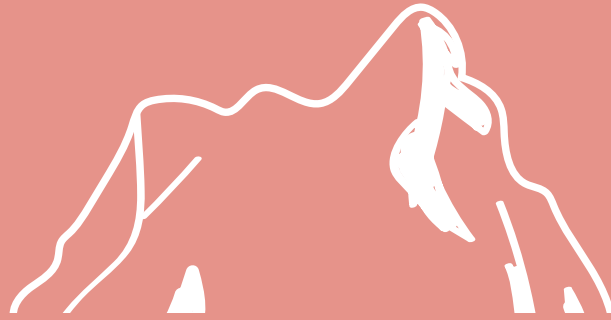
In this chapter the set-up of this graduation project, including some background information, motivation, context and scope will be discussed. As well, the goals of this project, guiding research questions and the approach taken will be outlined.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background: design, problem solving and social issues

As a problem solving discipline, design has a lot to offer to the public and social sectors. This includes different ways of working, including a human-centred approach, the inclusion of empathy, prototyping, iteration and participation. However, design education and practice has a huge blind spot: power and privilege. As design continues to move into the social and public sectors, researchers are highlighting the significant gap related to power and politics that needs to be addressed (see Holmes-Miller, 2016; Vink, Rodrigues and Wetter-Edman, 2017).

When it comes to applying design in the social and public sector, a well-intentioned designer is simply not enough. Without a deeper understanding of systemic and social structures (such as norms, roles, rules, assumptions and beliefs) that uphold structural inequality and injustices, designers are likely to reproduce existing inequalities by keeping power concentrated in the hands of those that are already privileged.

What is notably missing from design education and practice is a nuanced understanding of social and systemic inequities, injustices and

a designer's accountability to ensure that good intentions are translated into impact and outcomes. As such, if designers hoping to 'do good' do not have the reflexivity skills or training to address the underlying structures for systemic change, they are more likely to end up reproducing existing inequities.

1.1.2 Project motivation

Grounded in values of social justice, decolonization and democracy, I set out to explore the multifaceted, often invisible and complex phenomenon of power, specifically in the context of social and public sector participatory design projects. As design becomes more ambitious and popular, and public and social sector organizations are now continuously turning to designers and design thinking to tackle a number of complex social issues, it is becoming critical for designers to understand how power shows up in their work, and the resulting impact this has on the communities they aim to serve. Seeing a gap in both design education and practice, the aim of this project is to build on research and best practices relating to power, privilege and positionality from the social sciences, in order to apply this to the field of social design.

How might we make design processes in the social and public sector more socially just, democratic and decolonial[1]?

This was the question that first motivated this project. However, to begin to explore this question in the format of a 20 week graduation project at TU Delft, the themes of power and privilege were selected as the focus of the research and design activities. These research and design activities resulted in the creation and application of a framework for building up awareness of power dynamics and their impact in the context of social design. Power and privilege will first be explored through a sociological lens (specifically through intersectional feminism and network theory), as well as through the lived experience of four workshop participants, and finally through the experience of designers working on social and public sector projects.

Borrowing from Josina Vink's work on service ecosystem design, and viewing the distribution of power as both a cause and effect of existing social structures[2] and our systemic self,[3] the research and design activities reported in this thesis focus on reflexivity[4] as an important first step towards a more socially just design field (Vink, 2019).

Vink (2019) describes a vision for design, which she calls service ecosystem design, as a cycle of reflexivity, followed by reformation. As such, although both awareness of power structures (reflexivity), as well as action to reshape those power structures (reformation) is required to create a more social just design practice, this project focuses on reflexivity. This is because, before designers can effectively practice reformation of power and the underlying social structures (eg. norms, roles, rules and beliefs) that create inequalities in the design process, they must first develop reflexivity skills.

As such, this graduation project focuses on supporting social designers to become more (self-)aware of power and privilege and the subtle ways that these show up and impact the design process.

1.1.3 Kennisland

This graduation project has been carried out in collaboration with Kennisland (KL), a not-for-profit social innovation and action research agency based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands that researches and designs social progress. Action research can be described as "a global family of approaches that integrate theory and action with the goal of addressing important organisational, community and social issues together with those who are experiencing them" (Sharp, 2016). It can be thought of as a "shared values stance, founded on a commitment to generating knowledge through democratic practice in the pursuit of positive social change" (Sharp, 2016). As such, action research has a lot of commonality with participatory design and social design.

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1   In this context, decolonizing design refers to acknowledging how the current system of privilege and oppression, positioning of western norms as superior, and appropriation of non-western cultures (rooted in the history of Dutch (and global) colonialism) affect design and research practices in the public sector, and then bringing in alternative forms of knowledge and learning in order to adjust mindsets, assumptions and norms (Khandwala, 2019).

2   Here, social structures refers to shared and enduring norms, rules, roles, beliefs and assumptions (Vink, 2019)

3   Vink defines the systemic self as "our thoughts and actions that are influenced by and influence the social structures we are part of. It is our systemic selves that hold the current structures in place and make systemic transitions so challenging" (Vink, 2019; 129)

4   Keeping with Vink's work, here reflexivity is taken to mean "an actor's awareness of a multiplicity of social structures," of which power is a cause and effect, "internalized by themselves and others around them" (Vink, 2019; 121).

As a result, even though most Kennislanders do not have a design background, they combine their social science expertise with various action research and innovation practices that might be considered synonymous with design practices. For example, they often employ a double diamond design approach, apply empathy and human-centred design practices, as well as use qualitative and generative research to reframe problems and to then ideate, design and prototype solutions. Moreover, much of their work is participatory in nature, with multiple stakeholders (including users, or those with lived experience of the social issue at hand), being involved throughout the activities described.

Figure 1.1 the Kennisland logo.

As a foundation (*stitching* in Dutch), the organization only works in the public and social sector, addressing social issues related to three thematic domains: education, healthcare and urban inclusivity (eg. democracy, housing, public space). Based on the organization's values of transparency, inclusivity, equity and critical optimism, as well as their commitment to amplify marginalized voices in many of their projects, the impact of power and privilege on

their work is an area that they are interested in and want to pay more attention to going forward. As such, Kennisland was keen to support this graduation project and provided a 'playground' to experiment within.

Kennisland collaborated by offering itself as a case study in a number of research and design activities throughout this project: through observation of their on-going projects; through interviews with team members about the KL design and research process; past successes and challenges; and as practitioners to test and validate the final design deliverable with. Although the field guide (the final design deliverable) was not designed exclusively for Kennisland, it is something that can be used in their practice going forward and/or leveraged as a new knowledge product and educational tool that they can offer to other design and research practitioners under the Kennisland brand in the future.

Figure 1.2 Kennisland's former HQ at Springhouse in Amsterdam, NL.

1.2 Project scope

This project focuses on power and privilege, two concepts related to social justice, within social and public sector design processes. This scope has been selected with the purpose of supporting designers to challenge structural inequity (instead of reproducing it) in the multi-stakeholder processes that they

design and facilitate. There are four specific areas of focus for this project:

1. **social and public sector design**
2. **participatory design**
3. **process-centric change**
4. **conciousness raising**

1.2.1 Social and public sector design

For the purposes of this thesis, design is being defined as the intention and unintentional impact behind an outcome (Creative Reaction Lab, 2018). Moreover, a designer is understood as "anyone who has agency to make a decision, however small, that will impact a group of people or the environment" (Creative Reaction Lab, 2018; 4). Given this understanding, everyone is a designer in their day-to-day lives. However, this project focuses particularly on design practitioners or 'experts'—people who are paid to design. Thus, the term designer will be used to refer to a professional who is involved in framing a problem, exploring a problem space through research and/or in proposing solutions to the problem through an interactive and collaborative process. As has been described in section 1.1.3 with the example of Kennisland, this includes practitioners who may not have a formal design education as well as those who may use language such as action researcher, design researcher, facilitator or social innovator to refer to their role.

As such, the scope of this project is on design in public and social sector projects, specifically projects that aim to solve or at least mitigate social issues by applying design thinking and/or other design methodologies, referred to interchangeably as social design for the rest of this report.

Although applying principles of social justice are important in all applications of design (see Costanza-Chock, 2018; Vink, Wetter-Edman & Rodrigues, 2017), social design has been selected as the specific focus of this project for a number of reasons. First, social design projects tend to have an explicit intent to address social issues and inequity. Second, projects under the banner of 'social design' usually imply inherent values related to inclusivity, democracy, equity and fairness (although these still may be interpreted differently). Finally, social design projects have high social stakes since 'end-users' usually don't have the luxury of choosing an alternative or deciding not to consume a design output, as might be the case with more traditional product design. As such, awareness of power dynamics, the social structures that support them and their impact is more essential than ever in the field of social design. Moreover, social designers may be more receptive and interested in understanding power dynamics as this aligns with the values and motivations described above.

1.2.2 Participatory design

As well as a focus on social design, there is a particular focus on social and public sector design processes that involve multiple stakeholders through participatory elements during the design process. This is because, "as design shifts from a focus on objects to cultivating societal transformation, the role of non-designers in the co-design process becomes more prominent" (Vink, Wetter-Edman and Rodrigues, 2017; 3). As such, it is important to consider, "how issues of politics can be thoughtfully addressed within complex, participatory design processes working to realize social good," in addition to the influential role of designers (ibid; 3).

Even though participatory processes are often seen to be democratic and socially just in nature, power dynamics and privilege are still present, especially when stakeholder groups are not treated or perceived as equal in the design process (see Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014). Due to participatory design's perceived commitment to inclusion and equality, the assumption is that awareness and sensitivity to these dynamics are often overlooked, even though they are increasingly important within this context. As such, the focus of this project includes design projects that are participatory.

1.2.3 Process-centric change

Next, this project focuses on the design process itself, as opposed to the design outputs. Although outputs of social design matter, there is less attention being paid to the impact that the design process itself has on various stakeholders, outputs and other outcomes. In this context, there is a growing body of work from designers applying systems thinking, social justice and /or equity to their practice that emphasizes the ways in which the impact of the design process is just as important as design outputs when it comes to social design (see Costanza-Chock, 2018; Keshavarz, 2015; Vink, 2019; Hill, Molitor and Oritz, 2016; Vink, Wetter-Edman, Rodrigues, 2017;). "Design must not be analyzed on its intentions to serve, but rather on what it does and does not do to people and the environment[...] we must not only focus our political analysis on the results of a design process, but we must also consider the process itself, as this already manipulates the environment" (Vink, Wetter-Edman, Rodrigues, 2017; 4, referring to Keshavarz, 2015).

Moreover, when design is being applied for the purpose of social change, designers are aiming to shift complex social issues that have deep, embedded and often invisible structural roots. As such, the way that designers work together (eg. the design process and its associated social structures) must reflect the change that is desired in the design outputs. That is to say, an adjustment in the way that we work together is required to create systemic change, which is the aspect of change that will be focused on. Thus, the idea that change emerges "from an accountable, accessible and collaborative process, rather than as a point at the end of the process," is central to this project (Design Justice Network, 2016). Accordingly, the focus of this project is on the design process, as it is assumed that the process informs the extent to which systemic change can take place, especially in relation to social justice, decolonization and democracy.

1.2.4 Consciousness raising

Finally, the focus of this project at its outset was on equipping designers with the mindset, approaches and tools to share power within participatory social and public sector design processes. The aim was to support designers in becoming more *cognizant* of the underlying relationships and structures that cause imbalances of power, and to subsequently help them challenge the status quo by *shifting* these dynamics. As a result of research and design insights gained throughout the process of this project (as will be explained in chapter 4), this focus was later narrowed specifically to supporting designers to develop a greater awareness of and sensitivity to power and its impact. The narrowing of the project scope towards raising awareness was made midway through the project. Research activities revealed that it is necessary for an actor to first recognize an issue (marginalization and reproduction of inequity through existing social structures found in social design processes), before they can enact meaningful change (the redistribution of power in the design process in order to challenge existing systemic and structural inequities). As well, due to the mandated 20 week timeline for graduation projects in the Industrial Design and Engineering faculty at TU Delft, a focus on 'concsiousness raising' was deemed to be a more realistic goal. As such, although the ability to share power is believed to be an important and worthy skill that designers should develop, this ended up being outside of the scope of the final design deliverable.

1.3 Goals and research questions

At the outset of the project, the goal was to design guidelines or tools to support designers in becoming more aware of power and privilege, and to then share their power to ensure a more inclusive and equitable design process. Throughout the course of the project, this goal evolved and became more focused.

As will be described in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5, this shift resulted in a goal of bringing a shared understanding of power into the repertoire of the social designer, especially a greater cognizance of their own position of power and privilege. In doing so, the aim is to support designers in developing skills that foster a self-awareness of, sensitivity to and ability to understand the impact of power in the design process in order to act in a way that aligns outcomes with intentions.

The assumption is that by building up these skills, social designers will be better equipped to address the underlying structural issues that are often social and political in nature, instead of the more surface level, technical problems that we are already trained to see. In making these hard to see structural characteristics more visible, designers can more intentionally set up participatory processes that are socially just, democratic and decolonial.

With this goal in mind, the main research question that guided this project was:

How can social designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?

To explore the research and design space, this main research question was divided into three subsequent research questions:

RQ1: What is power and privilege?

RQ2: How does power and privilege show up in the design process?

RQ3: What kind of skills and guidance can help designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?

1.4 Process and approach

To carry out this project I took an intuitive approach, that was divided into two halves: research and design. The first half of the project consisted of an iterative research cycle, which took place within a greater process of diverging and converging, as seen in figure 1.3. This allowed for an exploratory design research phase in which the three research questions were investigated. Power and privilege were explored outside of as well as within the design context, while skills and approaches related to reflexivity and positionality were simultaneously investigated. Through this iterative cycle, as research insights were uncovered, a framework for power literacy was created. Along with this framework, a design goal and requirements for the final design were specified as a result of the research phase.

In the second phase of the project, design, an iterative process consisting of ideating,

1. Research Phase

2. Design Phase

research qs

conduct research

Iterative research cycle

analyze for insights

framework

diverge - discover

converge - define

ideate

design

Iterative design cycle

test

field guide
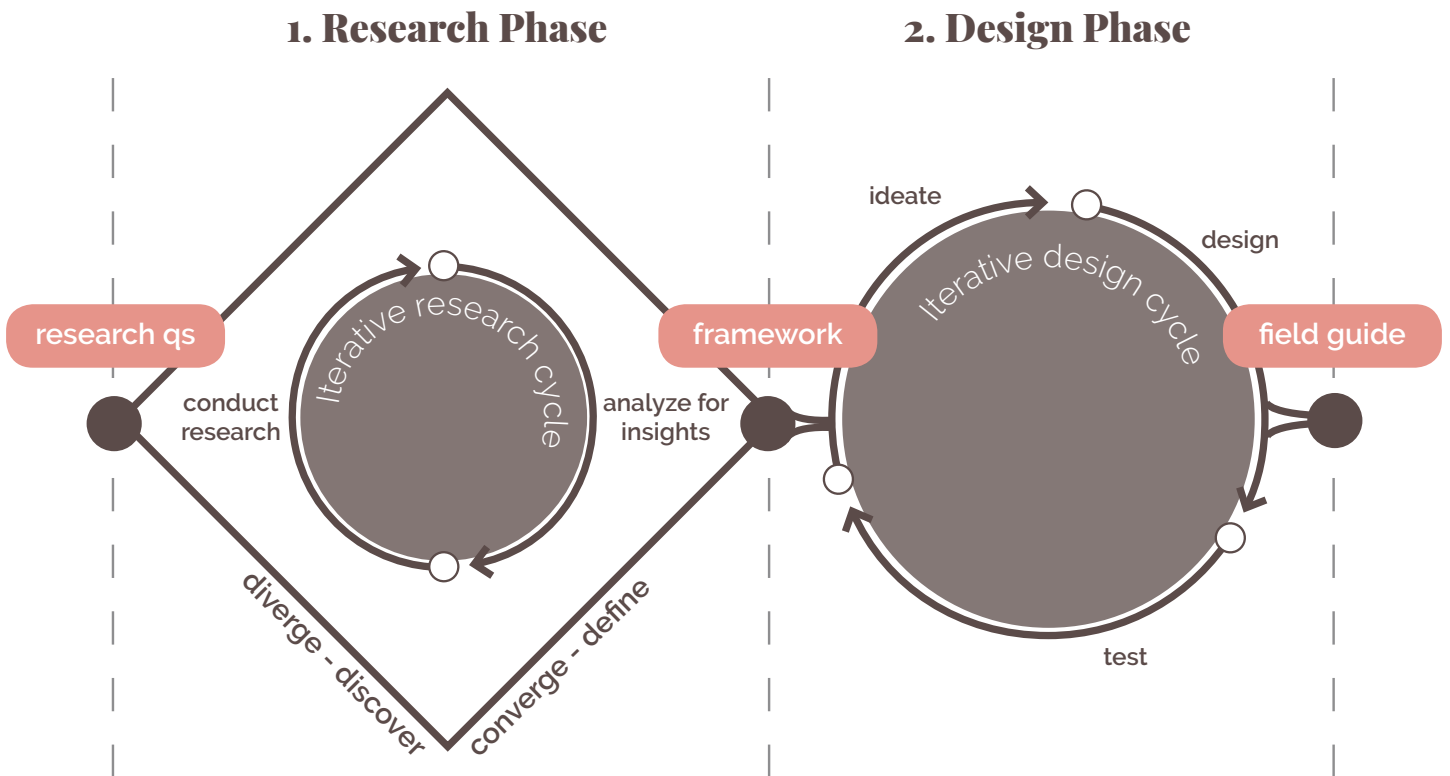
Figure 1.3 an overview of the design process applied in this project.

designing and testing was applied. After initially exploring the design space, a final concept was selected based on the design goal and requirements (as will be explained in chapter 5). This concept further evolved through initial prototyping and testing with designers. Finally, the final design was evaluated in its context of use with the Kennisland team, as well as with a TU Delft design student.

A number of research methods were selected, including literature review, interviews, observations and field notes, as well as a theme workshop. The interviews were done with 7 design practitioners who have experience in social and public sector design projects in the Netherlands and Canada. Observation, field notes, interviews and secondary research were used in the context of Kennisland as a case study. Table 1.1 gives an overview of each research method, its goal(s), research question and the chapter where it can be found.

Method	Research Question(s)	Goal(s)	Chapter
Literature review of power & privilege outside and within the context of design	RQ 1: What is power and privilege? RQ 3: What skills and guidance can help designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?	1. Gain an understanding of power and privilege through theory 2. Translate this understanding back to the design context	Chapter 2
Theme workshop	RQ 1: What is power and privilege?	1. Gain an understanding of power through lived experience	Chapter 2
Interviews	RQ2: How does power and privilege show up in the design process?	1. Understand how designers experience power in the design process, including sources of power 2. Determine current gaps in addressing power dynamics in the design process 3. Explore best practices and lessons learned for aligning the design process with social justice values	Chapter 3
Mapping (KL as case study)	RQ2: How does power and privilege show up in the design process?	1. Identify and visualize where, when and how power shows up in the design process	Chapter 3
Literature review of reflexivity	RQ 3: What skills and guidance can help designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?	1. Explore reflexivity as a skill that designers can develop to become aware of power and its impact	Chapter 4

Table 1.1 an overview of the research methods selected for this project.

Chapter 2: Understanding Power
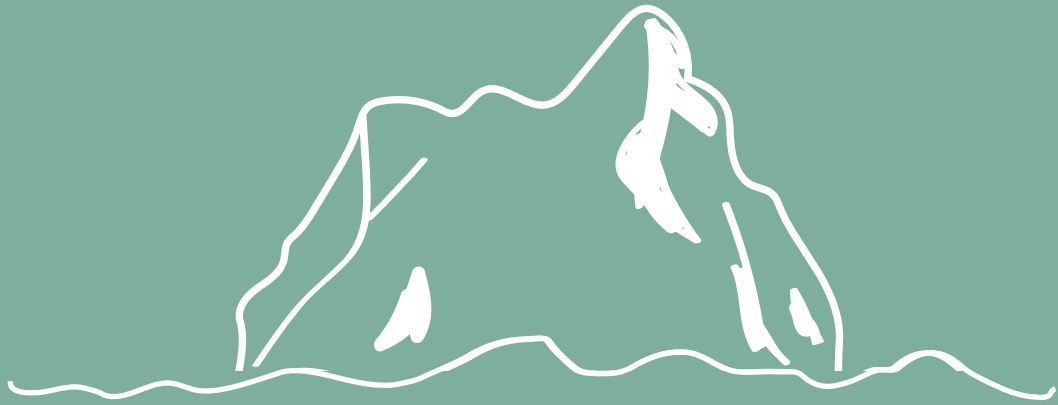
This chapter details a number of research activities that were undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of power. First, a general understanding of power is explored through a literature review and a theme workshop. Next, the concept of privilege is explored through social theory, and then translated back into the design context through a review of design literature and practice. Finally, the power in the context of network theory is further examined and then applied to the design field. The research questions, methods of these activities and key findings are described in the following pages.

2.1 Introduction

In order to explore the first research question, what is power and privilege, a number of research activities were undertaken. The first activity was focused on understanding various lived experiences of power outside of the design context. A theme workshop, part of the frame innovation method (see Dorst, 2015; Van Leeuwen, Rijken, Bloothoofd & Cobussen, 2020), was organized in order to gain insight into power in this context. The second research activity undertaken to answer the research question was a literature review. First, general meanings of power in social and political theory were researched to build on the insights discovered through the theme workshop. Next, understandings of privilege were explored through gender and race theory (including intersectionality and black feminist thought), and were then related back to the design context. After this, understandings of power in network theory were examined. Network power was then translated into the context of service design and finally related back to multi-stakeholder participatory design projects in the social and public sector.

2.2 Power

Two initial research activities were undertaken to explore general meanings of power. The first was a theme workshop and the second was a literature review of power from social and political theory.

2.2.1 Lived Experiences of Power: Theme Workshop

Research Question

For this research activity, the underlying research question was, how is power experienced personally? I wanted to explore this research question in a 'designerly' way in order to get a deeper understanding of what power means and how it is experienced by Kennislanders in their daily lives by hearing their stories.

Method and Set-up

In order to explore the research question, a theme workshop was facilitated with four Kennisland interns (and sociology students) as participants. Convenience sampling was used, based on the researcher's access to Kennisland, and the flexible schedule of the interns. Moreover, because Kennisland will be a key 'end-user' of the final design deliverable, involving them as participants was a way to explore their experience of power while gaining valuable insights to translate into the final design deliverable.

The idea of a theme workshop is derived from hermeneutic phenomenology and is based on the frame innovation method from Kees Dorst (Dorst, 2015). A theme can be explored outside of the context of the design problem (in this case: the reproduction of inequities in the design process due to a lack of awareness and understanding of power), and can be researched in a number of ways, including through personal experience (van der Bijl Brouwer & Dorst, 2014). At its core, a theme can be understood as a "psychological or social construct that can play a crucial role in motivating someone to act in a situation" (Rijken, 2013).

In line with this approach, the main theme of power and three related values of control, respect and equity were explored outside of the specific context of the participatory design process. These four themes were selected based on my preliminary literature research and initial interviews with designers. A facilitation guide was created to focus the discussion on participants' own lived experiences of power, whether that was in a personal or professional context. Although originally planned as an in person workshop, due to external circumstances (the COVID-19 pandemic), the workshop was reconfigured to be held online in the format of a group video call. Due to technical issues, the number of participants varied between 2 - 4 at different points during the session. At the beginning of the session, participants were given 10 minutes to create a mind map in relation to the theme of power in order to warm up their brains and get them ready to dive deeper into a discussion. Participants shared some interesting insights, commonalities and differences that came up from their mind map activities, and were then facilitated in a discussion about their past experiences of power. Participants also shared stories of times when they felt like power dynamics shifted between them and another person (eg. when power became more or less asymmetrical in a relationship). Finally, participants discussed their experiences of control, respect and equity, and how these themes connect to the theme of power for them.

Limitations

Although exploratory in nature, it should be noted that all 4 participants had similar backgrounds and demographic profiles, which greatly affected the discussion. All participants were white, female, Dutch citizens and in their 20s. All four participants, at the time of the workshop, were sociology students interning at Kennisland as a part of their Masters studies. As such, their lived experiences only reflect one particular viewpoint, and a more nuanced interpretation of power from other situated perspectives is missing.

Results

By unpacking the theme of power, a common idea that came up was that of having control as well as making decisions. Participants discussed how decision making and governance factors change the type of power someone has. These factors included how democratically the decision making process is, whether short term or long term impact is considered, and the pace of decisions. Multiple participants mentioned Trump and Putin as examples of "scary" forms of power, because they did not consider long term impact, and thus were not truly democratic in their opinions.

The idea of fear and feeling safe came up in relation to the way that power is used as well. Participants discussed how power can make one person feel safe, while causing fear in others. They saw this form of power as something that was more hierarchical, addictive and ego- centred. They also identified it as being gendered, and associated with masculinity. This power was seen to be related to status or title, money, privilege, belongings or access to resources, as well as the identity that someone is born into. This ultimately was perceived as wanting to have or maintain control over others and/or a situation.

On the other hand, they also told stories about feeling less safe, but trying to take back power or become empowered by acts of personal protest where one might stand up for themselves. This was described as the act of taking up physical, mental or emotional space that is not usually reserved for the actor based on their identity (eg. gender, age or race), position, or status. This form of power (or empowerment) was seen to arise from the actors ability to claim space, make decisions on their own terms and say no in a situation where they usually would be unable to do so. For example, one participant told a story where she was roller-skating and felt threatened by a man in a car who was yelling at her. She perceived that he had more power due to his gender, size and the fact that he was in a motorized vehicle, whereas she wasn't. However, she felt that him threatening and intimidating her was not right, so even though she felt scared she refused to let him take up that space; she described that this made her feel powerful in a way, but that she was also faking it and actually scared.

Participants also identified that power comes with a lot of responsibility, and that their more negative associations with power (described formerly), were related to a lack of responsibility being taken by the person with power. They saw that thinking ahead, empathy, prioritizing others, ensuring safety and ultimately a balance in one's own power were what brought respect into the power equation.

Finally participants saw equity as the opposite of concentrated power, and that mutual respect was important in order for power to be used positively. They emphasized the need to build common ground, and the importance of those with power to listen, and for those with less power to be heard. Factors such as trust, openness, vulnerability, discussion and time and space were also important in building common ground and fairness in decision making. One participant told a story of being on a diverse student on a trip as an example when she felt that there was the most respect and equity, or shared

power. She described how everyone shared something vulnerable about themselves, which humanized everyone, even though they were different, and required a shared respect and commitment to listen between the group in order for everyone to feel safe.

Key Takeaways

Exploring power as a theme through lived experience resulted in the discovery of important insights, with both similarities and differences to understandings of power that will follow through a literature review in the next section. Participants spoke about power as multi-faceted and both something that can be used to control or dominate others, but also as one's ability to be able to act or have influence. Participants also brought up the idea of privilege in relation to power, especially in terms of how their personal lived experience as women sometimes made them feel unsafe or like they had less power. Race was brought up as well, but due to their whiteness, it was not as easy and automatic for them to talk about their lived experience of privilege as it was of oppression, even though they mentioned it was something they had. As such, a connection between power and feelings of safety or, on the other hand, fear was an interesting take-away from the workshop. In addition, the idea of feeling 'powerful' was related to the concept of 'empowerment.' Moreover, a strong association between power and democracy, governance and acts of protest for those with less power was an interesting discovery. Finally, the insight that equity was perceived as the opposite of (concentrated) power, and one participant's experience of vulnerability, reciprocity and openness as an effective means for respectful or 'shared' power dynamics were valuable insights.

Next, to expand on understandings of power derived through the theme workshop, a literature review was undertaken. The results are explained in the following section, 2.2.2.

2.2.2 Power in Social and Political Theory

Power has been a somewhat disputed and, at times, evasive concept, with many definitions. Avelino writes that, "Power is one of the most contested concepts in social and political theory" (Avelino, 2011; 56). Even so, most understandings of power can be grouped into one of two distinctions; *power to* and *power over*. For the purpose of this project, both understandings of power are relevant; moreover, they are seen to be interrelated.

Power to is about an actors' ability or capacity to make something happen. Dowding labels power to as "outcome power," defining it as "the capacity to bring about or help bring about an outcome" (Dowding, 1991; 48). In line with this, Pitkin writes that "power is a something— anything—which makes or renders somebody able to do, capable of doing something. Power is capacity, potential, ability, or wherewithal" (Pitkin, 1972; 276).

Power as power over can be understood simply as "getting someone to do what you want them to do" and is related to the idea of domination (Allen, 2016). This understanding of power as power over or domination, is seen in Weber's (1978;53) definition of power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance." As such, power over is also inherently relational. Further, Dowding labels power over as 'social power,' and defines it as, "the ability of an actor deliberately to change the incentive structures of another actor or actors to bring about outcomes" (Dowding, 1991; 48). In line with this, Castells, who we will return to in section 2.2.4 of this chapter, defines power as "the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other other social actor(s)" (Castells, 2009; 10). Others write about power over as a kind of capacity, "the capacity to impose one's will on others; on this view, power-over is a derivative

form of power-to" (Allen, 2016 referring to Allen 1999, Lukes 2005).

As such, in line with Avelino, "power 'over' and power 'to' are not mutually exclusive; it can be argued that both can be 'possessed' and 'exercised', and both are 'relationally' constituted in some way or another" (2011; 57). Moreover, and importantly, Lukes indicates that,

> how we think about power may serve to reproduce and reinforce power structures and relations, or alternatively it may challenge and subvert them. It may contribute to their continued functioning, or it may unmask their principles of operation, whose effectiveness is increased by their being hidden from view (Lukes 2005; 63).

In other words, having the ability to define the conversation around what power is and isn't in a given context in itself will influence outcomes, including the way that actors interact with each other and the prevailing social structures that are embedded in and influence everyday life.

Based on the literature reviewed, an understanding of power that acknowledges both interpretations and their interrelatedness will be used in this project. Power is seen as a social actor's ability to influence an outcome (power to), which is affected by the asymmetry of an social actor's relationship to other social actor(s) (power over). As such power to and power over are understood to be inherently tied together; an actor's ability to act always happens within the context of social structures, relations and their own social position. Figure 2.1 demonstrates this relationship.

Here, asymmetry refers to the difference or unevenness between two or more actors' ability to influence, which can arise from a number of sources. One source of asymmetry that is of particular relevance for this project is privilege and oppression. This will be discussed in greater detail in 2.3.
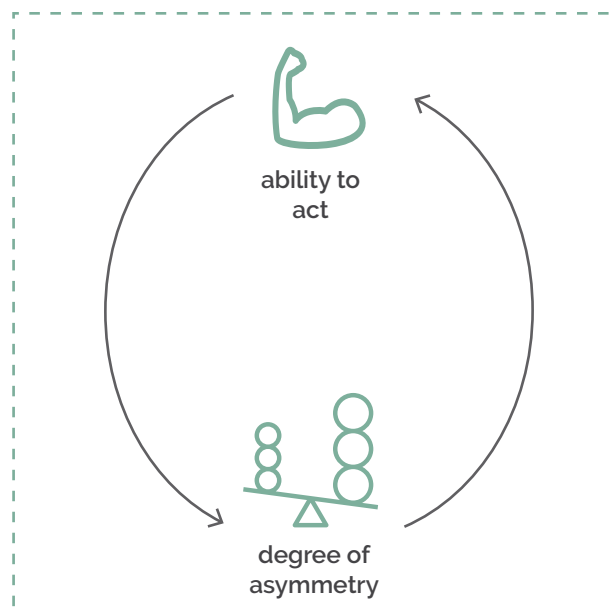
Figure 2.1 illustrates the positive feedback loop between an actor's ability to act and the social relations[1]

2.2.3 Key Takeaways

Based on the theme workshop and literature review, a number of characteristics of power have been identified as key takeaways:

1. Power is embedded within social structures

Power is understood to be everyday, socialized and embedded (Foucault, 1977). Here it is important to understand how power both determines and is determined by the prevailing social structures (the norms, roles, rules and beliefs that guide behaviour and social interactions), in a given context.

2. Power is relational

One's ability to influence an outcome is always determined within a greater social context of that person's relationship to other social actors.

3. Power is dynamic and temporal

Even if someone is able to exercise or possess power at one point, this is not static; power dynamics can and will change, and

1   Icons from the Noun Project: muscle by Zalhan and asymmetry by Nithinan Tatah.

are dependent on the context, including the other social actors, the point in time and other environmental factors

4. Power is perceived
An actor's perceived sense of power can be internalized. Thus, if an actor feels powerless, this will often function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Likewise, if someone else is perceived as powerful, that may also support their capacity to influence an outcome.

5. Power is multi-leveled
Power dynamics are prevalent in all levels of society, as seen in figure 2.2. They influence and are influenced by:

Individual: an actor's individual feelings, values and beliefs.

Interpersonal: the actions, behaviour and language used in interpersonal interactions.

Cultural: media images, as well as ideas of what is 'right' or 'normal' within a particular context.

Institutional: policies, laws, rules and governance (in government and other institions) and the way that resources are distributed as a result.
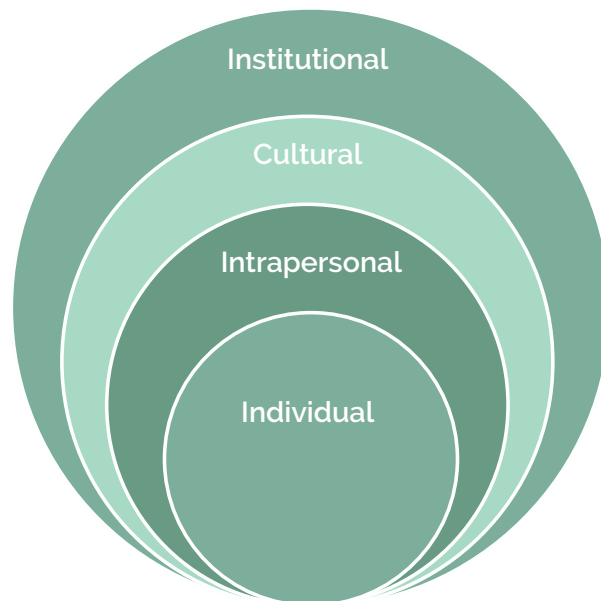
Figure 2.2 the multiple and interrelated levels of society that power dynamics play out within and between.

2.3 Privilege

"In order to understand the way privilege works, you have to be able to see patterns and systems in social life, but you also have to care about individual experiences. I think one's own individual experience is sacred. Testifying to it is very important—but so is seeing that it is set within a framework outside of one's personal experience that is much bigger, and has repetitive statistical patterns in it."

- Peggy McIntosh

The concept of privilege gained prominence in the late 1980s when gender studies scholar Peggy McIntosh began to write about it in her paper, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies." (Rothman, 2014). In the paper, she wrote a list of 50 ways that she had an advantage based on the colour of her skin. Her list included examples such as:

I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is

I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

(McIntosh, 1988)

2.3.1 What is Privilege?

Privilege is a social relation where members of one social group gain benefits at the expense of another social group. (Johnson, 2001). This concept, used in a variety of fields—especially in social theory and social justice practice—is linked to social and cultural forms of power, and the way that social structures reinforce existing concentrations of power and advantage for certain social groups (Twine, 2013). Thus, privilege is used to refer "to certain social advantages, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain social identity groups" (Garcia, 2018).

As such, privilege is an unearned advantage given on the basis of the social identity groups that someone belongs to (Johnson, 2001; McIntosh, 1988). Privileged social identities are those that have historically held positions of dominance over others; for example white people, men and cisgendered people. Along with the aforementioned social identity groups of race, sex and gender, other categories include mental and physical ability,

ethnicity, legal status, class, sexuality, religion and education. For those who have privilege, it is often invisible to them.

2.3.2 Oppression: Impact over Intent

Oppression is sometimes described as the opposite of privilege as, according to Johnson (2001),

> for every social category that is privileged, one or more other categories are oppressed in relation to it. The concept of oppression points to social forces that tend to press upon people and hold them down, to hem them in and block their pursuits of a good life. Just as privilege tends to open doors of opportunity, oppression tends to slam them shut.

In this way, the idea that *impact matters more than intent* is an important one when understanding privilege. In the very definition of privilege, one group is advantageous at the expense of another. Thus, even if those with privilege are unaware of their unearned advantage and/or do not *intend* for those of other social groups to be disadvantaged, the *impact* is still the same. Thus, if those with privilege want to reduce social inequalities, their good intentions need to actually translate into impact; they can use their privilege to call out forms of oppression and actively change their behaviour in order to level the playing field.

2.3.3 Unearned Entitlments and Conferred Dominance

According to McIntosh, there are two categories of privilege, or unearned advantage. The first category is *unearned entitlement*s; this is something that all people should have, but it currently gives a competitive edge (eg. unearned advantage) to those with privilege (McIntosh, 1988). This type of advantage could be spread or shared evenly,

regardless of social group, for a positive (and socially just) result. Examples of unearned entitlements include feeling safe in public space, being able to access all public transit stations and being able to wear your hair in its natural style without being accused of being 'unprofessional.' The second category, conferred dominance, gives one group power over the other, and "distorts the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups" (McIntosh, 1988). This includes the unequal distribution of resources and rewards, and as such, is something that social justice advocates aim to shrink (Johnson, 2001). In his book, *Power, Privilege and Difference*, Johnson (2001; 21) gives the following example:

> The common pattern of men controlling conversations with women, for example, is grounded in a cultural assumption that men are supposed to dominate women. An adolescent boy who appears too willing to defer to his mother risks being called a 'mama's boy,' in the same way that a husband who appears in any way subordinate to his wife is often labeled 'henpecked' (or worse). The counterpart for girls carries no such stigma. 'Daddy's girl' isn't considered an insult in this culture, and the language contains no specific insulting terms for a woman who is under the control of her husband.

Because these norms, beliefs and behaviours are so deeply and subconsciously ingrained into individuals, it's easy for those who have privilege "to amplify patterns of oppression without meaning to, or even realizing it" (Shelly, 2017).

2.3.4 Systems of Privilege and Oppression

Moreover, although individuals experience privilege and/or oppression, it is not an individual phenomenon, and thus cannot be separated from the larger social and systemic context that supports it; "privilege, power, and oppression exist only through social systems and how individuals participate in them"

(Johnson, 2001; 96). As Johnson (2001; 96) goes on to write,

> Systems organized around privilege have three main characteristics. They are dominated by privileged groups, identified with privileged groups, and centered on privileged groups. All three characteristics support the idea that members of privileged groups are superior to those below them and, therefore, deserve their privilege. A patriarchy, for example, is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. Racism happens through systems that are white-dominated, white-identified and white-centered, and heterosexism works through systems that are dominated, identified with and centered on heterosexuality and heterosexuals.

Privilege-dominated refers to the privileged social group having positions of power and/or being associated with being powerful. Privilege-identified means that what is considered 'normal,' or within the accepted norms of a social system, is based on the privileged group; the privileged group is taken as the standard for what is ideal. For example, this might include accepted ways of speaking, dressing or behaving. Finally, privilege-centered means that the majority of stories and images in the social system center those who have privilege. This might be reflected, for example, in stories that the news media chooses to focus on, or in the stories, novels and textbooks that are provided for school-aged children. That is to say, the experiences and stories that are focused on are about those who are members of the privileged group.

2.3.5 Intersectionality and the Matrix of Domination

Another important area of academic literature that helps to unpack power, privilege and oppression is black feminist thought and the concept of *intersectionality*. An understanding of intersectionality is important to avoid reproducing inequities in any field, especially

in social design processes, as it provides a systemic and interrelated perspective on power.

Black feminist scholars have a long history of studying the interconnectedness of race and sex, or more specifically the interrelated experience of both racism and sexism for black women (see Allen, 2016 referring to Gines, 2014). The term intersectionality (at least in its contemporary use), was proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw as part of a legal framework to demonstrate how, what she termed *a single axis framework*, "repeatedly failed to protect Black women workers" (Crenshaw, 1991a cited in Costanza-Chock, 2018;3). As such, Crenshaw used the concept of intersectionality to demonstrate that oppression experienced on the basis of race and gender are not independent constructs, but interrelated (Crenshaw, 1991b).

Intersectionality can then be understood as the idea that systems of privilege and oppression are "interconnected and mutually construct one another;" and that "configurations of social inequalities take form within intersecting oppressions" (Collins, 2017; 21). Moreover, the way a social actor perceives a social problem, "reflects how the social actor is situated within the power relations of particular historical and social contexts," and due to the distinct location of individuals within intersecting oppressions, they will also have distinctive perspectives on social phenomena (Collins, 2017; 21).

The matrix of domination, introduced by Patricia Hill Collins in her book, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, is a way to conceptualize intersectionality. Collins (1990) writes about "interlocking systems of oppression" as a way to view intersectionality from a systemic or macro view. She does this by introducing the matrix of domination, which Costanza-Chock describes as, "a conceptual model that helps us think about how power, oppression, resistance, privilege, penalties,

benefits and harms are systematically distributed." (Costanza-Chock, 2018). Collins (1990; 226) writes:

> Replacing additive models of oppression with interlocking ones creates possibilities for new paradigms. The significance of seeing race, class, and gender as interlocking systems of oppression is that such an approach fosters a paradigmatic shift of thinking inclusively about other oppressions, such as age, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity. Race, class, and gender represent the three systems of oppression that most heavily affect African-American women. But these systems and the economic, political, and ideological conditions that support them may not be the most fundamental oppressions, and they certainly affect many more groups than Black women. Other people of color, Jews, the poor white women, and gays and lesbians have all had similar ideological justifications offered for their subordination. All categories of humans labeled Others have been equated to one another, to animals, and to nature.

As such, the matrix of domination is a helpful tool to understand how systems of privilege and oppression along different axes of identity (eg. sex, ability, class, gender identity, race, sexuality, etc.) are interconnected. It also can help an individual to recognize how they are situated within these interlocking power relations, in order to recognize the privilege and oppression they may simultaneously experience along various points of their identity. This intersectional view aids the understanding that every social actor is simultaneously a member of multiple social groups, which afford them both unearned advantages and disadvantages depending on their location. In figure 2.3 you can see a visual representation of the matrix of domination.
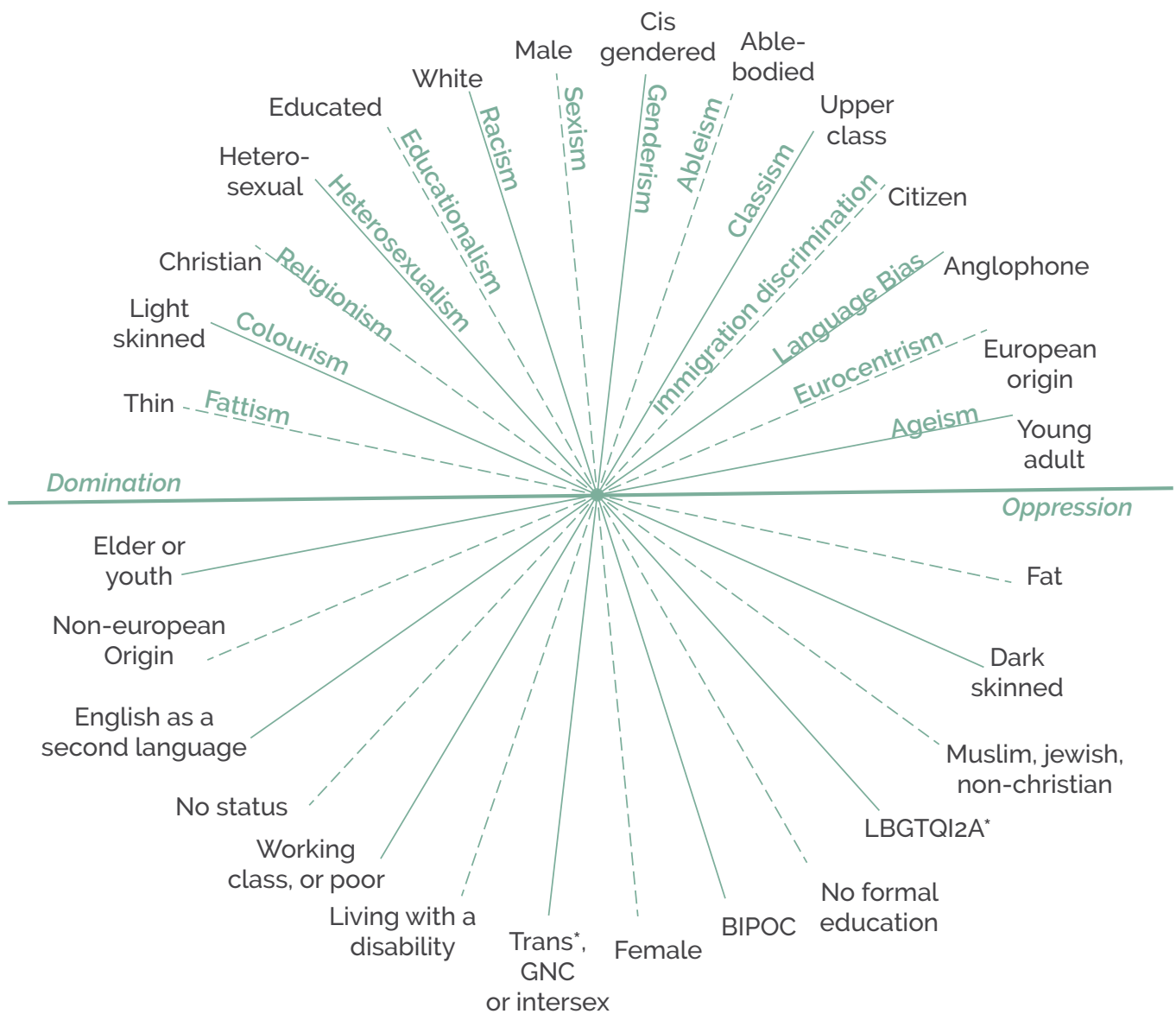
Figure 2.3 a visual representation of the matrix of domination, adapted from Morgan, 1996.

2.3.6 Intersectionality in Design

Not only are these understandings of privilege, oppression, intersectionality and the matrix of domination explored so far in section 2.3 important for design to be equitable and inclusive (especially social and participatory design processes), but they are already being applied by equity and social justice leaders in the field. Namely, this includes the work of Sasha Costanza-Chock and the Design Justice Network, as well as the EquityxDesign process created by Caroline Hill, Michelle Molitor and Christine Oritz.

To begin with, design justice takes the ideas of privilege, oppression, intersectionality and the matrix of domination, and applies them to design in order to ensure a "more equitable distribution of design's benefits and burdens; fair and meaningful participation in design decisions; and recognition of community based design traditions, knowledge, and practices" (Costanza-Chock, 2018; 5). Based on Patricia Hill Collins' work demonstrating how interlocking systems of oppression

result in varying amounts of privilege and disadvantage for each individual, "design justice urges us to consider how design (affordances, objects, systems, processes) simultaneously distributes both penalty and privileges to individuals based on their location within the matrix of domination, and to attend to the ways that this operates at various scales" (Costanza-Chock, 2018; 4).

Similarly, the EquityxDesign process builds on intersectional feminist thought, in order to merge the traditional design thinking process with equity work. As such, the EquityxDesign framework promotes the idea of reflexivity in terms of a designer's implicit biases related to legacies of oppression and privilege in order to "[reimagine] all of us as designers, [adjust] for our implicit biases, and [minimize] the scale and amplification of dominant identity throughout" (Hill, Molitor and Oritz, 2016; 5). EquityxDesign explores the idea of 'equity pauses' as a means to "to reflect on our language, ideas, and hunches in the context of a discourse of transformation," at each stage of the design process, in order to ensure that the design team's "ideas remain on the path of achieving equity" (Hill, Molitor and Oritz, 2016; 10). The idea behind this practice is to build in moments for the designer to pause so that they can explore their own biases, privileges and intersectional position between interlocking systems of identity, and how this might be impacting the design process and outcomes. This practice rooted in intersectional feminist thought, can also be understood as a form of *reflexivity*.

This idea of reflexivity as a skill that can support designers to become more self-aware and sensitive to power and privilege and its impact is a key insight that will be further explored in chapter 4.

2.3.7 Key takeaways

By exploring the concept of privilege in social theory and then relating it back to the design process, a number of key takeaways were identified.

This section identified privilege as a social relation where members of one social group gain benefits at the expense of another social group. As a result, this other group experiences oppression. Although privilege may be experienced individually, it is a social phenomenon that operates systemically, along various social categories to create interlocking systems of oppression. The concept of intersectionality and the matrix of domination, both contributions from black feminist thought, are key to understanding how systems of privilege (and oppression) are not mutually exclusive, but operate in tandem with each other. As a result, social actors are simultaneously members of multiple social groups, and thus are situated along various axes in the matrix of domination based on their unique experience. As such, Individuals can experience both privilege and oppression based on these different identities, and their perspective of social phenomena will be largely influenced by their location in the matrix.

Privilege, intersectionality and the matrix of oppression are all relevant to understanding and shifting power dynamics in participatory and social design processes. Each actor on the design team, as well as all of the other actors involved in the design process (or not)—including those stakeholders who have lived experience of the social issue as well as the clients or funders of the project—are all located in a unique position in the matrix of domination. These situated identities and perspectives cause and effect the power dynamics that unfold throughout the design process. As such, an understanding of a designer's own positionality, as well an understanding of the other intersectional perspectives being included or excluded in the design process is a key first step to challenging status quo inequities in the design process.

2.4 Network Theory

Power is the most fundamental process in society, since society is defined around values and institutions, and what is valued and institutionalized is defined by power relationships

Manuel Castells (2009; 10)

Finally, Manuel Castells' research on power in network theory will be explored, including four different forms of power found within a network. Following this, an application of the four forms of network power to the field of design will follow, based on Gordon Ross' talk at Service Design Global Conference 2019.

2.4.1 Four Forms of Network Power

A network is a way to represent a system that is made up of a set of interconnected nodes (Castells, 2009; 19). In a social network, the 'nodes' are social actors, and the ties that connect them together are social relations. As such, participatory social design processes can be likened to social networks, in that the process includes a number of actors (eg. designers, clients, participants, users), who are interconnected based on their roles and relationships to each other in the context of the design project and the social issue being addressed within it. This idea of the design process as a social network will be returned to in section 2.4.2.

As we have seen, Castells' defines power as "the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other other social actor(s)" (Castells, 2009; 10). In the context of a network then, he discusses 4 different forms of power; 1) networking power, 2) network power, 3) networked power and 4) network-making power.
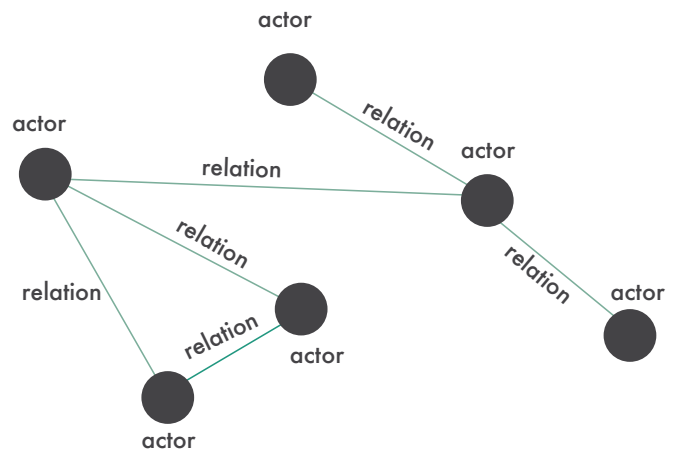
Figure 2.4 a visualization of a network, consisting of social actors (nodes) and the relations (ties) between them.

1. Networking power: who is in and who is out?

Networking power is, "the power of the actors and organizations included in the networks that constitute the core of the global network society over those human collectives or individuals not included in these global networks. This form of power operates by exclusion/inclusion" (Castells, 2011; 774). In other words, this can be thought of as the ability to influence who is included and who is excluded from the network itself. The cost of being excluded from a network increases at a greater rate than being included (Castells, 2011 referring to Tongia and Wilson, 2007).

2. Network power: what are the rules of inclusion?

The second form of power, network power, can be understood as power that comes from the standards or rules of inclusion that are mandated in the network. As Castells (2011; 775) writes, "once certain standards are incorporated in the program of networks, power is exercised not by exclusion from the

networks but by the imposition of the rules of inclusion," and that these rules may be somewhat negotiable, "but once the rules are set, they become compelling for all nodes in the network, as respect for these rules is what makes the network's existence as a communicative structure possible." As such, network power will ultimately favor the specific social actors who were involved in network formation and setting of these standards, or 'protocols of communication' (Castells, 2011).

3. Networked Power: who has power over who?

Networked power can simply be understood as power that certain social actors have over other social actors who are included in the network. Although in a network, it may not be clear whether there is a single source of networked power (traditionally understood here as "the relational capacity to impose an actor's will over another actor's will on the basis of the structural capacity of domination embedded in the institutions of society"), there are definitely still power relationships at work, "albeit in new forms with new kinds of actors" (Castells, 2011;776). This power over others may be determined by an actor's role and position within the network.

4. Network-making power: what is the goal and what does governance look like?

The final form of power that Castells writes about is network-making power, which he defines as, "the power to program specific networks according to the interests and values of the programmers, and the power to switch different networks following the strategic alliances between the dominant actors of various networks." (Castells, 2011; 773). In other words, network-making power is seen as the ability to set the goals of the network itself as well as determining protocol for governing the way the network will work, including the values and interests it is organized around.

2.4.2 Network power and design

In his talk at the Service Design Global Conference in 2019 titled, Power and Service Design: making sense of service design's politics and influence, Gordon Ross demonstrates how Castell's four forms of network power apply to the design process. Here, a service design project is compared to a network. Like a network, which is made up of nodes that are interconnected through ties; a design process consists of a number of stakeholders or actors (nodes) that are tied together through their relationships. A multi-stakeholder design project can thus be thought of as a network, as illustrated in figure 2.5.
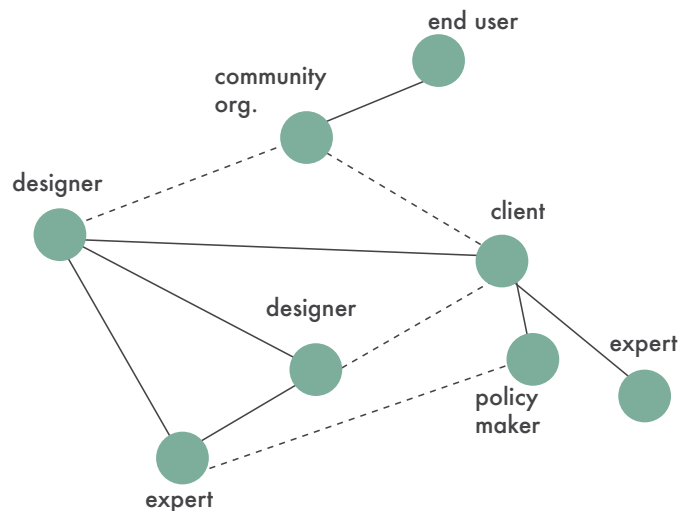
Figure 2.5 a design process represented as a network, consisting of multiple social actors that are tied together through various relationships and interactions within the design project.

In the talk, Ross explains how Castells' four forms of power; networking power, network power, networked power and network-making power, are all present in the context of a design network.

In table 2.1, Ross's adaptation of Castells' four forms of power to the context of service design are outlined in the middle column. In the right column, a further adaptation to the context under study in this graduation project, social and participatory design processes, is outlined as a key takeaway.

Network power theory (Castells, 2009)	Network power theory adapted to service design (Ross, 2019)	Network power theory adapted to the design process
Networking power	Decisions and influence around who gets to use the service being designed, and who doesn't.	Decisions and influence on who is invited to the design process, and who is excluded.
Network power	Emergence of service design standards or protocols.	The (unwritten) rules of how to behave, communicate and make decisions while working together in the design process.
Networked power	Giving form and communicating concepts in order to create shared meaning and influence users of a service being designed.	The prescribed roles given to those who are included in the design process.
Network-making power	Governance of service design projects, including which service design projects exist and who works on them.	The initiation, desired outcomes, problem framing and structure of the design process.

Table 2.1 key takeaways from Castells' network power theory and Gordon Ross's application to service design adapted to the context of this project: the participatory social design process.

2.5 Conclusion

Although power has been a popular topic in social science research, opinions differ about what it exactly means. Even so, this chapter explored a number of important understandings of power through the lived experience of Kennislanders, as well as through social and political theory in order to answer the research question, "what is power?" These understandings were then adapted to the design space based on the work of leading designers exploring power, equity and social justice. Along with traditional understandings of power, the important and related concept of privilege was explored, with particular attention paid to feminist theory and systems of privilege and oppression, intersectionality and the matrix of domination. The importance of these concepts to identify and understand power dynamics in social design processes was then highlighted. Moreover, network theory was applied to identify four forms of power that show up in social and participatory design processes.

Chapter 3: Power in Design

This chapter summarizes the empirical research activities that were undertaken in order to understand how power and privilege shows up in the design process, as well as to explore the skills and support that can help designers to become more aware of it. First, the results of seven interviews with social design and research practitioners are explained. Next, a mapping exercise to visualise when, where and how power manifests in the design process is detailed.

3.1 Introduction

After gaining a deeper understanding of power through the theme workshop and review of social and political theory described in chapter 2, the next stage of this project aims to explore power in the context of social and participatory design, particularly through the experience of the designer. The second and third sub research questions (in green in the opposite column) were explored through two research activities; semi-structured interviews with seven social designers, and a mapping exercise. In order to gain insight into this question, seven designers with experience working in the social and public sector were interviewed. Finally, an exercise to map power in the design process was undertaken in order to identify where, when and how different forms of power are present in the design process.

RQ2: How does power and privilege show up in the design process?

RQ3: What skills and guidance can help designers become more aware of power and its impact in the design process?

3.2 Perceptions of power in design: interviews

3.2.1 Method

Seven semi-structured interviews with design and research practitioners with experience in social and public sector design projects were set-up in order to explore the research questions through qualitative research. The interviews were conducted over video call, as meeting face-to-face was not an option due to external circumstances (the COVID-19

pandemic), as well as geographic location for certain interviewees.

The main goals of the interviews were to

1. Understand how, when and where designers experience power in the design process

2. Determine the current gaps in addressing power dynamics in the design process

3. Explore best practices and lessons learned for aligning the design process with social justice values

Participants

Interviewees were selected based on their experience working on design projects aiming to address social issues, and on their perceived awareness and commitment to being more intentional about power and equity in their design work. Out of the seven interviewees, four were Dutch, two were Canadian, and one was Dutch-Canadian. The degree to which each designer's current and past practices were participatory varied. Moreover, two practitioners currently work on commercial design projects, as well as social and public sector ones. Three interviewees identify as men, and five identity as women. All were white. Two practitioners currently work at Kennisland.

Interviewees were selected based on their social and/or participatory design focus, as well as based on the network that the researcher had access to. A convenience sampling method was used. With the exception of one, all interviewees felt that, due to their position and privilege, they had a responsibility to challenge inequality by 'sharing power' to some degree with marginalized stakeholders in the design process. Even so, *most interviewees found this to be a challenge* that they were not always able to meet for a number of reasons.

3.2.2 Procedure

All interviews were semi-structured and explorative in nature, with a list of open-ended questions used to guide the conversation. Each interview's duration was about one hour. The interviews were focused on the designer's own experience and understanding of power in their practice, including sources and points in the design process of power for a designer, challenges of sharing their power with various stakeholders, and lessons learned. A number of questions were used to prompt the interviewees to tell stories about their experiences of power dynamics (positive and negative) in past design processes and projects.

3.2.3 Analysis

Each interview was audio recorded, and later transcribed. After reading through the transcripts they were then coded with relevant themes and patterns highlighted in each of the seven transcripts. Using an adaptation of the 'on the wall' analysis approach from generative research methodology (see Sanders and Stappers, 2012), highlighted quotes and their interpretations were transferred onto digital post-it notes and grouped into clusters on a digital whiteboard in order to find emerging themes and patterns from the data. An image of the digital whiteboard during the clustering process is shown in figure 3.1.
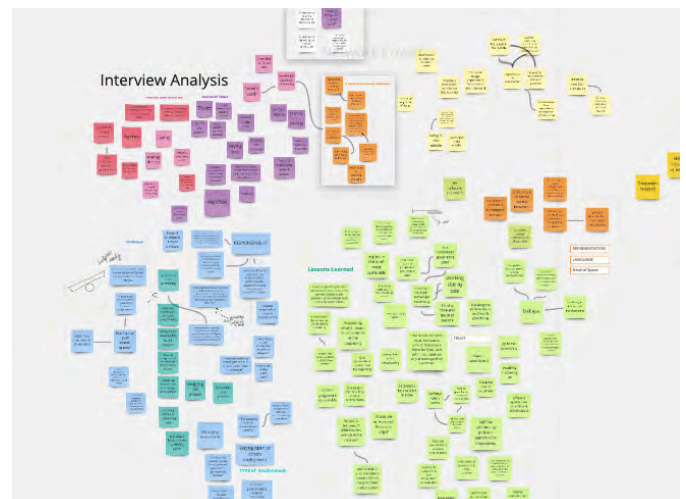
Figure 3.1 'on the wall' analysis 3.2.4 Results

3.2.4 Results

"In putting things into the world, in principle, you have a power position[1]"

From the interviews and their analysis, a number of insights that addressed the research questions were discovered.

All seven interviewees felt that as a designer they held a significant amount of power, and that this arose in different forms at various points throughout the design process. It was clear that the majority of interviewees perceived that there was a power gap in design education and practice, which led to a number of challenges in addressing power dynamics and related social structures in their design work. Even so, from working in the design sector and making an effort to educate themselves on issues related to power, equity, social justice and/or democracy, most of the interviewees shared valuable lessons that they had learned from their experience.

As such, emerging themes will be discussed under three headings: 1) current gaps and challenges to reducing power imbalances, 2) sources of power in the design process, and 3) lessons learned from experience.

"[Power] is something you can't deny, it's always there in social structures. And it has a function[2]"

Gaps and challenges

Six themes related to current challenges and gaps in addressing power dynamics for social designers were identified from the interview analysis.

Lack of Awareness

First of all, from the interviews, it was clear

that power dynamics are prevalent in design projects in the social and public sector. Moreover, interviewees felt that there wasn't enough attention currently being paid to power and how it related to values of social justice and/or democracy in design projects. A number of interviewees felt that there was an absence of meaningful discussions about power and privilege in design education, and resultantly, a limited awareness in design practice. As such, an important gap that was identified was a lack of awareness when it came to power in the design process.

Stuck in the Middle

"The power in this scenario for me is very clearly with the municipality—how far they want to go, how far they're willing to go, how much power they're willing to give up, essentially. And, of course we have some influence in that because we're an expert party in the city and I think they have some level of trust in us. But I can only design for what the client ultimately wants or is doing[3]"

Next, a common thread that appeared in a number of interviews was the idea that designers often felt like they couldn't use their power, due to a feeling of being 'stuck in the middle' between their client and the marginalized communities that were experiencing the social issue first hand. So, although they wanted to match their values and intention for equity to the impact of the project, they felt constrained by the allocated budget, resources, time and ultimately the wants of their client.

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1   interviewee 4
2   interviewee 6

3   interviewee 5

"You have to convince the policymakers, the managers, that this is a promising way of working and doing research, but it's hard because they say well, you're just working on such a small scale, how can this change or, how can this really bring solutions for the whole society.[4]"

Validating alternative ways of knowing

Another challenge that came up was in amplifying alternative viewpoints and ways of knowing to the dominant ones. For example, seeing ancestral, artistic and experiential knowing as equally valid to more practical and logical modes (Sloan Perry and Couchois Duncan, 2017). Interviewees expressed that they valued the perspectives of marginalized and less privileged voices. Even so, they struggled in figuring out how to meaningfully incorporate these perspectives in the design process, since they are outside of the norms and assumptions that they are used to working within. There also appeared to be a blind spot when it came to alternatives; a few interviewees expressed that the design field may be unaware and/or unwilling to accept the validity of non-western viewpoints, narratives and methods. As such, in some cases the challenge was in identifying how current social structures (norms, rules, roles and beliefs) and ways of designing might exclude or produce inequalities for stakeholders with less privilege. Thus, even when there was a level of awareness about alternatives, there was still a perceived challenge to fill this gap.

"How design usually is done isn't very inclusive... there's a lot of white bias. In the design process, in our cultural views on how people behave and our assumptions... Because if you look at it—if someone, a designer with a non-white or non-European background, looks at the data, she would see different things. That's a valuable thing. So yeah, I think it's definitely a theme that I don't know how to solve.[5]"

Power as an after-thought

Next, another challenge that came up was that power dynamics and privilege, if thought of at all, were usually only addressed once a negative effect had been perceived by the design team. Even though designers wanted to address inequities and make decisions that would empower all stakeholders, it wasn't something that was clearly being identified and planned for from the beginning of the project. Instead, it most often only came up after outcomes had largely been determined, and the rules, norms and assumptions of the project had already been established. In other words, designers had trouble challenging existing power dynamics and social structures, because they were only addressed once it felt like it was too late to make a change.

"I think there are moments of power across the entire design process. It's a challenge, and I think that's really something designers need to be more aware of from the beginning.[6]"

Shared meaning of participation

Moreover, another challenge that came up was a lack of alignment when it came

4   interviewee 6

5   interviewee 7
6   interviewee 3

to the idea of 'participation.' In over half of the interviews it was discussed that participation or involvement had different meanings, interpretation and applications. One interviewee discussed participation—what she referred to as sharing agency—as a spectrum, a sentiment that was echoed by two other interviewees as well.

"There are constraints of time, money and investment that come into play on these types of decisions, and the intention of the organization versus the values of the designer. All these kinds of things come into play in setting the conditions of where on the spectrum can you share this agency, and I think it's important for designers to be aware of it. I would challenge that designers are not aware that this is one of the considerations in their design process[7]"

Although many interviewees viewed participation as a way to share power and integrate democratic values into the design process, this intention didn't always translate into impact. As such, the lack of a shared language around what participation means and associated values in the context of social and public sector design lead to challenges.

"But I don't feel, in this specific scenario, that the municipality has done a very good job at distinguishing 'participation' from

'truthful collaboration[8]'"

Expertise ≠ objectivity

Another challenge that was identified by interviewees was being able to listen to affected communities without coming in with a preconceived notion that you are an unbiased expert and will ultimately know what's best. In other words, finding the right balance between fulfilling expectations of being an expert designer, but also using that position in a way that acknowledges that expertise does not mean objectivity was a challenge. Interviewees recognized that this was a shift that needed to be made in social design projects. Even so, there seemed to be a gap in having the tools or skills to make this shift.

"I think a lot of designers... they come with an idea that they take a very low, or let's say independent or unbiased role in the process. I think we have to accept that that's not true.[9]"

Sources of power in the design process

Next, looking at patterns from the interviews five sources of power for designers emerged. The five main themes, privilege, expertise, setting up the project, defining participation and converging, will be further detailed below.

Privilege

First, the idea of privilege, having power as a result of someone's social identity, was a common theme that came up in a number of interviews. Here, interviewees mentioned power as being connected to their own social identity, pre-given before the design process

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7   interviewee 3

8   interviewee 5 on the lack of shared understanding
9   interviewee 7

even begins.

Role as a design 'expert'

Next, another theme that came up was expertise. Interviewees noted that their role as 'expert' and 'designer' gave them a lot of power. In projects viewed as more 'successful,' this included being given the freedom to set up a design process to their own discretion, without being questioned due to their perceived role as an expert. Two interviewees noted that their role as 'expert designer' meant that, in certain circumstances, they were automatically given the trust of the organization(s) initiating or funding the project.

Setting-up the design process

Related to their role as an expert, interviewees also identified that there was an inherent power in being able to set-up the process itself—including the goals of the project, the framing of the problem and how the research and design activities and decisions will be structured throughout the project. As such, at least 3 interviewees mentioned that they felt they had a lot of power at the beginning, while setting up a project.

"I think there's moments of power across the entire design process… there's an inherent power already happening before you've even begun.[10]"

Defining participation:
access, roles and rules

Next, most interviewees felt that they had power in terms of determining the extent of participation throughout the design process. The majority of interviewees spoke of participation as something that did not have one specific meaning, and because of this, they felt that they had power in determining the depth of participation in a given design

project. For example, one interviewee, spoke about participation as a spectrum for the amount of agency that would be given to the communities you were designing with:

"I think that it's a spectrum that goes from not having any agency until the end, to full agency where people are deciding with as little intervention from the designer as possible"[11]

In terms of the form of power that came from participation, this included determining who had access to participate and at what point, what the role of those participating would be (eg. a team member, an interviewee, a participant in a design workshop, etc.), and determining the rules of how various actors would work together during these moments of participation.

"There's definitely power involved in being a facilitating designer, because you design the process, you help people with questions, you steer them. I won't say it's like puppetry, but in a way, you do have that power. And I think it's very important to realize that[12]"

Convergence

The final source of power in the design process that came up as a theme, was being able to synthesize and prioritize the data gathered through research activities. Interviewees mentioned that they had a lot of power during the converging phase, as they usually had complete control (or exclusive access) to

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10   interviewee 3

11   interviewee 3
12   interviewee 7

analysis, synthesis and prioritization. Even so, over half of the interviewees mentioned that they had experimented with ways to share power in this phase.

> *"As a designer, we do this workshop and then we bring everything back, and we get to make the decisions about what's important, right? And so I think there's still a question— as [design] methodologies are being practiced, how do we keep removing ourselves from doing the synthesis, how do we keep the participants actively involved and engaged?[13]"*

Lessons Learned

Finally, in terms of addressing the third research goal for the interviews, exploring best practices to align the design process to values of social justice, a number of lessons from the experience of interviewees were identified. These have been sorted into four recommendations.

Be explicit from the start

> *"how can we bring these conversations right up to the front and ask 'what power and agency do each of you have?,' rather than just thinking about it quickly and moving on.[14]"*

First, an important lesson learned is to be

explicit about values right from the beginning of a design project, especially in relation to participation and social justice. This is something that ideally will be included in the project proposal or design brief; this way it helps to address the challenge of 'being stuck in the middle,' because you have an explicit commitment that was made at the start of the project to hold your partners accountable.

> *"that was written into the brief as well. We were looking for the most vulnerable challenges that families face. And so, being able to refer back to that, this is what you're looking for, this is it. Even though all of these other needs are totally valid and a reality.[15]"*

Representation in the design team

Second, in order to challenge power inequities that exist outside of the design process, representation on the main design team is important. For example, two interviewees spoke about finding ways to include those stakeholders who were normally assigned a marginal role (as a 'user,' 'participant' or excluded from the process altogether) as co-designers on the main project team. This way, there is representation for a variety of communities and/or social groups throughout the entire process. As such, ensuring that these perspectives are represented during the set-up of the project was seen as an important lesson to apply on future projects. It was also indicated that to avoid reproducing power dynamics, these members of the design team should be treated the same as the others; this means being paid the same amount for their work, and given the same decision-making ability.

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13   interviewee 1
14   interviewee

15   interviewee 1

"when I think about power, I think about agency…the designer is there to answer with frameworks and methods and approaches, but really to give people agency[…]. I think the designer should give up a lot more power, especially when you're working in a community and it's closely related to people's lives.[16]"

Partner, don't invade

" it shouldn't be our instinct to invade, it should be our instinct to partner.[17]"

A third recommendation that came up was to build reciprocal relationships. Interviewees spoke of the importance of building trust and reciprocity with the communities that they were working with. Here it was seen that it was important to build relationships that were not just a one-way flow of data, where community members were only seen as subjects or participants. Instead, along with being paid for their time, two interviewees spoke of providing value back to the community through sharing stories, supporting them with errands, and cooking together. Moreover, interviewees expressed that it is important for designers to go to the communities that experience the most impact of the problem, instead of asking them to come to them. More so, understanding the past experiences and history of this community, especially past attempts to solve this problem from outside, were important, and a way to become more accountable. Finally, time and space to actually listen and build relationships was

seen to be key by four interviewees in order to build a sense of trust and accountability in the relationship.

Invite participation during synthesis

Finally, in terms of synthesizing and prioritizing insights from research, four interviewees expressed that involving the community in this phase of the design process, although a challenge, was an important action that they had been experimenting with in order to challenge inequities in the design process. One interviewee mentioned that after analyzing the data and finding patterns, they showed these results to the original participants, who were then able to make changes and add their own thoughts. Another interviewee, remembered one particular project where after analyzing, they created a tool to use with each neighbourhood stakeholder group so that they could effectively prioritize the needs that had emerged through the research phase themselves.

"we went back to them with the research and we said 'this is what we heard from all parties,' so then they were engaged in everyone's research, and we got them to prioritize things too. So there were moments when we opened up synthesis to them as well.[18]"

3.2.5 Key Takeaways

The insights from the interviews validated the research objective, as awareness of power and the ability to share power was identified as a recurring challenge for the majority of designers interviewed. Moreover, a number of other relevant takeaways related to challenges

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16   interviewee 3
17   interviewee 3

18   interviewee 3

and gaps, forms of power and tips for a more equitable design process were identified. These are outlined below in Figure 3.2.

Challenges and gaps

1. Lack of awareness
Design practitioners have a blind spot in relation to power dynamics and privilege in the design process.

2. Stuck in the middle
Designers feel constrained in their ability to shift power by clients and/or limited project resources.

3. Validating alternative ways of knowing
Designers struggle to de-center their own worldviews and internalized social structures in order to make space for marginalized perspectives.

4. Power as an after-thought
Power is not usually discussed or accounted for until it's too late.

5. Shared meaning of participation
Designers struggle to build a shared understanding of what participation means with their clients.

6. Expertise ≠ objectivity
There is a common misconception that design expertise is a sign of objectivity.

Five sources of interrelated power

1. Privilege
Designers gain position from their own social identity, which for all interviewees was white, cisgendered, able-bodied and educated.

2. Role as an expert
Designers were given a fair amount of influence due to their assigned role as an 'expert.'

3. Setting up the design process
The ability to set-up the process, including framing the problem and structuring the entire design process gives a substantial amount of power to the designer.

4. Defining Participation: access, roles and rules
Having control over decisions around participation gives designers a considerable amount of power. This includes:
4.1 **Access** - determining who is invited to participate and when
4.2 **Roles** - determining what role they will play
4.3 **Rules** - determining the rules for how participants will work together.

5. Convergence
Having the ability to synthesis and then prioritize needs during the converging phase is a big source of power for designers.

Tips for sharing power

1. Be Explicit
Be explicit about values and intentions from the start, including in the design brief or proposal before the project officially begins.

2. Representation
Ensure representation on the main project team, so the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and identities are included at every stage of the process.

3. Partner, don't invade
form reciprocal relationships and build trust with the community. This involves a long-term commitment.

4. Open up converging phases
invite participation from stakeholders with lived experience of the problem during synthesis.

Figure 3.2 key takeaways from the interviews

3.3 Power in the design process

3.4.1 Method and Procedure

In order to better understand how and where power shows up in public and social sector design projects, the generic design process was visually mapped, with common moments of participation (eg. involvement of multiple stakeholders) included. Next, the forms and sources of power identified in 3.2 and 3.3 were added to the map in order to create a visual and temporal representation to address the second research question, "how does power and privilege show up in the design process?" The purpose of creating a map was to help visualize and identify where, when and how these different forms of power materialized.

The data that informed the mapping activity was a result of observations, interviews, and informal conversations with Kennislanders, the interviews described in 3.2, and the author's own personal experience as a design student and design practitioner in the social sector. The participatory design process map was adapted from the British Design Council's double diamond, as consecutive diamonds of diverging and converging phases was seen as the most common design process model (British Design Council, 2005). Moreover it is easily adaptable, so that it can be applied to most participatory and social design projects, even if they do not follow a double diamond process.

3.4.2 The Map

The map, found in figure 3.3, includes four phases that can be found in a generic participatory social design project: project initiation, understanding needs, design solution and evaluate success.

Although not all four phases are present in every participatory social design process, at least the 'project initation' phase and one other phase were found to be present the majority of the time.

Moreover, each of the phases are broken up into two stages: diverging and converging. The diverging phase is understood as a process of collecting data, which includes qualitative research, ideation and user testing. On the other hand, the converging phases are understood as processes of analyzing, synthesizing and prioritizing in order to make key design decisions based on the data.

Moments of participation were identified to happen most often in the diverging phases, as participation may be understood as a way to collect or create data, but were mostly absent from the converging phases.

Finally the sources of power identified in section 3.2 (which will be further refined in chapter 4) were mapped out across the generic design process. As seen, the power to set-up a project has the most influences in the first phase, whereas the power derived from privilege and determining access to participate are present throughout the entire design process on the map. Moreover, being able to determine participation rules and roles are most prominent during diverging phases in the second and third diamonds.

Mapping Power

Project Initiation | Understand needs | Design solution | Evaluate success

proposal | set-up | discover | synthesize | ideate | develop | try | evaluate

time

official start

-initial research

-proposal to client

-team set-up

-structure process

-resource allocation

-define vision & outcomes

- observe interviews, story-telling, generative sessions, etc.

- reframe problem/ solution

- design direction, goal & priorities

- team brainstorms

- co-design or co-creation workshops

- select final concept

- prototype

-create final design

- user testing

- determine success of project

Legend

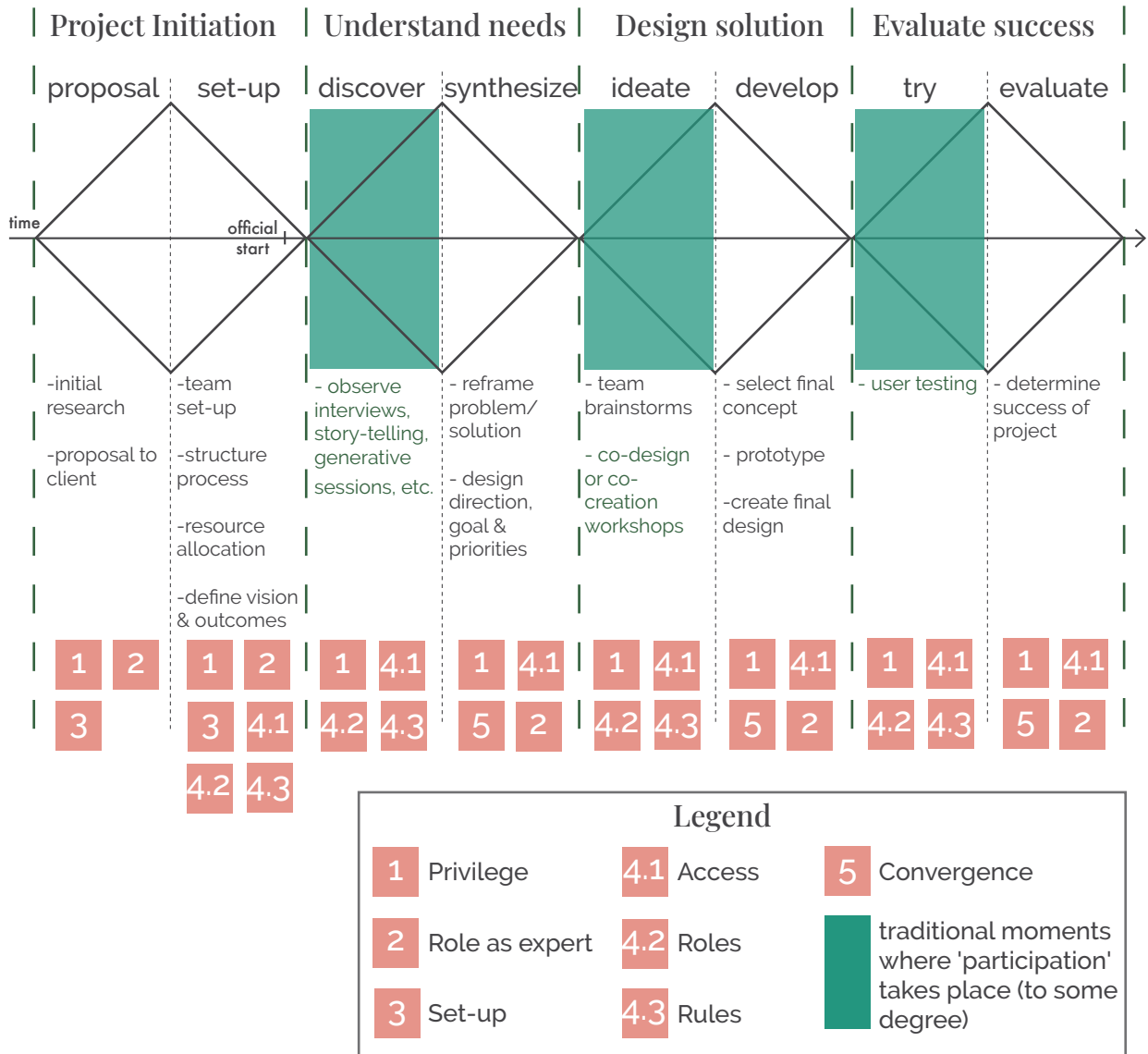| 1	Privilege	4.1	Access	5	Convergence
2	Role as expert	4.2	Roles		traditional moments where 'participation' takes place (to some degree)
3	Set-up	4.3	Rules		

Figure 3.3 sources of a designer's power mapped across a generic social design process

3.4.3 Key Takeaways

Four main insights were discovered as a result of this research activity:

1. Begin before starting:
The set-up phase of the project is a key moment in the design process where all five sources of power are prevalent, giving designers a lot of influence over decisions during this phase. As such, this is an essential moment for designers to practice reflexivity.

2. Privilege and access cannot be ignored:
Privilege and access power are key factors that influence all other forms of power. As such, it is key to have an awareness and understanding of these before considering goal power, role power and rule power.

3. Rules and Roles determine participation:
Moments of divergence were more typically seen as moments for participation. As such, role power and rule power came into play heavily here. It may be helpful for designers to be extra sensitive to rule power and role power during participatory moments.

4. Access power will determine the results of convergence:
Access power heavily influences phases of convergence, for example during analysis, synthesis and prioritization of needs. In other words, being included in decisions related to prioritizing community needs will have a big impact on stakeholders, the design process as a whole and other outcomes related to equity.

3.5 Conclusion

Through the research activities of chapter 3, it can be concluded that power dynamics and privilege are present and have a significant impact in all design processes, especially those addressing a social issue with some form of participation. We've seen that although designers may not always be aware of these dynamics, as well as their own positionality and implicit biases, this does not limit their effect—which is often to exasperate existing inequities and ignore the root cause of the issue being addressed. Moreover, a number of current struggles for designers who want to challenge inequities in the design process, as well as recommendations to address some of these were summarized in 3.2. Moreover, a number of forms of power show up in different ways and at different points throughout the design process, as discovered from the mapping exercise in section 3.3. Based on these insights, a vision and framework for a more socially just design practice will be outlined in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: A Framework for Power Literacy

Building off of the research insights, in this chapter a framework for building power literacy through reflexivity in social design projects is laid out. First, a vision for a more socially just design is introduced by exploring theory and practice related to positionality and reflexivity. Second, the concept of power literacy will be introduced as a form of reflexivity for social and participatory design processes. Next, four power literacy skills will be detailed; recognize, name, understand and act. To conclude, five forms of power in design processes will be described, followed by a number of questions developed from the research activities to build (self-)awareness of each of the five forms.

4.1 A vision for social justice in design

Building on insights from chapter 2 and 3, a vision towards a more socially just design is presented by exploring the concept of reflexivity as a practice that can help guide designers to become more aware of their own power, the power of those around them, as well as its various causes and effects. Before diving into the importance of reflexivity for social designers, the position of design as a neutral practice will be disputed.

4.1.1 Design is not neutral

To understand how power shows up in the design process, we must first understand that design is not neutral. As discussed by Josina Vink, most research and literature in the field of design pushes the idea that design is politically neutral, benevolent in nature or even positive for everyone (Vink, 2019, referring to Karpen, Gemser and Calabretta, 2017). Even so, there is an increasing awareness of the political dimensions, power dynamics and colonial legacies of design, as well as the inequities that design reproduces within the field (see Ansari, 2018; Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014; Constanza-Chock, 2020; Tunstall, 2013; Vink, Rodrigues and Wetter-Edman, 2017). Moreover, Bratteteig and Wagner, who write about power in the design process playing out through decision-making, draw attention to the "dilemma between the moral stance of participatory design to share power, and the fact that "designers as experts[...] have considerable power" (2014;117). As such, they explain that,

depending on the context of a project, the sharing of power may be made difficult by patterns of domination, based on hierarchical relationships and unequal access to resources within an organization; it may be hampered by the lack of respect for other knowledge traditions, based on cultural or gender differences. Power issues exist even in the presence of a strong commitment to giving all participants an equal voice. (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014; 6).

From this work, as well as from the research carried out in section 3.2 of this chapter, it is clear that "design is not something that is neutral or necessarily beneficial for all but has major implications on the distribution of power within the system" (Vink, 2019; 108). Moreover, as participatory social design processes "often engage with marginalized populations in a variety of settings, an equal playing field cannot be assumed" (Vink, Rodrigues and Wetter-Edman, 2017).

Moreover, although it may not be the intention of participatory designers to replicate existing power dynamics and hierarchies or to exercise power over participants, these structures are often reproduced throughout the design process, through 'nondecisions' (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014). Nondecisions refer to situations in which "dominant values, the accepted rules of the game and existing power relations among groups" work together, whether intentionally or not, in a way that prevents "certain grievances from developing into full-fledged issues which call for decisions" (Bachrach and Baratz 1963; 641, referenced by Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014).

In this context, it becomes clear that good intentions on the part of the designer are not enough to combat existing inequities, as these are deeply embedded within design activities, and the existing "social and economic structures within and for which design functions" (Vink, Rodrigues and Wetter-Edman, 2017; 4 referring to Julier, 2013). Given this understanding, reflexivity and positionality

are important practices for developing a greater awareness and sensitivity to power and its impact within the social design context. These concepts and their application to the design context will be explored next.

4.1.2 Reflexivity and Positionality

Although somewhat missing from design education and practice, reflexivity and positionality are common concepts from the social sciences and other qualitative research fields. Positionality refers to the idea that "personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world." (Sanchez, 2010). In the context of research it refers to "the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization or the participant group" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Positionality challenges the idea of value-free or objective research that dismisses "human subjectivity from the processes that generate knowledge and identities" (Sanchez, 2010). In relation, reflexivity refers "to the examination of one's own beliefs, judgments and practices during the research process and how these may have influenced the research" (Hammond and Wellington, 2013).

As such, human subjectivity is implicit in any form of qualitative research. Thus, other disciplines that use 'empathetic engagement' place importance on being explicit and aware about positionality in research (Iskander, 2018). However, Iskander (2018) points out that:

> the design thinking method does not stipulate rigorous attention to positionality. This omission signals that the designer, as creative visionary, is somehow suspended above the fray of bias, blind spots, and political pressure.

As indicated by Iskander, the limited attention paid to positionality and reflexivity in design education and practice plays into the false

notion that design and designers are neutral. Thus, to address power in the design process, reflexivity is an important skill for designers to develop.

In In/visible, Vink offers a vision for applying reflexivity in the design process. She describes a shift from seeing social structures as externalities of design, to materials that can be designed with (Vink, 2019). Social structures refer to shared and enduring norms, rules, roles and beliefs, and can be thought of as the 'rules of the game' in both society and design processes, or "rationalized myths about what is considered appropriate conduct within given situations'' (Vink, 2019; 118). Moreover, "social structures are always influencing the thoughts & actions of actors," as actors are embedded within existing social structures (ibid; 122). As a result, social structures both affect and are affected by the dynamics and distribution of power in any given social system. Figure 4.1 illustrates this relationship.
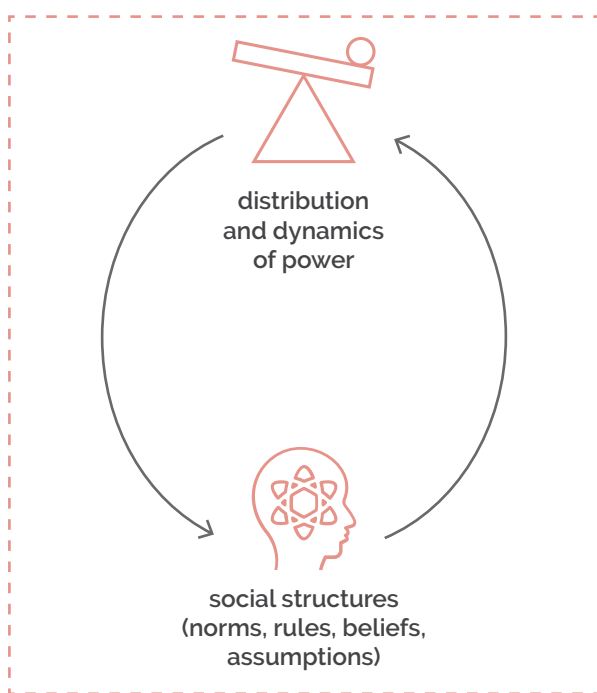

Figure 4.1 social structures both influence and are influenced by power dynamics within any given context, including the social design process.[1].

1   Icon from the noun project: mind ability by Vectors Point

Social structures impact the distribution of power and privilege within a system (and within a design process), which in turn can reinforce current social structures, ultimately determining how equitable any given situation, design process or social system is.

Building on a systems thinking and social sciences approach for challenging status quo social structures and power distribution through design activities, Vink then explains a vision for design within social systems—in her work the context is healthcare services—as a positive feedback loop of reflexivity and reformation. Here, reflexivity is explained as a social actor's awareness of institutions and social structures that are internalized by themselves and others (Vink, 2019). Through building up a practice of reflexivity, actors are able "to critique their social context and understand that it is possible to change it" (Vink, 2019; 123, referring to Voronov & Yorks, 2015). It follows that, with this greater awareness through reflexivity of the structures influencing them, designers can then begin to intentionally reshape these social structures in a way that power is more equitable distributed within the design process (and beyond) (Vink, 2019). This reshaping is what Vink refers to as reformation, the second part of the positive feedback loop, which is somewhat outside the scope of this project. In the context of a social design process, reflexivity can then be understood as a process of making invisible power and social structures more visible.

Using the metaphor of an iceberg, figure 4.2 illustrates the practice of reflexivity as making the invisible visible when it comes to power in design processes.

This application of reflexivity for the designer has often been missing from social design practice, especially under assumptions of neutrality. As such, I see cultivating reflexivity throughout the design processes as an essential skill for social designers who are aiming to address social inequities in their

work.

4.1.3 Key Takeaways

First of all, design can be understood as inherently political, whereby design activities either uphold or reshape social structures and resulting systems of oppression. As a result, I see an acknowledgement of a designer's own positionality, including their privilege and implicit biases, as an important first step to address power dynamics and resulting inequities in the design process. Moreover, reflexivity is seen as a necessary practice in order to recognize underlying social structures, systems of oppression and related power dynamics that show up and impact the design process, and to then act in a way that will align intentions with impact. As a result, I understand reflexivity as an important skill that can help designers become more self-aware of, sensitive to and understand the impact of power, or power literate. Building on this vision, a framework for power literacy through reflexivity will be outlined in the following sections.
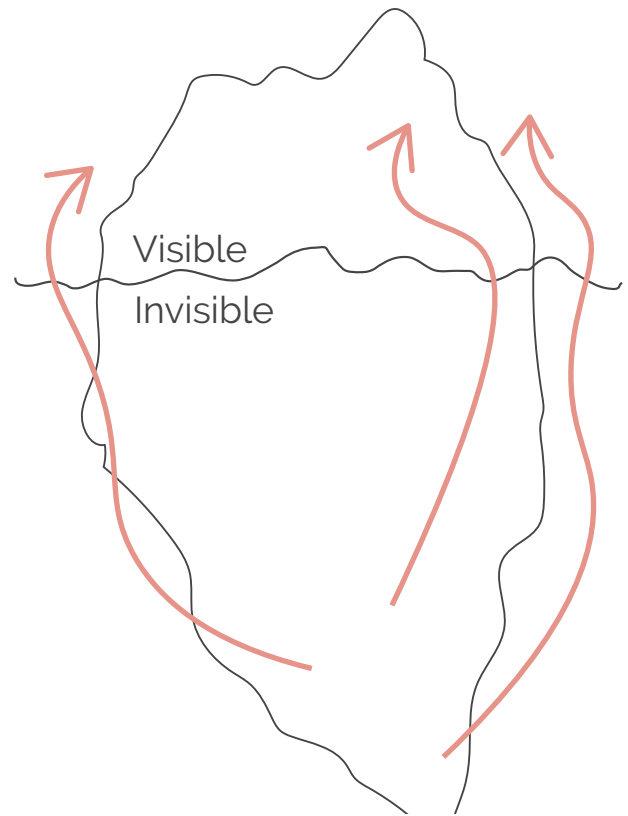

Figure 4.2 the practice of relfexivity illustrated as a process of making underlying, invisible structures more visible, adapted from Vink (2019).

4.2 Power literacy

When it comes to creating a more socially just design process, a big challenge that has been identified is the designer's lack of awareness, sensitivity to and understanding of how power dynamics affect stakeholders, the relations between them and the social issue being addressed. As such, reflexivity has been identified as an important first step needed in order to reduce inequities within, and as a result of, the design process. It's difficult for a design process to create social change without the designer(s) first recognizing the way in which they are complicit in upholding the status quo, even if it's unintentional. As such, to fill this gap, designers will have to first become

cognizant of the way that dominant social structures within the design process, as well as within the systems surrounding the social issue being addressed, currently distribute power and privilege. In other words, the gap that has been identified within design practice and education is one of power literacy.

Literacy, traditionally applied to the context of reading and writing, is used to refer to someone's knowledge of a particular subject. For example, Alberta Education defines literacy as the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of

daily living. Moreover UNESCO's definition of literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

The term has similarly been applied in the field of emotional intelligence (EI) to refer to an ability to 'read' emotions. This form of literacy can be described as the ability to recognize, interpret, label and understand the impact of your own feelings as well as of those around you. It includes having skills to navigate, communicate and regulate these emotions in a healthy and respectful way. In Mark Brackett's book, *Permission to Feel*, he outlines an approach to teaching emotional intelligence called RULER, which consists of five main skills:

1. Recognize emotions in oneself and others

2. Understand the cause and consequences of emotions

3. Label emotions with precise words

4. Expressing emotions, taking context and culture into consideration

5. Regulating emotions effectively to achieve goals and wellbeing.

In the context of power in design, literacy can then be interpreted as the ability and willingness to recognize, name, interpret, understand the impact of, communicate and regulate your own power position and the power position of the stakeholders around you; as well as to identify the underlying social structures and systems that lead to power imbalances to begin with. Thus, power literacy is being defined as the ability to be self-aware of, sensitive to and identify the cause and impact of power structures, and to then shift power in a way that aligns with values. As such, a designer with high power literacy understands their own position, including the influence that they have, the sources of that influence, and how it will affect the stakeholders they are working with. Moreover, they will be sensitive to power dynamics as soon as they come up in the design process, and will be able to use their skills to identify the impact that this will have on various stakeholders, especially those that are most marginalized.

4.3 Four skills for power literacy

Adapting the RULER approach to emotional intelligence and literacy described in the previous section, four skills (or steps) for power literacy have been identified. Moreover, building on research insights, questions to help foster reflexivity in the designer and the design team are proposed for each skill.

4.3.1 Recognize power

The first skill is about recognizing power, including your own power and positionality. In the design context, this includes being able to recognize when a decision is being made, and determining the degree of power you have.

Moreover, it involves being able to recognize the influence (or lack of influence) that other stakeholders have in the decision.

Reflexivity Questions:

What is being decided, and by whom? How much influence do you have? Who is being left out?

4.3.2 Name the form of power

The second skill is naming power. The first step in naming, is to identify where your power, or ability to influence decisions and outcomes in the design process, is coming from. This may include your position as an expert designer, parts of your identify (for example, the fact that a designer is highly educated, white or male may be relevant), your ability to communicate in the expected way, the way that others perceive you, or the fact that you were invited to discuss or weigh in on a decision. After taking this first step, you can then name the form(s) of power that is present. There are five forms of power that are part of this power literacy framework, namely: privilege, access power, goal power, role power and rule power. These forms will be summarized in 4.3.

Reflexivity Questions:

Which identities and positionalities are being given more power and why? What forms of power are present in the power that you've recognized, and how might this influence the design process?

4.3.3 Understand the impact

After naming the relevant forms of power, the next skill is to understand the impact that the recognized and named power dynamics will have on the design process, including the various stakeholders (especially on those who are closest to the social issue being addressed),

the relationships between the actors in the design network, and on outcomes.

Reflexivity Questions:

How might this impact stakeholders with lived experience of the social issue? What effect might this have on outcomes? Are existing inequities being reproduced or are they being challenged?

4.3.4 Act in accordance with your intentions

The final step is to be able to act in a way that will (re)align outcomes to intentions, based on the insights that have come up. Although this framework does not provide a prescription of how to act, being reflexive about the action that you will choose—based on the previous discoveries from recognizing, naming and understanding—is an important power literacy skill.

Reflexivity Questions:

What actions need to be taken in this phase to ensure that the impact of the design process will align with intentions and values? What are three actions I can take, based on my unique positionality, to influence the design process to move in that direction?
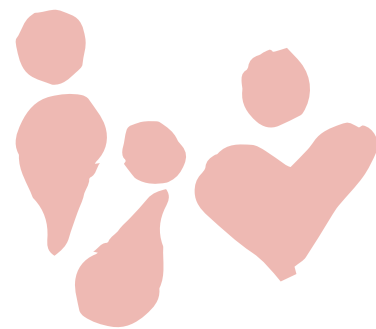
4.4 Five forms of power in the design process

Adding to the framework for power literacy, five forms of power that exist within multi-stakeholder social design processes are presented below. These five forms of power are privilege, access power, goal power, role power and rule power. An understanding of each is needed in order to be able to practice the second power literacy skill that was identified in the previous section: naming power. For each specific form of power, questions to promote reflexivity—for awareness of power, its causes and the resulting impact on inequities—are also highlighted.

Table 4.1 highlights the five forms of power in the power literacy framework and the corresponding insights from research that were used to develop it.

Five Forms of Power in the Design Process	Insights from chapter 2 and 3		
	Corresponding source(s) of power identified by interviewees:	*Corresponding feminist theory concept:*	*Corresponding network power form from Castells:*
1. Privilege	Privilege (1), expertise (2)	Systems of privilege, intersectionality, the matrix of domination	-
2. Access power	Defining Participation: access (4.1), Converging (5)	-	Networking power
3. Goal power	Setting up the design process (3)	-	Network-making power
4. Role power	Expertise (2), Defining Participation: roles (4.2)	-	Networked power
5. Rule power	Defining Participation: rules (4.3)	-	Network power

Table 4.1 an overview of the research insights used to create the power literacy framework

Each form of power in the framework will be described in greater detail next.

4.4.1 Privilege

Privilege is the type of power an actor gets from an unearned advantage given to them because of their social identity. When someone has privilege, it is often invisible to them. Because identity categories do not exist independently from each other and are *intersectional* (see 2.2.3) it is possible to have privilege and also experience oppression at the same time. Privilege often gives a social actor a leg up in being able to do something, influence an outcome and/or influence others around them. As such, privilege as a form of power in the design process is based off of the concept of privilege from feminist theory in chapter 2 and the interviews in chapter 3, as seen in Table 4.1.

As a designer, it is important to note what types of social identities are being represented in the design process. Because, traditionally, many expert designers in paid roles are white, cisgendered, male and/or able-bodied, this privileged position will often make other situated perspectives and viewpoints invisible (Bunnell, 2019; Khandwala, 2019; Miller, 2017). This privileged view will also likely inform beliefs, assumptions and norms that dictate most of the design decisions being made throughout the project. As such, privilege is a key contributor to a designer's positionality.

This is important because designers have a lot of influence on the desired outcome as well as on the unintentional impacts of the design process. If designers become more aware of their own privilege and sensitive to how privilege and oppression function in the context they are designing in, they can make decisions to challenge status quo inequalities and patterns of oppression related to the social issue being addressed. In effect, this awareness can be acted upon in order to create an equitable 'playing field' when it comes to the design process.

Becoming aware of privilege and the ways that it shows up and impacts the design process will take time and practice. A good place to begin is for a designer to first acknowledge their privilege, the perspective it gives them on various social phenomena, and how this will impact their design work. Based on the research, a number of questions to help designers develop reflexivity when it comes to privilege, including its cause and effect in the design context, were developed and are outlined in below.

Questions for reflexivity related to privilege:

What privilege do you have and how does it differ from those you are working with?

What privilege (or oppression) do you have based on the groups that you were born into and other aspects of your identity?

What advantages do you experience in your daily life due to your privilege? What biases and blind spots do you have as a result?

How might this affect your relationship with the community or stakeholder group that you are designing for/with in this project?

What advantages will those with privilege experience in the design process?

Who may be unintentionally excluded or marginalized as a result?

4.4.2 Access power

The second form of power found in the design process and included in this power literacy framework is access power.

Developed from research insights gained from network theory and interviews with designers (see Table 4.1), access power is defined as the ability to influence who is included in and who is excluded from the design process. Access power is about having the ability to control which stakeholders make it as actors in the design process (or 'network'), and which stakeholders are excluded altogether.

Designers gain the ability to influence outcomes from both their own access, and their ability to influence who else has access to the design process. Due to their paramount role in the project, designers most often have access to the entire design process. Moreover, designers enjoy a high amount of access power, as they likely have a moderate-to-high amount of influence in deciding which stakeholders (as well as which social identities within stakeholder groups) are represented as actors within the design process, and during which stage. In having the power to make decisions around inclusion, by default designers are also influencing exclusion.

Access power is important, because the input, experience and perspectives that are included in the design process have a considerable impact on the decisions that are made, relationships between people and ultimately on outcomes. In this way, representation is extremely important. If certain stakeholders and certain social groups are excluded, the design process, its outcomes and the relationships that are built throughout will likely reproduce existing inequalities and power dynamics. Moreover, recognizing and naming access power can help designers to understand the cause of inequities and exclusion. Only in understanding the impact of access power can a designer use their

influence in a way that will align values and intentions with outcomes. Below, questions for reflexivity are outlined.

Questions for reflexivity related to access power:

Who is included and who is excluded in the design process?

Which stakeholders are represented in the design process? Which are not?

How are different stakeholders invited to participate?

Will access be the same throughout the design process for each stakeholder, or will it change?

How much influence do you have in determining access?

How are different stakeholders invited to participate? What effect might this have?
What are the reasons for inclusion/ exclusion?

Who isn't represented in the design network?

How might access affect relationships between stakeholders outside of the network? What about outcomes of the project?

4.4.3 Goal Power

The third form of power in the design process is goal power. Goal power is the ability to initiate the design project, as well as the ability to influence decisions related to framing the problem, choosing desired outcomes and

structuring the design process, including moments for key decisions.

This understanding of goal power has been adapted from the interview insight of 'setting up the process' as well as from the form of network-making power as seen in Table 4.1.

Goal power is important because the power to initiate, set-up and frame a design project has a considerable impact on every following decision made. Although designers may not necessarily have complete goal power as the client or funder usually initiates the project, they have a fair amount of influence when it comes to framing and structuring the design process. The entire design process and its outcomes will look completely different and will serve different interests depending on which stakeholders have a share of goal power. As such, in order to avoid reproducing inequities, it is valuable to recognize which stakeholders have influence over these decisions (and which don't) and how this will resultantly impact participation, inclusion and outcomes. Social designers can better align the design process with their values and intentions if they practice power literacy skills for reflexivity related to goal power. Questions to support designers in becoming more self-aware and sensitive to the impact of goal power, below, were designed for this purpose.

Questions for reflexivity related to goal power:

Who initiated this project and what problems, desired outcomes and processes have been decided on?

How has the problem been defined or framed?

What are the goals or desired outcomes?

How much influence did you have to

structure the project and design the process?

How might framing and goals for this project affect participation?

What and who may be left out as a result?

What alternatives might be selected if more marginal stakeholders are given goal power?

4.4.4 Role Power

Role power, the fourth form of power in the power literacy framework, is adapted from Castell's 'networked power' as well as from the interview insights, as seen in Table 4.1. Role power is the ability to influence the role that different actors (those stakeholders who have already been given access) will take on. This includes any roles (eg. 'design expert' 'participant' 'interviewee' 'co-designer' 'user,' etc.) assigned to actors in the design network and the resulting hierarchies created, as well as influencing the role each actor will play in making decisions, especially what role—if any—various actors are given in synthesizing and prioritizing during the converging phases.

Role power is important because an actor's role will likely determine the amount of influence they will have on various decisions and outcomes. Related to access power and privilege, the positionality of the actors who are assigned influential roles—as well as which groups have representation in roles that might be described as higher up in the hierarchy, more central to decision-making or more important—will have a direct impact on how equitable the design process is. Role power interconnects and builds off of privilege, access power and goal power; depending on how role power is distributed, it can further exacerbate the inequities that the former three

forms may have reproduced.

Moreover, designers usually have influence over the way various actors are involved and the role that they take during participatory moments. For example, designers often influence how to include people who have first hand experience of the social issue being addressed: as 'subjects' to collect data from, 'users' to test solutions with, 'experts' from the community to consult with, 'co-designers' of solutions or some other variation. The decisions that designers make related to their role power will affect the experience for all stakeholders, especially those who are closest to the problem. As such, the way this power is used will determine to what extent the process is democratic and socially just. As such, it is important for designers to become more reflexive of this type of power, how much they have, and its impacts. Questions were developed to support the development of reflexivity in relation to role power, and are outlined below.

Questions for reflexivity related to role power:

What are the different roles, relationships and hierarchies between those who are involved?

How does participation differ for each stakeholder?

What different roles are being given to stakeholders (eg. participant, team member, expert, researcher, decision maker, non-participant) and who is deciding on this?

Which actors have reciprocal vs. hierarchical relations in the design process as a result?
Where on the 'participation spectrum' do these assigned roles

put stakeholders who have lived experience of the social issue being addressed?

Which actors will have the ability to interpret and/or prioritize findings?

Do these roles challenge status quo inequities found outside of the design project, or reproduce them?

What negative and positives might come from these assigned roles?

What effect, good or bad, might these roles have on stakeholders with lived experience outside of the design process? What about those with oppressed identities?

Is non-participation and option for certain stakeholders?

4.4.5 Rule Power

The last form of power included in this framework is rule power. Rule power is the ability to influence the way that actors included in the design network will work together. It includes the ability to influence what is considered normal, what is allowed and what isn't, and beliefs about what is true or valid in relation to the design network and various stakeholders in the social issue at hand. This form of power is modeled off of an adjusted 'networking power' from Castells' power theory and the interview insight of 'defining participants: rules,' as seen in Table 4.1.

Rule power is closely linked to privilege and systems of oppression. As such, it is one of the hardest forms of power to practice reflexivity on, as the social structures that define rule power are often invisible to most actors. Even so, it is an extremely important form of power

to be literate in, especially for a more equitable and democratic design process.

In any design process, especially those that are participatory, the 'rules of the game' will determine the way in which stakeholders who have been invited into the design network can participate, communicate and interact with each other. The rules also establish norms, which often determine how much influence and agency each actor will have. As a result, rule power will often render certain stakeholders as outsiders, deviants or marginal.

Designers tend to have a sizable amount of rule power, especially when it comes to participatory moments and collaboration between multiple stakeholders within the design process. Designers often have influence on how actors will communicate with each other in person and offline, norms around how to behave and interact with other actors, which forms of knowledge are deemed most valid, what language and technical jargon is used, as well as location, set-up and length of multi-actor sessions. These decisions, often heavily influenced by the designer, will determine the way in which participation can unfold, the experience of actors, relationships between them and outcomes. The way that rule power is used will determine how comfortable different actors are with sharing their knowledge, whether certain stakeholders are heard at all, and what ways of knowing and doing are centered. Without being reflexive about this type of power, how it impacts the design network, as well as how rule power intersects with privilege, the likelihood that the design process will be exclusionary and reproduce inequities, even for those who are invited to participate, is much greater.

Questions for reflexivity related to rule power:

How do we work together (eg. gather information, have discussions and making decisions together)?

What rules, norms and beliefs are guiding the way we work together and make decisions?
- **What kind of language is being used?**
- **Where and when are participatory sessions? How long will they be and what information will be included in them?**
- **What ways of knowing and doing are seen as most valid?**
- **How are actors expected to communicate and interact during? What about between, before and after?**

Who set these rules, norms and/or beliefs in the context of the design process?[1]

How is privilege affecting rule power?

How might these rules, norms and beliefs amplify certain voices? How might they silence others?

**How might rule power affect relationships between stakeholders?**

What ways of knowing, communicating and doing are left out?

How might this affect outcomes?

1   note: even if they aren't set intentionally, they will not be neutral or non-existent

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, a framework for building power literacy through reflexivity was outlined. After presenting a vision for a more socially just design process through reflexivity, the concept of power literacy was introduced. Based on traditional understandings of literacy, as well as more recent work in the field of emotional intelligence, power literacy was defined as the ability to be self-aware of, sensitive to and identify the cause and impact of power structures. Four steps, or power literacy skills, were outlined as the first part of the framework for reflexivity in the design process; these were recognize, name, understand impact and act. Finally, five forms of power found in the design process were included in the power literacy framework. These forms are privilege, access power, goal power, role power and rule power. For each form of a power, a number of questions for reflexivity were outlined as a part of the power literacy framework. Based on this framework, including the questions for reflexivity, a design direction and final design—a field guide for power literacy—will be presented next, in chapter 5.
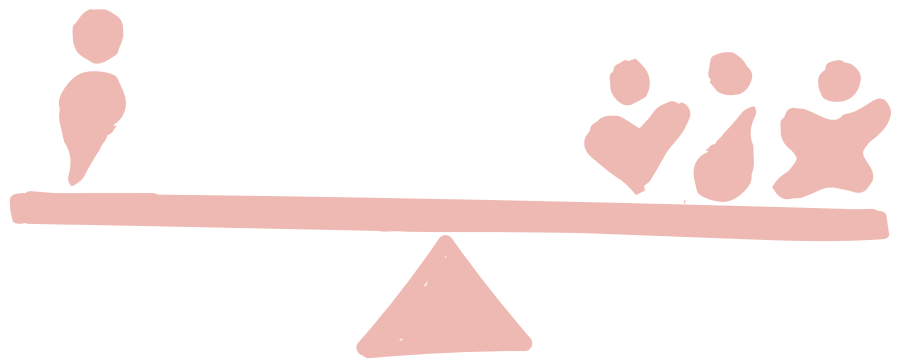
Chapter 5:
From Framework
to Field Guide

In this chapter, based off of the research insights, a design direction, design goal and target user group are first identified. Next, a number of design requirements and the final design deliverable–a field guide for power literacy– are outlined.

5.1 Design direction

After creating a framework to build power literacy skills through reflexivity, the next step was to translate this into a design concept. In order to do this, a design goal for the project was clarified, and a specific target group for the project was identified. Finally, a design direction was selected.

5.1.1 Design goal

In line with the scope of the project, a design goal that focuses on supporting designers to build awareness about power and privilege in the design process was selected. The design goal is:

For design professionals who work on public or social sector projects that address social issues to: 1) improve their self- awareness of, sensitivity to and ability to identify the cause and impact of power and privilege in the design process, and 2) build a shared understanding of power in the field of social design. This goal will be achieved by having designers reflect on past and current design projects in order to build their reflexivity skills.

The design goal makes it explicit that the design deliverable is to be used in the context of designers who are working on social issues. Moreover, it expresses that the goal of the deliverable is for designers working in this context to build up self-awareness of, sensitivity to and ability to identify the impact of power and privilege, or their *power literacy*. Finally, the mechanism to achieve this will be through two steps; first through reflection on past experiences, and second by then applying reflexivity in their current projects.

5.1.2 Target user group

Within the category of designers working on social and public sector projects, a more specific target group has been defined. This further definition will help determine design requirements, as well as evaluate how useful and appropriate the final design is during the evaluation phase in chapter 6.

The first characteristic of the target designer is that they are a design professional. This means that, even though many people are designing in their day-to-day lives (see Costanza-Chock, 2018 and Manzini, 2015), the final deliverable will be designed specifically for people who are paid to do design work as their profession. Next, a broad definition, as seen earlier in chapter 1.2.1, is used for the term designers. Here, designer refers to a professional who

is involved in framing a problem, exploring a problem space through research and/or in proposing solutions to the problem through an interactive and collaborative process. Thus, this definition includes practitioners who may not have a traditional design education, but are still considered to be practicing design. Although many designers within this category will refer to themselves as such, others may prefer to use language such as design researcher, action researcher, facilitator or social innovator to refer to their role.

Moreover, the focus of the final design will be specifically for designers working in the public or social sector who are already interested in values related to social justice, democracy and decolonizing design, but who are at a somewhat beginner level when it comes to theory and practice relating to equity. For example, they may be aware of the fact that privilege and power dynamics are present in their work, but they are unable to identify how this manifests and impacts social structures in a specific, concrete way. This characteristic of the ideal target user is summarized as an 'interested novice;' they value social justice, but have not yet learned how to fully apply it in their own practices as a designer.

In addition, the final design will be created for designers who hold a relative privilege based on their social identity and position within the matrix of domination. Although designers of various identities will benefit, highly privileged professional designers (eg. white, able-bodied, cisgendered, etc.) will be kept in mind while developing the final design. Moreover, the target use context will be in Europe or North America, as these are the geographies that have been considered in the research and that I have lived experience in. However, the design may still be relevant and adaptable to other geographical contexts.

5.1.3 Design requirements

Based on the design direction indicated, the research insights, and the framework for power literacy described in the previous chapter, a number of design requirements have been identified in order to inform the design outcome. These requirements include a final design that promotes reflexivity, educates through experience, is accessible and flexible, matches the depth of the subject, and is non-prescriptive. These five requirements are rationalized in the following section.

Promotes reflexivity

The first design requirement is to promote and enable reflexivity, so that the designer becomes more aware of the social structures that have been internalized by themselves and others (Vink, 2019). Although reformation—the intentional reconfiguration of social structures in order to create systemic change—is also necessary skill to create more equitable design processes, the final design will only focus on reflexivity, as this has been identified as a precursor to reformation (see chapter 4). As such, in line with the design goal outlined in 5.1.1 and because it is a more practical aim given the timeline of this project, the design will focus solely on reflexivity. Adapted from Vink (2019), figure 5.1 illustrates these two stages—reflexivity and reformation—for designing for systemic change as a positive feedback loop.

A couple of parameters to promote reflexivity have been identified. First, the design should support users in becoming (self-)aware and 'making the visible invisible' by using questions for reflection. Questions that prompt designers to become more critical of their position, their decisions and the social structures present in the design process are seen as an effective way to prompt reflexivity. As such, the final design should incorporate the questions for reflexivity in the power literacy framework laid out in chapter 4.
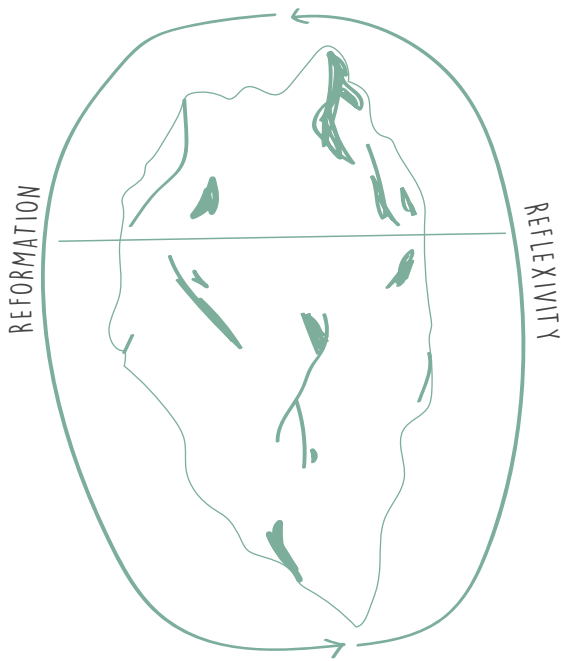
Figure 5.1 the positive feedback loop for designing for systemic change, adapted from Vink, 2019. In the context of this project, systemic change refers to the redistribution of power towards a more equitable design process.

Moreover, in order to deepen reflexivity and learning, the final design should incorporate both individual and group activities. The individual reflection time will support designers in becoming more self-aware of their own position in a non-judgemental way, which will better prepare them for the following group discussion. Reflecting in a group with the rest of the design team will help designers fill any blind spots that they have in terms of identifying power dynamics and impact on their own. Ideally, hearing other perspectives will sharpen and accelerate each designer's development of reflexivity and power literacy skills.

Finally the design should support designers in practicing reflexivity in the field. In other words, the design should guide users to practice reflexivity by using power literacy skills throughout the design process. Based on the insights gathered from mapping power across the design process (described in 3.4)

the design should offer extra support to users at particular stages in the design process. Namely, before the project has officially started, before divergence phases consisting of data collection begin, before moments where synthesis and prioritization activities take place in the convergence phase, and at the end of the project.

Experiential learning

The next requirement is for the design to promote experiential learning. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, actors are able to grasp, interpret and apply seemingly abstract concepts through their own experience. Four stages of experiential learning are identified; concrete learning (having the experience), reflective observation (perceiving or reviewing the experience), abstract conceptualisation (cognition or interpreting meaning from the experience) and active experimentation (changing behaviour as a result) (Kolb, 1984). A visual of the cycle can be seen in figure 5.2
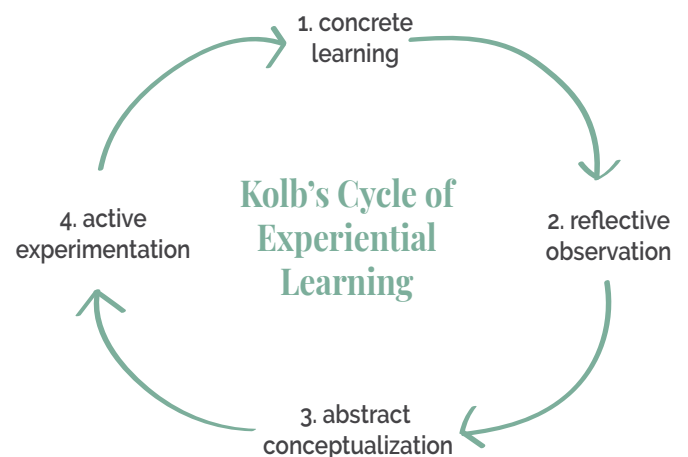

Figure 5.2 Kolb's cycle of experiential learning.

As such, the final design will incorporate experiential learning to help designers build up their power literacy and reflexivity skills in a more accessible way, before they are expected to do this during a project. Thus, in order to promote learning, the field guide should support designers in the second and

third steps of the learning cycle; reflecting on the experience, and learning or interpreting meaning from the reflection. To do this, the design will guide users through a number of questions that prompt them through reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation in a past project experience, before doing the same in a current project.

Accessible and flexible

The third requirement is for the design to be accessible and flexible. Accessibility has been selected as an important requirement for a number of reasons. First of all, the primary user group for the design, as explained above, is 'interested novices.' As such, the design must be non-intimidating and easily accessible for designers who are at the beginning of their journey toward power literacy and social justice. The experience of using the field guide should be non-judgemental. Moreover, in order to remain accessible, the design should allow for flexibility in the way that designers are able to use the resource; it should allow for incremental learning and be adaptable for a number of learning settings and styles depending on the pace that the designer and/or design team is able to take. In order to meet these requirements, the final design should translate certain questions for reflection and reflexivity (as described in the first two requirements) that incorporate approachable and guiding visual responses. Moreover, the design will be made more accessible by supporting designers to develop power literacy by first reflecting on a past project, before they are expected to apply these skills in practice (as explained in the previous requirement). Finally, the design should be 'modular,' in the sense that users can pick and choose different parts to use in a stand alone way depending on their needs and availability. This will prevent the user from becoming overwhelmed and deciding not to use it at all. To incorporate flexibility, the field guide will divide the power literacy framework into different sections that build on each other, but that can also be used standalone.

A design with depth

Although the design must be accessible, it must not be overly simplified either. As has been seen in the previous chapters, power, privilege, equity and social justice are complex, interrelated and weighty concepts that have often been absent from design education and practice. As such, it is important that the field guide acknowledges and pays respect to the significance of power literacy work without minimizing or simplifying it. In effect, the depth of the design will reflect the depth of the subject, while still being accessible.

Non-prescriptive

The final requirement is for the design to prompt action and accountability without being prescriptive. Thus, it should not prescribe the exact action that designers should take, but instead it should motivate the designer to act and hold themselves accountable based on their own conclusions. That is not to say that the final design cannot guide designers in a particular direction, but it will give them space to choose their own actions based on their unique perspective, context and intentions. In order to do this, the final design will use guiding questions and prompts that aid designers in determining the best way to act in accordance with their own values.

5.2 Exploring the design space

After setting a design goal, target user group and design requirements, the design was developed through an iterative cycle of ideating, designing and testing.
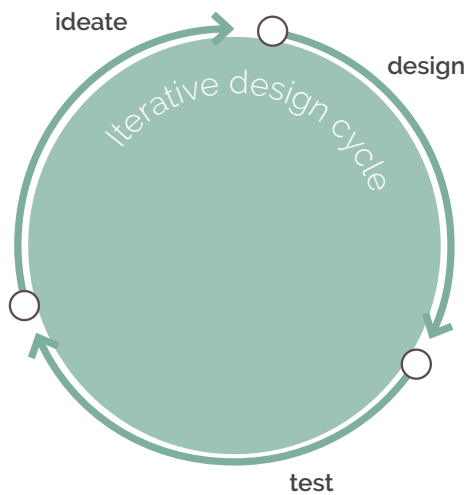

Figure 5.3 the iterative, cyclical approach taken to explore the design space and refine the final design.

First, in order to explore the design space, a number of ideas were generated through a brainstorming session. Afterwards, three main concepts were explored: a card deck, power literacy worksheets and an educational booklet. For more details on these concepts and the criteria used to select a final concept see Appendix C.

5.2.1 The final concept

Based on the criteria outlined in Appendix C, a final concept was selected: a field guide for power literacy. This concept combines elements of concept one and two (power literacy worksheets and an educational booklet), as these both scored highly in all criteria categories used.

A field guide, consisting of information, pages to fill in and worksheet activities, was selected for a number of reasons. First, the field guide was seen as an appropriate metaphor for the way the envisioned interaction with the final design should feel. Designers will feel guided and supported through this initial stage of their social justice journey as they discover what is "below the surface." At the same time, using a field guide is not prescriptive, and thus the interaction encourages the development of reflexivity skills, so that designers can find answers for themselves. Next, the format of a field guide allows for designers to first interact with the design on their own, in an accessible and approachable way, and at their own pace. Once designers have started to build some power literacy skills, they can then use the worksheets as a group activity in order to stimulate deeper learning and reflexivity.

Figure 5.4 images used for inspiration for the design of the field guide.

Moreover, in line with social justice practices, the field guide encourages designers to start small, by looking at themselves first, and then at their design team when considering what changes can be made. Moreover, it puts the burden to create change on those who have more power and privilege, lightening the load for those with more marginal positions in the matrix of domination.

Finally, the format of a field guide combines the richness of the individual and group learning experiences that would have been provided through a set of worksheets or an educational workbook, thus ensuring that the depth of the final design aligns with and does service to the depth of the subject of power and inequity in design processes.

The format of a booklet with fold out worksheets and instructions to complete various activities was selected for the field guide. Inspiration for the design of the field guide was taken from the images in Figure 5.4.

The field guide is interactive, and modeled off of the framework for power literacy presented in chapter 4.

5.2.5 An iterative process

In order to improve initial design directions and concepts through iteration, two different tests of the field guide were conducted during the iterative design process. The first was a two-hour workshop session with four Kennislanders, where two worksheet activities from the field guide were tested. For the second test the written content for the entire field guide, including the five worksheets activities from part one of the field guide (one for each form of power), were sent to a social designer and were completed over a 10 day period in Mural, a digital whiteboard platform. For both tests, feedback was collected through observations, a review of the worksheets that they filled out, as well as written and oral feedback from participants after the test was complete. More detail on the tests and the key insights that came out of them to inform the final design can be found in Appendix C.
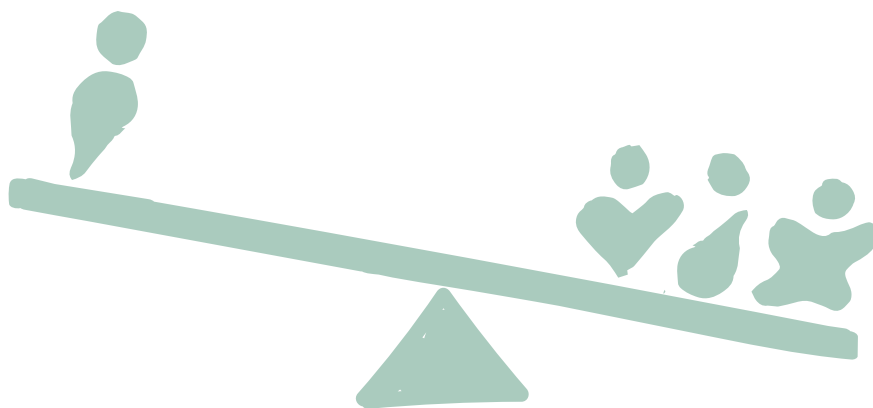
5.3 The field guide

Based on the initial tests described in 5.2.5, a final field guide was designed and can be found in Appendix A. In the following sections, the design of the field guide's format and content will be described.

5.3.1 Format

The final format of the field guide is an A4-sized booklet that consists of information to be read, sections and questions to fill in and nine A3-sized fold-out worksheet activities to be done individually and then discussed in groups. The worksheets can be torn out of the booklet and extra copies are available to download and print online at www.power-literacy.com, a website that was also designed

for this project. The field guide is meant to be used in its physical booklet format, however it will also be available on the website for designers to download and use digitally or print themselves for free. The final design of the field guide can be seen in Figure 5.5.

The field guide is divided into three sections: an introduction (Getting Started), reflecting on a past design project (Part 1: Five Forms of Power), and applying reflexivity in the field (Part 2: Power Checks). It has been designed in a way that builds up designers' knowledge and power literacy skills in a gradual way, however there is also some flexibility in its use. For example, it can be used in a modular fashion, because users can choose to to focus on certain sections or worksheets depending

Figure 5.5 the power literacy field guide.
(image: freepik.com)

on their level of background knowledge, the phase of their current design project, or the area of power they want to focus on at a particular point in time. As such, designers can choose to read the booklet without using the worksheets, or they can choose to use a worksheet with their team, even if the rest of the field guide hasn't been read or filled in.

5.3.2 Content

As mentioned, the field guide is divided into three sections: Getting Started, Part 1 and Part 2. Below, each section is summarized.

Getting Started

This section is an introduction to power literacy and includes a glossary of terms, seen in figure 5.6. It also includes prompts for users to consider and write down their values and the reason why they want to become more power literate in their role as a designer.

Figure 5.6 the field guide open to the glossary on page 10 and 11. (image: freepik.com)

Part 1: Five Sources of Power

This section introduces five forms of power in the power literacy framework, and provides a fold-out worksheet activity for each. Users are asked to choose a past project experience to use (criteria is provided for how to select the best project) that they can learn and reflect on each form of power through. Each worksheet includes a definition of the form of power, the estimated time needed to complete it, as well as instructions on how to complete the activity. Worksheets are meant to be filled out individually and then discussed in groups with others who were on the design team. The worksheets are ordered as follows: Privilege, Access Power, Goal Power, Role Power, Rule Power. Privilege is the first worksheet, as it forces the user to first zoom in on themselves and their own positionality before going any further. Moreover, privilege and access power are recommended to be done before the other worksheets, as these two types of power are prevalent throughout the entire design process, and are intertwined with the three other forms. Having an understanding of privilege and access power to begin with, will make the other worksheet activities more impactful. Goal power is placed next, as this form of power is often prevalent at the beginning of the design process. Rule power was placed last, as this was seen to be the most complex and difficult form of power to reflect on. As a result, users have a chance to build up their power literacy skills with the other worksheets first, so that the rule power worksheet feels more accessible. As such, this section of the field guide helps users get familiar with all five forms of power, which will help them to conduct power checks, outlined in the third section

Part 2: Power Checks

The final section is meant to be used in the field, before starting and during a design project. It explains the four power literacy skills for reflexivity, **recognize, name, understand** and **act**, and how they can be used as steps within a power check. A power check worksheet is included for four critical moments in the design process: during set-up, before divergence, before convergence, and just before the project is wrapped up. The outside of each worksheet includes information for when to use it and the time needed to complete it. An explanation and instructions for each power check can also be found on every worksheet.

PRIVILEGE

What is it

Privilege is the type of power you get from a social relation whereby you benefit due to the social group you belong to, at the expense of another social group. It is an unearned advantage given to you because of your identity. It is possible to both have privilege and experience oppression at the same time, since identity is intersectional. When you have privilege, it is often invisible to you.

How to

1. Look at the different identities in the web. For each

1. Recognize your own privilege

Which parts of my identity give me privilege? The identities in the inner circle are privileged, where as the identities in the outer circle are more oppressed (this can vary depending on geographic context and other factors).

3. Understand impact

What advantages did those with privilege experience in the design process? Who may have been unintentionally excluded or marginalized as a result?

n my daily life as a result?
oject as a result?

4. Discuss in a group

ACCESS POWER

What is it

Access power is the ability to influence who is included in and who is excluded from the design project and process.

How to

1. List ALL of the stakeholders involved in the ecosystem for the social issue you are designing for; include yourself as a stakeholder. Next, mark an X through the circles of stakeholders who were not included in the design process.

2. Use the design process template, or make your own on a seperate sheet of paper. Write down the actors that had access in each phase. Draw a star on the phases with the most important decisions.

3. Reflect on the way actors were invited to participate using the guiding questions.

4. Using the guiding questions, reflect on the impact of access power in the project.

5. Discuss in a group. Write down any new insights.

6. Using the spectrum, reflect on the amount of access power you had in this project.

1. Who's in

Who are the stakeholders involved in the issue? Who was included and who was excluded from the design process?

DESIGNERS

2. Points of access

Is access the same throughout the design process for each actor, or does it change? In which phases was access more valuable and/or influential? Use the double diamond below, or make your own project timeline on a seperate piece of paper.

3. Invitations

How were different actors invited to participate? How might the nature of the invitation affect their feelings of inclusion? Who decided who was included? What was the reason for inclusion/exclusion?

4. Understand impact

Who was not represented? How might this have impacted relationships in the larger ecosystem? How might this have impacted outcomes?
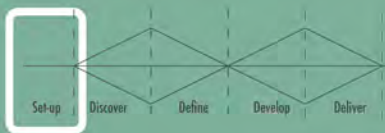
5. Discuss in a group

6. Your access power

How much access power did I have in the design process?

Low   High

Figure 5.7 the worksheets for the first two forms of power, privilege and access power.

SET-UP

Before a project has officially started decisions are already being made, whether they are explicit or implicit ones, that will impact the design process and affect the distribution of power within it. As such, before starting any given project, it's

lying assumptions,
urns and reflect on
at some of these
t have.

ntion to:

decisions about
n framing and
he design process

decisions about
vited to participate
, and when.

isions will be
ie positionality
wes of those in the

n the field:

uas and intentions in
This way, you have
to hold key decision-
ntable.

resentation on the
Having a diversity
as will help to
s and build trust
nunities you are
h.

Power Check:
SET-UP

Set-up   Discover   Define   Develop   Deliver

When to use

A set-up power check will ideally be conducted before or while preparing a proposal for a client, partner or funder. This worksheet should be completed by the design team, all together.

Time needed: 20 - 30 min.

Download and print extra worksheets at www.power-literacy.com

1. Recognize

Who has initiated this project and what desired outcomes are being set? How are we framing problems and why? What structure for the design process is being suggested?

What social identities are represented here? Are marginalized perspectives present in the set-up of this project?

Who will be included in the design process and in what ways? When will access be granted, and when will it be denied?

In what other ways is power showing up in the set-up of this project, and what influence do we have?

2. Name

What forms of power are present?

☐ Privilege   ☐ Access Power   ☐ Goal Power
☐ Role Power   ☐ Rule Power

3. Understand Impact

How might these decisions determine which perspectives are valued? What impact might this have on stakeholders with lived experience of the problem? Is the problem being addressed the right one and how might this impact the design process?

Will existing inequities be reproduced or challenged?

4. Act

What actions need to be taken in this phase to align the impact of the design process with our intentions and values? What are three actions we can take to move in that direction?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Figure 5.8 the first power check worksheet, set-up. The outside includes information on when to use it (left). Once you fold out the page you see the worksheet, which includes more information in the left column (right).
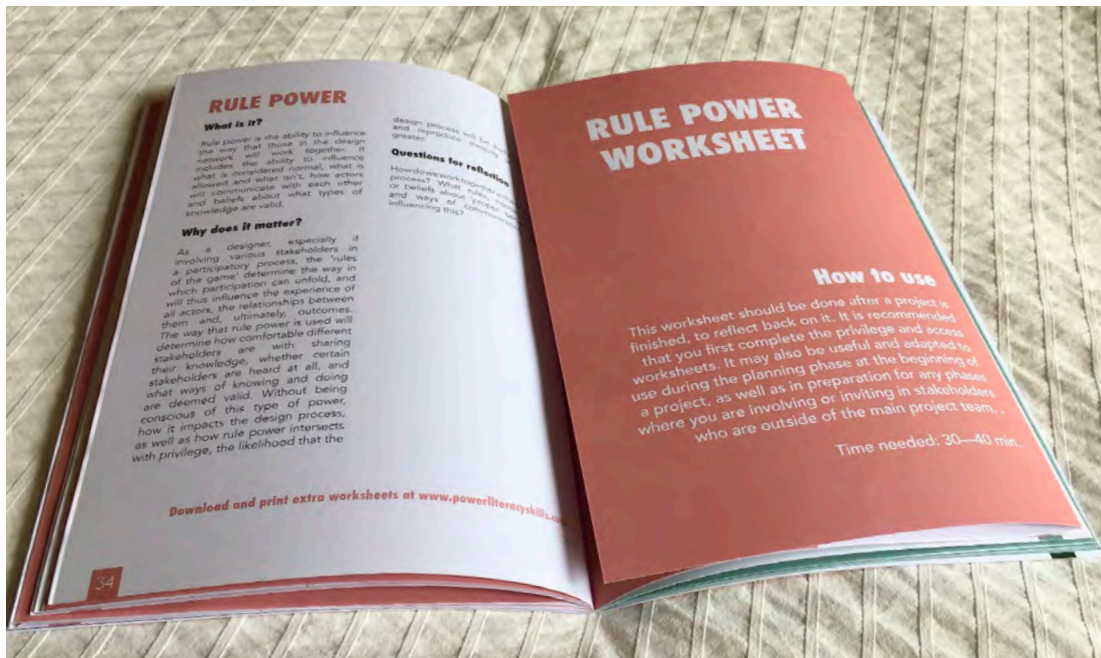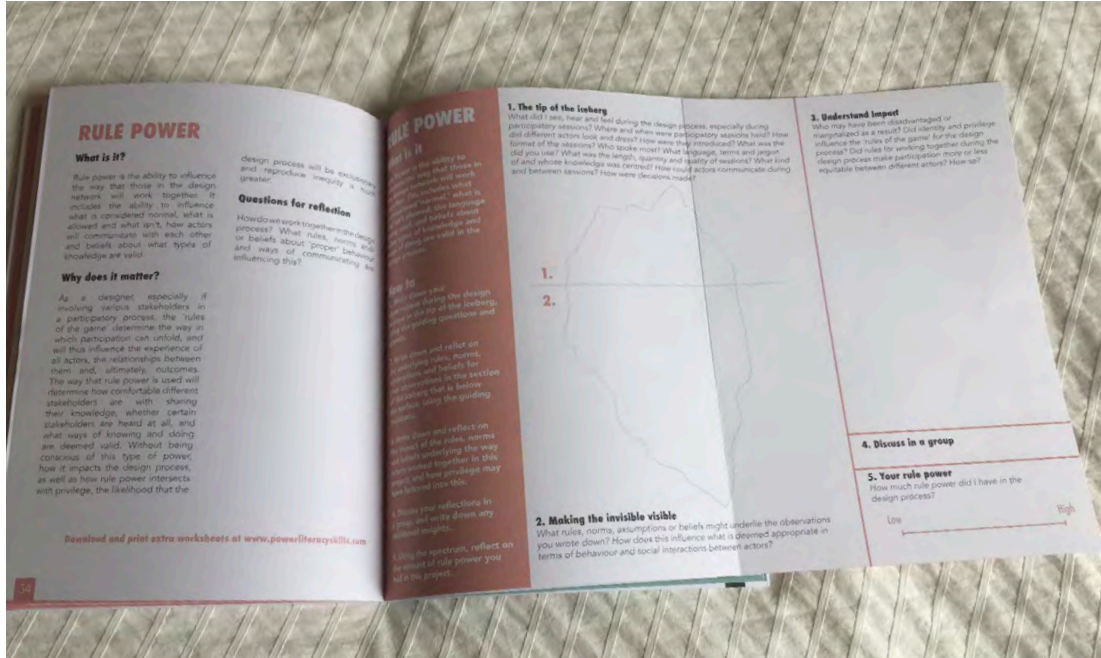
Figure 5.9 the fold-out worksheet for rule power, from part 1: five sources of power.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the design goal, target user group and design direction that was selected for this project. Moreover, it outlined five design requirements informed by the research, which will be used to evaluate the success of the field guide. Based on a number of iterative design activities, including ideating, designing and testing, a field guide for power literacy was designed. In order to evaluate the success of the field guide, limitations and recommendations for the future, two evaluations were set-up and will be detailed in chapter 6.

Figure 5.10 The field guide.
(image: freepik.com)

Chapter 6: Evaluating the Field Guide

In order to evaluate whether the field guide meets the initial aims of the project, the design goal and the design requirements, two tests were conducted. The objectives, methods, and results of these evaluations will be described in this chapter.

6.1 Evaluation plan

After finalizing the field guide, an evaluation plan was set-up in order to determine whether the design met the objectives for this project, the design goal and the design requirements.

Using the project aims set out in chapter 1, as well as the design goal described in chapter 5, the objective of the field guide has been formulated as:

The field guide's objective is to help social designers build power literacy, as a first step on their journey towards a more socially just design practice.

As such, the goals of the final design to be evaluated are threefold. The field guide should help designers to:

1. improve self-awareness of and sensitivity to their own power and privilege and understand how it impacts the design process

2. begin to identify the underlying social structures (norms, rules, roles, assumptions, beliefs) in their projects and design practices that lead to power imbalances

3. develop a shared understanding of power

In order to meet these objectives, the field guide was evaluated using two different tests.

6.2 Evaluation with a social design student

6.2.1 Method & Procedure

First, the entire digital field guide (in both an interactive digital booklet and pdf format) was given to a TU Delft Master's design student with five years of work experience in social design projects. They were also given a Mural digital whiteboard link, where a template for all nine worksheets included in the field guide were provided for them to fill out digitally. The student was given 10 days to complete the field guide. Since this was not enough time to properly use part two of the field guide, the student was told to use either a current or past project to fill out the power check worksheets in this section. After completing the field guide, the student was interviewed for 30 minutes about their experience using the field guide. Following this, the student was sent an online questionnaire where they answered questions about their experience (see Appendix D for the evaluation questions). Moreover, the worksheets that were filled out were reviewed to see if the activities were interpreted in the intended way.

6.2.2 Limitations

Due external constraints, the evaluation method and procedure had a number of limitations. First, due to time constraints of the project, there was not enough time for the participant to properly use the entire field guide. As such, part two was not evaluated in the context of use, as it was not possible for the participant to use it throughout an entire design project, as intended. Moreover, due to constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as costs and time needed

for professional printing, the field guide was filled out digitally even though it is intended to be used in its physical, printed format. Finally, the participant was unable to do the group reflexivity activity outlined for each worksheet, and as such that feature of the design and thus the third goal, a shared understanding, was not evaluated in this first set-up.

6.2.3 Results

Overall, the participant felt that she learnt a lot from using the field guide, even over the span of 10 days, especially in relation to the first two goals: improving self-awareness of and sensitivity to her own power and its impact in the design process, and beginning to identify underlying social structures that lead to inequity in design projects.
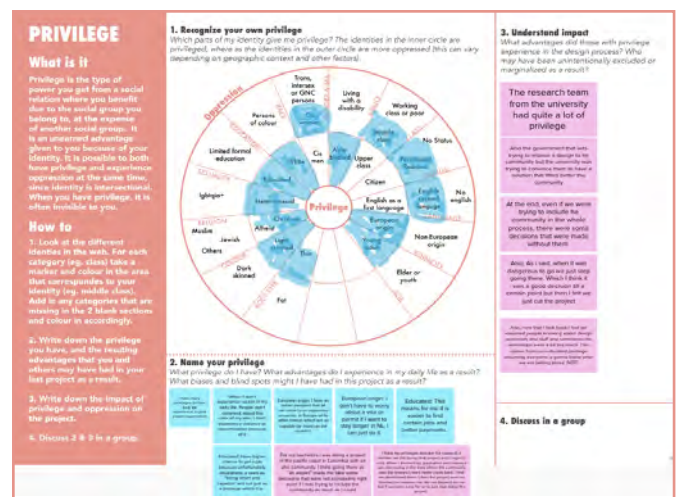

Figure 6.1 a screen short of the participant's privilege worksheet from the Mural whiteboard.

In the short interview, the participant spoke about how her experience using the field guide made her reflect a lot, and that it took her a

lot of time and mental capacity, as practicing reflexivity in this way was not a skill that she had used much in her previous practice, or that was taught in her current education at TU Delft. Even so, she felt that using the field guide brought up a lot of interesting insights, and that with time and practice it might become easier to be reflexive in her projects. Further, she felt that using the field guide had brought up new insights, even for concepts she thought she already knew about. For example, in the privilege worksheet, even though she was familiar with the matrix of domination and the concept of privilege, actually colouring in the visual that had been created, as seen in Figure 6.1, brought about a deeper level of awareness and understanding that she did not expect. It also allowed her to evaluate the success of the past project along values of equity and social justice, and to determine what could be improved for next time. Moreover, using the field guide brought up a deeper understanding of power dynamics within the design team for the project she was reflecting on, as well as her own.

"I think I felt discomfort, not because I felt judged from the guide, but I felt discomfort on thinking about how we managed the project; the things that were not right"

As expected, the field guide brought up feelings of discomfort. However, these feelings were seen to be constructive and were not a result of feeling judged.

While the overall experience was positive and met the first two goals being evaluated, in terms of usability the participant got a bit confused between the goal power and role power worksheet, due to unclear distinction between different terms (actor, stakeholder and role), and the repetitive nature of the visuals in these two particular worksheets.

"I already knew about the matrix of oppression and privilege and had seen it, but it was super impactful to actually fill it in and see where you are, and know that you can be privileged and oppressed at the same time"

The results of the questionnaire showed that the field guide scored highly in terms of usability and the design requirement of accessibility; the participant agreed or strongly agreed that the field guide and all of its components were easy to understand, with an adequate amount of information. Moreover, the participant strongly disagreed with the statement, "I felt judged by the information and questions in the field guide." The field guide was also scored highly in terms of improving self-awareness and sensitivity to the participant's own power, as well as the impact of power on the design process. The participant either agreed or strongly agreed with all statements related to becoming more aware of power and privilege for oneself, in the design process and in general, as well as identifying inequities in the design process. Finally, the participant indicated that the field guide was relevant, they would recommend the field guide to others and would use it themself in the future in the questionnaire.

6.3 Evaluation with Kennisland

6.3.1 Method & Procedure

For the second evaluation, a 3.5 hour workshop was set-up with six members of the Kennisland team. Of the six participants, all were white, Dutch, five were ciswomen and one was a cisman. The workshop was held online due to external circumstances (COVID19 pandemic). One week ahead of the session, the participants were sent the digital field guide and asked to read and complete the introduction 'getting started' section, as well as to pick a past project to use for the workshop. Due to time constraints, only the worksheets in part one of the field guide were tested during the session. Participants were split up into their project teams (two groups of three), and assigned breakout rooms during group discussion activities accordingly. For each form of power, participants were provided with a short introduction and were then given 15 minutes to complete the worksheet, using a Mural digital whiteboard link that had been provided for each participant. Afterwards, each group was given 15 minutes to discuss the worksheet activities with their project teams, writing down any key insights that came up. The first exercise in the privilege worksheet was adapted slightly for the context of Kennisland's work in the Netherlands. For example, "Dutch as a first language" replaced "English as a first language" (see Appendix E).

At the end of the workshop, feedback on using the field guide was provided in a 10 minute discussion. After which, participants were asked to fill out an online questionnaire where they answered questions about their experience using the introduction section of the field guide ahead of time and the part one worksheets during the session (see Appendix D for the evaluation questions). Moreover, the worksheets that were filled out were reviewed to see if the activities were interpreted in the intended way.

6.3.2 Limitations

As with the evaluation discussed previously, there were also a number of limitations for the evaluation method and procedure with Kennisland. Firstly, due to the timeline of the project as well as availability of Kennislanders, the 3.5 hour workshop was a much shorter timeframe than intended for part one of the field guide to be completed. This also meant that participants filled out each worksheet consecutively, without much time in between to allow for continuous reflexivity and reflection before moving on to the next form of power. As well, given the time constraints, it was not possible to test part 2 of the field guide with Kennisland before the end of this project. Similarly, because the workshop was held online, it was not possible to give each participant printed worksheets to fill out, as was intended. Finally, as english was not the native language of any of the participants, group discussions were conducted in Dutch as this was deemed to be more beneficial for participants. This likely affected user experience, as participants were using the worksheets in their second language, and then switching to their native language for the discussion. Moreover, I was unable to listen in and observe the discussions as a part of the evaluation as a result.

6.3.3 Results

Based on the 10 minute discussion at the end of the session and the questionnaire filled out by all six participants, it was interpreted that the sections of the field guide tested were successful in meeting the objective and three corresponding goals laid out for the evaluation.

To begin with, participants scored the field

guide well in terms of usability and accessibility. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that the 'getting started' section was easy to understand, and the amount of information provided was adequate, with four feeling confident that they were filling the worksheets in correctly. Moreover, all participants did not feel judged by the questions asked in the worksheets.

In terms of reflexivity, the clear majority felt that using the field guide made them more aware of their own power and privilege (five out of six agreed or strongly agreed) and that it opened up their eyes to power dynamics that they were not fully aware of before (three strongly agreed, one agreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed). Further, all participants agreed that using the field guide helped them to identify inequities in the design process and that they learned something new about the impact of power and privilege in the design process.
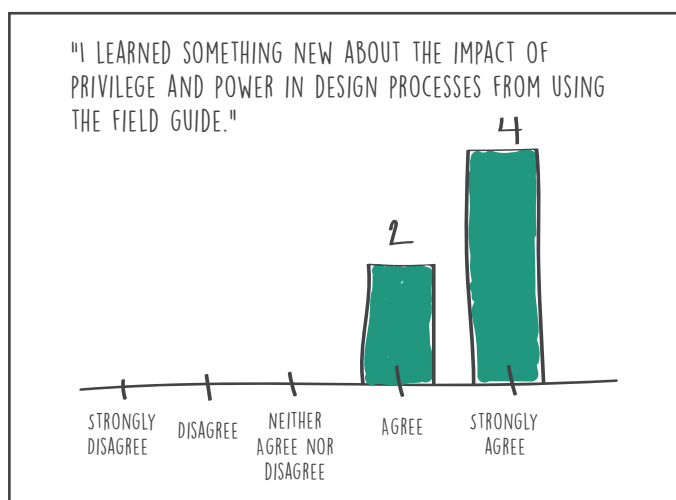

Figure 6.2 all participants agreed or strongly agree with the statement "I learned something new about the impact of privilege and power in design processes from using the field guide."

All participants felt that the field guide was relevant to their work as a designer and to the work of Kennisland, would recommend the field guide to others and would use it in the future.

Finally, in response to the statement, after using the field guide today, I feel that my team and I have a greater shared understanding of power, four participants indicated that they strongly agreed, one agreed and one indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

"After participating in the workshop about power literacy I feel many things brewing inside of me. What it is and where it goes, I'm not sure yet. But I've definitely found some new energy and language to work on social justice in and with my team!"

Moreover, based on the ten minute discussion with participants at the end of the workshop, the field guide seemed to successfully increase self-awareness of power and privilege, as well as provide a number of 'aha' moments for participants in terms of identifying underlying structures that resulted in power imbalances or inequities. One participant mentioned that before using the field guide they felt that they already knew a lot about power and privilege, but that there was much more that came up than had been anticipated. Other participants agreed that by using the field guide they were provided with language that they could use to talk about inequity and power dynamics in their projects together, as a team. Overall, participants agreed that the experience had been insightful for Kennisland, as well as for each of them personally. They indicated that using the field guide helped bring up insights for inclusion and anti-racism in their projects– something that is on-going discussion within the organization given recent events both globally and nationally related to systemic anti-black racism and the Black Lives Matter movement. Participants were impressed with the practicality of the field guide, as well as the way that it was able to simplify and make

visible power dynamics in a way that was both accessible and profound.

Even so, certain aspects within the field guide, could be changed to improve usability. For example, one participant misinterpreted the first exercise in the goal power worksheet and needed further explanation for the related exercise in the role worksheet. Moreover, a different participant had issues understanding the term 'stakeholder' that was used, especially in the access worksheet. To help with this, a definition of the term has been added to the glossary on page 10.

Figure 6.3 the role power and rule power worksheets, filled in by a participant during the workshop using Mural.

6.4 Conclusions

Based on the two evaluations conducted, it can be concluded that the field guide successfully achieves the objective and design goals set-out in this project. Using the field guide and the worksheets within it helped participants to become more self-aware, sensitive to and understand the impact of power in the design process. Moreover, the evaluations indicate that the field guide helps designers to begin to identify underlying structures and dynamics that cause power imbalances, as well as to build a shared understanding of power and privilege within the social and public sector design field. Even so, further evaluations that include more participants, take place over a longer period of time and involve using the entire field guide in its context of use are needed in order to validate these conclusions. Further, changes in the design and content of the field guide and particular worksheets could be implemented to improve usability and impact.

Chapter 7:
Final thoughts
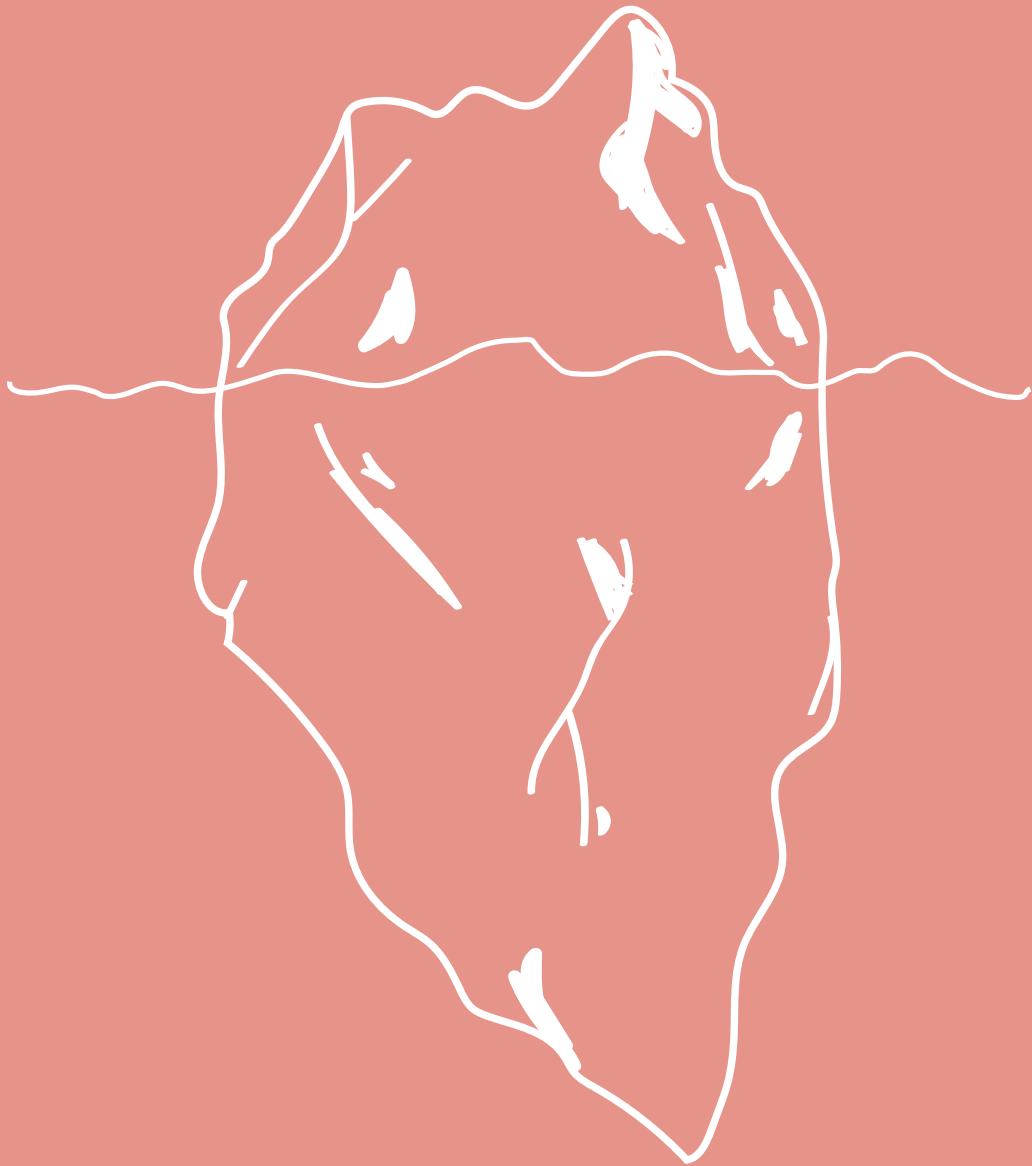
In this chapter, final reflections on the achievements and outcomes of this project, as well as limitations and recommendations for next steps will be discussed.

7.1 Discussion and reflection

This project was motivated by a desire for social justice, decolonization and democratization within design practice and education. I wanted to make a small contribution through the research and design activities of my thesis towards design processes and practices in which systems of oppression and the resulting inequities and injustices are challenged, rather than reproduced. This includes the opening up and shifting of power within the design field itself, in terms of how designers work with the communities that they aim to support, as well as who gets to be a designer and who gets to define what design is in the first place.

As such, at the outset of this project the aim was to bring a shared understanding and a self-awareness of power and privilege into the field of participatory and/or public and social sector design in order to prompt designers, especially those with greater privilege, to challenge inequity by sharing and/or giving up some of their power. As the project progressed the scope was narrowed to specifically support designers in building their power literacy—the ability and willingness to recognize, name, interpret, understand the impact of, communicate and regulate their own power position; as well as to identify the underlying social structures and systems that lead to power imbalances to begin with. This narrowing of focus was motivated by the assumption that by building power literacy and reflexivity skills, social designers will be better able and more motivated to challenge

existing power dynamics and social structures within their design projects and practice. As such, building up power literacy through reflexivity was identified as a prerequisite for designers to create meaningful, systemic change towards a socially just, democratic and decolonial form of participatory and social design.

In order to reach this goal, the field guide for power literacy was designed and evaluated. Although the field guide (along with the power literacy framework that it is based on) is only a small step towards the greater aim of this project, I understand it to be an important contribution in addressing the current power and privilege gap in design education and practice globally, and especially in the Netherlands.

Before concluding this thesis project, my research and the field guide has already had a number of impacts and side effects. Firstly, my work has contributed to a discussion around anti-oppression and social justice within Kennisland. Although my work with Kennisland has been a factor in setting this conversation in motion, it has been in large part due to the expansion of the global Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery in the United States and the activism of Kick Out Zwarte Piete, Black Queer & Trans Resistance NL, Nederland Wordt Beter, Control Alt Delete and other similar organizations against anti-black racism in the Netherlands. As a result

of this global movement, Kennisland (and other predominantly white, social design or innovation organizations and institutions in the country and elsewhere), have become more receptive to engaging in discussions and action related to social justice, decolonization and anti-oppression. Consequently, having access to the field guide and participating in the power literacy workshop (as described as part of the evaluation in Chapter 6) has been impactful for Kennislanders. For example, those who participated in the power literacy evaluation indicated that they are more motivated to take action as a result, and are better prepared due to an increase in awareness and the development of a shared language to discuss power dynamics and inequities internally at KL and within their public and social sector projects.

Moreover, the field guide and my research has already generated interest from the design community at large. This has resulted from sharing details with a number of design educators and practitioners in Canada, in the Netherlands, as well as within a global design slack group called "Where are the Black Designers?"

As a result, I feel that I have been successful in designing something that is impactful and effective in providing power literacy education and 'aha' moments for designers (specifically those with a fair amount of privilege), in a non-threatening and approachable way. More specifically, Kennisland has expressed enthusiasm to continue working with the field guide in the future. In addition, with the launch of www.power-literacy.com, the field guide will be available for anyone to use, adopt or even modify for non-commercial use (it has been licenced under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC 4.0)). After the conclusion of this thesis project, I hope to continue to contribute to the 'design justice' field by collaborating and evolving these resources for use within more specific and local design communities, particularly at TU Delft, in the Netherlands

and/or in Vancouver and Toronto in Canada.

7.1.1 Limitations

Even with all of the impact that this project had so far, there are a number of limitations that should be considered in terms of the approach of the project and the field guide itself. First of all, the field guide has been designed in a somewhat generic way, in order to have the added benefit of flexibility and adaptability to a number of different geographical and design contexts. However, as a result, it does not take into consideration specific local and/or historical contexts. As a result, certain aspects of it may not go deep enough and/or may result in the reproduction of inequity if used by designers in certain communities, without a nuanced adaptation.

Next, the evaluation as described in chapter 6 was somewhat limited due to the timeline of this project. As a result, further evaluation within the context of use and over a longer period of time would be needed to gain a better understanding as to whether the design goal has been met, and if the field guide itself is successful in challenging, rather than reproducing inequities within the design field.

Finally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has been unfolding during the entirety of this thesis project, most of the research and design activities have been conducted online, under unusual circumstances. As a result, the research and design outcomes have been affected. Moreover, as I have a very limited understanding of the Dutch language, I was unable to research, observe and participate within the projects and design processes of Kennisland to the extent that was desired. Along with my finite familiarity with the Dutch historical context and culture when it comes to systems of oppression (especially its colonial legacies), the field guide is limited in that it was designed from my own situated perspective, as a white cisgendered Canadian settler. As such, it will only benefit from future

feedback, adaptations and edits from those with different and traditionally marginalized viewpoints and lived experience.

7.1.2 Recommendations and next steps

As a result of undertaking this project, I have been forced to develop my own power literacy, while confronting a number of social structures and systems of oppression that have been internalized by myself and those around me. I am thankful for this opportunity and I look forward to continuing this difficult and uncomfortable, yet undoubtedly important, work.

In order to continue on with the goals of this project and ensure that the field guide and the power literacy framework has a considerable reach, I have a number of recommendations and next steps outlined below, directed at either myself, Kennisland and/or TU Delft.

Further evaluation

The first recommendation and next step for the field guide would be to further test the field guide in its context of use, especially Part 2 of the field guide (power checks) over the entirety of a design project. These tests could be used to further evaluate the success of the field guide in its entirety, while also providing useful insights for future iterations and evolutions.

Implementation at Kennisland

For implementing the field guide within Kennisland, the first step will be to publish the field guide on their website. Afterwards, Kennisland could hire a local social and/or racial justice educator in order to help translate the field guide into Dutch, in order to make it more accessible for the Kennisland team, partners and clients. Kennisland could also work with this educator for further anti-oppression training within the organization, as well as to adapt certain field guide worksheet

activities so that they can be used in client and partner planning meetings.

Promoting the field guide in design practice and education

Moreover, to ensure the field guide is widely used within the design community, a next step will be to share and promote the power literacy website (which includes downloadable versions of the field guide) as a free resource for designers working in the social and public sector (including participatory designers, social designers, action researchers, social innovators, civic designers, urban designers, facilitators and even urban planners).

Ideally, the field guide could also be adapted for a number of specific contexts within and related to the design field, based on specific interest and demand from various organizations and groups. For example, the power literacy framework and field guide could be turned into a workshop training, to be brought to design organizations, companies and educational institutions. It would be recommended that this work is done in collaboration with anti-oppression facilitators and/or educators who already offer related educational training workshops.

More specifically, I recommend that the power literacy framework and field guide be adapted for use specifically within TU Delft and the Industrial Design and Engineering faculty, as– to my knowledge at the time of writing this— there is currently no formal or informal anti-oppression training or education provided for staff or students.

Knowledge

Finally, in order to share the knowledge generated through my research, a recommended next step would be to publish and share a paper on the power literacy framework in a relevant design journal and/or at an upcoming conference.

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Appendices
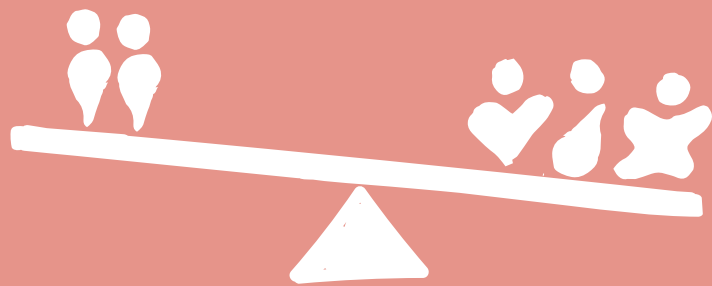
Appendices

Appendix A: The Field Guide

A beginner's guide to democratize, decolonize and create
socially just public and social sector design processes

A SOCIAL DESIGNER'S FIELD GUIDE TO POWER LITERACY

Created by Maya Goodwill
in collaboration with Kennisland

This field guide belongs to:

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This field guide was created by Maya Goodwill in collaboration with Kennisland for the graduation thesis, *Power Literacy: towards a socially just, decolonial and democratic design process*, as a part of the Master of Science in Design for Interaction at Delft University of Technology.

For the complete thesis and reference list, visit https://repository.tudelft.nl/.

All icons used in this field guide are from the Noun Project:

Magnifying Glass by Milinda Courey (page 6)
Premium Service by Priyanka (page 13)
Door by Adrien Coquett (page 18)
Goal by Alice Design (page 23)
Networking by Becris (page 28)
Rules by Arthur Shlain (page 33)
Power by Nithinan Tatah (page 40)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GETTING STARTED

HELLO!

If you've found this field guide, it likely means you are interested in understanding power dynamics in the design projects you take on and, hopefully, a more equitable, democratic and socially just design process.

The aim of this field guide is to help you develop power literacy; this includes building up your knowledge, reflexivity and interpretation skills to gain a more holistic understanding of the power dynamics and forms of power that come up, however subtly, in your design projects. Power literacy is really about being self-aware of, sensitive to and better able to understand the impact of your power and privilege in the design process, and to then take action based on your values.

Whether you call your work social design, participatory design, action research, civic design, social innovation, design for the public sector, urban design or something else, this guide will help you on your journey to becoming a more power literate practitioner!

HOW TO USE

The field guide is divided into two main parts, with fold-out worksheet activities to help you build your power literacy skills throughout. Before you begin with the worksheets, you will find a glossary to help you build up a shared language around power literacy in the social design field. You will then move on to the two main sections of the guide.

Part 1: Five Forms of Power

In Part 1 you will be introduced to five forms of power in design processes. You will learn about each form of power by reflecting on your own experience in a past design project. For each type of power you will find a corresponding worksheet activity to complete—these are best done by first filling it out individually and then discussing in a group with your design team. To complete these activities, it will be helpful to select a past design project that you were a part of. You can find criteria to help you pick an appropriate project on page 12.

Part 2: Power Checks

In part 2, you will be provided with guidelines, tips and worksheet activities to complete *power checks* at certain points in the design process. Power checks are a way to practice power literacy 'in the field.' These checks will help you to build reflexivity—your awareness of social structures internalized by yourself and others—in four steps: recognize power, name power, understand the impact of power and act accordingly. There are four worksheets for you to use at critical moments in your next design project: set-up, divergence, convergence, and wrap-up.

Choose your own adventure

Although, for the most comprehensive learning experience you will want to go through the field guide from cover to cover, it has been designed so that you can pick and choose what's relevant to you. For example, the worksheets in part 1 and part 2 can be used standalone, without going through the entire field guide. To help you navigate, suggestions for when and how to use each worksheet are provided.

Extra worksheets are available to download for free at www.power-literacy.com.

GLOSSARY

Language and the way that it is used is important, especially when considering power. In order to make it easier to use this field guide, we've put together a list of terms and meanings to start to build up a shared language in the field. You can add other important terms in the space provided on the opposite page.

Power: an actor's ability to influence an outcome. This is affected by asymmetry in relationships. Power can be used both positively and negatively.

Privilege: a social relation where one social group benefits at the expense of another. It is an unearned advantage and is often invisible to those who have it.

Oppression: the systematic and pervasive inequality embedded within social institutions, interpersonal interactions and individual consciousness. It can be understood as the inverse of privilege, or the 'isms' (racism, ableism, sexism, classism etc.).

Stakeholder: an individual, social group or organization that will be impacted in some way by the design project, process and/or its outcomes. The impact might be large, small, positive or negative.

Marginalized: a group or category of people made to be less important or of lower status, typically with less decision-making ability and influence.

Democracy: the idea that everyone should have an equal say in making the decisions that impact them.

Social Justice: equitable treatment, opportunities, rights and distribution of resources within and between all communities and social groups in a dignified and respectful way.

Design: the intention and the unintentional impact behind an outcome. Everyone designs, but only certain people are paid to do it.

Participatory Design: the involvement of various stakeholders in the design process. Participation exists along a spectrum.

Power Literacy: the ability to practice self-awareness of, be sensitive to and understand the impact of power in order to align outcomes to intentions.

Reflexivity: an actor's awareness of power and the corresponding social structures internalized by themselves and others around them.

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Why does learning about power literacy matter to you as a designer? What three values are most important to you when addressing social issues?

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PART 1: FIVE SOURCES OF POWER

Reflecting on a past design project

SELECTING A PROJECT

In this section you will be introduced to five different, yet interrelated, forms of power that show up in the design process: privilege, access power, goal power, role power and rule power. For each of the five, there is an accompanying worksheet activity that you will fill out by reflecting on a past experience. To complete these worksheets, it is best to have a past design project in mind while you answer the questions. When selecting a project, try to pick one that checks off the following three criteria:

☐ **Multiple stakeholders were involved in some way during the design process (even if this was minimal or varied).**

☐ **There was a clear group of stakeholders that had lived experience of the problem or issue that you were aiming to address (eg. an 'end user').**

☐ **The project aimed to address a social issue (eg. improve education outcomes) that was in a specific context (eg. for youth in a particular neighbourhood).**

1. PRIVILEGE

PRIVILEGE

What is it?

Privilege is the type of power you get from a social relation whereby you benefit due to the social group you belong to, at the expense of another social group. It is an unearned advantage given to you because of your identity. When you have privilege, it is often invisible to you. Because identity categories do not exist independently from each other (they are *intersectional*), it is possible to have privilege and also experience oppression at the same time (for example, if your gender identity is cis[1] male, *and* you are black).

Privilege often gives you a leg up in being able to do something, influence an outcome and/or influence others around you. For example, having privilege might mean you are taken more seriously when you have a health issue, you appear more 'professional' at an interview because of your physical characteristics, you don't have to constantly think about your safety when you're in public space, or you don't have to plan ahead to ensure transit is accessible before you decide to go somewhere. These types of advantages are something that everyone should have access to, and those with privilege can actively work to extend them to those with without privilege by using the

influence (or power!) that they have as a result of their social identity.

Why does it matter?

As a designer, we have a lot of influence on the desired outcome as well as on the unintentional impacts of our design process and design. If we become more aware of our own privilege and sensitive to how privilege and oppression function in the context we are in, it means we can actively make informed decisions in order to avoid reproducing status quo inequities and patterns of oppression. Instead, we can make decisions in order to expand these subtle advantages to oppressed social groups throughout our design process, creating a more equitable playing field.

Questions for reflection

What privilege do you have and what unearned advantages might this give you as a designer? How might this have influenced and impacted your last design project? who might have been unintentionally excluded or marginalized as a result?

_____

1   *cis (or cisgender) refers to someone who's gender identity matches the gender that they were assigned at birth.*

PRIVILEGE

What is it

Privilege is the type of power you get from a social relation whereby you benefit due to the social group you belong to, at the expense of another social group. It is an unearned advantage given to you because of your identity. It is possible to both have privilege and experience oppression at the same time, since identity is intersectional. When you have privilege, it is often invisible to you.

How to

1. Look at the different identies in the web. For each category (eg. class) take a marker and colour in the area that correspondes to your identity (eg. middle class). Add in any categories that are missing in the 2 blank sections and colour in accordingly.

2. Write down the privilege you have, and the resulting advantages that you and others may have had in your last project as a result.

3. Write down the impact of privilege and oppression on the project.

4. Discuss 2 & 3 in a group.

1. Recognize your own privilege

Which parts of my identity give me privilege? The identities in the inner circle are privileged, where as the identities in the outer circle are more oppressed (this can vary depending on geographic context and other factors).

Oppression

Privilege

- GENDER & SEX: Trans, intersex or GNC persons / Cis women / Cis men
- RACE: Black / Indigenous / POC / White
- ABILITY: Living with a disability / Able-bodied
- CLASS: Working class or poor / Middle class / Upper class
- STATUS: No Status / Permanent Resident / Citizen
- EDUCATION: Limited formal education / Educated
- SEXUALITY: lgbtqia+ / Heterosexual
- LANGUAGE: No english / English second languge / English as a first language
- RELIGION: Muslim / Jewish / Others / Atheist / Christian
- ETHNICITY: Non-European origin / European origin
- COLOUR: Dark skinned / Light skinned
- BODY TYPE: Fat / Thin
- AGE: Elder or youth / Young adult
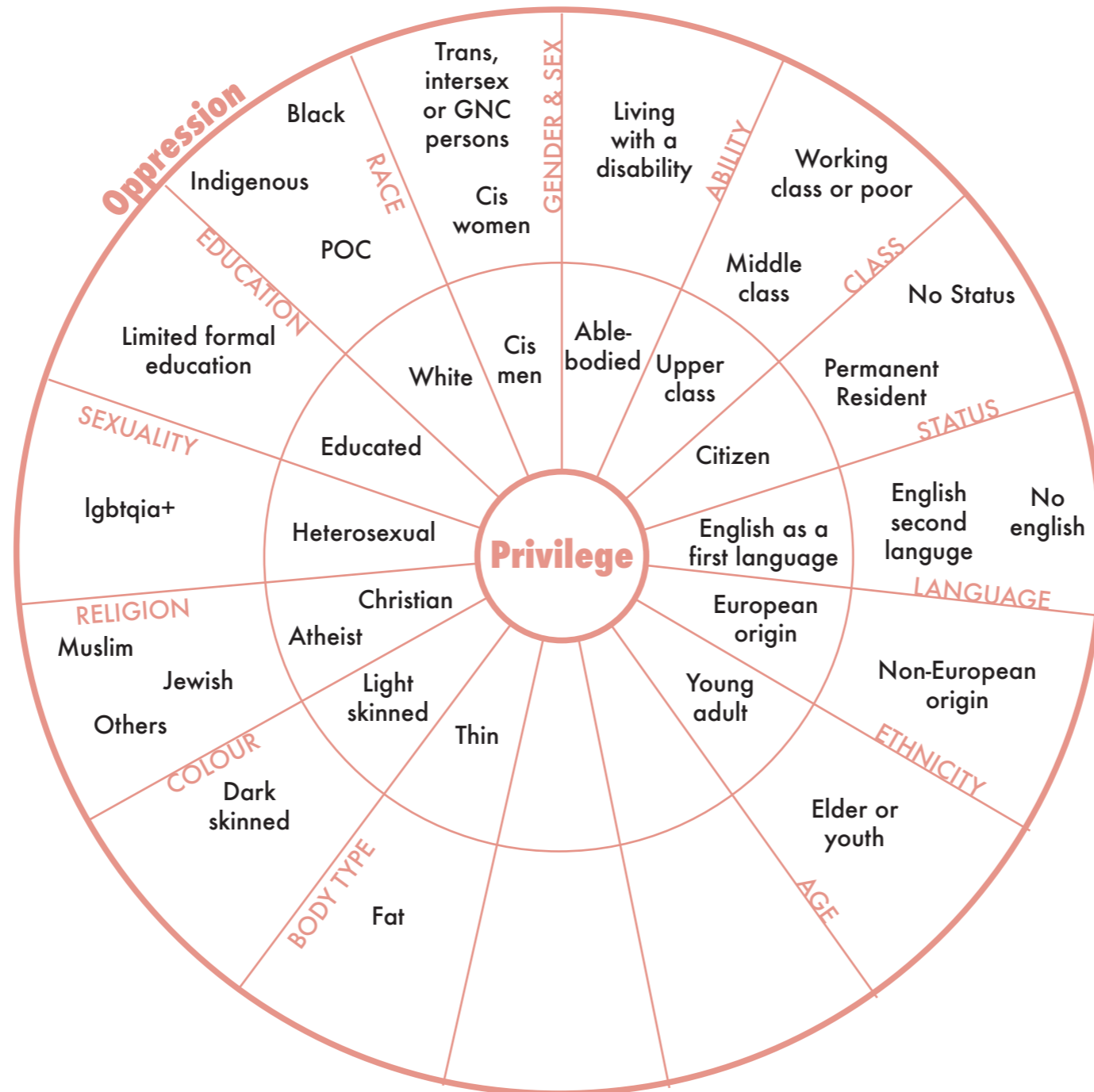
2. Name your privilege

What privilege do I have? What advantages do I experience in my daily life as a result? What biases and blind spots might I have brought into this project as a result?

3. Understand impact

What advantages did those with privilege experience in the design process? Who may have been unintentionally excluded or marginalized as a result?

4. Discuss in a group

PRIVILEGE WORKSHEET

How to use

This worksheet was designed for use after a project is completed, to reflect back on it. However, it may also be helpful and adapted for use during the planning phase, before the beginning of a project. It's recommended to do this activity in a group, with each designer filling out their own worksheet.

Time needed: 35 – 45 min.

Key takeaways for next time:

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2. ACCESS POWER

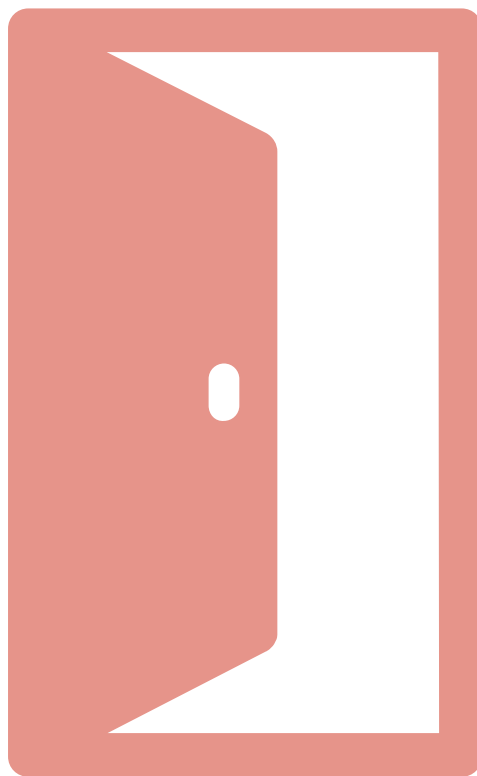flip & fold out for the access power worksheet

ACCESS POWER WORKSHEET

How to use

This worksheet was designed for use after a project is completed, to reflect back on it. However, it may also be helpful and adapted for use during the planning phase, before the beginning of a project. It's recommended to do this activity in a group, with each designer filling out their own worksheet.

Time needed: 35 – 45 min.

ACCESS POWER

What is it

Access power is the ability to influence who is included in and who is excluded from the design project and process.

How to

1. List ALL of the stakeholders that may be impacted by the design project and the social issue it aims to address. Include yourself (eg. designers). Next, mark an X through the circles of stakeholders who were not included in the design process.

2. Use the design process template, or make your own on a seperate sheet of paper. Write down the actors that had access in each phase. Draw a star on the phases with the most important decisions.

3. Reflect on the way actors were invited to participate using the guiding questions.

4. Using the guiding questions, reflect on the impact of access power in the project.

5. Discuss in a group. Write down any new insights.

6. Using the spectrum, indicate the amount of access power you had in this project.

1.Who's in
Who are the stakeholders involved in the issue? Who was included and who was excluded from the design process?

DESIGNERS

3. Invitations
How were different actors invited to participate? How might the nature of the invitation affect their feelings of inclusion? Who decided who was included? What was the reason for inclusion/exclusion?

4. Understand impact
Who was not represented? How might this have impacted relationships in the larger ecosystem? How might this have impacted outcomes?

2. Points of access
Is access the same throughout the design process for each actor, or does it change? In which phases was access more valuable and/or influential? Use the double diamond design process as a template,or make your own project timeline on a seperate piece of paper.
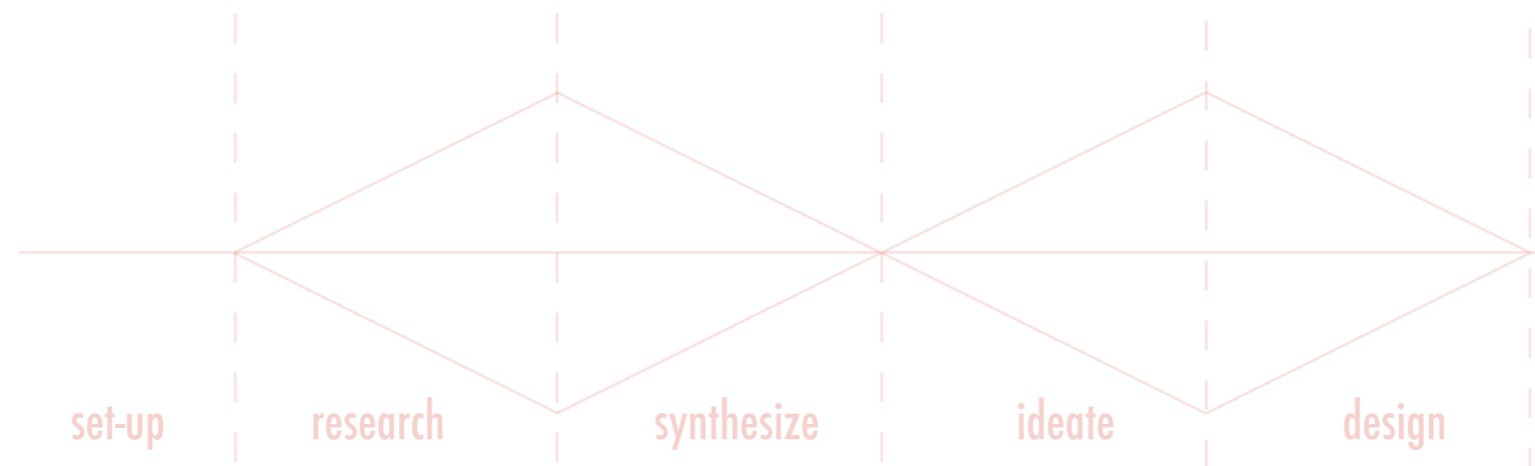
set-up   research   synthesize   ideate   design

5. Discuss in a group

6. Your access power
How much access power did I have in the design process?

Low   High

ACCESS POWER

What is it?

Access power is the ability to influence which stakeholders are included and which are excluded from the design process altogether.

Why does it matter?

The input, experience and perspectives that are included in the design process will have a huge impact on the decisions that are made, relationships between people and, ultimately, on outcomes. In this way, representation is extremely important. If certain stakeholders and/or social groups are excluded, the design process, its outcomes and the relationships that are built throughout will likely reproduce existing inequalities , not doing much to challenge the status quo situation that is producing the problem to begin with. Understanding this type of power and who has it can help you to evaluate how inclusive the design process is. Determining how much access power you have in a project allows you to use your influence in a way that aligns with your values and the values of the community you are designing with.

Questions for reflection

Who is included and who is excluded from the design process? How does this change depending on the phase of the project? How much influence do you have in deciding who has access and when?

Download and print extra access power worksheets for free at: www.power-literacy.com

Key takeaways for next time:

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3. GOAL POWER

GOAL POWER

What is it?

Goal power is the ability to initiate the design project to begin with, as well as the ability to influence decisions related to framing the problem, goals and the structure of the design process.

Why does it matter?

The power to initiate, set-up and frame a design project has a substantial impact on every following decision made. Although you may not have complete goal power as a designer, you likely have some degree of influence over problem framing, and structuring the design process. Depending on which stakeholders are given a share of goal power, the design process and outcomes will look completely different and likely serve different interests. As such, it is valuable to consider which stakeholders have influence over these decisions (and which don't) and what this might mean in terms of participation and inclusion. Additionally, as a social designer it is important to become more aware of the goal power that you have, so that you can evaluate if you are using it in ways that align with your values, and, if not, how you might change this.

Questions for reflection

Who initiated this project and decided what the design process would include? How has the problem been framed, and what were the goals of the project? How did this impact the project?

GOAL POWER

What is it

Goal power is the ability to initiate the design project to begin with, as well as the ability to influence decisions related to framing the problem, defining desired outcomes and structuring the design process.

How to

1. Write down the problem framing, as well as the desired outcomes/goals of the project.

2. Add the actors who had access to the design process onto the map. Place those who are most impacted by the problem in the inner ring, and those who are impacted less, or indirectly in the outer rings. Use a red marker to circle the actors that initiated the project. Use a green marker to circle the actors that were involved in framing the problem, setting goals and/or setting up what the design process will look like.

3. Write down the impact and consider alternatives.

4. Discuss and add any new insights that come up.

5. Indicate the amount of goal power you had in this project.

1. Recognize
How was the problem defined or framed? What were the desired outcomes for the project?

2. Mapping and naming goals
Which actors initiated the project? Which actors had influence in problem framing and setting goals? Observe whether goal power was concentrated in the outer or inner rings of the map.
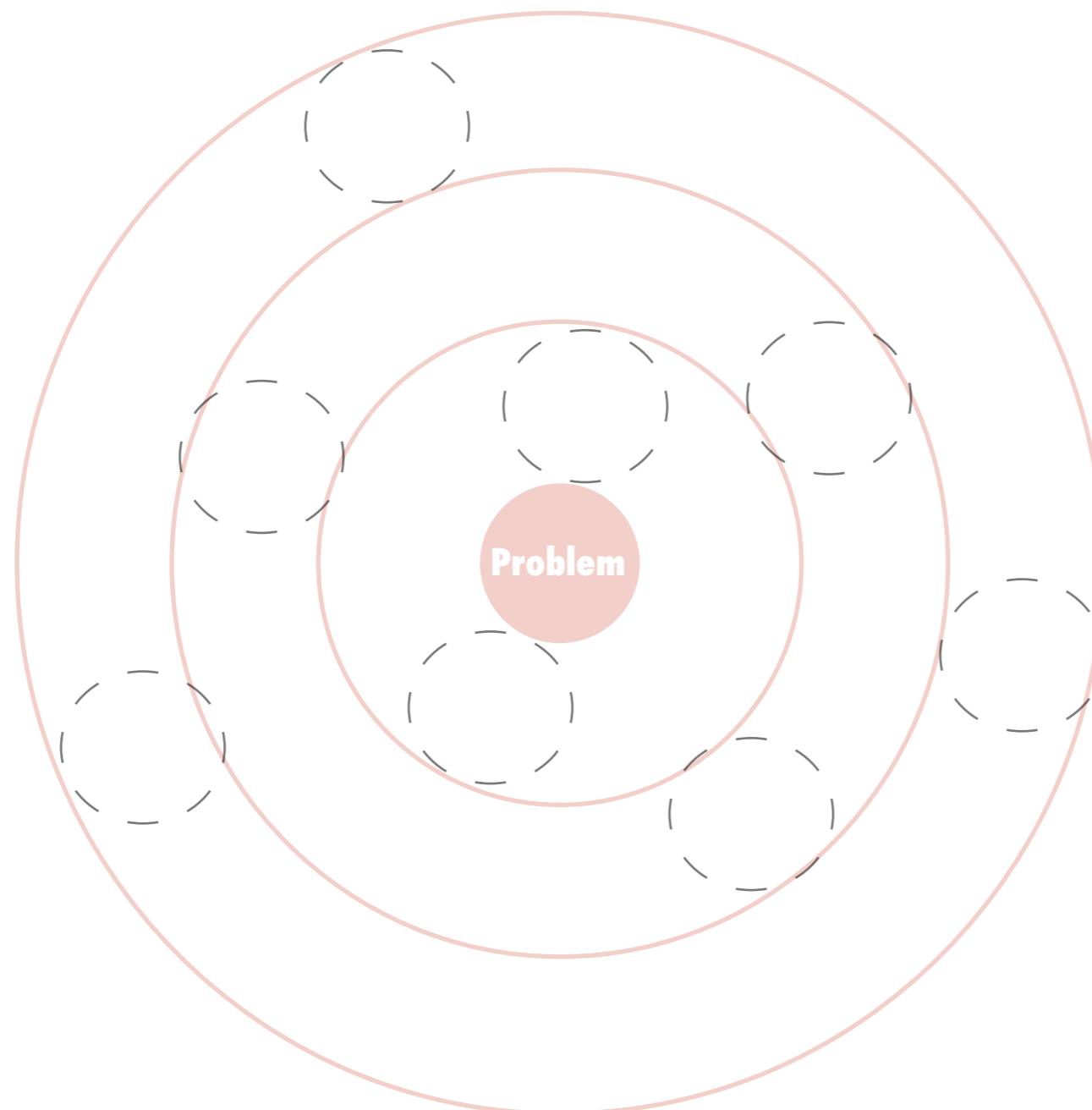
Problem

3. Understand impact
How might the framing and goals defined for this project have affected participation? What and who may have been left out as a result? If goal power had been distributed differently, what alternative problem framing and desired outcomes might have been selected for the project?

4. Discuss in a group

5. You goal power
How much goal power did I have in the design process?

Low   High

GOAL POWER WORKSHEET

How to use

This worksheet was designed for use after a project is completed, to reflect back on it. It is recommended to first complete the privilege and access worksheets. It may also be helpful and adapted for use during the planning phase, before the beginning of a project. It's recommended to do this activity in a group, with each designer filling out their own worksheet.

Time needed: 30 – 40 min.

Key takeaways for next time:

4. ROLE POWER

ROLE POWER WORKSHEET

How to use

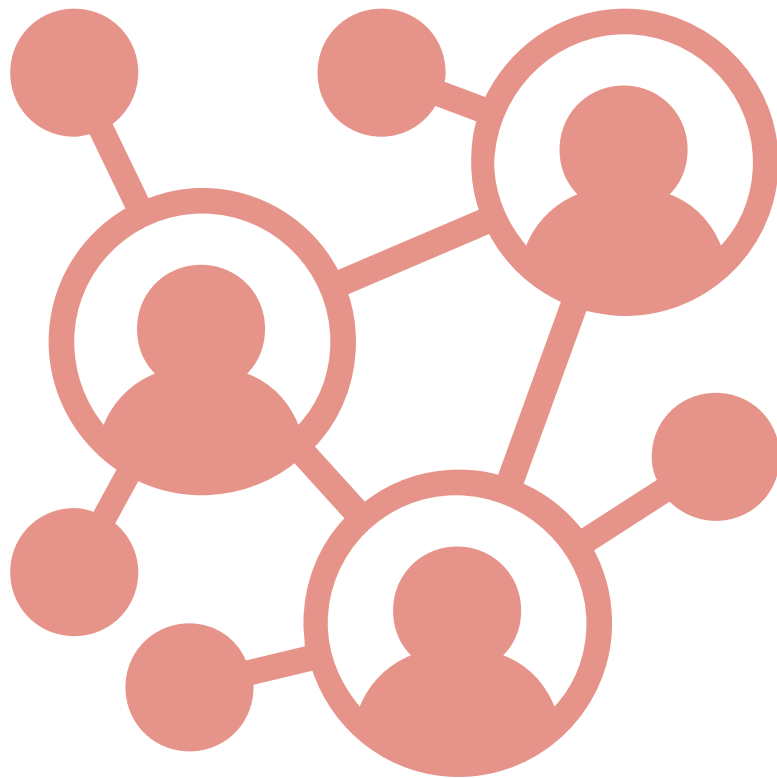This worksheet was designed for use after a project is completed, to reflect back on it. It is recommended to first complete the privilege and access worksheets. It may also be helpful and adapted for use during the planning phase, before the beginning of a project. It's recommended to do this activity in a group, with each designer filling out their own worksheet.

Time needed: 30 – 40 min.

ROLE POWER

What is it

Role power is the ability to influence the roles that different stakeholders take on. This includes the ability to assign any roles or titles in the design process (eg. 'participant', 'co-designer', or 'user'), as well as influencing the role each stakeholder plays in making decisions, especially who is given the ability to analyze and prioritize findings in the converging phases.

How to

1. Add the stakeholders who have access to the design process onto the map. Place those who are most impacted by the problem in the inner ring, and those who are impacted less or indirectly in the outer rings. Write the role assigned to each stakeholder in the design process.
Draw a green line to connect stakeholders that had recipricol relationships. Draw a red line between ones that had hierarchical relationships. Draw a blue circle around stakeholders with roles that were given the highest decision-making ability in the design process.

2. Based on 1, Indicate to what extent those with lived experience were invited to participate.

3. Reflect on the decisions made related to roles using the guiding questions. What was the impact?

4 & 5. Discuss. Indicte the role power you had in this project.

1. Mapping roles

Which roles have been assigned to different stakeholders in the design process (eg. user, participant, co-designer, subject, etc.)? How does this affect relationshps between stakeholders? Are those closest to the problem marginalized as a result?
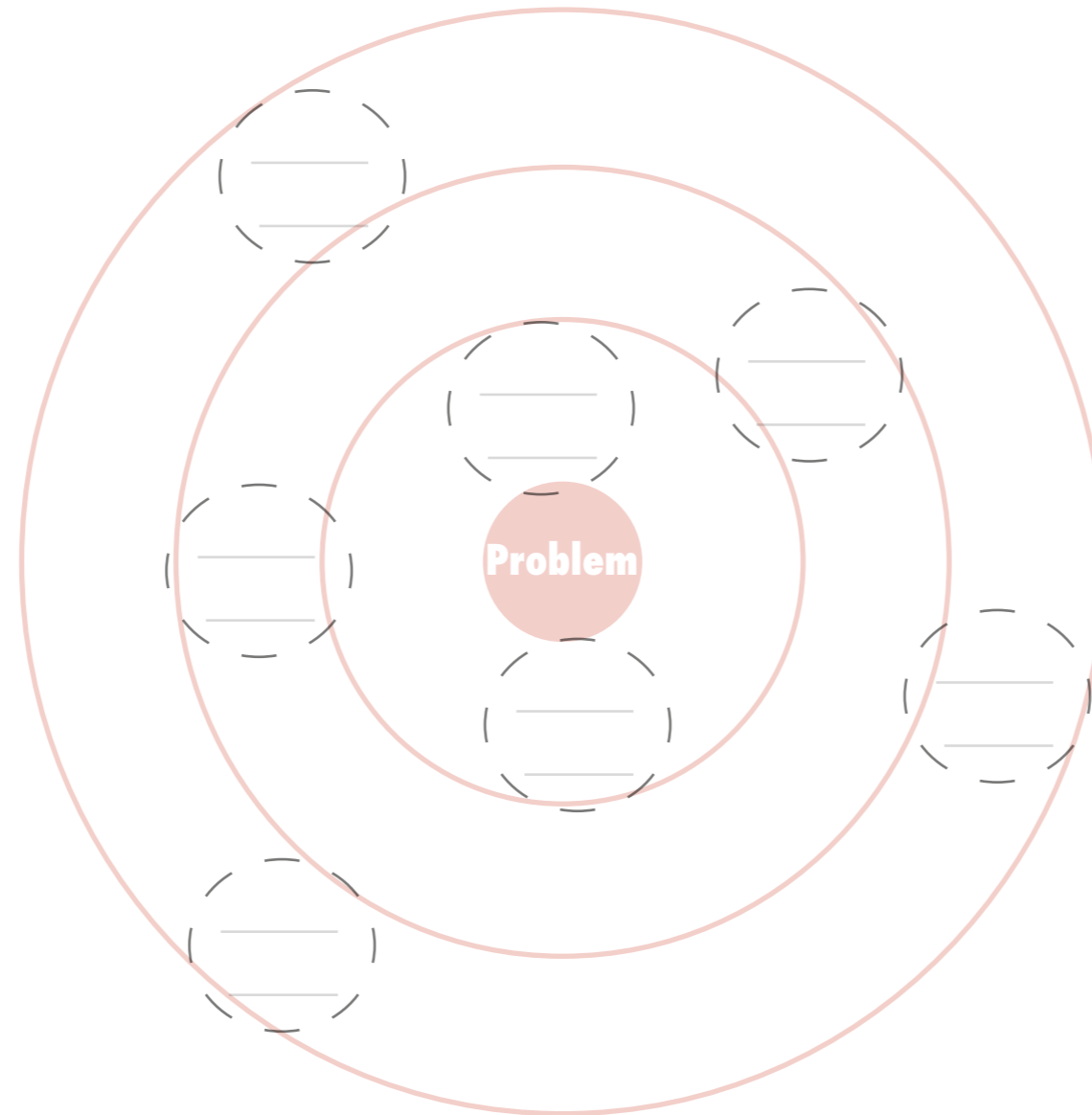
Problem

2. Spectrum of participation

Based on the roles assigned to stakeholders with lived experience of the problem, where do they fall on the spectrum of participation below? Was this decision made consciously? If so, why?

stakeholders consulted as users

stakeholders involved as particpants

stakeholders empowered as (co) designers

3. Understand impact

Are these roles challenging or reproducing existing social structures found outside of the design project? What were the positive and negative impacts?

What effect (good or bad) might participation have had on those with lived experience of the problem? Those with less privilege? Consider whether non-participation was an option for these stakeholders.

4. Discuss in a group

5. You role power

How much role power did I have in the design process?

Low   High

ROLE POWER

What is it?

Role power is the ability to influence the role that different stakeholders who have already been given access to the design process will take on. This includes any titles or roles (eg. 'design expert' 'participant' 'interviewee' 'co-designer' 'user,' etc.) given to those included in the design process and the resulting hierarchies that this will create. Role power also includes the ability to influence the role that each stakeholder will play in making decisions, especially what role—if any—various stakeholders are given in synthesizing and prioritizing during the converging phases

Why does it matter?

As a designer you likely have some influence over the way that various stakeholders are involved. For example, you may be able to influence when and how people who have lived experience of the problem are included; this might be as interviewees, as users to test solutions with, as participants in a co-creation session, as co-designers invited onto the design team, and/or as experts brought in during research. Depending on the roles that are assigned, the experience and outcomes of the design process will be very different. The way this power is used will determine whether the design network challenges existing inequities or reproduces them, and to what extent the process is democratic and equitable. As such, it is important to be aware of this type of power, how much you have, and its impact.

Questions for reflection

What are the different roles, relationships and hierarchies between those who are involved? How does 'involvement" differ for each stakeholder?

Key takeaways for next time:

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5. RULE POWER

RULE POWER

What is it?

Rule power is the ability to influence the way that those in the design process will work together. It includes the ability to influence what is considered normal, what is allowed and what isn't, how actors will communicate with each other, including language used, and beliefs about what types of knowledge are valid.

Why does it matter?

As a designer, especially if involving various stakeholders in a participatory process, the 'rules of the game' determine the way in which participation can unfold, and will thus influence the experience of all actors, the relationships between them and, ultimately, outcomes. The way that rule power is used will determine how comfortable different stakeholders are with sharing their knowledge, whether certain stakeholders are heard at all, and what ways of knowing and doing are deemed valid. Without being conscious of this type of power, how it impacts the design process, as well as how rule power intersects with privilege, the likelihood that the design process will be exclusionary and reproduce inequity is much greater.

Questions for reflection

How do we work together in the design process? What rules, norms and/or beliefs about 'proper' behaviour, interactions and ways of communicating are influencing this?

RULE POWER

What is it

Rule Power is the ability to influence the way that those in the design process will work together. This includes what is considered 'normal,' what is and isn't allowed, the language being used, and beliefs about what types of knowledge and ways of doing are valid in the design process.

How to

1. Write down your observations during the design process in the tip of the iceberg, using the guiding questions and prompts.

2. Write down and reflect on the underlying rules, norms, assumptions and beliefs for your observations in the section of the iceberg that is below the surface, using the guiding questions.

3. Write down and reflect on the impact of the rules, norms and beliefs underlying the way actors worked together in this project, and how privilege may have factored into this.

4. Discuss your reflections in a group, and write down any additional insights.

5. Using the spectrum, indicate the amount of rule power you had in this project.

1. The tip of the iceberg

What did I see, hear and feel during the design process, especially during participatory sessions? Where and when were participatory sessions held? How did different actors look and dress? How were they introduced? What was the format of the sessions? Who spoke most? What language, terms and jargon did you use? What was the length, quantity and quality of sessions? What kind of and whose knowledge was centred? How could actors communicate during and between sessions? How were decisions made?

1.

2.
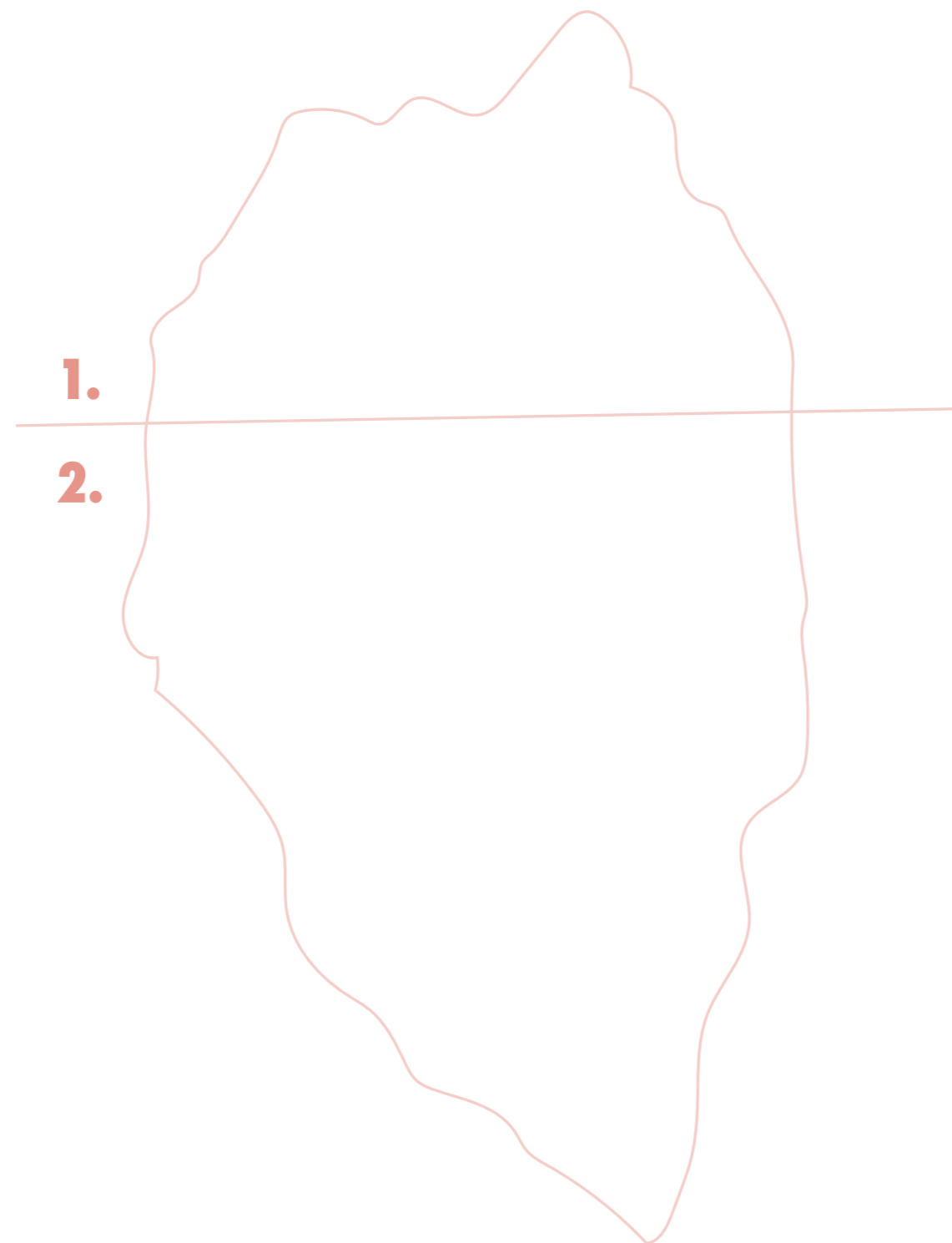
2. Making the invisible visible

What rules, norms, assumptions or beliefs might underlie the observations you wrote down? How does this influence what is deemed appropriate in terms of behaviour and social interactions between actors?

3. Understand Impact

Who may have been disadvantaged or marginalized as a result? Did identity and privilege influence the 'rules of the game' for the design process? Did rules for working together during the design process make participation more or less equitable between different actors? How so?

4. Discuss in a group

5. Your rule power

How much rule power did I have in the design process?

Low   High

RULE POWER WORKSHEET

How to use

This worksheet should be done after a project is finished, to reflect back on it. It is recommended that you first complete the privilege and access worksheets. It may also be useful and adapted to use during the planning phase at the beginning of a project, as well as in preparation for any phases where you are involving or inviting in stakeholders who are outside of the main project team. .

Time needed: 30—40 min.

Key takeaways for next time:

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PART 2: POWER CHECKS

Reflexivity in the field

Now that you have a deeper understanding of power, how it has impacted past projects and an awareness of your own position, it's time to apply your literacy skills 'in the field,' in your next design project.

In this section, you will be guided through power checks—moments throughout the design process where you slow down to reflect on how power is showing up in design decisions and its potential impact. Using four skills for power literacy (recognize, name, understand impact and act) you will become more aware of the power dynamics at play and their potential impact. It will then be up to you to act in a way that ensures outcomes and impact from the project align with your original intent and values.

You should use this section of the field guide before you start and throughout your next design project. You will be guided through the four steps of a power check at a number of critical moments:

- Set-up of the project
- At the start of the divergence phase(s)
- At the start of the convergence phase(s)
- Wrap-up of the project

A worksheet with guiding questions for the four steps of a power check, what to pay attention to and social justice tips are outlined for each of these critical moments.

POWER CHECKS

Four Steps for Reflexivity

Why do power checks matter? Without building in intentional moments for reflexivity into the design process, we are likely to continue on autopilot, easily defaulting to 'business-as-usual' without considering impact. As such, a power check offers a moment to pause and reflect on invisible power structures, and consider what changes need to be made for impact to align with values and intention.

A power check consists of four steps that correspond with each of the four power literacy skills:

1. Recognize
Recognize the explicit and implicit decisions that are shaping the design process and how much influence you (as well as other actors) have over them.

2. Name
Name the forms of power that are present in the decision being made.

3. Understand
Understand the impact that these decisions will have on stakeholders with lived experience of the problem, as well as on outcomes of the project.

4. Act
Act in a way that will align outcomes with intentions based on insights gathered from the first three steps.

Four Critical Moments for Power Checks

You should conduct power checks at critical moments in the design process. As such, the following pages of the field guide include four fold-out worksheets for conducting power checks at a number of critical moments throughout the design process: set-up, diverging, converging and warp-up.

'Set-up' refers to the stage where the project is being set-up. This might be before or while preparing a proposal for a client, partner or funder.

'Diverging' refers to any phases where data is being collected or stakeholders are being invited to participate in the design process.

On the other hand, 'converging' refers to any phases in the design process in which previously collected data is being analyzed, synthesized or prioritized.

Finally 'wrap-up' refers to the last phase of the project, where deliverables are being finalized and the success of the project is being evaluated.

Each worksheet includes information for when to use it, what to pay attention to at that moment in the design process, tips from the field and guiding questions for each of the four reflexivity steps.

Extra worksheets are available to download for free at www.power-literacy.com.

You will find these four power check worksheets on the following pages:

1. Set-up
2. Diverging
3. Converging
4. Wrap-up

Extra worksheets are available to download for free at www.power-literacy.com

SET-UP

Before a project has officially started decisions are already being made, whether they are explicit or implicit ones, that will impact the design process and affect the distribution of power within it. As such, before starting any given project, it's important to take a moment to unpack underlying assumptions, beliefs and norms and reflect on the impact that these may have on the decisions being made.

Pay attention to:

Goal Power: decisions about goals, problem framing and structure of the design process

Access Power: decisions about who will be invited to participate in the project, and when.

Privilege: decisions will be affected by the lived experience and perspectives of those in the room.

Tips from the field:

1. *Include values and intentions in the proposal.* This way, you can go back to the proposal in order to hold key decision-makers accountable.

2. *Ensure representation within the design team.* Having a diversity of perspectives will help to fill blind spots and build trust with the communities you are designing with.

1. Recognize

Who has initiated this project and what desired outcomes are being set? How are we framing problems and why? What structure for the design process is being suggested?

What social identities are represented here? Are marginalized perspectives present in the set-up of this project?

Who will be included in the design process and in what ways? When will access be granted, and when will it be denied?

In what other ways is power showing up in the set-up of this project, and what influence do we have?

2. Name
What forms of power are present?

☐ **Privilege** ☐ **Access Power** ☐ **Goal Power**

☐ **Role Power** ☐ **Rule Power**

3. Understand Impact
How might these decisions determine which perspectives are valued? What impact might this have on stakeholders with lived experience of the problem? Is the problem being addressed the right one and how might this impact the design process?
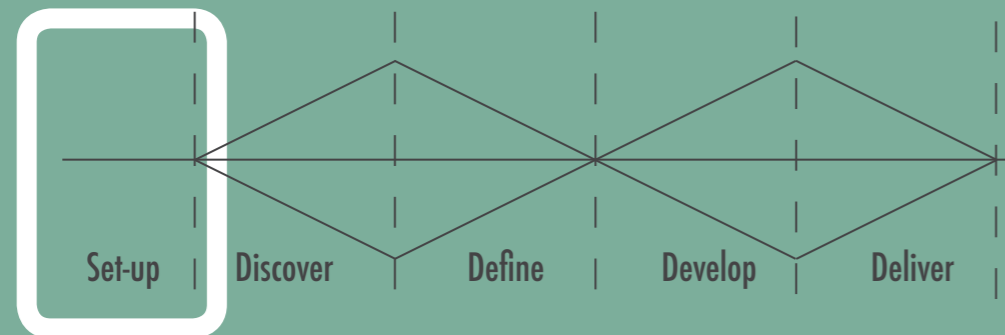
Will existing inequities be reproduced or challenged?

4. Act
What actions need to be taken in this phase to align the impact of the design process with our intentions and values? What are three actions we can take to move in that direction?

1. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Power Check:
SET-UP

Set-up | Discover | Define | Develop   Deliver

When to use

A set-up power check will ideally be conducted before or while preparing a proposal for a client, partner or funder. This worksheet should be completed by the design team, all together.

Time needed: 30 - 45 min.

DIVERGING

During divergent phases different stakeholders are often invited into the design process. As a designer you usually have influence over the way various actors are involved and the role that they take during participatory moments. For example, you likely have influence over how to include people who have lived experience of the problem being addressed: as 'subjects' to collect data from, 'users' to test solutions with, 'experts' from the community to consult with, 'co-designers' of solutions or some other variation.

Pay attention to:

Role Power: decisions about what role participating stakeholders will be given during data collection and co-creation.

Rule Power: decisions about the rules of how stakeholders will work together. This includes language, norms for behaviour, forms of communication and setting, among other factors.

Tips from the field:

1. *Partner, don't invade.* Build trusting relationships that are reciprocal with those in the community. What value can you offer in return to those who are participating?

2. *Go to them.* Meet marginalized stakeholders on their terms, in a setting that is comfortable for them.

1. Recognize

Who has initiated this project and what desired outcomes are being set? How are we framing problems and why? What structure for the design process is being suggested?

What social identities are represented here? Are marginalized perspectives present in the set-up of this project?

Who will be included in the design process and in what ways? When will access be granted, and when will it be denied?

In what other ways is power showing up in the set-up of this project, and what influence do I have?

2. Name
What forms of power are present?

☐ **Privilege**   ☐ **Access Power**   ☐ **Goal Power**

☐ **Role Power**   ☐ **Rule Power**

3. Understand Impact
How might these decisions determine which perspectives are valued? What positive and negative impacts might these decisions have on stakeholders, especially those who have lived experience of the problem? What effect might this have on outcomes?

Will existing inequities be reproduced or challenged?

4. Act
What actions need to be taken in this phase to align the impact of the design process with our intentions and values? What are three actions I can take to move in that direction?
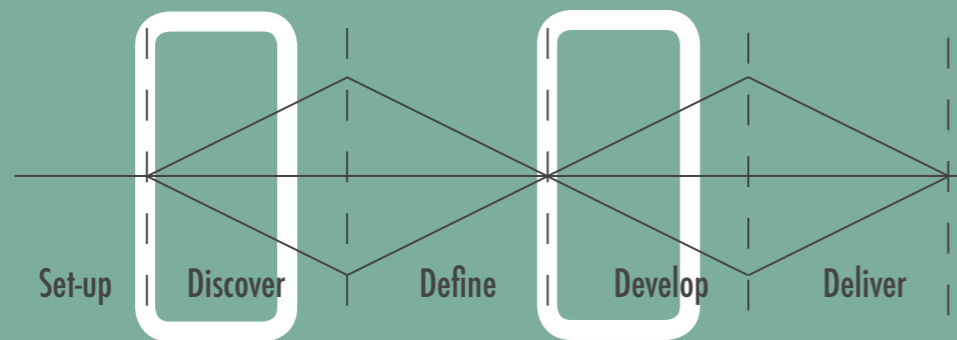
1. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Power Check: DIVERGING

Set-up Discover Define Develop Deliver

When to use

A divergence power check will ideally be conducted before the start of any participatory moments where stakeholders are being included in the design process. This includes collecting data through interviews, observations, storytelling, co-creation sessions, user testing and other forms of participation. This worksheet should be completed by the design team, all together.

Time needed: 30 - 45 min.

CONVERGING

During converging phases of the design project, the design team is likely undertaking decisions related to analysis, synthesis and prioritization. This involves making sense of the information that has been collected, deciding what is most important, and/or translating insights into a design output. Your privilege, the norms and rules surrounding behaviour and procedures, as well as who is given access to this phase will have a considerable impact on the design process and outcomes.

Pay attention to:

Rule Power: **Rules and norms around prioritization and decision making. This includes language being used, the selected approach for analysis, what forms of knowledge are deemed most valid and communication styles.**

Privilege: **decisions will be affected by the lived experience and perspectives of those in the room.**

Access Power: **decisions about who will be involved in interpreting, synthesizing and prioritizing information.**

Tips from the field:

1. *Invite pariticpation.* **inviting marginalized stakeholders to be involved in convergence can redistribute power and create a more democratic design process.**

1. Recognize

Which stakeholders are able to influence synthesis and prioritization of insights?

What social identities are represented here? Are marginalized perspectives present in this phase?

How is convergence being carried out? How will decisions be made, and what unspoken norms, beliefs and assumptions are influencing this?

In what other ways is power showing up in the set-up of this project, and what influence do we have?

2. Name
What forms of power are present?

☐ **Privilege**   ☐ **Access Power**   ☐ **Goal Power**

☐ **Role Power**   ☐ **Rule Power**

3. Understand Impact
What positive and negative impacts might these decisions have on stakeholders, especially those who have lived experience of the problem? What effect might this have on outcomes?

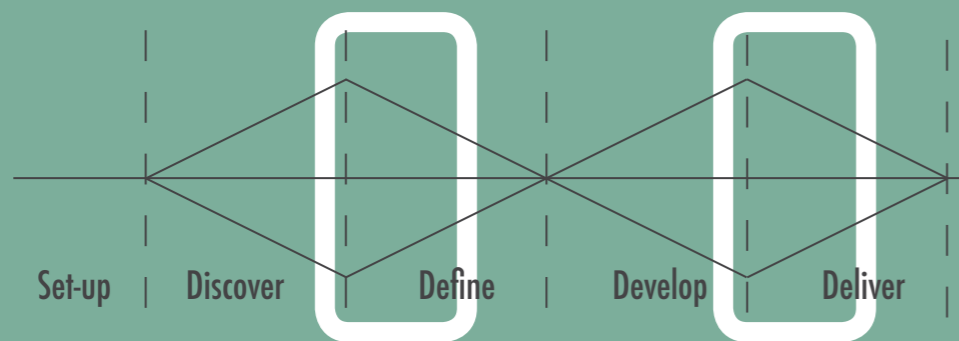*Will existing inequities be reproduced or challenged?*

4. Act
What actions need to be taken in this phase to align the impact of the design process with our intentions and values? What are three actions we can take to move in that direction?

1. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Power Check: CONVERGING

Set-up | Discover | Define | Develop | Deliver

When to use

A converging power check will ideally be conducted before the start of phases that include activities related to analysis, synthesis and prioritizing. This worksheet should be completed by the design team, all together.

Time needed: 30- 45 min.

WRAP-UP

It's a good idea to take a moment to consider how power is distributed in the design process before the final decisions are made and the project ends. This power check can serve as a way to assess whether impact and intentions are aligned and if inequities are being challenged.

Pay attention to:

Goal Power: decisions about final outcomes, and what is considered successful and relevant.

Privilege: decisions will be affected by the lived experience and perspectives of those in the room.

Rule Power: underlying norms, rules and assumptions about what a successful outcome is, and how it should be communicated.

Tips from the field:

1. *Bring in alternative perspectives.* Before delivering the final recommendations or design output, identify blind spots by including the opinions of those with lived experience (and pay them for their time!).

1. Recognize

What decisions are being made on final outcomes, and who is assessing success and relevance?

How will the design process be wrapped-up? How will final decisions and evaluations be made, and what unspoken norms, beliefs and assumptions are influencing this?

What social identities are represented here? Are marginalized perspectives present in the set-up of this project?

In what other ways is power showing up in the set-up of this project, and what influence do we have?

2. Name
What forms of power are present?

☐ **Privilege**   ☐ **Access Power**   ☐ **Goal Power**

☐ **Role Power**   ☐ **Rule Power**

3. Understand Impact
How might these decisions determine which perspectives are valued? What impact might this have on stakeholders with lived experience of the problem? Would all stakeholders deem the design outcome as relevant and/or successful?
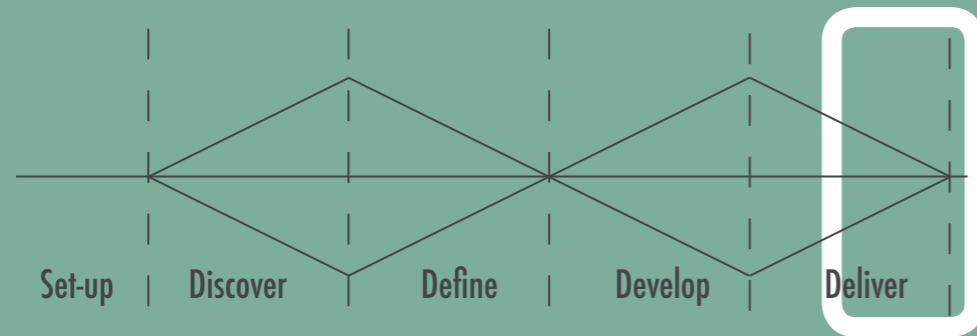
Will existing inequities be reproduced or challenged?

4. Act
What actions need to be taken in this phase to align the impact of the design process with our intentions and values? What are three actions we can take to move in that direction?

1. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

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Power Check:
WRAP-UP

Set-up | Discover | Define | Develop | Deliver

When to use

A wrap-up power check will ideally be conducted before the deliverables are finalized, to provide one last opportunity to consider power distribution in the design process before the project ends. This worksheet should be completed by the design team, all together.

Time needed: 30 - 45 min.

After completing these four power checks, write down why power literacy matters to you as a designer. Take a moment to reflect on any changes from your original answer on page 10.

YOU MADE IT.

Congratulations, you've made it through the field guide! On the way, you've picked up some important power literacy skills that will help you on your journey to becoming a more socially just practitioner.

Even so, this work is never really done. You can find further resources to continue your journey at:

www.power-literacy.com

Continue to practice power literacy in your design projects, and refer back to this field guide whenever you need a refresher.

Until next time!
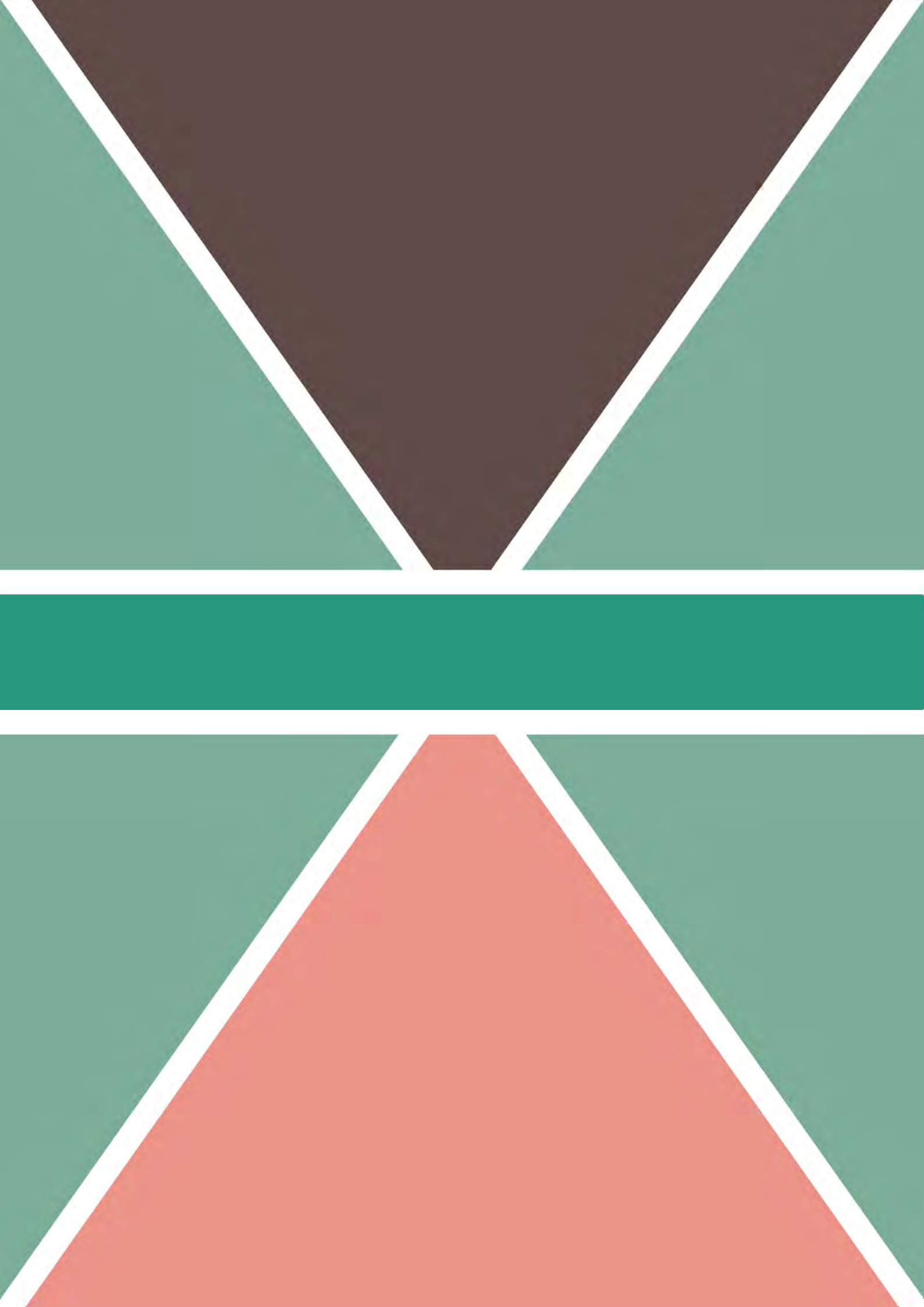
Appendix B: Project Brief

DESIGN FOR our future

TUDelft

IDE Master Graduation
Project team, Procedural checks and personal Project brief

This document contains the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project. This document can also include the involvement of an external organisation, however, it does not cover any legal employment relationship that the student and the client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks. In this document:

- The student defines the team, what he/she is going to do/deliver and how that will come about.
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs) reports on the student's registration and study progress.
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms if the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project.

🛈 **USE ADOBE ACROBAT READER TO OPEN, EDIT AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT**
Download again and reopen in case you tried other software, such as Preview (Mac) or a webbrowser.

family name	Goodwill	Your master programme (only select the options that apply to you):
initials	MA given name Maya	IDE master(s): ( ) IPD (★) DfI ( ) SPD
student number	4897730	2nd non-IDE master:
		individual programme: (give date of approval)
		honours programme: ( ) Honours Programme Master
country	The Netherlands	specialisation / annotation: ( ) Medisign
		( ) Tech. in Sustainable Design
i		( ) Entrepreneurship

SUPERVISORY TEAM **
Fill in the required data for the supervisory team members. Please check the instructions on the right !

** chair	Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer	dept. / section:	DOS / MOD
** mentor	Roy Bendor	dept. / section:	HCD / DCC
2nd mentor	Wieteke Vrouwe and Iselien Nabben		
	organisation: Kennisland		
	city: Amsterdam	country:	The Netherlands

comments
(optional)

🛈 Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v..

🛈 Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.

🛈 Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include two team members from the same section, please explain why.

Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer

Digitally signed by Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer
Date: 2020.02.23 13:39:41

chair ___Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer___   date _23_ · _02_ · _2020_   signature _____

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: _____ EC

Of which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme _____ EC

List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

(YES) all 1st year master courses passed

(NO) missing 1st year master courses are:

name _____   date _____ · _____   signature _____

- Does the project fit within the (MSc)-programme of the student (taking into account, if described, the activities done next to the obligatory MSc specific courses)?
- Is the level of the project challenging enough for a MSc IDE graduating student?
- Is the project expected to be doable within 100 working days/20 weeks?
- Does the composition of the supervisory team comply with the regulations and fit the assignment?

Content. (APPROVED) (NOT APPROVED)

Procedure. (APPROVED) (NOT APPROVED)

comments

name _____   date _____ · _____   signature _____

Initials & Name _MA_ _Goodwill_____   Student number _4897730__

Title of Project _Shifting Power. Reframing multi-stakeholder design processes___

Shifting Power: Reframing multi-stakeholder design processes
project title

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

start date   10 · 02 · 2020   26 · 06 · 2020   end date

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

The context of my graduation project is design and research practitioners who are hired to find solutions in complex systems with multiple stakeholders in the social and public sectors. In particular, I am interested in the roles, relationships and power dynamics that play out between the design & research practitioners and system stakeholders, as well as between different groups of stakeholders within the system in question.

Although there is much work being done to better understand processes to address complex societal issues in the fields of design, social innovation, public innovation, and systems thinking, I find that the emphasis tends to be on designing the solution, with not enough attention on designing (for and with) relationships (Dorst, 2019). Design and research practitioners who are coming into these complex systems, often hired by powerful institutions (eg. government ministries, municipalities) to work with marginalized communities, could be better equipped to understand power dynamics, the power that they hold as perceived 'experts,' and ways to reframe ideas of power, roles and relations throughout their design process for more socially just outcomes. As such, there is a huge opportunity to democratize and decolonize* the research and design process in the social and public sector (Ansari, 2018) . At the same time, current limitations make this difficult. This includes a lack of guidelines, resources and frameworks for considering power and embedding principles of social justice and anti-oppression throughout the design research process. Moreover, many institutions and practitioners are simply unaware of the need and importance of such a foundation when designing in the public and social sector; this makes it difficult to convince decision-makers to allocate the necessary resources to develop and implement these processes and to effectively train research and design practitioners to think in this way.

More specifically, I will be working with Kennisland, an organization that researches and designs social progress in the public and social sectors. I aim to better understand their current research and design process and approach. I will do this by interviewing KL practitioners on their different approaches and understandings of power. I will then choose 1 of their current projects as a case study to observe, participate in and explore how power dynamics are/could be addressed. I will also interview other research and design practitioners working in the social and public sector (eg. in the fields social innovation, systems thinking, social justice and future forming research) on their understanding of power in the design research process. The goal is to create something that helps practitioners become more aware of power dynamics (and their 'systemic-self' (Vink, 2019)), as well as to provide guidelines on how to reframe power, roles and relations when designing for complex societal issues.

*In this context decolonizing design refers to acknowledging how the current system of privilege and oppression, positioning of western norms as superior, and appropriation of non-western cultures (rooted in the history of Dutch (and global) colonialism) affect design and research practices in the public sector, and then bringing in alternative forms of knowledge and learning in order to adjust mindsets, assumptions and norms (Khandwala, 2019).

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$\tilde{T}U$Delft

introduction (continued): space for images

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- CLICK AREA TO PLACE IMAGE / FIGURE

PLEASE NOTE:
- IMAGE WILL SCALE TO FIT AUTOMATICALLY
- NATIVE IMAGE RATIO IS 16:10
- IF YOU EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS IN UPLOADING, COVERT IMAGE TO PDF AND TRY AGAIN

image / figure 1: _____

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image / figure 2: _____

Initials & Name   MA   Goodwill _____   Student number 4897730 _____

Title of Project   Shifting Power: Reframing multi-stakeholder design processes

PROBLEM DEFINITION **

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

How might we make design & research practitioners who are implementing participatory processes in the social/public sector more cognizant to underlying relationships and power dynamics? Subsequently, how might we equip them with the mindsets, approaches and/or tools to shift and reframe such dynamics to ensure more inclusive design processes that challenge the status quo?

Design and research practitioners aiming to make change in the social and public sectors are often overwhelmed by the power dynamics they find, and unaware of the underlying social structures and mental models that cause them (Vink, Rodrigues and Wetter-Edman, 2017). Even when they do have an understanding of power, they are often unequipped to intervene in order to create socially just processes for marginalized stakeholders. Additionally, many research and design practitioners lack the tools to acknowledge the power and privilege that they themselves hold as 'experts,' and how this may affect their relationships to various stakeholders (Aye, 2017). These factors can result in mismatched priorities and further marginalize the communities that were intended to be served through the project. As such, through this project I aim to bring understandings of power into the repertoire of research and design practitioners who are working in the social and public sectors. I will explore power dynamics and the underlying social structures that uphold them in an applied case study with Kennisland (KL). I will then take the learnings from my research process and design a toolkit/guidelines for designers and researchers. It will help practitioners become aware of their own privilege and power dynamics in stakeholder relationships, while providing approach(es) to reframe and redesign roles and relations throughout participatory processes.

ASSIGNMENT **

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, ... In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.
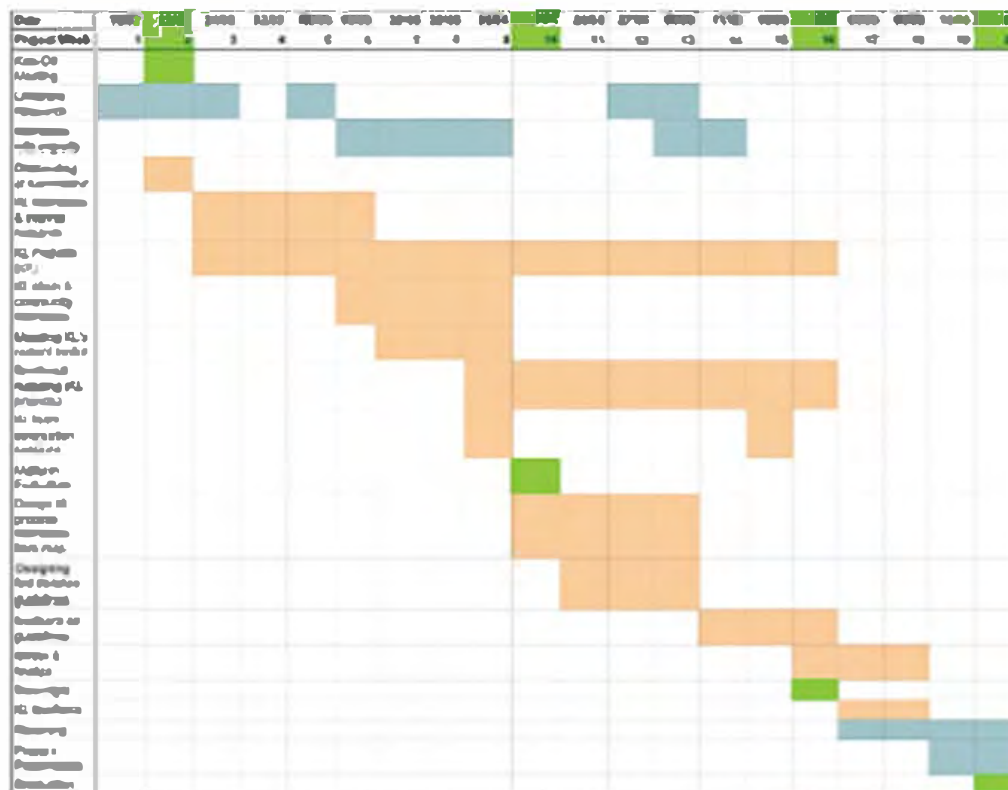
I will research Kennisland's approach of addressing societal issues by observing and participating as a design researcher in one of their current projects. I will also research (through interviews and literature review) similar approaches that consider power and relationships when designing for social and public innovation. Pulling from this research, I will design a framework for considering power and social structures including guidelines and/or a toolkit that helps

research and design practitioners acknowledge and reframe power dynamics, privilege and relations throughout participatory processes.

PLANNING AND APPROACH ↔

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

start date   10   -   2   -   2020   26   -   6   -   2020   end date

Initials & Name   MA   Goodwill   Student number   4897730

Title of Project   Shifting Power Reframing multi-stakeholder design processes

I set up this project because I feel that knowledge and tools to design with/for power, privilege and (the politics of) relationships is notably missing from our design education. At the same time, in the fields of social design, design for social innovation, systemic design and speculative design, I believe this knowledge and a shifting understanding of the role of designer (and researcher) as a facilitator and reframer of relationships is becoming more important than ever.

I would like to both apply and grow my experience embedding principles of civic design (Deep Dive) and speculative design (Read a Book) in the design process, as well as to further develop my design research competences. I would also like to apply what I've learned through an external urban geography elective I took at UvA, including competencies in critical thinking, social science research and understanding urban inequality. I would also like to further develop my experience applying systems thinking and systemic design approaches.

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Student number 4897730

Title of Project Shifting Power: Reframing multi-stakeholder design processes

Appendix C: Ideating and Testing

C.1 Exploring the design space

C.1.1 Concept one: card deck

The first concept explored was the idea of a card deck, that would be both informative and could be used in a playful way to spark dialogue between design groups. The card deck would include informative cards and reflexivity question cards. Informative cards would include a card for each of the five forms of power and four power literacy skills. Each reflexivity question card would correspond to a combination of one of the forms of power and one of the power literacy skills, and include a question that would prompt the designer to reflect in relation to them. Initial inspiration and sketches for this concept can be seen in Figure 5.4.
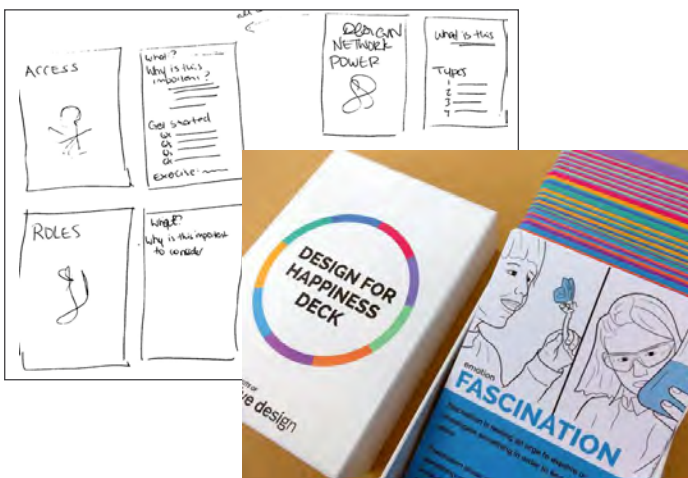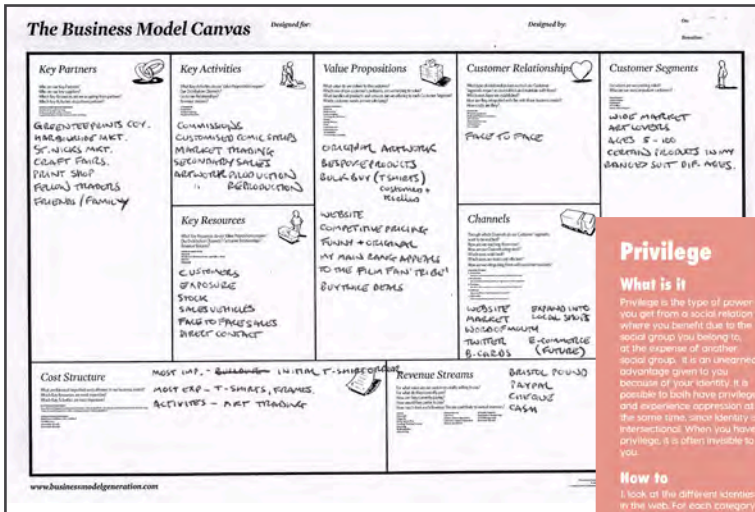

Figure 5.4 an initial concept sketch (behind), and the design for happiness deck used as inspiration (in front) from Delft Institute for Positive design, 2018.

C.1.2 Concept two: power literacy canvas

The second concept was to create a number of canvases or worksheets that designers would fill in to build power literacy skills. Initial inspiration for this concept came from canvases such as the Business Model Canvas (see in figure 5.5). This concept included five worksheets, one for each form of power. The worksheets would consist of a number of reflexivity questions and exercises that designers would first fill out themselves and then discuss in a group. An initial worksheet for the first form of power, privilege, can be seen in figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5. the business model canvas from Business Model Generation, used as inspiration (behind), and the first iteration of part of the power literacy canvas (in front).

C.1.3 Concept three: an educational workbook

The third concept was an educational workbook that would explain the power literacy framework in more depth than would be possible in a card deck, while prompting designers after each section with a number of questions for reflexivity. The workbook would provide an introduction section that would help to build a shared understanding of power literacy, and then explain the five forms of power, followed by the four skills. Inspiration was taken from workbooks designed for children, as seen in figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 inspiration was taken from children's workbook, like this one from Head and Heart Mindfulness.

C.1.4 Selecting a concept

In order to select a final concept, the three concepts were evaluated based on criteria taken from the design requirements (DR), the design goal and the preferences of Kennisland. Table 5.1 shows how each concept scored:

Based on the criteria, a mixture of concept 2 and 3 was selected to move forward with. The next iteration of the design was developed into the concept of a field guide.

	Concept one: card deck	Concept two: power literacy canvas	Concept three: workbook
DR 1: reflexivity	–	+	+
DR 2: experiential learning	+	+	–
DR 3: accessible and flexible	–	+	+
DR 4: depth	x	–	+
DR 5: non-perscriptive	+	+	+
Kennisland preference	x	+	+
Design Goal: supports a shared understanding	–	+	+

Table 5.1 the scores for each of the three concepts based on design requirements, kennisland's preferences and the design goal.
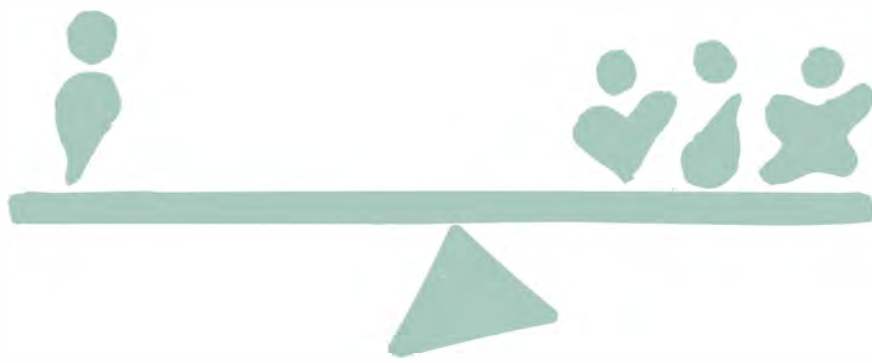
C.2 Field guide test with a social designer

C.2.1 Set-up and procedure

A written draft of the field guide along with five fully designed worksheet activities in Mural were sent to a social designer based in Canada, with past experience working in the Netherlands. She was asked to go through the field guide and complete the worksheets within 10 days. Limited instructions were given beyond this, as the purpose of this activity was to determine whether the field guide provided enough guidance to complete as a standalone product.

The participant provided feedback in a 30 minute feedback call, as well as in written post-its in the Mural whiteboard. The worksheets that she filled out were also reviewed, in order to see how she used and interpreted the activities.

C.2.2 Results

Overall, she found the field guide easy to understand, analyze for herself, and she felt like the prompts allowed her to respond in a way that is not judgmental or negative, which made her feel encouraged. She found the instructions easy to follow, and the pattern or repetition across templates aided with this. Moreover, the participant indicated that using a past project experience as an anchor helped her ground herself and think more critically. Finally, she indicated that she felt that the field guide was very succinct and described everything very well, with just enough detail

For the introduction section, the participant indicated that having a glossary was helpful. She also used the extra space to add her own terms, as intended. Based on feedback, the final field guide will include a definition of social justice.

For part one, five forms of power, all five worksheets were filled out without any major issues. She indicated that the fifth worksheet, rule power, was the hardest to fill out. As such, this worksheet will be ordered last in the field guide, so that users have a chance to build up their reflexivity before attempting this worksheet activity. Finally, for part two, power checks, the participant found the guiding questions helpful. However, she felt that it was missing references to part one. As a result, the final field guide will include checkboxes for each form of power the second step of the power check, naming. From using the field guide, the participant was able to reflect and form new insights and ideas for a more equitable design process in her future projects, including the incorporation of more participatory and democratic models for

C.3 Field guide test with Kennisland

governance outside of the design field.

C.2.1 Set-up and Procedure

An initial test was set-up with four Kennislanders to determine whether the initial design was meeting requirements and functioning as intended.

Six Kennislanders were approached, and four were available to participate. All participants were Dutch citizens, white and female, and they varied in age. All participants were interested novices—they had an interest in

social justice and power literacy, but were near the beginning of their learning journeys.

Due to time limitations, it was not possible to test the entire design, but two worksheet activities on privilege and access power were tried out. The first activity in the privilege worksheet was adapted to be more specific to the Netherlands context, as this is where the participants live and work (see Appendix E). The session was conducted online due to outside circumstances (COVID19), and as a result the worksheets were not tested in the physical form that they are intended to be used in. Instead, the worksheets were added to Mural, a digital collaborative whiteboard, where participants filled them out after an initial five minute tutorial. Part of the session was recorded and played back afterwards in order to identify key insights.

C.3.2 Results & Key Insights

As a result of the session, a number of insights were gained to iterate on the initial design of the field guide.

In terms of what worked well, it seemed that having both individual reflection and group discussion as a part of the worksheet activities was effective. Participants felt like the group discussion enriched the learning experience. Moreover, these two worksheet activities resulted in a greater awareness of power and privilege, especially on the impact it had in the past project they were reflecting on. All four participants were observed to become more aware of power and privilege, especially on the impact it had on their past project, and whether this impact aligned with their original intentions. In addition, even though all participants indicated that they had been somewhat aware of power dynamics before the session, using the worksheets allowed them to get a deeper self-awareness of their own privilege and a clear understanding of who was left out as a result. Next, the visualisation components in the two worksheets helped them with reflexivity—three participants explicitly mentioned that the visualization aided their ability to go deeper in reflecting on their personal influence and positionality.

In terms of improvements that can be made, participants liked that they were given a visual example of how to fill certain parts out on Mural. This is missing from the standalone field guide, so it will need to be translated into that context to make the worksheets more accessible. Moreover, certain issues with visibility and readability based on the font colour and size were pointed out, which will be changed in the next iteration. As well, participants felt like they were a bit rushed in filling out and discussing the worksheets; about thirty to forty minutes would be a more appropriate amount of time to spend ideally. Finally, although participants found the activities impactful, they felt a bit overwhelmed and discouraged afterwards, as there were no tips or recommendations provided to help them act. As such, some recommendations (see lessons learned in chapter 3.2.5) could be added to part two of the field guide in order to encourage and motivate users to make a change. Moreover, the final design of the field guide will include reflection or 'key takeaway' pages after each worksheet, where users can fill in what they've learned from the activity, so that they feel guided and less overwhelmed by what they have discovered.

In summary, it seemed that the worksheets were effective in building up initial reflexivity and power literacy skills for all four participants. The experience also seemed to be appreciated and eye-opening; it was suggested and agreed upon by all four participants that the rest of the Kennisland team would benefit from using the worksheets in a similar session in the future.

Positive Takeaways

+ Individual and group
+ Made the invisible visible
+ Increased depth of understanding
+ Visual representations

Things to improve

– Examples to fill in visuals
–Visibility and readability
–Indicate Timing
–Lack of positive reinforcement or encouragement

Appendix D: Evaluation Questions

D.1 Evaluation questions: TU Delft design student

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
(1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

1. I found the 'getting started' section of the field guide easy to understand.
2. I found 'Part 1: five forms of power' of the field guide easy to understand.
3. I found 'Part 2: power checks' of the field guide easy to understand.
4. I felt confident that I was filling in the majority of the worksheets correctly.
5. The amount of information provided in the field guide was adequate.
    If the amount of information was not adequate, please indicate if you would have wanted more or less of an explanation.
        - I wanted more information
        - I wanted less information
        - I was happy with the amount of information provided

6. I felt judged by the information and questions in the field guide.
7. The field guide opened my eyes up to power dynamics in my work that I was not fully aware of before.
8. After using the field guide, I am more aware of my own privilege and power.
9. The field guide helped me to identify inequities in the design process.
10. I learned something new about my own privilege and power from using the field guide.
11. I learned something new about the impact of privilege and power in design processes from using the field guide.
12. Using the field guide has motivated me to make changes in my next project.
13. The field guide is relevant to my work as a designer/researcher.
14. I would recommend this field guide to other designers.
15. I would use the field guide again in the future.

How did using the field guide make you feel?

Any other comments or suggestions?

D.2 Evaluation questions: Kennisland

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
(1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

1. I found the 'getting started' section of the field guide easy to understand.
2. I felt confident that I was filling in the majority of the worksheets correctly.
3. The amount of information provided in the field guide was adequate.

 If the amount of information was not adequate, please indicate if you would have wanted more or less of an explanation.

  - I wanted more information
  - I wanted less information
  - I was happy with the amount of information provided

4. I felt judged by the information and questions in the field guide.
5. The field guide opened my eyes up to power dynamics in my work that I was not fully aware of before.
6. After using the field guide, I am more aware of my own privilege and power.
7. The field guide helped me to identify inequities in the design process.
8. I learned something new about my own privilege and power from using the field guide.
9. I learned something new about the impact of privilege and power in design processes from using the field guide.
10. Using the field guide has motivated me to make changes in my next project.
11. The field guide is relevant to my work as a designer/researcher.
12. The field guide is relevant to Kennisland's work.
13. After using the field guide today, I feel that my team and I have a greater shared understanding of power.
14. I would recommend this field guide to other designers.
15. I would use the field guide again in the future.

How did using the field guide make you feel?

Any other comments or suggestions?

Appendix E: Privilege Worksheet Netherlands Context
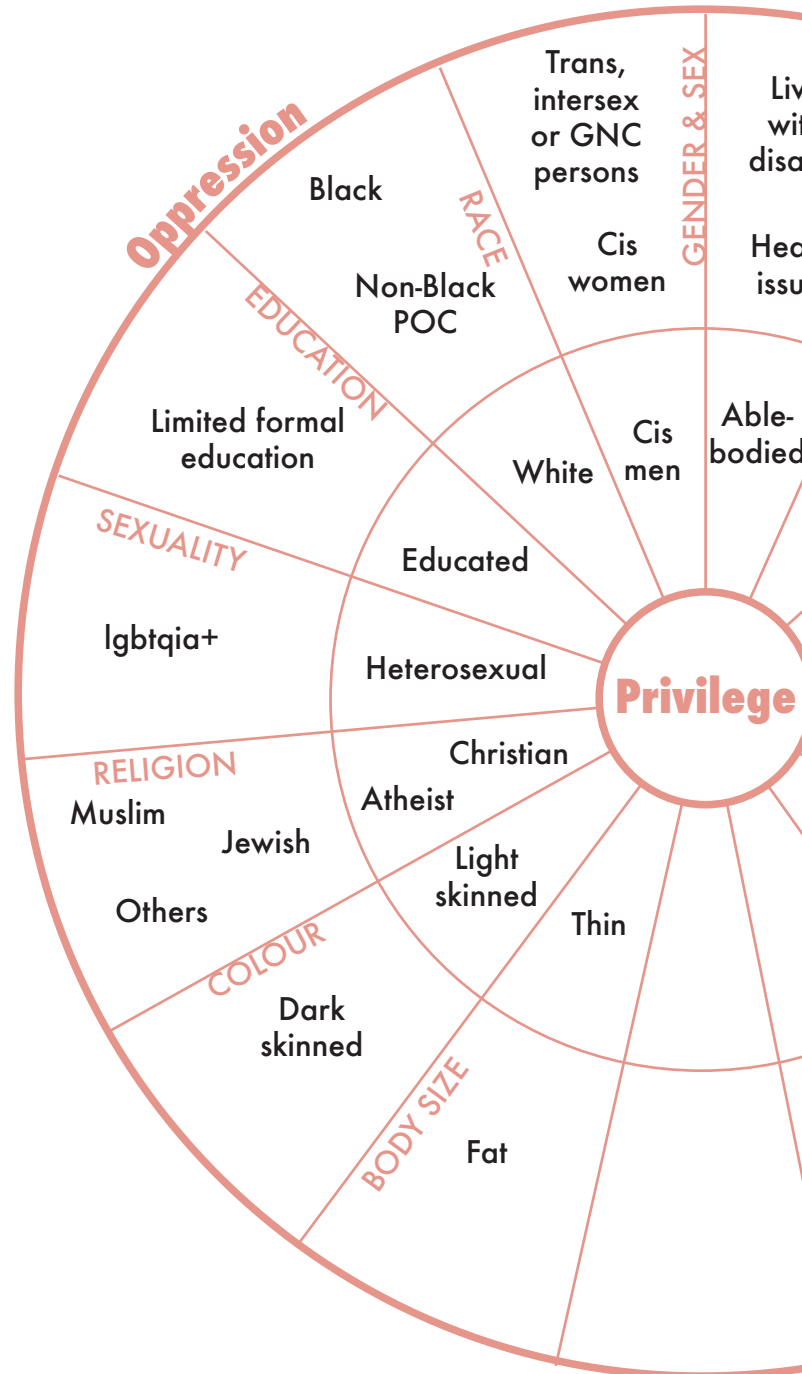
Privilege

What is it

Privilege is the type of power you get from a social relation whereby you benefit due to the social group you belong to, at the expense of another social group. It is an unearned advantage given to you because of your identity. It is possible to both have privilege and experience oppression at the same time, since identity is intersectional. When you have privilege, it is often invisible to you.

How to

1. Look at the different identies in the web. For each category (eg. class) take a marker and colour in the area that correspondes to your identity (eg. middle class). Add in any categories that are missing in the 2 blank sections and colour in accordingly.

2. Write down the privilege you have, and the resuting advantages that you and others may have had in your last project as a result.

3. Write down the impact of privilege and oppression on the project.

4. Discuss 2 & 3 in a group.

1. Recognize your own privilege

Which parts of my identity give me privilege? The
privileged, where as the identities in the outer circ
depending on geographic context and other facto

Oppression

RACE — Black, Non-Black POC

GENDER & SEX — Trans, intersex or GNC persons, Cis women, Cis men

Liv with disa

Hea issu

Able-bodied

White

EDUCATION — Limited formal education, Educated

SEXUALITY — lgbtqia+, Heterosexual

Privilege

RELIGION — Muslim, Jewish, Others, Atheist, Christian

COLOUR — Dark skinned, Light skinned

BODY SIZE — Fat, Thin

2. Name your privilege

What privilege do I have? What advantages do I e
What biases and blind spots might I have brough

3. Understand impact

What advantages did those with privilege experience in the design process? Who may have been unintentionally excluded or marginalized as a result?

identities in the inner circle are
le are more oppressed (this can vary
ors).

ving
h a
bility

lth
es

Working
class or poor

ABILITY

Middle
class

CLASS

No Status

Upper
class

Permanent
Resident

STATUS

Citizen

Dutch as
second
languge

No
Dutch

Dutch as a
first language

LANGUAGE

Dutch

Frisian

Other
European

Non-European

Young
adult

ETHNICITY

Elder or
youth

AGE

experience in my daily life as a result?
t into this project as a result?

4. Discuss in a group