ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN ART AND VISUAL STUDIES

ARTISTIC CARTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN EXPLORATIONS TOWARDS THE PLURIVERSE

EDITED BY
SATU MIETTINEN, ENNI MIKKONEN,
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ROUTLEDGE

Artistic Cartography and Design Explorations Towards the Pluriverse

This edited volume uses an interdisciplinary approach to art and design that not only reframes but also repositions agendas and actions to address fragmented global systems.

The contributors explore the pluriverse of art and design through epistemological and methodological considerations. What kinds of sustainable ways are there for knowledge transfer, supporting plural agendas, finding novel ways for unsettling conversations, unlearning and learning and challenging power structures with marginalised groups and contexts through art and design? The main themes of the book are art and design methods, epistemologies and practices that provide critical, interdisciplinary, pluriversal and decolonial considerations. The book challenges the domination of the white logic of art and design and shifts away from the Anglo-European one-world system towards the pluriverse.

The book will be of interest to scholars working in art history, visual studies, arts-based research and design studies.

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The values of the pluriverse compel us to disseminate this publication to a wide audience. Therefore, the book can be openly accessed via the Routledge portal. We thank the Faculty of Art & Design at the University of Lapland for funding this.

Preface

Andrea W. Mignolo and Walter D. Mignolo

There are two anchors that hold together the essays collected in *Artistic Cartography and Designs Towards the Pluriverse*. One is *calling*, and the other is *motivation*. This preface focusses on them by underscoring key concepts in the volume: *design*, *art* and the *pluriverse*. In relation to this, we assume that the *pluriverse* cannot be designed and managed from a single geographical location and with a set of universal categories, which is implied in the concept of *cartographies*.

I

The works in this collection call for a polycentric, pluralistic approach to the ways in which design is understood and practised, not in various localities but through cartographies of self, place and community. This distinction is important because what comes into focus through these writings is that design, as practised over the past century, is a product of the Anglo-European one-world system. Design obscures this by conceiving of itself as universal, a practice without subject matter, a singular process that can be applied to whatever the designer chooses.

Before design was called design, humans made things for functional, artistic and spiritual purposes. The act of making, or craft, was intimately tied to the act of creation through the hands of humans augmented with tools. For most of human history, the products of design were local, serving the needs of the people and the place and expressing local values, aesthetics and beliefs.

With the invention of the printing press and the creation of new manufacturing processes in the nineteenth century, design began to separate from craft. Professional design emerged as a practice of planning to address the problems of mass communication and mass production. Artisans could not create artefacts at the scale demanded by global markets, so the act of determining what was going to be made and how was transferred to the realm of the designer, while the act of making became the responsibility of machines.

The emergence of design thinking in the twentieth century pushed this separation further by postulating that the ways in which designers come up with innovative ideas for products could be abstracted and applied to 'problems' more generally. Design became separated not only from craft but from things as well. This move pushed the universalisation of design further and made it appear as if design could go anywhere and do anything. When various design agencies codified this into a consulting framework in the 1990s, design thinking infiltrated everything from business to health care

to education as an agnostic tool for innovation that drives breakthrough ideas. Here, we can begin to see how design, in the service of solving problems for profit, reveals its neocolonialist tendencies and the Western cosmology from which it originates.

However, there is still something in design that feels important and relevant, which is why we see efforts to decolonise design rather than throw it out altogether. Cartographies and designs for the pluriverse form an interesting combination because cartographies and designs both involve drawing. They require the understanding and modelling of space, place and possibility. What is important about the chapters in this book is that they draw attention to an essential component in reorienting design away from its colonialist origins towards the service of life and the pluriverse: cosmologies. Cosmologies are the ways in which we understand ourselves and our relation to the universe. Origin stories contain the initial seeds of these worlds, giving rise to the ways in which we make linguistic distinctions to create articulations of what is possible.

For centuries, Western cosmology has tried to convince us of its universality. The dominance of man over nature, our orientation towards control and progress and the elevation of individualism and rationality are all symptoms of this cosmology. Design, as a "universal" practice, is intricately tied to the problems of technology, markets and scale, while professional designers create and perpetuate mechanisms of harm and control.

We shape the world, and the world, in turn, shapes us. The pluriverse invites us to see that there are other worlds and knowledges and that we are not destined to this singular dance of extraction and destruction that Western cosmology appears to embrace so heartily. What has seemed universal for so long has become provincial. The authors in this collection have a deep understanding of this and, through their writing, explore the ways in which cosmology informs different approaches and practices of design.

II

The motivations and aims of *Artistic Cartography and Designs Towards the Pluriverse* emphasise art and design's means of shifting away from the North Atlantic *universal* (Eurocentrism) towards an intercontinental *pluriverse*. These aims presuppose a link between the geo-historical locations of the actors and the institutions working with and through art and design and the awareness that the audiences—watchers, listeners, addressees and consumers—of art and design have migrated from their geo-historical place of origin towards the four continents. In this migration, arts and designs carry with them the colonial difference.

If these are the motivations and aims, the major challenge to any movement 'towards the pluriverse of art and design methods and epistemologies' is precisely to overcome the regulations of *method and epistemologies* as well as the modern and postmodern meanings of the terms *art* and *design*. Addressing this challenge is not an easy task, and it may take the work of a few intercontinental generations. In addition, this effort should involve artists, designers, philosophers, public intellectuals and activists, including those located in the North Atlantic, in decrying the *North Atlantic universal*. This means that Eurocentrism originated in Europe but expanded to the Americas, Africa and Asia, piggybacking the political, economic, cultural and military North Atlantic expansion.

Today, Eurocentrism is well and alive in the four continents. Consequently, standing up for the pluriversal requires two unavoidable steps: (a) to delink from the North Atlantic universal and (b) to build an experiential awareness of border dwelling that Eurocentrism and coloniality disrupt and embed in the bodies of former dwellers and in their own languages, memories and praxes of living. This awareness generates the energy of border thinking and border doing. *Pluriversality* stems from the sensoria and intellects dwelling in the borderlands and borderlines (e.g. racism and sexism). Why border thinking and doing? Because invoking the pluriverse is not a magic formula that makes the North Atlantic universal magically vanish. The awareness of dwelling on the border is propelled by attentiveness to the privileges that the *universal* still holds. Universal thinking is territorial and dismisses or intends to suppress the pluriversal. Pluriversal and border thinking cannot avoid the awareness that actors and institutions benefiting from the universal will not relinquish their privileges.

The major obstacle to this enterprise, as mentioned earlier, is the vocabulary: *art* and *design*. The two terms carry the weight of the Eurocentrism that inhabits all continents today. Without removing the semantic connotations and the ideological weight of these two words, movements towards *pluriversal* will remain tied by the umbilical cord to their place of origin. To start cutting the umbilical cord requires reducing our vocabulary to its well-deserved size by stripping it of its universality. This step requires philological work, which is always historical: when the words in question emerge, where, why, what for and who created them and transformed their meanings and to whose benefit?

Decolonially, neither the words nor the concepts of art and design can be taken for granted. Similarly, the *pluriversal* cannot emerge as long as art and design change the content of the conversation while leaving the terms of the conversation intact. None of the coexisting languages, memories and praxes of living and thinking used the terms art and design prior to the European and North Atlantic invasions based on Western terminology. In the local history of Western civilization, the current meaning of art, which is associated with *aesthetics*, is an invention of the eighteenth century. In Latin, *ars* was the translation of the Greek word *artizein*, to prepare and to put together. Design entered Western languages as a verb and a noun. As a verb, it indicates processes such as planning and outlining; as a noun, it refers to a drawing or an outline. There are no Greek antecedents of the word.

Ars and design denote the skills that a person has for doing something. It could be said that both words have *techné* in common, a Greek word meaning to *know how* that encompasses both *doxa* (opinion) and *epistēmē* (rigorous knowledge). When these words leave their particular regions and are projected globally as universal concepts, we get into the coloniality of knowing and knowledge. The uses of *ars* and design beyond Western memories and imperial languages always activate the *colonial difference*. Take, for example, references to Aztec, Chinese or Egyptian art and design. What this amounts to is the destitution of the terms of the conversations, which were originally articulated in their own languages (Nahuatl, Mandarin, colloquial Egyptian and standard Arabic), and replacing them with the vocabulary of Western modern vernacular languages.

If our ancestors did not know how to plan, calculate and outline—in other words, if they did not *know how* to do what they were intending and planning to do; what today is called *ars* and design, then we would not be able to admire the Egyptian pyramids, the Taj Mahal or the Machu Pichu. *Languaging* (what we use to coordinate

doing and exchanging perspectives) did not need a grammar. The first grammar of Western modern imperial language, based on Latin grammar, was written and published in 1492. Since then, all the grammars of First Nations in the New World have been written by missionaries based on the grammars of Latin and Castilian. However, people did not wait to speak until the grammars were written. Same with art and design.

Denaturalising and desacralising Western vocabulary is the first step in delinking ourselves from the universal and relinking with the pluriversal. This book 'discusses and challenges the domination of the White logic of art and design, shifting away from the Anglo-European one-world system towards the *pluriverse* of art and design methods, epistemologies and practices'. In doing so, the book challenges both the content of what is said and the principles regulating and managing conversations.

Foreword

The European Commission policy for promoting arts to tackle societal challenges and increase cohesion and inclusion

Christina Sarvani and Jarkko Siren

Arts are not only expressions of emotions, ideas and the imagination. They can shed new light on the past, hold up a mirror to contemporary life and initiate new perspectives on the future. European arts are an essential component of culture and reflect economic and social substrates in their designs. Arts are vehicles for societal change with the power to reach people around the globe and shift perspectives while building bridges between peoples and communities from different cultures, reducing isolation and increasing individuals' societal engagement, along with their safety and well-being.

Arts are essential for societal stability and prosperity, especially during periods of social fragility and unrest such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Such global experiences, subsumed under the perspective of the arts, can contribute to community cohesion among people from different countries, cultures and languages, reduce social exclusion and isolation and increase empathy towards others. The arts reduce social tensions and discrimination, unleashing creativity, innovation and dialogue while generating economic growth and job creation.

The arts are directly engaged with societal challenges such as inequality, migration, climate and environmental change, social justice, conflict and violence. They also have direct positive impacts on individuals in terms of learning in an educational context, personal development and mental health improvements in a medical context. The arts can ease individuals' feelings of isolation and improve their well-being, both in real life and in the digital realm, as has been shown since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

European cultural heritage and arts have been among the main priorities of the European Commission. The EU framework programmes have funded research on European cultural heritage and the arts under various programmes and calls, while they have been an important part of the H2020 programme, which has invested more than EUR 600M in this area. In Horizon 2020, research on cultural heritage and the arts explored European diversity and the opportunities it brings, enhancing our understanding of Europe's intellectual and creative foundations and addressing key issues of cultural heritage and identity formation, as well as the intellectual, artistic, creative and historical legacy of the EU. Investments in the arts enabled the EU to support a number of initiatives related to individuals' experiences of art and the role of arts and creativity in societal relations and development. The Research and Innovation programmes have also encouraged

research on art perceptions, the design of art-based interventions and their social impact.

In addition to arts-based action research, of which the Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture project, 2020–2023, AMASS and Social Innovation through Participatory Art and Design with Youth at the Margins: Solutions for Engaging and Empowering Youth with Trans-Atlantic Mirroring, 2020–2021, the SeeYouth projects are excellent examples, several EU-funded research projects on inclusion, diversity and plurality have also produced creative works. Some projects have experimented with combining traditional and experimental methodologies from the humanities and social sciences with artistic productions. Several high-quality documentary films have been based on research conducted in projects to reach wider audiences. Some projects have also dared to experiment with art branches that are less common in research projects. Examples include a theatre play,[1] a folk oratorio[2] and a documentary film festival.[3]

The need for easier and more equal access to culture, heritage and the arts, as well as the need to improve the European way of life and maintain Europe's position in a globalised world, has kept the arts at the top of the EU political agenda for the 2019–2024 period. The capacity of European arts to encourage cultural diversity and plurality and to help make Europe more inclusive and prosperous increases the need for more research and innovation in this sector.

Moreover, COVID-19 and the containment measures taken in response to the pandemic have severely undermined the fragile cultural and creative ecosystem, endangering cultural and artistic creation and expression and weakening the contribution of culture and the arts to our well-being, cultural diversity, democracy and other areas. This increased the urgency of policy actions addressing the needs of the arts sector and fostering a more receptive and diverse cultural framework to include people from other continents equally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the post-COVID-19 era, culture and the arts sectors will need to drive European revival, which is one of the main political priorities of Research and Innovation, recognising the importance of culture and the arts as economic and innovation engines.

Horizon Europe, the ninth framework programme of Research and Innovation, supports culture and the arts, recognising their great value in significantly contributing to the vibrancy of society and enabling all societal segments to express their identities by promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, combating all forms of discrimination and fostering inclusive societies. Horizon Europe acknowledges the instrumental role of culture and the arts in fostering digital and green transitions, along with their ability to involve citizens in these transitions. Through a dedicated intervention area in the Cluster 2 work programme Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Societies, research and innovation empower cultural heritage and the arts like never before, helping them become international drivers of innovation and creativity and increasing their potential to serve as forces for societal change, growth and transformation in communities worldwide.

The Cluster 2 Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society work programme of Horizon Europe, with a budget of approximately 2.28 billion euros for the 2021–2027 period, will foster a more inclusive, innovative and prosperous Europe by increasing the understanding, preservation, restoration and transmission of cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries and the arts. The programme will encourage research and innovation to reinforce common European action to promote Europe's arts,

culture, values and interests internationally and to strengthen European competitiveness. It will assess existing policies and provide solutions to leverage the full potential and creativity of the arts. Finally, research and innovation on art and design will help foster dialogue and cultural literacy through the arts to increase our understanding of the diverse cultures, values and traditions in Europe, the value placed on diversity and citizens' participation in the social practices of European societies while reducing prejudice and inequality related to culture.

Disclaimer: The information and views set out in this preface are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.

Notes

1 The UNREST project produced a play called *Donde el bosque se espesa/Where the Forest Thickens* (see also the pedagogical package).
2 The CoHERE project produced the folk oratorio *Rivers of Our Being* (see https://irc.hw.ac.uk/news/rivers-of-our-being-riga.html and https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2616368).
3 The COURAGE project organised a documentary film festival at eight locations.

1 Introduction

Artistic cartographies and design explorations towards the pluriverse

Satu Miettinen, Enni Mikkonen, Maria Cecilia Loschiavo dos Santos and Melanie Sarantou

Urgent need for pluriversal methods, epistemologies and practices

In light of the current political, climate and global crises, there is an urgent need to embrace and encourage the pluriverse of methodological, epistemological and practice-based solutions. This book argues that art and design have the potential to make an important contribution to these solutions by providing practical ways of implementing pluriversal goals. The book stands in solidarity with global movements, such as Black Lives Matter, climate activism of the youth and global anti-war demonstrations that 'shake' the hegemonic and power-driven 'universal', general and common structures by fostering intersectionality, interconnectivity and plurality. The book explores the question of the pluriverse and aims to establish a more diverse and plural understanding of visual art and design. To achieve this goal, the book adopts the approach of *artistic cartography*, which addresses the role of arts-based methods in creating new cartographies to navigate and become immersed in a plurality of worldviews. The book's *design explorations* are based on the premise that educational structures in design schools need to be dismantled and that there is an urgent need to revise their neoliberal market-oriented agenda. The book challenges the domination of the White logic of art and design, shifting our attention away from the Anglo-European one-world system towards the *pluriverse* of art and design methods, epistemologies and practices.

By discussing artistic cartographies, plurality through art and design, and diverse case studies, the book asks the following critical questions: *Why is the call for diversity and plurality in art and design topical now? How can art and design help in mapping diverse worlds and navigating the pluriverse? How can arts-based methods help shift the dominant power balance towards diversity? Who gets to ask who is included?* We must ask transformative questions that reveal unconscious biases and hidden knowledge(s) and develop more critical views of the metrics that we use to measure performance, quality and success. This book focuses on art and design as vehicles of transformation and ways of addressing these needs.

The book adopts an interdisciplinary approach to art and design that reframes and repositions agendas and actions within fragmented global systems. It explores the pluriverse of art and design through epistemological and methodological considerations: What sustainable ways are there for transferring knowledge, supporting plural agendas, finding novel ways of unsettling conversations and challenging power structures in collaboration with marginalised groups through art and design? Many of the contributors to this book share their time between art, design, research and

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teaching. There are benefits and disadvantages to these professions from the perspective of pluriversality. On the one hand, they are at the margins of the market economy, which gives them the freedom to colearn, coobserve and codiscover with different communities. On the other hand, funding is scarce for art and research, which forces one to look for other resources and professions. By combining artistic and arts-based research, design research and the social sciences, the book does not establish a 'common methodology'; rather, it generates a plurality of methodologies based on practice-led design/art research and is premised on the importance of challenging the conventional methods and epistemological hierarchies of academic research.

The *main themes* of the book are art and design methods and epistemologies that provide critical, interdisciplinary, pluriversal and decolonial perspectives. These themes strengthen the book's critical self-reflexivity and contest dominant ways of knowing, doing and being. The *main objectives* are to strengthen coauthorship in artistic and design processes and research and to explore new means of collaborating as researchers, artists and designers, teachers, community members and stakeholders, when describing our circumstances instead of only narrating about the Other. By opening the horizons of pluriversal worlds, we aim to engage in the processes of decolonising, dewhitening and deracialising art and design methods, epistemologies and politics. Such processes involve deconstructing dominant logics by focusing on different aspects of contemporary life. For example, embracing a decolonial approach in art and design entails a variety of ways of undoing and envisioning alternatives to coloniality and hierarchical power relations (Seppälä et al., 2021).

When we speak of artistic cartographies, we propose the use of artistic methods, processes and actions to visualise and perform (Pearson, 2010) cartographies that can foster one's understanding of complex geographies and related narratives (Kwan & Ding, 2008), topographies (Lo & Gilbert, 2002), cultural phenomena (Sletto, 2009; Duxbury et al., 2015) and even emotions (Caquard & Griffin, 2018). The use of artistic approaches in producing cartographies can help us find new means of addressing, reflecting on and understanding global complexities and parallel worldviews and value systems.

The design explorations discussed in this book advocate design as a means of implementing pluriversal processes and approaches in practical experiments through codesign (St John & Akama, 2022), participatory design (Calderon Salazar & Huybrechts, 2020), service design (Duan et al., 2021) and design thinking (Lake, 2020). These design approaches can be seen as tools that can help in developing new solutions that take the pluriverse into consideration. Furthermore, design employs collaborative and iterative research cycles with users and communities by ideating and creating experiments with participants and stakeholders and evaluating such experiments to find new innovative and collaborative solutions to achieve a more pluriversal world.

Pluriversal discussions, art and design

The topicality of the *pluriverse* in the academic field is quite recent and is related to, for example, the increasing scholarship on sustainability and climate change and the work of authors such as Arturo Escobar (2011, 2018). As a term, the pluriverse comes from the Zapatistas' struggle for their rights in Mexico. The Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (Enlace Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional, 1997, p. 79) states: 'Para el poderoso nuestro silencio fue su deseo. Callando nos moríamos, sin

palabra no existíamos. Luchamos para hablar contra el olvido, contra la muerte, por la memoria y por la vida. Luchamos por el miedo a morir la muerte del olvido' (The powerful want our silence. When we were silent, we died, without the word we did not exist. We fight against this loss of memory, against death and for life. We fight the fear of death because we have ceased to exist in memory[i]).

Writings on the pluriverse, such as Walter D. Mignolo's preface in *Constructing the Pluriverse* (2018), discuss the topic of multipolarity, present a critique of the Western concept of universality and propose several cosmologies entangled in power differentiation. Ashis Kothari et al. (2019) critiqued the development agenda by means of pluriversal approaches. Escobar (2018) discussed how the modernist role and transformative potential of design could be reclaimed from the neoliberal agenda to contribute to codesigning and creative making with various communities of new possible worlds and futures. Our book expands these discussions by using artistic cartographies, which include socially engaged art (Kester, 2005) and design explorations, such as social design (Sarantou et al., 2018).

The pluriverse and pluriversal approaches in visual art and design are mostly discussed in conferences and papers rather than academic books. Calderon Salazar and Huybrechts (2020) put forward the idea of the pluriversal in the context of participatory design, discussing the topics of situated knowledge proposed by feminist thinkers such as Donna Haraway, the relationship between participatory action research with communities and the idea of popular education by Paulo Freire, and pluriversal designs that resist totalisation and universalism. Rachel Charlotte Smith et al. (2021) discussed decolonising design practices through pluriversality. In addition, the topic of *design for plurality* has been discussed by several authors. Ann Light (2019) considered the possibility of establishing plurality cultures and contributing to social innovation through the margins, and Yoko Akama and Joyce Yee (2016, 2019) explored the connection between plural and social innovation. Plurality has been discussed in research panels such as Design Enabling Plurality of Voices, Redistribution of Power Run by Satu Miettinen and Amalia de Götzen (2021) at the global ServDes Conference. Our contribution to the literature (e.g. Cooper & Morrell, 2014; Phillips & Steiner, 1999) lies in connecting the idea of the pluriverse with art and design, an under-researched combination in the pluriverse debate.

The conflict between the pluriversal and the hegemonic universal

We acknowledge that art and design are not inherently decolonial or related to the pluriverse and that we need to address this contradiction in a critically reflexive manner. Art and design processes and research inevitably incorporate and reflect broader social hierarchies, such as colonial, racial and patriarchal power structures (e.g. Smith et al., 2019). We argue that art and design processes that are power-sensitive and actively dismantle such structures can produce decolonial methods, epistemologies and politics. 'Actively' here refers to continuous critical considerations of whether and when our methods and approaches are decolonial and of how to navigate power issues as they emerge (Mikkonen et al., 2020).

The chapters are based on studies originally conducted in multiple languages in diverse contexts and disciplines. By positioning the authors and their subjectivities, the book unfolds the richness of the local, the particular and the immediate in contrast to the Western, the hegemonic 'universal' and the timeless. At the same time,

we need to commit to scholarly efficiency and the academic modes of presentation, including academic English language, which is not the native language of most of the authors, the communities included in the case studies or the editors. This academic commitment contradicts the pluriversal thinking and epistemologies that we aim to explore. As we need to fulfil the academic standards while questioning certain conventional forms of knowledge production in academia, we argue that art has the potential to overcome this contradiction.

When addressing this conflict, we approach the pluriverse not only as tolerance but as justice and fairness. This includes the idea of difference as a starting point instead of an outcome (Maharjan, 2020), meaning that differences are not only 'managed', 'dealt with' or 'addressed', as we are used to doing in the European school of thought. Rather, we approach the pluriverse as a continuous process that involves action, as an emerging philosophical and political movement that engages with particularities, contexts, communities and situations to counter the hegemonic forces of the universe.

Book structure and section contents

The book consists of three sections. In the *first section*, the authors propose artistic cartographies to go beyond anthropocentric and hegemonic research/artistic practices, discussing cocreation processes that involve nature, youth and cultural minorities in specific contexts. The *second section* explores the concept of plurality through art and design by discussing introspective reflections and practical projects of artists, designers and researchers from multiple angles: design—practice relationships, leadership development, service design and design disciplines in academia. The *third section* presents case studies of activism, diversity and accessibility along with critical, pluriversal and decolonial considerations. The book's fields and contexts are plural and cover, for example, technology, education, societal and social structures and processes, and engagement with communities from all continents: North and South America, Europe, Africa, Central and South-East Asia, and Australia and New Zealand. Drawing from these diverse contexts, the chapters aim at seeing, knowing and positioning differently in search of a transformative force capable of creating more inclusive and sustainable futures.

The chapters' *ethical considerations* are based on an epistemological foundation premised on critical reflections on hierarchies and power structures within research, art and design processes (Seppälä et al., 2021). The ethical foundation rests, on the one hand, on the principles of academia and, on the other hand, on Indigenous, decolonial premises to ensure that the book does not reinforce dominant narratives that (re)create otherisation.

Section I: Pluriversal A/r/tographies

The first section of the book discusses pluriversal a/r/tographies and artistic cartographies. The a/r/tographies concept is based on equality and coexistence between the following three identities: artist, researcher and teacher (Springgay et al., 2008). These identities are superimposed and provide different positions from which to observe, participate and impact the cocreation of different value systems and world views together with various communities at the margins. In short, a/r/tography (Irwin, 2013) can widen one's understanding of the pluriverse, helping one to develop plural

artistic cartographies. The authors in this section engage with the dynamics that challenge oppression brought about by colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. They discuss the dynamics that highlight the messiness of existence within complex power structures for marginalised communities in the Global South and North and offer an active means of deconstructing such dynamics.

Artistic cartographies include the idea of a/r/tography and expand cartography discussions towards new materialities, visualisations, interactions and opportunities to co-map cultural phenomena, geographies, topographies and emotions in new ways. This process has to do with more than metaphorical mapping; it can branch out into novel ways of physical mapping. However, such mapping is not merely territorial and enables new ways of describing content or illustrating the messiness of lived experience. Artistic cartographies enable the creation of new formats for presenting research. Furthermore, modern cartography, which studies new materialities and means of representation, also discusses forms of coauthorship (Dora, 2009).

Mariluz Soto Hormazábal and Mauricio Tolosa start the section by presenting the idea of the pluriverse as one that acknowledges non-humans and treats nature as an equal 'coauthor' in the artistic process. They present encounters and cocreative experiences between human authors and the trees and forests of Chilean Patagonia. The authors highlight Escobar's (2015) perspective on the pluriverse as integrating different realities within the same world. They explore artistic cocreation for mapping the pluriverse through a radical dimension—of the transformation of the human mental universe into a pluriverse as a space shared with other living beings.

Katri Konttinen, Enni Mikkonen and Mikko Ylisuvanto continue by discussing the importance of dialogue for plurality in arts-based processes with youth at the margins. In this chapter, arts-based methods are described as facilitating the mapping and understanding of the human experience and thus offering new materialities for the youth to participate in processes driving for social change. The authors consider the roles of artists and researchers while expanding the discussion to include professional roles in youth work and social work. They use collective experience and knowledge to suggest that creative dialogue for plurality, in which multiple forms of language intertwine, can strengthen young people's agency, as well as their self-determination and meaningful participation in and engagement with their life contexts, and provide new knowledge-production methods.

Marija Griniuk, Daria Akimenko, Satu Miettinen, Heidi Pietarinen and Melanie Sarantou discuss the post-artistic and social aspects of research—diversity, plurality and the pluriverse—for thinking beyond the homogeneity of academic/artistic research. The chapter explores speculative scenarios of the future of artistic research through an autoethnographic analysis of four case studies from diverse contexts based on a pluriversal approach to research practice, including technology, nature, humans and non-humans. In this chapter, the 'social' includes a broad group of agents and contributors who employ 'more-than-human' (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018) and 'anthrodecentric' (Gaietto, 2019) approaches to the social worlds of artistic practice and research, thus challenging the normativity of the reified structures of institutional/academic research.

Mari Mäkiranta and Outi Ylitapio-Mäntylä make an important contribution with their critical reflections on whiteness, an approach that is further taken up in other sections of the book. They write that intercultural artwork should include an

understanding of the dynamics of whiteness—for instance, how whiteness affects questions of nationalism, politics and histories of certain places. The authors propose materialist feminism and intersectionality as approaches for exploring the pluriverse from structural, political and representational perspectives (Crenshaw, 1991), with a focus on analysing power structures between people in different positions and relations (Christensen & Jensen, 2012).

Maria Huhmarniemi and Mirja Hiltunen discuss public art as a way of presenting, redefining and expressing Arctic pluralism in Finnish Lapland. They suggest rethinking how we discuss and represent the cultural context, claiming that social engagement through arts-based methods can promote the two-way integration of immigrant and local communities (Hiltunen et al., 2020; Jokela et al., 2015). They also consider issues of cultural appropriation (Räikkä & Puumala, 2019) and advocate strong ethical considerations in artistic processes. The chapter argues for the need to shift the power balance of representations in public spaces towards a more diverse direction and to create an understanding of the pluriverse to promote openness to immigrant cultures.

Ana Julia Melo Almeida and Maria Cecília Loschiavo dos Santos aim to understand how the relationship between women and the practice of embroidery in Brazil are constructed in spaces for learning, experimentation and work. They challenge artistic characteristics that are based on cultural stereotypes and colonial roots that reify the multiplicity of artisanal productions into a single image in which they are often portrayed as immutable, timeless, rural, isolated and needed for survival. The authors acknowledge the field of design as structured on colonialist-capitalist thought and consolidated through the universalisation of specific knowledge that is understood as uniquely valid. At the same time, the historical, social and political processes behind this reification process foster the emergence of other ways of knowing and, thus, of decolonising design. They conclude that expanding the field's narratives entails questioning the dynamics of subjugation and the erasure of subjects along with their histories and artefacts.

Michelle Olga van Wyk concludes the section with a chapter that proposes new, decolonial ways of design education from the Namibian and South African perspectives. She discusses the potential of restorative processes when embracing multiple identities and a plurality of knowledge systems and expressions in art and design practices. She uses a case study to describe how her creative practice framed by indigenous identities can begin to bury the colonial bones of design education. She explores an alternative approach to issuing and completing a design brief.

Section II: Design explorations towards the pluriverse

The first section of the book highlights the need to decolonise the artistic and arts disciplines. The second section continues this discussion from the perspective of design explorations. The purpose is not so much to create new design categories and define their limits but to ask critical questions. What can we do to decolonise design? What kinds of critical reflections are needed when designers engage in pluriversal processes and decolonising actions? The second section addresses several topics in relation to design, such as inclusion versus exclusion, permeability, reciprocity and transformation, hierarchies in knowledge making, alternatives in technology-driven education, decolonisation of artefacts, cultural appropriation, pluralities in relationships and

interactions, and leadership models. How design explorations related to the pluriverse contribute to the construction of more pluriversal values?

The book's approach to design involves pluriversalising the discipline itself: Design explorations include the notions of *action* (to design), *production or delivery* (the form of a product or a service that results from the design process or is in a stage of continuous development) and *discipline* of design (including multiple sub-fields, such as service design, industrial design, strategic design and so forth). Therefore, the concept of design explorations 'redefines' design discipline as a particular aspect of the pluriverse that can challenge and widen the existing universal concepts of design and highlight the fact that action, production/delivery and discipline depend on its actors and audience. In design explorations, action, production and discipline intersect to problematise the universal political domain; design explorations wonder whether the point is to actually pay attention to the actors: If a process is driven by a marginalised collective as part of developing solidarity, is that the core of art making or design as a decolonising and pluralistic action? This section discusses the potential role of design in the creation of the pluriverse, emphasising the need for change rather than providing answers.

Peter West opens the section with a critical discussion of inclusion and exclusion in design. The chapter asks the following questions: Who has been excluded? What are these practices of exclusion? What is revealed of the epistemic foundations of Design, which now assumes the position of host? West considers the expectation that those who are deemed worthy of inclusion should offer their knowledge and experiences as solutions. West's chapter is powerful in transforming his own position from a description of who he is into a situated critical practice in response to Indigenous sovereignties. When engaging in pluriversal design, we should be transparent and not only acknowledge our own positions but also think of how to move beyond them.

Caoimhe Beaulé, Élisabeth Kaine, Étienne Levac, Anne Marchand and Jean-François Vachon argue that recognising and celebrating knowledge plurality is necessary for greater university—community permeability, reciprocity and transformation and that design may be especially well positioned to foster such epistemic plurality. The authors discuss the power hierarchies in academia and knowledge systems that we need to critically consider in our design thinking. The dominant ways of knowing in academia can be counterposed by experiential knowledge (Baillergeau & Duyvendak, 2016), local knowledge (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2018), Indigenous knowledge and procedural knowledge, or 'knowing-how' as defined by Ryle (1949). In the processes of decolonisation, universities are invited to critically examine the hierarchy of knowledge and recognise these different knowledge systems. The chapter suggests a model and a tool that can facilitate an open dialogue about knowledge leadership during the different phases of collaborative projects.

Ricardo Sosa argues that the leaders of design and technology projects run the risk of colonising the minds and spirits of vulnerable groups. The chapter claims that how teachers and students engage with design and technology is shaped by what they create (or make), which is both a product and a process that produces feelings, thoughts and identities. Onto-epistemic alternatives to the dominant paradigm exist, pointing to other worlds and ways of approaching and developing digital technologies and education more generally. Sosa underlines the fact that the geographic labels of the Global North and South are not about countries or where people originate

from or reside; instead, such labels refer to the world of ideas and beliefs. The chapter describes alternative ways of codesigning in a technology-driven context.

Jonna Häkkilä, Siiri Paananen, Mari Suoheimo and Maija Mäkikalli discuss three case studies to explore how interactive technology can be used to design cultural heritage content for museums, digital cultural heritage sites and games and to facilitate future experiences with more pluralistic and diverse content. Although digital technologies can provide undeniable benefits for the cultural heritage domain, they also pose new design challenges. To conduct the design process successfully and to connect with the design context, one must integrate pluriversal and decolonising approaches, cultural sensitivities, historical-political contexts and possible traumas. Technologies and their contexts are not neutral; rather, they include values that are intertwined with politics and power. The authors discuss accessibility and cultural appropriation in such techno-political contexts and processes.

Namkyu Chun discusses relationship-centred design. Using the lens of Korean culture, he proposes that contemporary discussions on design, including activism, decolonisation and postanthropocentrism, are an effort to recognise hidden or forgotten relationships in design. He claims that when acknowledging the plurality of makings as an ontological condition, we may need to include more relationalities in our perspective. Chun agrees with the design scholars who claim that studies of relationalities are needed for a systemic understanding of complex situations (e.g., Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Postma et al., 2012; Fuad-Luke, 2014).

Zhipeng Duan aims to creatively conceptualise the ways in which designing is related to other making practices without reducing the latter to design. He deliberately employs the general term 'making' to emphasise the richness of divergent practices of forming, causing, doing and coming into being. Duan proposes that designing is an ability possessed by everyone, regardless of professional expertise (Manzini, 2015). This argument is aligned with recent studies on ontological design that see design as inseparable from what it means to be human and fundamental to becoming human (Fry et al., 2015, p. 286). In plural makings, participation does not necessarily mean inviting users to join the design process; rather, it means an embodied designer joining the meshwork of ongoing makings.

In the final chapter of this section, Joyce Yee, Sovan Srun and Laura Smithman discuss business leadership and design through a case study from the Cambodian context. The authors are conscious of design and leadership theories' Eurocentric/Western capitalist origins and want to contribute to the discussion on how design can support different forms of world-making (Escobar, 2018; Fry, 2017). They discuss what it means to work with and through differences while being attentive to cultural plurality (Akama & Yee, 2016). Based on their data, the authors claim that spirituality and mindfulness can improve communication and strategic thinking in leadership processes, thus strengthening pluriversal values in design processes.

Section III: The pluriverse of activism, diversity and accessibility

In line with the previous reflections on artistic cartographies and design explorations, the last section of the book explores new frontiers, discussing art, design and activism in various contexts, such as design education, youth work, urban traffic politics and digital social interaction. This section reconsiders the subjects and stories that have been left out of official histories and narratives. How do we interpret these absences

and imagine new possibilities? The section claims that the voices of different communities, such as youth at the margins, are needed more than ever. Understanding the youth and the processes of marginalisation and colonisation in various life-contexts promotes diversity and creates new ways of deepening our support and engage with young people and other groups at the margins.

Activism is related to diversity and accessibility through reconsiderations of spaces in which power hierarchies privilege some subjects and marginalise others, sometimes even placing the latter in life-threatening situations. Activism through art is about developing different perspectives and using creativity to foster diversity and accessibility to correct social and political defects. The pluriverse of activism, diversity and accessibility, in this sense, is built on non-hierarchical and intersectional actions and processes that expand academic spaces to the public ones, such as streets. In such processes, hierarchies of knowledge, objects and layers are refined in favour of the pluriverse.

Júlio César Tamer Okabayashi and Maria Cecília Loschiavo dos Santos start this section by presenting a decolonial perspective on the rise of design education in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s. The chapter criticises the concept of development for endorsing an Anglo-Eurocentric ontology along with an ideology that leans on capitalist ideas and situates *the Other* (the colonised) in humankind's supposedly lower states of development. The chapter argues that design, as one of the 'central political technologies of modernity', plays a significant role in this hierarchy inherited from colonial processes. The authors claim that understanding the connections between colonialism, modernisation, development and design is the first step towards recognising the narratives left out of design education and the damage perpetuated by our practices and political structures, thus opening the path to the construction of shared plural futures.

Ana Nuutinen and Enni Mikkonen discuss the plurality of structures in youth work in the Finnish context. By looking at the plurality contained in different layers of youth work, the authors aim to reposition the agendas and actions related to this work and the related collaborations with stakeholders, thus moving towards a more systemic (rather than individualistic) orientation. Analysing the layers of youth work by means of a creative framework that includes bird's-eye, grassroots and rhizome perspectives can help us understand and deal with the complexity and diversity of the situations faced by young people living at the margins. The creative framework that the chapter suggests contributes to the idea that pluralism underpins systems in which different perspectives can be seen as equal.

Teresa Torres de Eça and Ângela Saldanha argue that to promote counter-hegemonic narratives and the voices of marginalised communities, citizens need to master the technologies of discourse, representation and dissemination. A central question in their research was how to increase the fair representation of stories by people from marginalised communities with limited access to digital and cultural public spaces. Caring, collaboration and joint authorship were the key aspects of this study, reinforcing the need for recognising different social structures and strengthening voices from the margins via non-colonialist procedures of art and design. The chapter also embraces processes of learning and creating with communities, which are essential to the pedagogy of resistance (Freire, 1975) and an ecological approach to art, nature and society.

Heidi Pietarinen, Amna Qureshi and Melanie Sarantou discuss plurality in relation to spatial design. The objective of their arts-based project 'Flags' was to co-produce

knowledge of pluralism with the participating youth and to help them apply this knowledge in their (re)design thinking. The authors unfold the possibilities of establishing diverse and interactive relationships for and by spectators through plural interpretations of arts elements. In different contexts, colours, shapes and light can (re)constitute and express the pluriverse (Escobar, 2011) of visuality, feelings, meanings and stories embedded in artistic expressions. Shared authorship provides diverse and plural ways of working together with groups such as youth communities (March, 2021; Grisoni, 2012; Lovell et al., 2014).

Eduardo Rumenig, Julio Talhari, Luiz E.P.B.T. Dantas, André C. Silveira and Maria Cecília Loschiavo dos Santos discuss a case study of art activism in Brazil. In the project called Ghost Bikes, contorted bicycles represented violent deaths in the urban space and functioned as art-activism. The authors argue that these art objects impacted the decision-making process by forcing public decision makers to enact policies mitigating traffic violence against those who defy the hegemonic urban-mobility order, rethink urban design from a perspective that includes cyclists and move towards creating a bike-friendly city. The authors build on the plurality of activism to underline possibilities of improving safety, infrastructure and social relationships in urban spaces, in addition to establishing ceremonies to commemorate those who died in traffic accidents.

Amalia De Götzen, Peter Kun, Luca Simeone and Nicola Morelli discuss diversity in digital social interaction in the last chapter of this section. They explore the process of designing a chatbot application aimed at mediating people's interactions through diversity-aware algorithms. The chapter addresses the following question: When a machine mediates human interactions, how can we ensure its ethical and inclusive functioning? The authors identify and quantify social practices that are transversal to people by letting users help accommodate their diverse needs and preferences through participatory data analysis and suggest this analysis should be used in diversity-aware services. The final goal is to empower the online community to manage its own data as a commons (Morelli et al., 2017; Ostrom, 1990).

Conclusion: towards the pluriverse

This book brings together various perspectives and contributes to dialogue and encounters between different continents, thus it provides a significant undertaking at a time when global divisions are deepening. Discussions related to art and design can function as counter-narratives and acts that foster a broader understanding of pluriversal knowing, being, relating and acting. Such understanding can become a basis for creating and maintaining processes that develop everyday life worlds and sociopolitical spaces towards the pluriverse. The decolonisation and deconstruction of the 'universe' starts with mapping and exploring the potentialities of the pluriverse, a task for which art and design can offer cartographies and tools.

Our approach to artistic cartographies and design explorations towards the pluriverse contains the term 'to pluriverse', thus becoming a verb and being a process and an action in the form of 'pluriversing'. The action is continuous and never complete; it can create a philosophical or political movement that engages with people, contexts and situations. The action of pluriversing can include living, doing, making, connecting or even rebelling to counter hegemonic forces such as the neoliberal, colonial and patriarchal 'universal'. This action-driven idea contains countless possibilities. The

art and design examples discussed in this book, as practice-based applications, contribute to the action of 'pluriversing'.

We would like to underline the following *key findings* of our book in relation to employing arts and design methods, epistemologies and practices to navigate and revise the dominant, one-world system in the favour of the pluriverse:

- The pluriverse goes beyond the Anthropocene and (re)introduces the ecosystem into our actions by acknowledging that human and non-human actors have equal agency.
- Self-reflection is a critical part of pluriversal thinking and action. Reflecting on, for example, the whiteness within oneself can be an uncomfortable process. However, it is not enough to only acknowledge the dominant processes and structures that impact our positions; we must also actively deconstruct them by engaging with diversities in marginalities (through intersectionality).
- Artistic cartographies provide tools and perspectives to map and better understand different communities across the globe. Pluriversal approaches and arts applications can function as driving forces for change.
- Art and design are closely related in their need (and ability) to be self-reflective and (re)emancipatory. Interaction as a component of art and design processes can be informal, dynamic and changing. 'To pluriverse' their internal and external processes and actions, art and design processes need to be capable of transforming themselves according to diverse contexts, values, situations and particularities.

The perspectives elaborated in this book can be used in multiple contexts and at various levels. First, the book is useful to graduate students in various disciplines and to those who are interested in pluriversal and decolonial approaches. Second, it can stimulate discussions in spaces where pluriversal and decolonial research methods are learned and developed by challenging the ontological, epistemological, methodological and praxiological prominence of the Global North. Third, the book provides empowering narratives for those who are marginalised. The chapters engage with various communities, revealing the pluriversal nature of multi-community and multi-communal dynamics.

In pluriverse scholarship, the need for practical engagement besides theoretical considerations is inevitable, and the book presents art and design projects that can offer those. We suggest that the pluriverse and the acts of 'pluriversing' through practical applications can foster new theories and activities that promote peace, sustainability and inclusion. We invite you to experience the healing power of art and design. Both art and design are stronger when in dialogue with the pluriverse communities. This book offers a welcome to come together after so much time of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Section I

Pluriversal A/r/tographies

2 Record of a multispecies creative exploration in the austral forests

Mariluz Soto Hormazábal and Mauricio Tolosa

Abstract: This chapter explores the crossing of borders that separate the human realm from the world of plants, here proposing a community of interaction where cocreation can emerge as a virtuous relationship between the two. Collective creation, from the artistic and design areas, has been a human domain, in which ideas, intellect and language are the main drivers; however, this text records the collective creation inspired by various forms of life, specifically the audio-visual cocreation that emerged in the Chilean Patagonia where the authors and austral forests participated. The making of the film follows an organic flow that occurred without planning and expectations; this surprised the authors at every step, where encounters, coincidences and contributions took place, making it possible for this film to sprout, develop and expand. The arboreal worlds were recorded in the haiku writing and in images, both of which account for the magic and presence of the Patagonian Forest and the dissolution of the boundaries between the humanity and nature duality. Do Apple Trees Dream? is an exploration of the pluriverse in a radical dimension—of the transformation of the human mental universe into a pluriverse as a space shared with other living beings.

Keywords: Pluriverse, nature, community, cocreation, emotion

Introduction

This chapter presents the encounters and a cocreative experience between us—the human authors—a crab apple tree and the trees and forests of the Patagonia. The outcome took the form of photographic and audio-visual notes, haikus and a short video, all of which are human artistic expressions, but the creative process involved other species. This opened up different questions about the relation or communication between humans and other living beings, how the artistic and metaphoric language can be a way of expressing the complexity of such a relation and the expansion of the cocreation concept towards more integration with living beings other than humans. During the process, even with clear perceptions and feelings in the interactions with plants throughout the creative process, our rationality, as framed in the human universe, always questions the verity of those experiences and attributes them to our imagination more than to a manifestation of the plants. To explore these questions, we needed a different frame. The approach of Escobar's (2015) perspective on the pluriverse as integrating different realities as a part of the same world was enlightening. The pluriverse perspective brought us a new perspective to better understand and analyse our experience between humans and plants, allowing us to think about cocreation as a practice where living beings from different species could be involved.

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When we started our journey in the Patagonian Forests, there were no primary artistic or creative purpose or expectation. We were both coming from professional backgrounds linked to communication and artistic fields with an openness towards plants, but we had never thought of the possibility of a cocreation process with trees and forests. Starting on a patio in Santiago with a crab apple tree and flying to the Patagonian Forests, we lived and experienced, and we flowed freely with the plants in a poetic creative process. Maybe that "natural" flow was possible because there were no rational questions or planning. We were not trying to prove anything; we just went to the forest to explore and feel it. Inspired by the forests, we felt the connection with the plantae kingdom, and we slowly started registering the encounters and experiences through words and images, which later became a short film. Our creative journey could be an example of a multispecies collaboration and considered an example of cocreation with plants and an expression of the pluriverse.

This chapter is organised into four parts. First, we provide an understanding of the concepts of the pluriverse and cocreation and their relations with the plantae kingdom, here as a frame for our experience. Second, the methods behind the creative process and flow of the immersion of the authors are given. Third, the findings are provided, where the narration follows, here as emerging from the exploration of the Patagonian Forests in an effort to share the creative encounter with the plantae kingdom. Fourth, some of our reflections on the possibilities of cocreation between species are detailed.

Pluriverse and multispecies relationships between humans and the plantae kingdom

Our artistic and poetic exploration occurs in the crossing over of the boundaries that separate the human universe from nature and all other sentient beings. This creative process could be conceived of as a pluriverse manifestation emerging from interspecies cocreation.

The journey could be seen as an example of respecting multispecies communities (Vargas et al., 2019) and as a focus on life, understanding other species and valuing them in all their forms (Wilson, 1984). This comes at the opposite end of the anthropocentric vision, which does not even consider a harmonious relationship between humans and their natural environments, instead favouring the conquest of nature at the service of human beings (Acosta & Romeva, 2010).

The connection between humans and plants has been part of ancient wisdom, and its knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation; this is not uncommon in the Amerindian traditions. For example, Vargas Roncancio (2017) exposes the *mambia* ceremony, in which a group of people reunite to ingest a mix of coca leaves mixed with other plants while being guided by a local knower, or *sabedor* in Spanish, in Colombian Amazonia. The purpose of this ceremony is to communicate with the plant and let her educate the bodies and spirits of the participants. According to the testimony collected by Vargas Roncancio from the *sabedor* Don Antonio, the ingestion produces sensory stimulation acuity when the plant is absorbed into the blood making the skin quiver. The skin, which is our frontier with our environment, becomes the space where the plant manifests and 'dialogues' with the human through vibration. The elders can interpret these vibrations and put them into words.

In another example of a multispecies connection, now from a scientific point of view, in her book, *Thus Spoke the Plants*, biologist Monica Gagliano (2018) presents her experience as a scientist researcher with fish in the Australian reef. After several days of visiting the same place every day, the fish became used to her presence and did not flee when they saw her each time she dived in for her research; a certain trust and closeness were built over time that allowed Gagliano to swim naturally with the fish. However, biology and science in general require testing; the 'subject of study' has to be transferred to the laboratory to make a corresponding study, which means capturing and killing the fish. On the final day, 'the collecting day', no fish appeared. Gagliano had not done anything differently; only 'she' knew what that day meant and what would happen. This example can be interpreted in many ways, from coincidence to mysterious communication between humans and other species, challenging our usual understanding and confinement in our human world, our uni (human) verse.

The acceptance of realities other than the human one breaks some of the dualities that create the UNIworld, like nature/culture or human/nonhumans (Escobar, 2015), opening the field to think and feel in the domain of the different worlds intertwined, which is the pluriverse.

Cocreation, the pluriverse and multispecies relationships

According to the Macmillan online Dictionary (2021), cocreation is 'a way of working together where people from different backgrounds are invited to jointly produce a product or service that will benefit all of them'. Different fields explain cocreation with a specific emphasis. From the management perspective, cocreation is about actively engaging with users and stakeholders to create value together (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). In the design field, cocreation is one of the most used practices to find solutions or possible paths to develop projects. Sanders and Stappers (2008) place more emphasis on creative and collective actions. In addition, the business field has its own description. Ind and Coates explain 'it's [cocreation] also about interpretation and meaning-making. Meaning is always co-created' (2013, p. 90).

One could say that 'logically', these visions of cocreation are human centred and validated if they are part of the processes founded in the logic of human beings. The visions are deeply rooted in an anthropocentric vision and in human-centred civilisation and UNIverse.

The concept of community-centred design contributes to widening a human-centred focus by integrating the environment in which people move; hence, their behaviours and needs take a more comprehensive nuance (Meroni, 2008). Some views go even further. According to Acosta and Romeva (2010), it is necessary to change the epicentre, that is, to stop articulating everything—science, technology and innovation and the needs of the human being and their well-being—above all else. Here, cocreation should not be exclusive to the interaction between humans and be for their sole benefit.

Cocreation involves everything that influences and allows that encounter to happen; therefore, it requires a state of openness, receptiveness and availability to 'dance' with everything present in this exchange. In this sense, shared and collective creation requires a state of consciousness that allows for empathising with other human beings and that could be extended to a less anthropocentric perspective, including other living beings. As we showed earlier with the coca and fish experiences, the results of such an encounter should express a multiverse.

How to express the multiverse

Until recently, the concept of cocreation and concepts in general have been part of the human world, and even if we open ourselves to the possibility of some kind of communication or a creative togetherness with other sentient beings or nature entities, the sharing of the crossing over into their worlds will happen through human expression or languages. In the case of the coca ceremony and known shamanic experiences to develop abilities or knowledge, it is the manifestation of the plant in the human world; it is the plant that teaches or shows to the human, who will interpret in the human's own language, not the other way around. Thus, what human language or expression could give a better understanding of the encounter and cocreation with another species?

Integrating different disciplines and languages contributes to an exploration that can blur the boundaries between one discipline and another, giving a better chance to create a richer and more complex approach to another possible reality, such as that of the plants. The mix of various techniques opens up new possibilities for exploration and expression. The expression of one of the authors in this chapter that was employed to expose the exploratory register of his encounters with the plants was haiku, the short Japanese poetic form whose text consists of three verses: the first with five syllables, seven in the second and five in the third. Using haiku invites us to explore our experiences and place in the world (Stork, 2020), establishing an inspiring connection with the environment and a relationship with nature and daily-life events (Rosenstock, 2009). The haiku comes from the tradition of observation and experiences with nature and from being associated with living and honouring the moment. Because of the brevity and conciseness of its structure, it forces us to get to the essence, to the seed, to prune everything that could be seen as an accessory and leave out the judgements and rational mind to account for the moment itself. The indifference and inflexibility of the 17 syllables used in a haiku make impossible the eventual aspiration of a writer to become 'the creator' (Collins, 2013), making a full-fidelity account of the writer's own experiences an impossible task. Haiku writing is a cocreation between the experience and all its surroundings, the chance of the language of the poetic form and the author. Haikus are aware of the moment, composed on three lines (Goldberg, 2021); the author of the haiku disappears to show the moment and space attached to it, which often originates in nature, plants or animals or the elements. From this point of view, a haiku could have some advantages in the attempt to express multispecies cocreation and a manifestation of a multiverse.

Methodology

To account for the encounters on their journey, the authors used videos, photography, haikus and notes. Through the systematic observation and recording of the images of their interactions, the authors aimed to give this encounter a holistic perspective (Muratovski, 2016). Filming is also considered an art-based research method that combines technology with autoethnography to follow its own process during filming (Haering & Jones, 2019). The methodology of filming and producing a short video was neither conceived nor declared from the beginning of the creative record process. It unfolded naturally, following encounters with the forests and trees of the Patagonia. The data were analysed with total immersion at the beginning and later with thematic categorisation and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Leavy,

2017). Additionally, the practice and perspectives from the authors that merged on this reflection were arts-based, and design was the key emphasis of the process.

Findings on the encounter experience

The seed for the idea for the journey arose in meditation under a crab apple tree, which began a journey to the origin. The word origin has two different meanings: one of the authors in this chapter was born in Punta Arenas, in the Chilean Patagonia; hence, it was going back to his birthplace; the other meaning was related to going to the 'origin' of the plants—the forest—where they rule in the kingdom plantae.

Prior to this journey, the interactions with the crab apple tree had occurred in different ways: in the admiration of the figures drawn on its bark, in the emotion of the blossoming of flowers and the nuances of autumn, in the breath and vibration shared in some meditation, in the observation of aphid pests and arrival of ladybirds, and in the signals that require our attention such as pruning, multiplication through cuttings and caring for the soil (Tolosa, 2021). Sometimes, it had been the appearance of unsuspected words, the invitation to a new route, the connection with the energy of the earth or in the dialogue with the hummingbirds. The call 'to visit the origin' was manifested during the practice of meditative Qi Gong (known also as Chi Kung) exercises, coincidentally in the so-called tree posture. Qi Gong is an ancient Chinese practice based on postures, meditation and breathing and means a way of developing, enhancing and improving the body's energy (Posadzki, 2010).

> I was born at the end of Patagonia in Punta Arenas. The origin resonated with me in two ways: one through my hometown and the other through the forests, going from the exploration of my garden and patio, where the plants and trees had opened with generosity and magic but in a 'humanised' context. The forests are the space where the trees are dominant; this invitation meant crossing to their world, to their origin.
>
> (Author quote, Mauricio Tolosa)

> When Mauricio told me about the phrase that appeared in his interaction with the tree, the word origin resonated with me like a long-lasting echo in my body. After a couple of years living in the north of Finland, I felt the need to know the south of Chile and connect it with the immensity of the earth and nature through this trip from pole to pole.
>
> (Author quote, Mariluz Soto Hormazábal)

We started the journey without a specific creative project, but we both had notebooks, pencils and cameras. Some ideas were dimly drawn: the origin, the haiku writing and crossing into the world of forests.

For the first three days, there was no news from the trees. There were no signs of any connection. On the fourth night, staying in Punta Arenas, we went for a walk to the Plaza de Armas—the name of the main square of each city in Chile. Under the full moon, some hundred-year-old cypress trees allowed us to enter their energy, which flowed powerfully, uniting heaven and soil. We felt that flow in our bodies, though it is difficult to explain. The feeling is clear, the skin seems thinner, the fingertips become more sensitive, the breath gets deeper, and within the body, a movement of dense and flexible bubbles is perceived. It was like the plantae kingdom was opening its doors.

In an unexpected offer, on the next day, Jorge Molina, an old friend and explorer of the region, was going on a holiday season trip and generously left us his house, a jeep and a map where he pointed out three forests: Parrillar, San Juan and Chabunco.

In our conversations, the word portal resonated as something to describe the experience with the crab apple tree and the night of the cypresses in the Plaza de Armas. When we referred to portals, we thought of those moments when plants invite us to enter *their* world, in a sense that transcends habitual coexistence, one in which the form of communication seems to be through 'intention', 'instructions' or 'awakenings', which are sometimes even manifested in words, as with 'origins'. We decided that we had to go looking for portals in those forests, those spaces that would allow us to enter the forest, perceive or feel their reality and share their universe.

The first journey was to Parrillar. The distances are long in Patagonia. Along the way, we talked, among many other things, about our ideas to record the encounter with the forests, the writing of haikus, maybe making some short videos of a minute or so to share on social media platforms. We crossed lupine meadows of all shades of blue, 'desert forests' razed and extinguished by man and fire. Suddenly, we came to the forest of Parrillar, with green walls on both sides that only showed us a narrow path to follow. We spotted something that looked like 'a portal', quite literally. We walked there and decided to record our passage through it.

> I gave a greeting at the portal, joining the palms of my hands raised above my head as a sign of asking for permission and welcome to the forest. As I waved, a wind rose made the leaves of the trees vibrate, and the sun appeared, illuminating the moment.
>
> (Author quote, Mauricio Tolosa)

Coincidence? Synchrony? Welcome? The scene was recorded on camera.

> While I was recording Mauricio when he finished his gesture of greeting in front of the portal, I saw how the clouds opened, letting the sunlight pass through; the lighting changed utterly, and the wind blew the leaves. Stunned, I looked at what was happening live, comparing what I was recording on the camera. Luckily, it is possible to perceive it, but not with the intensity of witnessing it. It felt like a welcome sign.
>
> (Author quote Mariluz Soto Hormazábal)

We came across the sensation of entering a sacred space, almost trying not to step on the ground because of the fear of walking through the sprout of life growing from the soil, with a clear sensation of being inside the forest, up, down, forward, back and to the sides, forming a sacred web of life. We wrote, we recorded, and we tried to give an account of the magic of the forest and of the encounter.

In the following days, we continued visiting forests, both in Parrillar and San Juan; those portals were manifested—they appeared in front of our eyes, and when we crossed them, we had the same feelings as the first one. We could perceive treads of life, the relation between the older and younger trees, the role of the wind, the birds and the insects, the sounds and the silence of each forest. It was like a beautiful web of life full of signs to be perceived from the poetic language of creation, not just as a logical human language.

The forest,
their temperatures,
its sounds and silences,
soil,
wind
and the birds,
all intertwine,
they tell the story and the presence of Life.

I took notes; I tried to collect those perceptions, emotions and concepts in brushstrokes of text and images that later allowed me to write the haikus of those forests.

(Author quote, Mauricio Tolosa)

Enthusiastic, we prepared some scenes that would allow us to better graph what we were feeling (see Figure 2.1). Sometimes, during the night, we reviewed all the recordings. There was always some frustration with not being close to what we had experienced in the forest. The final project still did not appear clearly, but we felt the value and meaning of this testimonial record of our experiences in and with the plantae kingdom. However, we decided to take some shots that would allow us to stitch the recorded forest scenes together.

We ended our adventure with the gratitude of having lived magical moments in the southern forests, of feeling that we had been allowed to enter a dimension of trees and nature, here in a fusion of subtle consciousness that we recorded effortlessly and in the best way that we could in our images, audio-visuals and texts.

Back in Santiago, the traces of a story appeared with greater intensity, and we visualised ourselves as those who had travelled in the name of the crab apple tree, who had lent our senses and mobility to the noble and immobile master tree. We had the feeling of having been in an essential place of life, of having crossed into the plantae kingdom, of having seen it in its radiance, of having been in its presence as the web that sustains all life and basked in a healing generosity and sweetness.

The short film's journey: from Chilean Patagonia to the United Nations

The short videos were turned into a short film, thanks to Sophie Franca's talent and technique. In addition to being a Chilean-French producer and editor, she possesses a remarkable delicate narrative sensitivity capable of accounting for complexity in an artistic way. In her editing room, the images and haikus began to melt together and define the story. Without any sound of a human voice, just the wind, the birds and the trees, we felt that some soft melodies were needed to emphasise some moments of the narration. We invited Eduardo Carrasco, a renowned Chilean composer, musician and philosopher, and his piano. He was enthusiastic, and within three days, he had composed the music.

We never set out to make a film; the process was carried out alone, step by step, shot by shot, forest by forest, flowing with the trees and with the creators and professionals.

Figure 2.1 Four screenshots from the film with trees and a man walking through the forest or writing inside the forest.

When the short film was finished, another enthusiast from the plantae world unexpectedly appeared, Rod Sáez, director of Cintámani Films, who'd heard about the film. After seeing the film, he suggested submitting it to some festivals.

The film (see Figure 2.2) was circulating for a couple of months in festivals; it was well-received, and it was part of the official selection of thematic festivals in several countries; in others, it was selected, but unfortunately, the pandemic, as in many areas, caused havoc, suspending many of these international festivals. Nevertheless,

Figure 2.2 A poster with a burned tree in the middle in a landscape with mountains.

the film was part of the official catalogue of Cinema Chile 2020, and finally, it came to the Russian Lampa Festival, which included our film in a special exhibition at the United Nations building in Geneva.

In all these exhibitions, journeys and encounters, the film extended like the branches of jasmine, organically touching and leaning on one point and then looking for the next, extending the cocreative process between the crab apple tree, the southern forests and ourselves.

Conclusions and openings

Numerous cases have been documented by anthropologists on relationships with plants, and these are often linked to medicine, healing and traditional knowledge; in Western science, this human-plant relationship is inexplicable. Relations with plants usually occur in limited contexts, with the mediation of traditional authorities or shamans and with plants that are known as teachers or sacred, such as tobacco, ayahuasca, peyote, coca and cocoa.

Our cocreative encounter with the kingdom plantae, starting from the relationship with a crab apple tree in the middle of a patio in an urban environment, opens up different perspectives. Perhaps, the possibility of multispecies interaction is much closer than imagined, and one does not need to go into the deep of the Amazon to find a shaman or *Planta Maestra*. If one reads the experiences in *The Mind of Plants* (book and symposium), this communication seems to be happening more frequently. We are experiencing the multiverse in many situations that are still mostly invisible to the human-rational perspective. Our experience of the multiverse with other species emerged when we approached it free of classifications. We accounted for it through metaphors and multiple connotations; poetic or artistic expressions broaden and expand the register and tell of the experience of a multispecies pluriverse. The environment guided the capturing of images through video and photographs—the different shades of green, the extensions and heights of trees and shrubs, the wind, the birds and flowers, the lights and shadows and the breathing designed "invisible" patterns to be followed as paths opening front of us and were a constant invitation to be part of the forests. Lived in the moment and seen afterwards, it would be arrogant to think that what happened there was only a decision or creation of us humans. Instead, the sensation was flowing in the environment, following the manifestation of the forest's energy through our expressive capacities, transforming some of those perceptions into human language.

Multispecies cocreation connects the senses, emotions and vibrations in a permanent exploration that moves in different rhythms and times. Hence, the pluriverse, design and art are connected in this integration of all living beings as a community of constant creation, expanding the vision of design and art in a constant dialogue with all species. In this encounter between the plantae world and human one, art and poetry could be forms that allow for a more respectful and open exploration in a cocreative way, thus avoiding the temptation of conceptual and human colonisation of the plantae world that would reduce the possibilities of expansion and learning offered by an encounter with another world.

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3 Dialogues for plurality—art-based exchange for strengthening youth's role as agents of change

Katri Konttinen, Enni Mikkonen and Mikko Ylisuvanto

Abstract: This chapter presents an interdisciplinary arts-based research with seven young people from asylum-seeking backgrounds as part of a wider research project: SEEYouth. This research is based on the dialogical process leading to the transformation experienced by the participants and authors. The chapter's main research question is: How can interdisciplinary arts-based exchange with youth create pluralistic dialogue and strengthen youth's roles as agents of change in their life contexts? The dialogue for plurality is discussed in the chapter through verbal, visual and embodied languages, which were the main analysis categories from the process. The chapter suggests that creative dialogue for plurality, including multiple forms of languages beyond conventional research knowledge production, can create a space for youth to express their concerns related to the obstacles they face regarding their inclusion and belonging. It also encourages shared reflections, creating new perspectives and strengthening youth's role as agents of change in society and in their personal lives.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary arts-based research, pluralistic dialogue, youth agency, asylum-seeking youth, social transformation

Introduction

> *I have a question for you, did you have friends with immigrant or refugee backgrounds when you were our age?*
>
> *—Ella*

This question, which was asked of us (the authors) by a young participant during the arts-based workshops, provoked us to think about the structures maintaining the social divisions creating the evident otherisation in the societies in the Global North, such as Finland. Consequently, there is a need for transformation in the artistic research processes that involve diverse communities and groups, along with their artefacts, in an attempt to move towards a premise that focuses on the social dynamics and power structures in these processes (Leavy, 2018). This chapter presents an interdisciplinary arts-based case study with seven young people from asylum-seeking backgrounds, which has proven to lead to transformation as experienced by the participants and artist-researchers (Thompson, 2012). The research is based on a dialogical process with the youth in an attempt to reposition ourselves as researchers, artists, collaborators and community members—here by not only questioning the dominant

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positions but by moving beyond one-dimensional or universal solutions to the pluralistic dialogue with differences and particularities (Reiter, 2018).

Our main research question is: *How can interdisciplinary arts-based exchange with youth create pluralistic dialogue and strengthen youths' roles as agents of change in their life contexts?* The dialogue for plurality creates the space for youth to express their concerns related to the obstacles they face regarding their inclusion and belonging. It also encourages shared reflections, creating new perspectives and strengthening youth's role as agents of change, helping them pursue what they wish to see in society and in their personal lives. This builds on the idea of plurality that is constructed by reciprocal and positional knowing (partial and contextual; Reiter, 2018), including the overlapping dimensions of ethnicity, gender, language, culture, religion and age. These dimensions include those hierarchies that create structural obstacles to people in marginalised positions. The chapter offers arts-based exchange as a possible entry point to tackle these obstacles and hierarchies.

We—the artist-researcher (Katri), social work researcher (Enni) and advisor on multiculturalism and integration of young people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds (Mikko)—collaborated in a sub-study that is a part of the wider Trans-Atlantic research project called *SEEYouth* (SEEYouth, 2021). Six of the young participants were originally from Afghanistan and one was from the Republic of the Congo. These young people aged 18–21—six men and one woman—had come as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers to Finland between 2015 and 2019, had gained a residence permit and were studying. The youth were central actors, from orientation and planning to the implementation of two workshop weekends in Southern Finland in 2020 and 2021 and in the online workshops and communication between those. Our collaboration continued at the project's final conference and exhibition in November 2021 (SEEYouth Exhibition, 2021), where the youth presented their reflections on societal and professional ways to support young people with asylum-seeking backgrounds. They also contributed by performing in artistic ways, such as creating installations for the exhibition space (Figure 3.1).

We perceive dialogue for plurality as a process that includes creative aspects for nurturing diversity and questioning hegemonic artistic and research processes (Ellington, 2019). In this 'creative dialogue', the dynamics of verbal language intersect with visual and embodied languages, providing new avenues for youth to exercise their agency in collaborative spaces. Core-reflections form a continuum and dialogue that can expand beyond cultural, lingual and social hierarchies; thus, they create a holistic and in-depth understanding within the pluralistic space. They shift conventional academic roles and relations (researcher/researched) to a pluralistic dialogue, aiming at providing ideas to strengthen youth's identities, sense of belonging and global connection in the context of social inclusion and forced migration; hence, they can create a transformation towards more pluralistic knowledge production. This process required that we, as artist-researcher-professionals, were sensitive to listen and reflect on the youth's perspectives, like Ella's question at the beginning of the chapter:

ENNI: I was young in the 1990s, and we lived in the neighbourhood of the reception centre. My brother and I often went there to play and meet people. I witnessed racism and biases the people faced in their everyday life, and local communities were really separated from the centre and its people. This is a question that

should also be asked to us now: we tend to live in social 'bubbles' that do not often intersect with other groups.

KATRI: I agree with Enni. I grew up in an area where many families with immigrant or refugee backgrounds were living. It was an area where racism was also visible, especially among young people. However, it was not so visible in our small school, where we had pupils from different backgrounds and families.

MIKKO: Growing up in Porvoo (a small town in Southern Finland), there were not many immigrants, and, for example, in my class, there were none. I got to know people from immigration backgrounds as an adult when working as a service director on integration work at SOS Children's Village Finland.

Ella's question—among others—awoke us to reflect on our backgrounds and positions; we looked to observe (un)plurality in our life contexts and how it had appeared to us when we were younger. These reflections lead us to think about how long-term, arts-based collaboration with the youth had built a base for asking questions and doing things differently (Hiltunen, 2020), alongside strengthening youth's agencies in their own life contexts. Through this two-year process, a deeper understanding about the youth's circumstances and capacities to foster their agency in the future was gained. We suggest that creative dialogue for plurality—including multiple forms of languages beyond conventional research knowledge production—can create transformations that bring marginalities to the centre.

Figure 3.1 Youth's installation in the gallery space by Mahdi, Mohammad, Davoud and Dawod, 2021. Photo: Katri Konttinen 2021.

Next, we describe the interdisciplinary framework that combines three different professional standpoints defining our work. Our approach to plurality in coproducing knowledge starts from our introspective reflections as artists/researchers/professionals, instead of merely narrating about the youth, which aims to avoid reinforcing the processes of otherisation caused by, for instance, racialisation, nationalisation and colonising processes (Dominelli, 2010). In the following section, we describe our research process with the youth and our methodological approach. After that, we present the findings and discuss the dialogue for plurality through verbal, visual and embodied languages. In the last section, we address how these dimensions of dialogue for plurality can offer possibilities for youth to find creative ways to act as agents for change.

Three professional standpoints for the arts-based workshops

The framework for collaborating with the youth was built on socially engaged and environmental arts, social work research and professional expertise on working with youth from asylum-seeking backgrounds. These fields formed a reflective, context-specific basis for arts-based actions in the workshop weekends. In the following, we describe the three standpoints for our dialogue:

KATRI: In the workshops, socially engaged and environmental arts approaches formed natural frames for the activities, focusing on the youth's everyday lives and circumstances (Sederholm, 2000). Socially engaged art builds on active participation, communication and interaction with communities in arts-based processes, communicating naturally with different disciplines, such as social work (Dominelli, 2010; Hiltunen, 2020) and environmental arts strengthen the interaction between people and environments and creates dialogue between them (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2018). The role of art was to introduce the youth to different methods, encouraging them to observe their creativity and finding tools for self-expression. One of the premises of socially engaged art is precisely to bring transformation to the consciousness of participants through dialogues (Kester, 2005).

ENNI: Social work aims at advocating social justice and the well-being of people who live at the margins (Dominelli, 2010). The social work approach brought conceptualisations for researching social change as a structural process and addressing the questions of youth agency. It opened entry points for professional self-reflexivity to dismantle the structural obstacles that youth may face in their social inclusion and belonging to society (Jönsson, 2013). Social work is, however, not free from the hegemonic processes within its very own premise—it is argued that the profession has colonialist and imperialist roots that are yet to be fully acknowledged and deconstructed (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011). Long-term collaboration with these young people through arts-based methods opens the paths to deconstruct those conventional, Eurocentric ontologies and epistemologies in social work and within my own knowing and relating.

Our academic arts-based and social work standpoints were intertwined with contextual knowledge from the professional practice. Expertise on the pasts, life-contexts and needs of young people brought relevance to our context-specific framework:

MIKKO: The youth participating in the SEEYouth study have a refugee background, and they have arrived in Finland alone as minors without a guardian. Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are a special and understudied group (Kauko, 2015). When young people are involved in research projects, it is essential to make research psychologically safe and empowering. Therefore, it is important to understand the backgrounds and life situations of these young people. Many unaccompanied minor asylum seekers have varying degrees of trauma experience and many types of loss in their lives, including home, goods, family, familiar environments, community status and identity. Their past is often fragmented, and their futures contain many uncertainties. In addition, asylum seekers go through a lengthy asylum process (Mustonen & Alanko, 2011). To cope with the war situations and traumatic experiences they faced in their country of origin and on their escape, these young people need very strong resilience, which should be emphasised strongly to promote their integration and well-being. However, very little research is available on the means of support (Nahkiaisoja et al., 2019).

The inclusion of these professional standpoints was actualised in our continuous negotiations and flexibility to adapt our working methods to the youth's wishes and needs and the social circumstances. Mikko's commitment to the collaboration formed the ethical cornerstone of providing insights into youth participation and creating connections between the youth and researchers (Mikkonen & Konttinen, 2022). The collaboration was based on the premise that the three standpoints acted as providing context, rather than content (Kester, 2005), creating the space for fostering youth's agency, expertise and perspectives.

Methodological approach for multidisciplinary actions with youth

The methodological frame of the chapter is based on arts-based actions and dialogues with youth, built by interdisciplinary collaboration with our different roles. Mikko's role was in creating psychological safety and contextual relevance—a solid and ethically sensitive methodological basis: *I have known each of them personally from the first day they've been in Finland. My role in this project has been to provide understanding on the life situations of young people with refugee backgrounds, to help connect youth and researchers and to create functional and psychologically safe structures for practical implementation. My competence is based on both theoretical knowledge and long-term work experience in child protection, youth integration and work supervision. I consider it important that this research was carried out in a process-based form. In planning the workshops and group activities, I used work supervision and training methods and practices. Because some of the topics in the workshops were in depth and dealt with identity and internal fears, it was crucial to take care of the group's psychological sense of security*.

Katri provided a methodological arts-based 'toolbox', which was adapted and modified in our discussions to collaborate with these young people: *I focused on designing workshop activities with approaches from socially engaged and environmental arts. The youth's participation was at the core of the actions, where different engaging methods, such as performance (Kester, 2005), were utilised. They showed*

initiative, presenting a sense of trust in the collaborative space. The two-year journey with the youth was a learning process for us, where they opened their perspectives through multiple dialogues. Dialogue became a central part and independent outcome of the process (Kester, 2005).

As a social work researcher, Enni's role was to conceptualise and co-create a methodological and epistemological ground to implement arts-based actions that were sensitive to social structures and processes: *I engaged in this collaboration with an ethnographic, qualitative methodological framework from social work. Ethnography offers a base for producing knowledge on social practices and informal information within them (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2010). Being a context-specific framework, it guided me in participating in the activities as a researcher and strengthening my reflective encounters with the youth. Social work knowledge production is based on a critical premise that is openly subjective and formed through interconnectivity with participants (Dominelli, 2010). Intertwining arts-based methods enlarged the possibilities for open encounters and reaching for silent and marginalised knowledge, which is a crucial aim of social work in tackling social injustices.*

As our primary research data, we use the exercise 'me and society', which took place in the workshops in 2021. The exercise was initiated by Satu Miettinen, a professor of service design at the University of Lapland. The original idea in this exercise, which focused on the youth's observations of Finnish society (Sarantou et al., 2018), was to take photographs in which the youth would visualise society-related themes, such as school, healthcare or work, from their perspectives. Instead, they started to create small, acted scenes. These scenes reflected on the questions of the youth's social exclusion and current societal issues. The exercise summarised all the themes the youth had addressed throughout the process, starting from the first physical workshops. The exercise provided multidimensional forms of research data saved in photographs and video clips by the young photographer Mosi Herati and in the audio recording of the reflective discussion after the exercise. In addition to this, the authors' notes on their participatory observation functioned as a part of the ethnographic data (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2010).

In our analysis, we have focused on multiple forms of dialogue, strengthening the youth's agency (as experts by experience) for guiding other youth. By finding alternative ways of representing the research data (such as the exhibition and the youth's conference presentation) and integrating different ways of knowing, remembering and imagining into academic practices, we can find ways to challenge the conventional, Western paradigm in research practices (Pink, 2009). Here, the dialogue for plurality turns the research settings 'upside down' because the participants take an active role in planning, implementing and evaluating the research practices and outcomes, enriching the process and opening new aspects for performing research.

Because the research involved youth from multiple margins, *ethical considerations* were pivotal. One of the cornerstones was to engage in a long-term process in which open communication between the authors and youth was carried out to build trust. In this process, the youth's agency and knowledge were at the core, and they could take an active role instead of being 'targets' of the research activities. The youth provided their written informed consent for their artistic outcomes, photographs and views that they provided in the workshops, which was then used in the research publications. The process to gain consent was dialogical, with discussion about their

rights regarding participation (The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2017).

Dialogue for plurality

Through our analysis, we found *three core aspects of dialogue* in the arts-based space: *verbal*, *visual and embodied*. These aspects form a continuum that intertwines the social, environmental, physical and psychological aspects in the collaboration. They can deconstruct obstacles in our communication and widen our understanding of people who are living in different social and environmental positions. Verbal, visual and embodied forms of dialogue—when accompanied by critical and pluralistic foregrounds (Ellington, 2019; Dominelli, 2010)—can deconstruct hegemonic, conventional ways of knowing, being and relating. Each aspect includes the idea of plurality (spoken languages, forms of arts and doing, physical abilities and attributes and the environments we engage with); together, they form the 'plurality of dialogue'.

Through the theme 'me and society', it became relevant to discuss how society appears to the youth in the current situation in which they live in Finland, far away from their families living among the unstable political situations in their countries of origin. In the workshops in 2020, the youth expressed concern about their families. That discussion continued in 2021, especially as the situation in Afghanistan had undergone rapid and radical changes:

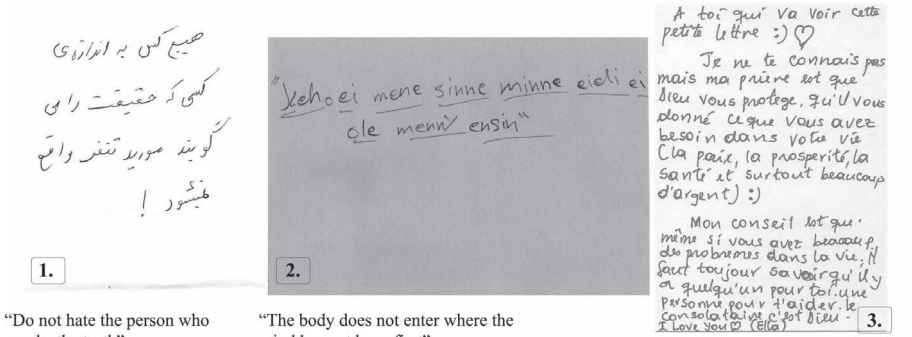
> *There is war now in Afghanistan. The Taliban don't accept people and their culture; they don't respect the people. They managed to attack because things were in chaos in our country.*
>
> *—Hamid*

One of the pivotal questions concerning the relation to society was about how this situation affects the youth, their identities and future plans. As the youth expressed, they had contradictory emotions towards the situation in which they were far away, unable to help their families. How could the dialogue for plurality provide new ways to reflect on those difficult situations? Amongst their in-depth reflections on tough issues, the youth presented arts-based methods as encouraging and inspiring. One of the expressions was their wish to share their thoughts and connect with other youth through arts-based actions and dialogues.

Verbal language

Multiple spoken languages were used during the process, with the youth switching naturally between their mother tongues and the dominant languages in the context: Dari, French, Finnish and English (Figure 3.2). This happened mostly in the youth's mutual discussions, in which they used their mother tongue; these conversations were sometimes translated to the other participants by the youth themselves.

The youth wrote down their reflections regarding the contents and methods during and at the end of the workshops. These notes (Figure 3.2), which were written in Finnish and in the mother tongues of the youth after the exercise 'me and society',



"Do not hate the person who speaks the truth"

"The body does not enter where the mind has not been first"

"To you who will receive this little letter :) <3 I don´t know you but my prayer is that God protects you, that he gives you what you need in life (peace, prosperity, health and especially a lot of money) :) My advice is that even if you have a lot of challenges in life, you always need to know that there is someone there for you: someone to help you. The comforter is God. I love you <3" - Ella

Figure 3.2 The youth used languages creatively in the workshops. The plurality of languages was one core feature in the arts-based dialogue.

illustrated how metaphors and spirituality were strong parts of their identities and language (example 3, Figure 3.2). Some of the notes indicated deep reflections (example 2, Figure 3.2) and strong statements where the youth used rich and multidimensional expressions (example 1, Figure 3.2). Here, language functions as a construct for one's identity, so using the youth's mother tongue—and understanding the cultural nuances of them—is an essential part of pluralistic dialogue.

The youth indicated strong linguistic skills in working with different languages and proved their flexibility shifting between the languages. They used the languages parallelly, which enriched their vocabulary. According to the youth, increased interaction with other youth in Finland would support their linguistic skills. This notion generated a discussion about the youth's identities and the changes regarding them when living in Finland. Their identities were reflected in the exercise as the youth observed the issues raised from their perspectives, relating themselves to societal discussions.

Languages are not neutral but developed and relate to each other in processes that reflect societal structures. In our conversations, Finnish was the major language, strengthening the authors' power position as native Finnish speakers. Thus, our lingual space included multiple hierarchies and entailed a risk of misunderstanding the youth's initial messages. However, being sensitive towards and using multiple spoken languages in a social space that included cultural and ethnic diversities can be seen as a way to counteract the hegemony of the English in the academia or Finnish in our research context. We could learn about the youth's social and cultural knowledge from their diverse languages, which builds dialogue that can foster plurality. In addition to being critically reflective towards these hierarchies of languages and possible misunderstandings, the spoken language was accompanied with other forms of languages—body language and visual language. Davoud, a young participant, stated the following: 'It feels now easy to tell what I am feeling in my heart'. The youth

expressed that they found it sometimes challenging to express themselves verbally in Finnish, even though their usage of languages indicated a rich vocabulary; but in being supported by the arts-based methods, they found new ways to speak from their hearts, building a plurality of verbal languages.

Visual language

Arts-based methods provided the group with the possibility to explore and strengthen their visual expression. The usage of arts-based methods can lead to the discovery of a shared language among participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, where the dialogue is built through practical work. In the exercise where the youth acted out scenes under the theme 'me and society', one group visualised the colours on the flag of Afghanistan and discussed the meaning of each colour (Figure 3.3), reflecting on the different aspects of the country's society and history, which has long been affected by war. The youth expressed that green, red and black symbolise joy, life and sorrow. By sharing this knowledge, the youth shared a piece of their backgrounds and, therefore, themselves through visual means.

Two months after this exercise, the Taliban conquered Afghanistan and reports of violations covered the media around the world. It was only then that the full meaning of this visual expression, by illustrating the country's flag, opened itself to us. It expressed the matters of freedom, security, democracy, self-determination and the rights to one's national identity. The simple exercise in which the youth got materials—different prompts such as role-play hats and colours—for their free use grew to include a strong political message that related to the youth in a very concrete

Figure 3.3 The youth explained that the colours symbolise joy, sorrow and life as they painted the flag of Afghanistan. Photograph: Mosi Herati.

and personal way. This expression took on wider meanings with time and opened our (non)understanding of others' situations.

Strengthening visual language and finding the right methods for oneself should be emphasised for supporting the youth's agencies, inclusion and belonging, as well as providing the tools needed for self-expression. In other words, visual dialogue can help in expressing thoughts that seem to be difficult to express verbally.

Embodied language

Embodied language was formed by interaction and physical exercises, such as acting with the youth. Their body language communicated a sense of affection, safety and trust. The formation of a safe space took place through activities and dialogues, providing the space for creative expression. The sense of safety appeared in the youth's behaviour through not withdrawing from the activities or discussions but instead taking an active role in participation. This was largely because of Mikko's knowledge in supporting the interaction between the youth and researchers and helping the researchers understand the emotional states and perspectives of the youth. It was also about providing time for the arts-based relationships to develop and evolve naturally in a long-term collaboration. In addition to this, the youth indicated being courageous, in-depth thinkers and actors and strongly committed to the process. As we collaborated in that specific place, we engaged in building a *meaningful place* (Cresswell, 2004) for the interaction.

The youth shared their thoughts of Finnish society through acting out scenes on unemployment, homelessness and substance abuse, the impacts of COVID-19 and helping others and national identity regarding Afghanistan and its fragile political situation. When presenting the negative aspects, they also looked for solutions to these problems. The miniplays included bodily and interactional performativity, which expands the conventional ways of producing knowledge and can fill the gaps of spoken language. The performativity was socially produced and constructed in an intercultural space. It could deconstruct the social hierarchies among us as we entered this embodied space in a reciprocal process. The agencies of the youth were strengthened in this embodied interaction.

> *SEEYouth is close to us youth. It is a friendly space.*
>
> *—Mahdi*

Discussion: change in youth's agency through arts-based dialogue

The youth's increased encouragement to take an active role as collaborators created fruitful dialogues that pursued change, which here refers to transformation in the youth's agency to act on their own terms and reflect on and respond to complex societal issues related to their lives (DeJaeghere et al., 2016) and to our new understanding of the youth's viewpoints. Even though it was not possible to arrange follow-up workshops facilitated by the youth because of the project ending, they expressed interest and skills based on their experience in taking this role in the future.

With the change in the youth's agency being notable throughout our collaboration, it also became evident in their later actions. Some of the participants participated in a performance presenting the circumstances of women and children currently living

in Afghanistan (Tuominen & Vainio, 2021). The use of arts-based methods showed that the youth had found the methods effective for communicating about important issues, such as taking an activist stance on societal issues. The depth of the youth's reflections made us address our positions as researchers/professionals, artists and co-citizens. This brought us back to the question of how we had engaged with other youth from immigration backgrounds in our youth.

We suggest that creative dialogue for plurality, where multiple forms of languages intertwine, can strengthen youth's agency, including self-determination and meaningful participation and engagement in their life contexts, as well as provide new knowledge production methods. They also bridge the positional understandings that we carry because of our different life contexts and social positions; the youth's insights created space for critical self-reflection on the part of the research-artist-professionals. In this process, arts-based methods can provide new perspectives and encourage youth to find creative ways for self-expression. Ultimately, it is pivotal to co-develop new means with youth to take active roles for participating in tackling societal challenges. They hold valuable social and cultural knowledge and, therefore, there should be more means for the youth to be included in promoting their social inclusion and belonging in the society.

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4 Multiperspective take on pluriversal agenda in artistic research

Marija Griniuk, Daria Akimenko, Satu Miettinen, Heidi Pietarinen and Melanie Sarantou

Abstract: Rigid structures and differences in the sociocultural contexts of art academies and universities across the world can limit cross-disciplinary collaboration and network building. Artistic and arts-based research has the potential to unfold a transition in art and design fields, merging them into a cross-disciplinary arena that summons radical innovation. Based on the concept of the pluriverse, this chapter explores speculative scenarios of envisioning the future of artistic research by analysing four case studies. These cases apply similar methods in engagement with diverse audiences to disseminate multiple themes or concerns (social, environmental and cultural) and to represent different medialities/medial situations and scales of collaboration, hence contributing to the concept of the pluriverse within arts-based research and artistic research projects. This chapter addresses the following four questions: *For whose benefit is artistic research initiated? Who is doing artistic research? With and by whom is artistic research conducted?* Why is artistic research conducted? Hence, the social aspects of artistic research are explored to better understand the relationship between collaborative practices and research. The 'social' in the scope of this chapter includes a wider group of agents, including nonhuman contributors. After an overview of theory behind the key themes—artistic research, arts-based research and the pluriverse—the authors proceed with autoethnographic analysis of the above-mentioned questions through the prism of their personal experiences and specific case studies from their respective artistic research practices. Further application of these autoethnographies in discussing the pluriversal agenda results in an outline of the profile of a contemporary researcher and the social aspects of her research, both in and beyond institutional settings.

Keywords: Artistic research, pluriversal agenda, autoethnography, social context

Introduction

This chapter addresses the multiplicity in academic voices, personalities and personal histories of artist-researchers practising arts-based and artistic research in a cross-disciplinary context and within the disciplines of art and design. The position of the contributing researchers is that of active practitioners within these aforementioned fields. All authors have a connection to the University of Lapland (Finland) and work with arts-based and artistic research in a variety of cultural contexts, from those in the Global North, such as Russia, Finnish Lapland, Lithuania and Australia, to those in the Global South—Namibia, Chile and South Africa, to name a few. Their work involves collaborations between educational and art institutions, as well as multiple nonacademic groups and creative individuals.

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The aim of this chapter is to present a profile of an artist-researcher within and beyond the university context. The objectives are as follows: (a) to define the key themes using a thematic literature review; (b) to unfold the case studies brought by each contributing author through autoethnographic exploration; and (c) to conduct reflexive analysis of the researcher's position within the institutional, noninstitutional, postartistic and social aspects of research.

The authors propose four questions to build on: *For whose benefit is artistic research initiated? Who is doing artistic research? With and by whom is artistic research conducted? Why is artistic research conducted?* While exploring the possible answers to these questions, the authors aim to respond to the pluriversal agenda that conceives of 'a world where many worlds fit', an idea borrowed from the Zapatista of Chiapas (Escobar, 2017). The social aspects of artistic research are explored to better understand the relationship between collaborative practices and research. In the scope of this chapter, the 'social' includes a wider group of agents and contributors who are employing 'more-than-human' (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018) and 'anthrodecentric' (Gaietto, 2019) approaches to the social worlds of artistic practice and research, thus pushing the normatives within the reified structures of institutional/academic research.

The methodology is based on autoethnographic analysis and collective reflection by the five authors within a pluriversal approach towards research practice. This research is a tapestry of realities and truths attuned to the interconnected relations between humans and nonhumans, hence contributing to a deeper knowledge of the researched area from the position of all agents. Furthermore, the radical interdependence between the place/space and the audience/reader/viewer is brought forward. Research outcomes can communicate to broad audiences on multiple levels, whereby the audiences are encouraged to choose their roles in interacting with text-based or visual research outputs. Within such practices, the trajectory is that of decolonising knowledge through arts-based methods, or a 'rejection of violent and unidirectional ways of knowledge production' (Lorenz, 2017, p. 41), and embracing pluriversality within the audience's experiences.

Thematic reflection on artistic research, arts-based research and pluriverse

The key themes within the current study—*artistic research*, *arts-based research* and *pluriverse*—construct the framework and introduce the need for highlighting the pluriversal thinking, experiences and personalities of researchers within and beyond institutional contexts. Themes such as *diversity*, *plurality* and *pluriverse* (Table 4.1) all contribute to the framework of thinking beyond homogeneity and towards multiplicity (Escobar, 2021).

Arts-based research and artistic research

Artistic research can be described as research relying on art in its process of investigation (Jones, 2009). The ability of artistic research to develop new ways and methods to deal with issues that are unknown, fuzzy, sensitive, fragile, radical or otherwise unique is one of its core characteristics. Artistic research can become a vehicle, methodology, a way of reaching for new information and a way of creating new outcomes

Table 4.1 Diversity, plurality, pluralism and pluriverse are explained according to the literature.

Diversity	*Plurality and pluralism*	*Pluriverse*
Diversity means the multiplicity of cultures and cultural relativism within one world, which corresponds to the term multiculturalism (Beachum, 2020).	*Plurality and pluralism* explain systems of beliefs, values and attitudes (Geir, 1995) that are often, but not exclusively, used regarding religion.	*Pluriverse*, according to Mingolo (2018), allows many worlds and truths to coexist on an equal level at the same time.

Source: Developed by the authors.

(Busch, 2009). Artistic research can bring forward new understandings about the art itself, artistic practice, intentions and philosophies. Artistic research is based on the critical thinking and evaluation of meaning and contents (Henke et al., 2020). Being a critical investigative practice, it can serve as a productive driver of change in shaping art, society and reality (Rouhiainen, 2017).

Arts-based research implies a system of research methods with art and an aesthetic approach to data collection, analysis and research dissemination at its core (Barone & Eisner, 2012). It is qualitative research that has an exploratory approach and is used within and beyond the fields of art and design (Barone & Eisner, 2012). In arts-based research, an aesthetic output, for example, an artwork, helps answer research questions. In contrast to artistic research, which mainly stems from the art academy perspective and that of artistic studio-based education, arts-based research is broader in the sense of containing art and aesthetics at its core within a wide scope of art and design practices; it can also be applied within other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology and pedagogy (Rolling, 2010; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2017; Gullion & Schäfer, 2018; MacDonald & Hunter, 2018).

In this chapter, artistic and arts-based research are referred to side by side and sometimes interchangeably so because of the multifaceted nature of the explored cases that both generate knowledge and understandings about artistic practices themselves and address wider issues relying on the artistic practices as a vehicle.

Pluriverse and pluriversal thinking

Escobar (2017) explains the *pluriverse* as the multiplicities of practices and experiences of representatives of diverse communities and diverse backgrounds, which is similar to the study presented in this chapter. Within pluriversality, all worlds are interconnected and interrelated, for example, in the way that indigenous worlds exist within the modern world (Escobar, 2021). Thus, the pluriverse is the interconnectedness of multiple ontologies and the world where many worlds can fit, which is a different framework of thinking than that of inclusion or assimilation (Escobar, 2021). *Pluriversal thinking* is a way to decolonise knowledge by dismantling and reassembling the structures within the institutions of knowledge production. It is crucial to discuss artistic and arts-based research within the concept of pluriverse: both play a role in framing the institutional milieu in art academies and universities, and both are interdependent in developing possible scenarios of future education.

Methodology

The method used in the current study is collective autoethnographic reflection. The authors use their experiences to reflect on the role of an artist-researcher and artistic research within and outside of the institution(s). Therefore, autoethnography as a method allows them to be representatives of the researched field while still reflecting on it.

Within autoethnographic practice, the personal experiences of a researcher are infused with the sociopolitics and reflexivity of her research context, where the self is a part of the researched area (Adams et al., 2017). According to Wall, the moving forces of autoethnographic inquiry are 'the freedom of a researcher to speak as a player in a research project and to mingle his or her experience with the experience of those studied' (2006, p. 148). Autoethnography can be viewed as action research for an individual (Wall, 2006), as well as a method built on narrative construction from the personal narrative of the researcher who represents the field of study (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). According to Muncey, autoethnography is 'as personally and socially constructed as any form of research, but at least the author can say "I" with authority and can respond immediately to any questions that arise from the story' (2005, p. 10). In the current study, autoethnography does not have a linear approach but rather is a complex tapestry of the experiences and narrations of several authors; therefore, it has an open-endedness in the process (Wall, 2006).

The data were collected in the form of notes taken during the meetings between the authors occurring online periodically from June to October 2021, along with the autoethnographic notes of each author. The meetings were held for the sake of this research, which resulted first in a conference presentation in October 2021 (Akimenko et al., 2021) and second in this chapter. This meant that the data were processed and analysed collaboratively, gradually and iteratively. A limitation is that the data are bound to the four cases. Analysis of the autoethnographic data is approached by extracting individual narratives and situating them within a collective reflection on the four cases in question (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Four cases within the project.

'Transcorporeal Writing' and 'Techno-voyeurism into the Performing Body', themed around technology within artistic production	Methodological framework relies on transcorporeality and inhuman connections within arts-based research.
BioARTech, Future Bio Arctic Design (F.BAD) and High-altitude Bioprospecting (HAB), themed around interdisciplinarity connecting natural sciences, technology and textile design	Methodological framework connects arts-based research and bioart, uniting a human creator and a living medium—bacteria.
The exhibition 'Have you met my sister', themed around reflection on interpersonal relationships	Methodological framework unites community-based, narrative and arts-based research projects across national borders.
The artwork 'Placemaking through Performance', themed around the idea of placemaking	Methodological framework is artistic research into placemaking within a specific cultural landscape.

Source: Developed by authors.

Autoethnographic reflection: multiplicity of research paths

For whose benefit are artistic research and arts-based research initiated?

'Transcorporeal Writing' and 'Techno-voyeurism into the Performing Body' are recent arts-based research projects by Griniuk in which she attempts, through pilot projects and peer-reviewed articles/reflections, to promote innovations within art academy and university milieus within the artistic process involving technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and technology remediating biometric data. Within these projects, the newest technology is added as a possibility for enhancing creativity within the writing or documentation practices.

In the project 'Transcorporeal Writing', a method of creativity training within academic writing is developed. It involves a creativity loop containing an input by a human writer and an output by OpenAI's GPT-3, which triggers creativity flows within the human, thus resolving creativity blocks (Griniuk & Mosich, 2021). Such an approach is different from some currently practised methods, for example, creative platform or pomodoro sessions (Byrge, 2020; Griniuk & Mosich, 2021), because it requires neither work in a group nor facilitation. Creativity training involves only a human and AI, with the possibility of using the method in multiple creative spots, be it a garden, a camping site or a studio, anywhere with access to a computer and the internet. Such innovation can significantly benefit the ways creativity is perceived within academic writing and creative writing generally.

In the research project 'Techno-voyeurism into the Performing Body' (Griniuk, 2020, 2021), biometric data, namely, the brain activity of the performer, are read by an EEG device to add an additional layer of performance documentation to the commonly used documentation given by video and sound recordings (Figure 4.1). Such innovation in performance documentation can reveal the inner states of cognitive load or relaxation by the artist during their performance.

The pilot projects and scientific outcomes have the potential to contribute to the change of the current normatives within art academies and universities on creativity and performance art documentation. Pluriversal thinking translates here into an expansion of the ways of collaborating with technology as radical interconnections between humans and nonhumans within research practices.

Who is doing artistic research?

BioARTech, Future Bio Arctic Design (F.BAD) and High-altitude Bioprospecting (HAB) are innovative combinations of natural sciences, technology and textile design in the Arctic Finnish Lapland area; they allow for participation in multidisciplinary working groups that include a variety of expertise, from biochemists to artists, including Pietarinen, one of this chapter's authors. All of these projects combine bioart, which can encompass activities from creating smart, natural and nontoxic textile materials by using Arctic raw materials to investigating the invisible microbial life in the air or vegetation. Microbial life can be viewed either as a coexisting benign presence or potential threat, the latter exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The working groups share interests in (textile) art, environment and bioart, the study of living organisms that are too small to be visible. For example, the Finnish idea of *kangas*—a word that translates as both 'fabric' and 'forest type'—describes the

Figure 4.1 Collage. The research PhD project 'Techno-voyeurism into the Performing Body' presented at Supermarket Art Fair, Stockholm, 2021. Photos: Mosich, T.B.

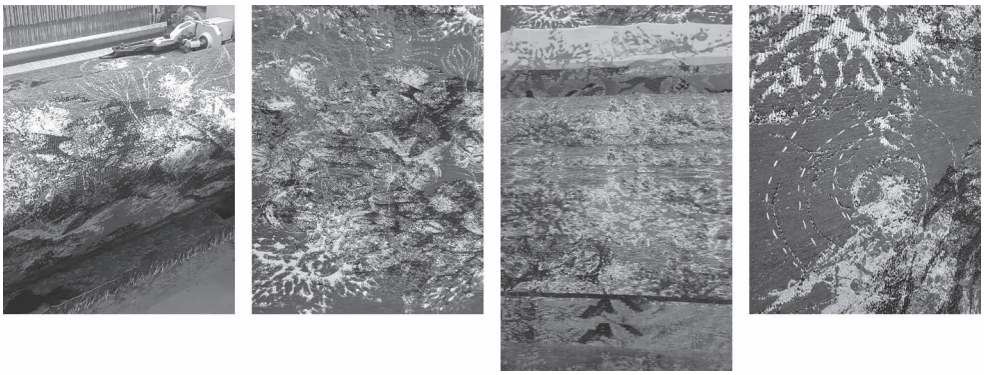

Figure 4.2 A jacquard woven 'kangas' (2021) fabric is designed by Heidi Pietarinen, Noora Sandgren, Anne Youncha and Melissa Grant. Woven by Annala Weaving Mill, Finland. Photo Noora Sandgren, 2021.

intricate meshing of species, human, nonhuman, aerial and terrestrial (Pietarinen et al., 2022; Kunnas et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2021; Grant et al., 2019).

After collecting and identifying the microbial 'collaborators' in an expedition to Kilpisjärvi (Northern Finnish Lapland), the jacquard weaving technique created layers and stitched together images from drawings, photographs and microscopic slides, attempting to better understand these other-than-human materials (Figure 4.2). The artists ponder the following: What are the abilities of these microbes? What are the bridges between us (humans and microbes)? This ongoing process of understanding involves several layers of fabric and translations, such as moving from two-dimensional hand-drawn sketches (analogue) through digital design to the physical implementation of jacquard woven fabric.

Bioart is a pluralistic practice that brings the artist-researcher to consider their ethical standing. This means that design is not only about producing an object, that is, a jacquard woven fabric in this case. From the very beginning, the process can show the relationship between human experience and a living design medium—the bacteria—that has its own agency. In line with contemporary trends in bioart, it offers the possibilities of shared experiences, collaborative practices, cooperation and shared authorship. Both HAB and F.BAD working groups approach life and living beings both as a medium and subject matter (e.g., in designing the perceptions of symmetrical and mirror repeated patterns) involving them in the creation of artistic acceptance for these bioartech developments and processes.

With and by whom is artistic research conducted?

The exhibition 'Have you met my sister' (Sarantou, 2019) took place at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery in South Australia and displayed works of seven women from Australia, Finland, Russia and Namibia, including two of this chapter's authors, Sarantou and Akimenko.

The artworks were created specifically for the exhibition, with certain topics in mind. Here, exhibition making served for 'setting up frameworks for experimentation'

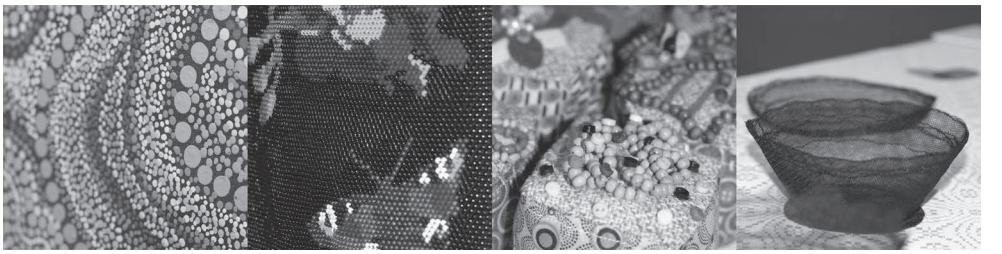

Figure 4.3 Collage of artworks by Sherrie Jones, Sanna Sillgren, Vera Tessmer and Laura Pokela displayed at the exhibition 'Have you met my sister'. Photos: Melanie Sarantou.

(Krysa, 2017), which enabled the artists to both experiment with their making and reflect on interpersonal relationships, such as family ties, friendships, intergenerational mother—daughter succession and knowledge transfer and sisterhood between women. The artists met in person over the years on several occasions. Continuing relationships emerged around community-based and arts-based research projects across national borders, with a focus on peripheral communities, which are those defined by the conditions of migration and social and geographical isolation (Miettinen et al., 2016; Akimenko et al., 2017).

Identities that constitute the notion of fluid family ties were explored through applied techniques, such as textiles, collages and projected images (Figure 4.3). The layers of meanings often connected to textile art express the identities connected to intimate spaces, including bodies and homes (Pöllänen & Ruotsalainen, 2017). The exhibition works evolved into dialogues and shared processes among the artists. As a result, it expressed the processing of the artists' memories of the past, hopes for the future and current dynamics that continue to nurture their relationships.

There can be, of course, multiple answers to the following question: *With and by whom is artistic research conducted?* The current case study offers insights into a place of artistic research and practice where 'with' and 'by' nearly merge. The research data—the artworks themselves, the documented processes of making and the ongoing conversations—are being generated and collected in a completely horizontal group setting where the artist-researcher acts as a research participant and vice versa (Miettinen et al., 2016; Akimenko et al., 2017). Every inner component (memories, beliefs, identity work) and outer input (shared art-making, interaction with others, surroundings) is taken into account. Everyone and everything is an agent because places, too, become contributors to the research process because of significant place-bound identity work carried out by the researcher-participants and translated both in artwork and narratives (Akimenko, 2018). Such a setting, together with a very patient timeline of long-term relationship work between researchers and research participants, enables a pluriversal approach to the research process.

Why is artistic research conducted?

In a recent artistic research work titled 'Placemaking through Performance' by one of this chapter's authors, Miettinen, the key topic is the idea of placemaking (Miettinen,

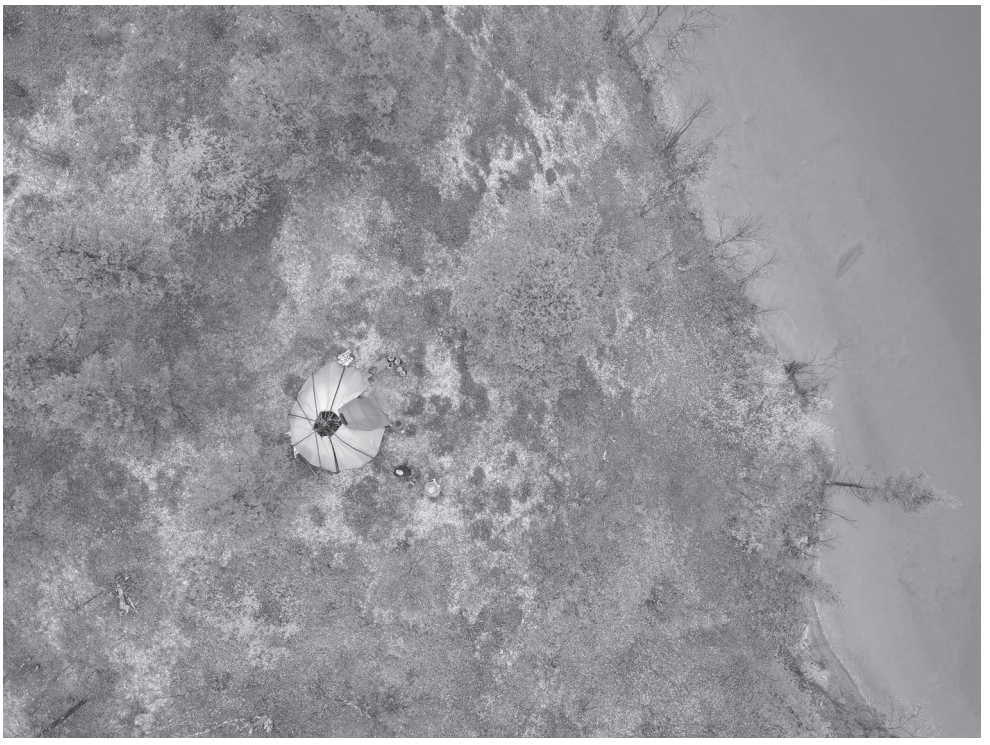

Figure 4.4 Placemaking with a drone camera in Vuontisjärvi. Photo: Satu Miettinen.

2021). The meaning of placemaking is connected to the tradition of cultural geography (Lew, 2017) and is associated with the sense of place (Othman et al., 2013). Different cultural groups can imprint values, perceptions, memories and traditions on a landscape, giving meaning to a geographic space (Rose-Redwood & Alderman, 2011). Artistic research can help propose new means of placemaking for people who are newcomers to a place and its cultural context. For example, artistic practices have been used as a means of placemaking in the context of recovery from catastrophic events (Puleo, 2014). People choose to move or find themselves displaced for different reasons and often have no means to access mouth-to-mouth or traditional knowledge linked to the sense of place. The artistic research process in 'Placemaking through Performance' (Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6) was carried out utilising photography, video and performance as a means to develop, test and iterate both artistic new ways and meanings for placemaking, as well as to create artistic performances in natural environments. In this case, both reasons for 'why' are equally important. Both motivations—that of offering tools for shared good and that of developing further individual and collective artistic practices—bear significant value to the process of artistic research.

Further, the elements of playfulness, intuition and improvisation present in the act of performance and placemaking (Glover & Sharpe, 2020) create new affordances for performing in a natural environment. Affordances are the opportunities that objects, processes or environments can offer for users or generally for people. It is a possibility

Figure 4.5 Placemaking through Performance at Vänö island. Photo: Satu Miettinen.

Figure 4.6 Placemaking through performance on the banks of the Kemijoki (Kemi River). Photo: Satu Miettinen.

of an action with the object. In placemaking performances, the environment itself offers affordances on how to use natural elements in the landscape for performance or how to pick up some objects and use them as elements in the performance. The opportunity for affordances could be one of the key motivations for conducting artistic research; it employs one's creativity, sense of discovery and exploration when doing research.

Arts-based research enters the academic field within universities by including an artistic and aesthetic approach to the process of data gathering and presentation; this is especially true within the development of academic research, in which there is the aim of producing more plural ways of knowing (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2017). Conversely, artistic research can be explained as academic research entering the art academy milieu. Both contribute to the shifts in the reified structures and norms of how research and art are conducted and perceived, where research contributes to the new knowledge production and art—to the aesthetic outcome of this process. Artistic research is seen as being junior to 'more academic' research and its emancipation from the university regime that is proposed (Henke et al., 2020, p. 5). These could be arguments in the favour of a more pluriversal outlook or agenda in artistic research. In artistic research, there are opportunities for new viewpoints, such as the opportunity for affordances that can create open-ended outcomes rather than focused end results, which are many times described in rigid and detailed research plans. Could the artistic research agenda challenge academic research conventions with its open-endedness?

Findings

The case studies in the fields of arts-based and artistic research presented in this chapter respond to both a set of key research questions and the current pluriversal agenda brought forward in academia and beyond. Based on autoethnographic analysis of these case studies, the authors offer a series of criteria or considerations as findings, here ranging from practical to ethical ones. This set of findings constructs an outline of a researcher's position and their code of conduct, in the institutional, noninstitutional and social contexts of research.

1. *Collaboration*. The collaborative aspect is present within the practices of arts-based and artistic research, be it collaboration with technology, nature, humans or nonhumans. For instance, in the reviewed bioart case studies combining natural sciences, technology and textile design, the experience of the researcher interconnects with a living medium, and within this collaboration, the agency of the researcher is in connection with the medium's own agency. Similar agency syntony takes place when a researcher, for instance, collaborates with AI and utilises biometric technology.
2. *Authorship in collaboration with nonhumans*. Over the years and in the scope of decolonising practices, the issue of authorship has been widely present in artistic research. It is rather obvious that collaborative practices result in shared authorship, but new forms of collaboration raise a new question: How can authorship be defined where humans and nonhumans are involved? This is a current research gap that Pietarinen discusses in her case study.
3. *Value for art academies and universities*. Arts-based and artistic research are valuable for art academies and universities because apart from being able to

discover the new aspects within art and design itself, they can be drivers of social innovation, activist action and cross-disciplinarity, here with the aim of destabilising current, generally accepted, institutional knowledge. These methodologies utilised by individuals can move the institutions towards a change and pluriversal thinking because innovation in the fields of art and design is first started by individuals both within and outside of institutions.

4. *Skillset of the researcher*. Arts-based and artistic research practices involving technology require redefining the artist's and researcher's skills. For example, an artist might need to refine her 'hard skills' as an interactor with AI and as an audiovisual editor. Another example is that of collaborative research settings with groups, especially those in vulnerable contexts, where the artists-researchers approach their participants with extra care and empathy and often have to acquire skills from the fields of psychology and mediation.
5. *Pluriversal approach to audiences*. Researchers, readers and audience members have different backgrounds. Therefore, an awareness of providing a possibility/place/space to participate and perform as an audience at different scales/levels is crucial. Collaboration and coparticipation build upon the value of each contribution.
6. *Affordances*. Artistic research, as the opportunity for affordances, through art, containing playfulness, intuition and improvisation, can contribute to the concept of placemaking, which is crucial, for example, for border-crossing people, who are newcomers to different locations and cultures. This is evidenced in Miettinen's case study.

All these findings contribute to the interconnected approach to arts-based research, artistic research and pluriverse from the following angles: (i) artistic and research processes are embodied in the multiplicities of the ways of collaboration between humans and nonhumans, which contributes to the rethinking of the normative borders in individual and institutional contexts, and (ii) artistic and research outcomes are designed to have a wide range of impact on the involved institutions, communities and audiences. Here, pluriverse implies a multiplicity of holistic 'worlds' and truths coexisting on an equal level. In this way, a pluriversal agenda within arts-based and artistic research contributes to envisioning a future of art education at universities and art academies.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the five authors have created a common ground for exploring collaborative approaches to artistic research within and outside of institutional academic settings. In doing so, they aimed to view artistic and arts-based research through the prism of pluriversal agenda. They identified four questions related to research practice to guide their inquiry: *For whose benefit is artistic research initiated? Who is doing artistic research? With and by whom is artistic research conducted? Why is artistic research conducted?* The social aspects of artistic research were at the core of the discussion and were regarded from a variety of perspectives, including the nonhuman viewpoints.

As a result of autoethnographic analysis of the relevant case studies from their respective research practices, the artist-researchers formulated a series of ethical,

theoretical and practical considerations proposed as an indicative code of conduct for a contemporary researcher engaged in pluriversal artistic and arts-based research practices. The application of the outcomes of the current research is manifold: acknowledging the value of the pluriversal approach to institutional arts-based and artistic research; contributing to the development of university pedagogies towards constructing a multiplicity of alternative futures of education; innovation within the framework of authorship and authorial rights; and dismantling the hierarchies within artistic research. The present study can impact the understanding of the contexts and conditions arts-based and artistic research are conducted in, as well as the means, agents and contributors involved. Further, the current study may benefit regional aspects of the decolonisation of knowledge within and beyond the university pedagogy contexts.

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5 A critical retrospective on whiteness in *Possible Worlds* video artwork

Mari Mäkiranta and Outi Ylitapio-Mäntylä

Abstract: The chapter examines the communally and interculturally constructed video work *Possible Worlds* in terms of its arts-policy meanings related on whiteness, living environments and youth. The video art work consists of seven episodes relating to the living environments of young women residing in different parts of Europe. The aim is to consider what kinds of meanings these young women produce related on the places they inhabit, and how the critical perspective on whiteness could challenge the ways how the knowledge of the place has been produced in the video artwork. The foundation of the chapter is arts-based research, where the artist-researcher is a participant in constructing the content of the art in collaboration with the human subjects of the study, and in which the production of the art intrinsically relates to both the research methodology and the presentation of results. The chapter draws on experiences of inhabiting a white world as a white, and explores how taking whiteness under a critical retrospective might produce new ways of understandings of living conditions produced in the video art.

Keywords: Arts-based research, whiteness, communal art, 'new'-materialism, young people, interculturalism, gender, social engagement, plurality

Introduction

The video work examined here, *Possible Worlds* (Mäkiranta & Escudeiro, 2017), consists of spoken narratives and photographs related to the living environments of seven young women living in different European lands. During the project, the women were photographed either on their own or with Mari Mäkiranta in their living environments—the places they inhabit, the people they meet and the daily lives they lead. The speech was produced in conversations occurring between the picture taking. In addition, some of the women recorded their stories after the meeting, sending the audio files to Mäkiranta afterwards for inclusion in the work. The women were between 16 and 27 years old and resided in Poland, Estonia, Croatia, Russia, Finland, Holland and Slovenia. A thread connecting the women was their general interest in art or their status as art students. The women's interest in visuality is manifested in the video through their thoughtful considerations for the aesthetics and structural features of the photographs. The speech component also demonstrates an informed awareness and analysis, as well as a sense of poetry and atmosphere.

The material for this chapter is taken from *Possible Worlds*—especially the segment on Kielce in Poland—and from the photographs and stories told by Daria Maron-Ptàk. Mari Mäkiranta invited the participants by an invitation letter sent to different

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institutions and universities—in this case, the University of Kielce and Maron-Ptàk were chosen after a meeting with her. Her position and contribution in the research was significant because of the fact that she was very interested in the project, photography and visual language. Our investigation in this chapter focuses on the content of the video and its process-oriented character: the varying, interpretative and mobile meanings relating to the living environment and the audio-visual worlds constructed within. When producing the artwork, Mäkiranta, as a researcher-artist of the project, did not pay attention to the questions of race, whiteness or non-whiteness in the process. However, the call in the book *Artistic Cartography and Design Explorations Towards the Pluriverse* inspired us to ponder the blindness that rests behind white domination both in the case of research and in the contents of artwork. When analysing the data, Outi Ylitapio-Mäntylä joined the process, and we started to coauthor this chapter together. In this chapter, we retrospectively examine the process of the artwork and the question about why the issues of whiteness matter. We ask the following: What kinds of critical retrospectives on whiteness can be formulated in the artwork?

The theoretical and methodological inspiration comes from affect theories on visual media and from the contributions of art research to the development of new materialist thinking (see Ahmed, 2004, 2008; Kontturi, 2012; Marks, 2000; Sobchack, 2004; Väätäinen, 2007). Inspired by arts-based research and material-affective approaches, we bring theorising on affectivity to the field of arts-based-oriented research (Barrett & Bolt, 2013). In addition, we define whiteness as a racial category that is varied and complex and a theoretical concept constructed and reconstructed by different kinds of social and political surroundings (Green et al., 2007). Our aim is to make some of the less-studied topics in arts-based-oriented research visible: the intertwining of affects and whiteness. We have sought to show the dimensions of affectivity, visuality and whiteness present in video art in dealing with living environments.

Intersectionality is a suitable analytical tool when analysing how different kinds of categories intersect, and it helps in understanding the pluriverse in our societies at the micro- and macro-levels (Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2012). Thus, intersectional thinking focuses on exploring the pluriverse from structural, political and representational perspectives (Crenshaw, 1991), and the focus is on analysing power structures in different positions and relations between people (Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2012). Yuval-Davis (2006) states that social divisions are found in people's attitudes and prejudices towards others. Hence, the importance of exploring the pluriverse

Figure 5.1 Still images of the video artwork *Possible Worlds*. Mäkiranta and Escudeiro (2017).

is evident. By using art-based methods, the understanding of the pluriverse and different structures of power can be reached. In particular, when studying whiteness, it is necessary to analyse constructions of society's values, morals, ethics, practices and discourses (Green et al., 2007). Furthermore, the discourses mentioned earlier, such as ethics and practices, need to be reflected upon when exploring visuality and affectivity. The aim is to point out the relation of the affectivity to the pluriverse and address an antiracist orientation to deconstruct the power structures that maintain white dominance—here as a way to avoid setting whiteness back at the centre.

Arts-based research, affects and critical perspectives on whiteness

'Making visible' refers not only to the presentation of research results via the written word, but also to the video work itself as a medium. Arts-based research is in close proximity to artistic research in terms of methodology (see Mäkelä, 2013; Mäkiranta, 2017). Arts-based research, however, is a field in which art content and art production are inseparably related to the methodology and the presentation of the results, for instance, in audio-visual form, as in the present case.

When we analyse the artwork together, we can better understand that we need a relevant, critical set of concepts and methodology to retrospectively investigate the whiteness and affects and to articulate how the encounter with the human subjects of our research are key factors for understanding the intertwining of living environments and race. In addition, the methodology to which we have committed our work—arts-based research—and in which we produced the material in collaboration with the research subjects demands self-reflection on our part as researcher-artists. In addition, we need reflection on the researcher-research-subject relationships and to hear the affective voices and emotional expressions to further register their seriousness.

We understand affectivity as part and parcel of a materially oriented research approach, one in which the material—pictures and stories or the visuality and speech they produce—is seen as mobile and ever flexible rather than static and stable. In this, our thinking runs parallel to that of materialist feminism (Braidotti, 2006; Haraway, 1991; Grosz, 2006) and is congruent with the ontological turn away from dualism towards change, movement and non-essentialising ways of apprehending the world. Materialist feminism refers to the recognition by materiality that the artistic endeavour is ultimately grounded in material substance, affects, embodied experiences, gender and race. We claim that materialist feminism refers to those artistic production processes and chains of gendered and racialised meanings that can never be reduced to pure linguistic performance. Arts-based research productions such as the video speaks sensuously to viewers, for example, in the form of bodily vibrations, aural images or memories that are difficult to verbalise or ineffable (Mäkiranta, 2017).

Our research subscribes to the notion that an affect is connected to one's experiences and personal emotions. The concepts of affect and emotion carry the burden of conceptually gendered history and culture, which assign emotion to the feminine in a way that often disallows it as a form and way of knowing (Koivunen, 2008, p. 182). We conceive of affects as a corporal emotional effect influenced by bodily experiences and that is related to culture and disallowed meanings (see Ahmed, 2004, 2008; Probyn, 2005; Sobchack, 2004). An affect is not simply born of an individual's body and experience, but it emerges through encounters between two or more materially embodied actors in a lived place and community.

In the current study, we critically reflect on the experiences of inhabiting a white world as a white person, exploring how taking whiteness under a critical retrospective analysis might create new ways of producing video art. The beginning of whiteness studies can be traced back to the early 1990s when it emerged and developed in the social sciences and humanities (Steyn & Conway, 2010). 'Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they "take up" space, and what they "can do"', as Sara Ahmed (2011) argues.

We claim that the definition of whiteness is on transition because the world around us is changing. For example, Nordic countries have been considered homogeneous, white territories (Lundström & Teitelbaum, 2017). This has caused domination and racism against the Sámi peoples and other ethnic minorities that have, however, lived in Nordic communities (Puuronen, 2011).

> These are associations centuries in the making. Nordics have long functioned as whiteness standard bearers in pseudoscientific race typologies. [. . .] However, Nordic whiteness is by no means natural or static. [. . .] Moreover, whiteness in the Nordic countries is today in flux because of influxes of non-white migrants and the increased mobility and mobilization of domestic minorities like the Sámi, Jews, and Roma.
>
> (Lundström & Teitelbaum, 2017, p. 151)

In the United States and South Africa, whiteness is understood as a skin colour, and in India, it is identified through educational status (Green et al., 2007). Thus, the definitions of whiteness are based on history and cultural and social constructions. Whiteness often appears in our living environments as a way of thinking and acting as a canon that will stereotypically repeat whiteness of a certain kind (Truman & Shannon, 2018). It should be remembered that whiteness is not the same identity of all white people (Green et al., 2007).

Whiteness signifies knowledge that has been a privilege for white people because of their possibilities to educate themselves, and it indicates national identity and an understanding of whiteness (white privilege) are an important part of antiracism practices (Green et al., 2007). Green et al. (2007) state that whiteness is reconstructed and reproduced; however, this requires a cultural shift in knowledge production, requiring white people to recognise racial limitations and understand how power and privilege are white dominated.

Whiteness in *Possible Worlds*

On the day of the meeting, Daria Maron-Ptàk in Kielce, Mari Mäkiranta and Daria Maron-Ptàk took photographs, both countries such as Poland, feminist individually and together, and discussed our ways of making art, sense of place and how we felt about that small, formerly socialist city. As a researcher-artist, Mari Mäkiranta ended up in different places, towns and cities because her research interest considered young peoples' living environments and photography art (Mäkiranta et al., 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). The knowledge of the residents and various living environments in the Polish city deepened as we spent the day exploring Daria's hometown cityscapes and communities. As Mari Mäkiranta and Daria Maron-Ptàk walked, we became more

assimilated with each other's worlds and, at the same time, differentiated from them as well, encountering each other as corporal agents, producing photographs and creating meanings related to the environment in the context of community and networks of relationships. In addition to the communities and people, we photographed many buildings and the vicinities around them.

The use of walking and photographing methods is a performative approach including collaboratively working together; it creates a space to walk, sense and sees places and living environments in a novel way (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010). Also, affects are intertwined with walkers during the photographing and discussing process (Truman & Shannon, 2018).

The foundation of our visualisation of Kielce involved performative walks, along with experiential and affective dimensions. These dimensions materialised as movement: physical distancing and coming together as social agents in an urban space. When our lack of a common language limited these expressions, we conversed with gestures and our bodies. The affects, too, such as our expectations about each other, anticipation and the sense of wonder, delight or disgust towards the urban space, induced bodily sensations. Bennett (2005, p. 36) and Kivinen (2013, p. 33) write of the relation between art born of such affective encounters and the production and presentation of multisensory, experiential and corporal-linguistic knowledge. However, the experiential knowledge of the living environments in our work was not free of power relations and hierarchy.

However, during the process of walking and photographing, we did not speak about the whiteness around us, even though whiteness is one of the identity categories defining subjectivity, in addition to gender and place. While analysing the artwork retrospectively, we noticed that we needed to recognise our 'Western'-based academic tradition and be aware of whiteness in us and in our artwork. We had not questioned whiteness earlier in the process because we had been too close to it, even though as feminist researchers we had studied diversity and marginalisation and recognised power issues in other research processes (Mäkiranta & Ylitapio-Mäntylä, 2011; Ylitapio-Mäntylä & Mäkiranta, 2020). Blindness is present when we are working in our own, familiar surroundings. Nevertheless, our retrospective working with the concept of whiteness helped us see whiteness as a structure and source of power that produces privilege.

Retrospectively, almost ten years after exhibiting the artwork, it is crucial to discuss the issues of whiteness and the conservative nationalist government continuing to strengthen its grasp in Poland. Attacks and harassment against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) people have increased, and several LGBTQ+, environmental and political activists have been arrested; in addition, xenophobic, homophobic and antisemitic rhetoric has been rising. The video artwork was implicated in the differential power relations, but at the time of producing the artwork, we were not aware enough about the political changes occurring.

During the production, Mari Mäkiranta talked with Daria Maron-Ptàk about what kinds of researcher-subject hierarchies might exist in the production process. Our encounter could be described as involving a two-way interaction (see Marks, 2000) between a small-town woman from 'Eastern Europe' and a feminist researcher from the Nordic 'West'. It makes little sense to speak of two different cultures or geographically locative labels such as 'East' and 'West' in our production process or to draw a line between the researcher-artist and the research subject (see also Rainio,

2015, p. 110). The question is more about a movement between corporal white social agents and between cultures, a matter of working practices, ways of thinking and people influencing and being influenced by each other.

Crossing dichotomies and challenging assumptions

In former socialist countries such as Poland, feminist art produced by women gained a real foothold in the early 1990s (Koobak, 2013). However, the issues of race and whiteness should be considered from a critical perspective. Certain surroundings and environments are filled with historical, cultural and practical layers, and this is a reason why whiteness will not be seen (Ahmed, 2011). Analysing whiteness in and around us helps us see our habits and constructions of environments that can be harmful and excluding of non-white people. Deconstructing whiteness as a norm can enhance the understanding of complex dynamics between place, affects and whiteness.

Hemmings (2011, p. 9) notes that the dominant position of discourse and cultural idioms in speech reveals that feminist thought is often conceived of as a product of Western capitalist democracy, suggesting that this form of society in and of itself is what makes feminist thinking possible. Thus, a power constellation is created in which the need for feminism is based on a fantasised shared oppression, one applied in the same way to East European women as to West European women (Hemmings, 2011). In the meeting with Maron-Ptàk, it struck us how by assuming this shared oppression, we might be glossing over the differences between our experiential worlds because white feminism in the 'West' has been progressive, advanced through various stages and dealt with issues of gender equality, whereas in the 'East', the problems are more acutely present. In the production process for our artwork, interculturalism also means challenging our own ingrained ways of thinking, giving oneself over to the affects and reaching out towards that other world, the framework in which the subject would present herself. In addition, intercultural artwork should include a critical understanding of whiteness, for instance, how whiteness affects the questions of nationalism, politics and histories of certain places.

In our retrospective analysis, we became aware that within the feminist approach, racial conflict between white and non-white continues to be one area of struggle (see, e.g., hooks, 1986). In fact, hooks reminds us that 'often these conflicts are so overwhelming that they cause us to despair that we can ever live and work together in social spaces that are no irrevocably tainted by politics of domination' (1986, p. 125). We claim that our commitment to analysing whiteness as white researchers and our privileged 'Western' position can strengthen the political struggle and solidarity as while confronting racism. We as white people admitting that we have privileges is not enough if we do not actively deconstruct this privilege in arts, politics and education. We understand that this is a complex but necessary task because the structures are deeply embedded in our ways of being and constructed as gendered and racial (and racialising) subjects.

Discussion and conclusion

At the visual and verbal narrative moment, the story itself and what the narrator herself experiences are connected to affectivity and nonverbal expression (Saresma,

2010). This is a crucial point in bringing into the discussion something that is hidden: whiteness. Braidotti (2006), Ahmed (2004) and Probyn (2005)—all of whom have conceptualised the construction of the subject not through discourse but as corporal and material—might say that whiteness is something that we carry in our emotions and bodies.

The present chapter's conception of the subject emphasises materiality and affective dimensions. We claim that taking whiteness under a critical perspective and understanding the subject as a multivocal racial and gendered entity, we might be able to formulate new methodologies in arts-based research that take into account hidden, unseen habits, thinking and acting. When walking, photographing, sensing and talking, it is possible to find an unknown phenomenon of race and whiteness. Whiteness must be critically approached to create art and research, admitting that racism and racial prejudice is impossible to understand without analysing the normative white centre that gives rise to it. Social justice and educational equity do not happen without analysing race. Whiteness is the norm around which other races are constructed; its existence depends on the mythologies, art practices and material inequalities that sustain the current racial system in arts, societies and research.

More research is needed about whiteness, for example, what kind of historical and cultural definitions are used. As Western researchers and artists, we carry on the specific disciplinary epistemologies and methodologies of Western academics, which could make us unconscious of other ways of knowing. Thus, when exploring race and whiteness, self-reflective work is needed. Furthermore, whiteness should be understood as one category of race and as a racialising system and practice.

The consciousness of our understanding and reflections of our position as white researchers are the ways to see racialised practices, which gives us some tools to see the necessity of pluriversal methods in art-making processes and other societal contexts. For example, the knowledge of political intersectionality in art activism against right-wing populism might be one way. Sauer and Siim (2020) study the matter regarding the perspectives of migration, race, gender and sexuality intertwined with the questions of whiteness; they address the challenges of the cases of Austria and Denmark in mobilising against radical right-wing and how the challenge is in generating pluriverse politics constructed on intersectional solitary. We claim that intersectional solidarity and feminist politics are important tools to deconstruct racialised processes in societies, cultures and arts.

In addition, by following the critical race theory tradition, our analysis, ways of making art and conducting research in the future must include the idea that the most dangerous form of 'white supremacy' is not only the obvious and extreme fascistic posturing of small right-wing groups but rather the taken-for-granted routines that privilege white peoples' interests. The aim of the study has been to explore how affects and whiteness are intertwined in arts-based oriented research. The video work *Possible Worlds* illustrates the phenomenon of young white women's lives and sense of place and living surroundings. In the context of arts-based research methods and retrospective interpretation, we claim that it is possible to see the surroundings and the world from a new standpoint. Arts-based research allows us to reach out to pluriverse and diversity, helping us in understanding the complexities of identities and our privileges as white people and the racialising processes we engage with.

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6 New genre Arctic art in the city of Rovaniemi

Promotion of de-Arctification and pluralism

Maria Huhmarniemi and Mirja Hiltunen

Abstract: Imaginaries of the Arctic cause so-called Arctification that does not resonate with experienced realities of the region as a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual place. This chapter is based on long-term art-based action research aiming to influence contemporary art, art education, transculturalism and inclusion in the Arctic, especially in the city of Rovaniemi. The research is based on need to consider the richness and the variety of the circumpolar world and to the discussion on pluriverse, new genre public art, and new genre Arctic art. The chapter concludes that socially engaged art can promote the identification of minority cultures, encounters amongst members of different cultures and representations of multiculturalism and transculturalism in public space and visual arts. Public art as an identity symbol of locality can counteract Arctification. Arts can create an understanding of the pluriverse and promote openness to multiculturalism, as well as present the Arctic as home to a rich variety of cultures.

Keywords: Arctic, arts-based action research, Arctification, public art, socially engaged art, appropriation

Introduction

Imaginaries of the Arctic as an uninhabited wintery land of adventures are repeated in Western arts as well as in global Arctic brands. According to Chartier (2018), the Arctic has historically been marginalised as the *imaginary North*—an empty and horizontal landscape—instead of the multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual place that it is, with a rich cultural history and living traditions. These illustrations do not resonate with the lived, experienced realities of the region. The demand to recomplexify the North and the Arctic is now presented by some artists, curators and authors (Chartier, 2018; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020a), who claim that contemporary presentations need to consider the richness of the circumpolar world and honour the people living in the region, including Indigenous people and cultural minorities. This chapter is based on the view that reflections and representations of the Arctic need to respect pluralities—multinational, multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural communities. While Arctic multiculturalism commonly refers to the presence of Indigenous cultures, we approach our study with the notion that global immigration to the Arctic has also enriched Arctic realities and arts.

The principles of new genre public art (Lacy, 1995), connective aesthetics (Gablik, 1995) and socially engaged art (Olsen, 2019) have challenged artists and curators globally to consider the socio-political impacts of public art. In this chapter,

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we discuss public art as a way to present, re-define and express Arctic cultural richness and pluralities. We discuss public art in the context of the Arctic city of Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland and examine representations of Arctic multiculturalism and transculturalism in public space and visual arts in Lapland. We also consider issues of cultural appropriation (Räikkä & Puumala, 2019).

This chapter is conducted as part of the research project Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture (AMASS), funded by the European Union. The overall objective of AMASS is to address the marginal positioning of some European societies, groups and communities, as well as the under-representation and power imbalances that exist in arts and culture. Researchers who participate in AMASS address societal challenges, such as various forms of exclusion and cultural poverty through a lack of cultural capital, while promoting resilience and inclusion of marginal communities. The title of the project is derived from the talks and texts of German artist Joseph Beuys, who coined the term 'social sculpture' in the twentieth century (Beuys, 2007; Gyorody, 2014). We consider socially engaged art to be social sculptures that can make cultural diversity visible for members of our communities in public spaces.

The research question for the discussion in this chapter focuses on how de-Arctification and pluralism can be promoted through a new genre of public art in the Arctic. We approach this question by discussing recent art productions in the city of Rovaniemi, located in the northern Arctic in the northernmost part of Finland, at the Arctic Circle. Rovaniemi is often called the capital of the region of Lapland, as it is an administrative centre and a city with a university and many art institutions. Of the population of more than 63,000 people, 2.5% have a foreign background or are immigrants (Statistics Finland, 2021). Rovaniemi is also called the gate of Lapland, while the land of Indigenous Sámi people covers part of Lapland that is further to the north from Rovaniemi. A minority population of Sámi people live in Rovaniemi, and the city also hosts many immigrant groups because migrant workers, foreign students, knowledge workers and refugees migrate to the city regularly. Cultural minorities and immigrant groups experience various degrees of marginalisation. A lack of participation in local activities, such as cultural events, challenges the encounters between immigrants and other communities. Many art and research projects on social engagement through arts-based methods have promoted two-way integration in Rovaniemi and Lapland (Hiltunen et al., 2020; Jokela et al., 2015). However, permanent public art productions that reflect the multiculturality in Rovaniemi were created only in recent years.

From modernism to new genre Arctic art

The discussion on pluriverse (Kothari et al., 2019) proposes that the idea of Western development as progress needs to be deconstructed in order to open the way for cultural alternatives. Many authors reject the dominant Western development model as a homogenising construct and offer various local and Indigenous cultures, philosophical and lifestyle movements and ways of knowing as alternatives (Kothari, 2019). In art, a similar shift from the hegemony of modernism took place in the 1980s as the post-modernistic style and later in situational and socially engaged contemporary art. While modern sculptures occupy places on city squares and facades of buildings of power in the same way as traditional sculptures do, the principles of new genre public art were defined in the 1980s (Gablik, 1995; Lacy, 1995). In this approach, artists may refer to

the social challenges in a certain community or location through artistic expressions and involve community members in artistic processes (Lacy, 1995). This new genre public art is situation and site specific and often temporary; the production includes events and installations of various durations. Lacy (1995) described new genre public art as being activist, communicative, socially engaged and politically interventive.

In the Arctic, the concept of Arctic arts is implemented to differentiate arts in the circumpolar region from the Western view of art. Unlike dualistic Western culture, which separates art, design and crafts into distinct disciplines, theorising Arctic arts underlines how art, design and crafts are interwoven (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020a, 2020b). Jokela et al. (2021) used the concept of new genre Arctic art to highlight the culture-political engagement of contemporary art in the Arctic and ways to participate in environmental and cultural politics through art. Researchers have also shown how socially engaged art activities empower local communities, promote cultural pride and influence a stronger cultural identity, which is meaningful in the rapidly changing Arctic (Hiltunen, 2010; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020b). When public art is created by heterogeneous groups of international artists, art students and local community members, intercultural competence develops gradually (Härkönen, 2021). Socially engaged art—the joint creation of public art and events to launch and celebrate them—offers possibilities for face-to-face meetings and the sharing of cultural knowledge (Härkönen, 2021).

In the Arctic, discussions of cultural appropriation are regular and heated. While arts in most cultures are full of influences and adaptations from other cultures, the blending of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures in the Arctic is often undesirable. There are some pressures to preserve the originality of Indigenous symbols and designs as a privilege for members of cultures that are defined by blood heritage (Kramvig & Flemmen, 2019; Manderstedt et al., 2021; Räikkä & Puumala, 2019). When someone outside of a cultural or ethnic group uses some characteristic objects and symbols without permission, cultural appropriation takes place (Räikkä & Puumala, 2019). While the appropriation of Indigenous cultures and other minority cultures is considered an unethical practice, culturally sensitive artists may restrict themselves from having influence from other cultures while expressing their transcultural identities and realities. Notably, Hansen (2016) widened the discussion by explaining how the representatives of a culture can appropriate their own culture when living traditions are brought into the context of the institutional art world, as well as when Indigenous art is included in Western art exhibitions. Furthermore, Minnakhmetova et al. (2019) proposed culturally sensitive re-appropriation of the local heritage into existing modernity in their studies on the use of traditional ornaments.

Methodological approach

Our approach as artist-researchers follows a strategy of arts-based action research (ABAR) with educational, emancipatory and reformative aims (Hiltunen et al., 2020; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020b; Jokela, 2019). ABAR contributes to the working approaches of community artists and artist-teacher-researchers. The strategy shares some common features with artistic research, in general, as well as with action research and arts-based research, in particular. In ABAR, the practical and theoretical phases of research are conducted in parallel in a cyclic process of setting aims, conducting artistic and art-based interventions and analysing and presenting results. The creation

of public art and the hosting of art exhibitions can serve as artistic interventions for driving changes or as presentations of research results, or both. In the cases discussed in this chapter, artistic production has been the intervention, and research results are presented as theoretical writings.

We narrate two public art productions in which we were involved. The first is the scaled model of the *Ishtar Gate* (2020) as part of the *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* (2020) project in Rovaniemi. When Iraqi social activist Al-Fateh Ali Mousa and art educator Saba Majid, immigrants to Finland, received an asylum decision and were invited to live in Rovaniemi in 2018, they wanted to gift the community and Finland something of their own culture in return as a token of appreciation. They chose to build a scaled model of the Ishtar Gate, which symbolises their love for their new home country, Finland. The *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* community art event was created around this gesture, in collaboration with Al-Fateh Ali Mousa and Saba Majid, local artists, art education students and volunteers. Hiltunen (one of the authors of this chapter) worked as a researcher and a team member in collaboration with community artist Pieta Koskenniemi in the initiative of the *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* project. Thus, Hiltunen continued her long-term ABAR on two-way integration in multi-ethnic communities in Lapland (Hiltunen, 2010; Hiltunen et al., 2020). Research data, such as documentation and various interviews with artists and participants of the *Neighbourhood and Love Talks*, have been previously analysed (Hiltunen et al., 2021; Sarantou, 2021). In this chapter, we focus on discussing the project about de-Arctification and the ethics of cultural appropriation.

The *Alien Hiker* (2010–2021) and *On the Way Home* (2021) series of photographs by Huhmarniemi (the other author of this chapter) consist of landscape photographs taken in Austrian Alps, Alaska and Rovaniemi. Scarves captured in the photos wave in the wind like flags. The colours, patterns and designs of the scarves refer to many cultures and religions and problematise themes of national identities in relation to land and immigration. The series of photos is part of the artistic research by Huhmarniemi aiming to enhance expressions of transcultural values through craftivism and craft-inspired installation art.

Typical to action research, ABAR is collaborative in all parts of the process (Jokela, 2019). Thus, the setting of the research is created together with community members, artist peers, curators and project leaders. *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* was a socially engaged art project involving a joint authorship regarding aims and artistic strategies, as well as a variety of community gatherings, launches of public art and dialogues with stakeholders (Hiltunen et al., 2021). The case of the *Alien Hiker* and *On the Way Home* included collaboration with art curators—Roland Haas in Alps and staff members of the Anchorage Museum in Alaska, along with curator Francesca DuBrock. The second volume of the *Alien Hiker* series was made in Alaska as a result of an exhibition planned by the museum curators, and photographs were taken without the presence of Huhmarniemi. In addition, collaboration in ABAR included analyses and theorising in cooperation with peer researchers in this chapter, together with Huhmarniemi and Hiltunen.

Multicultural public art in the city of reindeer art

Since the 1980s, Rovaniemi has been known as the official hometown of Santa Claus, but it is also branded as the Arctic capital and Arctic design capital. In 2021, Rovaniemi's

brand was renewed to strengthen the city's position as an Arctic capital. The key idea behind the new brand is that Rovaniemi is an Arctic capital in all its sense, and the city has set itself apart, particularly through creativity and design competence. Until recent years, permanent pieces of public art in the city of Rovaniemi were limited to artworks by Finnish artists who present majority culture. Many of the statues and sculptures were modernistic in style and were created by southern Finnish artists. Socially engaged art, such as art events, temporary murals and snow and ice sculptures, has enriched the art in the city and given space for minority cultures, youths and students to be visible in the public space (Hiltunen et al., 2020). In the twenty-first century, the city of Rovaniemi wants to highlight locality in public art and serve the tourism industry by commissioning figurative reindeer-themed art; therefore, Rovaniemi has been described as the centre of reindeer art (Huhmarniemi, 2018).

The *Ishtar Gate* initiated and executed by Ali Mousa and Majid is the first long-term public art piece in Rovaniemi that was made by immigrants with the great help of volunteers and Rovaniemi-based artists (Figure 6.1). The 4-metre-high, 5.5-metre long, 1.5-metre-wide sculpture is located in a central place in Rovaniemi, in a park by the public beach. The original gate is based on the Ishtar Gate built by King Nebuchadnezzar in 575 BC, dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, as a beautiful entrance to the city of Babylon (Rugerri, 2015, p. 1). The original gate was built from enamelled brick in blues, yellows and reds and featured more than 575 animals, such as bulls, lions and dragons (Rugerri, 2015, p. 2). Majid accompanied the sculpture with a series of postcards picturing the original gate but in the context of Santa Claus, a reindeer and a message of love (Figure 6.1).

The *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* project was produced to accompany the launch of the *Ishtar Gate*. Community artist Pieta Koskenniemi initiated the project with the idea of encouraging townsfolk to practice meeting neighbours, unknown persons on the street or family members with open minds and without preconceived notions (Hiltunen et al., 2020). The organised art workshops included a sticker-making session on the themes of love and acceptance, mural paintings, music and performing arts, and street dance. The project attracted participants from the general

Figure 6.1 Al-Fateh Ali Mousa and Mirja Hiltunen posing in the launch of the *Ishtar Gate* and a postcard by Saba Majid. Photographs by Maria Huhmarniemi (2021).

public, including immigrants, elderly people, young adults and people from different cultural backgrounds. The launch of the *Ishtar Gate* and the entire *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* event demonstrated how the city of Rovaniemi should be a home for all its inhabitants. It also highlighted cultural minorities and thus cultural richness in Rovaniemi and influenced the de-Arctification process.

Hiltunen et al. (2021) indicated that the *Love Talks and Neighbourhood* art event was based on the dream of increasing awareness of the kind of cultural atmosphere that towns folks want to have in Rovaniemi. The artists involved in the event trusted that art could be a significant factor in making the pluralities of lived experiences and realities visible (Sarantou, 2021).

In the first volume of the series of *Alien Hiker*, the scarves were staged in the Austrian Alps in Bielerhöhe in 2010, at the time when it was topical to discuss migration, the construction of minarets and the ban on the use of the burqa. At that time, many European countries wanted to limit the visibility of immigrants' cultures in the public space. Huhmarniemi participated in an artist-in-residency at Bielerhöhe, where tourists, travellers, hikers and climbers enjoyed Alpine culture and noticed that immigrants were absent in the mountains. While the traditional mountain views present images of national pride and the Caucasian man conquering the mountains, the scarves in the installations relate to multiculturalism. The scarves are symbols of identity and social positioning. Huhmarniemi attached scarves to modern hiking sticks and placed them according to their colours, patterns or shapes and the way they relate to the landscape.

The second volume of the series was made in 2021 in Anchorage, Alaska, during the exhibition *Counter Cartographies: Living the Land*, which explored themes of movement, migration, decolonising and mapping shifts in power and land. The curated group exhibition presented artworks that drew attention to the way culture, identity, emotion, ancestry, displacement, power and colonisation shape and inform understandings of land. Inspired by the group exhibition and challenged by the discussion on transculturalism and de-Arctification, Huhmarniemi captured a second series of photos in *On the Way Home* (2021), consisting of scarves on the hills of Rovaniemi. One of the scarves is part of the regional Northern Finnish costume, another is a part of a Sámi costume and others include elements of style and design appropriated from other cultures (Figure 6.2). The series aims to contribute to images of the North as home to diverse cultures.

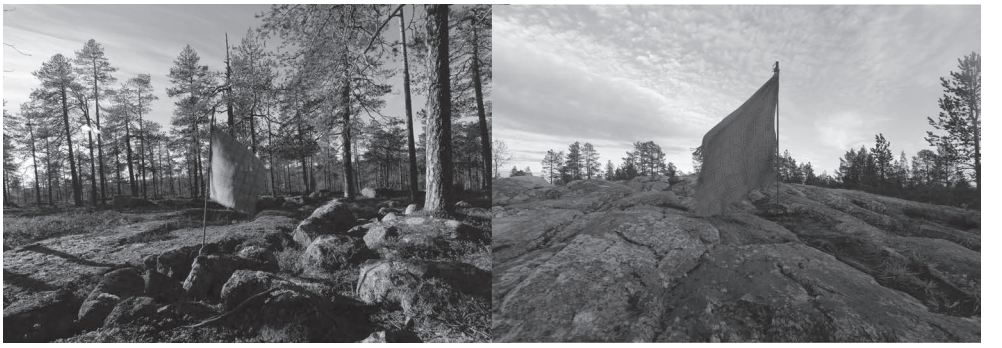

Figure 6.2 Maria Huhmarniemi's *On the Way Home* (2021) series of digital photographs.

Figure 6.3 Setting up the artwork by Tomas Colbengtson, 2021, *Ruávinjargâ*. Photograph by Tanja Koistinen.

The Artists' Association of Lapland is an organisation of artists aiming to present and promote contemporary art made in Lapland. Huhmarniemi proposed for association to promote de-Arctfication and in 2021, The Artists' Association of Lapland showed the curated exhibition *Wiping the Ice-Cream Off your Face*, which aimed at reconsidering notions about the North and contemporary Arctic cultures in a process that was called de-Arctification. The exhibition included Finnish and Sámi members of the association, together with invited Nordic and Russian artists. One of the guests, Sámi artist Tomas Colbengtson, showed an artwork that illustrated a vandalised road sign. The name of the city, Rovaniemi, was written on two signs as Northern Sámi *Roavvenjárga* and Inari Sámi *Ruávinjargâ*. The *rova* part in the name Rovaniemi is considered to be of Sámi origin, as *roavve* in Northern Saami denotes a forested stony hill. Colbengtson stated along the artwork that there was no official sign with this Sámi name of the city. He also explained in his email to Huhmarniemi that in many places in Sweden and Norway, Sámi signs have often been defaced and vandalised.

De-Arctification through public art and the ethics of appropriation

Artworks such as *Ishtar Gate*, *Alien Hiker* and *On the Way Home* include cultural appropriation. Mousa and Majid appropriated some of Babylonian heritage, and Huhmarniemi borrowed scarves that belonged to cultural minorities and ethnic

groups without permission. Nevertheless, both artworks were made with the good intention of promoting transculturalism and interculturalism through art. The public art production in the *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* art event shifted the power balance presented in public space in Rovaniemi into a more diverse direction, creating an understanding of pluriverse and promoting openness to immigrant cultures in Rovaniemi. While the artistic intentions were good, reflection is needed to consider whether the appropriation was ethical. We argue that appropriation can be considered harmful if it offends the cultural rights of ethnic and minority cultures and if it marginalises disadvantaged cultural groups; it can be considered fruitful if it supports peaceful encounters and enhances a sense of openness and plurality in our society. Our view of cultural appropriation is in line with Minnakhmetova et al. (2019), who described how, in the context of a multi-ethnic and multicultural Arctic society-information, a context-sensitive approach to appropriation is needed.

Manderstedt et al. (2021) questioned the focus on blood-heritage ownership as a key to ethics in appropriation and suggested an evaluation of the knowledge that the artworks produce and share. According to the authors, addressing questions of transculturation could have positive impacts on the lived realities in the region where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people coexist. The artworks presented in this chapter, *Ishtar Gate* and *Ruávinjargâ*, illustrate knowledge of the history and presence of immigrant and Indigenous cultures in the city of Rovaniemi. The townsfolk in Rovaniemi have treated the Ishtar Gate well. Even though the sculpture is located in a public park, where young people gather to party with no guards, it has not been vandalised. Similar evaluations cannot be made regarding the *Ruávinjargâ* artwork, as it was presented in public space only for one day. The Arktikum house, where the exhibition *Wiping the Ice-Cream Off your Face* was presented, promised to show the *Ruávinjargâ* only during the day of exhibition opening.

The artworks presented in this chapter do not propagate Arctic imaginaries of the region as an eternal winter land that is empty of cultures. Instead, they foster alternative images of the Arctic by highlighting multicultural realities, including Sámi culture and immigrant culture. Thus, the artworks foster the de-Arctification process and shift the public space of the city of Rovaniemi from the centre of reindeer art to the home of diverse townsfolk. The artworks can be described as new genre Arctic art. In particular, the *Ruávinjargâ* draws attention to cultural politics and makes a political statement. *Ishtar Gate* encourages love, which can also be considered a political message. In its form, *Ishtar Gate* is a fairly traditional statue with crafted decorations. Its means of expression are based on a simple form and a carpenter's skills, in a sense similar to the concept of Arctic art, which does not separate crafts and arts. The scale model honours the original gate. At the same time, it gives a colourful contrast to its Arctic surrounding, arouses curiosity and, by doing so, can be interpreted as socially engaged art and conceptual art.

Actively counteracting Arctification has been noted to be necessary for a more sustainable future of Arctic tourism, in which the tourism industry should become less dependent on winter weather conditions and more relevant to local communities (Cooper et al., 2020; Rantala et al., 2019). We see the need for avoiding Arctification to be relevant also for locals, while representations of the homeland and culture influence people of the Arctic. The artworks discussed in this chapter recall illustrations of Rovaniemi as a city that is open for Indigenous cultures, newcomers and cultural influences. These presentations may be meaningful for reinforcing peaceful coexistence.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed new genre Arctic art in the city of Rovaniemi as a de-Arctification process and promotion of the pluriverse. The chapter is based on long-term ABAR aiming to influence contemporary art, art education, transculturalism and inclusion in the Arctic. We argue that socially engaged art can promote the identification of minority cultures, encounters amongst members of different cultures and representations of multiculturalism and transculturalism in public space and visual arts. Thus, public art as an identity symbol of locality can counteract Arctification. Arts can create an understanding of the pluriverse and promote openness to multiculturalism, as well as present the Arctic as home to a rich variety of cultures. Art has political dimensions and educational potential for social change and the promotion of plurality. The originality of the study is in the application of the discussion of Arctification from tourism studies to cultural studies. The study introduces the concept of de-Arctification for further studies in Arctic sustainability and pluriverse.

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7 Expanding design narratives through handmade embroidery production

A dialogue with a community of women in Passira, Pernambuco, Brazil

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Abstract: In this chapter, our aim is to understand the relationships among and around the artisanal community of embroiderers, who are the focus of the *Bordados de Passira* (Embroideries of Passira) project in the countryside of Pernambuco, Brazil. We discuss the dynamics surrounding the production of artefacts and the artisans themselves, placing them at the centre of the action. In a society like Brazil, which is marked by multiple class, race and gender inequalities, it is essential to question the dimension of these aspects in design practices and learn how these exclusion mechanisms still guide the constitution and legitimisation of representation in this field. A main objective of this study is to question the universal and neutral position built by these hegemonic design narratives by examining the articulation of artefacts within the contexts in which they are inserted. Thus, beyond reflecting on methods that are already defined, we propose expanding the narratives in this field by mapping the relationships present in design practices and artefacts. Finally, in considering the construction of pluriversal perspectives, we propose a situated and relational approach that employs feminist theories and working with the community of embroiderers in Passira.

Keywords: Feminist theory, expanding design narratives, relational approach, resistance and autonomy, education and artisanal production

Introduction

In 2007, this group of artisans founded the Association of Women Artisans of Passira (AMAP) to establish a handcraft production space for the embroiderers of Passira, one in which experiences and knowledge could be exchanged. Together, these two elements recognise the value of local embroidery. In these contexts, constant sharing becomes a process of reinvention through collective knowledge, and a movement coalesces to reaffirm the tradition and identity of the group and its practices, which are configured as a strategy of resistance. This perspective is essential to the present investigation because our aim is to understand the specific contexts in which the embroidery production of Passira's artisans is inserted.

This chapter was developed from an encounter with the AMAP in 2012, which was part of a master's thesis project. The aim was to understand and document the craft developed by the embroiderers in Passira, particularly the techniques and social relations present in their practice. Contact continued over the following years between the artisans and a group of 10 professionals[1] from various fields, mostly

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design professionals, through a collaborative project entitled *Bordados de Passira* (Embroideries of Passira).

From the beginning of this investigation, feminist theories have been necessary to question a series of exclusions in the field of art and design (Parker & Pollock, 2013; Buckley, 1986, 2020). The work of anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez is fundamental to understanding the concept of *amefricanidade* (*amefricanity*) and considering the situation of African-Latin American women, contextualising these experienced inequalities. In the same way, sociologist María Lugones (2008) discusses the concept of *gender coloniality*, here based on the thinking of Aníbal Quijano (2000), expanding the discussion to the intersections of colonialism, gender and racial structures.

With these—and through the elaboration of *Bordados de Passira* and its artisanal work—this chapter aims to reflect on the narratives elaborated on in the field of design and its contact with nonhegemonic knowledge. In this respect, it is essential to recognise the knowledge present in different Brazilian social strata that calls into question the concept of universality in the production of knowledge.

Context of Passira and the AMAP

Passira is located in North-eastern Brazil, in the countryside of Pernambuco, about 100 kilometres from the state capital of Recife. It has a population of about 28,000, comprising 51% women and 49% men.[2] Arriving in the city of Passira by the main road, one soon realises how much embroidering is going on there, and a walk through the city centre reveals the work taking place in many houses and local businesses. Hand embroidery has been passed down through the generations here, is part of the city's history and represents a significant source of income for local families (Almeida, 2013).

In 2007, a group of hand embroidery artisans decided to formally organise themselves and founded the AMAP, which in 2021 had 50 members. Since its inception, its purpose has been to encourage and promote the local hand embroidery production. Institutionalising this collective made it possible to apply for funding from state and federal programmes that support culture.

Before the AMAP, these artisans created their pieces at home and only met occasionally to discuss their work, find solutions to common problems and seek fairs and spaces to display their products. These meetings gave rise to the desire to establish an organisation and have its own space for supporting its embroidery work.

When the AMAP was officially recognised by the federal government as an artisanal association, the artisans sought support from the public sector; they familiarised themselves with the project *Ponto de Cultura*, which had been initiated years prior by the Ministry of Culture. The set of cultural policies was created in 2004 by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture under the supervision of musician Gilberto Gil. The project aimed to build a network of recognition and support for Brazilian cultural practices, whether disparate or collective in character. With public support, community-based groups could submit projects and be chosen to receive funding for the maintenance of their cultural and artistic activities. In addition, the groups came to be recognised as cultural touchstones.

The AMAP applied for recognition through the initiative called *Promoting Self-Esteem of Artisans and Quilombolas of Passira*, which received approval in 2008. Their goal was to revive regional artisanal culture and promote the exchange of

knowledge between the artisans of the AMAP and the Quilombo *Chã dos Negros* on the outskirts of Passira.

The *Chã dos Negros* community was recognised as a quilombola property[3] in 2002, with a population of just over 1,500.[4] There are reports that it has existed since the eighteenth century, when the first families of black people enslaved during the country's colonial period fled bondage, established free territories and resisted further oppression. Together with the *Chã dos Negros* community, the AMAP's purpose was to promote workshops for the transmission of traditional embroidery techniques, sometimes on the property of AMAP members and sometimes in the quilombola community.

Before the association, knowledge of embroidering was passed down from generation to generation within a family. Older artisans often reported that they learned it from their mother, grandmother or aunt, as is the case with Maria Lúcia Firmino dos Santos,[5] one of the founders of the AMAP and its first president. With the creation of the AMAP, the headquarters became not only a space for organising work, distributing activities among the members and storing items for fairs and events, but also a place to promote courses, share experience and exchange knowledge.

With these actions, we can see a dual role for this group, here stemming from its formalisation, both as a workspace for the embroiderers of Passira and as a place for exchange and learning. The bonds that were previously established in family environments could be extended to a community around which these women have formed a group with common goals.

In addition to the articulation between tradition and resistance through the organisation and space of the AMAP, there is a second fundamental aspect to understanding embroidery production in Passira: it is mostly practised by women, and the AMAP's

Figure 7.1 Exterior space at the headquarters of the Association of Women Artisans of Passira in 2014 with some of the group's embroiderers. Photo: Hélder Santana.

Source: *Bordados de Passira*, 2014.

members are all women. Our aim, however, is not to link this activity exclusively to women or to a territory recognised as feminised spaces, but instead, we aim to understand how this relationship between women and the practice of embroidery is constructed through a space for learning, experimentation and work.

One of the main characteristics of artisanal embroidery in Passira is the use of drawn threads. Structured fabrics, such as linen and cotton with a visible weave, are used to facilitate this technique. Certain threads, either warp or weft, are pulled out, and the remaining ones are bunched with embroidery stitches. The threads to be removed are counted and pulled out according to the desired embroidery pattern, and stitches are sewn in with the removed threads. The remaining threads, perpendicular to those pulled out, compose the embroidery pattern together with the stitches. These hand-worked sections serve to strengthen the open structures. The two stitches most commonly used in drawn thread embroidery are chainstitch and hemstitch.

By understanding the context and production of artefacts with techniques such as those used in Passira, we can see two essential factors in the dynamics of artisans' work that differ from hegemonic design practices. The first is the time it takes to embroider a piece. During the project, we recognised the need to develop narratives that address the particularities of this production and that can adapt the pace of consumption of these products to the ways in which they were made. The second factor is that although there is similarity between the pieces, they are never identical and contain small variations,

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 Publications produced for *Bordados de Passira* (Embroideries of Passira). On the left: 'It's just a notion without any meaning, then when you put the thread in it, you give it life', as stated by the artisan Maria Lúcia Firmino dos Santos. On the right: 'Behind the embroidery is the tradition of generations of women in Passira', as stated by researcher Ana Julia Melo Almeida.

Source: *Bordados de Passira* (2014).

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 (Continued)

Figure 7.4 Embroidery production of the AMAP artisans. The image shows drawn thread work in the piece on the lower right with chainstitch and hemstitch.

Source: *Bordados de Passira* (2014).

such as in their stitches and colours. In this way, the unique qualities of the artisans also extend to the objects, and despite forming a cohesive group of women, each woman imprints her own identity on the activity. Therefore, it was important to recognise the group and its artefacts within a common dynamic, where each embroiderer shared her experiences without losing her diverse and plural character.

Theoretical and methodological approaches: education and artisanal production

Philosopher Paulo Freire[6] (2013) considers transformational dynamics as that through which culture is transmitted and the ways in which knowledge can be created and recreated every day. According to him, observing education through cultural practices allows us to understand its agents as permanent reinventors of culture itself. In the case of artisans, we can observe the common objective of producing this collective and continuous knowledge because it is anchored and strengthened in its geographic and symbolic territory.

In the current study, education was regarded in an expanded way, articulated between what is produced inside and outside the classroom and institutionalised spaces of knowledge, such as the university. This allowed us to look critically at certain characterisations that crystallise the variety of artisanal productions in Brazil into a single image in which they are often portrayed, here as immutable, timeless, rural, isolated and depended on for survival. These cultural stereotypes are also part of the Brazilian social order and stem from their colonial roots.

Brazilian authors—those who recognise that various types of knowledge should be regarded as equally valid in practices related to education and culture—were considered in the theoretical review. In addition to Paulo Freire, the work of Milton Santos[7] (*From Totality to the Place*, 2014) was consulted, as well as that of Lélia Gonzalez[8] (*Racism and Sexism in Brazilian Society*, 1984), which are fundamental to understanding the relationship between the production of knowledge and geographic and symbolic context into which these practices are inserted. From this perspective, it is important to question the production and legitimacy of knowledge, especially when it comes to a society marked by multiple inequalities of class, race, ethnicity and gender, as in Brazil.

Also, according to Lélia Gonzalez, Brazil's celebrated 'racial democracy' is a myth that has created a distorted idea of a mixed society. For a group of black Brazilian intellectuals, including Milton Santos (2005) and Abdias do Nascimento (2016), this racial myth preserves the hegemonic power structures and debilitates any systematic struggle against racism in the margins of society.

Philosopher Djamila Ribeiro (2017) extends and expands on these theories by reviewing the ways in which systemic racism persists in Brazil today and how the logic that structures it is connected to the exclusion of women, especially nonwhites. Racism in Brazil does not operate independently of other power imbalances involving identity, such as class, gender or geographic location, so it spans all areas of knowledge production.

Furthermore, feminist studies have placed us in a movement regarding hegemonic cultural and artistic practices as oriented around a single, neutral and universal character. For this reason, it is essential to understand practices as cultural products and situate and relate them to the contexts in which they are inserted. In the fields of art and design, researchers Cheryl Buckley (1986 and 2020) and Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker (2013, first edition in 1981) question a series of exclusions that

permeate the constitution of canons, clarifying that the inclusion and legitimacy of artistic works are also established through numerous deletions.

As a synthesis of this line of thinking, historian and theorist Griselda Pollock (2003, p. 5) states, 'We should be studying the totality of social relations which form the condition of the production and consumption of objects designated in that process as art'. Thus, it is essential to understand this entanglement of relationships present in artistic and cultural practices that articulate places, artefacts and people.

Therefore, when dealing with an artisanal community of women in North-eastern Brazil, we have to locate the feminist thoughts produced in dialogue with our contexts. The work of anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez (1984, 1988) is essential to our understanding of the social injustices present in the Brazilian social and historical fabric. The author elaborates on the concept of *amefricanidade (amefricanity)* to help us consider the condition of Afro-Latin American women and contextualise inequalities as they are lived. For the author, *amefricanity* is a category of analysis that regards the exclusion of women from Brazilian society, especially nonwhite women, showing how this is related to the delegitimisation of understanding and know-how that these women engage with.

In the same way, sociologist María Lugones (2008) discusses the concept of the *coloniality of gender*, which is based on the work of Aníbal Quijano (2000) and that expands the support of colonialism to gender, intertwining it with racial issues. For María Lugones (2008), in addition to capitalism, which directs oppression in a way that complements both the modern and colonial models, it is also necessary to understand how the body and gender itself have been constructed in a racialised way, which imposes a series of gender oppressions permeating the social structure. This logic of social, racial and sexual classification, which ascribes hierarchy to bodies and imposes various conditions of exclusion and discrimination on them, is the coloniality of gender.

Both Lélia Gonzalez and María Lugones structure their ideas regarding the condition of women in a Latin American framework and in a context of unequal and dependent capitalist development (Cardoso, 2014). These aspects help us understand the inequalities experienced by women in different contexts and those marked by coloniality in Brazil and Latin America. However, it is necessary to reflect on the ways in which inequalities are elaborated on between them, which is why the theoretical contribution of intersectional feminism[9] (Crenshaw, 1989; Gonzalez, 1988; Hooks, 2010) allows us to consider these factors based on the intersection between class, race, ethnicity, geographic location and gender, among others.

With the approaches noted earlier, we seek to understand the various experiences as lived by women in Passira through an intersectional and decolonial perspective. Thus, it is important to consider the intersection of both the concept of *amefricanity* and the *coloniality of gender* to situate and analyse the conditions of Brazilian women, especially nonwhite women.

Based on our experience with the project, what we see in Passira is that there is a diversity of experiences and contexts that make up this group. Some artisans possess a higher education and live in the city centre, while others are located in rural areas and lack a completed formal education but have had experience with embroidery from an early age and have had contact with their work and professionalisation in the association. Several additional factors combine with these subjective aspects, such as age, origin and economic situation.

For these reasons, it is impossible to regard the group homogeneously or reductively, and we instead seek to understand these experiences from the variety of social conditions and viewpoints they have established among themselves to constitute an

association based on the production of embroidery and, therefore, on their work. It is still necessary to position design practices at the centre of these social dynamics, together with how the exclusionary mechanisms noted above still guide the very constitution of hegemonic narratives and legitimise the representations elaborated in the field of inquiry. Therefore, when thinking about a purposeful activity, as in the case of design, it is also necessary to consider these exclusionary mechanisms in the production and maintenance of inequalities.

Women, work and autonomy: the embroideries of Passira project (*Projeto Bordados de Passira*)

Thinking about the practice of design based on an exchange of knowledge in a collaborative process and expanding its narratives as motivated by starting a project with the artisans of the AMAP, in August 2013, we started to develop *Bordados de Passira*. Three aspects were highlighted by the embroiderers as the main objectives: to have more autonomy in the commercialisation of their products; to encourage younger artisans in Passira to continue the activity; and to diversify the production of embroidery. Regarding the last objective, the artisans reported that they would like to continue embroidering bed and table items[10] and that they also wanted to work with other products, mainly clothing, to attract a wider audience.

In dialogue with the artisans, we developed a collaborative project and submitted it to a crowdfunding platform[11] to build a website[12] for the AMAP and promote garment modelling workshops. In addition to attracting attention to the artisans' work, our intention was also to build a space of autonomy in the marketing and dissemination of their products. This project was subsequently financed by everyday people who aligned with the association's objectives; this led to the formation of a support group monitoring the AMAP's actions.

As a result of the project—and in addition to the creation of the AMAP's website—the embroiderers developed about 15 products in the workshops held at the association's headquarters between August and October of 2014. In December of that year, as one of the AMAP's rewards for the project's collaborators, three artisans[13] went to São Paulo to give two embroidery workshops to project supporters. All the participants were women, as were most of the supporters of the crowdfunding platform.

The choice of this type of financing was based on a dialogue with the artisans themselves and their efforts to regain the autonomy they had had at the start of the association, which they had lost during some other projects before Bordados de Passira, some of them related to governmental support and Brazilian designers. It guaranteed that financial resources would be allocated according to the AMAP's own interests; additionally, the platform itself was a means for members to control their narratives and use them to reach people interested in their work and stories. Altogether, this strengthened both the artistic practice of embroidery by preserving the association's autonomy and expanded the possibilities for marketing its products directly to the public.

When the embroiderers met with project supporters in the city of São Paulo in Southeastern Brazil, in addition to the exchange of embroidery knowledge, they recounted their own stories in a dialogue between their techniques and own experiences. This dynamic of exchanging experiences and stories through manual activity has always been a part of what Maria Lúcia Firmino communicates, as when she says that embroiderers come together, 'not only to embroider, but to learn about each other. This is a moment when we exchange experiences, give advice and even have new ideas'.

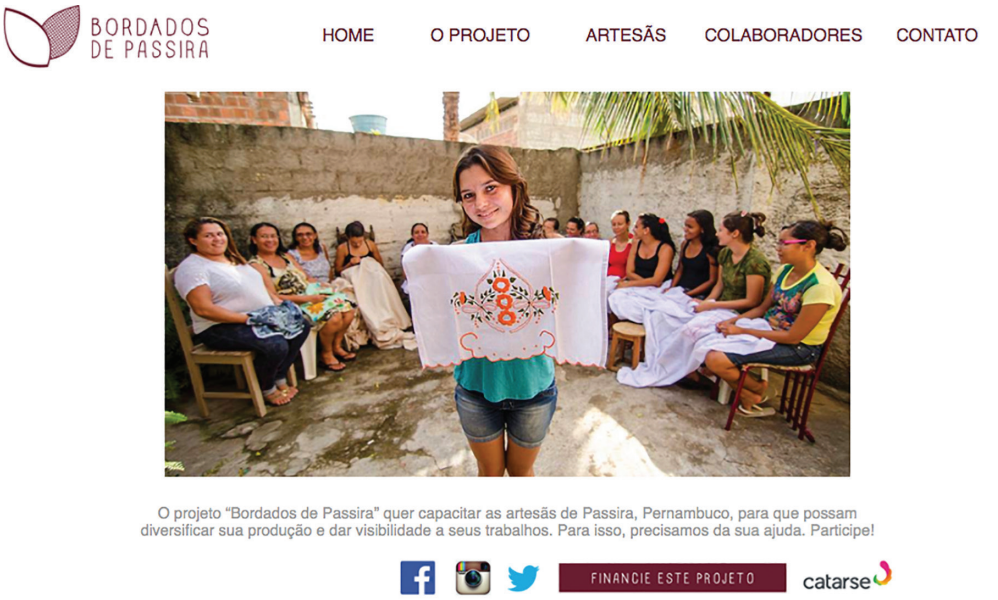

Figure 7.5 Homepage of *Bordados de Passira* produced with crowdfunding.
Source: *Bordados de Passira* (2014).

In one of these videos, artisan Marcília Firmino[14] begins her statement by emphasising, 'All the embroiderers in Passira have a story to tell'. Marilene Bernardo, on the other hand,[15] reiterates the dimension of recognition and a common identity based on the activity of embroidery: 'For years what we have been fighting for is to raise these women's self-esteem. This project will be recognition, because many people I don't know will recognise that here in this place there are embroiderers, and I am one of them'.

In this process of elaborating on a collective identity, the dimension of the individuality of each participant is also brought to light. Even if located in the same context, it would be wrong to consider AMAP artisans as being a homogeneous group devoid of subjectivities. They constitute themselves and the group based on their singularities, which are placed in a collective dialogue. The sharing of experiences inserts them into a dynamic of individual pluralities while also reinforcing their identities as a group. The construction of a community, as hooks (2010) writes, involves telling and sharing stories. Thus, the narratives acquire the multidimensional character of a group's strengthening and resistance.

Throughout this exploration, we observed that the activity of embroidery in Passira is related to the way the artisans understand this practice as a workspace from a dual perspective: while they maintain the tradition, which is understood here as knowledge transmitted down through the generations, they also re-elaborate on it and construct new practices.

Throughout this project, two core elements shared autonomy as a guiding principle. First is the continuity of the AMAP's impact in organising artisans and enabling their initiatives to lead the creation, production and commercialisation of their own work. Second is the expansion of narratives regarding embroidery work in Passira in

Figure 7.6 One of the pieces in the Abelhas (Bees) collection produced in the workshops from Bordados de Passira using the characteristic drawn thread embroidery.

Source: *Bordados de Passira* (2016).

a multiple symbolic dimension while taking into account several contexts that permeate this activity and the various social conditions of the association's members.

Final considerations

When considering the field of design as structured on colonialist-capitalist thought, it is consolidated through a hierarchy and standardisation of specific knowledge that is understood as uniquely valid. At the same time, the historical, social and political processes behind this create the emergence of other ways of knowing. In this sense, expanding the field's narratives inevitably requires the questioning of these dynamics of subjugation, as well as the erasure of subjects, their histories and their artefacts.

The community of artisans in Passira leads us to the possibility of understanding the plurality of both the knowledge produced in different contexts and conditions experienced by the women who, despite having similar experiences, maintain their differences. Therefore, the concepts of the *coloniality of gender* and *amefricanity* lead us to confront the idea of universality as a social and historical product, here also in its relation to the subjectivities in that social group and knowledge generated there.

It is essential to reflect on building relationships through design practices and situate the contexts of each practice by considering the knowledge and skills permeating them without reducing them to a single narrative. In the current study, we first sought

to expand the theoretical horizons for a dialogue between them and with the experiences of the embroiderers of Passira. We also sought to expand the horizons of practice and place its agents at the centre of research and the initiative itself.

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Notes

1 The professionals involved in the project were as follows: Ana Julia Melo Almeida (fashion designer), Beatriz Flausino (lawyer), Danielle Beduschi (fashion designer), Eduardo Paschoal (audiovisual producer), Érica Teruel (journalist), Hélder Santana (photographer), Jonathan Gurgel (fashion designer), Patricia Matos (fashion designer), Ricardo Goya (graphic designer) and Suelma Cristina (designer). All participated in the year-long project on a voluntary basis.
2 According to 2020 data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).
3 Quilombos are communities formed by runaway slaves, and their inhabitants and descendants are called quilombolas. Historian Beatriz do) writes that the formation of quilombos in Brazil dates back to the sixteenth century when there was news of quilombola territories in the region of sugarcane plantations in North-eastern Brazil. A quilombo is a social condition that goes beyond its geographic territory and must be understood as a place for the construction of collective subjectivity.
4 The community of Cacimbinha, also in Passira, was officially registered in 2005. There are other groups that have not yet been legally recognised, including Chã dos Lira, Chã dos Galdinos and Riacho de Pedra.
5 Embroiderer Maria Lúcia Firmino dos Santos took up the craft from her mother at the age of eight and never stopped. Despite having trained and worked as a teacher in a primary school in Passira for 30 years, she always embroidered, in additional to helping care for her whole family. At 65, she is now retired and still works to create incentives to strengthen the group and practice of embroidery.
6 Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was born in North-eastern Brazil in Pernambuco, the capital of the state, where Passira is located.
7 Milton Santos (1926–2001) was born in Bahia in North-eastern Brazil. He was a geographer who contributed to the renewal of the field of geography in Brazil based on the understanding of space as a set of representative forms of social relations in the past and present. For Milton, the geographical space corresponds to the way people organise themselves in it, being a reflection and condition of social processes; hence, it must be analysed in its entirety.
8 Lélia Gonzalez (1935–1995) was born in Minas Gerais in South-eastern Brazil and became a pioneer in studies on the condition of black people. In the 1970s, she participated in the Movimento Negro Unificado (Unified Black Movement), a political, cultural and social activist group during the late and postdictatorship period in Brazil.
9 Intersectional feminism proposes a multiple interconnected system approach to understanding and analysing the inequalities experienced by women. In the 1980s, the concept of intersectionality was developed by researcher Kimberlé Crenshaw, placing the categories of gender, class and race in relation with each other. Alongside Audre Lorde and Kimberlé Crenshaw, more black feminist authors such as Angela Davis, bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins presented indispensable ways to understand how race and class alter the experiences of gender by expanding and conceptualising gender based on other markers. Brazilian anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez wrote several articles in the 1980s on the articulation and persistence of racism and sexism in her country's culture, exploring how these combined aspects impacted the various roles and social representations of women, here stemming from their racial and socioeconomic conditions. The author also elaborated on the concept of *amefricanidade (amefricanity)* to consider the situation of Afro-Latin American

women, contextualising the inequalities experienced by women in Latin America, which differentiated them from those in the US context.

10 The main products embroidered at the AMAP so far have been bed and table items such as tablecloths, coffee table runners, napkins, placemats and so forth.

11 The project was made possible through the contribution of around 340 people to the online platform Catarse, which was the principal crowdfunding site at the time. The campaign duration was 60 days, and the funds totalled a little over $30,000 Brazilian Reais. The entire amount was transferred directly to the association, which then allocated it to each of the stages agreed upon with the project's supporters.

12 You can access the website at the following link: www.bordadosdepassira.com.br. The project's pages were also posted on Instagram and Facebook.

13 The artisans Maria Lúcia Firmino, the first president of the AMAP, and two younger members of the association, Aslani Firmino and Larissa Barbosa, attended the workshops held in São Paulo.

14 Artisan Marcília Firmino is the daughter of Maria Lúcia Firmino dos Santos. She learned to embroider with her mother when she was 12 years old. She also graduated with a degree in education and worked for a few years as a primary school teacher. She prefers making the more delicate embroideries, such as those made in children's pieces.

15 Marilene Bernardo da Silva Melo, now 40, has been embroidering since she was 8. She learned embroidery from her mother and is the only one among her sisters who embroiders. She participated in the foundation of the AMAP in 2007, together with the artisan Maria Lúcia Firmino.

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8 Afrikana—burying colonial bones to harvest seeds and bouquets of plurality

Michelle Olga van Wyk

Abstract: *Afrikana*—Afrika's rich cultural heritage—underpins the visually striking narrative that can be seen in many different forms of adornment across the continent. Despite being born from and immersed in this wealth of cultural capital, the current version of design education in higher education institutions has failed to harness the affirmative role of this knowledge. As a result, many emerging creatives are alienated from their core identities when trying to participate in the world of design. This chapter starts by introducing the context of the study, which is situated in the southern part of Afrika, namely Namibia and South Afrika. The key theme of plurality and its relation to colonisation are then unpacked to highlight the creative divorce of identity and making. The potential for restorative processes when embracing multiple identities is highlighted—a plurality of knowledge systems and expression thereof in art and design. Through a case study of my own creative practice, I posit that creative practice framed by indigenous identities can begin to bury the colonial bones of design education. By using a four-phase model, an alternative approach to issuing and completing a design brief is explored. The findings include observations made during the experience of briefing and making. The method lends itself to teaching in design contexts where marginalised identities are found.

Keywords: Decolonising design, African design education, adornment, arts-based methods (ABM), plurality, jewellery

> Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world only, our own, we see that world multiply itself and we have at our disposal as many worlds as there are original artists, worlds more different one from the other than those which revolve in infinite space.
>
> —Marcel Proust[1]

Introduction

The 54[2] nations that make up the world's second largest continent, Afrika,[3] all distinctly embody *Afrikana*—the continent's rich cultural heritage. This heritage underpins visually striking narratives that can be seen in many different forms, including adornment, across the continent. Although each country offers ample content for discussions on creative capital, this case study looks at design education in two specific countries that are located in the southern and south-west parts of Afrika: Namibia and South Afrika. Although Namibian born, I, the author, studied and live in South Afrika, too, identifying my/herself as a NamSAfrikan—a hybrid identity adopted to navigate living between these similar yet different countries.

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This chapter is framed by the reflective experience of introducing a cultural voice of identity into a traditional monologue of education and investigating what plurality could look and feel like in creative practice. By unlearning and learning *the way* to be while learning, plurality in design education is explored by allowing room for more than one perspective when creating objects of adornment. Although defined by the duality of being Afrikan in a Western world, my journey of becoming a qualified goldsmith is the catalyst that both stitched together and unravelled the façade of confidence known as 'being qualified'. Despite being born from and immersed in this wealth of cultural capital, the current design education in higher education institutions (HEI) in these two nations has failed to harness the affirmative role of this knowledge (Alabi et al., 2018). This is largely because of the dominant Western education structures and colonial stain on the fabric of these societies, in which the focus seems to be on producing skilled employees for a capitalist end (Rafapa, 2013, p. 439). Often, the sciences and math are elevated above the arts (which, from the my perspective, includes craft and design), leaving art, as a great innovator and connector, as a second-best option (Kabanda & Sen, 2018, p. 44). Hence, many emerging creatives are alienated from their core identities when trying to participate in the world (of design). It is from this point that the story in this work unfolds.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses this creative divorce and the potential of restorative processes when embracing multiple identities—a plurality of knowledge systems and expressions thereof in art and design practices. Through a case study of my own creative practice, I believe that creative practice framed by indigenous identities can begin to bury the colonial bones of design education. The case study looks at a component of design practice that forms a crucial element in teaching—the design brief. By critically reflecting on the learning process as a student in a jewellery design course at a University of Technology in South Afrika, the work aims to unpack the dynamic factors at play that erode the largeness of Afrikan identity and spirit through curriculum content, which ignores the cultural capital of the student and reinforces the need to forget to belong.

The act of reflecting on engaging a design brief might appear to be a simple task at first, but it is through critically reflecting on the experience of engaging in the design process that this step presents itself as the most intimidating. Acknowledging the need to find more room for oneself in learning is necessary, but the undertaking to do so in a practical way can be incredibly unnerving. How does one begin to unravel *the way* to find another? How does one recognise alternatives when gatekeepers and particular voices of authority offer only one perspective? How do you learn to recognise your own voice if you have so seldom spoken and find, as Denver Hendricks (2018) puts it, the 'roadmap to any kind of pedagogical decolonised utopia' (p. 2)?

The current study's experiment forms a critical part of an emancipatory journey in my practice-led doctoral studies, but also perhaps in finding a gravel path towards a decolonised utopia. One aim here is to present endogenous Afrikan knowledge through creative practice as the result of mining cultural capital with the tools obtained from plural voices and worlds. The following section discusses plurality in relation to decolonising practices in creative education.

Plurality and cultural divorce

It is important to understand that the need for pluralism in Namibia and South Afrika is not one that has recently emerged. This need has been submerged in the beating hearts

of many who have felt the oppression of power inflicted by colonial limbs and lips. Only a few decades have passed since the end of the brutal Apartheid era[4] in Namibia and South Afrika, but the courage to throw off the heavy rags of colonial systems has long been growing in the womb of frustration. Afrikan students have awaited the freedom to have their cries for justice heard—choosing what Mignolo and Escobar (2010) term the 'de-colonial option' (pp. 2–3). The year 2016 saw South Afrika, and to a lesser extent Namibia, again face student protests linked to a call to decolonise universities and higher education (C. Hendricks, 2018; D. Hendricks, 2018). At its core, this was a cry to have, hear and see Afrikan identities and experiences acknowledged. Any world of knowledge has value when it is *chosen* as a tool in a preferred context by the user. Just as a knife can cut to shape, wound or sever, the key lies in its choice and purpose. In this way, we have the options to choose our worlds and, hence, move away from the narrow, select individuality of colonisation, which has favoured a white European aesthetic and existence (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014).

Problematically, the agency of choice is compromised when one system of knowledge is placed above another to create and support power dynamics and the outcomes linked to it. In this way, coloniality and its structures disregard the significance of life (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010), so it is inevitable that those systems formed within these structures would disregard the very roots that anchor Afrikan life—culture, identity and place. To separate culture from learning is to separate the individual from identity (Clarke & Lewis, 2016; Shava, 2015; Ade et al., 1996). Such a separation is entrenched in the current educational offerings in Afrika. Within the context of art and design in South Afrika, the assault on identity through Western-focused knowledge has created a hierarchy of creativity—and worse, identity—where design is separated from craft in a sort of unspoken lesser or otherness. Furthermore, because the knowledge taught in universities has been predominantly shaped by colonialist perspectives and language, the inherent connectedness between arts, craft and design has also been superficially divided through words and definitions, creating artificial gaps or boundaries in the way that these visual languages are understood and engaged with in Afrika (Sidogi, 2014; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006; Lulat, 2005, pp. 433–436). Sidogi (2014) states, 'The term "Western art" is used in the light that arts education in South Africa was grounded on largely Western ideals of what constituted art' (p. 212). Subsequently, the ongoing debate on what can be classified as art, craft or design continues to uphold this division as colonial languages and approaches dominate the field, while muffling the sound that comes from engaging with the arts as a local, multivocal voice. The capitalist nature of Western design approaches craft that is linked to a cultural heritage as a practice to be enhanced by applying design thinking. Sadly, this act of enhancement further threatens to mute indigenous voices and is often poorly negotiated with the crafters in choosing how they navigate design spaces and the transformation of their work (Filho, 2013).

Design, education and the student experience

Indigenous craft practices are not formally taught in Afrikan HEIs because no curriculum exists. Ewenstein and Whyte (2009) state, 'An analytical interest in objects also reveals their centrality to the various processes and practices of learning and knowing' (p. 3), meaning that the objects that are made in design courses are undeniably linked to the knowledge systems from which they originate. Ewenstein and Whyte go on

to say, 'There is something distinct about the objects in and of themselves that make them key to knowledge development and innovation' (2009, p. 4), which reinforces the importance of the kinds of objects made and the processes involved (whether in materials used, techniques or instructions given) when making them. The doorway to this process is the design brief; if the object to be made is the view, the brief is the lens through which everything is seen. Seeing that the object points the beholder back to these worlds, why is the voice of indigenous knowledge still so faint? Could it be that colonial waters dilute the essence of Afrikan identity in the processes and practices of making in these educational structures. In the end, Afrikan hands are making objects that no longer reflect who they are but instead who they have been told and taught to be.

Comparatively, design education was modelled and is offered through systems that enhance Western societies and reinforce Western ways of being. Many design courses are available in both South Afrika and, to a limited degree, Namibia, with some courses even adopting indigenous knowledge related to craft into a design-centred curriculum. However, one cannot help but miss the prominent presence of our Afrikan identity. It appears that Afrikan epistemic objects represent a lesser threat than the formalised learning of the Afrikan methodology of making. If, like Ewenstein and Whyte state, the two cannot be separated, is it that the made object has been intentionally severed from non-Western knowledge systems to keep it framed as nonconsequential or insignificant, thus echoing the colonial lie that only what is taught and learned in Western education is of value. Consequently, craft is treated as an informal skill separated from design, which is legitimised by formalising knowledge through written curriculums. Students graduate with design education from a system that is taught from a Eurocentric perspective, with Afrikan content merely accenting the curriculum. In China, this intentional division, between mind and labour, was exercised in the government's strategy to divide Chinese society into four—of which artisans were included and classified beneath supposed important sectors such as agriculture and administration (Moll-Murata, 2018). In Namibia and South Afrika, the Apartheid government divided the population according to race and access to opportunity. The Black, Coloured[5] and Indian peoples were separated from the white Afrikaner[6] population and from the freedom to choose the decolonial option—even within education—themselves (Karlsson, 2004, p. 328). We see this choice being revoked again in the singular voice of design.

The government further went on to legislate an education system for Black, Coloured and Indian Afrikans known as Bantu education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The colonial classificatory term *Bantu* is a shortened form of the Zulu word *Abantu*, meaning people. It was used to replace the word 'native' and had been used as a tool of separation and division by colonial powers (Van der Waal, 2011, p. 33). Both the Confucian and Apartheid styles of governing reinforced that artisans and their indigenous knowledge and art were not an important part of society. Although the Apartheid regime intentionally limited access to certain vocations, it also supported this violent inequality by limiting access to Western education, arguing that offering education to a population that would not be able to actualise opportunities would only cause frustration (Sidogi, 2014, pp. 211–216; Fiske & Ladd, 2004, pp. 2–3). The restrictive nature of the Apartheid era lasted for four decades and left Black, Coloured and Indian Namibians and South Afrikans with an identity wound still being healed. Although many

efforts have been made towards equity in education, the student protests known as the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements were a clear sign that not enough had been done to lift the burden that students experienced during their university education (D. Hendricks, 2018). The inclusion of students of colour into classrooms has somehow veiled and delayed the need to address the systematic oppressive structures that were the core of the Apartheid era. The colonial foundation of the Apartheid era is seen not only in its vicious racist philosophy but also in the pervasive manner that education, in its past and current state, has been dangled in front of many Afrikans as a reward for securing freedom from colonial powers. The problem here lies in the curriculum that was birthed from an Apartheid government and was never meant to serve nonwhite peoples. So the current education system rests firmly on colonial cornerstones that did not and cannot acknowledge the wealth of knowledge housed in the students enrolled in HEIs across the two countries. Mavunga (2019) defines agency as being linked to identity, and identity is, in turn, influenced by culture. If culture is removed from education, identities and agency are inevitably affected. We need a different narrative, one that includes the freedom to choose plurality. With the undeniable conflict between design theory, in this case the how-to of design, and the practice of design, the two need to be renegotiated (Gribbin et al., 2016). Plurality helps culture navigate design spaces in a Western context and silences the room to acknowledge the unheard voices that have something to say.

Methodology

The methodological choices in this exercise were made to navigate away from a traditional approach of learning and making in a jewellery context, allowing the space for creativity and innovation (Edmonds & Candy, 2002). The traditional university approach would generally consist of reading through a set brief containing written instructions (usually in English) and illustrations. The aim would be to create a three-dimensional object from a brief (i.e., listed instructions), which would then be assessed against the given instructions and specifications. The assessment criteria would directly be linked to how closely the object appears to represent the brief. In this way, the outcome is predetermined, and the focus is on the practical skills only needed to produce said artefact. The model used for this creative endeavour, however, was based on four criteria linked to creativity as listed in Edmonds and Candy's (2002) paper, 'Creativity Art Knowledge and Practice'. The four criteria can be seen in Figure 8.1.

The creative brief was to create a wearable object of adornment that would reveal itself and something about the maker (author) (Inngs, 2017, p. 94). This was the sole outcome. What the outcome looked and felt like would be the creative innovation—the art (Sidogi, 2014). The process followed an arts-based method in which the first step included listening to Afrikan music for an hour while lying on the floor. This step breaks the conventional approach of working through the brief. The second step included working with material—shaping polymer clay—while the music played. The idea was to work the sound and experience of *Afrikana* as evoked by the music into the material, resulting in an epistemic object. Both these choices immerse the maker in a multitude of sensory experiences that surpass language and draw from a part of culture that cannot always necessarily be made

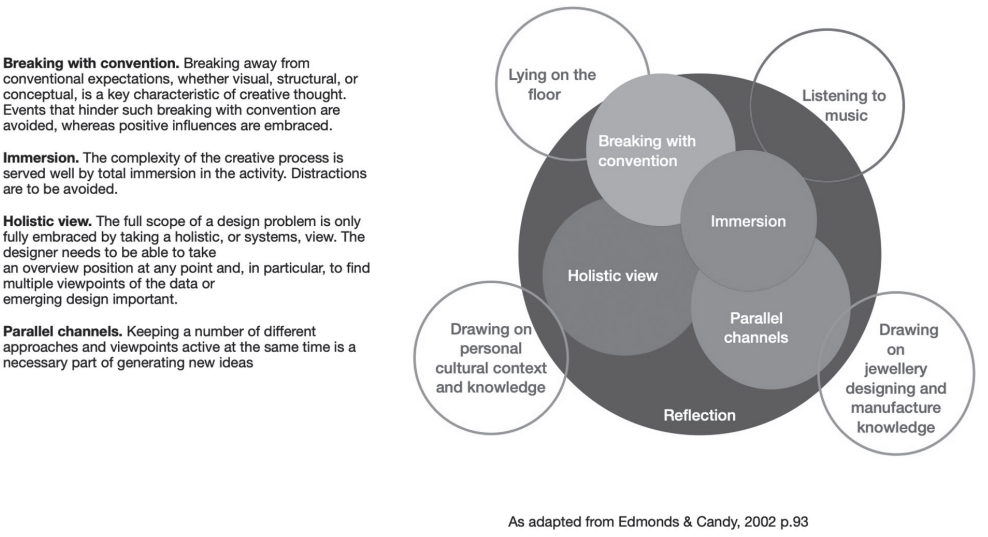

Figure 8.1 Methodology of Afrikanism in practice. Several overlapping circles representing the relationships between the four listed steps; namely Breaking convention, Immersion, Parallel Channels and Holistic view. These steps link to the method used in the experiment and show their connection to reflection. (author's construct as adapted from Edmonds & Candy, 2002, p. 93).

explicit through words (Gribbin et al., 2016). The approach also aims to have creative stimulus surrounding the maker while making, thus achieving immersion (see Figure 8.1).

The arts-based method also taps into storytelling, which is a fundamental component of Afrikan culture and education. Story conveys emotion and need not be bound to words or language, and in the case of Afrika and for this exercise, the rhythm of the Afrikan drum is used as the instruction that 'tutors' the learner. As Shava writes, the 'Rhythmic patterns and multiple colours are emblematic of African design' (2015, p. 13), and this is mimicked in Afrikan music. Thus, the concept of *the* way fades, and space is made for the diversity found in multiple ways. The navigation of this space is assisted by any knowledge the maker may have to draw on (holistic approach; see Figure 8.1), and makers are encouraged to use this to achieve the goal of the brief. My background in jewellery design and manufacture informed my creative experience (parallel approach; see Figure 8.1). The experience was then reflected upon through journaling, and the artefact was documented through visual documentation—in the forms of drawing, photographs or video. The act of reflection follows Schön's (1983) methodology, where the knowledge is unlocked by examining the experience. Therefore, the artefact is both an experience and outcome.

Findings

The findings of this creative experiment include my personal observations and contain suggestions for further investigation. Although the methodology can be adapted

to suit a group of people, the findings speak to the experiences of one person. This method serves as an effective way to engage learners who connect with creativity through their auditory senses. Gribbin et al. (2016) state, 'Knowledge appears to develop through experience within design practice' (p. 3183), so it was valuable to note the following details: the initial phase of the brief, which includes lying down and listening to music and which brought with it a wave of emotion, energy and thought. The desire to compare what one ought to be doing to create was at first overwhelming. This sense of creative obligation dissipated as the music kept playing. It was clear that the initial listening phase could be enhanced by closing one's eyes and engaging with whatever emotion and thought arises. Mental notes are valuable at this point because no written notes are taken during this stage—an option that could be altered, if needed. Furthermore, the need to respond to the music was almost irresistible; whether in hand or foot movements, the movement was restricted only by the act of being flat on the ground. This choice was, however, valuable to remain undistracted. The simple act of lying on one's back taps into the act of creative play and felt as if it gently restricted gravity, in turn freeing your mind to let the music dislodge embodied emotions and thoughts (Lindqvist, 1996). The duration of the listening phase (i.e., an hour) seemed long, but this may have been because of the overall unusual approach of the method. However, should it be required, the length of time spent listening to music can be adjusted, as long as enough room is given to immerse in the act of listening.

The duration of each phase can also be a point of reflection—to sift through valuable insights from the experiences of various sized or age groups.

Another key addition to the immersion process would be to prompt students with questions to introduce connections to their own cultures and indigenous knowledge. During the making phase, the transition from lying down to working with clay seemed natural. Thus, the immersive phase prepares the mind for creativity. Once the body adapts to the feeling of the material, immersion deepens. At this stage (see Figures 8.2 and 8.3), I drew on jewellery knowledge and attempted to build into the piece's elements of the rhythm of the music, drawing on a desire to want to wear the pieces and

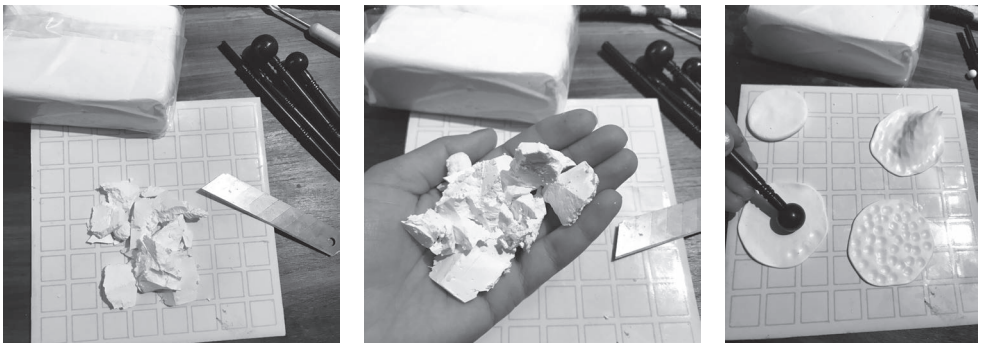

Figure 8.2 Immersion in making: process images of making with polymer clay. Hand holding chunks of white polymer clay with a block of clay, tools and a box cutter blade; black modelling tool texturing white clay discs with dents; several moulded white polymer shapes on white baking tile.

Figure 8.3 Baked pieces with colour added ready to be added to the findings (fixtures that hold the jewellery to the body). Several moulded white polymer shapes on white baking tile; baked white polymer clay with blue colour; white moulded polymer clay with orange, red, blue and green colour detail.

have them reflect adornment rather than perfection in terms of accuracy (which was a defining factor in jewellery). Regarding navigating parallel channels, this method allows for great exploration of oneself. This is not to say that the fundamentals of fine jewellery have no place in this methodology, but rather, they should be framed as an option, as opposed to a requirement.

Schultz et al. put it eloquently when saying, 'Ideas are embodiments of a designerly effort to make sense of experiential situations, and the transfer of ideas into and across different contexts informs how they affect thinking and action' (2018, p. 2). This methodology fosters ideas. Ideas can create scaffolding for other knowledge systems to plug into. Ideas can serve as bridges to allow for an exchange of knowledge rather than an imposition on marginalised groups. The model can—and in fact should—be adapted to what is deemed necessary for the participants, of which the facilitator is one. It is valuable to set (written) reflections and group discussions as support activities that enhance this learning experience.

Conclusion

Creativity is often a personal experience, and the outcomes thereof may or may not be valued by external audiences (Chakraborty, 2017). This evaluation, however, should not stop creatives from exploring unknowns within and outside of themselves. Creative standards are by no means forged in stone; in fact, they are in a perpetual state of flux, following the rhythm of life. Colonial pasts have long eroded the Afrikan identity, stripping away security and a sense of self that allows for innovation. Education has been proven to incubate the seeds that are planted within its soil, so it is of the utmost importance that we take note and revisit the methods used in these institutions. In journeys of rediscovery, it is important to venture on retrospective expeditions so that we can learn from the past and grow in our futures. The arts are a powerful voice, a resonant one. They

channel a multitude of voices from different walks of life and symbolise a universal language for those who have lost their voices because of violence against their identities. This creative experiment may not follow conventional jewellery teaching practices, nor did it deliver a conventional jewellery piece that would immediately be identified as precious and ready to be sold in a capitalist world; instead, it allowed me to choose creativity by choosing freedom. Freedom creates the space to contribute, to speak up and to breathe. If we are to create a world where plurality is the norm, we must, in an Afrikan context, allow ourselves to be heard—first by ourselves and then by the world. Through breaking conventional ways of learning, immersing ourselves in who we are, drawing from the outside that which we feel is valuable, here from the depths which we feel are necessary, and creating parallels for us to function within, we are undoubtedly part of the pluriverse. Our heartbeat is heard. A world that was waiting for us for so long has now become reality. The healing rhythm of Afrika will resonate in each new student who finds their artistic voice in this pluriworld. It is precisely for this freedom that we were born!

Notes

1 Source: Time Regained, 1999
2 www.worldometers.info/world-population/reunion-population/
3 Afri*k*a is spelled with the letter K in this work as the author's personal and intentional choice. This is done because no letter c is found in her mother tongue/first language, and this choice is made in solidarity with other Afrikan authors. This is done throughout the body of work, except for instances where direct quotes have been used.
4 Apartheid, which is translated from the Afrikaans language spoken only in Namibia and South Afrika, means apartness. It was a system of segregation and discrimination based on race against nonwhites (Britannica.com, 2021. see www.britannica.com/event/Bantu-Education-Act).
5 The Coloured people, historically defined as persons of mixed racial and ethnic heritage (see Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, 2012; Willemse, 2011).
6 Afrikaner—translated from *Africaander*—are white European decedents who settled mainly in the southern tip of Afrika during the middle of the seventeenth century, who remained in Namibia and South Afrika and were the minority race that benefitted from the Apartheid era and regime (SAHO, 2021; Source: South African History Online. See www.sahistory.org.za/article/afrikaner).

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Section II

Design explorations towards the Pluriverse

9 Excluding by design

Peter West

Abstract: Western Design education and Design practice discourse is beginning to express a need for greater diversity and inclusion. However, this desire to engage by merely including alternative voices or those pushed to the margins, potentially deflects from the critical examination and reset required of Designs epistemic foundations. For design to be inclusive, this must also beg the questions: Who has been excluded from Design, what are these practices of exclusion and what is revealed of Designs privilege to assume the position of host and includer? Modern iterations of what design has created; the centralised human is not sustainable or conscionable, which is evident by its own admission, through the desire to be more humane by including people of diverse backgrounds. However, when approached through Designs problem, solution mindset diversity and inclusion is at risk of being an answer motivated by offering a more broadly transactional reach and 'usefulness'. It is important to recognise that the shift to Inclusion as a policy emphasis does not erase past exclusions. Instead, the desire for diversity and inclusion can lead to Design positioning itself as benefactor, in a state of white virtue, rather than recognising itself as dominant discipline and system which politely adapts and consumes the invited other. The author writes this on unceded Indigenous lands on the continent also known as Australia. In Australian design contexts, there is an enthusiastic desire to engage with and include Indigenous peoples and knowledges within Western design education institutions. However, I contend that the inability to recognise and be in relation to Indigenous sovereignty, as the basis of the Australian state, has resulted in Design being ill-equipped and perhaps incapable of practicing in relation to Indigenous knowledge systems (sovereignty). In Designs for the Pluriverse, Columbian Design and anthropology scholar Arturo Escobar eloquently critiques neoliberal modernity, patriarchy, individualism and colonialism. In this important work, Escobar hopes to move towards designs for a 'pluriverse of sociocultural configurations'. This chapter explores this proposition while contending that it is necessary to identify and disrupt (white) racialised logics within design lest it consume pluriversal thinking as a 'value add'. I argue that the white racialised logics in design are illusive, adaptive and an exclusive disciplining practice. I draw upon critical race whiteness and indigeneity theory along with the seminal work of the Decolonising Design Group to explore a critical reset of the design episteme in relation to Indigenous sovereignty by knowing its ontological and epistemic boundedness.

Keywords: Design pluriverse, sovereignty, critical race, decolonising

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Guilt by omission

Amongst those practising Western Design and within Western education institutions, there is a growing enthusiasm for including people of diverse backgrounds in the realm of Design. This is often underpinned by university policies of diversity and inclusion, which encourage and measure the presence and participation of people of diverse backgrounds. Many would argue—and I am one of those to do so, that this is long overdue. However, my impatience aside, I believe this emphasis can deflect the necessary critical examination of the power base from which diversity and inclusion are called for. For Design to be inclusive, this must also beg the following questions: Who has been excluded? What are these practices of exclusion? What is revealed of Designs epistemic foundations as it now assumes the position of host and includer? For the author, such questions arise from a trajectory of industrialisation and modernity as inscribed through the colonial project and further propelled by the racialising practices of whiteness. This is the foundation that we (non-Indigenous) operate from and respond to 'other' peoples and knowledges. From this discipline power base, the 'solution' is to absorb more rather than fundamentally reposition Design in recognition of its epistemic boundedness, in the Australian context, this boundedness is set by Indigenous sovereignties. As decolonising Design scholars Ansari and Kiem state, 'Universities have never been places that favour structural decolonisation' (2021, p. 155). Ansari and Kiem are clear in stating that effective decolonisation can only occur through radical change, recognising the university as a site of 'established networks of colonial power' (p. 156).

Throughout this chapter, I have capitalised Design as a Pronoun; as being its own 'thing' with structures, behaviours and practices. In doing so, I am critically highlighting Design as a Western discipline, *sui generis*—of its own. I do this to provoke a practice of critically looking at and understanding the basis of the 'thing' itself. As a pronoun, Design requires adherence to its own (Western) principles, which must include the way the 'thing' ontologically reproduces. I will use the lower case 'design' when referring to design as a reductive practice of production.

Modern iterations of what Design has created; the anthropocentrism of the consumptive centralised human is not working and Design now seeks to account for its role in excessive consumption, defuturing and unsustainability (Fry, 2017; Escobar, 2018; Fry, 2013). This *mea culpa* is evident in Design by its own admission, through the desire to be more humane by including knowledges and experiences of peoples that have been previously excluded. As a result, diversity and inclusion as a policy and mindset is at risk of merely looking for an answer, being that with diversity, there is a richer offering for Design with a wider transactional 'usefulness'. I also argue that this shift in emphasis does not erase past exclusions and instead burdens those who are included with the assumption of resetting the exclusionary thinking embedded within Design. The expectation is that those who are now deemed worthy of inclusion should offer their knowledges and experiences as solutions. I argue that this form of inclusion is a subtle adaption of colonisation under the guise of well-meaning good intentions. The desire for diversity and inclusion can seem like a noble pursuit, which positions design as a benefactor and in a state of what critical race whiteness and indigeneity scholar Nicoll terms as 'white virtue' (Nicoll, 2014). Feminist, queer and critical race scholar Sara Ahmed (2007) argues that diversity as a term is used strategically by practitioners as a solution to what has been called 'equity fatigue'; it is a term that more easily supports existing organisational ideals or even organisational

pride (p. 235). Ahmed (2007) further contends that, 'what makes diversity useful also makes it limited: it can become detached from histories of struggle for equality' (p. 235). I argue that diversity and inclusion policies have been interpreted by Design as an enthusiasm for 'the other' as a project and growth based benefit. It is this enthusiasm for 'the other' as an approach to the pluriverse that I will examine in this chapter.

In the continent now also known as Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have never ceded their land, rights or identity. Australia comprises over 350 Indigenous (First Nations) sovereign nations with distinct languages, laws, cultures, knowledges and governing systems (Behrendt, 2003). Throughout this chapter, I will use the term 'Indigenous sovereignty' as a universal, as used by Aboriginal activists to speak back to the Australian state and of that which was never ceded by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I activate the term *Indigenous sovereignty* as the counter to Western knowledge systems and governance to emphasise that these systems continually deny their obligation to Indigenous sovereignty. I use the term *Indigenous sovereignties* (plural) to challenge the universalising thought and activity of Western Design (and non-Indigenous peoples) as there are and have always been many Indigenous sovereignties. By specifying sovereignties, I am addressing my concern that Design will centre itself as the designer of the pluriverse and pluriversality will only be engaged with through current diversity thinking and enthusiasm for 'the other'. I argue that what should be centred is Design's obligation to critically recognise itself as a dominant knowledge system epistemically bounded by being in relation to Indigenous sovereignties, that have always existed as pluriversal. To be in the conduct of the pluriverse and to Decolonise is to be obligated to Indigenous sovereignty (Tuck & Yang, 2012). It is common to hear terms such as 'Indigenous knowledges' or 'Indigenous cultural practices'; Indigenous sovereignties encapsulates these.

In this chapter, I refer to images I presented as discussion prompts when facilitating a series of workshops at RMIT University, titled the Early Enabling Academic (EEA) workshops. These workshops were overseen by Indigenous academics and thought leaders and comprised non-Indigenous academics as workshop participants from six different disciplines in which we explored how Western knowledge systems could be contoured and practiced through the lawful obligation of Indigenous sovereignties.

The ideas and arguments presented in this chapter have emerged through continual reflection on the EEA project. This reflects the embodied, emplaced nature of this research. The multiple cycles of action-orientated research methodologies support this ongoing exploration (Mao et al., 2016; Kemmis et al., 2013). Furthermore, the methodology I adopt is a narrative in response to Indigenous research methodologies. Decolonising research methodologies, or Indigenous research methodologies, shifts the 'ownership' or interrupts the coloniser by removing the emphasis of research 'about', 'with' or 'for' Indigenous people. Therefore, the methodology I apply is a parallel-methodology; propelled by being in response to Indigenous sovereignty, dependant on a critical situatedness and focus on my conduct of non-Indigeneity reflected by the lawful obligation of Indigenous sovereignty.

Walking in two worlds

Scholars such as Akama (2017), Haraway (2003), Law (2011) and Ingold (2010) have comprehensively exposed Design's modern condition of universalising, dominance

and consumption and, therefore, its limited ability to be in relation to other beings and knowledge systems. Alongside this important discourse, Escobar positions pluriversal thinking in response to the capitalist, neoliberal and patriarchal logics within Western Design, seeing this as a modern pervasive colonialism (Escobar, 2018). Much like how Escobar proposes a 'pluriverse of sociocultural configurations' (p. 19), I bring to this the possibility of Western Design responding to Indigenous sovereignties as a foundation of and for pluriversaility. These are not separate concepts; Indigenous sovereignties are and have always been pluriversal, and non-Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems have always been obligated to be in relation to them. Indigenous sovereignties are the ways of pluriversality that (should) guide non-Indigenous ways of being and designing; as the foundation of non-Indigenous pluriversality.

The image in Figure 9.1 was presented in the EEA workshops in order to provoke discussion on the relationship between knowledge systems. While the image presents a relationship of two or many, through discussion prompts attention was directed towards developing critical situatedness within Western knowledge systems, rather than defaulting to requests for information about the 'other' surrounding knowledge systems. Furthermore, the purpose in conversations was to challenge what I are suggest are more typical responses when discussing Indigenous knowledges; how we might bring the two together, through a lens of equality or inclusion, but rather to discuss what obscures the foundational reset required of the Western disciplines and non-Indigeneity in order to be in a sovereign relationship.

On many occasions, I have heard Indigenous people speak of their ability to 'walk in two worlds' which is to navigate the demands and effects of colonisation and remain as sovereign beings (Paton, 2018). This navigating of worlds is something

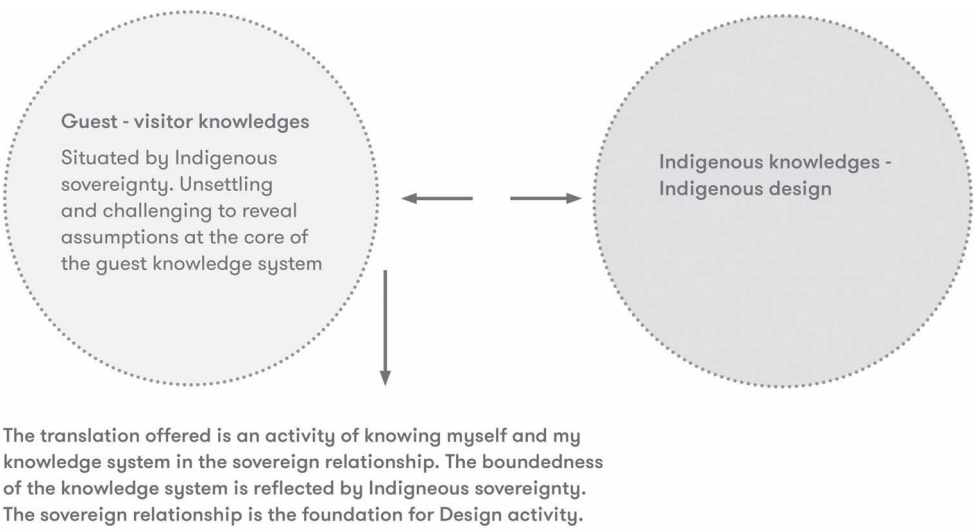

Figure 9.1 This image was presented in the EEA workshops as an initial, relatable example of Indigenous sovereignties as a foundation and the colonial designed response.

that Western Design has never had to do. To recognise that the continent, now also known as Australia, comprises over 350 Indigenous nations or sovereignties, we must also recognise that Indigenous ways of being have always been designing the pluriverse. Yet the Design episteme was not formed to recognise and act in response to this particular pluriversality; it was formed from thinking that obscured and denied the validity of other knowledge systems.

By placing myself here

In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe who I am in relation to Indigenous knowledges and peoples with as much brevity as possible. I am also conscious that my critique does not allow distance from my whiteness and avoid accountability and examinations of my privilege by supposedly being the good critical academic (Macoun, 2016). My intention is to move beyond positioning a description of who I am into a situated critical practice in response to Indigenous sovereignties. I use the terms 'obligation' and 'lawful obligation' deliberately and repetitively throughout this chapter in order to counter the possibility that engagement with Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous 'issues' would be positioned as 'good' social justice work and subsumed into institutional policies of 'diversity and inclusion'. Within these policy environments, social justice approaches tend to be centralised for marginalised groups, supposedly offering equality as a concession, while inadvertently reiterating the fact that these inequalities were created and continue to be recreated by the powerful. To focus on Indigenous sovereignty centres on the lawful relationship between peoples and knowledge systems.

I live, practise Design, research and teach on the unceded lands of the Woi Worrung and Boon Wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nations. Womin Djeka is the sovereign practice of Welcoming for the Kulin Nations. Womin Djeka is translated into English to mean; Come? And, what is your business or intention? I see this as not merely a request to the visitor to introduce or explain themselves; it is a statement of the sovereign's authority and the basis for the non-Indigenous visitors continual, situated, ontologically placed, lawful relationship. In a sense, the sovereign host is stating, 'I come from here, where do you come from?' The sovereign host emerges from this country and is inextricably one with country itself. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not from anywhere else. My being, and my design can only be grounded 'here', in an ontological way through my obligation to the sovereignty of the host while also understood as being from elsewhere. Recognising and reconnecting this 'elsewhereness' is particularly challenging for design. It disrupts the assumption that possession, property and the designed narratives of Australian-ness are an ontology of being 'home'. Throughout the text 'Indigenous Sovereignty and the Being of the Occupier', non-Indigenous philosophy scholars Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos (2014) describe the persistent presence of Indigenous sovereignty as unsettling non-Indigenous people and rendering them (us) as 'the occupier'. Design emerged elsewhere through Industrialisation and a zeal for growth as progress (Fry, 2017; Giard & Schneiderman, 2013). Reason and capitalist logics of possession are the claim to *be* here, by taking up space and occupying (Moreton-Robinson, 2017). Whereas Indigenous sovereignty emerges from an ontological connection to country and spiritual beings, as practiced since time immemorial (Moreton-Robinson, 2003). The immovable, ontological design of Indigenous sovereignty is a constant reminder

of Western Design's epistemic distance. Design distances itself from its obligation to Indigenous sovereignty by deploying practices of surface-level inclusion as a relief from the persistent challenge posed by Indigenous sovereignty.

I was born on Barapa Barapa country in the settlement town of Kerang, in Victoria, Australia. It was not until my young adulthood that I began to know my home as being on Barapa Barapa and Yorta Yorta countries. Further into my adulthood, I have had to reconceive of my home as being founded through the legal fiction of terra nullius; on stolen Indigenous lands (Behrendt, 2003; West, 2020). I am a non-Indigenous, white cisgendered gay man trained in Western Design and Western education practices. My husband, Mark, is a Wiradjuri man. Wiradjuri is an Indigenous Nation in New South Wales. Mark and I are at home in Melbourne/Naarm and are guests or visitors in relation to Kulin sovereignty. I use the terms guest or visitor as offered to non-Indigenous people and non-Kulin (Aboriginal) people from the Kulin elders in Welcoming ceremonies (McKenna, 2014). Mark, being Wiradjuri, responds to Woi Worrung and Boon Worrung sovereignty as an ontological way of being (McMillan, 2020). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have always been in sovereign relations with each other. This is the pluriversal foundation I am obligated to know myself in relation to. However, I have been taught to deny and obscure Indigenous sovereignties, and this practice of exclusion is designed and of Design. As Willis rightly states, 'We are designed by our designing and by that which we have designed' (Willis, 2006, p. 80). Geonpul, Quandamoka scholar Moreton-Robinson describes the non-Indigenous capitalist connection to place as a surface world (2017), and for non-Indigenous people, its illusive equilibrium depends on the denial of Indigenous sovereignties.

I am beginning to see myself in a practice of witnessing, being positioned and influenced by the conduct of Indigenous sovereignties; however, I am not a passive, objective, removed observer and designer. As Suchman argues, we do not design in a neutral space or hold an apolitical view, nor are designers invisible or removed from design situations (2007). Suchman is clear that designers need to take accountability for their vision of the world and emphasises the importance of locating the basis of Design, including bias and intentions. By divulging who I am, I am not neutralising accountability for the designs I am embed in. I am a non-Indigenous white cisgendered man accepting the obligations of Designing on unceded Indigenous lands.

Excluded by design

I am a gay man of a particular age. My early formative years as a teenager and as a young adult living in Melbourne were experienced within the 1980s to mid-1990s AIDS/HIV crisis. To be gay was already criminal and presented as morally deviant; however, from this period on, we were also positioned as a contagious, lethal threat to the heteronormative family unit. To be a gay man was to be a spectre of a deviant death, which needed to be distanced and, at best pitied (Stylianou, 2010; Vitellone, 2001). This was the design of my emergence into homosexuality. Initially, silence, denial and excluding myself from the gay community meant survival. The stigma and the resulting exclusion by governments, health officials, medical research and social care was designed, not accidental. To bring further context to the times, homosexuality was criminalised in Australia up until 1992; therefore up to that point, my

existence was criminal. From this period, I have vivid memories of attending funerals, candlelight vigils, fundraising events and ACTUP marches. However, I am fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries of Australia's world-leading responses to AIDS/HIV. That, too, was designed from within the LGBTQI+ community as a reaction to being marginalised. I place this sense of myself here with as much brevity to avoid suggesting character depth or inspiring empathy but rather to make clear the living memory of exclusion that drives me to ask the following; What am I now being included in, at what cost (or whose exclusion) and for whose larger purpose? I also acknowledge the ways in which many people feel and are excluded from dominant paradigms. I know I am not alone or exceptional in this.

My experiences as a gay man are not positioned here to suggest equivalence through marginalisation to Aboriginal people, people of colour and, in particular, Aboriginal gay men. Aboriginal gay men, Aboriginal people and people of colour are far more affected by AIDS and HIV than their white counterparts. My experiences are as a white gay man. The privilege of my access to health care, health messaging for which I was the intended audience and my activism comes with the assurance and the security of being a white gay man. As a white gay man, I was ultimately deemed worthy of being included and saved.

I also benefit from being able to comply to and gain access to (white) heterosexuality, if I accept the many conditions that this demands. White gay men can instigate positive change because of their access to power and political influence. In Australia, this can be seen in the achievements of Don Dunstan as State Premier leading South Australia as the first state to decriminalise male homosexuality in 1975 and Tasmanian activist Rodney Croome's actions in the high court of Australia leading to Tasmania being the final jurisdiction to decriminalise homosexuality in 1997 (Riseman, 2019; Reynolds, 2002). Aboriginal LGBTQI+ people are racialised by and from white heteronormativity in ways that I am not. Therefore, the conditions of entry for Aboriginal gay men, including from white gay men, demands far more personal editing and code switching energy than I have ever had to exert. However, such is the pervasiveness of heteronormativity that I frequently catch myself prosecuting the standards of the heterosexual male to my own detriment, against myself and other gay men. An awareness of what my privilege allows is an important critical view of the designs in which I am embedded in and benefit from.

A queer critical perspective is deployed by communications theorist Matthew Cox who refers to the workplace as the 'working closet' (2019) in order to bring forward the queer or 'unorthodox space' which includes queer rhetorics, queer peoples and their 'life contacts' (p. 3). Cox goes on to describe the need for disruption to heteronormativity by including queer alternative perspectives which can improve productivity. However, I position my queer unorthodoxy as contextualised by my racialised orthodoxy (power and privilege) as a critical practice as 'productive' only in service to my obligation to Indigenous sovereignty. This is not just about critical race theory as applied to social hierarchies, but goes to a sovereign relationship not recognised and continually deflected. The governance of Australia was designed to be exclusive; to not govern in relation to Indigenous sovereignty. Consequently Western disciplines and education institutions were not designed to be in relation to Indigenous sovereignty (knowledge systems). A description of my otherness and my situatedness within otherness should be seen primarily as an organising practice amongst non-Indigenous peoples. Whereas, Indigenous sovereignty is not the other;

it is fact; it is not at the margin; it is the foundation from which Design needs to situate. My experiences inform my ability to see problems with the design narratives of Australian-ness and the governance of Australia. However, I cannot use the existence of being an identified other as a deflection from my obligations to Indigenous sovereignty.

Enthusiasm and the 'race to innocence'

Inclusivity in Design as a desire and as a named priority tends to manifest as including non-designers and end users as valuable in so far as providing information and ultimately 'improving' an end design outcome (Bichard & Gheerawo, 2013). However, I argue that while Design invites others in, it remains politely dominant, as a hegemonic practice by refreshing itself with the latest, expansive 'business as usual'. Design has been adapted and expanded under the guise of democratising the design process for greater 'usefulness' by inviting in (non-designer) community members. In a similar vein Service Design translates and assimilates multiple, layered experiences and presents these as readable 'displayable' human narratives. This can be an energetic, dynamic design process; when you step back, there appears to be a web of inclusion. However what must also be recognised is the Designed effortlessness of these methods in which human experiences become a source of information through and for capitalist logics (West, 2020).

Recently, in keeping with institutional policies, there has been an increased interest—and I argue a hyper-alertness—towards Indigenous peoples and their knowledges. Alongside this there is increased recognition of the impacts of colonisation and greater valuing of Indigenous knowledges by non-Indigenous people and Western education institutions. This is an important development in non-Indigenous and Indigenous relationships. Some of the dominant thinking has been challenged, in which Indigenous people were seen as primitive, phenotypically black and existing only in faraway remote locations, not present in urban centres and to be celebrated only when presenting a palatable 'traditional' form of cultural activity or when acquiescing to (white) modernity (Behrendt, 1998; Gorrie, 2017). I am careful in saying that 'some' of these attitudes have shifted. I firmly believe that much of this thinking persists but now the 'traditional' or successful Aboriginal is romanticised or designed as part of an Australian pride, tourism narrative. Institutional policies that direct staff to cultural awareness training as 'one-off' isolated compliance sessions have accelerated this. Non-Indigenous people generally approach these sessions with the expectation of 'learning about' Aboriginal people and thus well-meaning cultural curiosity becomes the central relationship gesture. This gesture of 'learning about', as an activity of inclusion has accelerated a non-Indigenous 'race to innocence'. I use the term 'race to innocence' as coined by feminist scholars Fellows and Razack to describe the problem of 'competing marginalities' (1997, p. 335). Fellows and Razack direct this specifically to the experiences of conflict and immobility in feminist political discourse. Innocence emerges as a form of deflection as each woman comes to believe that her own claim of subordination is the most urgent and that she is unimplicated in the subordination of other women hence the 'race to innocence' (p. 335). In the 'race to innocence', that I refer to, it is not that Design is saying 'I'm oppressed, too; therefore, I don't need to critically examine myself', although I have heard designers

say similar things to this. I believe that Design, through its inclusive methods, is saying 'I'm carefully listening to you, being more accommodating of you, and referencing you. And that is enough'. I believe that challenging an assumed innocence in Design is particularly valuable as ground-work towards developing layered, situated pluriversality, which emerges through a consciousness of obligation to Indigenous sovereignties.

The design of you

Design has participated in the creation of the centralised human and its pinnacle as cisgendered male, heteronormative, white and able-bodied. The centralised human is designed to be the dominant knowledge holder, and to maintain this, other epistemes must be excluded, sometimes through overt racist policies and actions (Nakata, 2007) and other times through seemingly passive, 'well-meaning' assimilations. In particular, it is the practices of whiteness as being within and of Design that propels its innocent dominance. I use the term 'whiteness' to refer to racialised behaviours, practices, values and systems that constitute the social ecologies around us and are embodied within or navigated by to varying degrees all non-Indigenous people. More broadly, this is embedded in the cultural, historical and sociological aspects of white dominant social systems. The racialised logic of whiteness operates to remain out of the ordering of race categories while defining and managing the category itself (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This creates and maintains invisible race structures that shape a society so that colonial practices become fundamental and 'common sense' (Rigney, 1999, p. 114). This then leads to a logic that propagates the construction of whiteness as an ideology tied to social hierarchies. These often remain hidden from view, particularly from the non-Indigenous white person. This being said, the invisibility of whiteness is harder to achieve now that the voices and presences of people of colour and Indigenous peoples have been elevated. However, as we realise that these experiences are worth listening to, we need to be backward looking, not future looking, to chip away at Design's exclusionary knowledge base. Drawing from my experiences in heteronormative spaces, my choice to be included is to acquiesce and play on 'your' terms, to edit and comply. In this setting, this is to be or feel continually examined and conscious of maintaining my worth to be included and to be careful that I am not a problem or conscious that I might merely be an information source. LGBTQI+ people have always been in design and have always been negotiating what is an acceptable engagement, or what is palatable and consumable, navigating an acceptable level of difference within the frame of inclusion. You can be different but not too different. I bring this consciousness to my engagement with Indigenous Design practitioners. Indigenous architects, industrial, fashion, communication and games designers design through their ontological connection to country as their epistemic base. When I am offered Indigenous knowledge translated into Western Design, my response is not to treat this as an addition to my Design practice but to acknowledge the translation as a sovereign practice, which situates my responsibility to the sovereign relationship. I remind myself; I'm not interested in you as information source, I am placed by sovereign conduct within the pluriverse, through recognition of my Designs surface, ontological 'elsewhereness'. The offering or invitation of Indigenous knowledges needs to be understood as a practice of Indigenous sovereignties that states: We design from country, we are designed by country. Who are you and, where do you design from?

Conclusion

Indigenous sovereignty (and sovereignties) is the foundation from which non-Indigenous people can be in sovereign relationship, therefore Indigenous sovereignty cannot be othered, marginalised or included. I am surrounded by the pluriversality of Indigenous sovereignties not as something I can know through Western ways of knowing or that attempting to replicate is knowing, but what I need to know is how to live and Design in a sovereign relationship. What is most likely to disrupt my relationship to Indigenous sovereignty is non-Indigeneity reorganising itself as it designs the gravitational pull of Western standards of what can be included, empathised with and what creates a palatable form of diversity.

At the formation of knowledge, at the knowledge base itself, being in relation to Indigenous sovereignties as pluriversality was not valued as integral to the foundation of design. Now, diversity and inclusion risks being an activity of designing ways of overcoming gaps in design and avoiding the admission that the knowledge base itself is the problem.

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10 Knowledge plurality for greater university-community permeability

Experiences in art and design from fieldwork*

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Abstract: By relating the authors' experiences in the field with institutions and within indigenous communities, this chapter argues that knowledge plurality is required for greater university-community permeability, reciprocity and transformation, and that design can be a space to do so. When addressing the research obstacles, the authors are trying to highlight how collaboration can be a relationship with different levels and how addressing those obstacles within the university only makes the process of community empowerment easier.

Keywords: Collaborative research, fieldwork, university-community permeability, multiplicity, ways of knowing

Introduction

When addressing the pluriversal proposal of rejecting the modern and Western epistemology domination on the *world* (Escobar, 2018; Blaser, 2013; Stengers, 2007), settler scholars often fail to truly consider the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples (Todd, 2016), hence undermining a true collaboration research process. Even so, the pluriversal proposal is far from a goal in our sense; it offers new perspectives for design practices. On this matter, Escobar is eloquent in stating, 'Transitions studies considers design as an innovative critical praxis, a particular form of knowledge-practice that is in the spirit of transitions and the pluriverse' (2018, p. 172). In this chapter, the authors propose a reflection on university-community relationships and reciprocity from the perspectives of knowledge plurality, particularly in the field of design. This idea is addressed by presenting the authors' voices and experiences as non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. We, the authors, believe that as the first step to truly engage in a university-community collaboration-based approach, we must try to engage in a reflexive work in looking at our own experiences and thoughts reflexes.

The first section opens the discussion on how we are witnessing important changes in the academic world regarding what we term the 'university-community permeability'. The second part of the chapter deepens the idea that moving away from the dictates of a 'unified science' philosophy towards one that values pluriversal ways of producing knowledge and judging its validity (Weiler, 2011) opens spaces for imagining more mutually enriching university-community exchanges. In the third part, based on extensive fieldwork experience in art and design with Indigenous communities, the authors discuss

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the obstacles and possible incentives related to the integration of these 'other ways' of knowing in academic research. Anecdotes in both parts of the chapter are used to illustrate shared ideas. This material is then discussed through the lens of different levels of collaboration with the communities in a project. Finally, as an opening, the conclusion suggests that design—as a relatively young discipline or meta-discipline—may be well positioned to flourish by being especially permeable to a multiplicity of ways of knowing.

Towards greater 'university—community permeability'

Over the past few decades, we have seen historical and well-defined boundaries between research institutions and non-academic communities being challenged. For example, knowledge mobilisation—where research outputs benefit knowledge users outside academia—has significantly gained attention (Smith, 2012). In general, the diverse forms of knowledge held by community experts and community researchers are making their way into universities, contributing to this permeability and, ultimately, to power negotiation in more diverse directions. This example shows the contrast with the dominant ways of knowing established in academia by including experiential knowledge (Baillergeau & Duyvendak, 2016), local knowledge (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2018), Indigenous knowledge and procedural knowledge or 'knowing-how', as defined by Ryle (1949). For instance, in health sciences, rather than being an object of research, patients are considered partners, where their experiential knowledge is acknowledged as valid research input. In the processes of decolonisation, universities are invited to critically examine the hierarchy of knowledge and recognise Indigenous knowledge systems that have been developed over generations and that are grounded on individual and collectively learned experiences (Nicholas, 2018), mostly on and with the land. Regarding procedural knowledge in design research, discussions about design epistemologies support the legitimisations of 'knowing-how' or 'knowing though making' (Mäkelä, 2007).

Further recognition and legitimisation of such various forms of knowing and knowledge are necessary for creating positive impacts within and outside academia. However, by recognising the pluriversal proposal of different and 'other' ways of enacting our modern world (Blaser, 2013)—and so as to be aware of the thought mechanisms resulting in our constant perpetuation of the same onto-epistemology hierarchy we criticise—we must have the consciousness that we are also this 'otherness'. From a critical standpoint and regarding Indigenous critical scholarship in particular, while academia tends to include theories that are trying to recognise this 'other', we are still failing to create the conditions for 'intellectual presence as Indigenous peoples within its very own bricks-and-mortar institutions' (Todd, 2016, p. 10). According to Todd, who offers a critical and different ontological perspective on the notion of the pluriverse and the trend of ontological turn in a broader sense, such an encounter requires negotiations between worlds and realities that must go both ways and beyond a simple reference to Indigenous theories to achieve people's full participation and account for their knowledge systems.

In collaborative research, creating the optimal conditions for the encounters of different ways of knowing involves recognising these different forms of knowledges in their own terms, which include those that exist outside the walls of university institutions. That being said, as a way to introduce the next section, where the authors share anecdotes from fieldwork to illustrate and nurture reflections on

Figure 10.1 Okacic (walleye) fillet. Credit: Étienne Levac.

the obstacles and limits of knowledge systems, it seems pertinent to start by sharing a small example. In our sense, it highlights interesting elements as part of this reflection on the hierarchies of knowledge systems: those of context, utility and standpoint. During a research project taking place in the community[1] and on the traditional territory of the Atikamekw Nehirowisiw Nation (one of the ten First Nations of Québec), one of the authors of this chapter, Étienne, who is not Indigenous, follows an Atikamekw collaborator on their fishing activity. He attempts to help by preparing the fish they caught (Figure 10.1); however, although he tries his best, he makes many mistakes. His collaborator tells him with humour, 'For a researcher, you don't know that much!' Etienne adds, 'In that moment, I truly had a glimpse of the value of different forms of knowledge and that there, I was essentially a child; in a constant learning process'. This small interaction between Étienne and a member of the community can seem commonplace, but it holds an important aspect of the pluriversal that impose the Western epistemological framework as a knowledge benchmark for the rest of the *world*. As Stenger states, 'Slowing down reasoning creates the occasion for a small new sensibility regarding the problems and situations that mobilize ourselves' (2007, p. 45). In this sense, the considerations in Étienne's anecdote interact with questions such as the following: How can we engage in truly collaborative community-based research when we are not able to do a simple task in the daily life of the community with whom we work? How can we engage with a different onto-epistemical[2] than ours without devaluating their importance along the process of collaboration?

Anecdotes from the fieldwork: caught between the tree and the bark

As mentioned earlier, this section highlights the obstacles and possible incentives related to the integration of these 'other ways' of knowing in academic research. Its content draws on the experiences of the authors through their participation in various art and design activities, including those of the La Boîte Rouge VIF (BRV), an Indigenous nonprofit organisation (NPO) that was cofounded in 1999 by Élisabeth Kaine (author), which aims to preserve, transmit and value both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community cultural heritage through a consensus-building and cocreation approach. As an NPO, BRV was created as the more 'operational' branch of the design and material culture research group, an initiative led by Elisabeth as a professor and researcher at the University du Québec à Chicoutimi. The content of the discussion in this chapter also stems from reflections that emerged from the UNESCO Chair in Transmission of First Peoples' Culture to Foster Well-Being and Empowerment, which was established in 2018. This chair's mission is to promote an integrated system of research, training, knowledge transfer and documentation in the areas of education, well-being and culture with First Nations and Inuit people. It facilitates collaborations between cultural experts, Indigenous knowledge holders, university researchers and higher education establishments of Canada, the Americas and the world. This action research structure was also founded by Elisabeth, member of the Huron-Wendat First Nation.

Unlearning as the first step: knowledge considered an alternative for one is *the* way of knowing for another

During an activity organised as by the UNESCO chair in which the BRV is highly involved, M. Lucien St-Onge, Innu and a member of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Committee of the chair, addresses the university researchers involved as part of a collective reflection around Indigenous research: 'To get there, you must first unlearn what you know. At the moment, it is not you who is listening to me, but all the conditioning you have received' (Kaine & Lavoie, forthcoming).

These words from M. St-Onge invite university researchers to unlearn to learn from each other, to access one another's knowledge and to obtain greater equality between knowledge systems and university and community researchers. This requires us to change our ways of doing and perceive our roles as university researchers as facilitators that set a context and the conditions that allow for the emergence of a diversity of knowledge during the entire process. It seemed relevant for the authors to mention that the concept of unlearning in the context of knowledge production, as pointed out by M. St-Onge, is actually the object of a significant body of academic publications on the notion of discomfort and the process of unlearning (Boudreau Morris, 2017; Le Gallo & Millette, 2019).

Nonetheless, the conditioning to which M. St-Onge is referring is profoundly routinised and institutionalised in our ways of learning and understanding. Elisabeth, who has been involved for more than 30 years in various exhibition design projects as an Indigenous commissioner, project director or been responsible for collaborations with First Nations and Inuit, states that both museums and research institutions do not escape this reality. Among the projects she has been involved in, as an invited researcher for a significant national museum in Canada, she led an extensive

Figure 10.2 Creative workshop—thematic modelling, strategies and museographic means at the Matakan Camp in Manawan, 2011. Credit: La Boîte Rouge VIF.

concertation with the 11 Indigenous Nations of Québec as part of a new permanent and reference exhibition on the First Peoples of Québec (Figure 10.2). This process, financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, was intended as exemplary in terms of its collaboration; however, as we will discuss, this exemplarity was not reflected as much as it should have been in the exhibition. The concertation process allowed encounters with over 700 people and collaboration with about 60 artists and cultural experts from various Indigenous Peoples (Kaine, Kurtness et al., 2016). More than 2,000 pages of verbatim, 250 hours of video material and more than 10,000 photos were collected. Based on oral tradition, the content conveyed what the Nations had to say about their own histories and, most importantly, their contemporary reality. For an institution that relied primarily on academic 'written' knowledge to give credibility to its exhibitions, this approach turned out to be highly destabilising. From Elisabeth's perspective, this might have occurred because of the museum's personnel going back to their old ways of acting once she let her guard down.

At the end of the extensive concertation and creation process that started in 2010 and that lasted over three years, very few recommendations from the makers were followed by the institution. Few of the objects selected during the concertation were

included as part of the exhibition, and it did not reflect what the individuals had imagined over the years.

> *If, at the beginning, I thought the intent of working in a collective dynamic of action with all the First Peoples seemed real, it was crumbling during the whole process. Finally, an amount of decisions are taken internally; the institution fell into it's the compliance with its old reflexes on the first occasion: the centralisation of decisions, the 'let's do everything in the place of.*
>
> [. . .]
>
> *I was literally obsessed to find answers, reasons for this failure, which I wanted to be a concertation process that was completely exemplary. I would have wanted to identify a single and fundamental cause—the one that would explain it all. But it was rather a combination of small factors that created failure, and I found that almost harder to accept, as they were, in general, easy to resolve: the personality of some, a lack of sensitivity regarding the Indigenous cause or wrongdoings of colonialism for others, the unawareness of Indigenous cultures, the lack of knowledge regarding consultation approaches, but also, and most importantly, perhaps a lack of humility to stay behind the ones we are supporting for them to represent themselves.*
>
> (Kaine, 2021)

The humility, which is discussed here as the capacity to stay behind (Kaine et al., 2017), which was necessary to the legitimisation of different ways of knowing and encountering this knowledge, is clearly expressed through the shared vision of the Indigenous stakeholders of the UNESCO chair. During a long trip, canoeists can alternate the one steering the boat according to the conditions in the field. Following this image, leadership is shared based on the context and complementarity of expertise. Nonetheless, the main challenge remains not to fall back into old reflexes. As powerfully illustrated by Mme Evelyne St-Onge, M. Jacques Kurtness and M. Lucien St-Onge, members of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Committee of the chair, the metaphor of the cowalker—especially the one of the canoeists—helps define a relationship based on alternatively sharing the leadership between the university and the community researchers (Kaine & Lavoie, forthcoming).

The answer is in the following action: circularity versus linearity

Nowadays, universities and funding agencies require the generation of knowledge and activities that have a strong societal impact. Research impact is often expressed through the idea of knowledge transfer, which can be criticised for being essentially unidirectional. Rioux et al. (2006) propose moving from 'knowledge transfer' to 'knowledge interfacing and sharing' and the 'coproduction' of knowledge through collaborative learning. According to them, this implies '[. . .] a shift from a view of knowledge as a 'thing' that can be transferred to viewing knowledge as a 'process of relating' that involves negotiation of meaning among partners'.

In a similar perspective, Anderson and McLachlan (2015) point out that 'mainstream knowledge production and communication in the academy generally reflect the tenets of positivist research and predominantly embody hierarchical processes

of knowledge transfer' (p. 295). In contrast, according to Anderson and McLachlan (2015):

> *A transformative research paradigm, which create social change, is rooted in knowledge mobilization processes involving close collaboration between researchers and community actors as co-enquirers as a part of a broader agenda for progressive social change. They also involve communication strategies that mobilize knowledge beyond those directly involved in the research process.*
>
> (p. 295)

The authors describe three key and nonlinear knowledge mobilisation strategies for high impact research methods, communication and outcomes: *transmedia* to exchange knowledge across a wide range of communication media, formats and platforms to engage wider audiences; *bridges* to invite communication among diverse knowledge communities by inviting, for example, people with different politics, sensibilities and interests; and *layering* to communicate knowledge at varying levels of detail.

Why not undertake a collaborative approach from the start, where, step by step, the project is completed together? If community members are stakeholders from the start and contribute to the emergence of knowledge and solutions, there is no need for 'transfer' at the end of the research because they are actors in the research. For this to work, there cannot be a hierarchy of knowledge and epistemologies. Collaborative and cooperative approaches are key to successful knowledge mobilisation strategies. A model developed by members of the design and material culture team, where eight levels of project collaboration applying to non-Indigenous and Indigenous milieus are identified, is reported here (Kaine, Bellemare et al., 2016). This scale allows us to reflect on how the appropriation of a project and transfer of knowledge can be done in a unidirectional manner at the very end of a project; alternatively, it can be a part of the project's conceptualisation, in which knowledge mobilisation is an integral part (Table 10.1). When located in the higher levels of collaboration, the odds are higher of project appropriation and knowledge mobilisation. In this model, collective action—a project approach where the answer is in the following action and where transformation occurs though reflective action—is the goal of a true collaboration process. Ultimately, this approach would allow us to move from a scale of collaboration to one of decolonisation. These tools have been developed from the perspective that too often projects are coming to a community in response to a problem. Solutions are designed and carried out by experts coming from outside, and at the most, people are informed of it. It is a visual tool where actors of the project can agree upon or evaluate the level of collaboration desired in different phases of the project. Further, in section 4, this table will support the synthesis and further reflections on knowledge sharing in relation to the degree of collaboration in a project.

Rhythm and formats or the shock of the worlds

When the level of collaboration in a project is high and properly achieved, there is a shock of 'worlds'. However, if conversation and adaptation are constant and the appropriate amount of time is taken, this creates conditions for the real participation of all the actors in the project. Conversing must take time, and one should not expect

Table 10.1 Levels of desired collaboration in a cultural development project.

Level	*Description of the project proponent's relationship with the community*	*Types of collaboration*	*Dynamic of collaborative work*	*Resulting power for the population/community*
7	The project proponent entirely hands over decision-making and action- taking to the community, which therefore becomes the project proponent.	Collective action	Decisions and actions are entirely taken by the community.	*Real power*—the community is in a position of authority, and holds all of the decision-making and action-taking powers, becoming perfectly self-reliant.
6	The project proponent oils the wheels of dialogue and teams up with the community as equals to make decisions and draw up an action plan.	Consensus building	The project proponent and the community are experiencing a real encounter. The project proponent makes decisions *with* the community.	*Real power*—the community is as powerful as the proponent. The relationship is a partnership.
5	The project proponent always seeks to dialogue and argue with the community in order to make decisions and take actions that are based on consensus and that aim for compromise.	Negotiation	The project proponent enters into dialogue with the community, and takes part in making decisions and taking actions.	*Relative power*—the community gains some power but isn't in a position of equality with the project proponent. So there is a 'give and take' of power relationships.
4	The project proponent wishes to consult the community and is committed to hearing the opinions that it expresses in order to influence decision making and action plans.	Cooperation	The project proponent goes to the community and aims to represent it (ideas, concerns, aspirations) in the decisions it will make.	*Relative power*—dialogue is established, the community begins to have some power of influence and persuasion, but with no real influence over decisions.

(Continued)

Table 10.1 (Continued)

Level	*Description of the project proponent's relationship with the community*	*Types of collaboration*	*Dynamic of collaborative work*	*Resulting power for the population/community*
3	The project proponent wishes to consult the community about decisions and actions he/she has to make or take, while making no commitment to take this feedback into account. If the project proponent makes no such commitment, the strategy is 'co-opting'—appeasing the community by raising hopes of involvement, which in fact is illusory. Long-term co-opting may make the community lose confidence that it can really influence its own development. The resulting disillusionment may lead to a reflex of passivity among citizens.	Consultation/ Co-opting	The project proponent goes to the community, considers its viewpoint, and decides instead of the community.	*Illusion of power*—the community has a power of expression, but this expression, has no real impact and is ultimately *manipulated*.
2	The project proponent makes an effort to inform the community about his/ her decisions and actions, wants to ensure that the community fully understands them, but does not ask for its opinion or acquiescence. The information provided is nonetheless more objective than at the 'communication level; the community can thus form its own opinion and eventually respond and seek dialogue with the project proponent.	Information	The project proponent goes to the community, gives it a message, and hopes it will be fully understood. He/ she decides instead of the community.	*Absence of power*—project proponent's goal is to 'put forward.' Thus, no real dialogue takes place with the community.
1	The project proponent makes an effort to communicate his/her decisions and actions to the community, while not ensuring that the community has understood this message. He/she shows a desire for contact with the community, but isn't open to any feedback from the community. There may also be manipulation of the facts presented in order to convince people. He/she retains the power to decide and act.	Communication	The project proponent goes to the community and gives it a message. He/she decides instead of the community.	*Absence of power*—the community is subjected to decisions and actions that are imposed on it-the community is merely succinctly informed.
0	The project proponent wishes to keep his/her power and remain faithful to his/her work habits (vertical dynamic). He/she acts alone, without communicating with the community concerned by the project.	No agreement from the community or trust in the project proponent	The project proponent decides and acts instead community.	*Absence of power*—the community is subjected to deci-tead of the sions and actions that are imposed on it—guardian/ward relationship.

Source: Kaine, Bellemare et al. (2016, p.39).

quick answers. Jean-François Vachon (author), scientific director of the BRV, recalls the following:

> *A crew was literally thrown out of a community because their framework was too rigid. It was catastrophic. They wanted answers from the elders that would fit within the two-minute clips they had predetermined; that they answer the questions in two or three sentences, then they would cut them off. This highly disturbed the elders, as they could not answer in their own 'format' in their own ways.*

Again, regarding the format, similar to what Nishnaabeg academic Leane betasamosake Simpson has previously mentioned (Simpson, 2017), Étienne observes that when he asked a question to the elders of the Atikamekw Nation, with whom he collaborates, they often respond with a story. They take a different path to answer the question: their own path. In their universe, the elders responding directly, answering with oral tradition that works through narrative; in their system, they answer perfectly. Elisabeth recalls that for the treatment of the 2,000 pages of verbatim mentioned previously, it was necessary to avoid summarising the contents of the interviews, the length of which was determined by how much time the interlocutors desired to give to their answers; these interviews lasted between two and eight hours. A method inspired by phenomenological reduction (Husserl, 1980) was developed with the main objective of concentrating on meaning rather than a summary tainted by the editor. The aim is not to condense or summarise, but rather to extract its essence and meaning.

The question of formatting the research products presents a challenge. For instance, when we start from a complete experience and process it in a linear way—a linear narrative—we reduce and destroy something that is alive. The product can be suitable for certain standards, but it does not correspond to decolonising approaches, and in a wider sense, it undermines the multiple ways of apprehending the world. Ultimately, the format of the research outcomes should be thought out with and by the people during the fieldwork. Our deliverables as researchers are highly framed by the norms and conventions that dominate the funding organisations. 'We are caught between the tree and the bark' says Elisabeth when speaking about the pressures that are brought by the reporting process and its formats, before saying with a laugh:

> *When we worked with members of a Guarani community in Brazil, we learned afterwards that in their language, they named us 'those who run with papers in their hands'. We had about 10 weeks to wrap up everything, produce the contents and deliverables and meet our commitments with the funding organisations. We were trying to fit into a conception of time that was not the same as that of the Guaranis.*

Discussion: collaboration and trust as grounds for knowledge interpenetration

Based on Table 10.1, it could be useful to think about a scale of knowledge sharing or interpenetration anchored in the concept of collaboration between the stakeholders of a project according to the different steps that constitute it. Such a tool could allow all the stakeholders to together situate their potential contribution—or their

projected position in the canoe—for each step of the project, all while supporting trust-building. These intersubjective interactions, including knowledge sharing and constant dialogue, are at the core of the trust-building processes needed for successful collective action; these are also conducive to navigating multiple knowledge systems and expertise interacting within the same project (Beaulé & Viinikainen, 2022).

In terms of knowledge interaction, in the seventh level, it is the community that holds the intellectual leadership and project products, with their formats being determined by them during the whole process. To ultimately reach the seventh level of collaboration, it may mean that you work in the coconstruction of transformative knowledge and solutions at level 6 but within the perspective of level 7. This notably resonates with the idea of cultivating humility while occupying the support posture mentioned earlier. In levels 6 and 7, knowledge is considered a 'process of relating', not as a 'thing'. On the sixth level, where there is shared intellectual leadership, there is the recognition that the knowledge considered as 'alternative' for one is *the* way of knowing for the other. Knowledge mobilisation is an integral part of the project's conceptualisation. The format of the research outcomes is thought out with and by the people during the fieldwork. Levels 4 and 5 are mostly about knowledge interfacing and sharing. There is an account of pluriversal knowledge systems, but old and familiar ways of doing are difficult to undo. It is important to remain vigilant to avoid the dominant ways of knowing taking over again. In level 4, the community is especially likely to carry the burden of translating their world into the prevailing meaning systems to be considered. Finally, if the project occurs in the community, the third level is certainly the most critical and dangerous one because the community's knowledge is profited from and approaches that are defined from the outside are used. Indeed, the risk of instrumentalising and appropriating knowledge from the community seems particularly high because of an illusion of power and the possible establishment of trustful relationships.

Conclusion

To conclude, we are now expected to produce academic knowledge that has impacts on society or on transformative knowledge, but it is less clear how institutions are being transformed by 'knowing otherwise'. This chapter has stressed that recognising and celebrating knowledge plurality is necessary for greater university—community permeability, reciprocity and transformation and that design may be especially well-positioned to do so. The chapter has underlined that know-how or practice knowledge and experiential knowledge, being essentially tacit, are often seen as incompatible with or even less valid than the traditional understanding of research (Niedderer & Reilly, 2010), which contributes to exclusion and domination (Kamarck Minnich, 2005). From a broader view, the discussion in this chapter opens a reflection on the asymmetry of relationships that are inadvertently perpetuated by the nature of the research funding ecosystem in terms of leadership, retribution, output and liability. It suggests the production of a model and tool that could facilitate an open dialogue about knowledge leadership and interaction during the different phases of a collaborative project.

Finally, because designers are increasingly involved in projects that are anchored within a community, design practice and research in such contexts seem to call for new forms of competences and approaches that favour local actors to take charge. This may

call, for example, for the integration of new contents in the curriculum of design training, including the approaches and postures that have been presented in this chapter. Many of the ways of knowing discussed are not part of traditional documentation practices or of knowledge mobilisation in the academic world. Collaborative approaches that rely on creation and creativity to 'envision something that is not yet un existence' (Niedderer & Reilly, 2010, p. 2) may represent an avenue supporting its access and celebration, while enhancing research practice in creative disciplines and their epistemological foundations. One can consider that design can no longer draw on the model of applied sciences, where practical knowledge is seen as the mere application of scientific knowledge (Bousbaci, 2020) to circumscribe design epistemologies and postures as a scientific discipline. As opposed to disciplines with long-established traditions, design, a relatively young discipline or meta-discipline—which is notably seeing its epistemology defined by established traditions and disciplines—may be well-positioned to flourish by being especially permeable to a multiplicity of ways of knowing.

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Notes

* The authors of this text wished to emphasise the common authorship of this work and, therefore, deliberately used the alphabetical order system.

1 The use of the term 'community' here is referring to the geographical location of Manawan and people with whom Étienne has been collaborating.

2 This term is used to reflect how ways of knowing and our ways of enacting the world are mutually re-enforcing themselves at the expense of other onto-epistemologies (Blaser, 2013).

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11 Other worlds are possible

Advanced computational and design thinking in South Auckland

Ricardo Sosa

Abstract: An ongoing partnership between a university and local school serves as the background for an introspective examination of the author's positionality in place and what other academics may bring to community projects in areas related to creativity and digital technologies. The notions and rhetoric around *design thinking* and *computational thinking* are interrogated here as they emerged in the project 'Robot for Mayor 2030'. The analysis could be understood as a historical and situational inquiry pointing towards the post/decolonisation of academic research with local communities. More specifically, the chapter argues that the leaders of design and technology projects run the risk of (however inadvertently) colonising the minds and spirits of vulnerable groups. The study discussed here suggests that how teachers and students engage with design and technology is shaped by what they create (or make), which is both a product and produces what and how they feel, think and build their identities.

Keywords: Dialogic learning, learning technologies, teachers, social robots, digital curriculum, maker movement

Introduction

This chapter originates in the ongoing work with *rangatahi* (youth) in South Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau, in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The work is based on partnerships built with members of Te Kura Taurua Manurewa High School between 2016 and 2021. The projects in that partnership span several themes related to creativity and digital technologies. In this chapter, I examine the positionality that academics bring to community projects in this area, here through my personal experience in a particular context. Several dimensions have become visible to me after working for two decades in design and technology projects, where these are seldom acknowledged, including my personal identity and the dominant paradigms and worldviews.

The chapter goes beyond an exercise of introspection; it adopts an autoethnographic stance as a method to systematically examine and connect personal and societal phenomena (Iosefo et al., 2020), while the research projects cited use methodologies based on participatory action. The main purpose here is to critically examine the ideological bases of the dominant discourses and practices around ways of thinking, including 'design thinking' and 'computational thinking' as embedded in the framing of 'maker spaces' in schools around the world. The chapter also brings into question the nature and practices of academic research as conducted in universities and the increasing expectation to secure competitive funding for research. My presence in these projects in recent years has reinforced my long-held appreciation for

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some of the core ideas and practices as a designer, educator and researcher, but it has also expanded and sharpened my growing dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the underlying ethos and consequences of often unquestioned tenets and values. Here, I problematise the epistemological foundations of dominant paradigms in this area and argue for a plurality of views that sustain other possible worlds.

Arriving to research in South Auckland, Aotearoa

The work discussed here is situated in Aotearoa (New Zealand), one of the last places settled by humans (Māori in the fourteenth century) and one of the last to be colonised by the European imperialists of the eighteenth century. Life in Aotearoa in the twenty-first century is shaped by its colonial origin and by a multicultural population, particularly in its largest city, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Two of the most significant impacts that migrants can experience upon arrival today are the marked socio-economic disparity, particularly between ethnic groups, and the vestigial voices that defend and justify the privilege of the minority. In less than ten years since my arrival as a resident, these issues—with their profound historical origins—have become more visible in some of the most critical challenges for this country today: a major nationwide housing crisis; growing inequality along metrics of well-being, health and wealth; and wicked problems that manifest in domestic and gender violence, suicide, environmental degradation, white nationalism and in who is the most vulnerable in the COVID-19 pandemic. A third and more positive trend in recent decades—one more evident in the last few years—is the growing presence of Te Reo Māori in everyday life. Te Reo refers to the language and, more broadly, the epistemology of the original inhabitants of this land: the indigenous Māori. The foundation of modern New Zealand hinges on *Te Tiriti O Waitangi*, a treaty between Māori Rangatira (chiefs) and the British Crown that continues to shape not only legal disputes over land, but also the fundamental identity and character of this country (Cain et al., 2017). Over time, I would gradually begin to understand that Te Tiriti strongly shapes my very own presence in South Auckland and the research discussed here.

The *mahi* (work) discussed here takes place in South Auckland, a region with some of the richest ethnic diversity, youngest population and vibrant and well-organised communities. It is also an area left behind in the process of social and economic development, with limited infrastructure and systemic disadvantages in education, jobs and health. As an academic employed by a local university, I had heard about South Auckland since my arrival in 2015, especially in relation to our 'South Campus', which offers undergraduate programmes, including paramedicine and public health. My initial exposure to Te Reo was through a short welcoming ceremony for new staff at the marae (community house) at our university. Initially, it seemed to me that Māori culture and knowledge was being used rather instrumentally and in tokenistic ways; for example, the bilingual signage across campus and formal ceremonies that start with a *karakia* (chant) and greetings in Te Reo. Over the first months and years, as more of these performative uses became more evident to me in institutional settings, I began to appreciate a more genuine and grassroots trend to reinvigorate Te Reo in an increasing number of spaces. By late 2016, when I began making contact with teachers at Manurewa, my understanding of the history of Te Tiriti and the present mahi to revitalise Māori as a core dimension of identity and life in Aotearoa was improving. However, as often occurs when learning something new, my two main realisations were how

much I had yet to learn about tikanga Māori (culture) inside academia and in everyday life, and the extent to which the diversity of Māori spaces is often oversimplified to an exclusionary binarism. Today, I am better informed and can recognise my position as a migrant to this country, particularly as a *Tāngata Tiriti* (a resident without local ancestry) with obligations derived from Te Tiriti and living in the unceded lands of the local *iwi* (tribes). More precisely, my position as a migrant from the Global South who has lived on three continents gave me a relative sense of familiarity in the multiethnic spaces in Manurewa where the rangatahi come from, including the South Pacific (Pasifika), Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and beyond.

Design and technology from Singapore to Aotearoa

Before arriving at Aotearoa, I collaborated with roboticists in Singapore, an experience that left me perplexed by their technical prowess, which was only surpassed by the entrenched 'techno-chauvinism' in the field of robotics, here defined by computer scientist Meredith Boussard as 'the belief that technology is always the solution' (Broussard, 2019, p. 7). As a designer, I had similar concerns about this ethos in my field because Silicon Valley's 'design thinking' (DT) had become the epitome of design-chauvinism at the time (Sosa, 2015). Finding my place in a new country, I sought other like-minded folk working in design who had a personal interest in advancing participatory practices (Gerrard & Sosa, 2014). By then, the hype around design and technology in Aotearoa schools was evident from the proliferation of DT workshops, maker spaces and STEAM rhetoric. My own job interview had coincided with a hackathon where students pitched solutions (apps, naturally) to Auckland Transport—an effort I saw positively until I encountered first-hand the neglected state of the local public transportation caused by decades of prioritising private car ownership. Predictably, by then, big tech in Aotearoa, as in other similar countries, had pushed a 'digital curriculum' to the Ministry of Education, capitalising on the renewed hype on artificial intelligence and simplistic threats of robots taking away jobs.

The mahi with the Manurewa teachers grew from a mutual respect and shared connection to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's work on social justice. The initial contact came from a local organisation running codesign projects in South Auckland. I originally read Freire (2000 [1970]) nearly three decades before as an undergraduate in Mexico. I went to design school at UAM, a public university in Mexico City with origins in the 1968 student movement that the government stamped out by deploying the military to assassinate four hundred students in Tlatelolco. Design at UAM was taught through a strong lens of social justice, an ethos that has influenced my career, from the early participatory projects I joined in remote indigenous communities in the 1990s to my PhD research project trying to understand the role of creativity in social change (Sosa & Gero, 2005). I re-encountered Freire's work some 20 years later while leading an introductory design course in Singapore, and as a result, I drafted a manuscript that connected the ideas of emancipation to my interest in supporting creative capacities in every human being (Arendt, 2013 [1958]). It took another six years for that paper to go through the peer-review system (Sosa & Connor, 2021). Creativity as a driving force for social change is a thread that connects my research activity, even though it may not always be evident because my work crosses disciplinary, technology and methodological boundaries that fence communities into siloes.

The conversations with Manurewa teachers in 2016 also surfaced a shared sense of urgency to respond to the wave of tech-driven misinformation and manipulation that year from Brexit in the UK to Trump in the USA and Duterte in the Philippines. By then, many teachers and students in Aotearoa were already familiarised with—and some quite enthusiastic about—design and technology. Some teachers I met enthusiastically embraced the hype in the media around automation and ideas such as 'the singularity' (the hypothetical point at which computers become aware) in ways that evidence a lack of knowledge about digital technologies and limited consideration of its real potential in education (Player-Koro, 2013). I had previously witnessed first-hand the uptake in Singapore of the Silicon Valley doctrine (Jimenez, 2020), where a swarm of government officials and schoolteachers had been sent to do the two-week training course at Stanford. I personally worked with secondary schools, the Science Centre, the National Library Board and the local Maker Faire, all of which were keen adopters of facile five-step frameworks and obligatory commercial hardware like 3D printers and laser cutters associated with commercial and societal design and innovation.

The maker paradigm from the Global North

The maker rhetoric has become mainstream in schools in Aotearoa. The 'maker movement' (more on the use of pseudo-revolutionary language later) has at least two easily identifiable tributaries originating in the USA: on the one hand, there is constructionist learning (Papert, 1980) and, on the other hand, there is the tech-libertarian doctrine of Silicon Valley (Jimenez, 2020). These two complementary—but not entirely compatible—attitudes towards technology coincided by the late twentieth century with the rise of the personal computer and mainstream adoption of the internet across the globe. Only a few scholars have critically analysed the history behind these movements to understand how we got to where we are now. Morgan G. Ames (2018) traces the assumptions underlying both 'the universal appeal of learning to programme computers' and the *FabLab* or makerspace movement. By foregrounding the youth and early careers of its founders, Ames reveals the pillars of the mindset that is prevalent in the maker area today: primarily individualistic, pragmatic, capitalistic and patriarchal.

As a cisgender male born in the traditional culture of the 1970s middle-class of Mexico City, my presence as a *Tāngata Tiriti* (non-Māori) academic in Aotearoa nearly half a century later has moved me to reflect on the values that I bring to this mahi on digital technologies. Had my good intentions inadvertently turned me into an agent of American technoimperialism? In the context of my own childhood, learning disabilities were largely undiagnosed, and disobedience was dealt with using physical and emotional punishment. With school grades well above average, I deeply resented schooling and some, but certainly not all, of my teachers. At age 11, I taught myself computer programming to design my own videogames, and at university in the early 1990s, I circumvented an outdated curriculum to explore the use of computers in the design process, including writing my own software for brainstorming. Several teachers, mentors and peers had a strong influence on me, especially those in informal roles, including some of my relatives and friends. Although a good portion of my education and entertainment growing up was decidedly influenced by ideas, values and technology from the United States, this was

balanced with a distinct and rich Mexican culture and, more personally, a profound influence from my extended paternal family, who proudly hold their indigenous origins (Purépecha) in high regard. As such, I can now recognise how my own journey into digital technologies in the 1980s and 1990s deviated from the so-called first-world or Global North ethos in significant ways. Coming from a family with members of the Mexican Communist Party (PSUM) and union leaders incarcerated for their political ideals, education was, for me, a means to social *conscientização* (Freire, 2000) and revolutionary social change, rather than a quest for personal wealth or status (Donoso Romo, 2020). It was also clear for my young self that the best learning takes place outside of school and in the community. After all, my most meaningful learning at UAM had occurred outside the curriculum in a project working in remote indigenous communities led by Fernando Shultz, a designer with origins in the socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile.

The cultures of the Global North are far from homogeneous, but they can, at least to some degree, be distinguished from those in the Global South by specific onto-epistemic dimensions (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Having travelled to over 50 countries, my own lived experience confirms an affinity between people of brown skin from Central America to Northern Africa and South-east Asia. Such an affinity is hard to articulate and arguably stems from a shared resistance to a long history of European and American invasion and exploitation. An ontological emphasis on individualism is a sharp Global North/South difference, and it is often traced back to Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century (Ryan, 2012). It can also be recognised in the Judeo-Christian account that the world is created *for* (affluent white) men who can claim individual ownership over nature (Sosa, 2020) and over other inferior peoples, as justified by the 'doctrine of discovery' still in use today in the judiciary systems of colonised countries (Miller et al., 2010).

The entailments for how the affluent sectors of the Global North—and the Westernised elites of the Global South—approach technology today include ideals of 'progress' and 'growth' that go unquestioned, regardless of their environmental and social costs. They also include a view of ideas as individual 'property' to be protected from being shared and nurtured collectively. This WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic) individualism explains the emphasis of constructionist learning on individual children (precocious boys, mainly), its distrust of authority and community and its entrenched belief that their particular experience is universal (Ames, 2018). It also reduces childhood creativity to a technocentric scale explained by innate traits 'rather than socially and historically contingent' (Ames, 2018). Moreover, although digital technologies did have several possible futures available by the early 1990s, their neoliberal fate was sealed through the policies of the Clinton administration in the USA—and the alignment of regimes around the world, including the Salinato regime in Mexico—which worked relentlessly to privatise public infrastructure and revert antitrust legislation, paving the way for the rise of big tech under the guise of opening access (Greene, 2021). 'Learning to code' campaigns began at that time to promise the upskilling of a weaning manufacturing workforce, and the teaching of STEM and coding has since been pursued by governments in the service of the tech industry.

Onto-epistemic alternatives to the dominant paradigm exist, pointing to other worlds and ways of approaching and developing digital technologies and education more generally. These include convivial uses of technology (Illich, 2021), valuing

collective work over individual notoriety (De la Peña et al., 2017), and relying on public over private means of learning while addressing problems (Botta & Junginger, 2021). Note that despite the geographic labels of Global North/South, the distinction is not about countries or where people originate from or reside; instead, it refers to the world of ideas and beliefs. Thus, South American or African designers who have undergone mainstream training in design are likely to internalise and uphold WEIRD values and practices, while a designer in/from North America or Europe may occupy alternative spaces that resist the dominant logic, for example, by embracing alternative ways of using and developing technology outside the corporate agenda.

Finally, the conservative ethos of the maker movement becomes apparent upon closer examination of its use of revolutionary language. Its conservatism can be recognised in how it leaves essential values and hierarchies untouched. The long-lasting and biggest effect of the Silicon Valley doctrine (Jimenez, 2020) is the concentration of wealth in a small group of billionaires and entire populations of consumers who depend on devices designed for obsolescence and that come with hefty environmental costs. Although early maker technology, such as additive manufacturing, had more democratic intentions (like the internet and software did earlier), it was ultimately coerced by corporate acquisitions. As a result, maker spaces today normally fall victim to locked-in schemes with technology suppliers, who charge hefty amounts for service and warranty, training, supplies and repairs.

This lengthy contextual talk serves to position our work and critically analyse the adoption of design and technology by most schools in Aotearoa. It also helps reveal some of the ideological roots of this uptake and informs visions of possible futures. The analysis presented here has threaded macro events with a personal dimension to reveal my own positionality of *in-betweenness* as someone whose identity intersects multiple layers: an indigenous Mexican, single parent, middle-aged cisgender male, researcher, migrant, designer, coder, maker and educator. The next section presents concrete, albeit succinct, accounts of the projects I have co-led in this area in recent years.

A robot mayor in Manurewa

The work with Manurewa teachers and students was initiated with a project called 'Robot for Mayor 2030' inspired by a master plan published by Auckland Council in 2015 for the future of the city. 'The Auckland Plan' cited the mayor's vision for the future as its point of reference. In a speculative approach, our team (co-led by codesign expert Rebeca Torres) formulated a social media campaign seeking to examine youth participation in themes of citizenship and civics by drawing from *Electoral Guerrilla* theatre to usurp the conventional electoral rituals (Bogad, 2016, p. 5). This aligned well with the work of a seasoned Manurewa teacher Penny Bradford, who had experience facilitating DT projects with the students and was enthusiastic about using unconventional and creative means to generate dialogue in the classroom on topics of civics, politics and the future of their communities.

The core question driving this project was as follows: 'What may drive the interest and participation of young Aucklanders in civics using innovative learning approaches with technologies?' The original storyline was adapted in collaboration with Penny

Bradford, Rebeca Torres, Leanne Gibson, and Emma O'Riordan to invite students to playfully participate in conversations about citizenship and future visioning. This came with the goal of aligning with the New Zealand Curriculum, which included the principle to 'future focus [that] encourages students to recognise that they have a stake in the future and a role and responsibility to help shape it' (Ministry of Education, 2014a p. 1) and social science competencies such as 'understand how the ways in which leadership of groups is acquired and exercised have consequences for communities and societies' (Ministry of Education, 2014b). The teachers noticed that student engagement could be higher when tackling these issues of importance to their future.

The project presented a humanoid robot playing the character of an android who dreams of running for the Mayor of Auckland in the future. The story for the project had the robot visiting the school to share its story and ask students for advice on how to prepare for the role of mayor. In three sessions over a couple of weeks with groups of students aged 13 to 16, the robot facilitated DT activities that sought to enhance their interest and elicit their views on topics of civics. The robot was unexpectedly and consistently effective in these tasks, and the students vividly shared their views and engaged with the topics, demonstrating a meaningful learning of how they perceive their life in society, their own future and the future of their communities. In that sense, the robot became an effective means to encourage *rangatahi* (youth), to dream, articulate their voices, and build their agency to achieve *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination).

The project demonstrated alternative uses of ed-tech beyond the technocratic dreams of replacing teachers with machines (Watters, 2021). As 'third actors' in the learning environment, robots can be effective at facilitating dialogue, opening a space for teachers to adopt a reflective position to observe and notice the possibilities in the interactions between robots and students. The teachers were able to identify opportunities to expand on the key ideas that emerged in the conversations, asked students to comment on the interaction and transferred some of their responses from fictious to more realistic contexts, here with implications of immediate and palpable relevance. The Robot for Mayor project showed that robots, as third actors, can change the teaching script, enabling new possibilities for creative modes of 'indirect teaching' (Saeverot, 2013).

The robot was also effective in revealing deeper axiological misalignments in Design Thinking (DT) with students at Manurewa. Namely, the initial step in DT of 'empathy' and techniques like 'personas' tends to carry a strong individualistic bias, putting all the attention on personal experiences. A generative tension was revealed in how the students chose to share and explain their views to the robot not on a personal scale, but rather regarding the systemic and structural conditions and challenges in their collective experiences inside and outside the school. Students shared and explained to the robot how the decisions that affected their lives are made by school principals, government officials, community leaders or gang members. This exposed the limits of DT's instrumental aim to extract the user's needs, thoughts, emotions and motivations by observing or interviewing them. Instead, solidarity and *true* shared experience became evident in how the students transposed the impossibility of a robot to truly grasp what they experience into how the people in government and mass media from outside South Auckland similarly make misjudgements about them on a daily basis.

Figure 11.1 Key themes informing the Robot for Mayor 2030 project and a session with rangatahi in Manurewa.

Maker Whānau in Manurewa

In 2018, a maker space was piloted at the same school as part of an entrepreneurship programme. An inaugural group of 12 students from all years (ages 13 to 17) joined, bringing a diverse set of interests and backgrounds. The group met twice a week after school and had no direct connection to the formal curriculum. One of the main insights from that initial year was that the most valued element in their shared *kete o te wānanga* (baskets of knowledge) was not the technology but the collective sense of *whānau* (collective, fellowship) built around inclusiveness, freedom and mutual support. The maker space was collectively shaped as an open-door and safe space to pursue student-driven ideas and interests supported by adults and the available technology. The following year, conversations started with Emma O'Riordan, Leanne Gibson and Keu Iorangi. In collaboration with Dr Andrew Gibbons from the School of Education and Penny Bradford, the group identified an opportunity to study and support—in the context of a 'maker whānau'—the new Hangarau Matihiko (Digital Technologies) Curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education. The project obtained a competitive grant starting in 2020 to critically examine active learning (making) practices that can lead to computational thinking, which is one of the pillars of the new curriculum. New team members included Andy Crowe, Daniel Badenhorst, Emit Snake-Beings and collaborations with Sam Harris, who leads integrated learning in the local *Kāhui Ako* (community of learning).

A review of the literature showed a marked growth of school initiatives around the world aiming to train teachers and students on the competencies normally associated with computational thinking, namely abstraction, algorithmic thinking, decomposition and debugging. The assumptions informing such initiatives and the claims formulated vary considerably across cases, from straightforward 'learn to code' courses to math-based content and more general ed-tech efforts. We proposed the term 'advanced computational thinking' (ACT) to indicate our intention to go beyond employability and towards enabling students and teachers to ethically use, creatively apply and critically question the values and impacts of technology in their community as they engage with and develop their own 'queer uses' of digital technologies (Ahmed, 2019).

Applying a participatory ethos, the project drew from creative methodological approaches that were always driven by respect for the mahi of the maker whānau. Guided by this, we embraced a 'methodological slowness' to the project, making our goal to offer, facilitate and participate in activities that support ongoing projects driven by students' interests and aspirations. We were welcomed in the weekly sessions over many months and, as a result, identified the opportunity to use 'crit sessions' as a research method. Crit sessions in design education are dialogical spaces in which knowledge is cocreated between participants; they allow open-ended and participant-driven alternatives to conventional focus groups or group interviews. The members of the maker whānau were invited to a dedicated session every school term (normally ten weeks) to participate in these 'crit sessions', which included students presenting their work and the group asking questions and providing feedback. The emphasis in these critical sessions was to collectively examine the learning experience in the space and connections to ACT.

A ubiquitous truism in this area is that more and better training is needed for teachers to teach digital competencies. Our experience with the Manurewa maker whānau has made us question such an approach. Although it seems reasonable to advance teacher preparedness in content that is well-established, say algebra, or in pedagogical innovations, the reality is that digital technologies are still in their early stages of development. Models of computation and approaches to computer science are still emerging, but more significantly, the applicability and relevance of computers to other areas of knowledge, skillsets and everyday life remain mostly unknown. From social media to nonfungible tokens, from machine learning to social robotics, we (humans) have yet to Figure out the usefulness and value of new technologies. Most of the recent tech development has been done by corporate elites in the Global North, who have mostly built unimaginative and extractive solutions (the advertising model fuels the internet). Looking forward, we believe that the future of digital technologies needs to be locally developed. Therefore, any formative programme for teachers would need to go beyond merely focusing on access and acknowledging that it is teachers in their practice with students in and outside the curriculum who will Figure out what 'computational thinking' is and can be, along with how to approach it and integrate it into their learning experiences.

Discussion

The meaning of the term 'decolonising' is weaning because of its increasingly perfunctory use in academia. Still, the work presented in this chapter could be understood as a historical and situational inquiry pointing towards the post/decolonisation of academic research with local communities. More specifically, the chapter argues that the leaders of design and technology projects run the risk of (however inadvertently) colonising the minds and spirits of vulnerable groups. A modern obsession with 'intelligence' and 'thinking' has led the advocates of creative technologies to chase the elusive essence of their craft by professing 'design thinking' and 'computational thinking'.

As a way of informing ongoing kōrero (dialogue), we suggest avoid Cartesian divisions between *thinking* and *feeling*, and instead consider *feeling*, *thinking*, and *creating* in a coherent unison to be grown patiently and collectively in the local context over time. This shift implies that how teachers and students engage with design and technology is shaped by what they create (or make), which is both a product and

produces what and how they feel and think. Frameworks and competencies are not imported or defined a priori; rather, dispositions and skillsets are figured, negotiated and developed locally through reflective collective praxis (Gerrard & Sosa, 2014).

This leads to research questions and education initiatives that go beyond access, such as the slew of trite projects seeking to prepare more women or minority groups to join STEM or STEAM careers. In a way, the goal is turned on its head by recognising the principle of natality (Arendt, 2013) and ceding the space and voice through dialogue (Freire, 2000 [1970]) so that those who have been excluded hold a commanding position to reimagine and redefine what STEM or STEAM careers are *to them* and to begin with.

The work presented in this chapter is eminently transdisciplinary and action oriented. As such, it has faced numerous challenges, including methodological complexity, additional resistance from funding panels and ethics committees and more extensive work to connect theoretical concepts, among others. In the 'Robot for Mayor 2030' project, one common obstacle was that the schools automatically associated the project with STEM and robotics labs rather than with topics of civics and democracy. Had it not been for the trust and foresight of the Manurewa teachers, the project would have been lost between the humanities and social studies subject experts, who have no interest in or enthusiasm for robots, and the technology experts, who are indifferent to and unversed in social phenomena.

Debbie Chachra, a professor of engineering, feels 'uncomfortable with any culture that encourages you take on an entire identity, rather than *to express a facet* of your own identity: "maker", rather than "someone who makes things"' (Chachra, 2015). Similarly, I design but no longer think of myself as a designer; I teach but share the *ako* (teaching, learning, advising) with everyone in the space; I do research but refuse to be called an expert. I do make many *things* that are tangible, digital and otherwise, but I'm not a maker, and I see the risks of defining a space or a movement with that label now that the area has been claimed by a culture that deemed it normal to plant a country's flag on the moon. As a single parent, I am also a caregiver of a 10-year-old girl who has been my greatest teacher. My journey is not personal; I contain multitudes, including my biological ancestors and intellectual predecessors, my contemporaries, from which I learn every day, and my descendants, for whom we aim to build a better future. My intention, by making my own tensions visible, is for other design and technology researchers to inform their own path to better anticipate and address the risks that their presence has when collaborating with the local communities that trust and welcome them.

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12 Pluriverse perspectives in designing for a cultural heritage context in the digital age

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Abstract: Interactive technologies are increasingly being applied to the cultural heritage design context; digital archives, online exhibitions, and interactive museum pieces have become common approaches in the digital age. In this chapter, we explore how interactive technology can be used for sensitive cultural heritage contexts, discussing how to include decolonising design and pluriverse as an approach. Three case studies are presented, where the design context includes indigenous Sámi cultural heritage, a World War II memorial and archival materials. In these examples, digital technologies, including virtual reality and digital 3D models, are used to create interactive experiences with cultural heritage. We approach the topic through participatory design methodology and research through design approach. Our work can be useful when designing cultural heritage content for museums, digital cultural heritage sites and games, in the end enabling future experiences with more pluralistic and diverse content.

Keywords: Decolonising design, pluriverse, cultural heritage, technology, research through design, participatory design, human-computer interaction

Introduction

The digital age has brought the omnipresence of technologies and connected applications to different sectors of life. Digital technologies also provide new opportunities for the area of cultural heritage, offering possibilities to obtain access to historical materials and virtually visit remote places. This offers us new tools to access information, compile stories and narratives with rich presentation techniques, learn from different cultures and present and understand different viewpoints related to cultural history. On the other hand, applying new technologies can create new ethical challenges (Marshall, 1999), with examples ranging from thoughtless content sharing to exposing sites treated as sacred (Häkkilä et al., 2020).

In this chapter, we explore how interactive technologies can be applied to cultural heritage context, for example, museums and archives, and how the pluriverse and decolonising approaches can be embedded into the design. We present three projects as cases: indigenous Sámi cultural heritage, a World War II memorial and digital archive materials. In these examples, virtual reality, 3D modelling and creating connected services are used to create interactive experiences with cultural heritage.

We approach the topic through participatory design methodology, integrating different stakeholder perspectives into the design process and with research through design approach. We believe that our work is useful when designing cultural heritage

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pieces for museums, digital cultural heritage sites and games. This will enable future experiences with more pluralistic and diverse cultural heritage content for everyone.

Context of our research

The rising role of interactive technologies with cultural heritage

Interactive technologies are being applied to cultural heritage (CH) design contexts in increasing amounts. Global trends from physical to digital and from local to connected services are also being applied in the CH sector. Digital archives, virtual online exhibitions and interactive museum pieces have become more and more common applications for the CH domain in the digital age.

Digital technologies can bring different benefits from presenting CH content; they can be applied both to enrich the user experience by physically visiting the CH locations and for accessing the historical materials remotely. Wolf et al. (2018) study the experience of visiting a physical exhibition and virtual exhibition, showing that for virtual museums, space, time, location and money are no more barriers to visiting. Digitally augmented physical museum exhibitions with personalised content have been found to engage visitors better than predefined content (Hornecker & Stifter, 2006). The visitor can, for instance, be visualised as being part of a narrative, as in the body tracking-based installation of the traditional Heavenly Hunt story (Genc & Häkkilä, 2021). Altogether, augmented and virtual reality technologies are being applied in an increasing manner to museum experiences, as illustrated in the overview by Bekele et al. (2018).

Whereas there are undeniable benefits that digital technologies can provide for the CH domain, it also brings to light new design challenges. Designing for the CH context raises many sensitivities that influence the design process and outcome. To conduct the design process successfully and connect with the design context, cultural sensitivities need to be taken into account. In the context of CH, sensitive design aspects can include, for example, (de)colonisation, artefacts related to deceased people and different political or religious viewpoints (Häkkilä et al., 2020).

To achieve successful outcomes for the design process, the principles of user-centred design and participatory design have generally been recommended. Involving different stakeholders during the design process helps designers understand different viewpoints and take them into consideration. Kambunga et al. recognise 'how new forms of CH can be co-created based on the audience's everyday experiences' (2020, p. 785). Inclusion of the end users—as well as the cultural communities—in the design process is relevant for preventing any unpleasant surprises in the final product. In the next section, we discuss the meaning of the pluriverse and decolonisation in the context of design.

Decolonising design

Decolonising design has become a much-debated theme in academic discussions in the field of design studies (see, e.g., Schultz et al., 2018). In the context of human-computer interaction (HCI), decolonial thinking has made it essential to question whose interests and values are being served (Lazem, 2021). The critique has focused on how the current design has been made by—or for—male and white individuals, neglecting the 'cosmological others' (Ansari, 2019). In contemporary indigenous

studies, decolonisation is defined as ways of knowing different from the European academic traditions that originate from (see, e.g., Virtanen et al., 2021). To aid designers in understanding the issues related to the topic, publications such as the International Indigenous Design Charter (Kennedy et al., 2018) have emerged.

Although participatory methods have been presented to aid in the process of decolonising design (Smith et al., 2020), they have also been criticised for not being enough (Tlostanova, 2017). Tlostanova (2017) mentions how the whole logic of a culture should be applied, instead of just appropriating certain elements. Smith et al. (2020) also point out the lack of empirical studies in the context of participatory design and decolonisation, providing an example case with Namibian youth. Kambunga et al. (2021) present a virtual decolonising exhibition, including six demos related to cultural and historical topics from all around the world; they spotlight a diversity of voices that are normally silenced and marginalised, aiming for co-exploration and experience of pluriversality for visitors.

The particular context in which the technology is applied matters. In a systematic literature review on technology and decolonising design, Paananen et al. (2021) reveal that whereas technology itself appears to be neutral, it is applied through a lens of values that can be intertwined with politics and power. Thus, paying attention to the local context and culture is important. When designing for underserved groups or global minorities, Lazem (2021) raises issues such as local knowledge, power and pluriverse. To practice pluriverseism, one should view the world through multiple realities. Tlostanova (2017, p. 4) writes, 'decolonial pluriversality is decentered and stresses the provinciality of the universalized Western concepts by constantly juxtaposing them with their incommensurable non-Western parallels and opposites'. Schultz et al. (2018) suggest that to decolonise, we should dismiss universal solutions and focus on epistemic plurality instead.

The importance of decolonising and pluriverse related to technology is recognised by Lazem (2021, p. 48): 'Power imbalances will remain unnoticed when the diversity of users' values and realities are not appreciated by the technology makers'. This calls for technology developers to consider the values of the end users and open up to different worldviews. Escobar (2018) writes that recently, the rise of digital technologies has affected how design has become more pluralistic and collaborative as it is leaning more into user participation and interactivity. In the following section, we present examples of utilising interactive technologies with CH, discussing how design sensitivities, decolonisation and pluriverse aspects appear in the design process.

Case studies

In the following, we present three projects with which we have been involved recently. Two of the cases involved the indigenous context, which concerns the indigenous Sámi community in the Nordic countries (Figure 12.1). The first case handles the development process of a search tool for digital archives involving Sámi content, and the second one relates to interactive museum exhibitions in Sámi museums. The third case focuses on the design of a virtual reality graveyard. In these case examples, technology enables certain content to be represented, regardless of the limitations of time and place. Providing access to lost places, items or other historical content can be a culturally remarkable experience for many people. In all of these cases, multidisciplinary development teams have been involved, and particular attention has

Figure 12.1 Digital Access to Sámi Heritage Archives project staff visiting Kilpisjärvi, which is located in the Arctic region in the Northwesternmost part of Finland. User testing was conducted for the Nuohtti search portal service with local people at Kilpisjärvi. Two people in warm winter clothes walking in a snowy Northern landscape with sunny skies and bluish shadows in the snow.

been devoted to taking into account cultural sensitivities and respecting the topic and people involved.

Project 1: digital Sámi archives search portal

First, we present Nuohtti, a search portal that improves accessibility to digitised Sámi archival materials. Nuohtti was developed in a multidisciplinary research project, integrating user-centred design principles throughout the development process. The archived CH documents, such as travel diaries, letters, drawings and photographs, are held in the collections of archives and other memory organisations around Europe. Developing a search tool for this geographically scattered and fragmented material provides the indigenous Sámi people with the possibilities to better find and access their CH. Nuohtti is available in five languages: North Sámi, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish and English.

Although the digital search service provides new possibilities for accessing the Sámi CH, it also introduces vulnerabilities. Whereas the service is primarily developed for the Sámi community, archivists and researchers, the plurality of potential future users is broad. Digital access exposes the culturally sensitive material for a wider audience, creating the potential risk for offensive or disrespectful usage, related, for example, to commercial exploitation. Thus, it has been important to develop and provide ethical guidelines for the use of the search service.

Integrating the ethical guidelines into the user interface (UI) design of the Nuohtti has taken place in several multidisciplinary workshops (see Figure 12.2). In these UI

Figure 12.2 A multidisciplinary UI design workshop on ethical guidelines in action. Three people looking at a whiteboard with printed UI designs and post it notes, with one person pointing to a design element.

design workshops, we have joined the expertise of graphic and user interface design, technical development and law and archive professionals with both Sámi and non-Sámi backgrounds. The design goal has been that when entering the search service for the first time, the UI guides the user to consider ethical aspects. A pop-up window with a visualisation interrupts the first-time search activity and draws the user's attention to an ethical guidelines quiz or read the ethical guidelines at length.

Creating ethical guidelines for using culturally sensitive material has been a central aspect of developing the service throughout the entire project (Mäkikalli et al., 2021). The guidelines have been developed based on existing legislation and international examples of ethical guidelines on indigenous CH and have been made in collaboration with the Sámi community (Moradi et al., 2020). Here, participatory design methods and reviewing the guidelines with Sámi community representatives in the project steering group have played a central role. To address the pluralistic viewpoint, the ethical guidelines are targeted, especially for the non-Sámi users of the Nuohtti, who may have less knowledge about cultural sensitivities.

Project 2: virtual exhibition content for indigenous Sámi cultural heritage museum

Our second example presents a project conducted in collaboration with Saemien Sijte, the South Sámi Museum and Cultural Centre in Snåsa, Norway. Here, an old indigenous Sámi CH museum object was turned into a 3D model through the use of photogrammetry and showcased at the local museum and online as a virtual exhibition item. Creating a digitised 3D model enables visitors to see the object up close and investigate it from all directions, including zooming in and out (Figure 12.3). This is

Figure 12.3 A remote user exploring a virtual cultural heritage exhibition object, 3D modelled from a physical museum exhibition piece. A person sitting in front of two monitors, which are showing a 3D model of a museum object.

not usually possible with physical exhibition objects, which are old and fragile and inside of a display case.

New software and algorithms have enabled 3D objects to be created using photogrammetry and other techniques (Aicardi et al., 2018). To prepare the virtual representation, the object was placed in a well-lit room, and about 300 photographs were taken of it from all directions by a professional photographer. The free open-source software Meshroom by AliceVision was then used by the designers to create the 3D model from photos. After that, the model was cleaned up and polished in Blender, and the resulting model was then uploaded to Sketchfab for quick and easy presentation. In the future, the same model can also be used for other kinds of software if needed, for example, virtual worlds or augmented reality applications, or even 3D printing.

This example highlights how digital technology can be used to reach out to spread-out indigenous communities living in the geographical area of four countries and which have suffered from the colonising history, during which CH items have been destroyed or removed. A virtual exhibition object provides a way to access CH items over a distance. The method can benefit the community, including artisans and researchers, to see and investigate the object, no matter how far they are located, adding to the accessibility of tangible CH. This method also raises questions about ethics when it comes to making Sámi indigenous heritage accessible because it becomes easier to copy, which is one form of cultural appropriation. Therefore, the decision of which items to make accessible should be made by the indigenous communities. With this documentation technique, the culturally important object is also preserved digitally for the future if something happens to the original piece. In our process, accuracy and realism were followed as closely as possible, even though the digital version cannot reach the level of being exactly identical to the original because some details can be lost in the photogrammetry process (Sapirstein, 2018).

Project 3: virtual visit to a World War II memorial

In the third design case example, a virtual visit to a World War II memorial and graveyard was developed (Häkkilä et al., 2019). The physical CH site marks the place for German soldiers' graveyard from World War II and is located in Russia, close to Finland's border. The location belongs to the old Finnish village of Salla, which was split between Finland and Russia as a result of World War II. Being in the Russian border zone, visiting the place is restricted, and travellers need to apply for visas. However, the place is of interest to plural user groups, such as deceased soldiers' family members, scholars, history enthusiasts and tourists. The virtual reality visit allows different user groups to access the historical site and enjoy the experience at their own pace. Thus, it targets at supporting the exploration of the space from pluriversal angles.

In collaboration with the Salla Museum of War and Reconstruction (Salla, Finland) and Lapland University of Applied Sciences, an immersive virtual reality experience of visiting the graveyard was created and set as an interactive exhibition piece at the museum. A 3D virtual world model of the graveyard was created based on detailed photographs of the place. The user accesses the graveyard experience through a head-mounted display (HMD), which provides an immersive viewing experience and allows the user to explore the gravestones and memorial, as well as set a virtual candle at the site. Exploring the prototype version of the virtual graveyard visit is illustrated in Figure 12.4. During the design process, the prototype was user tested and, based on the results, improved further. To launch the interactive exhibition piece, the Salla village community was invited to an event at the museum to try out the virtual graveyard visit experience. Many of the locals have family histories entwined with the history of old, now inaccessible village locations, and the virtual exhibition offers an experience that can be quite personal.

Figure 12.4 Virtual reality modelled version of the historical graveyard in the development phase. A person using a VR headset and controllers, with a screen showing the virtual graveyard they are visiting.

Information visualisation also has an ethical dimension, as pointed out by Correll (2019). In the design process, we emphasised a respectful and dignified approach for the virtual graveyard visit. For instance, gamified elements were omitted. The visualisation also includes a mode presenting human-shaped shadows representing the number of people buried at the graveyard (Häkkilä et al., 2019). Using this approach, we sought to illustrate the extent of the human tragedy related to the war in a respectful way.

Discussion

Decolonising design in the CH context with interactive technologies has been an emerging topic recently (Paananen et al., 2021), and guidelines and good practices are needed to assist the design and development processes. The three project cases presented in this chapter demonstrate how the integration of pluriversal and decolonising aspects have been sought in practise when digital CH applications have been designed. These interactive applications have been created for public use, which inherently means that their users may come from various different backgrounds. With the users' different viewpoints and experiences, a pluriversal angle is present.

The presented design cases conducted in the three projects are all examples of contexts in which cultural sensitivities play a central role and the technology users are expected to follow a respectful and ethical code of conduct. To facilitate this, the design process has taken a participatory approach, where the community's and end users' viewpoints have sought to be taken into account. Participatory methods and co-creation allow people to work on such topics together and understand the possibilities and restrictions of the content and technological tools. For example, multidisciplinary development teams may work better together when the developers, artists, historians and other experts understand each other's perspectives, values and methods. Ethical issues are also very important in this context. The history of the research around Sámi people has been a problematic one (Drugge, 2016), for example, because of prior assimilation policies. Also, other CH design contexts, for instance, places of mourning and remembrance, such as graveyards, require a certain code of conduct. Ethical guidelines, as well as respectful design choices, are important aspects of the service development process.

The use of technology can improve access to CH in many different ways, such as over a physical distance and time and with lower visiting costs. Digital content can also be easily translated to different languages. Additionally, digitalisation can make operations more sustainable and ecological because physical travel between places is no longer required. As technology develops further, software and hardware become cheaper and easier to use, which will enable new users and smaller organisations, such as local museums, to integrate technology with their exhibitions and collections. Storytelling and local knowledge can be combined with the technology for engaging and interactive exhibition pieces, and digital technologies enable the presentation of materials in numerous alternative ways. In all three cases, presented in this chapter, digital technologies have provided a way to search for and explore remote, digitised content and have improved accessibility to CH. Here, this has probably been the greatest benefit in technology adaptation. In addition, the use of digital virtual models has provided a way to investigate fragile artefacts and gain a realistic 3D view of the physical content or space. Technology and digital media today take part in memory making in CH contexts (Kambunga et al., 2020), thus contributing to the new content.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the pluriversal aspects of integrating interactive technologies into the applications and services related to CH, presenting three design cases in which the result has been a digital service for a certain CH context: digital Sámi archives, Sámi museum and a World War II graveyard. When such services are used by people with different backgrounds, they inevitably bring in different experiences, interests and viewpoints. The plurality of the users' means designers must address not only the application usability and features, but also the ethical design of the system and UI. In particular, the presented work related to the Sámi heritage archives search service has taken ethical guidelines as a central part of the design. While improved access to Sámi heritage archives provides possibilities for the Sámi people and community, it also exposes it to others interested in studying and exploring Sámi history and culture. From the Sámi perspective, improved accessibility is both a benefit and challenge. These are especially sensitive questions when dealing with a community that has suffered from colonialisation history.

Our work contributes to the discussion around designing for pluriversal and decolonising contexts by describing concrete examples where the academic and theory discourses meet design practice. Technology has undeniable benefits in assisting in accessing information over distance. The Salla graveyard can be visited virtually across borders. Technology offers ways to connect the Sámi people located in multiple countries. These projects show the pluralistic ways in which technology may be designed and developed in the CH context, especially when dealing with sensitive topics.

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13 Centring relationships more than humans and things

Translating design through the culture of the Far East

Namkyu Chun

Abstract: Throughout the development of design, as design has expanded widely beyond Western societies, relatively limited knowledge from non-Western cultures has been explored. Both for having an inclusive understanding of design and for turning a monologue into an interactive dialogue, different cultural perspectives need to be embraced. Thus, looking at four cases in diverse design subfields from South Korea, this study projects the possibility of incorporating a perspective from East Asian culture. Although the traditional approach to design is centralised on 'things', human-centredness has recently challenged this perspective. Through the lens of Korean culture, more contemporary discussions on design, including activism, decolonisation and postanthropocentrism, are an effort to recognise hidden or forgotten relationships in design beyond thing- and human-centred design, that is, *relationship-centred design*. In the context of South Korea, the ways in which the relationship is considered in relation to design are introduced for initiating more active conversations between cultures. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future studies and implications for the field.

Keywords: Korean culture, South Korea, relationship-centricity, plurality, case study, more than human-centred design

Introduction

In encountering other cultures, design is surprisingly still dominated by the Western perspective. Despite the historic development of design in the West, the geographical location alone cannot define its values and applications. In fact, the definition of design is discursive (Julier, 2013). What defines design is the people who embrace and practice it. Regardless of location, design is studied and practiced all over the world. However, diverse perspectives on design with distinctive cultures are underexplored by the overall design research community. In particular, a great number of individuals from/in East Asia, including South Korea and China, have been involved in design as students and practitioners (McRobbie, 2015; Moon, 2011). The discussion on design has been mainly Western-centric regarding not only the geographical context but also the knowledge generation for conceptualising and communicating design. In other words, although design has expanded widely beyond Western societies, relatively limited knowledge of different cultures from non-Western societies is understood. To have an inclusive understanding of design and turn a monologue into an interactive dialogue, different cultural perspectives need to be embraced. Thus, the current study projects the possibility of incorporating a perspective from East Asia, specifically South Korea.

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With this pluralistic view, an interesting observation can be made while exploring the development of design discourses. As noted earlier, design as a field has moved away from its traditional boundaries. With its roots in industrial manufacturing, design had a dominant focus on designing 'things', or categories of products (e.g., clothes, furniture, domestic appliances, buildings, typefaces and visual identities). With human-centred design, it has started emphasising the human factor during the process of design under varying terms, including 'users' and 'customers' (Julier, 2013). In the 1980s, discussions on design broke the dichotomic view of things and humans, instead tending to focus on connections between them with diverse new labels, including 'participatory design', 'codesign' and 'interaction design' (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). More recent conversations on design have gone beyond humans and started embracing varying topics, including design activism, decolonisation, postanthropocentrism, circular economy and degrowth (see Mattelmäki et al., 2019). These conversations attempt to reorient the design discourse to be more inclusive and attentive to broader issues beyond Western societies. From the perspective of Korean culture, this can be seen as an effort to recognise what has been hidden or forgotten in the design between thing- and human-centred design: relationships. In this chapter, this is termed *relationship-centred design*. Supporting the discursive view on the definition of design, the research questions that the current study seeks to answer are as follows:

- How can relationship-centred design be conceptualised while acknowledging the particular culture of South Korea?
- How is design practiced through relationship-centred thinking in the contemporary context of South Korea?

These inquiries can contribute to design research by adding different interpretations of design practices from Korean culture. This further supports the new discussion on decolonising design that advocates for pluralistic approaches to design beyond the Western, first-world point of view (Abdulla et al., 2019). Additionally, the introduction of lesser known local cases in South Korea can increase the visibility of their approaches in the global context. Altogether, the contribution of initiating this culturally inclusive discussion is to make the conversation on design richer, more dynamic and more expansive.

In the following section, previous studies are introduced to support the conceptualisation of relationship-centred design. Afterwards, the research methods for collecting and interpreting the data are explained. Then, the findings from four cases that illustrate how design is practiced through relationship-centred thinking in the context of South Korea are presented. This chapter concludes with possible future studies on relationship-centred design.

Theoretical background: how Koreans think through relationships

In this section, a number of studies are presented, each illustrating the ways in which the notion of relationship plays a central role in Korean culture. These studies were conducted and written by Korean scholars, who are mostly situated in the field of social science. This selection of literature was intended to properly conceptualise relationship-centred design from the perspective of Koreans, instead of relying on

Western interpretations of Korean culture. A few Western publications have been cited to support the conceptualisation. In the following, the traditional philosophy of Confucianism is briefly introduced first to establish the historic background of Korean culture; then, the ways in which Koreans view the world through relationships are presented, here showing the influence of Confucianism.

Traditional Korean culture with Confucianism

Numerous cultures in East Asia, including South Korea, centralise their being and becoming in relation to relationships. This way of thinking originated from a number of traditional philosophies. However, the major 'world view', or philosophy behind this is generally thought to be Confucianism (Yum, 2009). June Ock Yum (2009) explored the influence of Confucianism on communication in East Asia; she introduced two key principles of Confucianism: *in* and *eui* (인 and 의 in Korean). The former means humanism and represents the overall philosophy of Confucianism. It has been interpreted by Western scholars as a natural human feeling for others based on the level of one's relationship (McNaughton, 1974). The latter has room for interpretation but also has a deep connection to social relationships. Yum described *eui* as 'part of human nature which allows us to look beyond personal, immediate profit and to elevate ourselves to the original goodness of human nature that bridges the ego and alter' (1987). As a passage for practising these principles of *in* and *eui* as well as proprietary, rite and respect for social forms, *li* (이) is the universal rule of human behaviour in Confucianism.

The emphasis of human, or humanism, in the first principle requires additional explanation to support this view of relationship-centred thinking. In Korean, *in-gan* (인간) means human being and is based on Chinese characters (人間). It is literally translated as 'between men' (Chung & Cho, 2006, p. 48) or 'person between' (Park, 2020, p. 514). According to this understanding of *in-gan*, human beings are not only individuals who exist in relationships with others but are also fundamentally 'relational beings', as noted by the Western view on social relationships (Strathern, 2005). Thus, humanism, or human-centric thinking, is more than just looking at individual human beings. It is instead deeply linked to the idea of relationship-centredness.

Meanwhile, even in contemporary society, it is quite common to find East Asians and Koreans practising this Confucianist relationship-centred thinking and considering what happens to their family and community first before making a decision or an action. In other words, how they are related to 'humans and things' significantly defines who they are instead of focusing on them as an individual. One can challenge that Korean society is generally recognised as 'developed' and Westernised in diverse layers from culture to economy; thus, individualism must have been deeply adopted to shift the relationship-centred thinking. Despite this perception, Korean society appears to have 'a paradoxical process of individualisation without individualism' (Chang, 2014, p. 2). From a sociological study, Kyung-Sup Chang (2014) presented the ways in which the idea of individualisation has strongly emerged in South Korea. He argued, however, that this phenomenon has remained as 'deeply ideational processes' when compared with Western individualisation. He noted that this is because of the rapid sociocultural and economic transformations that Korean society has experienced in the twentieth century (also known as 'compressed modernity'). The partial adoption of individualisation in South Korea can be understood as merely a shallow imitation of Western culture rather than of its mindset.

Influence of Confucianism on Korean culture

The relationship-centredness from Confucianism can be traced to a myriad of cultural characteristics. Yum (2009) introduced the influence of Confucianism on interpersonal relationship patterns. Compared with North American orientations, she argued that East Asians, including Koreans, tend to have patterns of being particularistic based on the level of closeness; having a preference for long-term and asymmetrical reciprocity over short-term symmetrical or contractual reciprocity; having a sharp distinction between ingroup and outgroup members; using informal intermediaries—shared personal experiences between parties—to establish a new relationship; and blurring the boundary between personal and public relationships.

Furthermore, in relation to these interpersonal relationship patterns, Yum (2009) presented the Confucianism impact on communication patterns: being perceived as a process of infinite interpretation; having differentiated linguistic codes according to those people involved and the situations; having a strong emphasis on indirect communication; and being receiver-centred to stress the listening, sensitivity and removal of preconceptions, rather than focusing on the clarity and credibility of the message.

These patterns of interpersonal relationships and communication provide a conceptual framework to grasp the abstract idea of relationship-centred tendency in Korean culture. Of course, East Asian culture, including Korean culture, cannot be understood exclusively through the lens of Confucianism. However, these patterns clearly present distinctions compared with Western patterns. Moreover, they hint at the ways in which relationship-centred design may be conceptualised.

Based on this, relationship-centredness, or relationship-centred thinking, can be conceptualised as a way of being in/with the world, here with careful consideration of the myriad of relationships at the personal and social levels. From this, relationship-centred design is conceptualised as the practice that considers context-specific relationships during the design process, embracing the conditions of things and humans (see Figure 13.1).

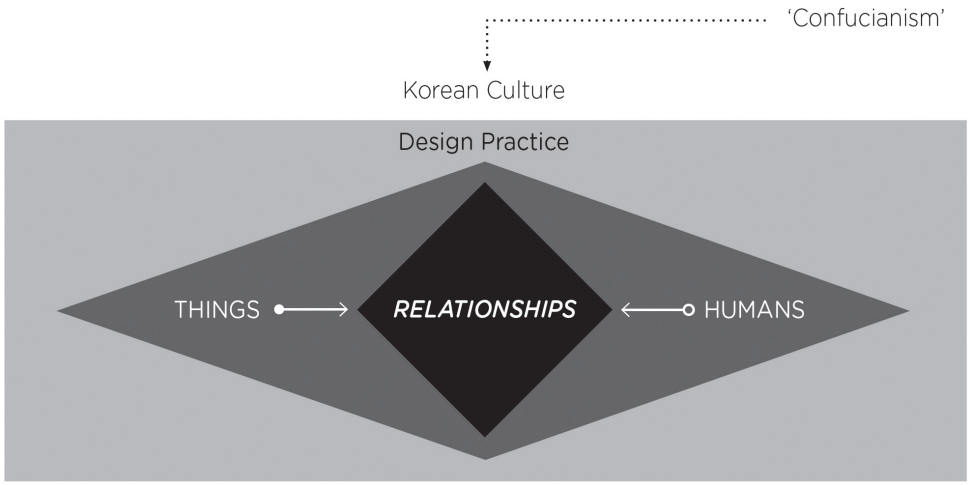

Figure 13.1 A scheme of relationship-centred design.

Research methods

From this cultural context of South Korea, the current study employed a case study research strategy to exemplify relationship-centred design through design practice (Yin, 2014). Johansson (2007) noted that case studies can be beneficial for practice-oriented fields of research because the individual knowledge of practitioners tends to be developed through model cases or personal experiences. Moreover, the strategy of a case study that can support the illustration of relationship-centred design through multiple sources of evidence was beneficial for the current study (Yin, 2014).

However, the purpose of the current study is not to unpack the entire Korean design community. Rather, cases were selected through purposive sampling to illustrate different approaches to relationship-centred design in diverse subfields, including interaction, urban, spatial and clothing design. Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were considered because the role of design is clearly observable in their operation compared with family-owned conglomerates, including Samsung and Hyundai (Sinha, 2000). Through the network of the author, the research participants were communicated with.

Regarding the methods for data collection and interpretation, the general principles of qualitative research were employed (Flick, 2009). The data were collected for each case through semistructured interviews with a key actor and through the use of varying documents, including news articles, blog postings by the case representatives and official websites (see Appendix 1). Because of the pandemic condition, the communication and research were conducted remotely via mobile applications, including Kakao Talk and Zoom. The interviews were done in Korean but translated by the author, whose mother tongue is Korean. After coding the data in iterations, thematic analysis was conducted to identify meaningful themes from the cases (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings: four cases of relationship-centred design in Korea

In the current study, four cases from diverse subfields of design were explored in the context of South Korea, namely Design Spectrum; Iksundada Studio; NohTaerin and Associates; and Fiorka. In these cases, the ways in which relationships are considered in relation to design practice were explored. The introduction to each case begins with a brief description. The activities and approaches that are relevant to relationship-centred design follow. Figure 13.2 includes the images representing each case.

Design Spectrum: loose yet long-lasting relationships

The first case is an open platform that organises events to exchange ideas and networks for local designers who work in the broader industry around information technology (i.e., user-experience design and interaction design). It was founded by Jihong Kim in 2017. While previously working in Samsung Electronics as a designer, he experienced that designers in different contexts have rich experiential knowledge, but this knowledge tends to remain at the individual level. In particular, from his trips to foreign fairs, where he encountered how knowledge can become more innovative and richer through active dialogues, he realised a strong demand to localise this practice in the Korean context. Thus, he envisioned creating an informal platform where the exchange of diverse experiences on design methods can take place in reciprocal and

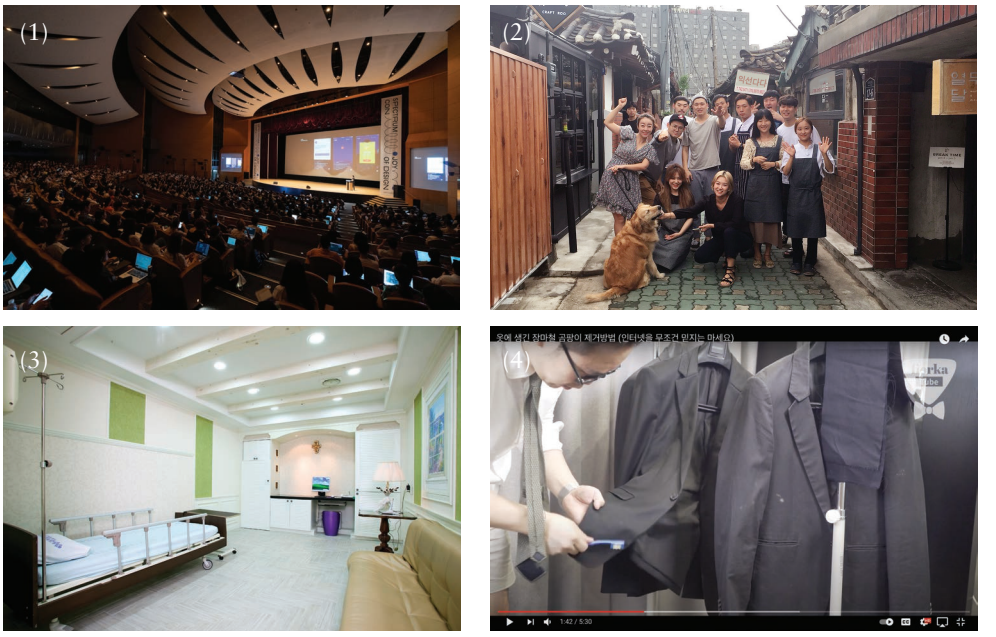

Figure 13.2 A compilation of the images from four cases: (1) Design Spectrum's main event Spectrum-Con in 2019 (Copyright: Design Spectrum); (2) Iksundada Studio's team at Iksun-dong Street (Copyright: Iksundada Studio); (3) Morgue design at Daejeon St. Mary's Hospital (Copyright: NohTaerin and Associates); and (4) A screenshot of Chong's YouTube channel (Copyright: Fiorka).

collaborative manners. Accordingly, the process of knowledge sharing has become its main area of interest. Overall, this creates a network of local designers through educational events. The platform initially focused on sharing 'how to design better' through online and onsite channels, including workshops, fairs, panel discussions, talks, podcasts and social media. More recently, it has revisited the type of knowledge it is sharing by increasing the emphasis on 'how to cultivate a better design culture/environment' for those who have limited resources. This change took place because careless knowledge sharing can impact a broad group of designers by unintentionally providing biased knowledge. Moreover, it is intended to avoid serving a selective group of designers who are in an established condition.

The last point is related to relationship-centred thinking. For operating the platform with a network of designers, the notion of 'loose relationships' is emphasised to keep both a broad range of interests from diverse participants and the culture of the reciprocal community. Kim noted that if participants become overly involved in the platform, they may want to control it for their benefit. The platform avoids being dictated by a singular authority, instead keeping it informal and inclusive as a community. In this way, their contribution to the platform does not become burdensome but can remain enjoyable throughout their participation in the process of knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this communal culture that prioritises building personal networks can contribute to the continuous bottom-up development of new initiatives in the local context.

Iksundada Studio: the more (relationships), the better

The second case is about a design agency that intends to turn forgotten and underdeveloped spaces into inviting new venues. In 2014, Han-ah Park and Ji-hyun Park (the cofounders of Iksundada Studio) came across an untouched area with old hanok buildings (traditional Korean houses) in the middle of Seoul, Capital of South Korea. Different from nearby popular tourist sites with a similar setting, including Insa-dong and Buchon-dong, Ikseon-dong remained underexplored until recently because of the zoning regulations that had prohibited new developments. While looking for potential tourist guesthouses, the founders of Iksundada encountered the area. They immediately recognised its hidden values and turned it into a place where nostalgic sentiment met new stories as a way to provide unique experiences to its visitors.

Interestingly, not having design training has helped them discover and rediscover the area and bring in fresh stories and ideas instead of just new furniture and products. For the Iksun-dong project, the main idea was for visitors to have a holistic experience of the culture 'New Analog' that connects old and new beyond the place. For this, they created four categories of 'eating, viewing, listening and feeling' and developed 24 stores and public spaces accordingly. By working with diverse design teams working in diverse subfields, including interior architecture and visual communication design, they have learned to develop their own approaches to design. Moreover, they have evolved with the area while learning what it means to (re)design a place. For instance, they could avoid criticism of gentrification by developing a joint investment to help local actors, including young entrepreneurs, actually own the newly developed venues. This has provided more sustainable business opportunities to local stakeholders while learning how to deal with complex relationships in the area. Their learning has recently been acknowledged by international design awards, including IF (2021) and Red Dot (2021), for their later project in Soje-ho.

From its name—Iksundada—its approach to relationships can be drawn. The name comes from the old phrase *Dada-iksun* (다다익선), which can be roughly translated as 'the more, the better'. Simply switching the order of the words, it inscribed a new feeling to the old phrase and kept the connection to its inaugural project Iksun-dong. Instead of dictating the design of every detail or using an underdeveloped area as an investment, they distributed roles and ownership with as many local actors as possible to coauthor new stories that resonate with both old and new, as well as locals and visitors.

NohTaerin and Associates: healthy relationship building

The third case is situated at the intersection of healthcare and space. NohTaerin and Associates (formerly known as We Are KAI) was founded by Taerin Noh in 2010 and has been known for its extensive experience working with hospitals on a range of scales. Starting with the interior styling of spaces in the hospital setting, its design scope has shifted to more sensitive spaces, including a morgue and hospice room. More recently, it has been designing the overall experiences of patients and staff in the hospital space. Noh noted that a morgue and hospice room may be difficult because they deal with extremely personal and emotional experiences. However, the theoretical concept of 'a good space' can be applied because they have limited aspects to consider while designing. Meanwhile, the general flow of services in the hospital,

especially an outpatient clinic, requires careful understanding of the entire healthcare process from the perspectives of different stakeholders. More importantly, for diverse services in the hospital, it is often unclear what is actually designed for clients. Thus, the design team must explain why less visible changes are needed in the design process rather than simply showing what could be made physically.

When it comes to relationships, NohTaerin and Associates takes a clear position that involving stakeholders (e.g., hospital staff and patients) in the process of designing can lead to healthy results. Possible answers to certain design problems, which are often complex and hidden, can be discovered in discussions rather than proposed by a single designer or design team. Thus, Noh emphasised the importance of communication and evidence-based design to clearly convey the value of design beyond visual styling. In addition, designing health experiences requires a multidisciplinary team; this means that relationships within the team also need to be carefully considered. In other words, in a fast-paced design project, distinctive roles of different design experts are often less recognised. Coordinating their roles depending on the project is important yet overlooked. NohTaerin and Associates advocates for the establishment of healthy internal relationships prior to the installation of health experience design.

Fiorka: in-gan-centred clothes

The last case is a small business that designs custom-made clothes specialising in uniforms. Its name, Fiorka, is adopted and modified from the Swedish word *fika*, which refers to a coffee break in the afternoon. Its founder and designer, Jaewoong Chong, noted that he was deeply inspired by this word, which recognises basic human qualities, including the work-life balance. With the rapid speed in the fashion industry, this view is often overlooked. In particular, its tendency to commodify clothes simply as products to sell has created distance between wearers and clothes. Thus, Chong founded the company in 2012 with the strong intention of designing more sustainable clothes while recovering the humanism aspect around the design process.

While making tailor-made suits for private customers, Fiorka has an array of clients from global high fashion and accessory conglomerates, including LVMH and Kering, that operate local branches in South Korea. While following references from its clients, the company designs custom-made uniforms for their service staff, including salespeople, who work in the local boutiques. The problem has been the management of these uniforms because they are worn daily but for a short period of time. After one season, the existing uniforms often require redesigning to fit the new visual identity of the brand. In other words, they are to be thrown away. Thus, Fiorka has developed reformable uniforms that can last for several seasons. Additionally, the proper methods to care for clothes are taught through video material (Chong, 2021).

Meanwhile, Fiorka's long-term goal has a clear connection to relationship-centred thinking. Throughout previous experience working for different fashion brands in Korea, Chong realised that although the message from a fashion brand remains the same, periodic changes require the continuous production of new clothes. Through this discrepancy between the symbolic and material productions of fashion, he attempts to turn the overall process of making fashion meaningful to more members in society. To achieve this ambitious goal as a starter, Fiorka has started the planning process to hire people with disabilities for the firm's production line. This brings a balance to the glamorous image of high fashion while empowering those who are

Case Name	Design Spectrum	Iksundada Studio	NohTaerin and Associeates	Fiorka
Design Subfield	Interaction Design, Communication Design	Urban Design, Interior Design	Experience Design, Spatial Design	Clothing Design, Social Design
Main Goal	Keeping loose relationships that last long	Involving as many relationships as possible	Building relationships both externally and internally	Connecting relationships in diverse social groups
Method	Process oriented knowledge sharing	Fresh storytelling by connecting old with new and locals with visitors	Internal and external communication	Inclusive clothing design via education and job creation
Approach to Relationship	THINGS: 'Knowledge Sharing Events' ↓ ***Long-lasting Relationships*** ↑ HUMANS: 'Designers'	THINGS: 'Urban Space and Story' ↓ ***Rediscovering Relationships*** ↑ HUMANS: 'Locals and Visitors'	THINGS: 'Hospital and Experience' ↓ ***Healthy Relationships*** ↑ HUMANS: 'Clients, Patients and Team'	THINGS: 'Clothes and Service' ↓ ***Recovering Relationships*** ↑ HUMANS: 'Clients and Workers'

Figure 13.3 A summary of the four cases on relationship-centred design from South Korea.

marginalised. Chong explained that Fiorka cannot exist alone as a member of society. He wants to involve marginalised groups to make their work impact on the other end of high fashion, which is often seen as more important. In this way, Fiorka can create a reciprocal relationship by connecting the two extremes.

Discussion and conclusion

With the aim of contributing to the polycentric view on design, the current study has explored East Asian, especially Korean, culture with a lens on Confucianist relationship-centred thinking. This was done to conceptualise relationship-centred design and demonstrate how it is practised in the context of South Korea. Figure 13.3 summarises the findings of the cases.

These cases have not only demonstrated Korean interpretations of design practice but also projected possibilities to expand emerging discussions in design, including decolonising design, design activism and circular economy, through the view of non-Western culture. These contributions hint at new research avenues for future studies. In the following, four possible scenarios to further explore relationship-centred design are suggested:

- Further exploring Korean culture for conceptualising relationship-centred design can be conducted. For instance, the notion of *jeong* (정), which can be loosely

translated as the feeling of attachment between people who are in a close relationship, is another vital element to comprehend relationship-centric thinking in Korea and can be added as an element beyond Confucianism (see Park, 2020).

- This chapter introduced four cases from different subfields of design. Additional cases in different subfields can be conducted to exemplify other approaches to relationship-centred design in the context of Korea.
- Alternatively, the integration of design into society can be explored from the perspective of policy-making. The Korea Institute of Design Promotion (KIDP) is a governmental organisation that is responsible for design-related nationwide activities and policies. The year 2020 was its 50th anniversary (KIDP, 2021), and its history can support the view on relationship-centred design while situating it in the broader breadth of time and scope.
- Finally, it is important to note that this approach of relationship-centredness is not exclusive to either Korean culture or Korean design practitioners. For example, from a recent study on fashion sustainability in Latin America, the notion of relationship—or trust and affect—was emphasised as a distinctive characteristic for the Brazilian context (Valle-Noronha & Chun, 2021). Careful comparisons of the relationship-centred approach to other contexts can make the conversation on the plurality of design more dynamic and relatable to other design research communities.

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Appendix 1
The research participants of this study are presented in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 Basic information on research participants.

Case	*Participant*	*Role*	*Date*
Design Spectrum	Jihong Kim	Founder/design education manager	June 9th, 2021
Iksundada Studio	Jinwoo Kim	Chief marketing officer/ design manager	June 11th, 2021
NohTaerin and Associates	Taerin Noh	Founder/chief designer	June 9th, 2021
Fiorka	Jaewoong Chung	Founder/chief designer	July 16th, 2021

14 Professionalised designing in between plural makings

Zhipeng Duan

Abstract: Designing is considered an ability that is endowed to everyone at large, going beyond one's professional expertise. However, without a careful examination of the colonial legacies, instituting everyone's creative practices as designing encourages the making of nondesigners as being isomorphic to the design professions. The chapter aims to evoke more imaginations of how designing relates to other makings practices while not fully rendering them as designing. Here, the general term 'making' is employed to indicate a scope emphasising the richness of the divergent practices of forming, causing, doing or coming into being, in which designing is only one or several modes of making. In this chapter, through a literature review, I first examine how the discourse and narrative of design professions over-occupy makings. This is followed by a mini autoethnography that illustrates how multiple practices of makings make transformative change and enhance the hierarchy in a 'design' project of remote care that I am engaged in. This chapter concludes by proposing the plurality of makings as a method of introspection to sensitise our design practices, as well as bodily and affective experiences. In the scope of plural makings, participation does not necessarily mean inviting them to enter the design process but rather means an embodied designer joining in the meshwork of ongoing makings.

Keywords: Designing, making, plurality, non-designer, practice

Introduction

'Everyone designs'. Simon (1988, p. 67) uses this phrase to suggest design as a common ground for communicating creative activities among different professions. Subsequently, similar expressions further spread the autonomy of people in designing and redesigning their existence (e.g., Escobar, 2018; Manzini, 2015). Designing is considered an ability that is endowed to everyone at large, going beyond their professional expertise (Manzini, 2015). This argument is aligned with recent studies on ontological design that see design as inseparable from what it is to be human and fundamental to becoming human (Fry et al., 2015, p. 286). For instance, Willis (2006, p. 70) suggests that to design is to deliberate, plan and scheme in ways that prefigure our actions and makings. Ontological design involves a concern about the retrieval and reimagination of heterogeneous forms of confronting the dangerous and concurrent conditions of coloniality, patriarchy and capitalism (Fry, 2017). Design can potentially be transited from a tool for Western modernity to a tool for reimagination (Escobar, 2018).

However, without a careful examination of the colonial legacies, instituting everyone's creative practices as designing encourages the makings of nondesigners

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isomorphic to the design professions (Suchman, 2021; Willis, 2018). Hence, the current chapter aims to evoke more imaginations of how designing relates to other makings practices while not fully rendering them as designing. Here, I deliberately employ the general term 'making' to indicate a scope emphasising the richness of divergent active practices of forming, causing, doing or coming into being. For Fry (2019, p. 69), making is the agency of human and world formation. Correspondingly, designing is narrowed down to one or several professionalised modes of making that are typically related to dominant Western modernity. Informed by studies of the pluriverse (Law, 2015; Escobar, 2018), this division acknowledges that different practices have the inconsistent capabilities of enacting futures. One mode of designing has no ontological priority because when a mode becomes visible by revealing coherent methods, values and institution, it often conceals more (Fry et al., 2015).

In what follows, I first present three approaches to how the discourse and narrative of design professions over-occupy the practice of making in design epistemology. I particularly coin the term 'design-ise' to problematise the notion that professional designing occupies a privileged position in the discourse and material of change, while other forms of making need to be expressed by the knowledge of designing. This is followed by an autoethnography to illustrate how multiple practices of makings can lead to transformative change and enhance the hegemony; this is shown through a 'design' project that I was involved in. Based on a reflection of the ethnography, the chapter concludes by considering how design professions can join in the ongoing meshwork of makings.

Designised makings

The word design appeared in English in the middle of the sixteenth century, referring to a plan or scheme intended for subsequent execution (Margolin, 2015). Similarly, in other European languages (Italian *design*, Spanish *dibujar* and French *dessin*), the connotations of design signify more about drawing a conceptual image—the clear or visual expression of an intention, idea and plan (Ingold, 2013). This assumption has been accepted in contemporary design research, which is often coined by the intentional operations focusing on 'how things should be' (Margolin, 2007; Bremner & Roxburgh, 2014). Conditioned by this assumption, designers, including architects and planners, are expected to be able to create a design concept for the desired future. Here, the concept of design refers to an abstract form of ideation that is often materialised by language and functioning in design (Dong, 2007). It is considered a primary generator prior to the real existence of an object (Darke, 1979). A pre-existing design concept envisioning and conditioning various futures legitimises the practices of design professions (Ingold, 2013). Design professions are often required to have the intellectual capability of delineating, prototyping and evaluating this design concept. The creation of design concepts in professional designing is not exactly equal to the anticipatory foresight manifested in other makings because it enrols relational makings to reach and scale up an evenly shared consensus of the future. Thus, designing tends to position and limit the foresight of other makings expressed only in a design process. In the epistemology of designing, makings tend to become programmed, rationally sequenced, time managed and positioned as succeeding the intellectual creation of design concepts. There is a tendency to create a design concept in a design project that is detached from its implementation and use, while the implementation

and use are implicated in other makings that not always aligned with the design project.

Making as the implementation of a design concept

First, there are practices of making about formation, oversimplified here as the implementation referring to the execution of a design concept which succeeds designing. For instance, in a retrospective study of Alberti's treatise *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* circa 1450, Ingold (2013) finds that Alberti deliberately elevates the recognition of architects by distinguishing the profession from the 'humble' mason, carpenter and other build workers. Alberti (1988, p. 7) believes that the architect has the ability to 'project the entire form in mind without any resources to the material' (cited in Ingold, 2013, p. 49). In this book, the practice and knowledge of architecture are untangled from the actual construction process, in which there are numerous overlaps between an architect and mason. The knowledge and wisdom of geometry that masons and carpenters have built up in practice were often less documented in Alberti's times (1988, p. 7). This notion of designers being devoted to building design concepts still remains to this day, and beyond the scope of architecture, it can be seen in a design paradigm that centres on building a solution to address a specific problem. Manzini (2016) calls this 'solution-ism', where designers build for a solution the dominant, if not single, possibility to solve a problem and, thus, promote changes. For example, the Double Diamond (British Design Council, 2015) and the design model of 'fuzzy front end' (Sanders & Stappers, 2008), which are two globally famous frameworks, all convey this notion that designing distinctly ends when a design concept of the solution is delivered. The rest of the practice after design is expected to be the handover, implementation and iteration needed to launch a conceptual solution idea (e.g., in service design, abundant design models such as the service blueprint [Shostack, 1984] and principles [e.g., Lin et al., 2011] are elaborated on to consistently put service concept into action and operation [Yu, 2021]). Within the discourse of design concepts, it is difficult to grasp how change can happen in an alternative way or even if the change that happens inside the making of implementing a concept (Manzini, 2016).

Making as habitual use

There are other practices of making that are recognised as being used. There are many practices called 'use' that exist in the scope of designing, here referring to what people do with an object (Kohtala et al., 2020). Conceptualising the interactions between people and objects as using can be manifested in the widespread culture of employing the term 'user' in design practice to delineate the people who utilise a product, service or building. The term 'user' is so taken for granted that there is neither a clear definition nor enough etymological study in the design community of it. One possible contemporary origin is computer science or engineering, which has widely coined the term end-user to distinguish people who only 'use' software. The term 'user' is closely concomitant and affiliated with the knowledge of experts, such as designers, developers and engineers. People can barely call themselves users without the presence of these experts. Knowledge about the needs, interests, desires and habits of users which produced mainly by design practices is less rooted in the everyday life of

users. Rather, the knowledge on users is more serving as expert knowledge aiming to better designing or engineering *for* users. The term 'user' implies that people can be grouped because they have many characteristics in common when interacting with an object (Ritter et al., 2014, p. ix). The value proposition of user centricity requires designers to concentrate on the needs and interests of users (Norman, 2013) and to develop products or services with better usability and experience (Woolrych et al., 2011). Value is employed to promote a cultural change that encourages enterprises to develop more products and services that meet users' needs (Deserti & Rizzo, 2019; Junginger, 2012).

Design practices value the needs and interests of users but often narrow and eliminate the heterogeneous changes possibly made through the practice of use. What users do when using a product or service is always beyond an interaction with a product or service that is predesigned with a certain teleology (Kohtala et al., 2020). The practices of different users are always contextual and multiple directional and entangled with other ongoing practices. In a comprehensive taxonomic study based on a literature review in design, human-computer interaction, consumption and science and technology studies, Kohtala et al. (2020) find that the *use as-is* that connects functions to the designed aims is often a starting point to establish a spectrum of innovation and design capabilities of users. Considering people's practices solely as using could produce a sense of dehumanisation by framing users as independent and rational (Marmont, 2019). The impersonal interaction between the user and service or product (e.g., the interaction between a user and Uber) in the design narrative tends to conceal the encounter among people (e.g., the interaction between the passenger and taxi driver) (Appadurai & Alexander, 2020). Teleology implies that users' practices can be well-arranged as specific functions in the design concept. Within the design concept, the journey of a user representing heterogeneous people displays a set of replicable and timeless events and processes with fixed interactions with other actors, regardless of the time these events take place. The purpose and approach of use are prenarrated before the real use, hence determining how we use an object (Björgvinsson et al., 2012). Designed objects always condition the being and knowing of us and structure our sense of time and the future (Escobar, 2018; Fry et al., 2015; Tonkinwise, 2016). As such, using is difficult to be oriented towards an alternative future but can better be oriented towards the future that designing made. One example of how to design conditional use comes from an anthropological study in Silicon Valley (Appadurai & Alexander, 2020), in which it was found that many task-oriented apps (e.g., Uber) valuing user experience, including convenience, joviality and efficiency, tend to encourage users to be habitual and mindless, hence increasing user stickiness. As suggested (Appadurai & Alexander, 2020, p. 90), habitual actions do not easily produce new knowledge.

Utilising the knowledge of making in design

It should be noted that the epistemology of the implementation of the design concept and habitual use constitute the worlding of how design relates to other practices of making. Referring to Tsing (2010), the term 'worlding' defines the situation rather than providing a description of what is happening. There are growing complexities of heterogeneous making, including implementation and use encountered in design practice. Therefore, there is a need to understand how the complexities

of other makings are engaged in design practice. The engagement of nondesigners particularly touches on the democratic movement towards participatory design or co-design and its critiques that have been occurring for nearly half a century. There are growing critiques of the dominant position of designers and architectures *in* the design process and calls for involving more users and other experts as designers (e.g., Oosterhuis, 2014; Robertson & Simonsen, 2012). Participatory design or co-design tends to encourage the utilisation of the knowledge of other actors in the design process. Extracting knowledge from users and actors can help to draw different interests and desires together, but it may hardly be sufficient: Transient design practices and life-long everyday practices of actors are disproportionate. Concentrating on the knowledge produced in design practices fails to fully acknowledge the dynamics of actors' ongoing practices. Even though some actors participate in the design process, they can also twist, change, forget their participations and carry the participations, through their practices towards other directions that diverge from the expectations of designers (Agid & Chin, 2019).

To unpack this failure, reviewing the research in the 1970s, when participatory design was developed, is helpful. In an influential study in 1973, design theorist Rittel and urban theorist Webber used the term 'wicked problem' to express the dilemma facing designers and planners in building a unified solution in a plural society where different knowledge and practices coexist. In subsequent studies, as Akama (2015) suggests, co-designing tends to concentrate on the former—the connection—while the divergence between practices is relatively omitted. Design is believed to have the ability to introduce different knowledge and experience into the design process to explore, envision and develop solutions more collaboratively (e.g., Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser, 2011). A growing body of research has been committed to exploring how co-design or participatory design accommodates heterogeneity (e.g., Eriksen, 2012). However, framing collective creativity mainly in design is paradoxical to this commitment.

The co-designing approach encourages people with different types of knowledge to detach themselves from their ongoing situated practices. In the context of design, they would not be able to carry out daily practice but instead share their knowledge in a designerly way, a term coined by Cross in 1982 to indicate a distinct way of knowing that is evidenced in designers' practice. There is a underlying premise that other participants' knowledge rooted in their practices can be converted into information in their communications (Strathern, 2018). Anthropologist Mosse (2019) finds that during a series of participatory events with farmers in western India, there is much farming experience and knowledge not mediated by language. Knowledge of farmers was hardly represented through participatory techniques when removing their practical contexts. Strathern (2018, p. 30) suggests that the way of reaching an agreement by sharing and communicating knowledge risks ironing out the difference of existence by flattening viewpoints and ideas which would better appreciate the context from which experts can operate. Without sensitivity about divergence, co-design for other participants can be oversimplified as a knowledge-sharing session. The different interests, values and intentions risk being translated by a set of dominant languages, concepts and knowledge that might draw one world-making project into another (Tsing, 2015). Translation is the accountability of designing to other makings and their futures, as it often leads to violence. A translation often endorses that the host worldview and knowledge are commensurable if the process of translation does not

point out the discrepancy between the translated and the translating (Satsuka, 2015). For instance, Appadurai and Alexander (2020) find that apps are becoming so complex that users find it difficult to make a change in how they use these apps, but user research can involve them as designers and testers in the design process. As such, users' failures and deviated actions can be translated into contributions to co-design events. Another profound example is the digital takeout platform. Chen (2020) finds that this platform, which is empowered by an algorithm, has the ability to collect the delivery time of riders. The specific information of riders and their daily delivery practices are extensively collected and analysed; their data and information can be used to plan and anticipate the shortest time and route required for other rider deliveries. Hence, a rider's participation risks yielding further oppression of other riders.

Designised makings manifested in the above three subsections entail attempts to explain other practices of making by design and enrol these practices as functional segments in the design project. By doing so, designers understand the goals, interests and values of makings that are inconsistent with design practices, here in a simplified and marginalised way, while the project threatens to endorse hegemonic worldviews. The aforementioned examples of medieval build works, users of a Silicon Valley app and a food takeout platform demonstrate that marginalisation is not only discursive but also material because other practices limit the enactment of an alternative future without joining in the designing practices. For the design itself, the result of extending the design to every making is a reduction in design (Fry et al., 2015). Designisation implies the tendency to refuse to be contaminated; that is, the wisdom and knowledge of heterogeneous practices that cannot be well translated by design will be difficult to enter the domain of design. Therefore, the epistemology of designised making also contributes to overformulising design methods and processes as the fluidity and diversity inside the design decrease.

Appreciating the plurality of makings

Given these considerations, we, as the knowers of design, need to reimagine how the practices of designing can relate to other makings while acknowledging that the purposes, values and interests of different actors are not evenly shared. As makings are constantly going on, design practices need to sensitise ourselves to trace them and respond to them more dynamically. There is a need for a pluralistic epistemological framework that might be able to broaden perspectives; doing this can help take note of other makings to let more worlds, including materials, practices and intentions, into a story of making futures. In the end, this can influence design professions. Shifting our focus to makings requires more attention be paid to how transformative changes happen and how the hegemonic world is being made (Suchman, 2011).

In the next section, I present an autoethnography, through which I write about my experiences of encountering multiple trajectories in a 'design' project (Ellis et al., 2011). At a hospital in a coastal city in China, I participated in a doctor's meeting where I expected to observe how they would *design* a process of applying a remote care platform to patients with pulmonary nodules for surgical rehabilitation. According to the functions designed in the platform, after discharge, patients are expected to collect their health data through the app and compatible medical devices, such as spirometers. Doctors are then supposed to check the patient's health status and provide support through a web-based management platform. As a service designer, my

observations came in the design research phase. I hoped to understand their working habits and design abilities. These observations could help me design for and with them later. However, this presupposition became uncertain because the designing, using and implementing were intertangled, so their practices could not be summarised.

This ethnography is anchored as being 'auto', here by mainly considering the inherent tension between my twofold identities—a designer and ethnographer—in the field. As a project designer, my practices constitute the field of ethnography. I am responsible for promoting the project and making the platform applicable at the hospital through my design knowledge. Design knowledge inevitably became a crucial lens through which to remember and analyse what is happening in the field. As an ethnographer, I intended to describe and interpret different actors' practices and also reflect on my design practices in plural makings. This twofold approach resonates with Tim Ingold (2017)'s argument on the embodied participant observation, an anthropological way of doing ethnography. As he suggests, 'To observe is not . . . to objectify. It is to notice what people are saying and doing, to watch and listen, and to respond in your own practice' (Ingold, 2017, p. 23). To design in this study is my way to respond to and hence join in other practices for observing. In order to better observe others in design practice, I also tried to deviate from design knowledge to allow me to perceive the heterogeneity existing in the practices of makings.

Autoethnography is not only about writing personal experiences, but more importantly, it involves accountability for narrating the relationship between oneself and others (Tolich, 2010). During the write-up, I also employed the interviews and conversations that I conducted with the doctors to compare and contrast my personal experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). Those who were involved were doctors, a patient and her family member; they all signed informed consent before or during my participant observation to ensure they understood their appearance in my research (Tolich, 2010). Pseudonyms were applied to protect their anonymity. One value of autoethnography is to create accessible texts to produce aesthetic and evocative narrative descriptions that enable readers to feel the feelings and conditions of others (Winkler, 2018). In the current study, I hope to resonate with those who know design and help them look back, find and sensitise the practices of makings existing in their design practices. I also used drawing to interpret key scenes during the writing process (Causey, 2017). When drawing these illustrations, I can deliberately put in more details that seem not relevant to the project I am working on. For instance, within drawings, I can share how the desks of doctors' office are untidy by presenting some specific materials (e.g., teas, keyboards and papers) on their tables. By doing so, I hope to disturb the single viewpoint on the design project and allow rooms to notice others makings were taking place.

Making transformation

'This office is different than you'd expect, isn't it?' said Doctor Fu when he ushered me into the office and down the long corridor of the thoracic surgery ward. There were three other young doctors in the office. Four were medical graduate students who were participating in this project. Fu continued, 'You can sit wherever you like. This [the office] is really messy'. The office, which was around 20 square metres, held eight tables with desktop computers, with 11 chairs scattered about. These desks, chairs and computers did not belong to any specific doctor; any doctor in the department

could use them. The stacks of objects in the room were evidence of the interwoven work and lives of these different doctors. Medical books, models of lungs and gifts of tea were crammed into many corners. Unfinished hot milk tea implied that there were other doctors here not long ago.

There were other things that indicated rapid changes happening in their work. The CT light tables gathered dust on the wall, while the young doctors checked the CT images on the computers. Many blank forms were piled neatly and were more than a metre high in the corner next to the door. They were the vestiges of the doctors' work before the movement to paperless offices beginning in 2020. In addition, there were many different printed forms on the desks, including the records of prescriptions, medical tests, surgical statements and discharge notes. The doctors needed to fill them out on the computer in the office and print them out. Why did these records need to be printed out? Based on the communication with the doctors, I found the reason was that the inpatient platform through which the doctors filled out the records was not linked to the archives department. The printed forms would be collected by nurses regularly and then scanned into the digital version once sent to the archives department. When the paperless movement ended, one of the main jobs of medical graduate students was to help their leading surgeon fill out these forms in bulk. Before the movement, students needed to handwrite these forms for their surgeon.

The last inpatient form was the discharge record, which meant that the patient's treatment was officially terminated when the patient was discharged. The remote care project asked the doctors to extend their working scope to rehabilitation after leaving the hospital. The paperless movement coexisted with the remote care project. Taking quick notice of the move away from paper can help us understand the change in remote care and how it was entangled in between makings. This move away from paper was not the ideal shift from one mode to another, in which all paper would be removed. Besides, the paperless movement gave a new form of the hierarchy between medical graduate students and surgeons as it was still students doing this monotonous work of filling forms, however, more efficiently. The movement reminded me that the platform conditions the futures of rehabilitation care, but I might not expect to apply the platform as an isolated vision of better futures and it could also reproduce one dominant hierarchy.

Half an hour after I arrived, a surgeon, Dong, arrived at the office. He had just finished his last surgery. Every week, Dong carried out an estimated ten surgeries. Even though Dong could finish his surgery and outpatient by 5 to 6 p.m., unless something unexpected happened, his research work had just begun. In terms of promotion for doctors in the Chinese healthcare system, research projects and articles are more important than the quality of treatment. Dong told me that he often stayed at the hospital until 9 to 10 p.m. He had worked at this hospital for more than two years. Compared with other surgeons, Dong was relatively new. He had to manage several different research projects. The remote care project was one of them. For him, applying the platform was a clinical experiment. As a study, he planned to compare the efficiencies of rehabilitation for patients with and without the platform.

Dong covered his face with his hands as he sat back in his chair and then updated his surgical status on the desktop computer. Ten minutes later, he turned his chair around to the other graduate students. As Dong was about to speak, the graduate students rotated their chairs around. They began the discussion about each student's graduation thesis. They worked together and not only on the project. Dong, as their

senior, was also responsible for guiding them in their studies and research. Then, the discussion was redirected to the remote care project.

The meeting that I wanted to observe happened all of the sudden. They formed a very subtle circle while the other doctors were working outside. In Figure 14.1, I illustrate this situation from an overhead perspective. 'The platform looks quite complicated', Dong said, 'How about each of us starting to learn one segment of the platform? We must learn it very well. We must teach patients well. We must ensure that we have good data'. Wang, one of the students, then said, 'I can learn how to use the doctor platform and how to register an account for patients. Wu, would you like to learn how to teach patients how to use the app? You two guys could teach them how to use the devices. How about this?' Dong did not reply to Wang but directly said, 'Now, I'll go to the ward. Yesterday, I found one of my patients who would be willing to rehabilitate'. No reply here meant confirmation. 'By the way, I will also ask patients to sign the informed consent and patient's information reports', Wang added. Then, the two men went to the storeroom and brought a big box with all the medical devices to the office. That was when I realised that what I was observing was not just a design meeting.

When the students were learning about the platform, I followed Dong to the ward. The patient, Yanming, was a woman of around 50. It was the day after her surgery, and her husband was at her bedside. Rather than directly inviting her to the project, Dong first focused on rehabilitation in their conversation, including what Yanming could do after discharge and the exercises involved in rehabilitation. Then, gradually, Dong said, 'Like we said yesterday, we have a research project, and we'd like you to participate in it'. Instead of using technical terms like remote care and data collection or medical terms like rehabilitation, he said, 'Anyway, when you're at home, just try to use it, and we will help you in the hospital. My students will come over here to help you use it in 10 minutes'.

Dong came back to the office and said, 'All right, is everybody ready now?' On the way to the ward, they ranked the process of teaching Yanming in order of doctors' feelings of difficulty regarding each segment. According to their discussion, Wang would first introduce the overview of the study and ask Yanming to sign the informed consent form. Then, the two men would help her use devices and Wu would help her use the APP. 'Then, we *suí jī yīng biàn* (随机应变), a Chinese idiom which means to improvise neatly according to the change of opportunity and circumstance', said Wang. Was this a moment of designing? Yes and no. Like what designers do, their discussion indeed formed a rough service process that could be referred to when they needed to use the platform with other patients. However, the service process was enacted by colloquial and later embodied practice rather than abstracted and concreted by other languages and materials as a transferable design concept. In addition, the design comprises the doctors' use and implementation of the platform. On the one hand, they are the users of the platform, conditioned by the preset function of the platform. On the other hand, they were working in medical research, intending to collect data of good quality. To do so, they need to guarantee that the functions of the platform are expected to be routinely used by the patients and themselves. In this sense, this is also a moment of implementation. Designing, using and implementing hung together, all manifested in their practices at the same time. How can I give their practices a name to mediate these three categories by my design knowledge? My provisional strategy involved suspending the question of conceptualisation and acknowledging the insufficiency of design knowledge. Doing so allowed room for me to see and learn from strange but ongoing practices.

Figure 14.1 The 'project meeting' in the doctor's office.

When we entered the ward, we filled it and squeezed in the bedside space. Without us, the ward was already overcrowded because six beds were put in a space originally designed for four. This crowding might imply a limitation of medical resources and bad service experiences. After this event, Dong told me that for patients, the cost of surgery in this hospital was relatively cheaper than other hospitals in the city.

Crowding also indicates one's activities and gestures can be seen, perceived and hence responded to naturally by others. There was a very smooth connection among the different doctors, Yanming and her husband. Because the doctors had only a rudimentary understanding of the platform, they were unable to answer all the patients' questions about the platform. This was neither a mistake nor a problem. They just needed to continue to learn or change the process. The patient's questions were not always related to the project; the questions varied from how Yanming could install batteries to when she could swim after discharge. The patient's husband was also closely engaged in the process. For example, when the doctor told the patient how to use the electrocardiograph, her husband directly rolled up his shirt to stick an electrode slice to the skin of his chest to help Yanming learn how to use it.

Along with this, I observed different activities in this ward, and if I had questions, I could ask them directly. There were some practices of 'designing' happening. Fu asked me, 'Brother Zhipeng, what do you think of making a poster in the corridor? I think introducing the project to patients only by talking is not enough'. I said, 'Sounds great! Could we later discuss how to make this poster?' I illustrate this connection in Figure 14.2 by imagining multiple activities from Yanming's perspective.

Figure 14.2 Training patients to use the platform: research and rehabilitation.

Medical study, using the platform, husband's care and my design research were all being enacted in this room. One's activities are always related to others'.

Teaching Yanming took about 40 minutes. Then, the doctors returned to their offices and began discussing what to do next. 'Ok, does every learn how to teach patients?' said Dong. 'We need to involve 500 patients in two years. Next time, let us try to teach patients using only two people'. The discussion became more serious and gloomier then. One patient for 40 minutes of training meant that they would be overwhelmed. The doctors discussed the division of labour among the different doctors based on their daily routines and possible ways to reduce the time it took to teach patients. Without the presence of patients, their discussions centred more on their studies. For example, one of their focuses was on how to collect effective data. The benefits of patients were not well discussed. In addition, most of the work was assigned to graduate students. In the following months, the project strongly disturbed their study routines. The project leaders would not be expected to consider them as authors or well-paid in the project. In fact, the labour fee for these students in the project was 1,500 Chinese Yuan per month.

'Do you have any suggestions, Zhipeng?' Dong asked. I was involved beyond merely being an observer. I brought the idea of making a poster proposed by Fu and emphasised it: 'This study, for you, I guess, is your work, but for patients, it is their treatment. Maybe we can extend our scope and take a look at what you and patients really need in the project beyond collecting data'. Here, I could feel that my participation slightly disrupted the discussion. I proposed making some new posters or brochures with illustrations to introduce remote care and rehabilitation, through which I hoped to redirect this project and move it to something beyond just a medical study. This proposal evoked more discussion about how they could change their way of treating patients.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter questions the epistemological assumption that the practices of design professions are conceptualised as independent creations of intellect from other practices. Within this framework, designers are encouraged to understand the relationality of multiple practices through a prefabricated perspective. Different practices are expected to endow specific functions, such as use and implementation, to join in the world-making project of design. This assumption of designisation may contribute to the decline and homogenisation of design knowledge because it restrains our imagination of how the transformative change happens, thus making design clumsy in trying to promote transformations. If we hold a singular assumption that the complex functions of society and culture are conditioned by prior design, the value of design tends to be limited to proposing a more elaborate design concept for the world and to expecting that the world is ready for it (Ingold, 2013).

Appreciating the divergence between making and designing allows us to turn our attention to the relationality with potentials and tensions that contain transformational messages in other makings. Through ethnography, I hope to demonstrate the insufficiency of prefabricated understanding in design professions. The ongoing change should be watched and reinterpreted carefully within the encounter. During my practice of design research, there are many other things being made, enhanced or damaged, including the rehabilitation of Yanming, her family ties, the doctors'

medical study, the doctors' promotion system, the scaling up of remote care platform, the digitalisation of healthcare and the hierarchy at the hospital. The opposite of designisation is not to clearly mark, define, pick out and protect these makings and then claim they are not designing. Doing so is the other side of the coin of designisation because a clear distinction may encourage assimilation or segregation. In overlapping practices, antidesignisation begins from appreciating the plurality of makings as an ontological condition that people are participating in different world-making projects but stay together and influence each other. The doctors did not deliberately distinguish their study from the family's care, nor did they fully utilise the care in the study. The flexible and respectful interactions between doctors and patients around the medical study and surgical rehabilitation had enabled a new remote care technology to be nascent in the local hospital.

Acknowledging the plurality of makings as an ontological condition, we might need to bring more relationalities into our sight. I agree with those design scholars who claim that studies of relationalities are needed for a systemic understanding of complex situations (e.g., Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Postma et al., 2012; Fuad-Luke, 2014). Utilising the knowledge of relationalities as an intellectual tool for better design practices matters but is hardly enough because these relationalities indicate multidirectional initiatives of plural makings that cannot be abstracted and used coherently by design. Through my mini autoethnography, I hope to start evoking readers to think of design in the guest position as ongoing practices that constitute the conditions of existence of design. For example, the last discussion with the doctors showed less care about patients and also the young doctors. My proposal of making posters here was an echo of the situation to raise attention to other issues rather than to transfer this discussion to a design process. My guest position did not indicate detaching oneself from the meshwork but involved observation points in and across different the boundaries of makings. This position allows us to see the coincidence and confrontation among makings that designers cannot fully take control of and that one design framework cannot fully encompass. Seeing such relationality of plural makings can become a method of introspection to sensitise our practices (e.g., dialoguing, sketching, drawing, modelling and prototyping), as well as bodily and affective experiences, to the specific situation rather than to the body of existing design knowledge and methods. Some scholars argue for extending the scope of the co-design process from using design methods to the embodied practices of designers to enable contextualised knowing and creating (e.g., Kimbell, 2011; Light & Akama, 2012; Akama et al., 2019; Agid & Chin, 2019). If the scope is plural makings, participation does not necessarily mean inviting them to enter the design process, but rather, it means an embodied designer joins in the meshwork of ongoing plural makings.

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15 Enacting plurality in designing social innovation

Developing a culturally grounded twenty-first-century leadership programme for a Cambodian context

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Abstract: This chapter charts the development of an online leadership programme for young Cambodian entrepreneurs and managers. Culturally grounded practices are enacted in a context of designing social innovation, here paying particular attention to local practices, cultures and knowledge. The importance of anchoring leadership practices to familiar cultural and spiritual values is highlighted, and resources are created using local role models. The chapter advocates for a plurality of experiences when designing learning programmes to ensure that design's universalist tendencies are not inadvertently recreated; this illustrates pluriversal ways of working that are central to designing culturally specific practices.

Keywords: Culturally grounded designing, design for plurality, online training programme, business leadership concepts, young Cambodia managers, designing social innovation

Introduction

This chapter shares the knowledge gained from the development of the 21st Century Leadership for Young Cambodia Leaders (CLEAR) programme, which is aimed at addressing a lack of culturally relevant leadership resources for local managers. We describe the background, premise and process that went into creating an accessible, self-sustaining, locally rooted and driven, relevant and research-based leadership programme for Cambodian entrepreneurs and business professionals.

What constitutes good business leadership within the changing Cambodian context in the twenty-first century? How do we make it locally relevant, accessible and fit for purpose given the fast-changing needs of ambitious young Cambodians? These were the research questions that drove the development of a new type of leadership programme that sought to address the lack of culturally relevant resources aimed at a Cambodian audience.

At the outset, we were mindful that dominant theories of leadership are often derived from Western contexts and are not universally applicable across cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Javidan & Carl, 2005; Smith & Peterson, 1998). Instead, we consciously sought to identify leadership practices that were Cambodian specific. In doing so, we seek to challenge the idea of 'universalism'—the idea that we all live in a single world (of which the Western world is the ideal) and contribute a practical example of how a modernist concept of leadership has been interpreted within a Cambodian context.

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Conscious of design's Eurocentric capitalist origin, we wanted to contribute to the discussions on how design supports different forms of world making (Escobar, 2018; Fry, 2017). By being reflexive of power, gender and social and political dynamics during our research, we believe our insights offer a robust analysis of the data that can reveal insights into the changing understanding of leadership in a Cambodian context. We carefully considered how to work with and through differences, paying heed to cultural plurality (Akama & Yee, 2016) in our approach to the research.

Our aim in this chapter is to use learning from this project to challenge design's tendencies for universalism and generalisable approaches while highlighting the importance of socio-cultural dimensions in the design process. Therefore, it is important that we state our positionality as researchers and designers to help reveal the underlying assumptions and biases. The authoring team consists of the main team involved in researching, analysing and developing content for the programme. The first author is a Malaysian-born UK design academic with expertise in social innovation and impact evaluation. Her role was to lead and advise on the research-related stages. The second author is a Cambodian native with experience in designing online learning platforms. She was the researcher on the project and was responsible for conducting the literature review, interviewing participants and analysing the outcomes. As a young business professional leading a start-up, she brought important field experience and cultural specificity that helped inform and guide the team to follow cultural protocols and decipher cultural nuances. The third author is a UK national who cofounded Impact Hub Phnom Penh (IHPP) after eight years in Cambodia, with three years previous experience supporting capacity-building programmes in India and Burkina Faso. She is the project lead and initiator and has a background in business, social entrepreneurship and innovation.

Leadership in a modern Cambodian context

The initial idea for the CLEAR programme originated from IHPP's observation that there was a lack of accessible leadership resources aimed at a Cambodian audience. They have been working since 2013 from their base in Phnom Penh to support impact-driven entrepreneurs across Cambodia through a series of capacity building programmes, events and mentoring. As part of a global network, they are focused on supporting young entrepreneurs who are looking to deliver social change by working closely with various governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGO) and civil society stakeholders.

Prior to COVID-19, Cambodia's economy maintained an average growth rate of 7.7% between 1998 and 2019, making it one of the fastest-growing economies globally (World Bank, 2019). It has high ambitions, having achieved lower middle-income status in 2015 and aiming to attain upper middle-income status by 2030. With over two-thirds of the population under 30 (United Nations Population Fund Cambodia, 2016), it has a growing tech and social entrepreneurial sector dominated by young people. This generational shift has brought about a change in mindset and approach to the notion of entrepreneurship and what it means to be successful. Many are not driven by purely economic returns, but also focus on delivering social and environmental changes to their communities. This shift, coupled with returning Cambodians with new ideas and different approaches, has created an exciting mix of young talent looking to contribute to society.

Within this exciting and expanding landscape, there is an increasing need for a support network that can help sustainably evolve and nurture these young leaders-to-be. Young people often face societal and cultural barriers when accessing leadership positions, however. A study into the barriers to youth leadership (Transparency International Cambodia, 2020, p. x) found seven major barriers preventing youth from achieving leadership roles. Although the majority of the barriers are culturally specific, that is, age discrimination, nepotism and discouragement by parents, one identifies a lack of soft skills in supporting young people to adapt to different working contexts. It is also interesting to note that many of the barriers faced by youth are connected to the barriers that women face, a key point that echoes what we found in our research for this programme.

Cambodians historically think of leadership in a political context rather than in an organisational or business context. This cultural bias might explain the lack of discussion about what constitutes good leadership because it might be construed by governing authorities as a threat to their positions of authority (Ledgerwood & Vijghen, 2002). This bias also extends to the type of research undertaken to understand Cambodian leadership, which we found to be mainly focused on understanding leadership from a political and civil society point of view (see, e.g., Thon et al., 2009; Pratt & Yongvanit, 2014). This historical focus has meant that most leadership courses available are aimed at community leadership, and they are usually supported by funding from an international NGO or local civil society. At the time of the programme commission in 2018, there were limited training courses aimed at young business professionals and entrepreneurs in Cambodia.

The courses that were available were often costly and concentrated in urban areas. This is especially challenging when many young entrepreneurs struggle to access professional training because they often work outside organisational structures (i.e., when it is their second job). Young managers working in micro-, small- and medium-sized profit and not-for-profit enterprises may not have access to a formal training budget that supports this area of their personal development.

Most importantly, although there are many accessible online leadership development resources that can be accessed, the vast majority are in English and created for a Western market and workforce. Although Cambodians are increasingly learning English as their second language, the country is currently ranked 84 out of 100 countries in the world in English proficiency according to the 2020 EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI, 2020). Language is not the only barrier because there are significant differences in the context in Cambodia, including economic, cultural and social issues, especially in understanding the notion of business leadership.

It was evident from the various historical, political and sociocultural barriers highlighted that there was an opportunity for us to develop a more bespoke, culturally appropriate and contextually relevant leadership training for young business professionals across Cambodia. In the next section, we describe our research, development and content creation for the programme.

Developing the CLEAR programme

Background

An opportunity arose in April 2018 to apply for funding from the British Embassy in Cambodia, here aimed at nurturing Cambodia's future political and business leaders.

We saw this as an opportunity to propose a project focusing on twenty-first-century leadership for young Cambodian professionals, and the aim was to explicitly develop culturally appropriate learning materials and widen access outside of the capital through the use of an online platform. The project was officially commissioned in May and lasted 12 months, with the official launch coming in May 2019.

Concept of leadership

Leadership theories that have been developed in the West fall mainly into four broad categories: trait, behavioural, situational and transformational. Trait theory (Cawthon, 1996) focuses on identifying the traits and characteristics of effective leaders and assumes that leaders are born, not made. Behavioural theory (Johns & Moser, 1989) focuses on the actions and skills of leaders and assumes that these behaviours can be learnt. Situational theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982) recognises the importance that context and situation play in determining how a leader behaves. Transformational theory focuses on how a leader encourages, inspires and motivates followers (Bass, 2005). Recently, other types of leadership styles have also emerged that emphasise the development of shared, collective and collaborative leadership practices (Lee-Davies, 2013; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020).

A major limitation of dominant leadership theories is that they were developed from a Western cultural perspective. Integral to this understanding are beliefs such as the following: (i) business leadership as a concept is widely discussed, (ii) leadership positions can be occupied by anyone, rather than only by those who currently are in positions of authority, and (iii) leadership is mainly understood from a behavioural standpoint. However, these points of awareness, power and onto-epistemological perspective are often not applicable to other cultural understandings of leadership. Within an Asian context, studies like Alves et al. (2005) and Ling and Fang (2003) have shown the importance of the moral and philosophical aspects to Chinese leadership that is underexplored in Western leadership literature.

Studies have supported our view that leadership theories and practices developed in the West need to consider cultural specificities if we would want to deliver any significant impact (Bird & Osland, 2006; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; House et al., 2004). Additionally, we were interested in understanding what context-specific knowledge could contribute to these dominant theories to support more pluriversal thinking.

Initial assumptions

Our market review identified a lack of leadership development opportunities, particularly outside the capital. What was available were often exclusive, uninspiring, lacked interaction and used outdated and theoretical materials that did not easily translate into daily practices. Hence, we set out to build a programme based on the principles of accessibility that would be culturally rooted and self-sustainability.

We felt that delivering rich content through an online platform was the most appropriate approach for addressing the issue of access while also offering flexibility in how and when the participants can undertake the training. However, this was the first time that IHPP delivered training through an online platform, and it was the first time many learners would be learning in this format. For this reason, we built a formal evaluation stage into the work to better understand the benefits and limitations

that this mode offers and to understand how impactful the programme has been for the participants. By choosing to deliver the content online, we were also assuming that connectivity in rural areas would not be a challenge, here considering that the country's internet coverage is close to 76% of the population (DataReportal, 2019).

Another assumption that we made was to focus on creating and delivering high-quality video content that would be interesting enough to ensure learners could access all the content. The aim of the video content was to showcase local business leaders who would be more engaging and relevant to the learners' lived experiences. This would also address the limited examples available from Cambodian leaders presented within a business context.

Because we were trying to cater to both urban and rural business professionals, we assumed that there might be some content and style preferences. We were also mindful of the gender balance by considering that women faced similar barriers to young people in terms of leadership, with the added barrier of family commitments and expectations.

Project and research methodology

The project loosely followed the Double Diamond (Design Council, 2004) design process, with an additional situating stage for the initial project set up and a post-project evaluation stage. Recognising the industrial, Eurocentric origin of the model, which often prioritises generalisability and replicability, we purposefully incorporated key points of reflection in each stage that sought to identify the leadership practices already rooted in local practices, values and history (Akama et al., 2019).

The stages were as follows:

1. Situating: Situating and framing the research questions and activities in relation to the local context. For the first author, this was an important step to sensitise and become more attuned to social-cultural particularities.
2. Discover: Reviewing literature, recruiting participants and identifying interview questions.
3. Define: Conducting interviews with local business leaders, analysing and defining key leadership attributes, values and skill sets, along with a suitable pedagogic framework.
4. Develop: Identifying suitable case studies that could be used to illustrate key principles and offer concrete examples of principles in action grounded in a Cambodian context.
5. Deliver: Iteratively developing and testing content leading to the production of the videos and supporting materials, such as quizzes and worksheets.
6. Evaluate: Evaluating project outcomes, including interviewing participants three to six months after programme completion.

This chapter will specifically focus on the outcomes from the discover and define phases, which were the most research intensive. These two stages took six months and consisted of 22 semistructured interviews with young Cambodian entrepreneurs; this was supported by a literature review on leadership theories. We decided to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews because they enabled us to explore the understandings, experiences and feelings pertaining to leadership more deeply. Our assumption is

that leadership skills can be seen as a continuum, so it is best to understand the individual's leader and leader-to-be's journey. These interviews also allowed us to identify potentially interesting case studies and role models to feature in the video explainers as part of the content.

We identified and contacted 33 Cambodian managers working across the country with varying experiences and working in different types of profit and nonprofit organisations and sectors. The participants were sampled from the IHPP's existing network, as well as through member recommendations. We were particularly keen to have an equal gender balance, as well as having representatives from outside of Phnom Penh. Out of the 22 participants, we interviewed 13 male and 9 female business leaders. Tables 15.1–15.3 illustrate the breakdown in experience, type and sector.

We started our literature review by first identifying Cambodian-specific research on leadership. Unsurprisingly, we did not find many studies directly addressing management leadership in Cambodia, instead having to refer much more broadly to related studies looking at leadership styles in Asia, specifically in China. We were careful not to arrive at a specific definition of leadership because our aim was to understand how this concept was understood by our interview participants. However, acknowledging

Table 15.1 Experience managing.

Leadership level	*No. of participants*
Early manager and first-time professional	7
Middle manager	4
Senior	7
Founder	4

Table 15.2. Type of organisations.

Type of institutions	*No. of participants*
Private	12
NGO	9
Government	1

Table 15.3 Sector.

Sector	*No. of participants*
Education	6
Food	2
Construction and Property	3
Social	5
Technology	5
Embassy	1

that we did not have specific domain expertise in management leadership, we needed to familiarise ourselves with historical developments in the field through exploring the more widely referenced Western-based leadership theories. Throughout the study, we remained vigilant in how we used existing theories, helping to contextualise our findings where culturally appropriate.

Our review led us to examine three aspects of leadership: (1) leadership theories and styles, (2) associated traits and competencies and (3) assessment tools that could be potentially used to reveal leadership skills and preference. The literature review helped to inform a series of questions we wanted to explore with our participants, mainly grouped into four areas:

1. Definition: Understanding the notion of leadership as a concept and a practical construct.
2. Experiences: Uncovering previous and current experience of business leadership.
3. Challenges: Identifying the challenges linked to being a leader.
4. Advice: Advice or tips for other aspiring leaders.

A mixture of telephone, virtual and face-to-face interviews took place. They were audio recorded, transcribed and translated for further analysis. The conversations were held in the local Khmer language and translated into English by the researcher. An inductive thematic analysis was used (Braun & Clarke, 2020), where coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data. The researcher collated responses under each question and went through the phases of data familiarisation by listening back and reviewing notes before coding them into initial themes. The project team then reviewed the themes collaboratively against the dataset to ensure that the themes were reflected in the data. This process was followed by the identification of themes against the four areas identified earlier to help us determine what type of content might be suited for the target audience.

We were mindful that the reflexive approach that we adopted (Braun & Clark, 2019) recognises that the data are context bound, positioned and situated. We were using these data to help us understand a very specific topic to inform the development of our programme without aiming to arrive at general theories of leadership. The second author, who is a Cambodian native, conducted all the interviews in Khmer. This helped bridge the potential issues of cultural distance and misinterpretation. As a local entrepreneur with experience leading teams, the second author had perceived local legitimacy that balanced out the potential power inequality when research was conducted by outsiders. The interviews highlighted a number of interesting insights around leadership preferences, styles and purpose. For the purpose of this chapter, we focus on four key themes that surfaced particular sociocultural dimensions of leadership in a Cambodian context.

Insights

Doing the right thing

When we asked the participants what being a leader means, a majority of the responses expressed a desire to be inspirational leaders who can influence others, show care and

be supportive. These concepts express an approach that seems grounded in moral foundations, wanting 'to do right' and aiming to create significant change in the life of people and the organisation. This moral imperative echoes studies that have found the importance of moral character in Chinese leaders, pointing towards self-actualisation in the service of society instead of the individual (Lee, 1987). This inspirational style also resonates with a well-known Western-based transformational leadership theory originally introduced by Burns (1978) and later extended by Bass (1985, 1990). Leaders adopting a transformational style often demonstrate specific traits aimed at transforming others—developing and empowering their individual followers to become leaders themselves. When applied to an Asian context, transformational leadership tends to focus on collaboration and collectivism rather than individual accomplishment and power playing. In a study looking at Asian women leaders in hospitality, Maier (2014) identified that the contemporary Asian transformational leader often puts others ahead of self, typically display high levels of charisma and team orientation skills whilst at the same time paying close attention to societal, cultural and organisational norms. In Asia, society expect leaders to demonstrate a strong moral orientation (Hui & Tan, 1999) and display proper conduct in family, kinship and workplace relations (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). This cultural preference towards collectivism and moral character is not surprising given the cultural influences on leadership rooted in the dominant practices of Confucianism and Buddhism in East Asia.

Our participants expressed the importance of supporting others in growing and building capacity. However, moving away from a paternalistic, hierarchical and patriarchal Cambodian society (Pen et al., 2017), the interviewees expressed the importance of leaders offering a framework for growth and mutually working together to support the team to realise their potential. This focus on supporting others echoes studies observed in Chinese management, where leadership styles are influenced by collective orientation and social relations (Pun et al., 2000). This approach also aligns well with the idea of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006, Gottfredson & Reina, 2020). A growth mindset is a belief that people, including themselves, can change their talents, abilities and intelligence. The ability to influence and be inspirational is balanced by the pragmatic requirements for a leader to achieve set goals, to be accountable and to be a good communicator.

An interesting finding is the influence of spirituality in leadership approaches, which was expressed by two interviewees who made explicit links to how it has influenced their approach to leadership. One participant identified the four Buddhist virtues: *Metta* (benevolence), *Karuna* (compassion), *Mudita* (empathetic joy) and *Upekkha* (equanimity) as guiding principles when working with others, as well as the use of meditation to understand oneself as a leader. Another participant shared how they practised mindful leadership, focusing on clarity, compassion, appreciation and empathy.

> *Buddha is the most spiritual philosophy. His leadership is very direct . . . he talked a lot about balance, about moderation (intelligence and emotion). He leads by example, he leads by understanding . . . he says what he means, and he means what he says.*

Although we were careful not to assume that all Cambodian leadership approaches have been influenced by Cambodia's dominant religion, it did suggest a deeper

cultural factor that may have influenced the expressed moral foundation 'to do right'.

Being flexible and adaptable

We asked the participants to identify their leadership style. Almost half of the interviewees mentioned 'flexibility' and 'adaptability', both in communication style and task delegation. The respondents did suggest the caveat that these qualities depend on their team member's level of maturity and personalities. This adaptive approach has been identified in other existing Western-based leadership theories. Using the term 'situational leadership', Hersey and Blanchard (1982) describe a situational leader as someone who adapts to the development and maturation of people they lead. Leadership is seen as a 'continuum' (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958) or progression of leadership adaptation. Leaders adopt different styles (directing, coaching, supporting and delegating) in response to different levels of capability and experience. This preference for a more adaptive style of leadership indicates a shift from a traditional Cambodian style of leadership that tends to be more hierarchical and directive. This might be reflecting the generational shift in demographics and being exposed to non-Cambodian leaders working in international organisations.

Being open to knowledge sharing

Our interviewees expressed the desire to have a leadership style that is more welcoming and easily relatable to their subordinates. This, they remarked, is also trying to break from the cultural norm where Cambodian leaders can seem aloof and distanced, tending not to offer praise explicitly. There is an inherent tension with traditional Cambodian leadership practice, which tends to be more hierarchical, with many levels of seniority:

> *I think being open minded is important because you need to succeed with others, with your team members. Good leaders should share experiences, give them an opportunity to do stuff and express their ideas. If you listen to their ideas, you need to hold your judgement. Let them do it first if it is not critical to the company's success. Even if they do wrong, don't blame them, give them feedback.*

The interviewees suggested that adopting this more open and collaborative approach is considered attractive to younger Cambodians and recognised as a quicker way to achieve collective growth. However, this openness can be a challenge when, culturally and historically, leaders are secretive and protective of the knowledge that their privilege allows them access to. This sentiment was captured by a respondent:

> *Cambodian leaders hide their characteristics because we have 'kings'. The kings are usually secretive, so leaders do the same thing. Like the Cambodian saying, if you know 10 things, you only give away nine. . . . The manager doesn't tell you everything because they are afraid of their job security. The Cambodian culture does not value their sharing among leaders. But in order for our country to grow, you need to think of that.*

Being mindful, reflective and self-aware

Many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of adopting a mindful approach that supports constant reflection and heightens self-awareness. One participant specifically mentioned his practice of mindfulness-based leadership:

> *Mindfulness-based leadership—it teaches everyone what it takes to be a good leader and starts from ourselves, and it requires lots of reflection. As a leader, it embeds focus, clarity, creativity and compassion. . . . Let's start being a leader within ourselves.*

Mindfulness is not just focused on enabling the person to become a better leader, but it should also instil a higher level of self-awareness that can help them manage their own emotions, be better communicators and improve the ability to think strategically.

> *Leadership has to come from inside both for the leaders and the followers. People who want to become leaders need to find someone or some ways to develop themselves through time, not from what others tell them to do. So first they need to want to become a leader, then they would become self-aware, and they start to observe themselves and others how their action influences others. That's how they learn.*

Outcomes

Our interviewees overwhelmingly aspire to be transformational leaders. They expressed a moral imperative 'to do right' and support others in their growth. This approach indicates a generational shift in how a leader is perceived and should act. The participants also expressed a preference for a more collaborative and people-focused style of leadership. However, we did recognise a continuing challenge in moving towards this type of leadership. Differing cultural norms, unfamiliarity with this form of leadership and a lack of experience were identified as key challenges.

Analysis of the interviews supported by our initial literature review led to us developing the *CLEAR leadership development pyramid* (see Figure 15.1), which gave us a framework for developing programme resources. It also allowed us to shift the focus from pragmatic skills (such as decision making, time management and communication) to instead reveal the fundamentals of how leaders think, learn and behave. This focus on mindsets reflects new ways of thinking (Kennedy et al., 2013) about leadership as emergent, relational and collective, hence shifting the focus from development of skills to questions of mindset.

The four levels of the pyramid are as follows:

- Mindsets: What mindsets does a leader need to acquire to transform themselves to be the kind of leader they aspire to be?
- Values: Alongside mindsets, what values do such leaders need to have?
- Behaviours and actions: Based on the mindsets and values, what types of behaviours and actions shall the aspiring leaders seek to develop?
- Skills: Finally, to enable certain actions that are desirable in a good leader, what skills do leaders need?

Figure 15.1 CLEAR leadership development pyramid. This Figure is shaped as a pyramid with 4 layers representing the programme framework. At the base level is Mindsets, followed by Values, Behaviours and Skills. The shape of the pyramid (from broad to narrow) is used to convey how each level builds onto each other.

Analysis of the interviews led us to identify six mindsets that support a transformational style of leadership: purposeful, mindfulness, empathy, appreciation, adaptability and nurturing. Each mindset (section) consists of three subsections, starting with a short video introduction by a local leader, followed by a longer video of a selected leader providing an example of the mindset in action. These videos are supported by downloadable resources (such as further readings and worksheets). Each section has a short self-assessment at the end to evaluate learning and serve as a content summary. It is beyond this chapter's scope to go into the details of each mindset. Instead, in the next section, we look specifically at design considerations adopted to create culturally relevant resources.

Discussion

Cultural anchor

One of the ways we were able to help learners relate to the programme material was by offering them what we term 'cultural anchors'. We relied on the local cultural understanding of the researcher and programme manager to bring analytical nuance to the interpretation of the data while also helping us translate key concepts like appreciative inquiry and mindfulness into a Cambodian context. We also recognised the importance of anchoring leadership traits to cultural traits more familiar to Cambodians through the introduction of the four Buddhist virtues of benevolence, compassion, empathetic and equanimity to the programme. Although we could not assume that all learners will relate to this anchor point, it was important to emphasise that a people-focused leadership that centres on empathy and compassion is not an entirely foreign concept and has been predated by a Buddhist theory of leadership

that has existed for over 2,600 years. The focus on mindset also appealed to young Cambodians because it tapped into a philosophical approach to self-development that appealed to Generations Y and Z, localised by the linking with Buddhist philosophy.

Culturally sympathetic role models

Role models are important and recognised as playing a critical role in people's pursuit and attainment of goals (Finkel & Fitzsimons, 2011). Two factors that strongly influence role model effectiveness are the extent to which the role model is relevant and identifiable and the extent to which the role model's level of success is perceived as attainable (Collins, 1996, 2000; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). One of the gaps identified in our initial literature research was the lack of Cambodian role models for young business professionals to aspire to. This was confirmed by the interviews, where mainly foreign personalities like Jack Ma, Richard Branson or Barack Obama were mentioned. Recognising this deficit, we focused on filming and showcasing local Cambodian leaders at different stages of their careers. We hope this provides our learners with relevant role models in terms of background, experience and knowledge to support the feeling of attainability. To this end, we were also explicit in ensuring a gender balance in the role models we chose to feature, especially when there were far less recognisable women role models available within the sector. The attention to this point also extended to the launch of the programme in May 2019, where two local female entrepreneurs were invited to share their experiences as leaders.

Plurality of experiences

Mindful of the criticism of design's 'universalism', we not only wanted to account for a plurality of cultural contexts in how we approached this work but also wanted to ensure that our outcome supports a multitude of approaches to leadership. One of the ways in which we did this was to select a range of mindsets that learners could choose to explore individually or as a set of attributes. Although the respondents overwhelmingly favoured a transformational style of leadership, we did not prescribe a fixed route to achieve this. We recognised that learners would need to navigate their own way through each mindset and consider how they might adopt and enact it in their own practice. We started with a video briefly explaining the mindset, followed by an interview with a leader regarding how they apply this approach in their practice. These videos are supported by further paper-based exercises that encourage learners to try it in their practice over a period of time, which is supported by reflective questions and additional resources such as external articles and reading lists.

Conclusion

As of August 2020, over 1,500 participants have registered and completed the programme. Evaluations from the participants have been overwhelmingly positive, with more than 40% of the participants accessing the programme from outside Phnom Penh, which was one of the main aims of the programme. The programme is continually being improved and iterated, mainly focusing on the online delivery platform and content.

We have attempted to use the insights gained from the research and development of the CLEAR programme to demonstrate how to design for plurality. We approached this work without a specific framework or process to follow, instead trusting our ability to attune and pay heed to cultural entanglements (Akama & Yee, 2016) to work with and through differences. Although we recognise the importance of grounding our findings within the context of existing well-established theories of leadership, we want to bring to the surface the social-cultural dimensions of leadership relevant for a Cambodian business context. By focusing on these dimensions, we hope to illustrate the heterogeneity of knowledge and approaches to designing that support a more pluralistic way of designing. We recognise the limitation of this small sample and its focus on a subset of Cambodian business professionals, so we recommend further research to expand and extend our initial findings. We present our insights as a counterpoint to knowledge derived within the Western epistemic canon (Tilley, 2017) and consider this knowledge produced by the Global South as a valid contribution to the future (Kothari et al., 2019).

Our hope is that by focusing on a plurality of understandings in relation to leadership as a concept, we can demonstrate how we might design to account for cultural differences. We offer this as a way to enable further reflection on how we explicitly design for plurality.

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Section III

The pluriverse of activism, diversity and accessibility

16 A history of design education in Brazil

A decolonial perspective

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Abstract: The main goal of this chapter is to present a decolonial perspective on the rise of design education in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s, here encompassing both the economic and cultural aspects of its formation. The economic side arises from the roots of the Brazilian design discourse on the developmental and industrialist ideologies in national development politics before and after the 1964 military coup, presented here as Eurocentric paradigms in countries from colonial backgrounds. The cultural side is also presented as colonial heritage, arising from colonised subjectivities permeated by the ideology of modernisation, Europeanisation and the domestication of native and Afro-diasporic narratives and ways of being, knowing and doing. In this sense, the roots of design education are reviewed at the intersection of economic, social and cultural dynamics in Brazil through a bibliographic study on decolonial thought in Latin America and other contributions from the Global South, going from dependency theory to studies on alternatives to development by the Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development founded by Miriam Lang, acknowledging the inseparable and transdisciplinary nature of this phenomenon and its economic and cultural elements.

Keywords: Design history, design education, development, coloniality of design, decolonisation

Introduction

In the book *Designs for the Pluriverse* (2018), Arturo Escobar discusses how design, development discourse and industrialism have been crucial tools to the structures of unsustainability that erode the possibility of shared and healthy futures for people from across the world (Escobar, 2018). Here, we take development as an ideology (Prado, 2015) that carries a utopic horizon based on Anglo-Eurocentric ontology, which believes that the history of Europe can provide a roadmap to a 'better' society (Dussel, 1993), as well as a detailed programme that includes industrialisation as a means for 'underdeveloped' countries to reach this goal (Prado, 2015). On the other hand, for Escobar (2007, p. 20), the purpose of development is to replicate the characteristics of the 'First World' in the 'Third World'. Therefore, the latter is conceptualised as a backward image of the first: a lack of development, civilisation and modernity.

The hegemonic idea of development usually ignores the fact that the modern world inspiring it was born on the backs of colonialism, slavery, genocide and ecocide. As Machado (2018) points out, the accumulation of capital that allowed for industrialisation in Europe was directly connected to the slave trade and exploitation of areas later tagged as 'underdeveloped'. In this sense, the structures of dependency and the

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'relational causes of underdevelopment' (Silva & Lessa, 2019, p. 3, author's translation), here highlighted by dependency theory, show that this strategy and utopic horizon of development is unreachable because of the very structure of the capitalist world system: some characteristics attributed to 'advanced' societies were created by the destruction of the social systems of colonised areas, as well as the objectification of nature and the colonised themselves (see Prado, 2015; dos Santos, 2020).

Prado (2015) argues that development becomes an ideology when its discourse is delinked from the social and economic histories that produced it, 'naturalizing the relations of domination and exploitation through a thought system which presents a particular historical process as universal', thus justifying a particular political project (Prado, 2015, p. 32, author's translation). In the field of design theory, Gui Bonsiepe (1983) has already warned us about such fiction:

> The lack of development in general, and industrial development in particular, has been considered a result of historical backwardness, and not as the development of central economies entrenched into the very structure of the great contemporary system.
>
> (p. 69, author's translation)

As in many parts of the Global South, design education in Brazil was born under this ideology. Brazilian design schools first emerged in the 1950s and 1960s when after World War II, the need for industrialisation became imperative for the local *bourgeoisie* to update its sources of revenue, which had been extremely dependent on exporting agricultural goods since colonial times. This process fits precisely into 'the golden age of development . . . when the dream of poor third-world countries catching up with the rich West still captured the imaginations of most world leaders' (Escobar, 2018, p. 147). As both economist Celso Furtado (1961) and later design theorist Gui Bonsiepe (1983) argue, this was an enterprise guided by the substitution of imported goods that came almost exclusively from Europe and the United States. As Silva and Lessa claim, in Latin America, one of the beliefs was that 'an industrial-based system would be able to overcome the historical agrarian vocation and, at the same time, promote economic growth' (2019, p. 2, author's translation). Thus, the creation of design schools was justified by an economic discourse derived from cultural/ontological beliefs.

From their first years in Brazil, the design schools have had to look at previous experiences abroad, with the undeniable influence of the *Bauhaus* and the *Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm* curricula (Leite, 2007). This led to a growing disconnection between design curricula in Brazil and the plurality of cultures that constitute the country's social fabric (Leite, 2007): a design strand based on the Eurocentric notion of universalism made clear that the material culture of autochthonal roots was not worthy of the term *design*, for its industrialist characteristics consider everything that does not fit this framework as backward and underdeveloped. This school of thought has been dominant in design schools, for it serves very well those designers who want to please the tastes of the *bourgeoisie* and their dreams of Europeanisation, modernity and development.

Progress and development ideology in design

Tempting as it may be, to discuss the ideology of development in design education in Brazil, we cannot stay on the developmentalist fever of the 1950s and beyond, as João de Sousa Leite claims (2007, p. 9). For Leite (2007), the roots of the institutionalisation of Brazilian design education dates to the arrival of the Portuguese royal family

in Brazil in the early 1800s, when concerns of the European colonisers regarding the modernisation of the colony led to the creation of the first schools of art in the country, which had a discourse connecting the European applied arts and aesthetics to civilisation. To modernise, the country was taken as a civilisational mission linked with the racist notion of the 'burden of the white man'.

The question of why the modernisation of the colony was a concern is significant here, and the answer seems simple and even sarcastic: Brazil was not European enough. The violence of slavery and oppression that built the colony's foundation lacked the order of the Cartesian grid. To fully understand development ideology, we must first understand the doctrine of progress, which is a crucial element of modernisation.

Anthropologist Marimba Ani (1994) states that the idea of progress results from the universalisation of the *idea of Europe* as the pinnacle of civilisation: it is, in this sense, a child of eurocentrism. This essentialised and fabricated image of Europe (white, good, rational) as the centre of humanity has created a racial and cultural hierarchy in which the European has been seen as universal, placing *the other* (the colonised) in humankind's lower states of development. In this sense, seeking to be like Europe was conceptualised as inherently good and, hence, an unquestionable goal. For Marimba Ani, 'Progress . . . is ideally fashioned to encourage the growth of the technical order while justifying cultural and political imperialism' (1994, p. 490). Therefore, if *progress* is a process in which a society seeks to be 'more like Europe', to bring progress to a particular place means to 'bring Europe' to it.

With this concept in mind, we can better understand the relationship between development and progress ideologies. On this, Escobar states the following:

> Development policy and planning, as well as much of what goes on under the banner of design, are central political technologies of patriarchal capitalist modernity and key elements in modernity's constitution of a single globalized world.
>
> (2018, p. xiii)

In this sense, other forms of relating with the earth and with 'the other' different from Anglo-American and European ontologies become marginalised.

Thus, design, as one of the 'central political technologies of modernity', plays a significant role in this occupation inherited from colonial occupation. Similarly, Miriam Lang (2016) claims that 'to develop' means to incorporate new areas into the accumulation chain of the capitalist world system. For Silva and Lessa, the 'development narrative . . . has been utilised to justify framing diverse territories to Western economist logic despite cultural and economic structures of subjugated territories' (2019, p. 1, author's translation).

Design as a tool for development

As we have seen earlier, specialists and national states considered industrialisation to be the answer to the problems of the 'Third World'. For this reason, hegemonic design, here born out of the Industrial Revolution, has been treated as a tool for developing the economies of peripheral countries. In many cases, the search for development and, hence, industrialisation has been presented as a necessary condition to increase people's living standards at the periphery of the capitalist world system. Aside from the historical delinking present in development ideology (Prado, 2015), development

discourse also ignores the damage to communal social relationships and the illnesses present in industrial societies, such as anxiety, high rates of depression and other mental health issues (Lang, 2016). Like the 'unquestionable good' of progress within progress ideology, in mainstream political discourse, to question development is considered 'absurd' (Lang, 2016, p. 26).

Carrying on the *ethos* of progress ideology of the 1800s, development ideology was rapidly absorbed by Brazilian intellectual and political forces after World War II. In Brazil, one of the first institutions focusing on design education was created in 1951: the Institute of Contemporary Arts, from the São Paulo Museum of Arts, whose pedagogic structure was highly inspired by the design disciplines of the *Institute of Chicago* and the *Bauhaus* (Sousa, 2001; Leon, 2006). The cultural landscape of both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro had been the stage for many events of Brazilian *avant-garde* artistic movements (Sousa, 2001; Leite, 2007), such as exhibitions from Max Bill and Tomás Maldonado. This exchange led to the foundation of the first successful design school in Brazil: the Superior School of Industrial Design (Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial—ESDI).

The influence of European artistic movements and ontology, here aligned with the elites' economic interests, was crucial in the upbringing of design education in Brazil. The model implemented at the ESDI, which the *Hfg Ulm* unquestionably inspires, was transposed to most design schools in Brazil, and many of the concerns about the applicability of an imported pedagogical structure in such a different context were then silenced (Leite, 2007). In the words of Leite, the school 'wanted to constitute itself as the country's school of modern design' (2007, p. 8, author's translation). For Leite (2007, p. 8), this intention led to a universalism and scientism that 'blocked a closer look to the circumstances of the country in which it was installed', with it being highly committed to industrialisation and, in this sense, guided by development ideology.

Regarding the question of the applicability of external design and technological frameworks in peripheral countries, Bonsiepe (1983) points to the fact that when applied to an 'underdeveloped' country, an industrial design that emerges from central countries reproduces the consumption patterns of an elite whose mentality have been formed under external models of well-being. With this, Bonsiepe is already indicating the connection between industrial design and modernisation and development projects, referencing the ontologies from major countries. Incorporating this *diagnosis* with the notion of the coloniality of power exposed by Anibal Quijano—which speaks of the racial/gender hierarchy solidified by colonialism that structures power dynamics in colonised societies (2000, 2005)—we could then think of a 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova, 2017). On this, Tlostanova states the following:

> Coloniality of design is a control and disciplining of our perception and interpretation of the world, of other human beings and things according to certain legitimised principles. It is a set of specific ontological, epistemic, and axiological notions imposed forcefully onto the whole world, including its peripheral and semiperipheral spaces in which alternative versions of life, social structures, environmental models, or aesthetic principles have been invariably dismissed.
>
> (2017, p. 3)

An ontological approach to this problem will show that when autochthonous knowledge and ways of being are deemed unfit for the dominant society's views, the practices of doing that come into existence from them are equally erased. In other cases,

when such practices can be refurbished for the purposes of the coloniser, their meaning is desacralised, twisted or whitewashed. This coloniality of knowledge/design can be seen in the Brazilian case of the systemic erasure of Afro-diasporic peoples' intellectual and technological contributions in Brazil (Cunha Jr., 2010). This process leads to the hegemony of a particular way of doing: the one of modern design. With this phrasing, I am not trying to devalue or demonise modern design. On the contrary, I question its hegemony as the one way of doing, the one way of constructing 'modernity's one-world ontology' (Escobar, 2018, p. 4).

Conclusion

As we have seen, development ideology has its roots in the modern concept of progress and, hence, subsidises the idea that industrialisation is key to bettering the quality of life in the periphery of the capitalist world system. This constitutes a utopic horizon that rests upon the notion that the development of societies must follow the steps set by European and Anglo-American countries. Modern, hegemonic design has been promoted (and has promoted itself) as an essential tool for development since being solidified as an isolated discipline during the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Hegemonic design has embraced this mission to its core, moulding its practices and theories around the central question of 'how' it could be a tool for development.

As we have seen, this framework represents the economic/cultural paradigm that has inspired the institutionalisation of design education in Brazil. Undeniably, an imported utopic horizon came with an imported design thought and practice. As Couto states, it is unfair to expect that design teaching 'would spontaneously arise in Brazil with its own characteristics' (2008, pp. 21–22, author's translation). This statement, which addresses the absence of a mature industrial landscape and pedagogical tradition in the applied arts, acquires a different meaning from a decolonial perspective.

From a decolonial perspective, we can understand that despite the efforts of some movements that have aimed to value 'Brazilian' roots in dissident groups within the ESDI itself and the studies of Lina Bo Bardi on craftsmanship from Northeast Brazil, Europeanisation has always been the goal of Brazilian white elites. In this sense, not only was it expected of a field developed in such intense exchanges with European artistic movements, progress and development ideology to be born with 'Brazilian' roots, but it was almost impossible because of the racist social structures that Brazilian society inherited from colonialism.

The actors involved in such a process of institutionalisation came from a tiny portion of what constitutes 'Brazil'. To illustrate this gap, it is essential to realise that it was not until 2012 that insufficient but important reparation policies were implemented in Brazilian universities—thanks to the struggle of black and indigenous movements—increasing access to higher education to indigenous and Afro-diasporic people. Therefore, the narratives present in design scholarship are not yet representative of the plurality of the ways of being, knowing and doing that exist in Brazil. In fact, they represent the one way of doing modern design, industrialisation and development. As we have seen, this perspective classifies indigenous and Afro-diasporic forms of socialising and interacting with nature as backward and unfit for a modernised Brazil, which paves the way for violent actions against these groups, here conducted by the Brazilian state and some political economic groups in recent years.

Therefore, understanding the connection between colonialism, modernisation, development and design is the first step towards recognising the narratives left out of

design education and the damages perpetuated by our practices and political structures, opening the path to the construction of shared, plural futures.

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17 Unveiling the layered structures of Youth Work

Ana Nuutinen and Enni Mikkonen

Abstract: This study describes the components and actors of stakeholder and youth interaction with a particular interest in visibilising different structures and power positions among pluriversal spaces and perspectives. The aim is to seek to respond to the following research questions: What are the underlying factors defining youth work and how to perceive complexity of the situations that the youth at different margins live in? The primary data of this case study is based on 20 semistructured thematic and reflective group discussions conducted in 2020–2021 with youth workers from different organisations. The data were analysed with inductive thematic qualitative analysis. Content analysis of the websites of the youth work services guided the observation of complexity. Three analysis perspectives—the bird's eye, grassroots, rhizome—were outlined from the emerging themes from the interviews. The theory of space syntax brought together these perspectives. A matrix was formed to summarise the findings of the study. It shows how the layers and perspectives, as well as the actors and places, form the plurality of interactions and networks involved in youth work.

Keywords: Youth work, layers, complexity, bird's eye perspective, frog perspective, rhizome perspective

Introduction

This chapter is based on a case study involving the one-stop 'Guidance Centre' (later called the 'Centre') for youth that was situated as a part of the youth department in a town in northern Finland and two researchers from the University of Lapland. During this collaboration, the researchers learned about the multilayeredness and complexity of the youth work activities, promoting youth's well-being and preventing their marginalisation. This complexity inspires us to analyse the different layers of spaces and actors related to youth work.

In this context, layers refer to the *service providers* (in addition to the Centre, for instance, the outreach youth work and rehabilitative work), the public social sector organisations and their *physical spaces* (e.g., street address), *virtual spaces* (e.g., Discord[1] software and social media channels) and *network of actors* (professionals and young people). By looking at the plurality contained in these layers, we aim at repositioning the agendas and actions related to youth work and collaboration with stakeholders therein, hence moving towards a more systemic—rather than individualistic—orientation that seeks to understand the complexities of the circumstances that different youth live in. We argue that understanding plurality within the

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layers of youth work can increase justice and fairness in the structures and social circumstances that promote youth's well-being.

We seek to respond to the following research question: *What are the underlying factors defining youth work, and how to systematise and understand the complexity of the situations that these youth at different margins live in?* We do not offer straightforward answers, but we discuss the complexity through analysing the layers, here by defining youth work in our research context. First, observations from the *bird's eye view* aim to identify the whole and its parts, along with the interactions between them. Second, in the *frog*, or *grassroots perspective*, the overall picture will be formed from separately observed subviews 'as you go'. Third, the *rhizome perspective* seeks to identify the structures and/or functions that lie beneath the surface. Methodically, the layer-related observations are brought together by applying space syntax theory (Hillier, 2007) and the concept of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Research on youth work (e.g., Mertanen, 2020; Hart, 2009) and social work (Sheedy, 2013) will add critical perspectives to these observations.

Layers of plurality in youth policy and work

Youth policy refers to those policies that aim to support the development, inclusion and independence of young people (Mertanen, 2021, 2020). Finnish youth policy has launched projects aimed at guiding and educating young people who reside at the margins. One example of this is the Guidance Centre, where young people aged 15–29 can receive information and support in various life situations on a one-stop basis. The aim is to find a place and sense of belonging in society and build a meaningful life for each young person based on their resources and views (Rauas, 2014).

Youth policy implements many types of practices, yet an exact agreement on the definitions of youth work is lacking (Rauas, 2014). Tensions can be seen, among other things, in the fact that professionals in the field are expected to respond both to the exclusion and control of young people, as well as to their emancipation (Soanjärvi, 2011). There are recognised inconsistencies in youth policy that affect services for young people. In the midst of these services, young persons should be able to act as active and risk-conscious 'consumers' who are free to choose the services that suit their situation the best. At the same time, it is assumed that young people are not able to control themselves sufficiently, which is why they should be guided and supervised for their own well-being (Mertanen, 2021). The approach to youth as consumers of services has also been criticised, for example, in social work research, of being based on a market-oriented, individualistic orientation that fails to see the power structures and cumulative social effects that are creating challenges to young people's lives (Sheedy, 2013).

Attention is also drawn to the fact that professionals' expectations and assumptions about young people can be conflicting. On the one hand, youth are described as life-hungry, innovative, courageous, active and creative actors who, by learning the right knowledge and skills, can move freely in the direction they dream of in the future (Mertanen, 2021, 2020). On the other hand, youth are considered immature, incomplete, impulsive or even dangerous (Mertanen, 2020). Many studies have demonstrated that in popular political and governmental rhetoric, youth are often perceived from the perspective of risk. Youth at the socioeconomic margins are especially

seen as vulnerable to the risks of radicalisation and extremism and, thus, as a potential societal threat that needs to be governed and controlled (Hart, 2009).

In this chapter, we describe the components of stakeholder and youth interaction, here with a particular interest in visibilising different structures and power positions among pluriversal spaces and perspectives. We focus on the perspective of interaction, where each individual has, in principle, the opportunity to be unique but where one is shaped in relation to the sociocultural environments and the groups with which they live. These sociocultural environments can involve obstacles that hinder youth's sense of belonging to society or their communities. The contradictions in perceiving young people as having the potential for risk versus active and resourceful individuals can be reviewed by perceiving youth work from a broad perspective: its goals should not only be defined by professionals or structures, but youth should be viewed as active participants in developing these services. Because youth work is also about preparing for the future, it is partially driven by the unknown skills and abilities that youth will need in the future. According to Mertanen (2020, 2021), however, youth work deals with the present moment, but a clear vision for the future is often missing. During the current situation where rapid changes have taken place, the past cannot provide an accurate guide for the future. Therefore, young people's own real-life experiences are important, impacting their ability to apply their past experiences to shape future ones.

The method and analysis perspectives

The primary data of the chapter is based on 20 semistructured thematic and reflective group discussions conducted in 2020–2021 with youth workers from different organisations. The aim of these discussions was to identify key features of the work of youth workers and to understand the relevant concepts involved. The topics of the discussions started with the use of art and design-based methods in youth work (Barone & Eisner, 2012), leading to reflections on the situations and needs of young people and the services and ways of working with them. This resonates with previous research (Rauas, 2014) arguing that since there is no mutual agreement on the definitions of youth work, the discussions made it possible to clarify local definitions in this case.

Ten experts in youth work provided solid professional knowledge on working with complex social situations and on regional youth work. Discussions explored the possibilities and challenges of art and design-based methods in youth work, as well as the previous experiences of the youth workers with similar activities for young people. The development of art and design-based processes was discontinued due to the COVID-19, and the emphasis of the collaboration with the Centre's staff and stakeholders was shifted to the analysis of youth services and situations from a specific temporal and local perspective. The aim was to gain a broader understanding of society and its structures, specifically those impacting youth's situations, rather than reflecting on the behaviour of individual young people (Brinkmann, 2014).

The data were analysed with thematic qualitative analysis, in which the researchers sought to categorise the themes the youth work experts talked about (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In particular, the discussions were examined in an inductive way, highlighting those themes that outlined the different layers and perspectives of youth work. In addition, content analysis of the websites of the youth work services provided a starting point for perceiving the multilayeredness.

Next, the three analysis perspectives (the bird's eye, grassroots and rhizome) were outlined from the emerging themes in the interviews. These perspectives were sketched to discuss the possibilities and challenges of online and face-to-face methods in creating safe, dialogic cooperation spaces for youth's well-being and emancipation.

The *bird's eye view* refers to looking at an object from above. Its purpose is to find those prospects that might otherwise go unnoticed. From a top-down perspective, the object provides a more comprehensive view of the entire area, situation or process. Thus, it is possible to see how the process works and how its parts lock together in settled or complex social situations. This also provides a unique perspective with which to view the structures—such as actions, institutions, ideologies or their intersections—that define youth's environments and living conditions. However, this perspective may leave out some nuances that the other perspectives reveal.

A *frog perspective* means looking at something from the ground level. This perspective can be equated with the concept of the grassroots level. For example, the grassroots level of an organisation is constructed as low-threshold services that are easily accessible to people who have less power or abilities in their living environments and who, in addition, have limited opportunities to make choices and decisions. The concept of the grassroots level is relative; it can be defined in many different ways in different contexts.

The rhizome perspective refers to an organic approach that provides the tools for visualising and describing complex systems and mechanisms (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The concept comes from botanical terminology, which describes an underground network of plant roots that rise as the vegetation on the surface of the earth. It can be applied as a metaphoric construct in describing and mirroring hidden social/societal structures and their hierarchies. It allows us to view unique perspectives of different parties, for example, in situations where youth work professionals, young people and their relatives encounter each other to seek solutions for promoting the well-being of youth.

Space syntax theory brings together all the perspectives described earlier. Space syntax is a set of techniques used to analyse the relationships between space, spatial relationships and society. It addresses, for example, the spatial setups of buildings and the human operating models in them (Hillier, 2007; Yamu et al., 2021). Within this chapter, it provides the perspectives to outline both the relationships between the various facilities and society involved in Finnish youth work and social and cultural relationships between youth work professionals and young people. In addition, it opens viewpoints to improve practices supporting youth's well-being and/or emancipation in complex situations by comprehending the relationships between the layers and three perspectives (Figure 17.1). As follows, limitations and context-specific nuances of the processes involved in working with youth can be revealed, which is based on a 'mosaic construction' of different knowledges and structures (Reiter, 2018). This involves a framework of difference that can also be used to affirm more democratic services for youth in other societal contexts.

Ethical considerations of the study were based on the principles of art and design-based research that reflects the current situation and context, drawing on the needs and goals of communities (Barone & Eisner, 2012). In order to build trust between the partners, it was important to listen with sensitivity and be open to edit the research activities along the way to respond to certain context and time. The participants were

Table 17.1 Layered structures of youth work.

	Perspectives		
Layers	*Bird´s eye*	*Frog/Grassroots*	*Rhizome*
Youth service providers (e.g., One-stop Guidance Centre, outreach youth work, rehabilitative work)	Youth work and youth policy governed by the Youth Act (2017) – experts, service instructors and coordinators – information and advisory services – guidance and counselling – organising resources for activities for youth – administration and networking – confidentiality	Steered by the municipality – collaboration with other professionals – experts, service instructors and coordinators – guidance and counselling – organising shared activities – administration and networking – confidentiality	Relation to local conditions – services and facilities – support of civic activities – experts, service instructors and coordinators – guidance and counselling – administration and networking – doing and being together – hanging out, chilling
Physical spaces (e.g., street address)	Local map – the Centre's location – accessibility during official opening hours – by appointment (especially because of COVID-19) – equal access, no charge	Changing operating environments – mobile youth work: professionals reaching out the youth in their everyday life contexts – 'Puuhapaku'-van: a mobile youth work unit – equal access, no charge	Young people's leisure environments – public places, parks, parking places, streets, shopping centres, events – school yards – homes (own, friend's, foster care) – equal access, no charge
Virtual spaces (e.g., Discord software, social media channels)	Official www pages – easy access – 24/7 availability – anonymity	Formal + informal activities in collaboration with youth and youth workers – e.g., gaming + communication between youth and youth workers – easy access – 24/7 availability – anonymity	Informal activities —e.g., gaming + individual communication – easy access – 24/7 availability – anonymity
Professionals (social workers, psychologists, housing specialists, youth counsellors, etc.)	Guidance, planning, organising and communication by the competent, professional, motivated staff	Youth as co-instructors and experts of their life situations	Youth work done in the 'territory' of young people
Young people	Satisfied subscriber and user – youth as 'consumers' of services – social justice and fairness of the structures	Youth in their living environments – social networks: peers, families, schools, hobbies	Voluntary activities base on young people's own needs and desires – freedom/no requirement to be in contact with professionals

the ones to decide the terms and conditions of the discussions. Ethical principles were also based on the research integrity, protecting the participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, which encouraged them to also provide critical insights.

Results

We now illustrate the results of our analysis (Figure 17.1), which were obtained by applying the idea of space syntax (Hillier, 2007) to explicitly address the layered structures of youth work. It also has features of topoanalysis, which is a sociopsychological perspective on space, focusing on reflections on how the context structures activities or feelings, experiences and meanings that the environment evokes (Castello, 2010). In this context, the characteristics of the spaces related to youth work and its factors were examined, and the different layers of meaning of the spaces were outlined.

The table shows how the layers and perspectives, as well as the actors and places, form the interactions and networks involved in youth work. The system of activities aimed at young people as a whole looks diverse. When looking at the perspectives as vertical pillars, the dynamic difference between them becomes visible. Different layers, their content and ways of working, as well as the life cycle of the goals towards the future, can be clearly identified.

The bird's eye perspective is seemingly the most static and may even seem like a rigid monotonous frame. However, it contains clear principles that support the goals enshrined in the Youth Act (2017): promoting the inclusion and empowerment of young people, as well as their ability and preconditions to function in society. The bird's eye view highlights the services tied to, among other things, the Centre's schedule, the working hours of the youth workers and the rehabilitation agreements signed with the young people. By organising activities in this way, the Centre can both make efficient use of its limited resources and manage additional activities acquired from the outside. The Centre's services are complemented by workshops organised by various educational institutions that are, in principle, socially and economically valuable youth work. The challenge, however, is that there are numerous workshops for young people with similar content, making the range of activities seem confusing and fragmented.

The rhizome perspective gives the most dynamic and diverse picture of youth work. It implements the goals of the Youth Act (2017) but emphasises the young people's unique life contexts and development of youth culture. From this perspective, a variety of encounters with young people and discussions about new and unforeseen issues in their lives emerge. The layers of the rhizome perspective involve flexibility and the ability to 'read young people' who navigate towards the future in the labyrinth of given external expectations and individual intentions.

Between the two pillars described earlier is the frog or grassroots perspective. It combines the operating principles of both producer-oriented and customer-oriented youth work. Drawing from critical social work and youth work research (Sheedy, 2013; Mertanen, 2020), the services are found to be personalised to meet the needs and desires of young people as unique individuals in their specific social environments. The individual young person is also at the Centre in the bird's eye view, but at the grassroots level, the services are implemented physically closer to the youth, for example, by doing mobile youth work on foot or by car. The

rhizome perspective also includes personalisation, but this perspective combines collaboration between professionals and young people, which promotes, for example, young people's quick and easy access to those things that they consider relevant and important.

New ways of achieving the goals of youth work must be constantly developed. One example is the virtual spaces layer in Figure 17.1. Digitalisation has been a part of Finnish youth work since the 1980s (e.g., Verke, 2019). Digital youth work has been done in concrete places, in online environments and by combining these two formats. The COVID-19 epidemic has increased the emphasis on online youth services. In these exceptional circumstances, different virtual spaces have become places to spend time together. However, digital youth work is not just about leisure activities but also about improving services for/with young people and making them more accessible and relevant from the youth's perspective.

All in all, examining the layers and their interrelations offers a way to move beyond designing one-dimensional solutions to view social situations as complex and diverse, in which the universalistic claims need to be redirected towards the pluriversal (Reiter, 2018). Using space syntax theory to understand the interlinkages between spatial relationships and how society defines youth work and the interactions therein, we can seek to understand the pluriversality of hidden spaces, nuances and creativity as sources of promoting youth's well-being. Through the pluriversal understanding, there is more space to embrace the complexity and use creative methods, such as arts and design approaches in developing youth services. Using multilayeredness as a framework can be seen as a counter-act for the market-oriented, individualistic and risk-based view of youth (Hart, 2009). Pluriversal thinking, however, acknowledges that we cannot see everything; the views are always partial and limited (Reiter, 2018). Consequently, the framework makes it possible to view youth work as responding to different, place-bound environments and challenges in which each situation is unique and of equal worth.

Conclusion

As a starting point for this chapter, we considered the definitions of youth work as supporting young people to navigate their lives in complex situations. To clarify the starting points, we discussed three perspectives of youth work—the birds-eye, grassroots and rhizome perspective—and their layers in our research context. Analysing the layers of youth work can help in defining the underlying factors of youth work and in dealing with the complexity of the situations that youth at different margins live in. It also helps in viewing other's (and one's own) perspectives as a part of the whole. This contributes to understanding pluralistic views as forming the systems in which different perspectives are viewed as equal. In considering the plurality of layers from a critical point of view, the dominant perspectives—such as the needs of the market—are to be adjusted by the ones at the margins, and the youth's needs, wishes and abilities are put at the centre when designing services to support their well-being.

Note

1 Discord (software)—Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discord_(software)

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18 Making IMPACT

Visibility status in participatory projects

Teresa Torres de Eça and Ângela Saldanha

Abstract: Communication skills and spaces for visibility in public spaces are not granted to everyone. To promote counter-hegemonic narratives and be able to make visible the voices of marginalised communities, citizens need to master the technologies of discourse, representation and dissemination. Over the past ten years, the Association of Teachers of Expression and Visual Communication (APECV) in Portugal has developed artistic projects with marginalised groups (e.g., for their culture, ethnicity, age, gender, cognitive or physical differences) providing artistic workshops with artists and educators to explore communication skills through relational art and design processes. Within the scope of the AMASS International Project "AMASS: Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture",[1] APECV has tested participatory and collaborative methodological strategies to work with communities using strategies based on activist participatory art and the pedagogy of hope of Paulo Freire. Central to these strategies are group knowledge and establishing trust activities, collaborative design of the actions, creation of a collaborative art and design work, and public visibility of the processes and products. Throughout the chapter, the strategies explored by the participants of APECV AMASS project will be described with examples illustrating the concepts inherent to artistic collaborative practices and pedagogies. Problematic issues, such as ethical aspects of the research, will be shared with the readers. Finally, discussion about the impact of APECV actions under AMASS will raise concluding questions about the right to express participant voices to influence local cultural policies and the need for greater impact of art and design-based research.

Keywords: Participatory research, community-based participatory research, participatory art and design, social inclusion, AMASS project

Introduction (the right to fair representation in public spaces)

With increased mobility of people and digital media facilities, communities are more and more permeable to other cultures, enlarging plural perspectives and raising diverse integrational challenges. Physical and digital public spaces may offer windows to foster pluralism by allowing different individuals and groups to become aware of themselves and others. However, the exchange of knowledge, information and power is not equitable in public spaces, especially for women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalised communities (Santos, 2007).

The digital public space is in our epoch and is impossible to avoid, even despite the digital divide, as a great majority of the world population uses or is used throughout

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internet communication. According to national statistics, in 2019, 80.9% of Portuguese households have internet access at home, and this access is more frequent in households with children up to 15 years old (94.5%) than for those without children (73.2%). In 78.0% of households, internet connection is performed via broadband (INE, 2019). According to the Minority Rights Organisation, technology increasingly permeates every aspect of our lives, from the use of big data to information and communication technologies (ICTs) to artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, but for marginalised groups, it replicates patterns of exclusion in new forms (Grant, 2020). Social media present competing narratives about social groups where very often the voice of the represented may be manipulated, distorted or even falsified through disinformation tactics. For example, Benjamin Strick, an open-source researcher, has been pointing out how suspicious use of the internet, manipulation of contents and profiles in the social channels have been used to distort information (Benjamin, 2021). Digital media have represented people with disabilities as a completely separate group in society (Ellis & Goggin, 2015; Young, 2012), increasing their social and political isolation. Furthermore, many people with disabilities, especially those from lower economic backgrounds are not able to portray their own stories in digital spaces because they lack communication multimedia skills. Nevertheless, despite the aspects of technology to reinforce and exacerbate inequality—through, for example, surveillance and discriminatory artificial intelligence—civil society is using the same tools to decentralise power and to destabilise established systems of oppression as in online activism and social media campaigns (Girard, 2020).

As a starting point for our research, a central question was raised about how to increase fair representation of the stories by people from marginalised communities with less access to digital and cultural public spaces. By marginalised communities, we understand people who are not included in the cultural mainstream, and are perceived in a context of alterity, as different from the majority or as "others" in the predominant discourses of social media, education and academia.

In the APECV Research Group in Arts, Community and Education's arts-based projects with communities, we often work with people unable to express their opinions in verbal or written forms, so we ask ourselves if artistic and collaborative processes may provide other means of expression and storytelling. In our work, we have been experimenting with learning situations through artistic processes with people from non-profit organisations working in the area of disability. We understand the need for non-colonialist procedures in art and design to be able to embrace processes of learning and creating with communities and enabling the visibility of different voices, essential to an ecological approach of art, nature and society as a pedagogy of resistance (Freire, 1975). Freire grounded his concepts on critical pedagogy, where the teacher does not instruct, but is learning while in dialogue with the students, and the students learn while teaching. In critical pedagogy, the student's actions are not limited to receiving, sorting and storing the teacher's banking deposit. On the contrary, the student has a real opportunity to recognise reality and to act on that recognition. This implies a respectful and trustful relationship of co-learning and co-authorship of knowledge that is also the core of participatory arts and design action in our opinion. In the core of our practices are Freire's ideas about education as social transformation, a tool to achieve emancipation of the oppressed (or the underrepresented) as well as approaches of arts as a relational process to help people to express and communicate feelings, ideas and hopes through multimodal activities. However,

as Freire also claimed emancipation needs hope in the future, Freire understood hope as an ontological need (Freire, 1994), so, in our aims of participatory arts and design actions, establishing hope is the primary condition to be able to create trustful situations and good memories for building possible stories to resist against trauma, discrimination and social isolation.

Within this theoretical frame, we have worked with arts educators, art professionals, caregivers and social workers according to participatory art and design concepts, where the importance is not the recognition of the work as art, but the recognition of the processes as transformative learning, generating trustful relationships, hope and positive narratives from the people who are normally not represented in the predominant social and cultural discourses.

Participatory arts call

Global capitalist structures are being challenged little by little, the Anthropocene is being criticised, the notions of capital, money and reliable trade are revised in terms of distribution of services, such as blockchains and crypto money. We do not have any certainty about achieving more social justice with these changes, but we do know that the change is in place, as we, living creatures, understand that climate has changed and there is a need to adapt ourselves to the consequences of human behaviour on the planet. In the movements that are provoking these structural cracks, there is a constant claim for collaboration, trust and hope, a challenge to build different social structures based on plurality and democratic participation. As Rita Bredariolli wrote in her article about the place of indigenous history and cultures, in education, there is still hope for another possibility of globalisation (Bredariolli, 2018).

Another change we have been witnessing since the 1970s comes from arts and design movements and professionals who have been calling for more participation, more engagement of arts and design professionals in the society. Participatory artists have created new relations between their works and audience. As the critic Nicolas Bourriaud advocated, art is a state of encounter and through participatory art, the viewer becomes part of a broader experience which in certain cases calls for pedagogical transformation, critical conscientiousness or empowering audience's narratives (Bourriaud, 2002).

Recently, many artists and especially collectives have embraced art processes for solidarity and social change purposes. It is interesting to note that in 2021, the Turner Prize—one of the most recognised awards in the English elitist art world—selected a shortlist consisting entirely of artist collectives working closely and continuously with communities inspired in social change through art, such as the groups Array Collective,[2] Cooking Sections,[3] Gentle/Radical and Project Art Works.[4] The Array Collective is a group of 11 Belfast-based artists who have been collaborating since 2016 on projects in response to issues such as access to abortion, gay rights, mental health, gentrification and social welfare, with local actions characterised by a great sense of humour, hope and hospitality. Black Obsidian Sound System (B.O.S.S.) is a community of queer, trans and non-binary black people and people of colour involved in art, sound and radical activism. In their actions, they question ways in which marginalised groups have developed methods of coming together against a background of repression and discrimination in the UK. In the B.O.S.S. video presentation published on Facebook,[5] artists emphasise the need to create spaces for collaborative creation and making visible the stories of

those who are underrepresented in the society. There has also been great interest by cultural institutions, collective of artists and other cultural agents from civil society in social commitment and participatory arts in Portugal, as for example PARTIS[6] (Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion), a programme generated and funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation advocating for art as an agent for inclusion and social change through its unique power to bring people together. The Program supports projects that use artistic practices (music, photography, video, theatre, dance and circus, among others) as tools for cultural participation. Another example is the project "My District",[7] funded by the European Community and the city of Lisbon, where artists and researchers investigated in a problematic district of Lisbon how the arts can help transform social problems causing social exclusion. One of the outcomes was a collection of participants' stories about the place through photography.

Participation skills

The examples listed here are just some of the artistic actions in the area of social inclusion using participatory arts to enable the plurality of voices that were recognised by the predominant cultural discourses. Many other projects are in place all around the world aiming at plurality and making visible the voices of underrepresented others. However, it is important to look at participatory art projects from a critical lens, and question whose voices and how the voices have been collected, mediated and published. As Matarraso pointed out:

> Participatory art can empower people but good results are not guaranteed. Like all art, it can also be hollow, manipulative, pretentious, trivial and dull and the extent to which participation is desirable depends entirely on what it is we participate in, on what terms and to what end.
>
> (Matarasso, 2019, p. 29)

Exchange of knowledge, information and power is not equitable, especially for women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalised communities (Santos, 2007), communication skills and spaces for visibility in public spaces are not granted to everyone. To promote counter-hegemonic narratives and be able to make visible underrepresented voices, citizens need to master technologies of discourse, representation and dissemination. The example of participatory art projects referred earlier can give insights on art and design thinking and collaborative making processes may be one of many ways to foster such skills by developing creativity, dialogic learning in complex situations and multimedia access.

Plurality of voices

AMASS

As explained before, the researchers in APECV embrace the combination of collaborative practices of participatory arts aiming towards social inclusion through artist practices. APECV seeks for projects that may bring added value to underrepresented communities in Portugal in order to help members of those communities to tell their stories for wider audiences, especially in local and international education

circles. Maybe this was one of the reasons why APECV was invited in 2019 to join the AMASS International Project "AMASS: Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture"[8] to explore how the arts can act as a vehicle for mitigating societal challenges.

AMASS is an arts-based action research project that aims to create concrete opportunities for people to come together and accompany artists as agents for social transformation. Through participatory approaches, it uses practical methods to capture, assess and harness the impact of the arts and further generate social impact through policy recommendations. Thirty-five case studies were implemented during 2020 and 2021 in Malta, Portugal, Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary and Finland.

One of the case studies was conducted by APECV researchers and artists with people suffering mental disabilities in a rural area with the non-profit organisation ASSOL through participatory and collaborative methodological strategies. Central to these strategies were group knowledge, establishing trust activities, collaborative design of the actions, co-production of artefacts and public visibility of the processes and products. ASSOL was selected to partner with APECV in the AMASS experiments in Portugal because of past collaborations with APECV, therefore, a trustful relationship was already in place and achieved through past collaborations between the two organisations.

The selected research methodology was in line with our theoretical influences and the international project was grounded on participatory action research and community-based participatory research (CBPR). CBPR is an approach to research that involves collective, reflective and systematic inquiry in which researchers and community stakeholders engage as equal partners in all steps of the research process with the goals of educating, improving practice or bringing about social change (Israel et al., 1998). Forty-seven participants were involved during two periods, comprising 6 participatory artists, 4 researchers/art educators from APECV, 3 caregivers from ASSOL and 29 users of the ASSOL day care centre. Data was collected in visual, video, audio and written forms through observation notes by researchers, individual and focus groups interviews and conversations with artists, caregivers and ASSOL users. The activities will be explained in the next section.

Ethical issues

After first contact with the director of ASSOL, APECV's research team met with the two caregivers, Pancho and Raquel, to talk about the AMASS objectives and APECV invitation. Pancho and Raquel communicated APECV invitations to the groups with whom they worked ensuring the protection of people with diminished autonomy, and only people who could ensure a truly informed decision on their own were invited to the experiment. Participants were free to withdraw at any moment and could require the elimination of their personal data from APECV databases and any documental storage of the Project, if desired, during and after the project lifetime with the exception of articles, books and catalogues published before the withdrawal. All the participants were volunteers and agreed in maintaining their real names and photographs visible in all the outcomes of the project. Such procedures ensure the visibility of the voices maximising the benefits for participants in terms of representation in public spaces and guarantee the co-authorship of all participants in the project.

The actions

The first collaboration

The pilot study was conducted during June 2020–December 2020 with a group of 20 people comprising seven participatory artists/researchers/art educators from APECV, 2 caregivers from ASSOL and 11 users of ASSOL day care centre. For every group of meetings, APECV researchers attributed a title to encapsulate the feelings experimented during the activities as for example: With Love, Learning Places, Conversations, Learning Together, Doing Things Together and so forth.

In the first meeting (With Love), the APECV team explained the project to the participants and asked if they had suggestions for the experiment. They told us their expectations suggesting activities such as creating photography, creating art, and learning with us. After the first visit, we started to prepare our suggestions taking into account the results of the first meeting.

During the second visit (Learning Places), the APECV team members asked the participants if we could enquire together about the places where we learn, they liked the idea and we gave everyone a polaroid camera. Ângela, the second author, explained how to operate the camera, giving some tips for light exposure and framing a scene. Ângela proposed to take photographs of the places where we would learn during the next two weeks together or in a group. During that time, every one of us shot a few places. In ASSOL, the caregivers also set up one trip to take group photos in the places selected by the group members.

In the third visit (Photovoice Conversations), we told our stories about the places where we learn using the photos. Many stories came up, many places, many memories with rivers. For example, artist Dori Nigro told us a story about a river flood in his hometown and the loss of family photos during the tragedy. At the end of the day, we discussed what to do during the next visit. The group decided that we should meet near a river for a storytelling activity with Dori Nigro.

So, the fourth visit was in the margins of a river near ASSOL, one of the places referred to as a good place for learning. Dori, being Afro-American, brought us stories of his grandmother about the syncretic Goddess Yemanjá, and each one of us shared a tale, a folk story or a good memory with the others. As a collaborative activity, Dori asked us to embroider an image or a path about our story in a transparent fabric. We had a little help with the needles from some more talented participants. By the end of the day, all the pieces were put together and we could see the materialisation of the collaboration.

During the following weeks, ASSOL caregivers developed their work based on folk stories of the region and involved us from APECV in their work. As we could not visit them during that time because of COVID-19 lockdown, they sent us folk tales and invited us to interpret some drawings of ASSOL users in our way using copies of the original drawings. The APECV team composed of artists, researchers and art educators did the artworks and we sent it to them. Subsequently it was included in the exhibition of ASSOL in the municipal library. For us, this meant that we were part of the group and that the relationship was bidirectional between APECV and ASSOL teams. We were recognised by the group as another author in making their stories visible.

The last visit before the winter lockdown was with Carlos and Juliana, who are printmakers. The ASSOL team already knew them from other projects, so they asked Carlos and Juliana to help them make posters using silk printing and typography

Figure 18.1 Story telling activity near the river. Photography by Raquel Balsa (2021). Participants doing embroidery during a story telling session with artist Dori Nigro near the river.

Figure 18.2 Folk stories and printmaking—ASSOL, June 2020. Photography by Raquel Balsa (2020). Participants doing posters with artists Carlos and Juliana using silk printing technique.

Figure 18.3 Kit "Isolate with Love". Exhibition at the Museum of Photography "Casa da Imagem", Gaia, (December 2020—March 2021). Photography by Raquel Balsa (2021).

technologies with the images they created in the drawings about the folk stories. The posters were used to announce the local exhibition of ASSOL folk tales in the city library (November–December 2020). In this relationship, the artists had a facilitators' role; we approached the relationship not as an artistic encounter dominated by the artists' narratives but as a transformative pedagogy where the artists facilitate the projects of the group and make their stories visible by bringing up their technological know-how. Such observations made us understand the rich potential of the combination of participatory art, collaborative work and selected research methodology. At its core, CBPR advocates for power to be shared between the researcher and the researched, acknowledges the legitimacy of experiential knowledge, and aims at improving situations and practices. And as claimed by others (Israel et al., 1998), we observed this approach to research to be useful when working with populations that experience marginalisation, helping to establish respectful relationships. Furthermore, we were able to experiment Freire's critical pedagogy and his concept of the educator as an agent of change and the role of the artist, according to the art participatory activist idea of artist as a facilitator or a social worker to improve situations and practices by collaboration.

The winter lockdown challenged us to think in other collaborative strategies. This time it was up to our designers to create a story that should be also a story of the group. Ângela designed a brand called "Isolate with Love", a symbolic reference to the pandemic restrictions and a visual manifesto for participative actions (Kit "Isolate with Love", December 2020). The first product was a bag and mask with a

Figure embroidered from folk stories' drawings series. The Kit was made available online for selling, the profit going to ASSOL. To produce the kit, ngela managed our first stakeholder, a textile company sponsored[9] the production of the kit and helped in this way to make the narratives of the group visible.

During the process, the APECV team have published the narratives of the project and of the participants online, whereas articles and presentations were presented in congresses. Forty-five posts with photos and videos about the activities on AMASS and APECV websites, Facebook channels and Instagram as well as through the personal social channels of researchers, artists and stakeholders were published online.

This was our obligation to the participants—making visible their stories in digital public spaces. As far as physical public spaces to present the narratives are concerned, we have also searched for cultural spaces in other cities. We knew the group enjoyed photography so we looked for a photography museum available to display a community art project. And we ended up with another stakeholder, the gallery of the Photography Museum in Vila Nova de Gaia (Casa da Imagem).

The final exhibition was displayed by the end of December 2020 at the Photography Museum, integrating photographs of the process and final products. Participants from ASSOL could not set up the exhibition with the APECV team, as initially previewed, but photos of the exhibition were sent via phone to the group in ASSOL. Because of the successive lockdown, the exhibition stayed until April 2021, and the ASSOL group visited it in mid-April 2021.

One final evaluation activity was made in December 2020: a group conversation with two members of the APECV team. Participants also wrote statements about the experiment and replied to a short questionnaire. The results indicated the experiment was considered beneficial to the group. The most important aspects were to learn with the group, to experiment with art-creation together, to have the narratives displayed in public spaces so that we could test out our initial hypothesis of the role of art and design thinking and collaborative making processes and develop relational skills and make visible the voices of participants.

The second collaboration

APECV researchers and artists returned to ASSOL in January 2021 for the second round of workshops also integrated with the AMASS project—the testbed experiences. Caregivers from ASSOL asked again for volunteers to work with us, and they decided to choose another group, so more people in ASSOL could profit from the Project experiences. The second group included 27 participants: 2 researchers from APECV, 5 artists, 2 caregivers from ASSOL and 18 users of the ASSOL day care centre. Participants first communicated via postal cards because of the second COVID-19 lockdown, and after June 2021 during physical meetings.

The group asked APECV researchers to help them in making their stories visible through visual arts and music. They invited us to visit the exhibition of ASSOL "I Am: a Face is not the Heart"[10] in the local museum. The exhibition was the outcome of the work done in ASSOL during the previous months, where they created short sentences to describe each one and made a self-portrait mask in *papier maché*. During that visit, our artists proposed to make an animated film with the *papier maché* self-portraits. They said it would also be good to invite artists from the music and dance spheres to help them with the performance for the ASSOL festival in October 2021, and also to bring the typography and silk printing artists to help produce the next notebook

Figure 18.4 Notebook collection designed and produced in ASSOL bindery called "Unlikely Collection" (*Coleção Improvável*). Porto Book Fair, September 2021. Photography by Raquel Balsa (2021).

collection of the ASSOL bindery for the Porto Book Fair in September 2021. Each notebook cover would have a sentence to be created by ASSOL users. ASSOL users of the bindery would assure the complete handmade production, and APECV artists would help with the silk printing and typography.

Between June and October 2020, APECV artists Carlos and Juliana (printing) and Abel and João (music/dance) worked with the group to achieve the expectations of the group. The artists' role was to help produce in artistic forms the stories of the group and one of the roles of the researchers was to help to disseminate it via internet channels, articles, and presentations in conferences.

The experience that was entirely driven by the community was characterised by collaborative actions to promote plural narratives of people living on the margins, not because their authors have mental problems but because their narratives, their works have quality, as the caregivers Anja and Pancho commented during the evaluation session in October 2021. Central to the work of ASSOL is the valorisation of the skills of their users, so their work should be recognised as good work and not recognised as work produced by disabled persons. In APECV, we often reflect about this question, because especially in participatory art the discourses on working with marginalised populations can be extremely negative to the participants and instead of recognising the unique voices and skills of people who normally are not recognised in the mainstream cultural discourses, promote a centralised view about the otherness, with the recognition of alterity as a label for cultural products without recognising its intrinsic cultural value as a unique narrative worth of being published or showed elsewhere.

Social innovation through participatory art and design with people on the margin

The AMASS experiences with ASSOL took place during social distance restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was difficult, as physical co-presence was an essential part of our workshops' strategies, facilitating the chance for people to experience the world with others (Arendt, 1998), restricting the number of opportunities for engagement in collective artistic processes. Some participants were excluded in an information sense, with no smartphones or not being able to use them without the help of others. Therefore, after the pilot, we had problems in continuing to communicate with the group using digital technologies.

But these constraints also made us think of alternative ways of staying connected, re-creating old communication technologies such as postal communication. Our team of researchers, educators and artists started a chain of mail art with the isolated groups. The postcards, in their physicality, helped to maintain the emotional link between the participants, keeping alive the idea that we cared for each other, which is an important characteristic of our methodology.

Caring, collaboration and joint authorship were key aspects of this study, reinforcing the need for different social structures, different ways or relationships to enable the visibility of voices of people on the margins with non-colonialist procedures of art and design, embracing processes of learning and creating with communities, which

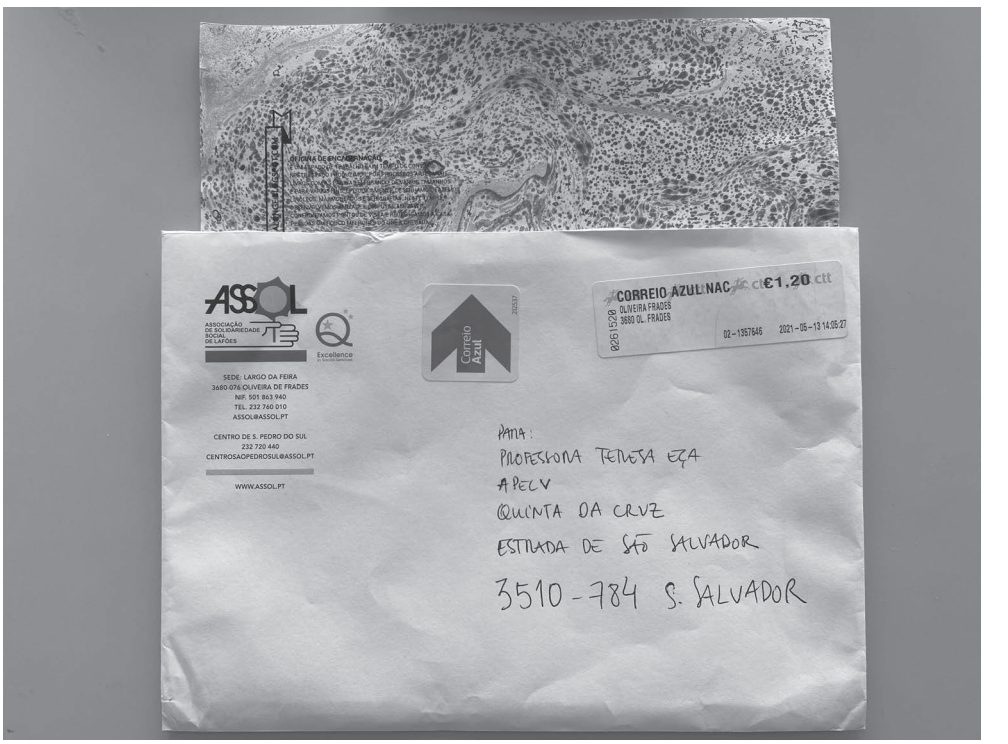

Figure 18.5 Postcard exchanged between APECV and ASSOL participants during the COVID-19 lockdown. Postcard from one ASSOL participant to one APECV researcher.

enable visibility of different voices, essential to an ecological approach of art, nature and society as a pedagogy of resistance (Freire, 1975).

Recognising the authorship of the participants raised ethical problems in terms of social sciences ethical codes of practice, because we could not give fictive names in the exhibitions and public presentations. It was essential, as an arts-based and community participatory research condition, to treat the participants as co-authors, and not passive objects of study or silent actors in an artist production. This decision was possible because we could ensure that the photographs, videos, design and art works produced and exposed to wider audiences, such as in digital spaces, would not harm the participants, and would be presented in artistic ways always protecting the dignity of the represented as research peers and artist's colleagues.

Furthermore, this study made us reflect upon the role of artists, art educators and caregivers in civil society; approaching arts, art professionals and artworks according to participatory art and design radical concepts, where the purpose is not the recognition of the work as art, but the recognition of the processes as transformative learning, capable of social empowerment. Without claiming our work as work of Art, and our profession as Artists, and being aware of our limitations in changing big structures, we think there is a need for cracks in the system, long-term projects in collaboration, sharing narratives, making the marginalised stories visible as facilitators of change and agents to promote other narratives. By collaborating in ASSOL's own plans of work, exhibitions and festivals, ASSOL opened up a bridge to the other (us) to connect with their community and learn and create things with them. In the same way, by collaborating with the APECV team, ASSOL opened possibilities to learn and make things with others. Together we built a bridge between different centres or different margins. As the caregivers of ASSOL said several times, it was very important to receive new people for the community, and establish new connections.

The outcomes of the project with ASSOL were disseminated through posts on social channels (#amassproject), sections in the APECV internet page (www.apecv.pt/pt-pt/amass), on the AMASS internet blog (https://amassproject.weebly.com/portugal.html), through photography exhibitions in galleries (Porto, Portugal, Casa da Imagem December 2020—March 2921), AMASS exhibition in Malta in December 2021), design objects ("Isolate with Love" 2020, "Unlikely" notebook collection, 2021), articles in academic journals, and conference presentations.

We tried to make visible the stories of the groups in broader digital spaces, but we were limited by our type of networks mainly populated by educators and artists. Maybe we should have planned a marketing plan for media communication trying to capture strategic stakeholders of media communication for greater impact of the narratives.

We understand we need to put more effort to transmit the stories of our groups to greater audiences and have a stronger voice in information and communication technologies media and also in reaching strategic stakeholders who can promote political guidelines, and finance arts activities for narrative construction in other marginal contexts. However, we believe that in a globalised world, during the COVID-19 pandemic period where everything had become virtual, our actions also encapsulate arts-based need for physical processes and analogue communication channels so important at local levels as an activist action for local awareness of plural voices in the society.

Exhibitions about stories and design objects made with artists and people with disabilities may be a factor to promote equity in the exchange of knowledge and information in public spaces. Our project was a small step to promote counter-hegemonic narratives and be able to make visible the voices of marginalised communities through collaborative arts-based work between members of those communities, artists, researchers and health workers. Essential to this project's experiences was listening to others and planning actions through conversations according to the needs of participants and not according to an artist's proposal so it could really engender plurality. We understand this project as an example of non-colonialist procedures in art and design to be able to embrace collaborative artistic processes of learning and creating with communities, and enabling the visibility of different voices in art media, essential to an ecological approach of art, nature and society as a pedagogy of hope and resistance (Freire, 1994). Participatory arts and design and education cannot solve the social existential challenges we live today. But, as pointed out by Matarasso (2019), it might help us live with them. Between ASSOL and APECV, we saw participatory arts, crafts and design activities that can enable collaborative spaces to share stories and produce new memories. We were able to build a common ground and ways of working together, through love, hope, creativity, trust, respect and empathy. And, as Matarasso pointed out,

> It might be especially valuable in the places too small or weak to be noticed by power. In communities left more and more to their own devices, participatory art—and especially community art—might be a valuable tool for building a better future.
>
> (Matarasso, 2019, p. 29)

Notes

1 The project was funded by the European Union's research and innovation program Horizon 2020, agreement no. 870621.
2 www.arraystudiosbelfast.com/array-collective.html
3 http://cooking-sections.com/info
4 http://gentleradical.org/who/
5 Available here for Facebook users: www.facebook.com/blackobsidiansoundsystem/videos/891679291490484
6 https://gulbenkian.pt/en/project/partis/
7 https://bairromeu.pt/
8 The project AMASS was funded by the European Union's research and innovation program Horizon 2020 (agreement no. 870621)
9 TEXIBÉRICA.
10 The translation in English of the title of the Exhibition is not easy 'Quem vê caras não vê corações', meaning that we cannot know another person just by looking at his or her face, Manoj 1998.

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19 Flag

A shared horizon

Heidi Pietarinen, Amna Qureshi and Melanie Sarantou

Abstract: The *Flag* workshop explores visual and multisensory thinking as an internal process for the University of Lapland's fashion, textile art and material study students and artist-researchers (authors). The students verbalised and visualised their ideas, thoughts and feelings, which led to the initial ideas and material experiments being transformed into sketches. This culminated in the *Flag: A Shared Horizon* installation. The colourful and kinetic installation *Net*, emerging from *Flag*, mirrors the shared horizons of youth during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting extended global lockdowns. The installation came about in Agora Hall in the F-Wing of the University of Lapland. Both *Flag* and *Nets* are metaphors that look beyond the obvious challenges youth have faced during the pandemic, redefining their diverse understandings of hope, fear, needs and what constitutes novel ideas what they want in the future. Thinking towards the unknown can reveal insights into the underlying narratives, while arts-based methods can open up new approaches to the different challenges faced by society. *Net* will represent the portrait of the participating youth from December 2021 to February 2022. The objective of the workshop was to provide these youth with knowledge about pluralism and how to apply it in their (re)design thinking. It was a process for applying a lens of pluralism to a real youth-based workshop, solving problems by prioritising their (the participants') needs above all else and sharing what they learned in the workshop.

Keywords: Pluralism, narratives, visual literacy, arts-based methods, youth

Distance learning has been a pancake

In spring 2021, a mother wrote in the Finnish language on behalf of her 16-year-old son: 'Distance learning has been a pancake' (Kokiksi opiskelevalle, 2021). She observed her son struggling with distance studies and challenges with isolation because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her son was able to gain only a couple of study credits over four months. In Finland, pancakes are made with a simple recipe of flour and water, and without rising agents. Therefore, a pancake metaphor in the Finnish context is often used to refer to a failure, as something that has quite literally 'fallen flat'. A pancake metaphor reminds the reader that distance learning is not for everyone. The digital leap has brought its own technical challenges, and an isolated young student might feel exhausted at home, while someone else would enjoy their freedom, thrive and see distance learning as a new kind of opportunity (Lavonen & Salmela-Aro, 2022, pp. 105–123).

As a new cohort of first-year students arrived in the Arctic city of Rovaniemi, *Flag* was initiated with a group of participants with the intention to explore their

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current dreams and fears for their new futures as youth embarking on another phase of their life journeys. In collaboration with the youth, the aim was to enhance dialogue by transforming the making and storytelling processes, here through art-based approaches, into concrete products that will be visualised in the installation. Rather than seeking closure on a predetermined problem, the intentions were to explore youth (as subjects) and specificities of their contexts. *Flag* and its art-based processes illustrated these features by representing a creative enquiry into the cofabricated, shared, plural and cultural values associated with a commitment to open dialogue between the youth and artist-researchers (see Edwards et al., 2016, pp. 319–328).

Flag unfolded the possibilities for manifesting diverse and interactive relationships for and interpretations by the viewer through plural interpretations of arts elements. In different contexts, colours, shapes or light can (re)constitute and express a pluriverse (Escobar, 2011) of visuality, feelings, meanings and stories embedded in artistic expressions. The objective of *Flag* was to unfold new perspectives through the materiality and spatiality of expressions by the participants, their work and the interactions between them. These plural narratives as well as the choices made during the *art in progress* led to diverse interpretations and expanded the participants' visual literacy. This chapter tackles research questions, such as the following: 'What can be accomplished by expressing life experiences in plural ways?' 'How do youth view their worlds after the pandemic, and how are their visions expressed in the new material outcomes?' 'How can art and material-based methods be used to expand the boundaries of visual literacy to promote plural expression? Addressing the topic of isolation, adaptive strategies and re-engagement in society in postpandemic times, *Flag* visualised and mirrored youth's voices. These questions were also examined regarding youth's views on individual thinking and their relation to questions of the power of the youth and impact of COVID-19 on young people.

Upholding arts-based methods for embracing pluralism in the expression of social values

The literal meaning of plurality implies many kinds and forms. This chapter uses the term 'pluralism' to refer to a framework of multiplicity, for example, of societies, individuals, ideas and actions. Borrowing from Nandy (2010, p. 2), pluralism can be understood as social diversity and tolerance of others' beliefs, even when these beliefs are different or diverse; therefore, pluralism can be understood as a social value. Tsirogianni and Gaskell believe that social values stem from lived human experiences, describing them as 'socially collective beliefs and systems of beliefs that operate as guiding principles in life' (2011, p. 2).

Arts-based research (ABR) can support pluralism. The term was developed from numerous concepts (about 28) used to describe a plurality of ABR approaches (Leavy, 2017). This term moved away from the singular reference to 'art' as introduced by McNiff (2008) because various art forms and approaches can be used as media for data collection, analysis or dissemination (Foster, 2016; Leavy, 2017). Coemans and Hannes (2017) identified different types of arts-based methods (ABMs), including visual art, poetry, dance, theatre, film, video and music, in a review focusing on the use of ABMs in community-based longitudinal research spanning two decades.

The participatory nature of ABMs enables different ways of engaging participants in creating shared understanding and building empathy. These strengths are evident in certain marginalised and vulnerable groups, whose voices are seldom heard (Miettinen et al.,

2016; Li et al., 2018). Traditional research methods tend to be less effective in engaging such groups because they are often rigid in that they are not culturally neutral and, therefore, are likely to encounter obstacles during the research process. Cahnmann-Taylor maintains that educators and researchers should accept the responsibility 'to explore even more varied and creative ways to engage in empirical processes, and to share [their] questions and findings in more penetrating and widely accessible ways' (2008, p. 3) when engaging with ABMs. Therefore, the values of pluralism can be argued to be upheld by ABMs because they champion a multiplicity of different creative and artistic means that can be used in the various processes of research to generate more complex ways of knowledge creation through both individual and collaborative processes, but also through a plural means for expressing the social values and shared beliefs of an individual or group.

Methodology

The key methods of enquiry employed in the current research are narrative enquiry and ABMs. One of the successful ways in which ABMs have been employed is by combining the approach with narrative enquiry (Akimenko et al., 2017). The Ricoeur (1992) perspective on narrative underpins the organisation of action and life; narratives assist in the arrangement of human life (p. 157) while potentially drawing from recounts of vague units of life, rendering cohesiveness by creating a unity of life (p. 158). A 'narrative unity of life' enables sense-making in complex situations and the recounting of the care of oneself and care for others (p. 163).

ABMs often generate 'interesting types of data' that can be difficult to interpret (Coemans & Hannes, 2017, p. 41), but in combination with narrative enquiry to create dialogue, alternative ways of expression and enhancing engagement can be achieved. ABMs can assist in building a shared understanding not only among participants, but also between participants and researchers. The successful use of ABMs to generate impact in research processes, however, calls for different experimental and improvisatory approaches to data collection and visual content generation. The testing, assessing and comparing of methods and how they are used are important.

Data are a collection of notational data during the art- and material-based workshop during the autumn semester of 2021 (24 August to 5 November). Participants are first-year fashion, textiles art and material research students at the University of Lapland who participated in the workshop, which was coordinated by the authors. The data consist of group discussions with 12 students (participants), creative descriptive essays written in Finnish or English and sketches. The material is supplemented with the critical discussions on values, ethics and the role of the arts to re-engage societies in postpandemic times that developed from *Flag*. The aim of the workshop was to mirror youth voices, enabling their participation in the art installation and to express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through materials and colours.

Before, during and after the arts- and material-based *Flag* workshop, focus group discussions with student participants were conducted. We encouraged students to explain their experiences while making the installation and to write a creative descriptive essay in Finnish or English about their learning and experiences of the ongoing workshop. We asked them to answer, for example, the following questions: What does it mean to work in *Flag*? Why did you engage in this workshop? What was the meaning for you? Students were also encouraged by a three-dimensional writing exercise to stimulate a plurality of senses (sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing) towards self-thinking and creative writing.

The research data open up new and even surprising perspectives by focusing on the behaviour of youth. A broader understanding of the pressures and demands that are placed on youth through the pandemic can uncover the pluralities of societal structures (Mertanen, 2020), which may impact postpandemic futures. The narrative accounts of the participants are subjective and emotional responses to their experiences; they are recounts of histories and are driven by discovery. Narrative accounts are presented as a data source, combined with a reflexive analytical approach. The data analysis is supported by the literature and visual analysis.

A fish*net*—the outlet for youth

Flag served as a metaphor and focused primarily on the topic of isolation and adaptive strategies. It focused on re-engagement with society in postpandemic times by visualising and mirroring the youth's voices. In accordance with the nature of the creative work, the author's experience was merged into the work, and a more specific theme and name was defined for the installation through joint reflections (Dewey, 2010, pp. 133–138). For example, students gave several nickname to *Flag* installation *art from COVID-19, COVID-19 installation, fishnet, social network, no process, no art (without the process, there is no art)* or *outlet for people*. Nets are often used as traps; a fisherman captures fish, or an ice hockey player scores a goal with a net. However, in the workshop, the net represented entanglements by enabling contact with others. The net was a metaphor for life and connections between the youth and friends, while it was an invisible structure for the physical activity that assisted them to cope with postpandemic times. One youth participant reminisces in the following:

> *Overall, it's amazing to see a group like that. I've made new friends because of the workshop, and most importantly, I've been able to laugh, have fun, bring ideas to the table and enjoy the company of others and creak together. What an incredible opportunity I have been given, and I am more than happy to be a part of this.*
>
> (Participant 5)

> *We had a long and eye-opening conversation about COVID-19 with our group. It started by talking about the feelings we had during the corona pandemic and the colours we felt. Everyone shared their own experiences. I really feel like it made us even closer. We do the installation together and follow a mutual plan.*
>
> (Participant 3)

Every story told a picture; when students drew, language was present, and when they used words, they made images (Figure 19.1) (Bardt, 2019, pp. 77–80).

The net also has an ambiguous character: Designing and making a net together enabled the students to broaden their awareness, but they also found the scale of the vast space, the Agora Hall, overwhelming:

> *Like the COVID-19 pandemic, our workshop has had its ups and downs and unexpected turns. Because of the size of the project and of Agora Hall where the installation is going to be in, we were forced to look at things on a larger scale. Lots of redos, lots of different ideas and, most importantly, lots and lots of experimenting.*
>
> (Participant 7)

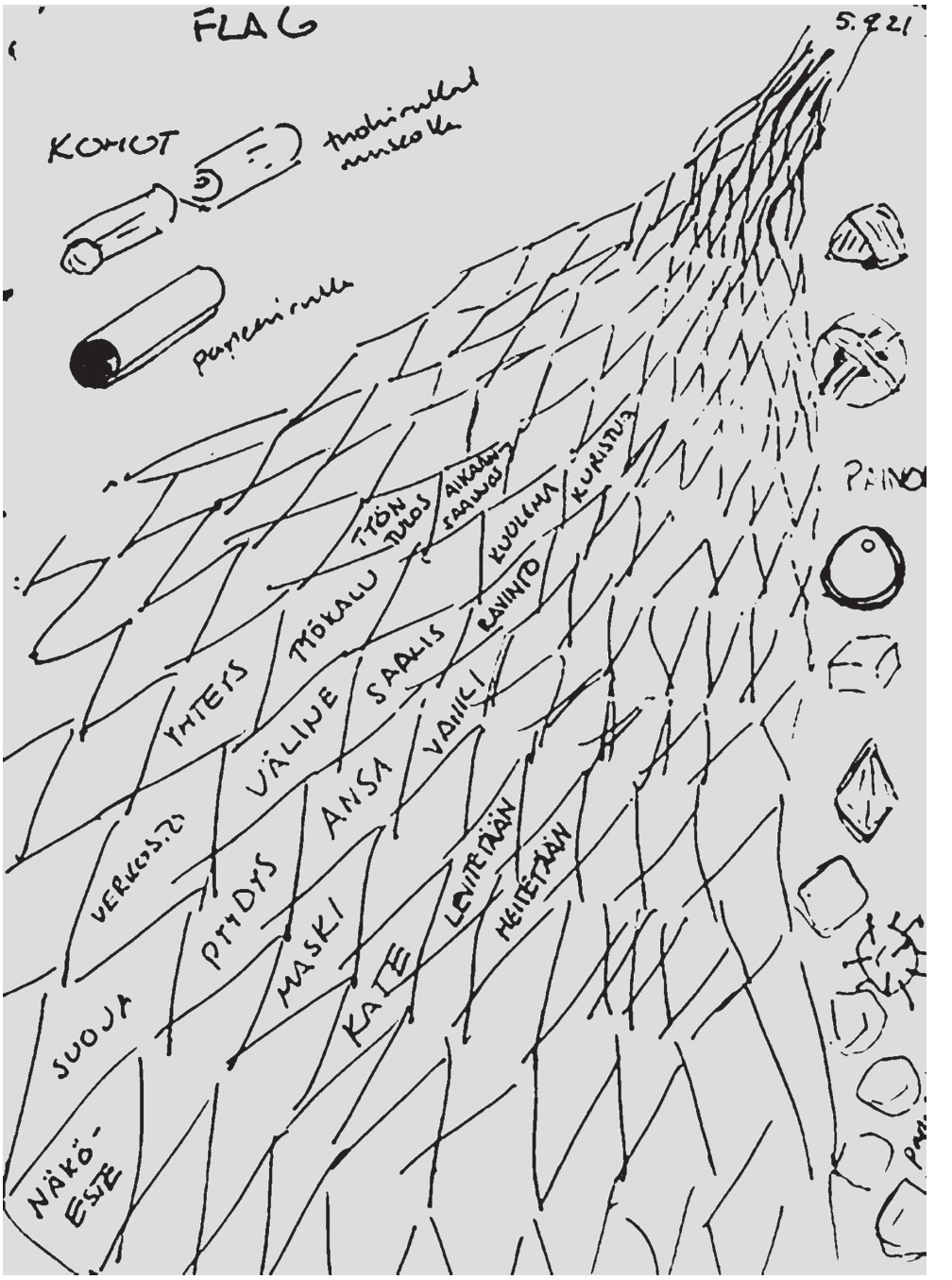

Figure 19.1 The outlet for youth. Regarding bringing in different pluralist perspectives, for example, group discussions, three-dimensional writing, mood boards and shared visual and emotional experiences were followed by a sketch of the Fish*net* installation with keywords. Image credits: Flag workshop group, 2021.

When it takes 5,000 hours to master something, imagination must be part of the process, following what was imagined deeply enough to know it tacitly. Material and physical tacit knowledge is granular, distributed knowledge that is impossible to explicitly convey (Bachelard, 2014; Bard, 2019). Unintentional mistakes were made during the workshop because anyone who acts makes mistakes. Some risks were overlooked, causing hazards. Some parts of the installation were built on a too-small scale, requiring remaking. The hall acted as a black hole or never-ending story for whatever was installed. Challenges with (un)visibilities, volumes, colours and scales were experienced in the huge space. Both the process and building the components of the installation involved critique of the prevailing conditions under which the installation came about and calls for self-criticism and responsibility of actions, both of which are characteristic of a process (Böninger et al., 2021, p. 18). As explained by John Dewey (2010, pp. 83–103), the nature of the creative process and aesthetic experience is an activity.

The installation created a horizon for new insights. The net knotting began by students selecting a colour of yarn to represent their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Each student knotted a net with their yarns as a mark of their identity and as part of the installation. The idea was to build a colourful *Net* installation in Agora Hall to redefine their diverse understandings of hope, fear, needs and future visions. Multicolour yarns travelled around the four floors of Agora Hall, which represent the youth's different feelings during the pandemic: from grim and dark colours to brighter colours such as yellows, pinks and greens. The colours were simple yet an effective and universal way of conveying a message; therefore, they served as a suitable technique of communication in this installation. This also proved that the chosen colours cannot be described with words, because visuality, tactility, kinetics, experience and many other factors were not easily translated into verbal language. The differences in colour tones were in the eye of the beholder (Kuure et al., 2017; Naukkarinen, 2001, p. 154).

Intersections between the youth and the patterns they selected became apparent in the knotting. The knots were a metaphor for and represented the empathetic connections created between the youth and Agora Hall visitors, allowing for a more general understanding to emerge based on exclusive and personal experiences.

> *These kinds of workshops are important because they create an outlet for people to express their feelings in a way that's not through words because that can be hard sometimes. It is extremely important to document this and let the world know about this kind of method of portraying one's emotions.*
>
> (Participant 7)

One of the students referred to the pandemic crisis as a defining epoch for the current generation of youth. During the workshop, the participants became personally engaged with one another, discovering links between storytelling and the sharing of personal perspectives, as well as addressing the benefits of taking a reflective approach to research. As Pillows (2003) reminds us, research can become more extensive upon reflection. The group discussed the cocreated data extensively, exchanging ideas and perspectives on how to present the installation in the extensive space. From this process, personal reflection was enhanced, which was beneficial for the postpandemic context that the youth entered during the autumn of 2021.

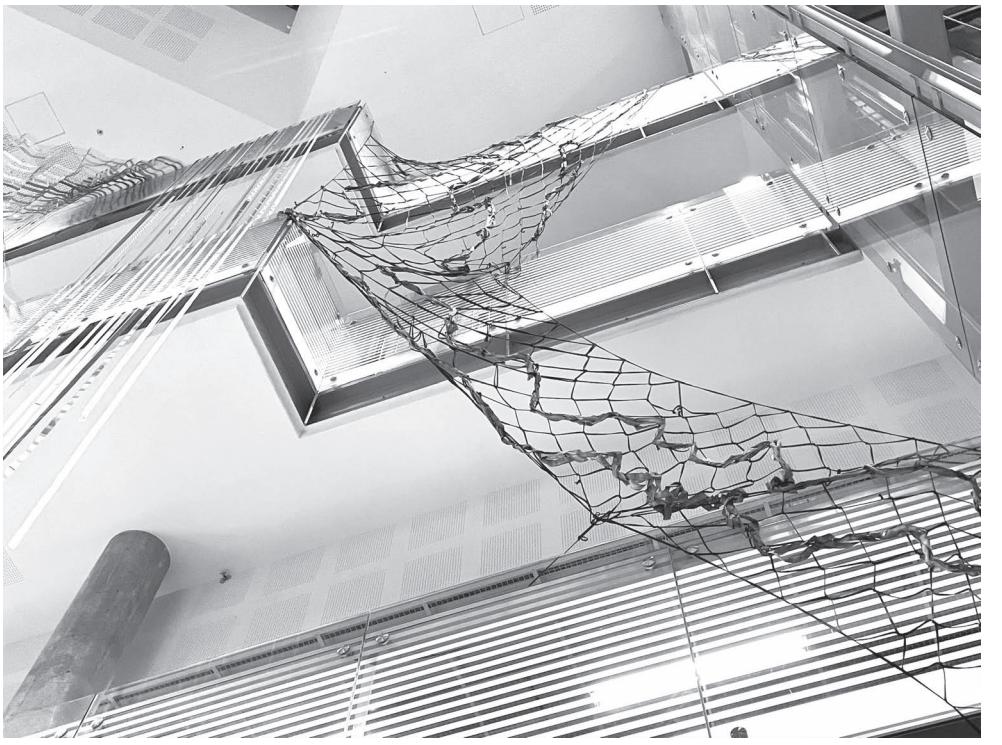

Figure 19.2 Final *Net (a)*. Photo credits: Amna Qureshi (Researcher-author), Flag workshop, 2021.

Figure 19.3 Final *Net (b)*. Photo credits: Amna Qureshi (Researcher-author), Flag workshop, 2021.

Leading the eye through art processes—intrusion to inclusion

Art processes can become a powerful means of bringing people together. This can help in engaging in creative processes to articulate one's thoughts. The possibility to reimagine youth's thinking and mirroring their voices to explore their intellectual abilities can help improve the limited imagination they encountered during pandemic times. Hence, finding the means to articulate and express the content of imaginative expression is crucial for the participants to be able to share their thoughts. As supported by both Barone and Eisner (2012), the manifestation of feelings and expressions becomes evident through engagement in the process of expression, which is similar to the thoughts of the youth during the workshop:

> *It is all about the process. Without this process, there is no art. Our work is far from complete, and it may change shape along the way, but I think the end result will be great anyway. However, I consider the process itself to be more important than the end result. I also believe that through this workshop, each of us has learned something new about ourselves, about each other and about art.*
>
> (Participant 4)

In addition to the ongoing art process, the authors engaged in the research as participants. They were able to relate to the viewpoints of the youth because they were a part of the process, engaging collectively and cocreating with the entire group of participants. According to the authors, each phase of the process had an impact on the next.

Consequently, *Flag* experienced an interesting incident. The university students were having their lunch break at the Petronella restaurant, situated in Agora Hall, when the authors were hanging the installation across the space. The installation consisted of long ribbons, tassels and light paper rolls, which were challenging to stabilise and install. During that process, one part of the installation gently touched a student's shoulder, interrupting a well-deserved lunch break. Although the student did not appear displeased, the author sensed the student's uneasiness through face expressions, and apologies were duly made. This moment of awkwardness made the authors realise that they were intruders at the wrong place at the wrong time. Not being able to build the installation after hours, the authors turned this incident to their advantage by involving anyone entering Agora Hall to engage in the *Net* installation process.

To accomplish this, the authors displayed a banner in Agora Hall, mentioning that there is 'art in progress' to create awareness of the ongoing process. The banner served as a visual clue to lead their eyes to the installation in progress. This provided a sense of inclusion, not only to the participants and authors, but also to everyone present in the hall throughout the installation period. The authors wanted the process to be visible and acceptable but not finished as a masterpiece.

Conclusion: *Flag* as a metaphor for a shared message, meaning and story

At the beginning of the workshop, the public Agora Hall, appeared an empty and uniform space. The space has four large ceiling windows and hosts three permanent artworks hung from its ceiling. Sculptor Kari Huhtamo's *Flamma Artis*, or *Flame of Art* (2006), which is installed in the space, recalls the necessity of fire for igniting and in creativity (Collection of the Kari Huhtamo Art Foundation, 2021). Campus life in

and around Agora Hall can be described as a community garden or a space with a plurality of functions where students, staff and visitors gather to dine, meet, study or enjoy arts displays. Students and staff also exhibit their art and creativity in the surrounding arts galleries that are in and open into the space. This shared public space offered an experimental research environment for the workshop, serving as a stage for making a layered installation.

Flag, a mixed media installation, served as a metaphor for the plural social processes that students engaged in, including discussing, exploring, creating and expressing. *Flag* also served as a metaphor for the plural life experiences the participants had during the pandemic, which was expressed through the manifold of colours, textures, materials and stories the participants used to create the installation. Also, working as a group demonstrated how hands-on work following approaches such as do-it-yourself (DIY) and do-it-with-others (DIWO), that is, shared authorship, can offer diverse and plural ways of working, for example, as a community of youth (March, 2021; Grisoni, 2012; Lovell et al., 2014). *Flag* was built in a context of risk taking, exploration, incompleteness and interpretability, conveying the idea that beauty is created during the interaction between youth and this environment.

Flag enabled the rethinking of artistic processes that are underpinned by the narrative identities of students, including those of the artists-researchers, creating a unique relationship and interplay between their stories and environment. How they made sense of their identities during the challenging pandemic times, which was exacerbated by ongoing disruptions and disconnects, was enabled by working through their plural individual experiences, which were shared through discussion and storytelling and expressing their plural identities through the multicoloured and textured installation. The students wove their stories of isolation because of the pandemic, narrating them as verbalisations of their own identities. The students' sense-making supported place-bound identity work (Akimenko, 2018, pp. 136–137). The workshop strengthened their interaction skills and provided an opportunity for positive interaction with the university community, making invisible encounters visible:

> *The workshop has an important meaning and a message—how we could describe our feelings through art. Not everything has to be spoken or written; it can also be told by art and painting and creating. The way we built this installation really helped me sit down and think about the past year and how I personally felt.*
>
> (Participant 3)

The installation was the result of several months of work, but the result was not only an installation. According to Rautio (2010), beauty should not be thought of only in terms of artefacts but also in terms of what is done. The workshop provided a pathway for the development of the university community and students, which also developed the quality of life of students at the individual level. The aim of the workshop was to benefit students and the entire university community. The *art in progress* banner and roll-up enhanced sharing by giving people the opportunity to connect on a personal level and through collective making with the faculty event, thus creating a sense of inclusion and community.

> *It is important to document this project because I think it is necessary that people see how this whole art project came to be, and they will see our thought processes.*
>
> (Participant 4)

The purpose of the visual message was to engage everyone in the work process and experience of both space and environment more holistically—following the life of the event instead of working in studios behind closed doors from an isolated space towards a plural, welcoming, care to the other and shared horizon. This was seen at the very end of the workshop, when the students placed a bright and overflowing green plant wall over the railing of one of the four levels of the building. This addition to the installation symbolises their hope for a future that entails new growth, opportunities and continuity after the disruptions experienced in their young lives because of the pandemic. The idea of a sensitive but vibrant hanging piece of plant art had been abandoned at the beginning of the workshop, but in the final review, it seemed to be the strongest and an inseparable part of the installation. It showed that the students kept their own vision and, during the workshop, shared their needs of being heard. This final piece of work reminded us that pluralism is not straightforward, nor is it comfortable to always attain; instead, it showed that hope in the future and a willingness to work towards shared goals are the values that the youth wanted to express their beliefs and visions. It is an achievement that takes time, but *Flag* gave the youth an opportunity to go beyond passivity and actively express their pluralist values and beliefs in a positive future. Despite the high expectations the youth had for their entry into university and a new phase in their lives, which ended as a deflated pancake because of the isolation and disruptions of the pandemic, *Flag* rose high and tall over four stories of Agora Hall to express the pluralist views and values of the group in colourful and textured ways. The new interconnections they were able to understand, build on and establish throughout the process were expressed in a very physical manifestation of the installation *Net*. This assisted them, at least to some extent, in shaping their new world of shared pluralisms, or what Escobar (2011) refers to as the 'pluriverse'.

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20 *Ghost bike agency* and urban culture through art activism

Eduardo Rumenig, Julio Talhari, Maria Cecilia L. dos Santos and Luiz E.P.B.T. Dantas

Abstract: Latin American cities have recorded dozens of traffic-related deaths every year of pedestrians and cyclists, mainly due to urban mobility public policies and urban space that privilege motorised vehicles. Activists, artists and relatives of traffic victims have made urban interventions to blow the whistle on traffic violence and propose safer urban mobility designs to nonmotorised commuters. Regarding the cyclists, one of the public interventions has been the embed of *ghost bikes*—victims' white bicycles—in the location where the fatalities occurred. The endeavour in this chapter was to scrutinise these 'motionless vehicles' from an anthropological perspective, inspired by Gell's approach. This approach enables us to apprehend the *ghost bikes* as *art objects*, behaving like an extension of human beings and influencing urban mobility, urban space and social imagery. *Ghost bikes* apprehended through anthropological analysis of images and digital cartography revealed a plurality of social relations between humans and nonhumans, fostering ways of sociability, social spaces and urban materialities safer for bicycle commuting. Moreover, art-activist interventions bring out political ways of life (and death) where oeuvre, life and the loss of cyclists' life are blended. In short, traffic-related deaths became political potency to ensure life.

Keywords: Urban culture, ghost bike, agency, art activism

Introduction

In several Latin American cities, including São Paulo, Brazil, cycling has been marginalised in urban spaces (Sá et al., 2019) and in the urban mobility agenda. In general, Latin American metropolises have adopted an urban design that privileges private automobiles to the detriment of other modes of transport, leaving no place for cyclists—not in the streets aimed at drivers nor on the sidewalks for pedestrians. Consequently, dozens of traffic-related deaths, especially of pedestrians and cyclists, occur in São Paulo every year (Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, n.d.).

Groups of cyclists, activists, artists and relatives of the victims seize on these horrific situations to draw attention to traffic violence against cyclists. After a memorial service, bicycles are placed in the location where these fatalities occurred to shed light on traffic violence, as well as to activate mobility relevance. The purpose is to convert these motionless bicycles into prominent actors that can act for mobility public policies as *art objects* rather than being discarded vehicles. These bicycles are transformed into *art objects*, knowledge as *ghost bikes*. Such bicycles might operate as extensions of human beings, wielding *agency* over the social practices in the

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urban space (Gell, 1998), inaugurating new forms of social relations among human and nonhuman agents and influencing the hegemonic notion of urban mobility culture.

However, some issues arise from this preliminary discussion: (i) What transformation takes place with bicycles and urban spaces after these commemorative artistic interventions are erected? (ii) Why should these nonmotorised vehicles be considered *art objects*? (iii) How do these motionless vehicles that are transformed into *art objects* embody urban violence? (iv) Are they endowed with agency at the point of influence in a hegemonic urban culture that is underpinned by automobiles? Adopting an anthropological perspective—which means that the interest lies in situational social relations—our purpose is to localise these *objects of art activism* through digital cartography and photography regarding the *ghost bikes* in São Paulo as a way to understand the agency that *ghost bikes* carry within urban spaces and social imagery. In Alfred Gell's conception (1998), agency, which is a theme that has been widely studied by anthropology—as demonstrated by Sherry Ortner (2007, pp. 45–76)—might be understood as an attribution of action based on human intentions but that is mediated by objects, artefacts and works of art. Urban culture, in turn, is grasping the city as a set of codes induced by and required for performing daily social interactions and social relations.

Ghost bike origin: São Paulo context

The practice of memorialising *ghost bikes* in urban spaces arose in Saint Louis (Missouri) in 2003 with Patrick Van Der Tuin, a commuter cyclist who wanted to draw attention to traffic violence involving both fatal and nonfatal cyclist injuries (Thomas, 2015). He witnessed an accident with a female cyclist in a bike lane a block from his home. He then decided to install a junk bike where a fatal/nonfatal injury involving a cyclist took place. Originally named 'Broken Bikes, Broken Lives', these urban interventions were removed from the urban space by the local authorities as quickly as they were memorialised (Everett, 2017). The name *ghost bike* appeared later, with Eric Boerer, a contumacious cyclist who had his leg broken by a minivan driver. He decided to bring Saint Louis' culture to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, installing white bikes in all public spaces where traffic violence against cyclists had taken place. He also catalogued his interventions on a web domain (ghostbikes.org), inviting others to do the same. Since 2012, thousands of activists have installed *ghost bikes* worldwide to pay homage to those cyclists who have been victimised by traffic violence.

In São Paulo—the largest municipality in Brazil—despite the 648 km of bicycle lanes built over the past ten years and increasing growth (24%) of bicycle commuters within the same decade (Companhia do Metrô de São Paulo, 2020), the cycling commuters represent less than 1% of the daily commutes, although cyclists' traffic-related deaths have corresponded to 4% of all deaths in 2019 (31 deaths) (Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, n.d.). The municipality has 13 million inhabitants distributed within 1,521 km^2 and has been one of the most important economic conurbations of the country, carrying 30% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados [SP], 2020). Such economic strength is underpinned by automotive expansionism, with an urban design that has privileged automobile circulation. This scenario fosters huge inequalities relative to urban mobility, becoming the cyclists invisible to the hegemonic urban mobility culture,

being apparent only as statistics, and contributing to an injustice scenario: less than 1% of commuters represent 4% of the total traffic-related death rate.

Methodology and field research

Digital cartography was drawn on to georeference these *ghost bikes*' locations in São Paulo. Their localisation was obtained by gathering information about cyclists' deaths on 'cyclist-activists' websites (such as 'VádeBike'), as well as articles about traffic deaths involving cyclists in São Paulo's two largest mass-circulation newspapers: *Folha de São Paulo* and *Estadão*. The term 'ghost bikes' was used as the keyword search. In cases of incomplete address information, the positions of *ghost bikes* were confirmed through Google Street View or physical assessment. These pieces of information were exported to a geoprocessing tool (BatchGeo), which stemmed from a 'kml file'. Later, this information was spatialised in the GIS software QGIS (version 3.18, Zürich), resulting in the map in Figure 3.1.

Afterwards, we portrayed the authorial photographs of some *ghost bikes* identified by digital cartography, privileging those that encompassed the controversies of the urban mobility culture that privilege automobiles rather than bicycles. The *ghost bike*

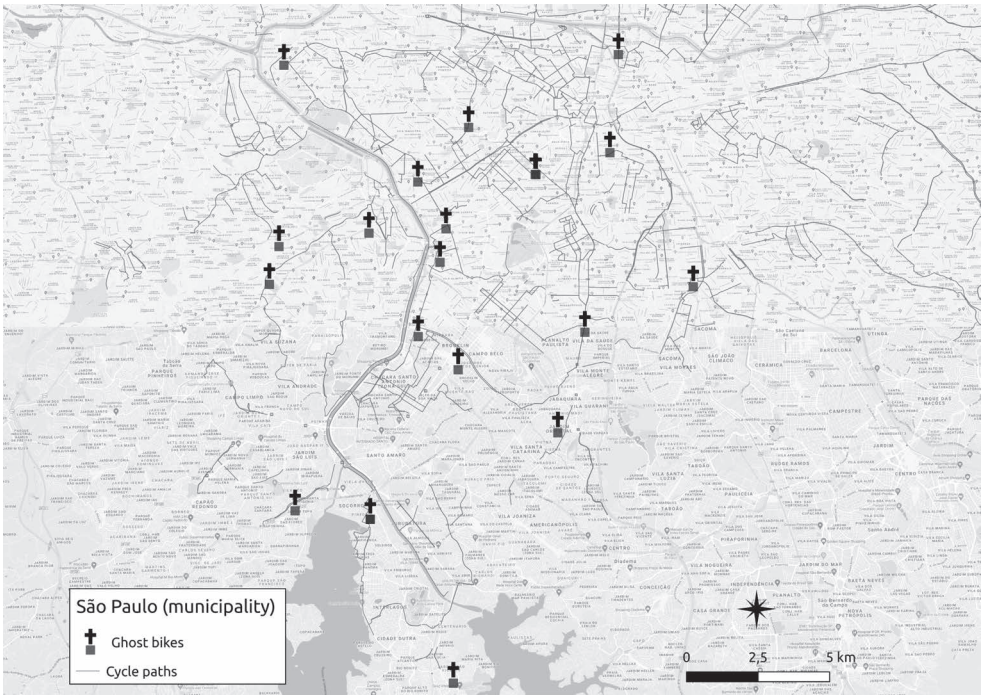

Figure 20.1 Digital cartography of the *ghost bikes* in the São Paulo municipality. Map of the municipality of São Paulo, Brazil, showing the location of nineteen ghost bikes and the layout of the bicycle path network in the territory. Ghost bikes were represented by black crosses while bicycling paths by a https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zk_tlfTvIqcI6PICKc_dxghlhSiN6Ra4/view?usp=sharing.

Figure 20.2 *Ghost bike* installed on Paulista Avenue, an important financial corridor in the city. Photograph by Eduardo Rumenig. The foreground highlights a twisted white bicycle anchored to a guardrail on a Brazilian avenue, in São Paulo. The white bicycle, called 'ghost bike', contrasts with red, blue and white linear lights formed by moving vehicles, making up the background. A bright building in the right corner makes up the third plan.

chosen belonged to Juliana Dias (33 years old), who was run over in March 2012 by a bus at one of the most important financial and commercial areas of the city: Paulista Avenue. The image highlights the immobility of a contorted *art object* contrasting with the mobility of automobiles, which are represented by the linear digital lights in the background, connoting the hegemonic role of car culture while conjuring pluralistic ways to occupy urban space (Figure 3.2).

Once we selected the *ghost bike*, we ran an anthropological analysis of the *art object* captured in the image. The anthropological analysis was guided by Alfred Gell's (1998) propositions, which define art as 'a system of action whose purpose is to change the world rather than 'encode propositions about it' (Gell, 1998, p. 31). Gell's approach allowed us to understand how a white bicycle from a dead cyclist might be considered a nonhuman agent and a distributed element of the victim that can engender abductive inferences, cognitive interpretations, a plurality of relations and a network of intentions able to challenge the hegemonic automobile urban culture. Seen as mediators of actions or, in certain contexts, as social agents, these *art objects* motivate 'inferences, responses, and interpretations' (Gell, 1998, p. ix) that influence urban and social imagery. Understanding art as a system of action, Gell sets this up as a transcultural concept drawn by social relations immanent to such *art objects*.

Social and urban imaginary in dispute: the role of *ghost bikes*

Bicycles assume numerous social roles depending on their insertion into social relation networks. Their relevance is displayed in the reiterated attempt of government agents to remove these white bikes from the public view, as well as the insistence of artist-activists to erect them in the public space as an evocation of a life lost and endeavour of artists-activists to claim the right to ride with safety in São Paulo. From an anthropological perspective inspired by Gell (1998), ghost bikes are promulgated as *art objects* for two reasons: (i) because they use the lexicon of contemporary art, which includes objects that have the ability to convey intentions and connect people and objects, expanding the notion of art, and (ii) their influence on the imagery itself, which can be seen as a 'prototype', that is, the artefact objectifies an image or a conception. In our case, this is a prototype of the conception of urban mobility.

The first feature from digital cartography that caught our attention was the existence of bicycle lanes in almost every place where a *ghost bike* has been erected. On Paulista Avenue, for instance, three cyclists were run down: Marcia Prado (2009) and Julie Dias (2012), both resulting in death; and David dos Santos (2013), who had his arm ripped off by a driver on March 10. These tragedies fostered the municipal government to build a bicycle lane that became a reference for urban design. Somehow, the motionlessness of these contorted white bicycles wielded some agency in the decision-making process. These art-activist actions that materialised violent deaths in the urban space engendered changes, forcing public decision-makers to enact policies that mitigate traffic violence against those who defy the hegemonic urban mobility order, rethink urban design from a distinct perspective that includes cyclists and contribute to a bike-friendly city.

In a sense, ghost bikes fostered a considerable expansion of the cycle path networks over the ten years after their start, especially during Fernando Haddad's administration (2013–2016), when São Paulo was transformed into a more suitable and safer place for cyclists. Two years after Julie Dias' death, the bicycle lane on Paulista Avenue was inaugurated (Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, 2015). Additionally, the avenue has been closed to automobiles every Sunday for carrying out leisure and cultural activities since the bicycle lane opening.

From Gell's perspective, it could be assumed that *ghost bikes* influenced the hegemonic urban culture in São Paulo, especially considering that a *ghost bike* might be grasped as an extension of cyclists, wielding *agency* over social practices and influencing the social relationships among human and nonhuman beings through a creative process. These *art objects* act in urban space as an index of the action: the action of the activists who create and insert ghost bikes into urban spaces motivated by tragedies caused by traffic violence. Through this creative action, the ghost bike becomes a reference image—a prototype acting on the artist-activists while making and installing the ghost bikes. Later, they might also act on other urban dwellers and even on public policy decision-making agents.

The tragedy, which could be interpreted as a personal event, is transfigured in a collective intervention that connects the entire imagery, inaugurating a tense dispute about what urban mobility is and how urban mobility should be. The *ghost bike* proposal, after all, uncovers a pluralistic conception of mobility, capturing the attention of city dwellers to the necessity of alternatives to urban mobility public policies. Beyond these artefacts that unveil the tragedy of a cyclist's death, they disclose the

causes, pointing out the mistakes of a one-dimensional conception of urban mobility. The agency of artist-activists and of the *art objects* in the urban space is the agency of the imagery of urban mobility culture. This is an imagery prototype that, because of its inability to accommodate a plurality of mobility modes, has resulted in numerous fatalities in São Paulo.

Conclusion

When a *ghost bike* is placed in the public eye, it unfolds a plurality of possibilities that might engender any of the following: (i) new urban materialities, such as bicycle lanes; (ii) new forms of social relations among human beings, as demonstrated by cyclists gathering to promulgate for safe mobility public policies, demonstrations that install ghost bikes in public spaces or even ceremonies to honour the memory of those who are killed by traffic violence; and (iii) new social relations between humans and non-humans, for example, the relations between motorised and nonmotorised vehicles.

As a matter of fact, *ghost bikes* bring to light a mode of life and of death inseparable from its form, which means that 'acts and processes of living are never simply facts, but always and above all possibilities of life, always and above all [human] potency' (Agamben, 2017, p. 232). This political form of life, this life/death as potency—what Agamben calls *bios*—discloses a form of life where oeuvre, life and the loss of life are blurred. In other words, the *ghost bike* inscribes the life and death of the cyclists as an oeuvre and oeuvre as life.

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21 Mediating social interaction through a chatbot to leverage the diversity of a community

Tensions, paradoxes, and opportunities

Amalia De Götzen, Peter Kun, Luca Simeone, and Nicola Morelli

Abstract: Emerging digital technology could enable communities to benefit from the diversity of their members mutually. This chapter explores the process of designing a chatbot application aiming to mediate people interaction through diversity-aware algorithms. In particular, we focus on designing a specific chatbot application that builds on the diversity of university students—the envisioned end-users—to accommodate their diverse needs and preferences while leveraging the diversity represented in their community.

Keywords: AI, diversity, service design, chatbot, communities

Introduction

The case discussed in this chapter is part of the EU-funded WeNet project (www.internetofus.eu), which aims to develop the culture, science, engineering methodologies, algorithms, and the social interaction protocols that will support the design of a new generation of applications, in which diversity is learned by algorithms and leveraged to benefit a given community. Diversity can be interpreted in many ways: from the superficial meaning referring to apparent physical characteristics or demographic categories to a deep-level meaning referring to different routine behaviours or worldviews. For example, someone who approaches cooking as an art differs from someone who looks at cooking as a chore and a meal as sustenance. Within our specific case study, we refer to this latter, deep understanding of diversity, which is articulated in terms of social practices, that is, the activities that shape people's everyday lives.

Despite such an approach's promises, engaging with diversity requires addressing important ethical aspects and continuous reflection. In this chapter, we discuss how to ethically operationalise this definition of diversity in the design of a very simple chatbot application that connects students to reinforce their sense of community. In the following parts of the chapter, we first define diversity based on social practices, together with the rationale for its adoption in a chatbot application. Then we present the experimental setting and discuss the preliminary analysis of the qualitative data collected from the different pilot sites.

Characterisation of diversity in the WeNet project

Diversity exists only between individuals and emerges through their interaction: we can recognise and qualify diversity when we compare ourselves to others. We actively use

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our diversity-awareness in our social interactions (Harrison et al., 1998). Our awareness evolves in time as we acquire more information, and our perceptions are based more on observed behaviour than superficial classifications, that is, stereotypes (Jackson et al., 1995). What if the observations were instead made by a machine that mediates human interactions? The WeNet platform (Miorandi et al., 2021) has been designed to develop this kind of application, like the chatbot, under discussion in this chapter.

The diversity-aware algorithms and applications running on the WeNet platform, like our chatbot, form a socio-technical system aiming to connect people who could benefit from each other's competencies and skills to address their everyday challenges. The platform must understand people's needs and identify the right individuals who could handle them and possess the set of characteristics—a shared practice—that are recognisable on a social level and respond to the expressed need to address these challenges. Another challenge for the system is identifying the diverse elements of users' social practices. Alongside the demographic characteristics (here understood as superficial diversity), we suggest conceptualising the diversity of users based on their "social practices". The theory of social practices (Shove et al., 2012) is proposed to consider both surface-level and deep-level characteristics of a person, that is, to respect both the individual characteristics (e.g., gender, age, and other characteristics) and that of the individual as part of a collectivity (their skills, abilities, and competencies). Social practice can be further specified through three fundamental elements (Shove & Pantzar, 2005): (i) competence, (ii) meaning, and (iii) material.

- *Competence* incorporates skills, know-how, (background) knowledge, and social and relational skills required to perform the practice.
- *Meaning* incorporates the issues relevant to that material, that is, understandings, beliefs, values, norms, lifestyle, and emotions.
- *Material* covers all physical aspects of the performance of the practices, encompassing objects, infrastructures, tools, and hardware, including the human body.

These three elements exist on a social level (i.e., separated from the individual). In different combinations, they form various practices. However, material, competence, and meaning can be traced back to the individual. The way an individual combines the elements of a specific practice reveals their belonging to that practice. In this sense, individuals are not merely described with skewed attributes, but they are seen as members of a collectivity, also called a community of practice (Wenger, 1999). They develop a shared practice, which becomes a repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems. The platform can then help the collectivity of practitioners to improve their performance and explore their community by leveraging and connecting their different competencies, meanings, and material aspects of their practices.

The data collection

Multiple qualitative and quantitative data collection activities were conducted before and after the pilot to explore the different contexts and communities of practice represented in the different universities involved in the pilot. The four main activities were

- field research, through interviews and focus groups conducted in fall 2019 (D'Ettole et al., 2020) to better understand the ecosystem of the different pilots' locations;
- data collection performed through an online survey to explore the represented social practices (Bison et al., 2020);
- sensors data collection achieved through an online application (Zeni et al., 2014) aimed at understanding students' habits; and
- an exit survey and focus groups designed as instruments to evaluate specifically the chatbot experience (Bidoglia & Gaskell, 2021).

In this chapter, we focus on the chatbot experience and the post-pilot qualitative and quantitative evaluation. The pilot described in this chapter is the first of three such pilots. In this first pilot, we used the chatbot as a probe (Hutchinson et al., 2003) to investigate user perceptions of diversity and validate the chatbot itself as a meaningful instrument in students' communities.

The pilot study

Months of lockdown worldwide forced people to rely on online services as it had never happened before. University students have been particularly affected by this situation: students who relocated to a new city needed to start their education remotely in a new place and faced challenges collaborating with peers without many possibilities to meet them in person. In this context, we conducted a two-week pilot study in March 2021, with the AskForHelp chatbot, built on the WeNet platform by the WeNet consortium, to assess its utility to re-connect students otherwise isolated because of the pandemic and to observe how a group of participants reacted to a diversity-driven chatbot.

The designed user-user interaction model is shown in Figure 21.1. User A wants to ask a question triggered with the/question command in the first step. The chatbot invites other community members (Users B, C, and D) to answer the question in the second step. Any and multiple of these users can answer. In the third step, User D answers. In the fourth step, the chatbot forwards User D's answer to

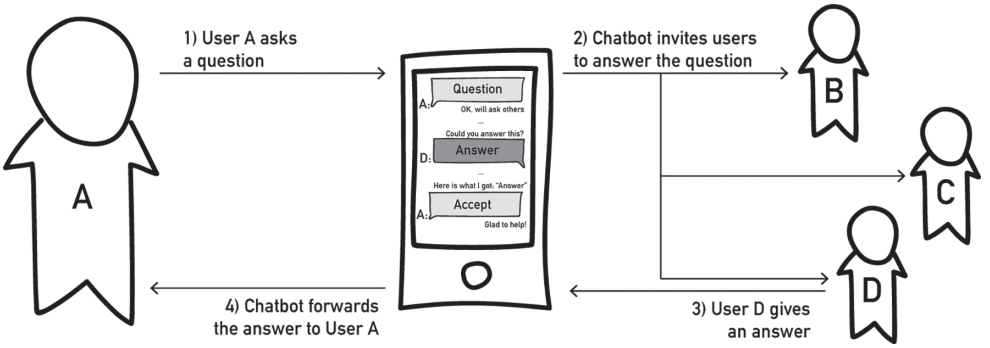

Figure 21.1 The user-user interaction is entirely mediated through the chatbot.

User A, who can then accept the answer or ask the chatbot to invite more users to answer. It must be noticed that the AskForHelp chatbot is not following the concept of interacting with a conversational agent in natural language, like early research on chatbots such as ELIZA (Weizenbaum, 1966) or Alice (Wallace, 2009). The AskForHelp chatbot is a "botplication" (Klopfenstein et al., 2017); a lightweight interface accessed through an instant messaging platform (i.e., Telegram), solving a problem that should not warrant yet another app on the user's mobile device. This design space is emerging since chatbots' social roles, and conversational capabilities are still underexplored but could support richer social interactions in online communities (Seering et al., 2019).

Participants

In total, 195 students participated in the current study: 34 in Denmark, 47 at the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom, 53 at the University of Trento in Italy, 39 at The National University of Mongolia in Mongolia and 22 at the Universidad Catolica Nuestra Senora de la Asunción in Paraguay. All the students were volunteers and were granted monetary compensation for their participation in the study. The participants needed to install the Telegram app on their phones and install

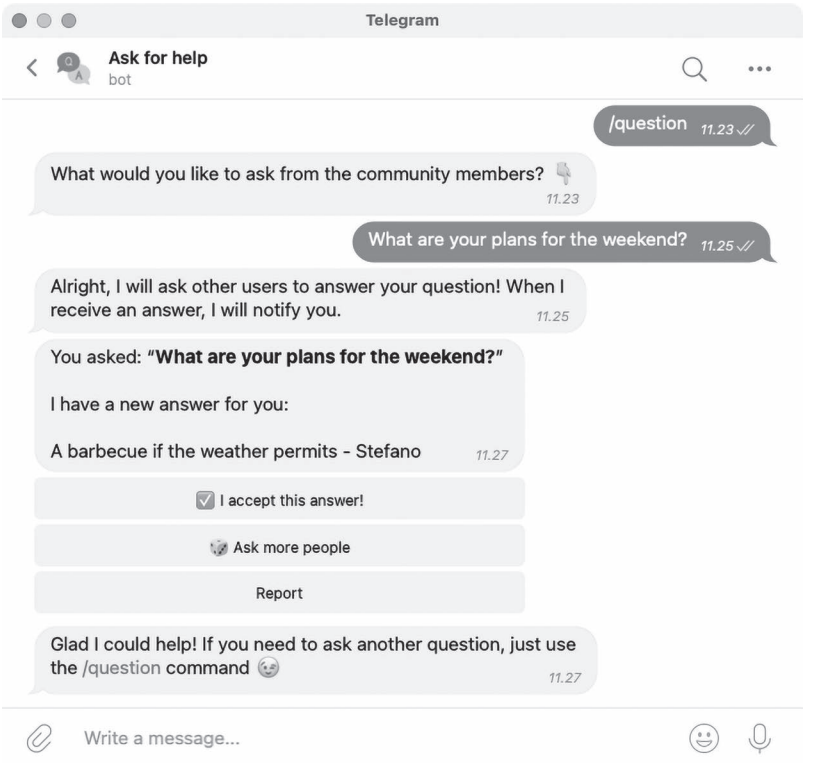

Figure 21.2 The chatbot mediated the interaction between users.

the AskForHelp chatbot. In the following section, we present the testing results with the 195 users over two weeks in the different pilot locations.

Data collection and analysis

We approached the data collection with mixed methods. Besides the log file available from the question-and-answer interactions within the chatbot, we also surveyed users at the end of the study. The survey contained a tailored questionnaire, following the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) (Venkatesh et al., 2012) to assess the participants' views on the chatbot design and its integration into their everyday life (Bidoglia & Gaskell, 2021). In each pilot's location, two focus groups were conducted and analysed with a total of ten participants.

Results and discussion

Over the two weeks, the questions asked varied over topics related to the university, the city in which the university is located, COVID-19 lockdown, hobbies, recommendations of music and TV shows, and so forth. Without going into the details of the UTAUT2 exit survey, the data across pilot locations showed:

1) The chatbot was easy to use, which indicates that a chatbot approach is suitable for such communities. In general, the participants found that the chatbot enabled a novel interaction with fellow students, which was especially appreciated by first-year students that started education in remote classrooms due to COVID-19 lockdowns.
2) The chatbot was considered useful to know more or feel part of the community and very useful to provide and reach out for help. However, participants found the interaction model limiting when they wanted to follow up with someone who answered them or engage with the same user with many questions and wished to exchange contacts for taking their conversation out of the chatbot.
3) The students felt at ease and enjoyed asking and replying to questions while finding the chatbot experience interesting. The participants unanimously mentioned the limited interaction model they found uncommon and the usability issue of simply receiving too many notifications from the chatbot that they often needed to mute for parts of the day. However, other perspectives emerged as well from the focus group discussions. One focus group participant praised the limited interaction model, steering her to more likely answer questions without the need to engage in a larger conversation, which she found "refreshing", not common on other social platforms. Another user highlighted how she had difficulty giving private answers to sensitive questions. While talking indirectly to a person through the chatbot is intriguing, she caught herself stopping a reply realising that she usually would not share such personal thoughts with a stranger.

In relation to the chatbot intervention, we observed that the chatbot managed to create a real feeling of community in some pilots, addressing the need to connect otherwise distant students. In Mongolia, for instance, the students made a habit of using the chatbot to cheer each other in the morning: the students started to refer to specific users in their questions (even if the chatbot itself does not allow asking questions to a

specific user) and in the last Q&As registered in the application, they wished for the experiment to continue to keep in touch with each other. In other student communities, like in Italy and Paraguay, where the students were mostly from engineering educations, they acted as a community that started to reverse engineer the chatbot itself: they collaborated through the chatbot in ways we did not imagine, leveraging each other's skills and knowledge to understand the inner mechanism of the application they were using. In Denmark, the students explicitly valued the possibility of connecting students with different educations, backgrounds, habits, and ultimately, lives. The chatbot was perceived in all pilots' locations as a safe space, provided by their trusted University, and as a place in which they could freely ask for help or offer it. Nevertheless, specific privacy concerns emerged, the paradoxical need of protecting their own privacy while simultaneously being willing to expose themselves to significant others in meaningful conversations.

Conclusion

In this preliminary study, we proposed to work with their diversity as a resource to a community of students challenged by the COVID-19 lockdown. We asked them to explore it through a diversity-aware chatbot application. We aimed to provide a new communication channel to explore the diversity represented in their communities and benefit from it while building empathy. In the current version of the chatbot, because of the limited data collection and the early design stage of the application, the different social practices had to be fully represented and made visible in the application and to the students themselves. Nevertheless, some reflection should be mentioned about the challenges, opportunities, and tensions of designing to leverage such a multifaceted concept, primarily through a technology-mediated intervention.

To enable algorithms to learn diversity means collecting many data points about the users and quantifying diversity to become measurable and often reduced to a series of numbers. In the WeNet approach, we claim to identify and quantify social practices transversal to people: the task remains quite demanding but possibly not a discriminatory one once the right level of granularity is found. In this first pilot, the users were not profiled yet, but the data collected through the survey and the chatbot experiment will inform the model of diversity that will be used in the next iteration. The coding of the Q&A allowed us to understand better the students' topics of interest and the relevant social practices associated. The next step is to design an algorithm that computes the distances between students' skills and knowledge to provide the right responder to a given question. Agency will be left to the users that will decide how and what type of "diverse" the responder should be with their own profile and the question asked. Considering the feedback, we got in this first pilot iteration. A data minimisation principle will be adopted.

We should be aware that the risk is always to introduce categories and labels that might not fully represent the community we are designing for or that might discriminate against the ones that deviate from the norm (Holtz, 2013). Machines are, in fact, not particularly good to capture nuances (Matzner, 2019), exposing the users of applications like the one we presented in this chapter to possible risks ("threat of invisibility" [Bucher, 2012], "statistical stereotyping" [Cheney-Lippold, 2011], cf. [Schelenz et al., 2019]).

Future research should consider mitigating pre-existing biases through machine learning fairness (Oneto & Chiappa, 2020) and a more participatory process. The users themselves can, in fact, help define their diversity through participatory data analysis and suggest how to use it in diversity-aware services. The final goal is to empower the online community to manage their own data as a commons (Morelli et al., 2017; Ostrom, 1990).

Furthermore, in the current settings of the pilot, the very same application is used in different pilot sites, and we are still in the process of fully understanding local habits and cultural aspects that might have influenced not only the overall experience through the chatbot application but also the machine learning algorithms. Just to mention the more obvious aspect of this point, youth in different countries use smartphones differently (Mathur et al., 2017; Meegahapola et al., 2021), and the data collection needs to take place these differences across cultures and countries into account.

To conclude, our preliminary results indicate that a Q&A chatbot may positively support community members to benefit mutually from the diversity of the community, but the reported study has limitations. First, our intervention was a paid research experiment, which tells limited information whether a chatbot would be persistently integrated into the participants everyday as part of a student community. Second, the envisioned user interactions stretched what is feasible with a chatbot, which resulted in additional user effort. Third, while the chatbot was promoted and communicated as a diversity-aware chatbot, the respective algorithms to connect two users based on diversity dimensions were missing in the current study. In this respect, our diversity-related findings can only consider how the users found the concept in general, but not its effect. This goal will be part of the next iterations of the chatbot pilots.

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