Pluralistic methods in codesign: a co-speculation play method for feminist Utopias in urban Türkiye*

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a co-speculation method developed in urban Türkiye, economically, socially and politically fluctuating geography. This method leverages decolonial and feminist design studies to emphasise pluralism and the integration of underrepresented knowledge systems, thus benefiting from their valuable epistemological and methodological contributions. We show the details from the development of the feminist co-speculation method through co-design sessions, showcasing how it adapts to and is reshaped by the social realities in urban Türkiye.

1. Introduction

Decolonial perspectives are widely adopted in Participatory Design (PD) to achieve a plural design state. In decolonial studies, scholars employ indigenous ontologies in the participatory design process to forefront cultural pluralism and autonomy of knowledge systems (de O. Martins & de Oliveria, 2016; Smith et al. 2020). This supports pluriversality, endorsing non-Western thinking and enhancing autonomy in creative endeavours (Escobar 2018). Yet, decoloniality studies have highlighted the potential risk of overlooking pluralism in designerly methods, especially in PD (Schultz et al. 2018; Smith et al. 2020).

Bardzell (2018) investigated the merging of feminist utopian thinking and Participatory Design (PD) as a promising plural approach, allowing individuals to express their ontologies. Developing participatory design methods aligned with feminist utopian thinking holds the potential to nurture imaginative concepts (Bardzell 2018).

Utopia as a method (Levitas 2013), at the intersection of decoloniality and feminism, enables envisioning an ideal society with specific characteristics and inhabitants, empowering individuals to communicate their ontologies. In PD, the method aids in identifying broader social issues (Bardzell 2018; Hope et al. 2019) and reinforces people's agency (Bardzell 2018). Co-speculation methods encourage imaginative exploration of alternative societies, drawing from critical theory (Bray and Harrington 2021). Simultaneously, the play's open nature challenges the status quo, probing personal, interpersonal, and systemic relations (Dumit 2017; Flanagan 2009; Ryding 2019).

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*In this work, we use 'Türkiye', the original name of the country, in line with its official usage by Turkish locals and as referenced in Turkish papers. This approach respects people's choices and aligns with a decolonial perspective.

Our study, grounded in utopia as a method, aims to materialise the co-speculation process through game mechanics, focusing on speculating around underrepresented feminist practices in Türkiye. Building on this, Türkiye could use its feminist practices to promote diverse cooperation, addressing challenges from post-COVID situations, earthquakes, and economic downturns as cooperative platforms are increasingly adopted. In our co-design process, we were mindful of existing studies on decolonial pluralism, shaping our approach to unlock the potential of a co-speculation play method that explores underrepresented feminist knowledge systems.

Inspired by diverse feminist rituals in Türkiye and aligned with Levitas's (2013) notion of selflessness and cooperation as utopian glimpses, this paper focuses on the emergence of plural applications. It highlights co-design sessions developing a versatile co-speculation play method tailored for non-Western contexts.

2. Related work

In this section, for building a tailored co-design process in the Turkish context, we introduce previous work on decolonial perspectives on PD, feminist utopian thinking, and the potential of play as a co-speculation method.

2.1. Decolonial approaches to pluralism in PD

In Participatory Design (PD), the decolonial paradigm confronts colonial origins, emphasising underrepresented and indigenous perspectives while encouraging the autonomy of non-Western knowledge systems (Escobar 2018; Smith et al. 2020; Talhouk and Armouch 2022). Scholars highlighted researchers' unconscious cultural biases (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012), discussed the colonial roots of methods (Smith et al. 2020), and emphasised centring community values in research design (Garcia et al. 2021; Lazem et al. 2021; Talhouk and Armouch 2022).

Scholars used methods incorporating complementary indigenous ontologies to address contextual and cultural pluralism in narration. Smith et al. (2020) explored generating localised design knowledge through probing and oral narration, capturing Namibian cultural realities. Triggers, such as archival images and newspaper articles deconstructing everyday narratives, empowered participants' expression. Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake (2012) used African philosophical principles of humanness to reconceptualise PD methods. Additionally, Barcham (2021) identified collaborative storytelling, a longstanding design tradition, as an indigenous co-design methodology. In the intersection of speculation, critical design, and participation, de O Martins and de Oliveira (2016) disrupted linear design thinking by emphasising entanglements across time in Latin American timelessness. Experimenting with and applying these approaches informed scholars about research design, providing a contrast to prevalent Western methodologies.

Scholars deliberately contemplated the research design, mainly focusing on the impact of cultural and contextual nuances on participation (Barcham 2021). This included integrating culture-specific rituals to express respect at the beginning of the workshop and embracing unplanned, community-driven activities (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012). Rather than adhering to pre-set schedules, the workshop's

natural flow fostered a relational understanding of the value of time (Barcham 2021). A powerful strategy of researchers involved empowering participants to guide the design process, fostering a sense of familiarity (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012). Furthermore, interpretations of concepts like decoloniality and participation vary in understanding and adoption within specific community contexts (Smith et al. 2020; Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012). It is crucial to align with the diverse interpretations and applications of such concepts and theories in non-Western contexts.

We are inspired by how scholars introduce underrepresented ontologies, encourage the expression of ontological perspectives, adopt methods to explore contextual reality, be adaptive, and interrogate the plural meaning around concepts. To explore these, we introduce the co-design process of the co-speculation play method that encourages engagement with often-neglected feminist rituals in Türkiye. As we illustrated theoretical and methodological approaches, building methods with communities and being transparent with the co-design process can also expand the embraced strategies of decolonial scholars. Utilising the 'utopia as a method' theory by Levitas (2013), we co-created decolonial speculation materials. Through co-design, we refined these materials into a saturated decolonial feminist co-speculation method. This article showcases the method, its flaws, and its operation within a non-Western context, presenting a case of decolonial feminist co-design in Türkiye's urban setting.

2.2. Feminist Utopian thinking through play as a co-speculation method

Design speculation prompts critical reflections on potential preferred and non-preferred futures (Dunne and Raby 2013). Ongoing discussions centre on participation in speculation (Bray and Harrington 2021) and concerns raised regarding potential elitism and power imbalances related to gender, class, and race (Baumann et al. 2017; Martins 2014). Typically, utopias are conceived by designers, artists, and decision-makers (Levitas 2013). Integrating feminist viewpoints in envisioning and implementing participatory design can help address prevailing power dynamics (Bardzell 2018) and thus can also enhance speculation.

In PD, Afro-futurism (Bray and Harrington 2021; Bray et al. 2022) and Feminist Utopianism (Bardzell 2018) play critical roles in co-speculation, shaping inclusive and equity-driven design alternatives. Feminist utopianism is utilised in PD as a complementary methodology within hackathons (Hope et al. 2019) and maker spaces (Okerlund, Wilson, and Latulipe 2021) to re-imagine products, systems, and policies. Using utopia as a method framework in PD is considered to carry the social issues to a broader scale (Bardzell 2018; Hope et al. 2019) and reinforce the idea that individuals have agency and choice (Bardzell 2018).

Play is valuable for speculation to explore alternative presents and plausible futures (Coulton et al., 2016) and is utilised in the co-design process to stimulate thinking (Rüller et al. 2022). While games provide structure with designer's rules, play encourages the exploration of personal, interpersonal, and systemic relations (Ryding 2019). Play empowers participants to establish their own rules and challenges conventional design roles, fostering a change in thinking (Dumit 2017), making it a valuable tool for plural co-speculation.

While prior decolonial studies have attempted various strategies to achieve a plural design state, exploring building methods with communities still needs to be explored. Aligned with the core commitments of decoloniality to dismantle epistemological and ontological coloniality (Lazem et al. 2021) and drawing from feminist thinking, Levitas (2013) encourages individuals to exercise their ontological capacity during imagining. As emphasised by Bardzell (2018), constructing PD methods that align with feminist utopian thinking can foster imaginative concepts imbued with philosophical depth.

Acknowledging the complementary nature of decoloniality and utopia as a method, we co-designed a co-speculation method with participants in Istanbul, Türkiye. Instead of providing a predefined game structure, we utilise game mechanics that promote play and speculation. Using the open play method and feminist utopian thinking, we showcase a case involving creating, applying, and assessing a 'decolonial feminist co-speculation method'.

3. Acknowledging the context & positionality

Economically, socially and politically fluctuating, in Türkiye, co-speculations can be of utmost importance. With COVID-19, severe earthquakes, and the ongoing economic breakdown, there is a visible increase in the uptake of platforms for cooperation used by people and communities (Karabacak and Aslı Sezgin 2019). However, from a pluralistic perspective, Türkiye may have the potential to benefit from its feminist rituals to create nuanced forms of digital cooperation.

As feminists and design justice academics in Istanbul, our shared backgrounds and experiences have profoundly shaped our perspective on pluralism, decoloniality, and feminism in design research. Raised in Türkiye and influenced by first-world scholarship and local indigenous knowledge, our unique backgrounds enrich our viewpoint. These dual influences and ongoing reflections fuel our commitment to reimagining conventional design approaches. We firmly believe that design research can challenge systemic oppression and empower marginalised communities.

In this article, we aim to contribute to the global discourse on decolonial feminism in design, taking the role of halfies (greetings to Abu-Lughod) and reflecting on our local cultures from inside and outside at the same time, highlighting the need for a more equitable, transformative, and inclusive approach to design.

4. Co-design study method

This section introduces our study procedures: participants, study structure and materials, session tasks, procedure and data collection. The paper showcases the codesign of a co-speculation play method over 11 sessions with 42 participants, prompting method reconsideration and adaptation. Each session, moderated and documented by the first author, lasted 2–3 hours.

The linear thinking embedded in the Utopia as a method was cohesively articulated for the co-speculation play method. Across co-design sessions 1-2-3-4, our goal was to comprehend the engagement with game mechanics and determine which ontological boundary to establish and leave open for participants to shape. In sessions 1 and 2, we aimed to grasp the narration and speculation sequence and determine when to introduce

game mechanics such as unexpected event cards, avatar cards, and open mechanics like dice and an achievement board. In sessions 3 and 4, we aimed to observe and improve the speculation board. In session 5, our objective was to apply the fully integrated method to see the improvement potentials for documenting the design outcomes. Finally, we reached a co-speculation method, with game mechanics iteratively updated based on participant feedback after each session. In session 6, a playtest with 29 new participants assessed the method's effectiveness in the collaborative scenario of designing sharing systems, unveiling new opportunities for decolonial and feminist potentials.

4.1. Participants

For this study, we obtained ethical approvals from the university (2020.257.IRB3.098) and employed the snowballing method (Noy 2008), together with calls via neighbourhood centres and collectives. We sought community-connected individuals actively engaged in neighbourhood sharing, with a keen interest in collective systems and openness to playing board games. Across the first four sessions, we explored various relationship types – neighbours, friends, acquaintances, and long-term partners. The scope expanded to include colleagues and individuals unfamiliar with each other. This diverse approach aimed to capture different levels of solidarity and engagement within the sessions which is presented in Table 1.

4.2. Study structure & materials

In this section, we present the theoretical foundation, the mapping of play mechanics, and integrating a decolonial perspective into the initial method. In order to create the first round of co-design, we started by deconstructing the theoretical knowledge driven by Levitas (2013), which consists of three modes:

- *Archaeological inputs* include images of a good society described as political, social and economic programs and policies.
- *Ontology* is the part that incorporates reflections on the inhabitants of the imagined society. What qualities of people are prominent, valued or inhibited in this society?

Table 1. Participants for each session.

Sessions		Context	Recruitment	Participants	# of Participants	Sessions
(1)	Imaginaries on platforms and systems chosen by participants	Familiar environments based on participants will	Snowballing	Participants already acquainted and actively using sharing platforms	10	4
(1)	Collective rules for a non-hierarchical workplace	Shared workspace	Open call & snowballing	Co-worker design researchers	3	1
(1)	Enactment Session: Exploring the method to inform sharing platforms	Miro	Open call	Participants who do not know each other and active users of sharing platforms	29	6

- *Architecture* is where participants imagine alternative scenarios and design institutions and systems.

We tested each mode with classical play elements – events, characters, and maps (Truong 2018). Below, along with our rationale, we introduced the materialised version of Levitas's 'utopia as a method' as play materials.

4.2.1. Archaeological inputs

To start with, to explore the 'images of a good society described as political, social and economic programs and policies', we thought of using well-known possible events that relate to the Turkish geographical context. We introduced fictional and non-fictional unexpected event cards – for instance, possible crises (water shortage, earthquake) that would affect the collective and spark conversations on applied social policies, programs, and platforms. In conversations in urban Türkiye, it is classic to talk about possible future events, everyday struggles and individuals' relationships to world views (Tarhan 2022).

4.2.2. Ontology

To understand the 'reflections on the inhabitants of the imagined society', we thought of several options (such as giving free cards or giving components from which participants can build the 'inhabitants'). However, we united in the idea that a set of pre-defined avatar cards diversified in their economic and social conditions could best reveal some frictions. We also speculated that the 'faith' concept (you can not choose where and under which conditions you were born) could be another cultural clue to help participants co-imagine the avatar in the given context.

4.2.3. Architecture

With the influence of existing decolonial studies on involving underrepresented knowledge systems in speculation (e.g. de O. Martins & de Oliveria, 2016), inspiration cards introduce community-driven and care-oriented feminist cooperation practices in Türkiye (see Figure 1). These cards encompassed traditional social cooperation networks
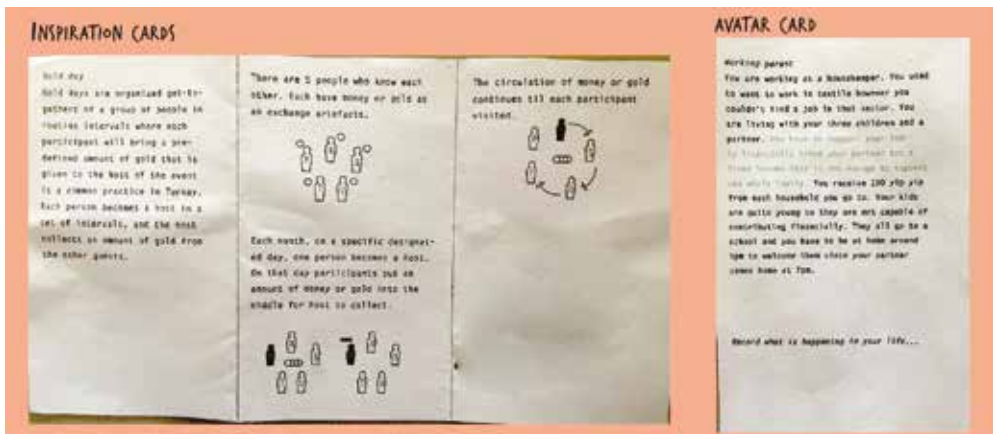

Figure 1. Documentation of co-design session 1, close-up to the map (right).

like neighbours (Çiçek 2023), such as organised solidarity events like 'gold days', where members exchanged small amounts of gold in monthly turns within smaller groups (Büyükokutan 2012). The inspiration cards embody attributes from these practices, including collective negotiation, balanced contributions, enjoyment, social engagement, and sustaining caring exchanges through familiarity. These cards serve as counter-archaeological instances that participants would architect their utopias around. We supported the architecture by including a pre-determined map featuring two worlds (individualistic vs. collectivity-oriented) to see how participants benefit or not while imagining an achievement board, a fictional exchange value, and dice to explore how participants set values around achievements, monetary or non-monetary exchanges, and integrate these to the speculation flow.

Our initial materials aimed to create a shared visual language, offering easily relatable contextual information for discussions and negotiations. Following an adaptive co-design approach aligned with decolonial studies (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012), we prioritise participant influence in shaping the process.

4.3. Data collection & the development of the play materials

This section details chronological modifications to core game elements – unexpected event cards, inspiration cards, avatar cards, and the speculation board – derived from insights and lessons gained after each session (see Table 2). Additional mechanics were improved with minor adjustments and given after each session.

Throughout all sessions, workshops were audio-recorded and transcribed, with the data analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke 2006) by the authors. Upon reviewing the

Table 2. Overview of sessions.

Session	Given core game mechanics in each session
Co-design 1 *Everything belongs to everyone, and no one*	Non-fiction & fiction unexpected event cards. Pre-determined avatar cards. Inspiration card deck introducing sharing systems in Türkiye. Pre-determined map with two worlds (individualistic vs. collectivity-oriented). Achievement board. Dice.
Co-design 2 *An emerging water shortage*	Non-fiction unexpected event cards Fictional exchange value is replaced with an economic cycle board. Idea bank introduced. Pre-determined avatar cards The predetermined map was removed.
Co-design 3 *Food production is limited*	A speculation board was introduced based on the sequence of speculation and involved game mechanics in Sessions 1 and 2. Pre-determined avatar cards updated with sensitivities. The economic cycle board was adjusted as supplementary material to avatar cards.
Co-design 4 *Pandemic outbreak*	Updated speculation board given. Achievement board as a blank template.
Co-design 5 *Collective rules for a non-hierarchical workplace*	Updated speculation board given. Avatar cards and economic cycle board as blank templates.
Co-Speculation 6 - Enactment session *Exploring the method to inform sharing platforms*	Updated speculation board given.

data collected from each session, we developed initial codes centred on collectivity, pluralism, and decoloniality. Their theoretical implications and overall outcomes are explored in Sections 4.3.5 (Emerging Themes) and 6 (Discussion).

4.3.1. Session 1: learning from the speculation process through pre-defined game mechanics

In the first session (n:2, neighbours), participants received a predetermined map with two worlds (individualistic vs. collectivity-oriented), an avatar card, inspiration cards (Figure 1), an achievement board, fictional exchange values, unexpected event cards and dice to support their speculations. Additionally, a rule is given, 'everything belongs to everyone and noone', to provoke participants to reflect on collectivity. Assessing their interaction identified materials to iterate on and exclude.

4.3.1.1. Insights & revisions after Co-speculation 1.

4.3.1.1.1. Unexpected event cards and fictional value updated to encourage speculations around contextual realities.. Participants favoured non-fiction unexpected event cards when crafting their speculations, reflecting specifically on familiar contextual events and experiences while envisioning a collectivity-oriented world. Rather than speculating on fictional events, they felt more at ease speculating on non-fiction crises in Türkiye. Based on these learnings, unexpected event cards were updated to non-fiction topics with solidarity and collectivity potentials (e.g. water shortage). The fictional value acted exactly as 'money' through the speculation process. Participants put fictional numbers and called them yipyips (See Figure 2, right), derived from the avatar card description. To delve deeper, we introduced an economic exchange cycle board detailing each avatar's monthly resources and needs.

4.3.1.1.2. Eliminating some pre-defined game mechanics to empower participants. Through the speculation process, aiming to speculate around a collectivity-oriented world encouraged players to negotiate economic suggestions and discuss the nature of their collective or individual intentions. On the contrary, some pre-identified game mechanisms, such as the map and pre-given rules, did not prompt interest. Learning from this, we removed the predetermined map as participants constructed their speculations without engaging with it. We deliberately avoided enforcing the rule 'everything

Figure 2. Given materials, inspiration card & avatar card example.

belongs to everyone and no one' to empower participants to envision their own rules for an ideal collectivity-oriented world and unexpected events.

4.3.2. Session 2: learning from the speculation process through pre-defined game mechanics

In the second session, three people acquainted through friendship compared various economic conditions and addressed a challenging scenario – a water shortage with no quick monetary solution. To enhance resource distribution, each person received distinct economic cycle boards (see Figure 3). An Idea Bank was introduced to acknowledge and record participant contributions.

4.3.2.1. Insights & revisions after Co-speculation 2.

4.3.2.1.1. Detailing avatar cards to encourage discussion towards contextual biases. Predetermined avatar cards are updated in response to biases and sensitivities observed in the session; we included roles (e.g. sensitivity to national preconceptions) and responsibilities (e.g. awareness of existing infrastructures). To boost avatars' interaction and promote non-monetary speculations regarding Unexpected Event Cards, we incorporated details that link their lives as neighbours. Economic Cycle Boards were modified as supplementary materials, given with avatar cards, to highlight potential economic events and aspirations in the avatars' lives, creating room for non-monetary cooperation.

4.3.2.1.2. Introducing speculation board: reorganising utopia as a method through contextual narration. Participants suggested a common enemy or clear goal to foster cooperation without predefined winning conditions. This led us to introduce a central speculation board where collective decisions and social challenges are framed as everyday struggles in the game environment. The notions of Utopia as a method are described as distinct stages; however, during the speculation process through the game mechanics, they complemented each other, and consequently, participants discussed them cohesively. The speculation board shapes the sequence of speculation with open questions (see Figure 4). In this version, the order begins with an initial discourse on individuality, collectivity and rules of the game environment, followed by the creation of avatars and the establishment of connections within their fictitious lives. Participants then explore inspiration cards, investigate unexpected events while identifying relevant stakeholders, and revisit inspiration cards in light of these events. Finally, the process concludes with

Figure 3. The economic cycle board, improved unexpected event & an inspiration card.
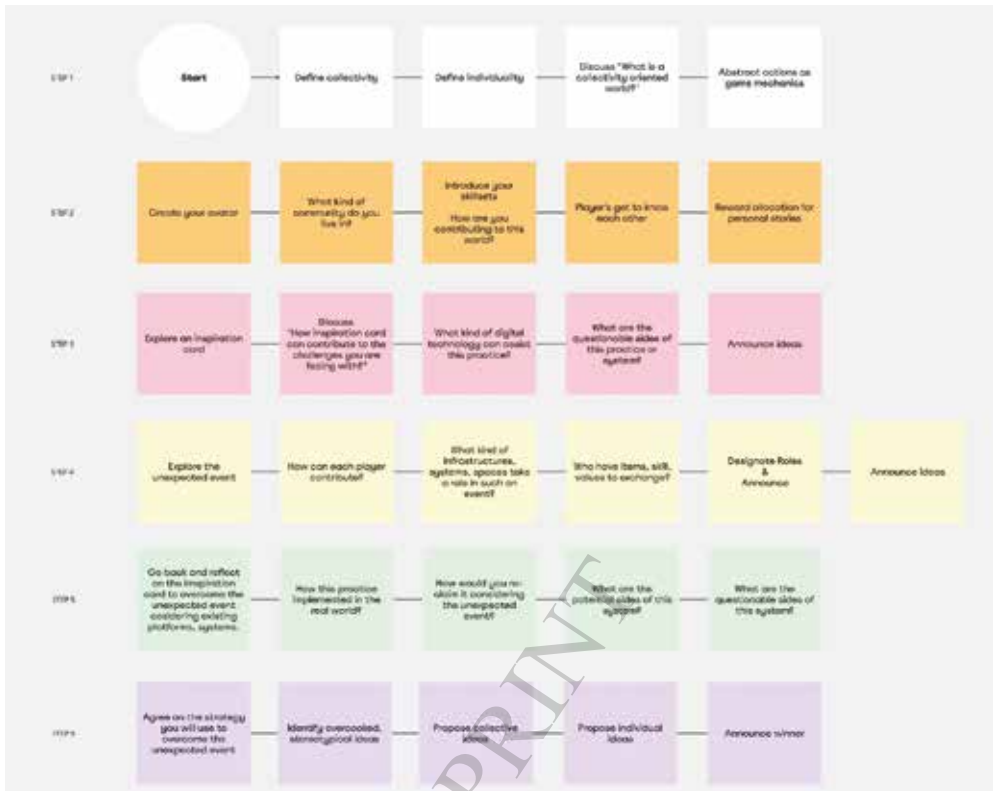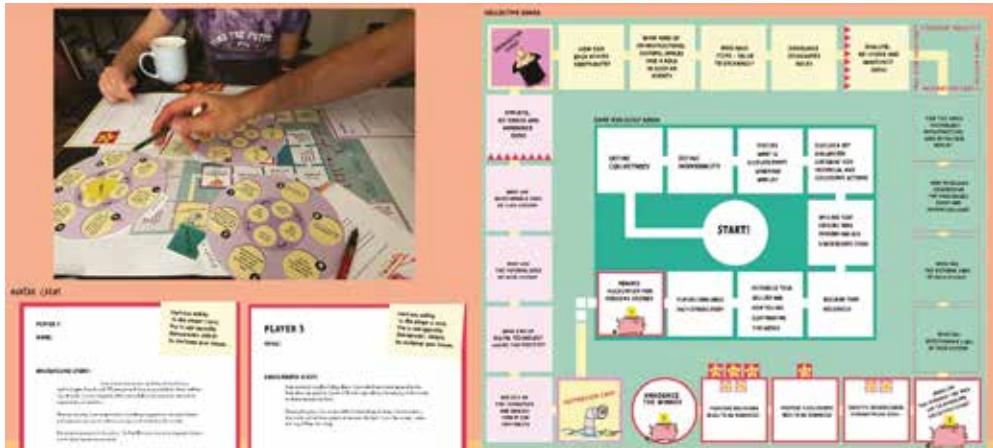
Figure 4. Speculation board.

a collaborative effort to formulate, refine, and present a strategy and system. The speculation board had rewards for individual and collective goals (Idea Bank) to encourage participants to engage with avatar stories and share ideas.

4.3.3. Session 3: refining the speculation sequence & game mechanics

In the third session, three participants (acquaintances) investigated constraints in food production and devised a system for managing surplus food. Alongside updated game mechanics, a speculation board was introduced in this session which is available on Figure 5.

4.3.3.1. Insights and revisions after Co-speculation 3.

4.3.3.1.1. Achievement board as a blank template for people to determine "what is worth rewarding?". Based on the rewarding stages on the speculation board, Idea Bank (moderator) rewarded the participants. With active participation and idea sharing, determining a winner at the workshop's end lost significance; participants recognised that the play was not about winning. Instead, we encouraged participants to designate what is worth rewarding in the imagined environment. The 'Achievement Board' was updated as a blank template for participants to determine what is worth rewarding in their imagined environment.

Figure 5. Third session documentation, avatar cards, & the speculation board.

4.3.3.1.2. Refining the Speculation Board to encourage abstraction of contextual dynamics. The Speculation board was revised again to ease the speculation process and logic. We aimed to condense the board by focusing on essential speculation notions. We condensed step 4, the exploration of the unexpected event, and moved it to the beginning of the play, thus shortening the two rounds into one. Additionally, we consolidated the presentation of a strategy section into a single step and added the 'Abstraction of Actions as a Game Mechanic' section on the speculation board. This addition, represented by dice and the achievement board, originated from participants discussing ideal societies in prior sessions without linking them to game mechanics. For instance, participants who proposed game mechanics (e.g. introducing an enemy) needed a system to document these ideas.

4.3.4. Session 4: refining the speculation sequence and game mechanics (remote session)

In this session, changes and the method's virtual applicability were tested through a scenario involving 'the pandemic outbreak case'. Two long-term partners were selected to minimise potential alienation. Everything was created on the Miro board, and the session was audio recorded, accompanied by screenshots (see Figure 6).

4.3.4.1. Insights & revisions after Co-speculation 4.

4.3.4.1.1. Blank avatar cards and economic cycle boards to encourage ontological expression. Avatar cards are provided as blank templates for participants to customise and contemplate ontologies they are familiar with or unfamiliar with (See Figure 7).

4.3.4.1.2. Refining the speculation board to interrogate plural meanings and understanding around concepts. The speculation board is once more simplified to refine the speculation process. We optimised and integrated reflection on the unexpected event cards and interrogation of the relevant parties to the beginning of the speculation board before discussions on collectivity and individuality to ensure a more sharpened discussion on the collectivity and individuality-related assets. We modified the questions on the
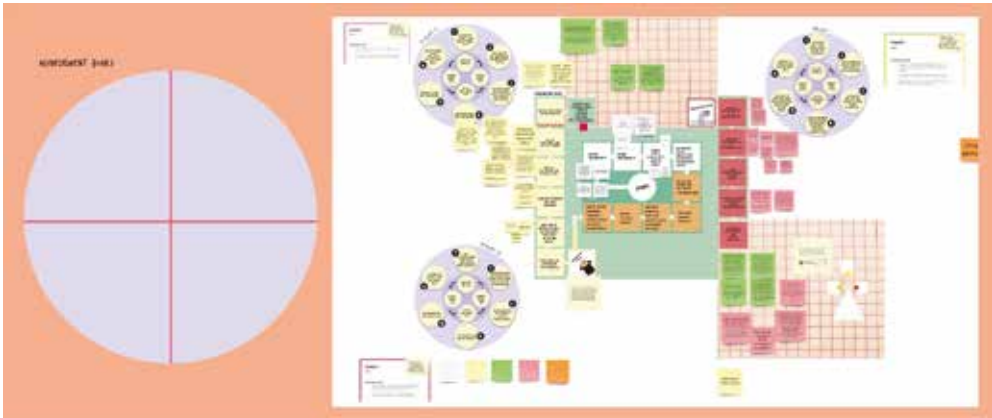
**Figure 6.** Achievement board & documentation of the fourth session.
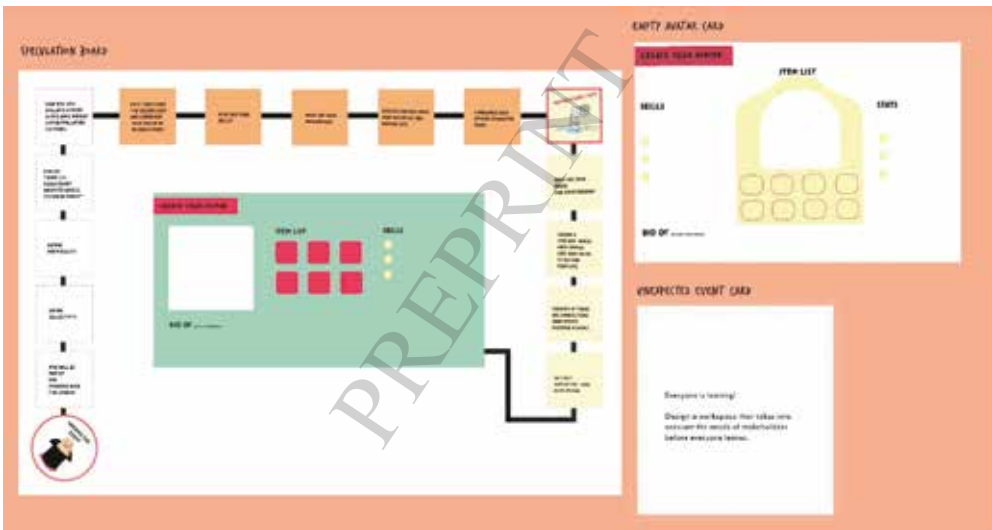
Figure 7. The speculation board, avatar card & unexpected event card.

avatar's section on the speculation board to enhance engagement with the avatar cards, addressing both individual and collective needs and strengthening the connections. We removed the abstraction of the game mechanics section for inspiration cards to prevent didactic interpretations and give participants more freedom to draw inspiration for their system proposals.

4.3.5. Session 5: application of the method to a real life setting

Unlike earlier trials, this session involved three co-workers speculating on the unexpected event card: 'Everyone is leaving! Design a workplace that considers the needs of the affected parties'. Participants adapted the play for interactions with colleagues in their workplace, aiming to gain insights into the design's practicality. The documentation is available in Figure 8.
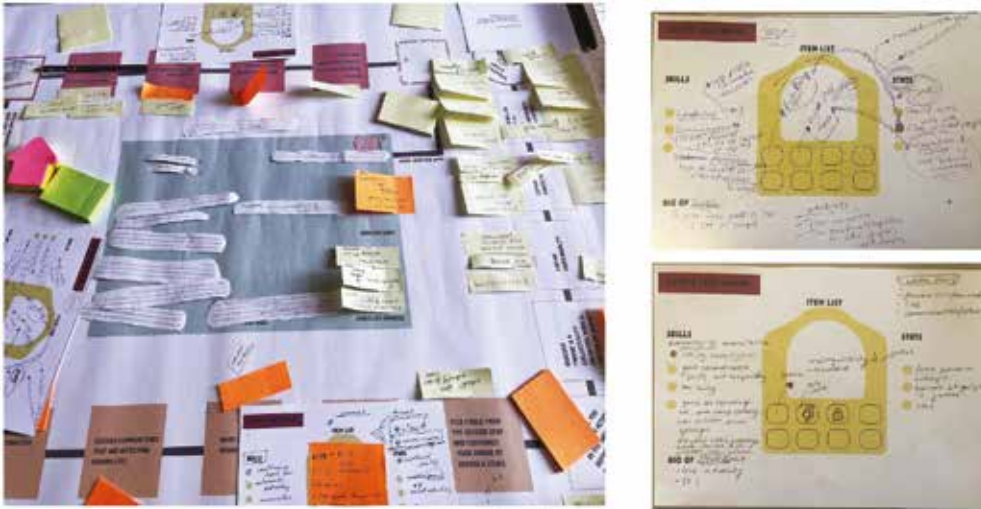
Figure 8. Documentation of session 5.

4.3.5.1. Insights & revisions after co-speculation 5.

4.3.5.1.1. Refining the speculation board to prevent overlaps with additional game mechanics. The avatar card section on the *speculation board* was refined after this session to avoid redundancy, as individual reflections on skills, weaknesses, and desires were already covered through avatar cards. The guidance for collective discussions was retained on the board. Furthermore, specific questions were modified to improve engagement with inspiration cards and delve into their potential advantages and drawbacks.

4.3.5.1.2. A deck of platform cards featuring familiar sharing platforms. For the upcoming enactment session, we opted for a more traditional topic of collectivity among people who do not know each other, namely imagining the sharing platforms. This topic is already criticised for its lack of fairness and plurality. To facilitate reflection on sharing platforms, we introduced a set of sharing platform cards based on a report of sharing platforms in Türkiye (Subasi and Kirkulak-Uludag 2021), as illustrated in Figure 9. Not separately introduced, we integrated these cards with unexpected event cards.

4.3.6. Session 6: co-speculation enactment session

We designed six parallel-running non-moderated co-speculation sessions (n:29) via Miro Board (see Figure 10). Insights from this session are integrated into the discussion. However, before that, we introduce the final design.

4.4. Final version: the co-speculation play method

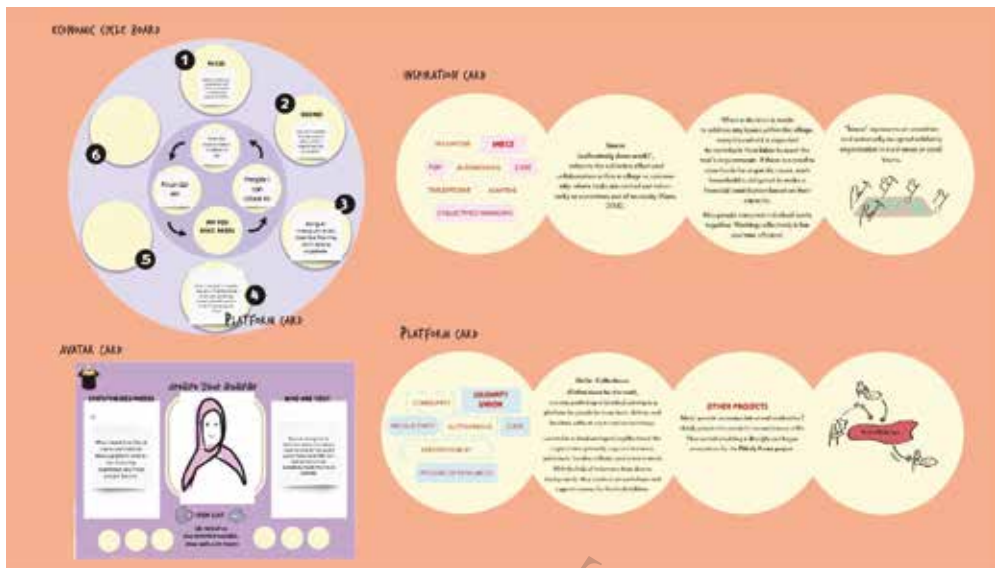This section introduces the final version of the co-speculation play method developed in co-design sessions.

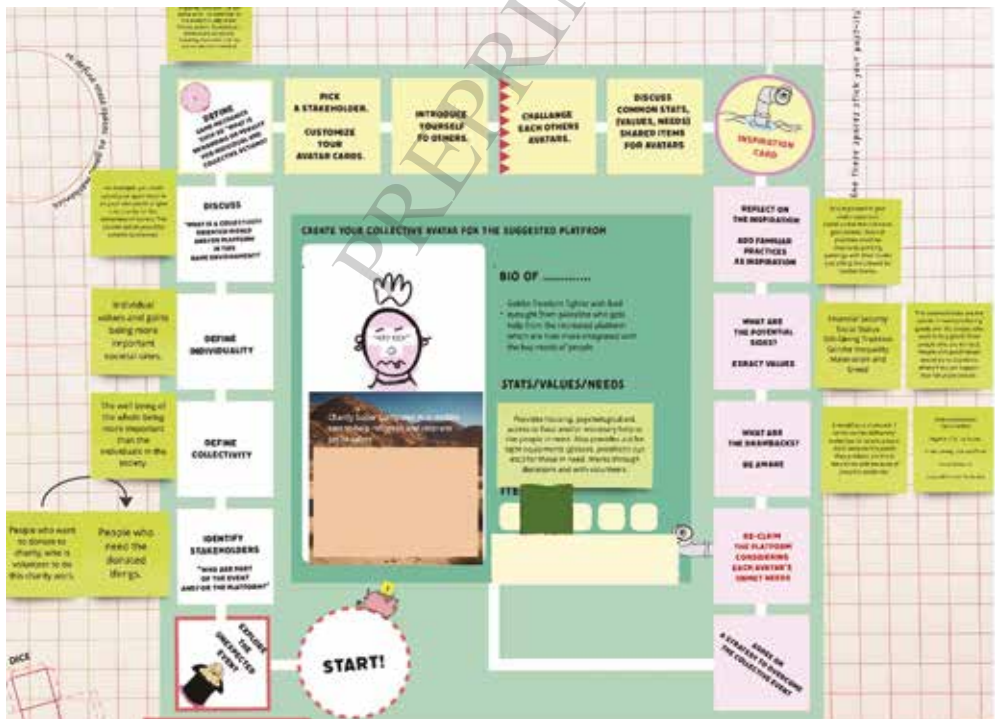**Figure 9.** Economic cycle board, avatar card, inspiration card & platform card.

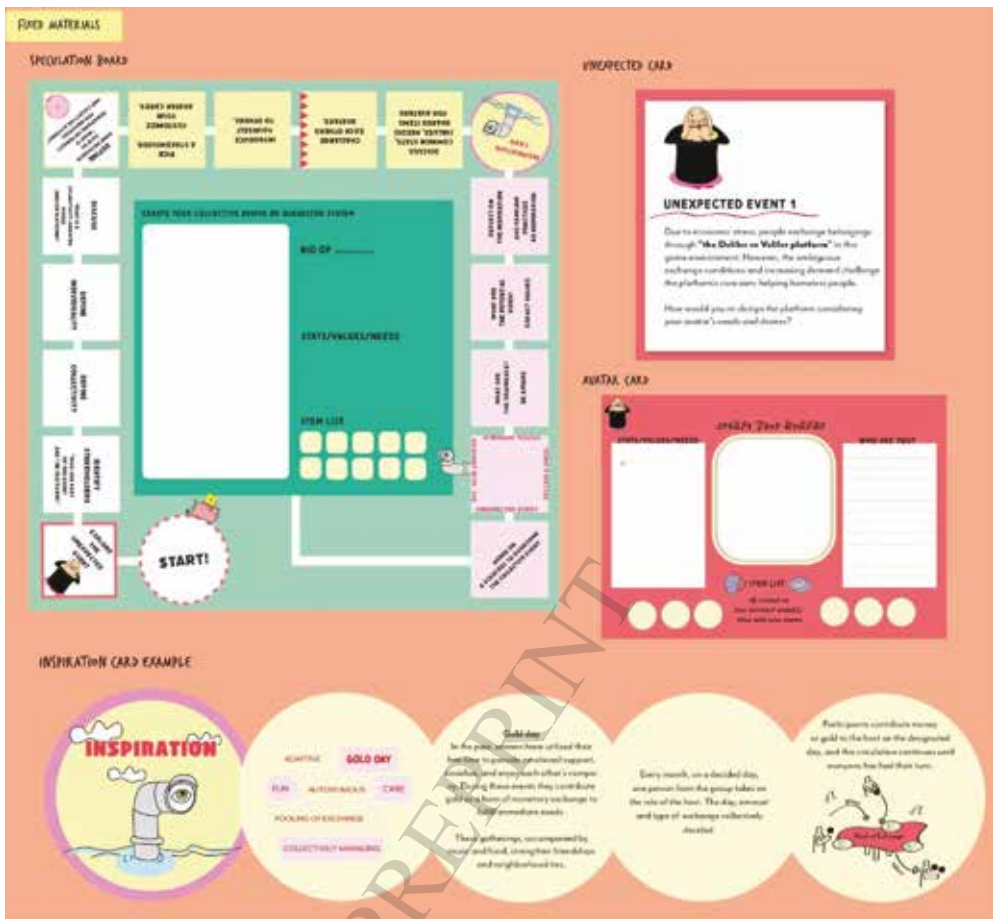**Figure 10.** Documentation of session 6.

Figure 11. Core items.

4.4.1. Core items

Materials that remain constant throughout the process are the speculation board, unexpected event cards, blank avatar cards, and inspiration cards, as displayed in Figure 11.

4.4.2. Optional materials

Participants are given a dice and an achievement board based on their willingness to engage with them which are available in Figure 12. Examples similar to 'Platform cards' can be incorporated depending on the topic of speculation.

4.4.3. Rules

We have integrated the sequence onto the speculation board to prevent the moderator's rules from being overly authoritative, eliminating the need for an external 'user manual'. The players collectively resolve any uncertainties.

4.4.4. What is needed
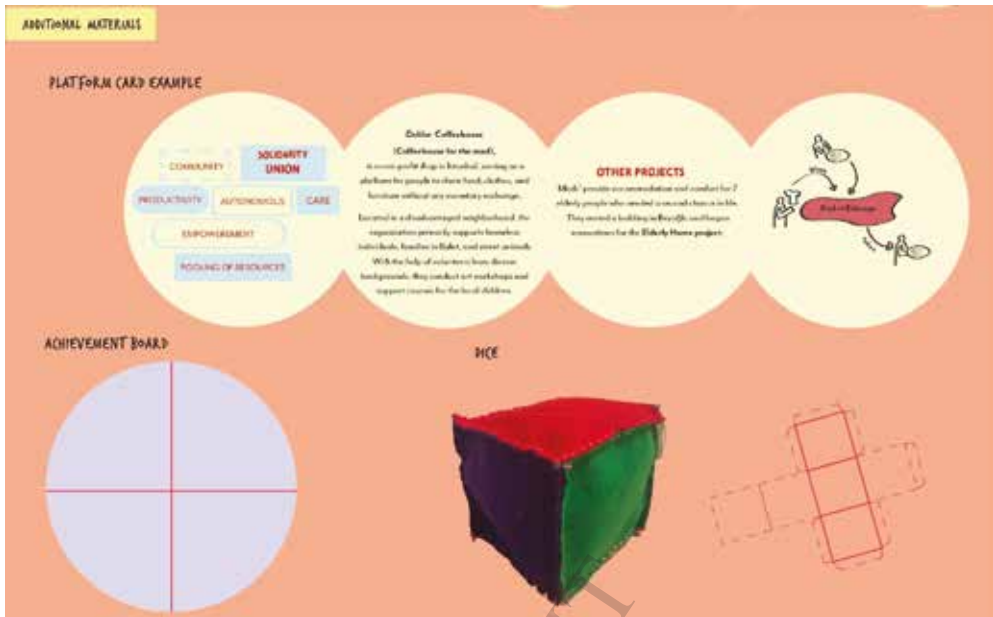
2–3 hours time, up to 5 people, moderator (optional)

Figure 12. Optional materials.

4.4.5. *How to document*

We recommend recording audio for in-depth analysis and using post-its and drawings on the board for marking critical elements. Observers are advised to familiarise themselves with the utopia method and its categories before the play session and document observations as field notes in a notebook immediately after the session.

Everyone can download and customise these elements from our open-source repository about the co-speculation method (Futurewell 2024).

5. Emerging themes

During the co-speculation play development, we documented key instances as memos and thematically categorised reveals, aiding our comprehension of the relationship between our the method's evolution and decolonial feminist perspectives, as well as pluralism in design. The identified themes are:

(1) Unfolding Plural Understandings: Upholding Individuality within Collective Systems arose from diverse codes such as 'preserving individuality', 'the dominance of collective identity', 'daily experiences', and 'the shaping of collective boundaries'.
(2) Abstracting Realities through Open Game Mechanics emerged through codes such as 'government ambiguity', 'workspace absorbing desires', and 'dice as surprises'.
(3) Exploring Ontologies through Avatars Uncover Biases and Encourage Discussion is shaped through the codes 'performing another person reveal biases', 'the desires of the other', 'discussing on biases', and 'identifying pre-judgements'.

(4) Architecting with Inspiration Cards Evoke Nuanced Imaginaries, merged through the codes 'decentring money', 'diversifying shared values in platforms', 'sustaining distribution of power', 'lack of profit interest', 'centring neighbourhoods'.

5.1. Unfolding plural understandings: upholding individuality within collective systems

In the initial stage of the speculation process, participants engaged in discussions about the meaning of individuality and collectivity, and they imagined a set of values for a collectivity-oriented world. While defining these concepts, they drew from their experiences to uphold their sense of justice and contemplate cooperation and power distribution.

Participants unfolded these concepts through contextual and real-life examples. In session 3, they cited a community-oriented vacation spot on the west coast of Türkiye as an example. Individuals seeking relief from city life volunteered to work and stay, contributing to essential tasks for the vacation spot. Volunteers maintained power distribution among peers rather than being determined by administrators. This led to a discussion on sustaining a collective system, preventing abuse, and distributing power while considering individual desires and capabilities. In Session 5, participants conceptualised a collectivity-oriented system to address the perceived absence of individuality in the workplace and the mismatch among individual, group, and hierarchical system values. They introduced a value-metre guided by their commitment to safeguarding individual desires and sense of values within the group, in contrast to the imposed desires of the workspace. The everyday stories and their blueprints in the imaginative scenarios revealed the desire to preserve and sustain individuality within collective systems and, thus, the importance of individuality in defining collective action from diverse perspectives instead of a unified norm of collectivity.

5.2. Abstracting contextual realities to emotions through open game mechanics

Participants were encouraged to attribute meaning to open-game mechanics, such as dice and the achievement boards. They were also encouraged to design imaginary game mechanics.

In Session 4, participants referred to their interactions with municipal applications during the pandemic. They symbolised the government application's distrustful nature, unpredictability and ambiguity with the dice's capacity to offer a different value each time. Participants discussed that 'The government is capable of prioritising their needs on top of everything else. Can deceive the community unexpectedly'. In contrast, they envisioned a grassroots needs pool system overseen by community representatives to promote inter-community communication and prevent monopolisation. In Sessions 4 and 6, participants viewed the sharing of emotions as a rewarding experience. They delved into unmet emotional and psychological needs within existing sharing platforms, envisioning new platforms that facilitate sharing individual experiences and emotions. In session 5, within a workplace context, participants delved into how administrative expectations impacted priorities, values,

and actions, abstracted as a game mechanic, "hierarchic absorption of administration endangering the existence of the co-workers. In session 6, participants proposed a condition to reward actions in the envisioned environment that supports the underprivileged, emphasising a desire for a form of justice 'often absent in Turkish everyday life'. They proposed that affluent individuals should be rewarded for directly contributing their wealth to support those in need instead of channelling donations to questionable charities or post-modern art galleries. These discussions inspired additional reflections on more intimate systems, where individuals in need and those who wish to contribute are in a more direct relationship.

Imagining and attributing meaning through game mechanics encouraged participants to reflect on their social realities. Abstracting contextual dynamics involves addressing both the deficiencies in existing systems and articulating the desired functionalities, shaping participants' utopian imaginaries.

5.3. Exploring ontologies through avatars uncover biases

Engaging with the perspective of the 'other' served as a reflexive process for participants, exposing biases and fostering discussions.

In sessions 1 and 3, as participants engaged with their avatars, biases were exposed, leading to subsequent discussions. For example, in Session 1, one of the participants initially believed that a working mother should not only be poor but also unhappy. Another participant responded, 'Why do you suffer in a world of your creation?'. The participants automatically challenged each other's stereotypical thoughts to create a mutual solution. In Session 3, one of the participants explored an immigrant avatar and later admitted to having prejudicial thoughts influenced by the contextual challenges in Türkiye, including increasing migration and economic breakdown. Nonetheless, participants engaged in discussions that challenged these ideas while maintaining their avatar roles. In Session 5, participants explored non-human perspectives via avatar cards, drawing inspiration from their interactions with a cat and pushing the boundaries of the method. The embodiment of non-human perspectives through avatars allowed for context-oriented observations and an understanding of the cat's reality, highlighting qualities like independence and community engagement, which influenced discussion on the collective boundaries.

Using the avatar cards, we explored the borders of diversifying ontological representations. The co-speculation process revealed that game mechanics, particularly avatar cards, can serve as a familiar mediator to reflect on biases and encourage people to shape imagined scenarios.

5.4. Architecting with inspiration cards evoke nuanced imaginaries

Reflecting on inspiration cards, participants emphasised non-monetary needs such as emotional well-being, sociability, and power distribution while respecting individual boundaries in crafting utopian scenarios. They interpreted feminist values, decentralising money and redistributing power. This theme highlights how these values influenced speculations on collectivity-oriented systems, showcasing well established examples from the studies.

During sessions 1, 3 and 4, participants explored the idea of decentring the sole focus on money by encouraging community building. An instance occurred in session 3, where participants concentrated on the Gold Day practice inspiration card, later envisioning it as a neighbourhood bank operating without the pursuit of profit. The profitability depends on the exchanged value or item, allowing people to gain or not gain from the exchange without expectation. While speculating within a context where food production was limited, their envisioned system drew inspiration from the neighbourhood solidarity and socialisation aspects of the Gold Day. The system involves circulating surplus food from each household to a designated space in the neighbourhood, where volunteers cook and serve dinner.

In session 4, participants explored an inspiration card centred on a resource pool, emphasising the exchange of non-monetary values such as food, clothing, and time in the context of a pandemic outbreak. While reflecting on the inspiration cards, the participant stated, 'Needs become accessible. Money lost its importance, and other qualities seem more important'. They discussed that this pool gains value based on the diversity of contributions. Considering their avatar, the participant illustrated this: 'If everyone only contributes money, it benefits those in need of money, but there are other needs as well, like an elderly uncle who can not do his shopping. Someone capable of providing a specific service contributes, making the space more useful'. Once more, the neighbourhood solidarity aspect took centre stage as community representatives were appointed to introduce the system, recognising varying levels of digital literacy and engagement among community members. The definition of need expanded to include skills, dreams, access to information, and emotional support. Emotional well-being and sharing were also informed in the imaginaries.

Lastly, In Session 6, similar assets were revisited. Group 2 delved into the concept of 'Imece', collaborative work while interpreting the inspiration cards and deriving values. They discussed the potential of collective action in society to secure surplus goods, considering the contextual distrust in existing government-initiated platforms. Group 3 implemented a revenue system inspired by Gold Day rituals, creating a pool-based cooperation system to generate income for the platform for immigrant academics.

As this paper concentrates explicitly on pinpointing the articulation of pluralism through the method, the themes revealed important nuances about how individual desires, collective aspirations, cultural norms, and the political climate can change imaginaries.

6. Discussion

In the discussion, we illustrate how our findings relate to how pluralism is observed in the development and enactment of the method through co-design sessions, illustrating their relation to existing studies on decolonial studies in PD and feminist utopianism.

6.1. Co-design as a reflexive process to decolonise PD methods

Generic applications of PD methods are considered insufficient in understanding non-Western communities' realities (Smith et al. 2020; Tlostanova 2017). In our situation, iterative co-design sessions for the co-speculation play method helped identify concepts

to deconstruct with participants and decide which game mechanics to pre-define or leave open for participants to articulate their social realities.

It has been noted that the concepts of democracy (Bardzell 2018) and decoloniality (Smith et al. 2020; Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012) can encompass plural understandings among communities. In the initial sessions, individuals actively deconstructed the meanings of individuality and collectivity. The subsequent reflection on these concepts extended to the speculation board. Encouraging discussions and identifying values through the board utilised contextual knowledge, expanding reflections on plural and practical applications of these concepts.

In past studies, scholars successfully used triggers like archival images to deconstruct everyday narratives (Smith et al. 2020). In our context, crises introduced through unexpected event cards served as practical triggers. We kept dice and the achievement board open throughout the iterative process, actively promoting the abstraction of specific instances as potential game mechanics. Attributing meaning to these mechanics documented participants' daily realities and external influences and facilitated counter-imaginaries' construction by considering both drawbacks and desires.

Throughout the iterative co-design sessions, participants naturally adopted the modes of utopia as a method in a contextual manner. The sequence of the board was tailored based on the narrative flow they experienced while engaging with game mechanics, aligning with instances of the utopia as a method. Importantly, Levitas (2013) did not prescribe discussing these notions as distinct stages in a linear form. In line with this perspective, the final speculation board comprehensively captures and documents architectural and ontological elements to inform the architecting stage.

Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake (2012) delved into the concept of adaptability in the participatory process, underscoring the significance of permitting participants to shape the ongoing process with the researcher taking a step back. Adaptability and shifting roles of the researchers can be embraced when constructing methods with communities, mainly through co-design. Given our participants' familiarity with game mechanics and play, offering these as mediators to building methods with communities through co-design sessions became an iterative process. This process enabled us to adjust to the ontological boundaries set by participants throughout the speculation process while articulating contextual narration.

6.2. Fostering reflexivity and respectful dialogues through methods informed by familiar rituals

In decolonial studies, familiar cultural practices and rituals are utilised to design and inform the research structure of participatory design workshops (Smith et al. 2020; Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2012). The participants we recruited were acquainted and at ease with game mechanics and the aesthetics of board games.

Yet, familiarity and the comfortable environment created by play materials played a significant role in the utilisation of our diversified avatar cards. While exploring the roles of avatars, we were attentive to the potential elitism that may arise when projecting oneself onto others (Baumann et al. 2017; Martins 2014). Our findings reveal that exploring others' realities frequently exposed biases, fostered respectful discussion, and inspired the creation of alternative ontological representations and relationships. In

countries like Türkiye, where the population is heterogeneous and controversies arise constantly, there is a need for methods that provide space for reflexivity and foster open and respectful discussions.

Smith et al. (2020) utilised probes to initiate discussions on personal memories related to post-colonialism but noted that participants favoured oral narration in Namibia, and triggers such as archival images proved to be more effective. Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake (2012) advocated for participants to take ownership of the workshop process through their rituals. These strategies, urging participants to shape the design of participatory design workshops around their familiar cultural and daily rituals, could disrupt the generic inclination towards the application of PD, introducing more nuanced forms. In this study, constructing the method using familiar play mechanisms, particularly avatar cards, promoted reflexivity and fostered respectful dialogue among the participants.

6.3. Speculating around underrepresented feminist practices centre othered values

Decolonial pluriversality is a way of thinking that does not put one culture or set of ideas above others. It highlights the limitations of widely accepted Western concepts by constantly comparing them with very different non-Western ideas (Tlostanova 2017). Scholars emphasise integrating imaginaries from underrepresented communities into future technological speculations, essential for equitable technology design (Harrington, Klassen, and Rankin 2022). Decolonial approaches explored through speculation aim to incorporate underrepresented knowledge systems and marginalised ontologies as valuable methodological influences in design (de O. Martins & de Oliveria, 2016). However, the nuances and influences of design conceptualisation are less discussed (Harrington, Klassen, and Rankin 2022), and we argue that, particularly in patriarchal societies, speculating around underrepresented feminist practices can further enrich these nuances.

Through the method, the main ontological boundary we set was architecting around underrepresented feminist sharing practices in Türkiye through the inspiration cards in contrast to the archaeological instances. This objective aligns with Levitas' (2013) concept of selflessness and cooperation as glimpses of utopian imaginaries. Simultaneously, drawing inspiration from Verges (2021) and exploring the contributions of women from the Global South can broaden our understanding, challenging both racial capitalism and heteropatriarchy. One of the principal values of feminist collectivity-oriented practices in Türkiye is that people distribute power and organise themselves through negotiation, sustained through emotional exchange and sociability (Büyükokutan 2012; Tarhan 2022). In contrast to most collective platforms prioritising anonymity and monetary cooperation, participants envisioned systems focused on neighbourhood-driven care-oriented platforms. These systems emphasise emotional support, non-monetary neighbourhood solidarity, and diversifying exchange values to disrupt the centralised positioning of money.

The application of utopian imaginaries is viewed as problematic (Bardzell 2018). However, instead of perceiving these imaginaries as potential design solutions, we regard them as expressions of people's unmet needs and desires within mainstream

collectivity-oriented systems. Our work illustrated multiple ways in which the integration of local tools, feminist rituals and practices can lead to novel and nuanced discussions in contexts like urban İstanbul. Uncovering and capturing local inspirations, diverging from Western perspectives on co-speculative play, we unearthed local inspirations, yielding a new understanding of civic engagement and intimacy's importance.

The impact of PD can lie in fostering autonomy, where individuals forge connections and design independent solutions to their problems (Light and Akama 2014). Building on Martins and Oliveira's (2016) exploration of speculation as a practice for nurturing solidarity, we combined 'utopia as a method' (Levitas 2013) with decolonial ideals of pluralism (Escobar 2018; Lazem et al. 2021) and via this combination, we motivate individuals to engage their ontological capacities and imagine alternative forms of solidarity through a method called the co-design of a decolonial feminist co-speculation.

7. Limitations

Designing a method rooted in Türkiye's social realities required a focus on the play's adaptability to meet participants' contextual needs, aligning with discussions about acknowledging colonial implications in design methods and embracing values introduced by marginalised communities (Garcia et al. 2021; Talhouk and Armouch 2022). In our study, we also encountered the limitation of each of our sessions centring around a different crisis topic due to the constant changes in the country's climate. Additionally, due to the ongoing early development phases, we primarily recruited participants familiar with sharing and collaborative platforms. We acknowledge the need for a more diverse audience. Lastly, while our focus is on illustrating pluralism in co-design, further studies and interviews are needed to uncover the real potential of co-speculation in building solidarity and autonomous systems.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, by designing a co-speculation-oriented play method informed by utopia as a method, we encouraged participants to build context-driven, collectively negotiated imaginaries. Game mechanics informed us about the participant's contextual dynamics and reality. Our method -open and available for future use- served as a medium for integrating underrepresented feminist values into the early design stages, actively shaping the speculation process alongside participants. As we illustrate the making process of the co-speculation play method, our future contribution aims to investigate the imaginaries of people around digital cooperation.

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