

Cultural Strategies & Devices for Hybrid Dialogic and Deliberative Spaces. Report & Playbook

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Glossary of Key Concepts, Methods, Platforms, and Abbreviations

Term / Acronym	**Definition**
Democratic Capabilities Framework (DCF)	A framework developed in INSPIRE (WP2, D2.1) based on Sen and Nussbaum, focusing on the real freedoms and conditions that enable meaningful participation beyond formal rights.
Hybrid Democratic Choreographies	Carefully designed constellations of tools, practices, spaces, and infrastructures that connect embodied participation with digital traceability and institutional impact.
Intersectionality	A framework (Crenshaw, 1991) analysing how overlapping systems of oppression (e.g. race, gender, class) shape participation, access, and power.
Spatial Justice	The principle that participation is shaped by access to space, including territorial inequalities, infrastructure, and the design of deliberative environments.
Temporal Justice	The recognition that time (pace, duration, rhythms) is unevenly distributed and affects the ability to participate meaningfully.
Consequential Participation	The extent to which participation leads to tangible influence on decision-making, policy outcomes, and accountability processes.
Decidim	An open-source digital platform for participatory democracy used in INSPIRE pilots to structure assemblies, proposals, debates, and traceability of participation over time.
Digital Legislative Theatre	A hybrid methodology combining Augusto Boal's legislative theatre with digital platforms (e.g. Decidim) to translate embodied scenes into structured policy proposals and deliberation workflows.
Visual Dramaturgy Cards	A core tool in the D4.2 Playbook consisting of visual prompts and narrative devices used to translate lived experience, conflict, and emotion into collective reflection and deliberative input.

Cultural Devices	Structured participatory tools and formats (e.g. storytelling, theatre, visual methods) used to enable inclusive, embodied, and relational forms of participation.
Hybrid Assemblies	Participatory processes that combine physical and digital spaces, allowing synchronous and asynchronous engagement across different contexts.
Embedded Participation	Participation that is institutionally anchored, socially rooted, and connected to decision-making processes, avoiding tokenistic or isolated engagement.
Datafied Participation	Participation that generates and relies on data (e.g. platform interactions), raising questions of visibility, traceability, and data governance.

📍From Platform to Culture: Rewiring the Conditions of Democratic Participation through Hybrid Democratic Choreographies

D4.2 marks a shift in how we understand and design participation: from a focus on platforms as infrastructures to a recognition of democracy as a *cultural, embodied, and relational practice*. Building on the insights of D4.1, this document moves beyond technical design to address the deeper question of how inclusive, dialogic, and deliberative processes are *felt, staged, and sustained* across **hybrid environments**.

Hybrid participation refers here to the integration of physical and digital spaces, as well as synchronous and asynchronous modes of engagement, into a continuous participatory ecosystem (Bussu & Fleuß, 2020; Smith, 2009). Hybrid forms do not replace deliberation; rather, they **reconfigure its conditions**. While classical deliberative theory, most notably Jürgen Habermas (1996), assumes co-present, structured, reason-giving exchanges, hybrid environments introduce fragmentation, mediation, and extended temporalities that challenge these assumptions. This is not a contradiction but a shift: deliberation becomes distributed across formats, rhythms, and interfaces. As research on digital deliberation shows (e.g. Coleman & Moss, 2012; Bächtiger et al., 2018), the key challenge is not whether hybrid participation is deliberative, but **how deliberative quality can be sustained across heterogeneous, technologically mediated settings**.

Drawing on interviews and a pluriverse of democratic traditions, the report identifies a central tension: participation today is often structurally invited but culturally unsupported. Processes promise inclusion, yet remain constrained by dominant norms of communication, time, space, and knowledge that systematically exclude marginalised voices.

In response, D4.2 proposes a **cultural turn in democratic innovation**. It brings together insights from Black feminist pedagogies, decolonial and Indigenous cosmopolitics, European civic prototyping, and arts-based practices to reimagine participation as a choreography of relations, emotions, and power. Rather than treating deliberation as primarily a **rational-argumentative exchange**, the report understands it as a situated encounter shaped by histories, bodies, and asymmetries. While critical strands within deliberative democracy have long challenged narrow rationalist interpretations, these dimensions remain underdeveloped in many institutional and digital practices.

These perspectives converge in the concept of **hybrid democratic choreographies**: carefully designed constellations of tools, practices, and infrastructures that connect embodied experiences with digital traceability and institutional impact.

At its core, this deliverable develops a **Playbook of cultural strategies and devices** designed to support hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces. These are not neutral methods, but **micro-institutional formats of care and imagination** that can be adapted, repeated, and embedded within participatory ecosystems. They bridge art and governance, enabling experiences of exclusion and lived reality to be translated into collectively intelligible and politically actionable forms. A key contribution of the report is its attention to **methodological integrity and ethical safeguards.**

The present deliverable brings together two interconnected layers of work within a single document: a conceptual and analytical report, and a **Playbook of cultural strategies and devices** for hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces. While combined here to ensure coherence between theory and practice, these components are intended to evolve as distinct outputs. The conceptual framework consolidates insights from research, interviews, and pilots, while the Playbook translates these into actionable formats for practitioners. In its next phase, the Playbook will be redesigned as a standalone, publicly accessible playbook, iteratively refined through ongoing pilot feedback and experimentation, with its dedicated release planned for October 2026

How to Navigate This Document

D4.2 is designed as a flowing architecture: each part can be read on its own, but together they form a cultural, temporal, and spatial grammar for hybrid democratic design.
Use the table below as a navigation map depending on what you need to do / understand the theory, design a process, or apply the tools.

If you want to understand…	Go to…	What you'll find
The problem we are addressing: the "vertigo" of contemporary public dialogue and deliberation	**Part I: Insights from the Field**	Synthesised insights from 28 interviews with practitioners and experts. Key tensions around speed, diversity, affect, consensus myths, and structural inequalities. This section frames the limits of current participatory paradigms and why transformation is needed.
The conceptual foundations of our cultural turn	**Part II: Cultural Strategies**	Four cultural genealogies; safe(r) digital infrastructures; and the shift from representation to relation. Useful for grounding methodological choices.
How space and place shape inclusion	**Part III: Spatial Justice**	Principles for designing inclusive democratic spaces across physical and digital environments. Includes spatial agency, affective environments, and applied frameworks. Essential for place-based and hybrid process design.

How time structures participation, care, and exclusion	**Part IV: Temporal Justice**	Democratic rhythms, tools such as time audits and rest protocols, and the ethics of pace. Essential for avoiding participatory fatigue and exclusion.
How legislative theatre becomes a hybrid platform workflow	**Part V: Digital Legislative Theatre**	A replicable Decidim-based model linking embodied scenes to structured, traceable policymaking. Demonstrates how cultural practices interface with digital infrastructures and institutions.
How to *apply* all of this in practice	**Part VI: Playbook**	A set of adaptable cultural devices presented as Visual Dramaturgy Cards. Includes step-by-step methods, hybrid adaptations, and facilitator guidance. Designed as micro-institutional formats of care and democratic experimentation. This section will evolve into a standalone public playbook.

This report is grounded in a commitment to plural epistemologies, particularly those emerging from Black, Indigenous, feminist, and Global South traditions. These perspectives do not simply diversify participation: they fundamentally reshape how democracy is practiced, by centering embodiment, relationality, care, and community-rooted knowledge.

📍Part I: Insights from the Field: The Vértigo of Public Dialogue and Deliberation

1.1 Lessons from Deliberation Experts and Practitioners

The aim of this report is to identify how hybrid and digital participation processes can embody care, creativity, and equity without losing democratic rigour. However, the current practice of contemporary public dialogue is rather realised under the conditions of vertigo: it is **too fast, too fragmented, and too burdened by expectations of an immediate resolution**.

This section draws on the understanding of the field based on the 28 in-depth interviews with **twenty-eight** deliberation practitioners, civic innovators, facilitators, and researchers working across citizens' assemblies, legislative theatre, digital participation platforms, and institutional reform processes that we have conducted between May 2024 and February 2026., (see full list below).[1] We have complemented the interviews with the discussions during the School of Creativity and Democracy programme led by Fundación Platoniq and attended by democracy experts and practitioners (April 2025-June 2025). The themes that emerged during the conversations, around **embodiment**, **plural epistemologies**, and **democratic choreography** - were further developed through pedagogical experimentation and collective practice.

In ordinary language, *vertigo* is the unsettling sensation that the ground is no longer stable, that the world tilts, spins, or escapes our capacity to orient ourselves. In this playbook, we borrow the term to describe a condition increasingly present in contemporary participatory and deliberative processes: a **loss of democratic orientation**. We speak of **the vertigo of public dialogue** to capture how participation today is often experienced as accelerated, fragmented, and dissonant. Participants are asked to engage, respond, and produce outcomes at a pace that leaves little room for reflection, trust-building, or collective sense-making. The result is not empowerment, but a subtle form of disorientation; a feeling that one is moving, contributing, even speaking, without fully grasping where the process is going or how it connects to decision-making. The reference to Hitchcock is not incidental. In his film *Vertigo*, disorientation is not only a visual effect but a narrative device: a way of destabilising perception, identity, and truth. Similarly, in participatory settings, vertigo is not just about speed: it is about **the breakdown of coherence between experience, process, and outcome**.

This vertigo is not merely affective; it is structural. Practitioners in interviews repeatedly described the compression of participatory timelines, particularly in hybrid and digital settings. Mauricio Mejía noted that deliberative processes are increasingly expected to "produce ambitious outcomes" within short institutional cycles, often mirroring electoral timeframes rather than civic learning rhythms. For Garikoitz Lekuona, a key challenge emerges **after participatory processes formally conclude**. What appears as procedural efficiency often masks a deeper temporal misalignment: institutions may move quickly toward decisions and outputs, while participants are still engaged in processes of learning, reflection, and collective sense-making. At the same time, several interviews point to an inverse misalignment, where participatory processes unfold rapidly, such as in assemblies, but are followed by slow or delayed institutional response.

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[1] The interviews have been published by Fundación Platoniq in Wilder Journal https://journal.platoniq.net/en/wilder-journal-2/interviews/

These overlapping temporal mismatches reveal a structural disconnect between the pace of participation and the rhythms of governance, undermining both the quality of deliberation and the credibility of its outcomes. This gap generates tension, as the time required for democratic reasoning does not align with administrative expectations: ultimately weakening both the depth of deliberation and participants' sense of meaningful impact.

What appears as procedural efficiency often masks temporal misalignment between democratic learning of participants and administrative expectation.

This diagnosis can be read in tension with Jürgen Habermas (1996) model of deliberation as a structured, reason-giving exchange oriented toward rational agreement. While this model presupposes conditions of time, continuity, and mutual orientation, practitioners consistently report that contemporary governance operates under acceleration pressures that undermine these very conditions. As Lucy J. Parry and Nicole Curato (2024) argue in their work on deliberative integrity, time and follow-up are not secondary design features but central conditions of democratic quality. Insufficient time, compressed timelines, and weak institutional response emerge as systemic risks, particularly when accountability and implementation are not built into the process from the outset. Rather than rejecting deliberative rigour, this points to a structural shift: the challenge is no longer only how to deliberate well, but **how to design the temporal and institutional conditions that make deliberation possible in the first place**.

Yet while practitioners continue to value deliberative rigour, they also observed that contemporary governance operates under acceleration pressures that distort deliberative conditions. Ernesto Ganuza's (2025) work on mini-publics demonstrates that deliberative legitimacy depends not only on procedural design but on sufficient time for reflection and judgement formation. When speed replaces reflection, deliberation risks becoming technocratic compression rather than collective reasoning.

Several interviewees implicitly challenged the universalist temporality embedded in deliberative theory and current practice. Sonia Bussu emphasized that co-design processes with marginalized communities require slower, trust-building phases that cannot be subordinated to institutional deadlines. Dayo Eseonu pointed to the epistemic labor required for racialized participants to feel recognized before speaking which also takes time. These insights resonate well with decolonial critiques of modern political temporality. For example, Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2011) argue that colonial modernity imposes a singular developmental timeline privileging speed, progress, and closure. Lugones (2007) further demonstrates how coloniality fragments relational worlds, subordinating embodied and communal epistemologies to abstract rationality. Within this frame, **the vertigo of public dialogue** reflects not simply digital acceleration but the persistence of colonial temporal hierarchies in political design. Following Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2011), coloniality should not be understood as a historical residue of colonialism, but as an enduring matrix of power that organizes labor, knowledge, authority, gender, and race. Within this matrix, modern temporality (structured around linear progress, productivity, and developmental hierarchies) plays a constitutive role. The contemporary acceleration of democratic processes should therefore be read not as the definition of coloniality itself, but as one of its temporal expressions. Acceleration intensifies a modern time-discipline that has long structured whose knowledge counts, whose speech is recognized, and whose political presence is deemed timely.

Three tensions crystallized consistently across interviews.

Speed vs. Depth

Participants and practitioners alike describe a sensation of the dizziness of having to deliberate while everything accelerates. Such sensations can be strengthened by the incorporation of online tools for participation. They create the cognitive and emotional load of constant notifications, rapid threads, and short comment cycles that mirror the logic of the attention economy. This produces what several interviewees called **“participatory fatigue.”**

Acceleration erodes the epistemic aspects of deliberation. Many of the interviewees argued that the fast pace of digital participation weakens the ability of the participants to fully understand the analysed issues and can lack spaces to create collective understanding. For example, Núria Ferran Ferrer stressed that digital mediation often prioritizes throughput over comprehension. Ismael Peña-López frames digital governance not simply as a set of tools or platforms, but as an **ecosystem shaped by incentives, feedback loops, and institutional logics**. Within this ecosystem, immediacy is not accidental, it is structurally produced. Digital infrastructures privilege speed: rapid feedback, continuous interaction, real-time metrics, and visible responsiveness. Institutions operating within these environments are pushed to demonstrate activity and impact quickly, often valuing **reaction over reflection** and **output over process**. Yet deliberative depth requires time for reframing, translation, and collective sense-making. As Quim Brugué argued in discussing “cold” versus “hot” deliberation, without carefully structured pacing, discussion either becomes abstract and disconnected or polarized and entrenched. Democratic quality, therefore, depends on tempo.

Decolonial perspectives further complicate this diagnosis by framing time itself as a site of political struggle rather than a neutral resource. Drawing on research with autonomous movements, Azucena Morán argues that many participatory and institutional processes reproduce extractive dynamics not through exclusion, but through the imposition of linear, accelerated temporalities that conflict with the rhythms through which communities sustain life, care, and political agency. From this perspective, participation fails not because people disengage, but because they are required to adapt to temporal regimes that erode autonomy rather than support it. The forthcoming paper *Democracy Takes Time (Bussu, Schulbaum, Senabre, & Palazzi, 2026)* reinforces this argument by showing that temporal inequality is produced across at least three interrelated dimensions: macro-level institutional rhythms such as funding cycles, deadlines, and procedural urgency; lived temporalities shaped by care burdens, precarity, migration, disability, and racialised histories; and temporal commitments rooted in memory, repair, and long-term responsibility.

Hybrid designs must therefore build **temporal justice mechanisms**: asynchronous participation, slower cycles, paid facilitation time, and recognition of care labour.
This connects D4.2’s exploration of *democratic rhythms*.

Inclusion vs. Homogenisation

Attempts to generate consensus rapidly risk flattening plural epistemologies. Oliver Escobar’s distinction between dialogue and deliberation clarifies this tension: Dialogue is oriented toward **mutual recognition, listening, and the expression of diverse experiences and perspectives**, without requiring convergence. It creates the conditions for participants to understand how others see and live an issue. Deliberation, by contrast, introduces a **structured process of judgement**, where participants are expected to weigh options, justify positions, and move (however

provisionally) towards decisions or collective recommendations. Conflating the two risks collapsing this sequence prematurely: it can push participants to evaluate, rank, or decide before sufficient space has been created for plural voices, situated knowledge, and relational understanding to emerge. Patricia Luján's work on feminist communication and Cristina Fallarás's testimonial practices similarly highlight that narrative recognition precedes structured reasoning. As Amber Huff argued, pluralism requires conditions for voice, not merely voice itself. Designing for diversity thus entails sequencing recognition before aggregation.

Rationality vs. Affect

While deliberation has often been associated with rational-argumentative exchange, a significant strand within deliberative democratic theory has long challenged this narrow framing. Scholars such as Iris Marion Young (2000) and John S. Dryzek (2000) have emphasised the importance of storytelling, rhetoric, emotion, and alternative communicative forms in enabling more inclusive and plural deliberation.

What is less developed in the literature is not the recognition of these forms, but their operationalisation in participatory practice. Building on this theoretical foundation, practitioners increasingly mobilise affective and embodied modalities as democratic infrastructures. Katy Rubin's legislative theatre exemplifies this shift. Rather than seeking immediate consensus, it stages disagreement, hesitation, and experimentation, allowing participants to explore policy implications performatively before formal judgement. Raúl Oliván's civic lab practices similarly introduce play as a methodological device that suspends closure. These approaches resonate with agonistic theory (Mouffe, 2000) in recognising conflict as constitutive, yet they do not abandon collective decision-making. Instead, they stage conflict temporally, creating structured transitions between exploration and decision.

Table 2: Interviewees and Short Biographical Notes

Interviewee	Short Bio
Cristina Fallarás	Spanish journalist and feminist activist known for digital feminist mobilization and public narrative interventions.
Dayo Eseonu	Researcher specializing in race, diaspora politics, and democratic inclusion in European contexts.
Yanina Welp	Political scientist and expert in direct democracy and participatory institutions in Europe and Latin America.
Ernesto Ganuza	Sociologist and leading scholar on deliberative mini-publics and democratic innovation in Spain.
Azucena Morán	Civic educator and practitioner focused on participatory pedagogy and community engagement.
Katy Rubin	Creator of Legislative Theatre and international practitioner integrating performance and democratic participation.
Amber Huff	Researcher in global governance, feminist epistemologies, and transnational justice.

Katie Reid	Digital rights and feminist organizer working on online civic engagement and platform accountability.
Axel Gasulla	Public policy practitioner involved in municipal-level participatory processes.
Ismael Peña-López	Scholar and former public official specializing in digital governance, open government, and democratic innovation.
Desirée Bela-Lobedde	Afro-Spanish writer and activist addressing racial justice, identity, and representation in Spain.
Hera Hussein	Journalist and storyteller focused on migration, refugee narratives, and media justice.
Núria Ferran Ferrer	Academic specializing in information literacy, digital knowledge ecosystems, and civic learning.
Erica Núñez	Member of the Spanish Citizens' Climate Assembly and civic advocate for environmental deliberation.
Gabriel Fernández Gil	Former member of the Spanish Citizens' Climate Assembly and co-founder of its post-assembly civic association.
Mauricio Mejía	Former OECD coordinator for citizen participation and deliberative democracy initiatives.
Sonia Bussu	Associate Professor of Public Policy researching participatory governance, co-production, and intersectional inclusion.
Stefano Sotgiu	Legal scholar and president of Prossima Democrazia, working on deliberative democracy and strategic litigation.
Patricia Luján	Communication strategist and co-founder of School of Feminism, applying advertising tools to feminist advocacy.
Nuria Albet	Representative of La Palma Renovable, promoting citizen-led energy transition and local assemblies.
Quim Brugué	Professor of political science and former Director General of Citizen Participation for the Government of Catalonia.
Jaume López	Political theorist and former Director General of Good Governance in Catalonia, researching social worldviews and democracy.
Garikoitz Lekuona	Community and Governance technician at Tolosa City Council, facilitator of a citizens' assembly on mental health.
Raúl Oliván	Founder of LAAAB Aragón, promoting democratic innovation and public-sector civic laboratories.

Taysir Mathlouthi	EU Policy Advocacy Officer at 7amleh, focusing on Palestinian digital rights and platform accountability.

1.2 Emergent Democratic Clusters: Core Tensions and Structural Patterns Across the 28 Interviews

The analysis of the 28 interviews was further guided by the **Democratic Capabilities Framework (DCF)** developed within INSPIRE (WP2, D2.1) by Lucy J. Parry, Oliver Escobar, and Adrian Bua. Drawing on the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), the DCF shifts attention from inclusive participation as an *event* to the conditions needed for inclusive participation in democratic life more broadly, foregrounding the **real freedoms and opportunities** that enable meaningful and consequential participation. It emphasises how agency is shaped by structural and intersecting conditions (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). Democratic agency is developed through real opportunities for safety, dignity, epistemic justice, and meaningful influence through participation.

We use the DCF as an analytical lens through which to make sense of the interviews we conducted to identify how different participatory settings enable or constrain key democratic capabilities. This involved coding and interpreting interview material in relation to capabilities such as safety, dignity, epistemic justice, temporal accessibility, and consequential participation. In this sense, the interviews were not only a source of empirical insight, but a way to **test, refine, and situate the democratic capabilities framework** within real-world participatory ecosystems, particularly in hybrid and digitally mediated contexts.This procedure allowed us to identify a series of emergent clusters that illuminate how different practitioners diagnose the pressures facing **hybrid and deliberative participation**.

Epistemic Justice & Racialized Knowledge

This cluster directly operationalizes **Epistemic Equity & Justice Capability**, as explained by Eseonu, Bela-Lobedde, Bussu, Huff, and Mathlouthi. The core issue here is whose knowledge is recognized as legitimate during the participatory processes. Intersectional Solidarity becomes necessary when epistemic exclusion intersects with race, migration status, gender, or geopolitics.

Across interviews, epistemic injustice emerges as a structural rather than incidental issue. Dayo Eseonu highlights how racialized communities experience participation as conditional recognition rather than full inclusion, while Desirée Bela-Lobedde exposes racial invisibility within Spanish public discourse. Sonia Bussu problematises the demographic homogeneity of participatory design itself, arguing that many democratic innovations universalize white, middle-class participation norms. Taysir Mathlouthi extends this critique into digital space, documenting algorithmic over-moderation of Arabic content and structural asymmetry in platform governance. Amber Huff contributes a feminist global ethics lens, emphasizing how knowledge hierarchies are embedded in governance structures.

Together, these interviews highlight a key tension: **deliberative democracy claims epistemic plurality, yet without intentional redesign it risks reproducing racialized and geopolitical hierarchies of whose knowledge counts**. Adrian Bua's political economy perspective helps explain why such epistemic asymmetries persist. Drawing on Bourdieusian field theory, he suggests that democratic participation operates within a broader distribution of economic, cultural,

and social capital. In this view, democratic capabilities can be understood as field-specific forms of symbolic capital: the dispositions, knowledge, and communicative skills required to operate effectively in participatory arenas. Because these capabilities are unevenly distributed across social groups, participation risks reproducing existing hierarchies unless institutions intentionally redistribute the resources required for effective voice.

Capability Gap:

Deliberative Democracy claims epistemic plurality but often lacks structural mechanisms to guarantee epistemic redistribution.

Institutional Accountability & the Implementation Gap

A second cluster reveals a recurring weakness: the translation of deliberation into binding outcomes. Ganuza, Lekuona, Sotgiu, and Albet reveal that participation without institutional embedding fails to reach the threshold of **Consequential Participation**. Voice must have structural effects to be meaningful.

Ernesto Ganuza defends procedural rigor but acknowledges that mini-public legitimacy collapses if recommendations are not meaningfully considered. Garikoitz Lekuona offers a practitioner's perspective on post-deliberative institutional disappearance, describing how recommendations lack formal embedding. Stefano Sotgiu proposes legal mechanisms (litigation and ombudsperson oversight) as accountability correctives. Nuria Albet shows how community energy initiatives can pressure institutions into structural commitments, while Axel Gasulla reflects on municipal embedding challenges. From a political economy perspective, this implementation gap reflects deeper structural constraints. As Adrian Bua notes, participatory processes operate within broader systems of capital accumulation and institutional incentives. Recommendations emerging from assemblies may confront economic priorities such as growth strategies or private investment interests, which can limit the willingness of political actors to translate deliberative outcomes into binding decisions. These interviews intersect around the same structural fracture: **deliberative innovation often generates legitimacy internally but struggles to redistribute authority externally.**

Capability Gap:

Participatory processes enable voice and deliberation, but fall short of ensuring *consequential participation*: the real capacity to translate collective input into binding decisions, institutional commitments, or observable change; consequential power transfer remains limited.

Technological Infrastructure & Digital Power

Digital governance directly affects **Safety & Security**, especially in Mathlouthi's account of algorithmic repression. Platforms regulate visibility, speech, and exposure to harm. Technology appears not as neutral infrastructure but as political architecture. Taysir Mathlouthi documents digital repression and narrative erasure affecting Palestinian voices. Ismael Peña-López frames digital governance as an ecosystem where openness requires institutional will and infrastructural literacy. Katie Reid reflects on the structural vulnerabilities embedded in digital participation infrastructures, In her interview, she emphasizes that children and young people are often invited into participatory processes, particularly digital or hybrid ones, without adequate safeguarding infrastructures. Their inclusion is framed as empowerment, yet the environments in which they participate are not designed with their specific exposure to risk in mind. From a child-rights

perspective, participation without protection can reproduce harm. Young participants face heightened risks of manipulation, trolling, reputational damage, and misrepresentation. Moreover, they often lack the institutional literacy and social capital that adult participants can mobilize defensively. In this sense, inclusion alone does not guarantee agency. Safety becomes the enabling condition of meaningful participation. Raúl Oliván sees civic labs as hybrid spaces where digital and institutional experimentation meet. From a field-theoretical perspective, digital infrastructures also generate new forms of symbolic capital within participatory arenas. Adrian Bua observes that participation increasingly depends on competencies such as digital literacy, rhetorical fluency, and the ability to navigate platform architectures. These competencies interact with existing economic, cultural, and social capital, meaning that technological participation can reproduce inequalities unless participatory infrastructures are deliberately designed to compensate for these asymmetries.

The cross-cutting pattern is clear: platforms, algorithms, and digital architectures shape democratic visibility and voice, making technological justice a precondition for contemporary democratic equality. Hussein's work on online gender-based violence offers a critical refinement to the DCF: **epistemic equity cannot be realized without prior guarantees of safety and security**. In her interview, she demonstrates that digital participation spaces are not neutral arenas of voice but environments structured by asymmetrical exposure to harm. Women, racialized activists, and gender-diverse participants often enter online deliberative forums already navigating harassment, coordinated trolling, reputational attacks, and threats of violence. Under such conditions, the capacity to speak is not simply a matter of invitation or access; it is a matter of risk. This reframing elevates *Safety & Security* from a procedural safeguard to a structural precondition. Without protective moderation, accountability mechanisms, and platform governance that actively counter online gender-based violence, participatory spaces reproduce epistemic hierarchy. Those least exposed to harassment appear most "rational" or "engaged," while those targeted are rendered absent or emotionally marked. In effect, insecurity redistributes epistemic authority.

Capability Gap:

Digital infrastructures mediate political voice but are governed by opaque corporate power.

Affect, Narrative, Collective Care & Cultural Politics

Emotion and storytelling operate as democratic infrastructures rather than peripheral elements. Cristina Fallarás demonstrates how testimonial narratives mobilize feminist publics; Patricia Luján applies advertising logics to cultural struggle, arguing that hegemonic change requires narrative innovation. Katy Rubin's Legislative Theatre integrates embodied performance into policymaking, collapsing the boundary between expression and deliberation. Erica Núñez and Gabriel Fernández Gil describe how participation reshapes identity and civic self-perception. Raúl Oliván introduces play as a methodological and affective catalyst in governance innovation. These interviews converge around a shared insight: democratic agency is relational and affective, and narrative struggle is inseparable from institutional reform.

This insight challenges the longstanding assumption that legitimacy depends on the suppression of emotion in favour of procedural neutrality. If democratic action is relational, then affect is not incidental to politics but constitutive of it. The discomfort produced by anger, grief, or embodied testimony does not signal democratic failure; it signals the presence of unresolved injustice entering the public sphere. This becomes particularly visible in Hussein's work on online gender-based violence. In her interview, she describes how women and racialized activists experience digital participation not as a neutral deliberative arena, but as a terrain structured by

harassment, intimidation, and reputational threat. Before deliberation can even begin, safety is already compromised. The emotional intensity that surfaces in these contexts (anger, exhaustion, withdrawal) is not an individual reaction but a response to structural hostility embedded in platform infrastructures.

Hussein's analysis reveals that what is often labeled as "emotional disruption" in online debate is frequently a defensive response to sustained violence. Survivors of online abuse are expected to remain calm, rational, and procedurally compliant while navigating environments that systematically target and challenge their identities. In this light, affect does not undermine deliberation; it exposes the unequal distribution of vulnerability within digital public spheres.

It is precisely here that Audre Lorde's work becomes illuminating. Expressions of anger, grief, or embodied testimony are frequently interpreted as disruptions of deliberative rationality. Yet Lorde (1981) argues that anger is not a breakdown of reason but a response to racism that carries information and clarity. Anger can function as a "loaded gun" of insight, a force that exposes injustice rather than obscures it. From this perspective, affect is not external to deliberation but constitutive of it. Recognising emotions as **legitimate carriers of knowledge** becomes a matter of epistemic justice: whose experiences count as valid contributions, and under what conditions they can be expressed and heard. Similarly, Lorde (1984) reminds us that speaking from lived experience requires courage and time: silence is not passivity, but the effect of structures that make certain voices unsafe or untimely.

Legitimacy, Representation & Democratic Quality

Several interviews address the erosion of representative legitimacy and the role of deliberation as corrective. Quim Brugué distinguishes deliberation from both plebiscitary populism and technocratic closure, emphasizing the importance of political leadership. Jaume López introduces the framework of "social worldviews (Cosmovisions)," arguing that plural epistemic lenses must be consciously represented. Mauricio Mejía frames mini-publics as depolarizing complements to representative systems, while Yanina Welp warns against naïve enthusiasm for direct democracy detached from institutional safeguards. Together, the respondents emphasise a central dilemma: deliberative democracy improves quality and legitimacy, yet must coexist with representative institutions without either neutralizing or destabilizing them. Lucy Parry's intervention draws on the literature on deliberative integrity to reframe integrity not as procedural compliance but as fidelity to the core commitments of deliberative democracy across the full life cycle of a process. Within this body of work, deliberative integrity is understood as the extent to which these commitments are sustained from commissioning through to follow-up, including agenda-setting, facilitation, and institutional response (Parry & Curato, 2024; Dryzek et al., 2022).

Within the INSPIRE project, this life-cycle perspective is complemented, but not replaced, by the Democratic Capabilities Framework (DCF). While deliberative integrity focuses primarily on the quality and coherence of deliberative processes, particularly in the context of mini-publics, the DCF expands the analytical lens to the conditions that enable meaningful participation across diverse settings. This distinction sharpens the stakes of impact. In the DCF, the ethical and political question of influence is captured through the capability of consequential participation: it is not enough for participants to deliberate well; participation must be tangible and meaningful in people's lives (Parry, Escobar, & Bua, INSPIRE D2.1, forthcoming). As Lucy J. Parry further argues, the integrity of a process is tested across its full life cycle, particularly in how outputs are taken up, responded to, or disregarded within institutional contexts (Parry, 2023). Without visible consequence, agency risks collapsing into performance. Yet consequence cannot be assumed. As she puts it, if deliberation is not challenging existing power relations in some way, its democratic

value becomes questionable. At the same time, Parry cautions against technocratic assumptions of design. While sortition promises representativeness, even carefully facilitated mini-publics can reproduce forms of marginalisation, requiring ongoing reflexivity and openness to adaptive or enclave-based formats.

Capability Gap:

Without affective recognition, formal participation lacks relational legitimacy.

Democratic Choreography & Designing for Diversity

Escobar and Ganuza distinguish dialogue and deliberation as distinct democratic grammars. Dialogue prioritizes relation, recognition, narrative, and mutual visibility; deliberation seeks structured judgement, collective reasoning, and decision clarity. Democratic innovation fails when it conflates these grammars or compresses them prematurely.

Hybrid civic platforms must therefore *choreograph* democratic phases:

1. Open, story-based dialogue spaces
2. Transitional reflection and knowledge integration
3. Focused deliberative phases where judgement crystallizes
4. Institutional translation

In Tolosa's mental health assembly reported by Garikoitz Lekuona, the rotation of experts and visual facilitation illustrates transitional choreography, moving from informational exposure to conversational digestion to structured recommendation. Legislative theatre, as articulated by Katy Rubin, embodies this choreography. Rather than forcing consensus, it stages disagreement, hesitation, and experimentation as productive democratic moments. Conflict is held open long enough for collective learning before hardening into polarized positions. Azucena Morán framing participation as pedagogical suggests Democratic learning requires paced sequencing, aligning directly with the choreography model. This sequencing directly informs D4.3's notion of democratic choreography: democracy as temporal design, not just procedural format.

Capability Gap: Holding Space for Exploration vs. Premature Closure

This gap refers to the uneven capacity of participatory processes to sustain open-ended exploration, hesitation, and disagreement. When this capability is weak, processes tend to close too quickly, pushing participants toward decisions before experiences, positions, and conflicts have been fully articulated.

Modern governance systems are structurally pressured toward speed, efficiency, and decision closure. Deliberative formats often compress disagreement into rapid consensus or formal recommendation.

Democratic choreography, by contrast, requires a reordering of participation: recognition must precede judgement, narrative must come before aggregation, conflict must be allowed before crystallisation, and experimentation must take place before institutionalisation.

The tension is therefore between:

Administrative acceleration and the need to maintain pluralism open long enough for meaningful transformation to occur.

Democratic choreography departs from both Habermasian procedural deliberation and agonistic democratic theory by reframing conflict not as something to be either rationally resolved or permanently staged, but as something to be temporally sequenced. In Habermas's model, deliberation privileges reason-giving under ideal speech conditions and aims toward rationally motivated agreement (Habermas, 1996). Agonistic theorists such as Mouffe (2000) counter that by arguing that pluralism generates ineradicable conflict and that consensus risks suppressing difference. **Democratic choreography occupies a third position: it accepts the agonistic insight that disagreement is constitutive, yet retains the deliberative aspiration to collective judgement. Its intervention is temporal rather than purely normative**. Dialogue phases create space for recognition, narrative, and epistemic expansion; deliberative phases crystallize judgement without erasing plurality. In this context, legislative theatre and similar participatory practices function as *cultural devices*: they suspend premature closure and maintain conflict open long enough for collective learning to occur before institutionalization hardens positions.

This sequencing resonates strongly with decolonial critiques of universalist deliberation. Thinkers such as Aníbal Quijano (2000) and Walter Mignolo (2011) argue that modern political rationality is structured by the coloniality of power and knowledge, privileging Eurocentric epistemologies as neutral and universal. María Lugones (2007) shows how colonial modernity fragments relationality and suppresses alternative ways of knowing and being, imposing a dominant, universalising logic that marginalises other epistemologies. In this context, the notion of the pluriversal is the coexistence of multiple, partially incommensurable worlds and knowledge systems, rather than a single, shared framework of reason. Democratic choreography responds to this by refusing epistemic compression: narrative and dialogic phases become mechanisms for pluriversal recognition before judgement, allowing different ways of knowing to appear on their own terms before being translated or evaluated. Rather than assuming a universal grammar of reason, choreography acknowledges epistemic asymmetry and deliberately designs temporal space for its negotiation. In this view, cultural devices are not aesthetic supplements to deliberation, but infrastructural interventions that interrupt colonial temporalities of speed, closure, and extraction.

Democratic Education & Civic Learning

Democratic participation emerges repeatedly as a pedagogical process. Azucena Morán stresses civic literacy and empowerment through participatory practice. Gabriel Fernández Gil describes how climate assembly participants undergo cognitive and behavioral transformation. Núria Ferran Ferrer links democratic participation to information competence and knowledge accessibility. Mauricio Mejía highlights the learning phase of deliberative assemblies as central to depolarization. Across these interviews, participatory processes function as civic schools, demonstrating that democratic competence is not pre-existing but cultivated through structured engagement. From a Bourdieusian perspective, this learning process can be interpreted as the accumulation of participatory capital. As Adrian Bua suggests, democratic capabilities develop through practice and recognition within the field of participation. However, because the broader distribution of economic, cultural, and social capital shapes who can access these learning spaces, the expansion of democratic capabilities requires sustained institutional commitment to equity and inclusion. Parry's reflections on non-verbal and modal pluralism extend the capabilities framework into the terrain of expression and tempo. She cautions that "everyone learns and participates differently," and that democratic design must enable participants to "participate in ways that work for them." This is not a superficial matter of technique but a structural condition of inclusion. Silence, writing in chat, embodied exercises, think–pair–share scaffolds, and the option "to withdraw" are not ancillary

tools. Modal pluralism, in this sense, is not pedagogical variety: it is a democratic necessity for sustaining epistemic equity across different communicative dispositions and vulnerabilities.

Capability Gap: Authority Transfer vs. Deliberative Legitimacy

This gap refers to the **capacity of participatory processes to convert deliberative legitimacy into real influence over decisions**. While deliberation enhances legitimacy, it does not automatically redistribute sovereign authority.

Reconfiguring the Demos: Planetary & More-Than-Human Futures

Finally, this last cluster reveals democracy as a contested project of collective world-making, where the authority to imagine and author the future is itself politically disputed. Patricia Luján situates feminist communication within a broader cultural battle for hegemonic futures. Amber Huff and Lucy Parry converge around a shared expansion of democratic horizons, not only spatially beyond the state, but temporally and ontologically beyond the present human subject. Both destabilise procedural minimalism and reopen democracy to a question of who and what counts in collective world-making. Amber Huff's interview shifts the democratic question from institutional design toward planetary responsibility and temporal depth. Rather than treating deliberation as a bounded procedure oriented toward immediate policy outputs, she situates democratic practice within transnational and more-than-human ethical horizons. Democracy, in her framing, is not merely a mechanism of aggregation or judgment; it is a site of collective world-making. These interviews intersect in expanding democracy beyond procedural reform toward collective imagination of alternative socio-economic and epistemic futures. The underlying tension concerns who has the authority to imagine and define the future. Huff's legitimacy framework for more-than-human representation makes this explicit. By distinguishing epistemic, agential, procedural, and disruptive legitimacy, she foregrounds the question of whose knowledge, whose agency, and whose suffering are recognised as politically consequential. In doing so, she expands the field of democratic imagination beyond human present interests toward planetary interdependence and structural transformation. "Simply seeing suffering isn't enough," she notes; spectacle does not generate structural change. What is required is disruptive legitimacy, practices that confront industrial-scale exploitation and unsettle dominant paradigms of growth and extraction. Parry's work on more-than-human representation can help us to explain this tension further. Parry argues that what is often framed as a problem of "representation" is in fact a problem of legitimacy: who counts as a valid knowledge holder, whose interests are recognised as politically relevant, and what forms of justification are accepted. Her distinctions between epistemic, agential, procedural, and disruptive legitimacy extend democratic imagination into the terrain of interspecies justice. If other species are recognised as agents rather than mere objects of policy, the horizon of democratic responsibility shifts fundamentally.

Capability Gap:
Who has authority to define the future; institutions, markets, or communities?

Table 3. Emergent Democratic Clusters: Core Tensions and Structural Patterns Across 25 Interviews

Cluster Name	Interviews Included	Core Focus	Core Democratic Tension	Structural Pattern Observed

Epistemic Justice & Racialized Knowledge	Dayo Eseonu, Desirée Bela-Lobedde, Hera Hussein, Sonia Bussu, Amber Huff, Taysir Mathlouthi	Recognition of marginalized knowledge and narrative authority	Who counts as a knower?	Participatory spaces risk reproducing dominant (white/Eurocentric/digital) epistemologies unless intentionally redesigned.
Institutional Accountability & Implementation Gap	Ernesto Ganuza, Axel Gasulla, Garikoitz Lekuona, Stefano Sotgiu,	Translation of deliberation into binding institutional action	From deliberation to binding power	Strong deliberative processes frequently encounter weak institutional follow-through; advisory status limits structural impact.
Technological Justice & Digital Infrastructure	Taysir Mathlouthi, Ismael Peña-López, Núria Ferran Ferrer, Katie Reid, Raúl Oliván	Platforms and digital architectures as political actors	Platform neutrality vs infrastructural power	Digital systems are political actors; algorithms and governance architectures shape visibility, participation, and legitimacy.
Affect, Narrative & Cultural Politics	Cristina Fallarás, Patricia Luján, Katy Rubin, Erica Núñez, Raúl Oliván	Emotion, storytelling, and recognition as democratic infrastructure	Emotion as democratic force	Storytelling, anger, play, and embodied expression function as political infrastructure rather than mere communication tools.
Legitimacy, Representation & Democratic Quality	Quim Brugué, Jaume López, Mauricio Mejía, Yanina Welp	Crisis of representative systems and deliberative complementarity	Representative crisis vs deliberative complementarity	Deliberation emerges as corrective to polarization and degraded parliamentary debate, but remains institutionally secondary.
Democratic Choreography & Designing for Diversity	Katy Rubin, Ernesto Ganuza (via Escobar distinction), Garikoitz Lekuona, Azucena Morán	Sequencing dialogue and deliberation; holding conflict productively	How do we design for difference without either homogenising it or losing collective orientation toward judgment and action?	Democratic outcomes depend on temporal sequencing: recognition must precede judgement; conflict must be staged before closure.

Democratic Education & Civic Learning	Azucena Morán, Gabriel Fernández Gil, Núria Ferran Ferrer, Mauricio Mejía	Participation as pedagogical process	Democracy as learned practice	Mini-publics operate as civic schools; political competence develops experientially through structured participation.
Reconfiguring the Demos: Planetary & More-Than-Human Futures	Amber Huff, Nuria Albet, Patricia Luján, Dayo Eseonu, Lucy Parry	Future-making, sovereignty, and long-term democratic horizons	Who imagines the future?	Energy sovereignty, feminist communication, and planetary ethics expand democracy beyond procedural presentism.

Taken together, these clusters suggest that the future of deliberative democracy cannot be understood without confronting the democratic implications of the digital transition. Participation increasingly unfolds across hybrid infrastructures where physical assemblies, civic spaces, media ecosystems, and digital platforms intersect. This transition does not simply introduce new tools for participation; it reorganises the conditions under which voice, visibility, knowledge, and authority circulate. Platforms such as **Decidim** illustrate how digital participation infrastructures can function as democratic commons when they are designed with transparency, accountability, and public ownership in mind. At the same time, the design of these infrastructures shapes how citizens encounter and navigate political processes. As discussed in **D4.1 through the concept of Political User Experience (PUX)**, the interface of participation platforms is not merely a technical layer but a political environment that structures how information is accessed, how arguments circulate, and how collective judgement forms. Algorithmic moderation, interface design, digital literacy, and data governance therefore become central democratic questions. The digital transition intensifies existing inequalities of capital, time, and safety while also expanding the scale and reach of participation. Across the interviews, a shared insight emerges: technological infrastructures are not neutral supports for democracy but constitutive elements of its contemporary architecture. Designing inclusive deliberative spaces therefore requires treating digital infrastructures as democratic institutions in their own right.

This is precisely where the cultural strategies and participatory devices explored in the following playbook become crucial. Storytelling circles, legislative theatre, community filmmaking, and other arts-based methodologies operate as **counter-infrastructures within hybrid democratic systems**, slowing down deliberation, redistributing narrative authority, and enabling forms of expression that digital interfaces alone cannot accommodate. In this sense, the playbook does not simply provide facilitation tools; it proposes cultural and methodological responses to the structural tensions identified in this analysis, helping hybrid democratic ecosystems combine digital infrastructures such as Decidim with embodied, relational, and creative forms of participation capable of sustaining democratic capabilities in the digital age.

1.3 Time, Emotion, and the Myth of Consensus

A recurring theme across interviews is that **time is a political resource**. Intersectional inequalities manifest as temporal deprivation. Precarious workers, caregivers, or migrants simply have less time to participate.

> *“Time is the single most frequently mentioned issue that compromised the integrity of deliberative processes. It’s the time people have to participate, the time before and after participatory processes, political time, the distribution and use of time within the process, and the demands on all of our time, all structured by intersecting layers of advantage and oppression. It’s probably the primary reason I wouldn’t participate in a deliberative process if invited right now, as bad as I feel about saying that out loud!"*
>
> *Lucy J Parry, INSPIRE researcher in deliberative democracy*

Insights from decolonial and autonomous political thought help to further problematise dominant assumptions about time, autonomy, and participation in deliberative processes. Reflections emerging from the work of Azucena Morán are particularly relevant in this respect, as they foreground time not as a neutral resource to be optimised, but as a central terrain of political struggle. Drawing on research with autonomous movements in Latin America, Morán shows how institutional and developmental logics often impose linear, accelerated, and outcome-oriented temporalities that clash with the rhythms through which communities sustain collective life, care, and political agency. In this perspective, autonomy is not primarily a question of organisational form, but of temporal control: who sets the pace, who absorbs delay, and who bears the cost of acceleration.

These insights are especially pertinent for the design of hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces. Participatory processes frequently fail not because of a lack of engagement or motivation, but because they require participants to conform to temporal regimes that are incompatible with their lived conditions. When deliberation is organised around fixed timelines, continuous availability, and rapid production of outputs, it risks reproducing extractive dynamics that mirror those of the economic systems many communities are already resisting. Morán’s work invites a rethinking of deliberation as a practice that must allow for pauses, interruptions, cyclical returns, and moments of withdrawal, recognising these not as failures of participation but as expressions of democratic agency.

Her research also challenges the linear narratives of progress that underpin many participatory models, where deliberation is expected to move smoothly from discussion to consensus to decision. Autonomous political practices often operate through non-linear temporalities, where political meaning accumulates gradually through repetition, care, and the maintenance of relationships rather than through discrete outcomes. Integrating this perspective into deliberative design shifts the emphasis from efficiency and throughput toward continuity, trust, and collective resilience. In the context of this Playbook, this reinforces the need for cultural strategies and devices that support deliberation as an ongoing, relational process rather than a time-bounded event.

Lorde connects vertigo and affect in a more racialized way: If anger, grief, or embodied testimony disrupt institutional tempo, they are often interpreted as deviations from rational deliberation. Yet as Lorde insists, anger can function as a source of political clarity. From this perspective, what institutions perceive as a disruptive affect may in fact be a refusal to conform to colonial time. Vertigo, then, is not only the experience of speed; it is the friction produced when suppressed temporalities insist on appearing. Claims that require historical narration, affective articulation, or structural contextualization are easily framed as digressions. Vertigo emerges when political subjects must compress histories of harm into soundbites compatible with institutional pace.

Morán’s work complicates simplistic understandings of autonomy as separation or isolation from institutions. Instead, autonomy emerges as a negotiated and fragile condition, constantly balancing

visibility and protection, engagement and distance. This has direct implications for hybrid and digital deliberative spaces, where exposure, data capture, and constant connectivity can undermine participants' capacity to retain control over their political time and presence. Recognising autonomy as a temporal and relational condition strengthens the case for designing safe(r) deliberative infrastructures that allow differentiated levels of participation, reversible engagement, and collective control over pace and visibility. In this way, Morán's contributions inform the Playbook's broader argument that temporal justice, care, and cultural design are not ancillary concerns, but foundational conditions for inclusive and non-extractive democratic deliberation.

1.3.1 Embodied Deliberation

Escobar's research with "mini-publics" and Platoniq's pedagogies of creative deliberation converge on one principle: deliberation is not purely cognitive; it is **embodied**. Jaume López's reflections on cosmovisions deepen this insight. He cautions that participatory processes often assume a single, implicitly Western understanding of politics, agency, and rationality. When diverse communities enter deliberative space, they do not bring only opinions, they bring distinct ontologies, temporalities, and relationships to land, community, and authority. Cosmovisions are not thematic positions within debate; they are structuring frameworks that shape what counts as a problem, what counts as evidence, and what counts as a legitimate decision. In this light, embodiment is not merely about gesture or affect. It is about the epistemic grounding of knowledge in lived relational worlds. Morán cautions against imposing mini-public models onto Indigenous communities, where leaders have responded, "This is not how we make decisions", underscores that deliberative formats are not culturally neutral. They carry embedded assumptions about who speaks, how authority is recognised, and how knowledge is validated. Designing for diversity, therefore, requires more than modal plurality; it requires sensitivity to epistemic and ontological difference.

Further reflections from practitioners working at the intersection of performance and policy further challenge rigid distinctions between expression and deliberation. As Katy Rubin argues, legislative theatre creates a structured space where lived experience, emotion, and narrative are not opposed to rational debate, but act as gateways into collective reasoning. By transforming spectators into "spect-actors" who intervene, test alternatives, and negotiate consequences, these processes make visible how deliberation already relies on embodied judgement, not only abstract argument.

Cristina Fallarás' testimonial politics also demonstrates that emotion is epistemic. Anger and grief are not irrational residues; they are diagnostic. They signal structural injustice and demand recognition. Embodied speech, trembling voice, collective chanting, shared affect becomes a mode of political truth-telling that precedes formal argument. Hussein's work on online gender-based violence further complicates the picture. When digital spaces become hostile, bodies retreat. Silence in such contexts is not disengagement but self-protection. Embodiment here reveals vulnerability: participation is conditioned by safety. Gestures, silences, posture, and pacing carry meaning, including the meaning of threat. Without attending to these embodied signals, deliberation risks privileging those least exposed to harm.Gestures, silences, and shared atmospheres shape meaning.

Digitally mediated spaces must therefore integrate **sensorial cues** (sound, rhythm, visual pacing, asynchronous options) to re-introduce presence into online deliberation. Embodiment is not aesthetic embellishment; it is a democratic condition. Without it, epistemic equity and collective care cannot be sustained.

1.4 Decentering Whiteness in Deliberation: Toward a Plural, Situated Practice

Desirée Bela-Lobedde interview articulates **anti-racist democratic work as structural, epistemic, and institutional struggle**, not as inclusion into existing democratic arrangements but as a challenge to how those arrangements are constituted, narrated, and enforced.

Referring to the **Navigating Power Capability,** the interview is a sustained analysis of how power operates through institutions, narratives, legality, and invisibility. Importantly, Bela-Lobedde frames racism as structural power, not individual bias. She argues that racialised people must be the producers of knowledge about their lives, communities, and demands which connects to the **Epistemic Equity and Justice** capability. Speaking *about* them reproduces domination; speaking *for themselves* is a democratic act. Referring to the **Consequential Participation Capability,** she repeatedly questions whether participatory mechanisms lead to law, rights, and enforcement, highlighting the gap between expression and political consequence.

Bela-Lobedde mentions several important aspects of democratic work: :

a) Democracy is a struggle over representation, not mere presence
Bela-Lobedde reframes quotas and affirmative action not as “liberation” but as **corrective mechanisms** within structurally unequal systems. Representation is not symbolic inclusion but an enforced disruption of exclusionary norms. Democracy here is about *who is structurally prevented from appearing* unless intervention occurs.

b) Democracy is about epistemic self-definition
A core democratic act, according to the interviewee, is the right of racialised people to **define themselves beyond imposed categories** (migrant, victim, newcomer). The insistence on narrating one’s own story, and refusing to be reduced to trauma, is essentially a political act.

c) Democracy is a confrontation with institutional racism
The interview treats racism not as interpersonal prejudice but as **institutionalised power embedded in laws, bureaucracies, labour markets, borders, media, and education systems**. Democratic work thus consists in naming, exposing, and contesting these mechanisms.

d) Democracy is focused on intersectional justice, not zero-sum competition
Bela-Lobedde rejects the framing of majority vs minority interests and instead articulates an afrofeminist principle: *protecting the most vulnerable protects everyone*. Democracy is understood as a redistributive justice, not as balancing competing claims within an already unjust system.

e) Democracy as narrative and imagination struggle
A significant dimension of democratic work concerns who is recognised as **belonging to the political community**; that is, who is seen as a legitimate member of the collective “we” that democracy presupposes. Bela-Lobedde highlights how the persistent refusal to recognise Black Spaniards as fully Spanish reveals a deeper democratic failure rooted in colonial imaginaries. In this sense, democracy is not only about participation or rights, but about expanding the boundaries of **civic, cultural, and political belonging**. It requires challenging inherited narratives that define who can be imagined as part of the polity, and under what conditions.

f) Democracy as consequential participation, not mere inclusion
While citizens’ panels and dialogues are discussed, Bela-Lobedde consistently points out their limits: translation into law, political will, and institutional follow-through. Participation without power should be treated with caution.

Whiteness as an Operating System

Taking this into consideration this Playbook is not only about *who participates*, but **under what epistemic, temporal, and affective conditions participation is recognised as legitimate**.

A central insight emerging across INSPIRE pilots and the IPSOS/platoniq webinar[2] is that many deliberative settings (despite inclusive intentions) remain structured by **norms historically shaped by whiteness** even despite inclusive intentions. We understand whiteness here not as identity, but as a **default regime of meaning, time, and comportment**.

This produces a paradox:

> Participation may be formally open, while deliberation remains normatively closed.

Decentering whiteness is therefore not an add-on or ideological gesture; it is a **design and governance necessity** for intersectional deliberation.

In D4.2 terms, **whiteness functions as an invisible operating system** of deliberation. It manifests as:

- Assumptions about *neutrality* and *objectivity*
- Linear, efficiency-driven conceptions of time
- Comfort with abstraction over embodied experience
- Preference for dispassionate, orderly speech
- Epistemic trust in written, rationalised, decontextualised forms of knowledge

This aligns directly with what Titaś Biswas, INSPIRE researcher, identified as the **colonial afterlife of neo-Kantian epistemologies**, still shaping how research, memory, and participation are conducted (IPSOS webinar).

In the landscape of democratic innovation and participatory methodologies, the architecture of deliberation has long been shaped by what Charles W. Mills calls **“epistemologies of ignorance”**; knowledge systems that function not by failing to know, but by actively refusing to know what threatens the racial order (Mills, 2007). These systems present themselves as rational, universal, and neutral, yet they are deeply rooted in whiteness as a normative framework.

To **decenter whiteness** in dialogic and deliberative spaces is not merely a question of including non-white bodies or voices. It requires us to fundamentally challenge the assumptions that govern who speaks, how knowledge is validated, and what counts as a legitimate contribution to collective sense-making.

Within liberal democratic traditions, deliberation is often regulated by ideals such as *civility*, *neutrality*, *impartiality*, and *rational consensus*. However, as scholars like Sara Ahmed (2012) and bell hooks (1994) have shown, these ideals often mask mechanisms of exclusion. “Civility,” for instance, can act as a disciplinary tool, silencing anger, regulating affect, and protecting comfort zones rooted in whiteness. “Consensus” may erase dissenting voices, especially those that speak from marginalised locations of embodied and historical trauma (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2003).

From an **Afrofeminist perspective**, deliberation cannot be detached from the body, memory, or emotion. Knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988). The personal is political. The act of speaking

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[2] “*Democracy Takes Time: Intersectional Temporalities in Participation and Deliberation*”

from a racialized, gendered body (especially a Black or migrant one) is already a disruption of dominant norms of “rational debate.” Emotions like rage, grief, and erotic joy are not obstacles to democratic practice, but central to its transformation (Lorde, 1984; Collins, 2000).

The body speaks. Memory speaks. Rage, silence, and refusal speak. In many non-Western traditions, deliberation is not about reaching rational consensus, but about holding space for contradiction, for historical pain, and for embodied truths that cannot be resolved in procedural time.

This perspective reimagines deliberation as a **relational praxis**; a collective **choreography of care**, friction, and listening across difference. Here, disagreement is not a breakdown but a sign of integrity. Refusal to speak or to agree is not dysfunction, but a form of political agency (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Silence, spirituality, and ancestral knowledge are not deficits, but modes of presence that demand new infrastructures of recognition (Simpson, 2017; Anzaldúa, 1987).

In such spaces, facilitation practices must shift. Instead of enforcing civility, facilitators might co-create agreements based on **care, historical awareness, and mutual accountability**. Instead of striving for resolution, processes can allow for **unresolved tension** and **non-closure**, resisting the impulse to absorb all differences into a single outcome.

Deliberation, then, becomes not a mechanism of governance but a **technology of healing, resistance, and imagination**. It becomes a site where plural epistemologies (Black, Indigenous, queer, diasporic, spiritual) are not added as decoration, but honored as foundations of democratic life.

Dialogue Is Not Neutral

Western models of deliberation, particularly those rooted in Habermasian traditions, tend to privilege rational, “unemotional” speech, individual turn-taking, and argument-based persuasion, often oriented toward consensus as the ideal endpoint (Habermas, 1996). However, this orientation toward consensus has been critically challenged. As Knops (2007) argues, deliberation does not necessarily require agreement to be democratically meaningful; in many contexts, the expectation of consensus can obscure persistent conflict and suppress legitimate disagreement, particularly where power asymmetries are at play.

But these are not neutral norms. They reflect the histories of **colonial governance, bourgeois civility, and Enlightenment exclusion**. As María Lugones reminds us, these logics emerged from a **“colonial/modern gender system”** that dehumanized non-Western peoples by casting their knowledge, bodies, and cultures as inferior.

For a Black woman, a trans Afro-descendant migrant, or a diasporic Indigenous person, to enter a “deliberative space” defined by these rules is often to be asked to **translate oneself into a language not built for your survival**.

Dominant Deliberative Norm	**Afrofeminist/Global South Counter-Insight**

Rationality over emotion	Emotions are epistemic: *"I feel, therefore I know"* (Audre Lorde). Emotional expression is not a failure of deliberation: it can be its most truthful form.
Civility = decorum	Civility often functions as a form of control. As Bell Hooks warns, "niceness" can silence necessary anger and dissent.
Impartiality as ideal	Impartiality often masks privilege. Afrofeminism centers on situated **knowledge** and **partial perspectives** as strengths.
Expertise = formal knowledge	Black, Indigenous, and popular pedagogies recognize **lived experience**, **storytelling**, **embodied memory**, and **ancestral wisdom** as valid and powerful forms of knowledge.
Consensus as goal	From a decolonial perspective, **plurality** and **non-resolution** can be politically valuable. Seeking harmony must not erase difference.

How deliberation has been silently “whitened”

Many deliberative processes remain structured by unmarked norms of time, speech, knowledge, and neutrality, that silently reproduce whiteness as the default framework of democratic legitimacy. Recognising these dynamics does not imply abandoning deliberation, but rather redesigning its temporal, epistemic, and affective foundations to accommodate plural ways of knowing, speaking, and being present.

Table 4: Mechanisms of the Silent “Whitening” of Deliberation

Dimension	Dominant deliberative norm (often unmarked)	How this reproduces whiteness as a framework	What gets marginalised or excluded
Time	Linear, efficient, future-oriented time; punctuality; closure; productivity	Assumes neutrality of accelerated time and treats urgency as democratic virtue, obscuring historical trauma, waiting, and uneven temporal burdens	Non-linear narratives; pauses; grief or sickness; cyclical or interrupted time; those balancing care, precarity, or historical injury
Speech & Expression	Calm, rational, orderly, emotionally restrained speech; turn-taking as control	Privileges communicative styles associated with dominant cultural norms and frames affect as disruption rather than knowledge	Storytelling; silence; emotion; circular or fragmented narration; anger, mourning, or embodied expression
Knowledge Forms	Abstract argumentation; policy-ready language; textual contributions	Elevates disembodied, universalising knowledge while marginalising situated, relational, or experiential ways of knowing	Oral histories; embodied knowledge; memory; artistic, performative, or visual expression
Neutrality & Objectivity	Procedural neutrality; “view from nowhere”	Masks historical power relations by presenting dominant epistemologies as universal and value-free	Positional knowledge; situated critique; acknowledgment of power asymmetries
Participation Ethics	Formal consent; anonymisation as sufficient ethical safeguard	Treats participation as extraction rather than co-production, ignoring how hegemonic frameworks shape desire and consent	Collective ownership of data; ongoing consent; relational accountability,

Deliberative Atmosphere	Functional, task-oriented spaces; minimal attention to care or comfort	Frames care as peripheral, reinforcing extractive participation and emotional detachment	Shared food; informal sociality; trust-building rituals; “participation for the soul”
Decision Logic	Closure, consensus, and deliverables as indicators of success, consensus seen as arising from the force of ‘the better argument’. Alternative democratic logics instead accommodate ongoing disagreement, unresolved tensions, slow convergence, and refusal as legitimate political positions, allowing participation to remain open-ended rather than prematurely resolved.	Prioritises outcomes over process, favouring those fluent in dominant deliberative codes	Ongoing dissent; unresolved tensions; slow convergence; refusal as a political stance; a desire to conform.

What emerges from Part 1, is a set of recurring structural tensions, between voice and impact, inclusion and power, dialogue and decision, and speed and care, which limit the effectiveness of participatory processes, both offline and online. The analysis also highlights how dominant deliberative norms embedded in institutional and digital settings can marginalise embodied, emotional, and situated forms of knowledge, constraining epistemic diversity.

From a design perspective, these findings point to a systemic misalignment between participatory practices, digital platforms, and the conditions required for meaningful engagement. From a cultural perspective, they invite a shift from participation as a procedural exercise to participation as a **choreography of relations, temporalities, and infrastructures**. Together, they establish the need to redesign not only methods, but the **underlying socio-technical conditions** that enable democratic participation to be inclusive, coherent, and consequential.

📍 Part II: Cultural Strategies for Hybrid Dialogic and Deliberative Spaces

> *"Culture is not an accessory to participation. It is the space where democracy rehearses its own possibility."* Platoniq's methodological note

2.1 The Cultural Turn in Digital Democracy

This report focuses on the cultural **dimension** of platforms as civic infrastructures (see D4.1), the forms of expression, emotion, and imagination that make participation meaningful.
While digital participation often seeks efficiency and reach, cultural strategies emphasize **depth, connection, and transformation**.

Hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces require more than digital interfaces; they need **cultural architectures** that can hold disagreement, sustain care, and invite creative agency.
This chapter explores how **art-based, feminist, and decolonial methodologies** can act as infrastructures of inclusion, reshaping how dialogue happens, who speaks, and what counts as democratic knowledge.

Democracy is a design practice. **Every participatory tool, whether a town-hall format or a Decidim platform, encodes cultural assumptions about what counts as reason, evidence, or belonging.**
The **cultural turn** in digital democracy calls for reimagining these infrastructures not as neutral systems but as **living cultural devices**.

This implies three key shifts:

1. **From usability to affectability:** participation must be experienced and felt, not reduced to functional interaction..
2. **From dialogue as debate to dialogue as relation:** listening and empathy as democratic competencies.
3. **From platforms seen as tools to platforms understood as commons:** collective ownership of civic infrastructures.

These shifts underpin INSPIRE's goal to **hybridise digital culture with creative practice**, blending deliberation with art, ritual, and narrative to generate new forms of agency.

The present section builds on D3.1 Scoping Review of Arts-Based and Creative Methods by situating arts-based participatory practices within a broader pluriversal genealogy of democratic imagination.

The review systematically documented how visual, performance-based, and narrative practices enhance inclusion, social justice, and democratisation across participatory processes. It demonstrates the transformative potential of methods such as Photovoice, Legislative Theatre, storytelling, and participatory filmmaking in centring lived experience and challenging epistemic injustice. D3.1 includes empirical cases from the Global South and acknowledges Indigenous and postcolonial theory within its conceptual framework.

However, while D3.1 acknowledges the roots of intersectionality in Black feminist, Indigenous, queer, and postcolonial theory, its primary focus remains empirical and practice-oriented. The

deeper philosophical genealogies of these methods (particularly their connections to decolonial, anti-colonial, and Afrofuturist traditions) remain underexplored.

2.2 Multiple Cultural Genealogies of Democratic Imagination: From Social Sculpture to Decolonial Infrastructures

Cultural strategies cannot be rooted in a single philosophical tradition; they emerge from a plurality of democratic worlds, each proposing different relationships between art, power, and participation.

Hybrid deliberative designs, therefore, become a form of **cultural governance**, where aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions intertwine.

🔵 2.2.1 Genealogy I: European Civic Prototyping

Rooted in post-war avant-garde and countercultural movements, this genealogy sees art not just as aesthetic expression, but as a democratic infrastructure of relation. Pioneers like Joseph Beuys positioned creativity as a civic force. His concept of Soziale Plastik (social sculpture) defined society itself as a participatory artwork, shaped by every individual. His “Organisation für direkte Demokratie durch Volksabstimmung” (1971) invited the public to deliberate and perform direct democracy in public spaces, decades before institutional mini-publics became formalised. Beuys' assemblies were not procedural simulations but rituals of re-imagination, where symbolic gestures (such as planting trees) served as acts of civic renewal, prefiguring later democratic innovations. In this context, symbolic action becomes infrastructural: a way of rehearsing other political realities.

This European lineage (extending through participatory theatre, institutional critique, and civic hacking cultures) continues to inform technopolitical experimentation in Europe today. It offers key tactics: performative listening, prototyping-as-politics, and temporary assemblies as platforms for political imagination. Within INSPIRE, this tradition contributes to the design of cultural devices that reframe deliberation as a generative, symbolic act. Platforms, assemblies, and digital infrastructures are not treated as neutral tools, but as civic stages; experimental sites where new modes of authorship, decision-making, and aesthetic-political agency emerge.

While contemporary citizen assemblies are often framed as novel innovations, their deeper cultural roots can be traced to a European lineage of participatory artistic practice that envisioned democracy as a living, relational process. These traditions, including Fluxus, Situationist International, and strands of feminist and institutional critique, framed creativity not as individual expression, but as a tool for collective authorship, symbolic action, and civic transformation. The Fluxus movement similarly rejected the division between art and life, embracing open-ended “scores” for group interaction and disrupting hierarchies between artist and audience. Meanwhile, the Situationists theorised and enacted methods of interrupting capitalist spectacle through embodied wandering (dérive) and symbolic repurposing (détournement), laying the groundwork for spatial and experiential methods now common in participatory urbanism and civic design. Feminist collectives like Womanhouse and Kitchen Table Press turned domestic space into political infrastructure, staging assemblies in kitchens, bedrooms, and workshops, spaces usually excluded from “public” debate. Their work prefigures contemporary ideas of safe(r) space, affective deliberation, and care as democratic method. However, this history reveals a paradox: while today’s democratic innovation field often draws aesthetic inspiration from these movements, it tends to marginalise the methodological contributions of art, rarely including symbolic, performative, or

embodied modes of participation in formal assemblies. **The very traditions that helped birth democratic prototyping are now often excluded in favour of technocratic rationalism.**

Within INSPIRE, these genealogies are not merely referenced but reactivated. Cultural devices such as **Legislative Theatre** and **Deliberative Tarot** (see playbook)**,** carry forward this lineage, integrating artistic, symbolic, and ritual methods into the architecture of hybrid deliberation. Here, deliberation becomes more than speech. It is a practice of relation, imagination, and shared authorship. Crucially, this genealogy does not stand alone. It is intentionally placed in dialogue with Black, Indigenous, and Global South epistemologies of resistance, which challenge its Eurocentric assumptions and extend the scope of what counts as “political imagination.”

🟣 2.2.2 Genealogy II: Black Feminist Democratic Pedagogies

Black feminist thinkers such as bell hooks and Audre Lorde articulate democracy as a deeply relational, embodied, and affective practice. In this genealogy, participation is not limited to argumentation or institutional engagement; it is grounded in care, voice, mutual recognition, and collective pedagogy. Democracy is not only a system of decision-making, but a practice of healing, unlearning, and reconstituting the conditions of being together.

hooks conceptualises education as a practice of freedom, where learning becomes a site of democratic transformation and collective empowerment (hooks, 1994). Pedagogy here is not neutral transmission, but a relational process that confronts domination and nurtures critical consciousness. Lorde, in turn, reframes emotions such as anger, grief, and desire as sources of political knowledge and clarity, refusing their marginalisation within dominant deliberative norms (Lorde, 1984). For Lorde, silence is not absence but the product of structural conditions that render some voices unsafe; speaking becomes both risk and resistance.

This genealogy challenges the epistemic foundations of deliberation by rejecting the hierarchy between reason and emotion, and by insisting that lived experience constitutes a legitimate and necessary form of political knowledge. It also foregrounds relational accountability: participation is not only about expressing views, but about how participants hold space for one another, listen across difference, and remain responsible to the communities they represent.

Methodologically, these traditions generate practices centred on narrative and embodiment: story circles and testimonial dialogue, poetic and epistolary exchanges, embodied voice and breathing practices, and collective reflection rooted in lived experience. These approaches expand what counts as participation by validating affect, memory, and positionality as core democratic resources.

Within INSPIRE, this genealogy directly informs the design of narrative and care-based deliberative environments. It underpins the emphasis on emotional safety, epistemic justice, and creative pedagogy in hybrid spaces, where participation is not only about contributing arguments, but about sustaining conditions of trust, recognition, and collective learning. In this sense, Black feminist pedagogies do not simply complement deliberation; they reconfigure its foundations by centring care, vulnerability, and relational knowledge as democratic infrastructures.

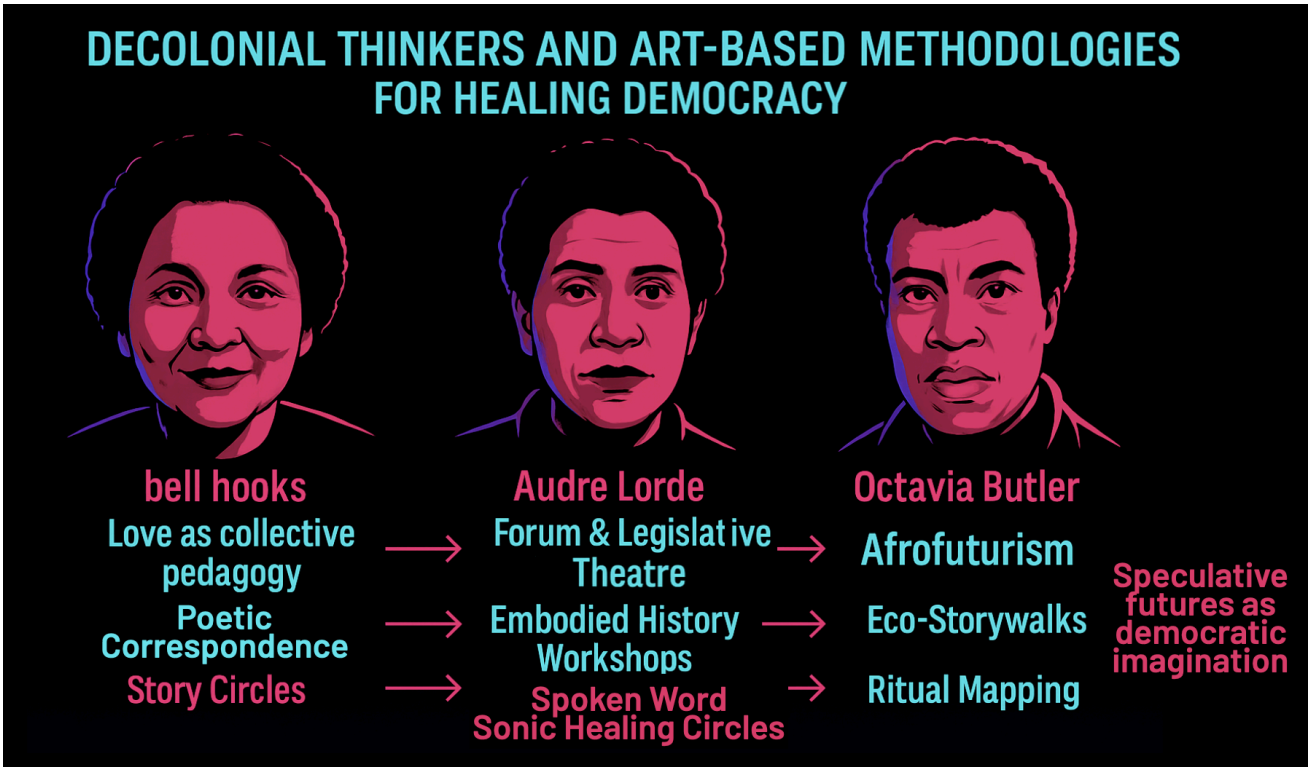


Fig 1. Decolonial Thinkers and Art-Based Methodologies for Healing Democracy I. Platoniq

🟢2.2.3 Genealogy III: Anti-Colonial & Indigenous Cosmopolitics

Anti-colonial and Indigenous thinkers offer another foundational genealogy of democratic imagination. Frantz Fanon exposes how colonial violence fractures political agency, insisting that liberation requires both structural transformation and processes of collective psychological repair (Fanon, 1961). Achille Mbembe, in turn, reveals how democracy is shaped by its often invisible infrastructures: borders, regimes of mobility, and forms of exclusion that regulate who can appear, speak, and be recognised within the political sphere (Mbembe, 2019). In parallel, Indigenous scholars such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson articulate democracy as an ecological and relational practice, where political life is inseparable from land, memory, ancestry, and more-than-human worlds (Simpson, 2017).

Taken together, these perspectives reframe democracy as a field shaped by historical trauma, ecological interdependence, and structurally obscured exclusions. Colonial violence is understood not only as a past event but as a **collective democratic wound** that continues to shape participation and agency. At the same time, democratic life is repositioned as a form of **relational accountability to land and community**, rather than an abstract institutional arrangement. This also entails making visible the **hidden infrastructures of exclusion** that underpin contemporary democratic systems.

From this genealogy emerge methodologies centred on: collective remembrance and historical visibility, ecological storytelling and land-based relation, ritual mapping of memory and territory, acknowledging structural harm and reimagining belonging. In INSPIRE, these insights ground cultural strategies that link participation to territorial care, ecological justice, and the political visibility of marginalised lived realities, particularly in pilots working with migrant communities and spatial

justice. This genealogy shifts participation from debate to remembrance, land-based relation, and the political work of making the unseen visible.

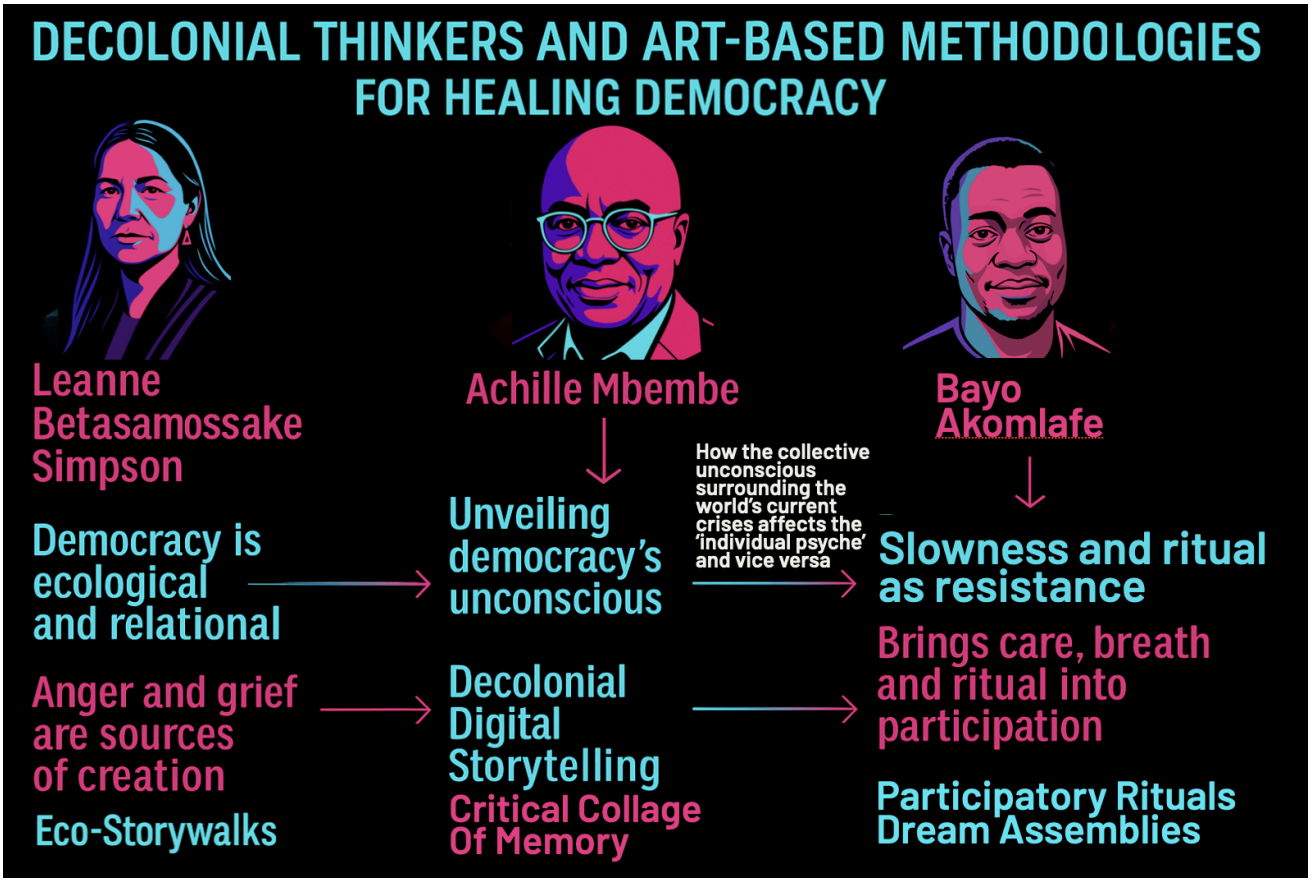


Fig 2. Decolonial Thinkers and Art-Based Methodologies for Healing Democracy II. Platoniq

🌍 Decolonial Thinkers and Art-Based Methodologies for Healing Democracy

This table extracts democratic insights from decolonial thinkers and reworks them into participatory formats that can be enacted. The goal is to move from critique to design, without flattening the politics these traditions carry. By aligning each insight with arts-based methodologies, the table expands the grammar of participation to include affect, memory, embodiment, and ecological relation. In doing so, it positions cultural methods not as complements to deliberation, but as infrastructures for healing democracy.

Importantly, this table also **informs the development of the exercises included in the Playbook section (Part VI)**. Each methodological proposal presented here has been translated into concrete participatory formats (such as Visual Dramaturgy Cards, performance-based devices, and narrative practices) designed for direct application in hybrid democratic processes.

Table 5: Decolonial Thinkers and Art-Based Methodologies for Healing Democracy

Thinker	Core Democratic Insight	Corresponding or Extended Methodologies	INSPIRE Category	Application to Healing Democracy
bell hooks	Love as collective pedagogy; education as a practice of freedom	**Community Filmmaking** (existing) → framed as *Pedagogies of Love* (new framing) **Story Circles / Testimonial Dialogue** (existing, popular theatre roots) **Poetic Correspondence Exercises** (new) – exchanging short love letters to democracy, community, or the earth.	Narrative / Performance-based	Turns care and dialogue into public learning; counters disaffection with empathy and relational responsibility.
Frantz Fanon	Colonial trauma must be collectively acknowledged and reimagined through action and voice	**Forum & Legislative Theatre** (existing) **Embodied History Workshops** (new) – participants re-enact erased or silenced scenes of struggle, followed by rewriting them. **Sound Collage of Protest Archives** (new) – remixing recorded voices of resistance.	Performance-based / Visual	Converts psychic trauma into collective catharsis and agency; democratizes remembrance through embodied re-enactment.

Audre Lorde	Anger and grief are sources of clarity and creation	**Creative Writing & Spoken Word** (existing) **Embodied Voice Practices** (new): sessions where breath and emotion are traced through voice modulation. **Sonic Healing Circles** (new): use sound and poetry to reclaim silenced affects.	Narrative / Performanc e-based	Validates marginalized emotions; transforms suppressed affect into creative and political insight.
Leanne Betasamosa ke Simpson	Democracy is ecological and relational; healing emerges through kinship with land and more-than-hu man worlds	**Participatory Video / PhotoVoice** (existing) → reframed as *Land Voice* — filming reciprocity with territory. **Ritual Mapping** (new) – co-creating maps that combine memory, plants, ancestors, and future generations. **Eco-Storywalks** (new) – combining narrative with sensory movement in natural settings.	Visual / Narrative	Reconnects deliberation with ecology; frames participation as care for territory and interdependence.
Bayo Akomolafe	Slowness, ritual, and uncertainty as resistance to technocratic speed	**Participatory Performance Rituals** (new) – hybrid of theatre and ceremony where participants slow down collective rhythm. **Dream Assemblies** (new) – participants co-create narratives from dreams, myth, and silence	Performanc e-based	Reclaims time as a democratic commons; brings care, breath, and ritual into participation.

		(arts-based reflection).		
Achille Mbembe	Unveiling democracy's colonial unconscious and its politics of exclusion	**Decolonial Digital Storytelling** (existing but extended) – combining local testimonies with critique of data regimes. **Critical Collage / Digital Cartography of Memory** (new) – co-creating maps that reveal invisible borders and exclusions.	Visual / Narrative	Exposes the necropolitical dimensions of democracy; makes visible the "unseen" infrastructures of inequality.

🟢 2.2.4 Dialogue as Colonial Encounter

🛑 Dialogue is not innocent. In many parts of the Global South, dialogue has not been experienced as empowerment, but as a mechanism of control, surveillance, and extraction. The history of "dialogic" practices (from colonial missionary encounters to modern development workshops) is filled with examples where communities were not invited to shape power, but to perform their realities for external validation. Dialogue, in these cases, becomes a form of a theatre: a ritualized form of consultation where marginalized people are asked to speak, but only within pre-scripted roles, timeframes, and formats. These processes often claim to "give voice" to the voiceless, but in reality, they listen in ways that neutralize dissent, extract knowledge, and translate complexity into fundable outcomes. From a decolonial and Afrofeminist perspective, this form of participation is not democratic, it is paternalistic. It frames communities as recipients of knowledge rather than producers of it. It treats disagreement as dysfunction. It privileges data over story, coherence over contradiction, and always centers external timelines over lived experience. To frame dialogue as a colonial encounter is not to reject collective sense-making. It is to expose the historical weight and political conditions under which dialogue takes place. As Ochy Curiel and other decolonial feminists remind us, the "invitation to participate" must always be interrogated: Who invites? For what purpose? Who benefits from the knowledge shared? And what happens when people say no? If cultural strategies for deliberation are to avoid repeating these violences, they must:

Recognize when "inclusive dialogue" is just a softer form of extractive governance. Refuse the urge to instrumentalise community knowledge for pre-designed policy goals. Create conditions where refusal, silence, or interruption are not punished but treated as legitimate political acts. Shift from extractive listening to accountable listening, where facilitators and institutions are not just gathering input but transforming themselves in response to what is heard. This means rejecting the colonizer's ear, the ear that listens only to manage, to fix, to document. Instead, it means listening as a form of surrender. Of humility. Of political and epistemic accountability.

✴ 2.2.5 Genealogy IV: Afrofuturist & Speculative Democratic Imagination

> *Yet if the future is seen as 'a chronopolitical terrain,' as hostile and in need of contestation as the past, then 'inquiry into production of futures becomes fundamental, rather than trivial' (Eshun, 2003, p.289).*

Future is resistance through remembrance and ever-expansive timescapes that disrupt the timeline, or otherwise hack it to open up accessibility into the future(s) (Phillips, 2022). A fourth genealogy emerges from Afrofuturist and speculative traditions, most notably the work of Octavia Butler. Here, democracy is understood not as the preservation of existing structures but as the collective design of futures yet to come. Speculation becomes a democratic technology; a way for communities to articulate desired worlds, confront systemic constraints, and prototype alternative systems of care, governance, and relation. Afrofuturism offers tools for expanding political imagination beyond the limitations of present institutions. It emphasises fluidity, transformation, and the power of narrative to create possibility. This genealogy inspires participatory methods such as: speculative design challenges, policy fiction labs, futures collage sessions, dream assemblies and narrative prototyping. Within INSPIRE, these methods nurture collective foresight, helping participants imagine new democratic infrastructures and reconfigure their relationship to power, agency, and futurity. These genealogies do not derive from each other, nor do they form a single lineage. They coexist as a pluriverse of democratic imaginations: European civic prototyping, Black feminist pedagogy, anti-colonial and Indigenous cosmopolitics, and Afrofuturist speculative practice

In her work with the **Truth and Reparation Commission** (TRC) model, Dayo Eseonu helped co-design a participatory framework bringing together participants from diverse racialised and social backgrounds, alongside institutional representatives, working over an extended period to co-create a reparations programme. This framework integrated key democratic innovations with a deep understanding of **structural racism**, **historical trauma**, and **community protection**.

The TRC process combined multiple layers of participation and knowledge. It included testimonies from communities experiencing structural racism, shared through community **hearings and sharing circles** designed to prioritise safety, collective processing, and protection from harm before moving toward policy outcomes. These were complemented by contributions from **experts on the histories of slavery, colonialism, and counter-narratives**, grounding the process in a critical and historically informed understanding of injustice. Creative methods were integrated as core deliberative strategies rather than supportive tools, enabling participants to articulate experiences and imagine just futures through visual storytelling, memory work, and symbolic artefacts, such as the affirmation "We belong here" emerging from youth participants. The process also incorporated veto mechanisms and shared authority structures, ensuring that communities could set boundaries, interrupt harmful dynamics, and shape the conditions of participation. Finally, expert facilitation supported the navigation of tensions and the translation of collective insights into concrete policy proposals and resource frameworks aligned with community-defined needs.

In this context, veto is not obstructionist: it is **generative and reparative**. It acknowledges that when participants **carry histories of harm**, justice requires tools that allow them to say *no* without penalty. As such, **veto becomes a condition for trust**. It also forces **institutional actors** to sit with discomfort and confront the possibility that certain narratives or decisions are not theirs to legitimise.

This case is illustrative of how **Black participatory design** can function not only as testimony or healing, but as **a structured exercise in institutional transformation**. It shows that **truth-telling must be accompanied by power-sharing**, and that **creative expression is not ancillary to policy. It is a method of democratic truth-making**.

INSPIRE draws on this pluriverse to design hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces where multiple ways of knowing, sensing, and imagining democracy can co-exist.

2.3 Affective Diagnostics, Agonistic Vitality, and Decolonial Repair in Hybrid Deliberative Spaces. Insights from a webinar

As part of Task 4.2's exploration of cultural strategies and devices for hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces, we have organised the session *Rewilding Democracy through Affect and Imagination* at the University of Canberra (November 2025). The session was designed and facilitated by Platoniq and examined how affective and embodied interventions generate diagnostic knowledge about democratic disaffection and possibilities for repair. The session gathered 35 participants, primarily scholars and practitioners from the deliberative democracy field. The affective patterns that emerged therefore reflect the perceptions of experienced democratic actors rather than detached commentary.

The session was structured around two arts-based devices included in the D4.2 Playbook: "Democracy at the Divan," whose dramaturgy card appears in the Playbook section (see: visual materials), and "The Flavour of Democracy: From Bodies to Platforms." Together, these devices move from interior diagnosis to collective embodiment, enabling democracy to be encountered not merely as a system of rules but as a living relational field.

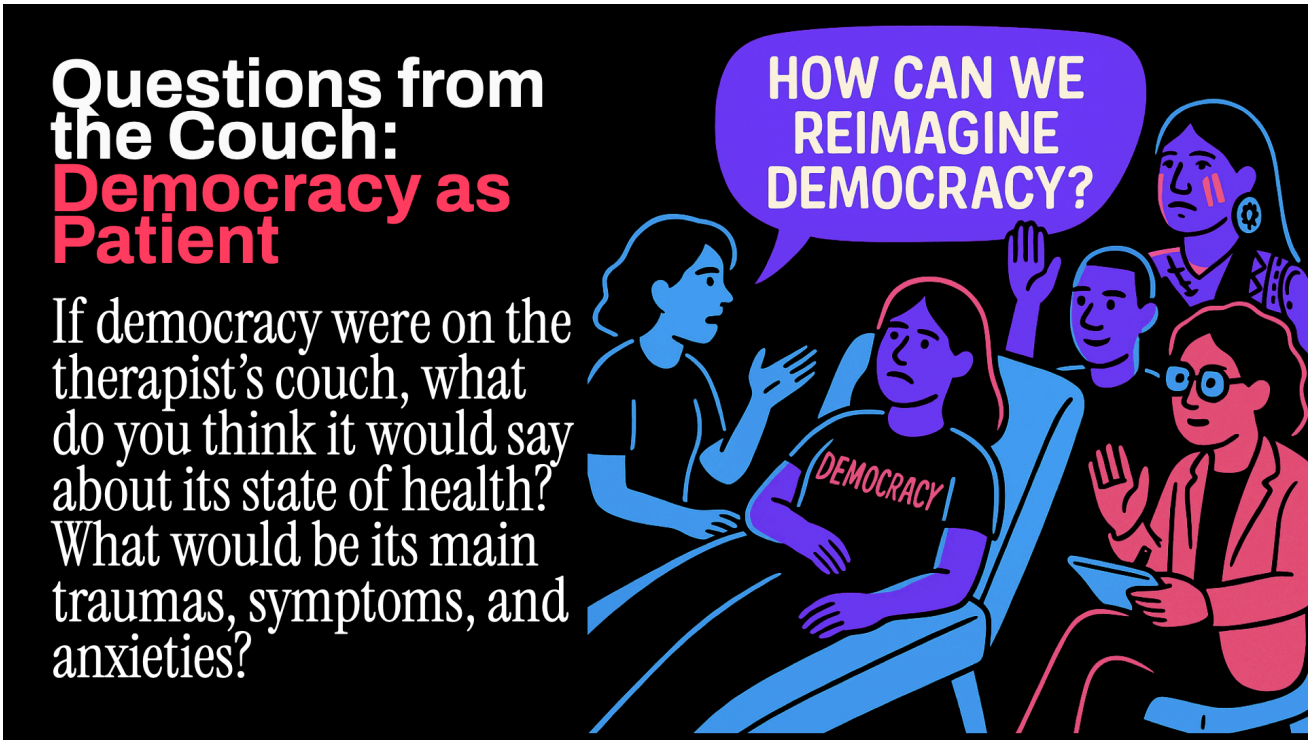


Fig 3. Questions from the Couch: Democracy as Patient. Platoniq

The Divan device, inspired by Cynthia Fleury's work on care, vulnerability, and the psychic dimensions of democracy (Fleury, 2019), and Chantal Mouffe's reflections on conflict and the affective nature of political life (Mouffe, 2005), can be understood as a psychoanalytically informed dramaturgical method. It invites participants to personify democracy as a patient in therapy, making visible its symptoms, contradictions, and unmet needs through collective interpretation. In this staged improvisation, participants worked from a combination of prompts and shared imagination to

co-construct the character of “Democracy,” rather than receiving a predefined script. Through this process, Democracy emerged as confessing exhaustion, fragmentation, overexposure through digital mediation, and reliance on procedural “medication.” Participants were then asked to further describe Democracy as a person. The responses converged around a striking affective register: exhausted, grieving her own ideals, always online but rarely present, wearing a mask of consensus, pulled in too many directions, bullied by powerful interests, struggling with imposter syndrome, too male, and somewhat lost.

This lexicon reveals three interrelated layers of diagnosis:

First, the language of exhaustion and grief resonates with Cynthia Fleury’s analysis of democratic pathology. In *The Pathologies of Democracy*, Fleury argues that democratic crisis is not reducible to institutional malfunction; it is a disorder of recognition and dignity. Democracy becomes ill when citizens no longer feel acknowledged in their singularity and vulnerability. The Divan responses suggest precisely such a pathology: democracy appears procedurally active yet relationally depleted. The recurrent metaphor of grief signals a perceived loss of recognition and meaning.

Second, the descriptor “wearing a mask of consensus” aligns with Chantal Mouffe’s critique of rationalistic consensus models. Mouffe maintains that attempts to eliminate conflict in favour of procedural harmony suppress legitimate antagonisms and transform them into resentment or disengagement. The mask metaphor implies that consensus is experienced as performative rather than transformative. Participants’ affective diagnosis suggests that democracy’s vitality may be compromised not by conflict itself, but by its containment.

Third, the recurring references to being bullied, fragmented, or structurally dominated evoke a dimension that neither procedural nor agonistic theory alone fully captures: the psychic weight of structural violence. Here Frantz Fanon becomes indispensable. In *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes how colonial domination produces internalised fragmentation and exhaustion. The colonised subject experiences psychic rupture not merely through external coercion but through the erosion of dignity and self-recognition. While contemporary democratic malaise differs historically from colonial trauma, the metaphorical convergence is instructive. Participants’ description of democracy as bullied, overexposed, and exhausted echoes Fanon’s insight that structural power imbalances can produce interiorised fatigue and fragmentation.

The Divan device therefore surfaces not only dissatisfaction with institutional performance but also a deeper affective rupture. Democracy appears overburdened by proceduralism, stripped of recognition, and pressured by structural inequalities. The dramaturgical structure of the Divan card enables these layers to emerge without collapsing into technocratic critique. Emotional metaphor becomes diagnostic data.

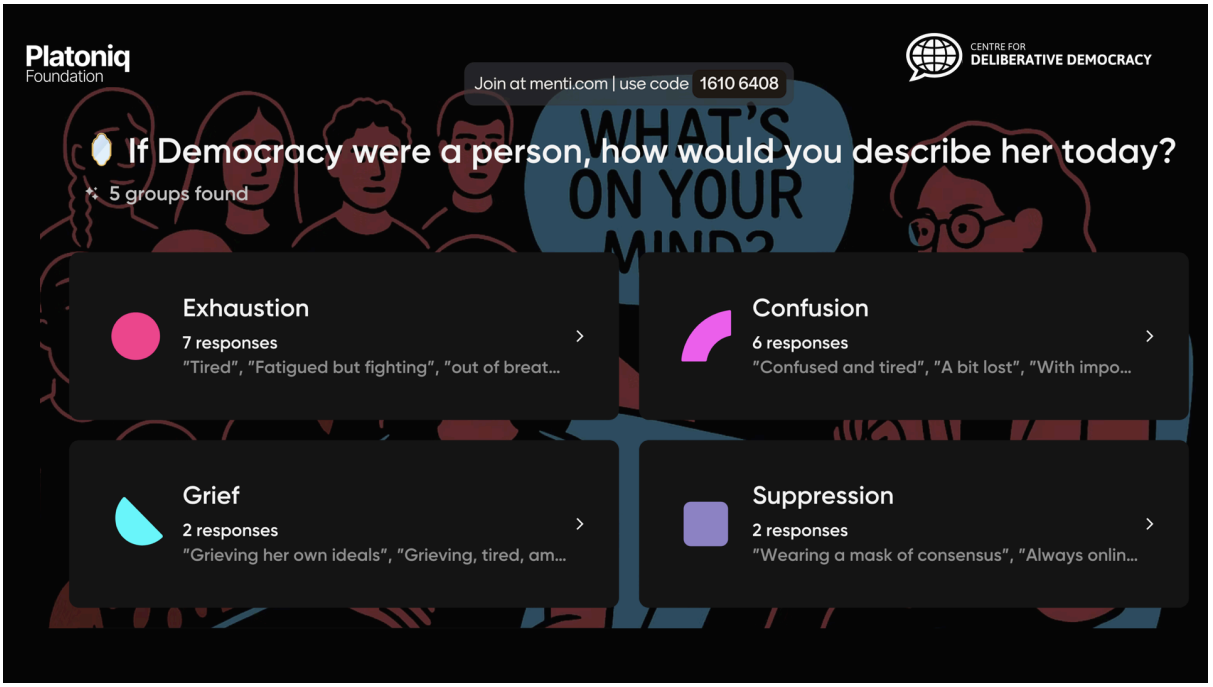


Fig 4. How Would You Describe Democracy Today? Mentimeter Results. Platoniq

The subsequent ranking exercise on "symptoms of exhaustion or disconnection" reinforced this diagnosis. Participants prioritised apathy and emotional burnout, distrust in institutions, proceduralism replacing imagination and care, cultural exclusion, and fear of speaking up. The prominence of proceduralism confirms that the perceived problem is not insufficient structure but over-structuration without relational depth. In Fleury's terms, procedural density cannot compensate for deficits of recognition. In Mouffe's terms, excessive rationalisation risks evacuating passion from democratic life. From a Fanonian perspective, proceduralism without dignity may reproduce subtle forms of symbolic domination, where participation becomes formally accessible yet experientially alienating.

Participants were then invited to prescribe "creative pills" for Democracy. Storytelling Circles ranked highest, followed by Legislative Theatre, Gamification and Play, Community Filmmaking, and Photovoice.[3]The prioritisation of storytelling reflects a desire for relational recognition and shared vulnerability, echoing Fleury's emphasis on dignity as the core of democratic health. Legislative Theatre's strong ranking highlights the importance of linking affect to institutional consequence, aligning with Mouffe's argument that conflict must be channelled into agonistic contestation rather than suppressed. At the same time, participatory performance practices resonate with Fanon's insistence that collective action and embodied expression are necessary to transform psychic paralysis into agency.

Open-ended responses expanded the repertoire to music, silence, inclusive sports, mural painting, and the revitalisation of common spaces. The survey responses extend beyond recognised deliberative formats and point toward everyday, embodied, and material practices, such as sewing circles, garment repair, rupture-based interventions, poetry, music, dance, and democratic playgrounds, that function as micro-infrastructures of solidarity and temporal resistance. These suggestions align closely with the decolonial methodological constellation outlined in this deliverable. Fanon's insight that trauma must be collectively acknowledged and reworked finds

[3] The selected methods emerged at the intersection of participant validation, prior INSPIRE D3.1 Scoping Review of Arts-based methods of participation evidence, and theoretical coherence

methodological translation in embodied history workshops and participatory theatre. Fleury's call for restoring dignity resonates with testimonial and narrative practices. Mouffe's agonistic framework is operationalised through performative devices that stage disagreement without collapsing into hostility.

The second device, "The Flavour of Democracy", is an embodied and sensory mapping method that invites participants to explore political experience through movement, sound, and affect rather than argument, translating diagnosis into collective perception. Participants repositioned themselves within the digital space, using camera framing, visibility, and presence to indicate proximity or marginality, and produced non-verbal sounds to express resonance or dissonance. They were also invited to describe democracy in sensory terms. When flavour words were read aloud simultaneously, the resulting sonic overlap enacted pluralism in real time. This exercise demonstrated that affect is infrastructural: proximity, sound, silence, and sensory expression mediate democratic experience before argumentation begins.

Intersectionality can be operationalised by inviting participants to reposition themselves from the standpoint of marginalised groups. The visual reconfiguration of the gallery shall reveal uneven distributions of audibility and visibility. In Fleury's vocabulary, this exposed deficits of recognition. In Mouffe's framework, it illustrated the plurality of legitimate positions within the democratic field. In Fanon's terms, it foregrounded how structural hierarchies shape whose voice is heard and whose remains muted.

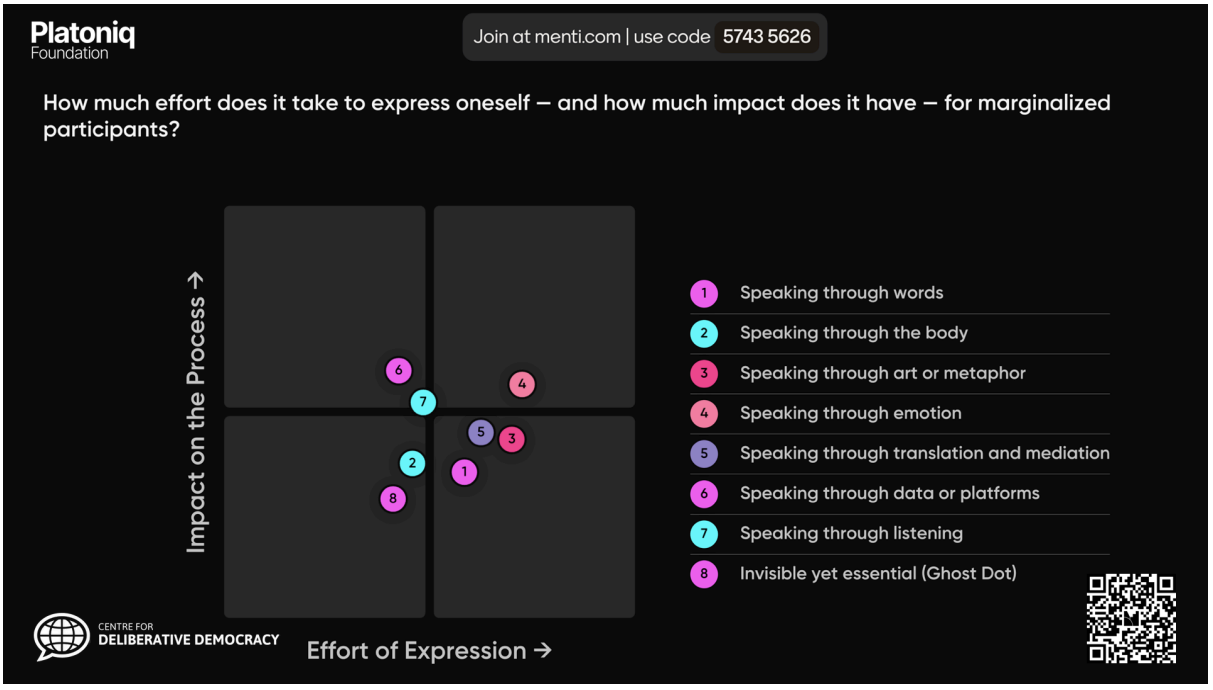


Fig 5. Effort vs Impact Matrix for Marginalised Participants. Platoniq

The "Effort vs Impact" matrix, implemented through Mentimeter as a live interactive mapping tool where participants collectively position different forms of participation along axes of perceived effort and institutional impact, reveals a structural asymmetry embedded in participatory infrastructures: the unequal distribution of expressive labour and democratic consequence. By positioning modalities of expression along axes of effort and impact, participants identified that embodied, emotional, mediated, and listening-based forms of participation often require significant temporal and affective investment while generating comparatively limited institutional influence. In contrast, verbal and platform-compatible contributions tend to be more easily legible within formal deliberative

architectures. This disparity is not only procedural but temporal. As Parry and Curato (2024) argue, time is not neutral in deliberation; it shapes who can speak, how they speak, and whether their contributions are sustained. For participants facing precarious employment, caregiving responsibilities, linguistic barriers, or racialised marginalisation, participation entails disproportionate effort in rendering oneself intelligible within dominant formats. From a capabilities perspective, such temporal inequality constitutes a “corrosive disadvantage” that constrains meaningful agency (Wolff and de Shalit 2007).

The placement of the “ghost dot” in the high-effort, low-impact quadrant visualises this condition. It captures forms of participation that are invisible yet essential, including translation, emotional labour, witnessing, and relational maintenance. Intersectional solidarity, understood through Black feminist theory, transforms individualised expressive struggle into shared vulnerability and collective resilience (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2017). Rather than organising solidarity around fixed identity categories, it recognises the dynamic co-constitution of oppression and agency. In this light, the exercise demonstrates that democratic repair requires redistributing not only voice but recognition. Fleury (2019) reminds us that democracy deteriorates when dignity and recognition are eroded. Mouffe (2000) emphasises that passion and contestation must be institutionally channelled rather than suppressed. Fanon (1952; 1961) further shows how structural hierarchies shape whose voice becomes audible and whose voice is rendered mute. The grid therefore supports the claim that intersectional solidarity depends on the collective redistribution of expressive labour and the institutional validation of diverse modalities of political speech. Time, effort, and affect must be recognised as democratic resources rather than private burdens if participation is to be both inclusive and consequential.

Taken together, the session confirms central claims of D4.2. Democracy is experienced affectively before cognitively. Procedural density without recognition generates fatigue. Suppressed conflict produces alienation rather than stability. Structural inequalities shape emotional experience. Arts-based dramaturgy can function simultaneously as diagnostic instrument, agonistic rehearsal space, and decolonial repair practice.

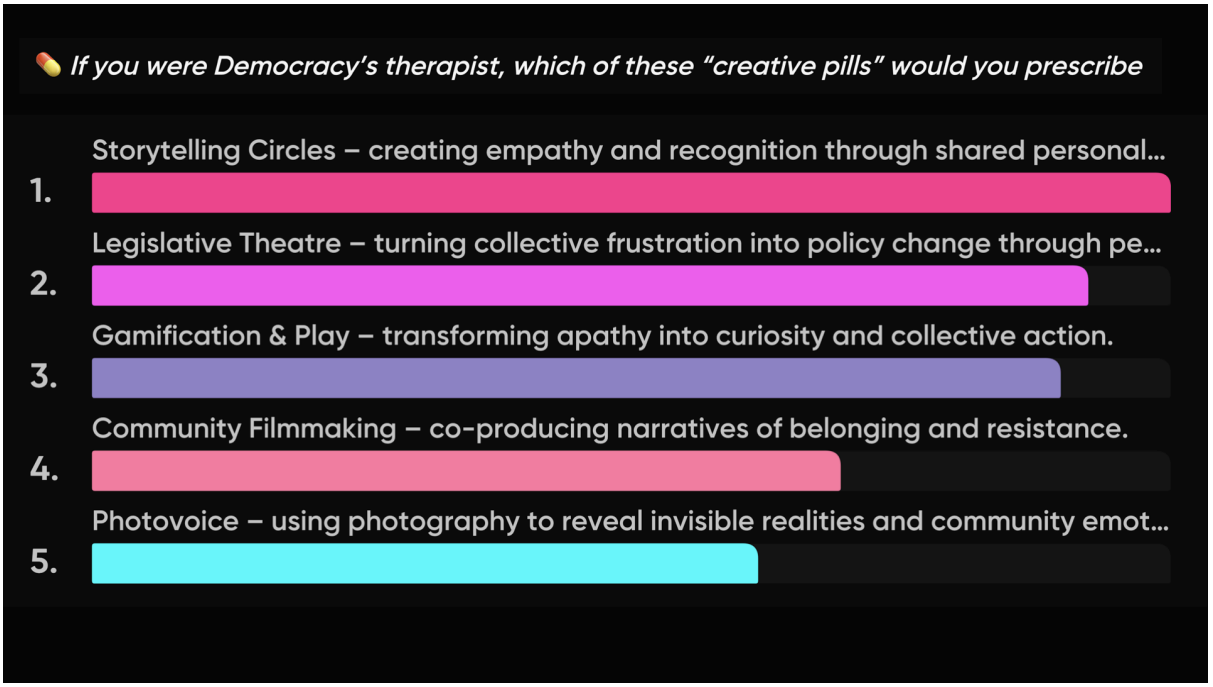


Fig 6. Creative Pills for Democracy: Ranked Methods

The “Democracy at the Divan” dramaturgy card in the Playbook section offers a replicable structure for surfacing democratic malaise through care rather than denunciation. Rewilding democracy, in this sense, does not romanticise spontaneity. It restores dignity, conflict, and embodied recognition to institutional life. The findings suggest that democracy is perceived less as collapsing than as exhausted and fragmented. The demand emerging from this expert audience was not for institutional abandonment but for affective, agonistic, and decolonial regeneration.

Synthesis: Toward a Culture of Dialogic Infrastructures

From the interviews and webinar series coordinated by Platoniq, emerges a unifying proposition:

> **Democracy today must be re-imagined as a dialogic infrastructure, a living system that can hold multiplicity, slowness, and imagination in hybrid /digital and physical forms.**

Hybrid spaces are not substitutes for physical assemblies; they are *extensions of care* across distance and time.
Designing them requires not only technical competence but cultural literacy: sensitivity to rhythm, story, power, and presence.

These insights form the bridge into **Part III** of D4.2, where the Playbook translates them into concrete **cultural devices and hybrid deliberative prototypes** for the INSPIRE pilots.

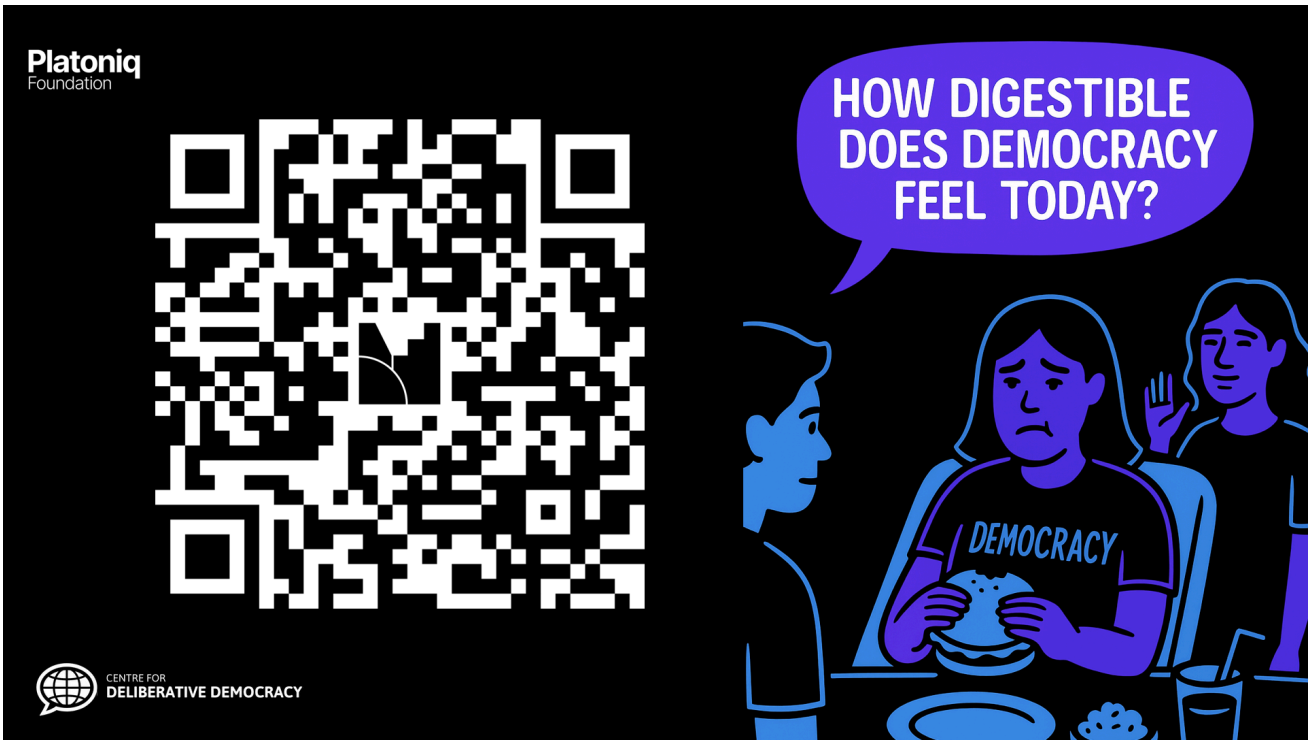


Fig 7. How Digestible Does Democracy Feel Today?. Platoniq

2.4 Drama-Based Methodologies as Cultural Devices for Democratic Translation: Ethical Boundaries, Political Translation and Institutional Accountability

Across contemporary democratic innovation processes, a growing range of **arts-based participatory practices** are being used to expand how citizens express experiences, articulate grievances, and collectively imagine alternatives. Storytelling circles, photovoice, community filmmaking, and other cultural methods demonstrate that democratic participation does not rely solely on rational argumentation or formal deliberation. Within this broader landscape of cultural devices, **drama-based methodologies (psychodrama, sociodrama, and legislative theatre), occupy a distinctive role**. Rather than working primarily through narrative or visual testimony, they operate through **embodied enactment**.

Within the playbook, the focus on drama-based methodologies is intentional. **Their emphasis on embodied enactment makes them particularly suited to hybrid dialogic and deliberative spaces, as they expand participation beyond verbal formats, reveal affective and relational dimensions of political experience**, and support the translation of lived experience into collectively actionable forms. This is especially relevant in hybrid infrastructures such as Decidim, where the challenge is not only to enable participation, but to translate diverse forms of expression into proposals, deliberation, and accountability processes without flattening their meaning. Within the INSPIRE ecosystem, these approaches have been explored across different contexts, including legislative theatre processes in the West Midlands, Lisbon, and Warsaw, as well as sociodrama practices in Hungary, demonstrating their adaptability to diverse political and cultural settings.

Within the INSPIRE ecosystem and related initiatives, several participatory pilots have explored how theatre and drama practices can support democratic dialogue and collective problem articulation. Rather than presenting these experiences as separate pilot case studies, this section examines how **drama-based methods operate as cultural strategies and participatory devices** within broader democratic innovation processes.

Drama-based approaches should therefore not be understood simply as facilitation techniques. They function as **cultural mechanisms that reorganise how experiences, narratives, and conflicts enter democratic deliberation**. Their democratic potential lies in their capacity to **transform personal experiences into shared political questions** that can be addressed collectively.

This transformation is particularly important in contexts where certain voices or forms of knowledge have historically been marginalised. Decolonial scholarship has shown that modern institutions often operate through **epistemic hierarchies that privilege some forms of knowledge while marginalising others** (Quijano, 2007; Santos, 2014). Participatory practices that centre embodied storytelling and narrative experimentation can therefore contribute to **epistemic recognition**, enabling participants to challenge dominant narratives and articulate alternative interpretations of social reality.

The political dimension of drama-based methodologies also connects to the tradition of **critical pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire and expanded through Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed**. Freire argued that democratic transformation requires pedagogical processes through which individuals move from being **passive recipients of knowledge to active subjects capable of interpreting and transforming their social conditions** (Freire, 1970). Boal translated these ideas into participatory theatre practices in which participants become **"spect-actors" who collectively rehearse alternative social and political possibilities** (Boal, 1979). In this sense,

drama-based methods can function as **forms of democratic pedagogy that connect experiential knowledge with institutional transformation**.

Despite these shared intellectual roots, the umbrella category of “drama-based participation” often conceals important differences between methods (*for details see the table on page 50*). Psychodrama, sociodrama, and legislative theatre operate at distinct **ethical, epistemic, and political levels**, and should therefore not be treated as interchangeable approaches.

Maintaining this distinction is essential. When therapeutic and political methodologies are conflated, participatory processes may expose participants to harm or transform care-oriented spaces into **extractive consultation mechanisms**, where personal narratives are mobilised symbolically without influencing decision-making. As several practitioners and public officials involved in participatory governance processes emphasise, **the central question of participation ultimately concerns power**: whether citizens’ voices merely inform discussion or contribute to shaping the policies that affect their lives.

The stakes of this distinction are high. Conflating therapeutic and political methods risks:

→ exposing participants to harm
→ instrumentalising lived experience
→ blurring accountability boundaries
→ transforming care-oriented spaces into extractive consultation
→ undermining consequential participation

Methodological precision is therefore not academic formalism; **it is a condition for democratic dignity. It is a democratic safeguard**.

This concern resonates with broader critiques of participatory governance that warn against forms of **“inclusion without transformation,” where institutions invite participation while leaving underlying power relations unchanged** (Escobar, 2018). Methodological clarity is therefore essential for ensuring **ethical participation and democratic accountability**.

INSPIRE-related experiences also illustrate how drama-based methods can operate within **hybrid participatory infrastructures**, particularly when combined with digital participation platforms such as Decidim. In these contexts, scenes, narratives, and proposals generated through performance can circulate within wider deliberative ecosystems. Digital platforms extend the political afterlife of embodied participation by enabling **documentation, collective reflection, proposal development, and institutional follow-up**.

However, **the digitalisation of drama-based participation introduces both opportunities and risks.** Digital platforms can function as **translation spaces**, where insights generated through embodied processes are reformulated into proposals, debates, and accountability mechanisms. At the same time, recording or archiving participatory experiences may expose participants to new vulnerabilities if emotional or personal narratives circulate without adequate safeguards.

More importantly, documentation alone does not guarantee institutional responsiveness. Experiences across participatory governance processes repeatedly show that **the most fragile stage of democratic innovation lies not in deliberation itself but in what follows**: whether institutions respond to citizen input and integrate it into decision-making processes. Without such mechanisms, drama-based participation risks becoming **symbolic participation that amplifies voices without altering governance outcomes**.

Understanding the distinctions between psychodrama, sociodrama, and legislative theatre is therefore essential for designing **responsible hybrid participatory processes**. Psychodrama prioritises **personal exploration and relational safety**. Sociodrama enables **collective reflection on shared social dynamics**. Legislative theatre translates **lived experience into public claims and policy experimentation**.

When carefully sequenced, these approaches create a pathway from **recognition to reflection to political articulation**, allowing participatory processes to move toward democratic decision-making while protecting participants and preserving the integrity of their experiences.

From this perspective, drama-based methodologies can be understood as **cultural infrastructures for democratic translation**. They enable experiences that are often marginalised, individualised, or silenced to become **collectively intelligible and politically actionable**. Their democratic value ultimately depends on whether institutions are willing to **listen, respond, and transform policy in response to citizens' contributions**.

Table 6: Comparative Overview of Drama-Based Methodologies in Participatory Contexts

Dimension	**Psychodrama**	**Sociodrama**	**Legislative Theatre**
Primary focus	Individual experience	Social roles and collective dynamics	Public issues and policy change
Nature of method	Therapeutic	Reflective / socio-pedagogical	Political / deliberative
Protagonist	A person (personal narrative)	A social situation or system	A collectively recognised problem
Type of expression	Emotional, autobiographical	Relational, role-based	Performative, propositional
Level of exposure	High (personal vulnerability)	Moderate (distanced through roles)	Variable (public articulation)
Purpose	Emotional processing and healing	Understanding social dynamics	Generating policy-relevant proposals
Output	Personal insight	Collective awareness	Policy proposals / institutional input
Relation to power	Indirect (personal transformation)	Analytical (exploring structures)	Direct (engaging institutions)
Ethical framework	Clinical / therapeutic	Educational / community-based	Democratic / institutional
Compatibility with governance	❌ Not compatible	⚠️ Pre-deliberative	✅ Fully compatible (with design safeguards)

A/ Psychodrama: Individual Experience and Therapeutic Containment

Psychodrama, developed by Moreno in the 1920s and formalised in *Psychodrama, Volume I* (Moreno 1946) and *Who Shall Survive?* (Moreno 1953), is a therapeutic method based on dramatic enactment of personal experience. Its core principle is spontaneity-in-action, enabling individuals to re-experience and reconfigure emotionally charged situations.

In psychodrama, one participant becomes the protagonist, while other group members take on and enact significant roles from that person's life. Through techniques such as role reversal, doubling, and mirroring, participants are able to re-enter emotionally charged situations and explore them from multiple perspectives (Moreno, 1946; Moreno, 1953). Emotional exposure is central to the process and can often be intense, requiring careful facilitation and containment. These documented cases are directly relevant to INSPIRE themes such as migration and structural injustice. They demonstrate how political violence and exclusion become internalised at the level of biography and embodiment. However, they also confirm that such work requires extensive clinical preparation, including multi-year training, supervision structures, trauma-informed protocols, and explicit aftercare mechanisms (Kellermann, 1992; 2000; 2007). In these documented cases, individual refugees became protagonists, with other group members enacting figures from their life world such as border guards, family members, or persecutors. Structured role reversal facilitated emotional processing, and sessions were conducted by trained psychotherapists within clearly defined clinical frameworks (Kellermann, 2000).

The literature consistently stresses the need for specialist training, supervision, trauma-informed practice, and post-session stabilisation, reflecting both the therapeutic potential of psychodrama and the intensity of the experiences it engages. Psychodrama therefore remains ethically incompatible with participatory governance infrastructures. While it provides insight into how structural inequality affects subjectivity, it cannot be responsibly integrated into deliberative arenas without crossing therapeutic boundaries.

European Trauma Rehabilitation Contexts

In several European countries, psychodrama has been incorporated into refugee mental health programmes, particularly within psychosocial support systems designed for survivors of war, displacement, and political violence. For example, German psychosocial centres for refugees, including those coordinated through the BAfF network (Bundesweite Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Psychosozialen Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer), as well as trauma-focused clinical settings in Scandinavian countries, have integrated psychodramatic approaches within broader therapeutic frameworks (BAfF, 2020; Varvin, 2003).

Although not all of these programmes publish detailed methodological case studies, the wider clinical literature consistently states psychodrama within trauma treatment rather than civic participation. These applications highlight the depth at which structural violence becomes embodied, the intimate psychological dimensions of migration, and the significant risks of retraumatisation if such methods are not facilitated within appropriate clinical and ethical conditions (Kellermann, 2000; Weine et al., 2008).

At the same time, these experiences reinforce a critical boundary. Psychodrama operates within therapeutic ethics and must remain external to participatory governance infrastructures. Its relevance to INSPIRE lies not in procedural replication, but in informing ethical caution, particularly regarding emotional exposure, care, and the limits of participatory design.

Sociodrama in Migration and Intercultural Dialogue

Unlike psychodrama, sociodrama has been applied in civic, educational and integration contexts addressing migration-related tensions across Europe. Sternberg and Garcia (2000) document sociodrama used in intergroup conflict and intercultural learning, including role enactments addressing migration-related tensions. FEPTO (Federation of European Psychodrama Training Organisations) has documented sociodramatic applications in intercultural dialogue and migrant integration contexts across Italy, Germany, Greece and Spain. In these applications, participants enact roles such as immigration officers, local residents, asylum seekers, or municipal administrators. The focus remains on systemic interaction rather than personal disclosure, and each enactment is followed by collective reflection. This allows participants to explore institutional gatekeeping, bureaucratic power, everyday forms of xenophobia, and the often-invisible dynamics of migrant labour without requiring autobiographical exposure (Sternberg & Garcia, 2000).

Across different European contexts, sociodrama has been used in adult education and integration settings, where participants explore the dynamics between host societies and newcomers, enact encounters with public services, and reflect on patterns of exclusion embedded in institutional practices (FEPTO, various reports). These initiatives are typically framed within social pedagogy, community development, and civic education, rather than therapy.

This distinction is critical: although facilitated by professionals trained in drama-based methods, the work remains structurally focused.

***B/* Sociodrama: From Biography to Social Roles**

Sociodrama, also conceptualised by Moreno, shifts the protagonist from the individual to the social system. Instead of staging a person's lived experience, sociodrama stages social roles, collective conflicts, and institutional dynamics.

Sternberg and Garcia (2000), in *Sociodrama: Who's in Your Shoes?*, document sociodrama in educational and civic contexts addressing intergroup conflict, democratic tensions, and structural inequality. In these documented applications:

→ the protagonist is a social situation rather than a person
→ participants enact structural positions (e.g., "the policymaker," "the excluded citizen," "the bureaucratic gatekeeper")
→ personal biography is not required
→ reflection focuses on systemic patterns rather than personal catharsis

European adult education initiatives documented through FEPTO (Federation of European Psychodrama Training Organisations) further demonstrate sociodrama used in intercultural dialogue, including contexts involving host–migrant tensions. These initiatives show that:

→ migration-related conflict can be explored without retraumatising individuals
→ institutional roles can be embodied and interrogated
→ participants can identify "missing actors" in governance systems

Sociodrama thus offers a bridge between lived experience and structural analysis. It aligns closely with intersectional analysis (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2017), particularly where multiple layers of disadvantage interact in democratic participation.

However, sociodrama does not, by design, produce policy outputs. It generates collective insight, relational shifts, and systemic awareness. It is therefore particularly suited to pre-deliberative phases within participatory processes.

C/ Legislative Theatre: From Insight to Institutional Obligation

Legislative Theatre emerged from Boal's work in Brazil during the 1990s when he served as vereador (city councillor) in Rio de Janeiro. Documented in *Legislative Theatre: Using Performance to Make Politics* (Boal 1998), the method extends Forum Theatre by introducing a formal legislative translation mechanism.

In legislative theatre:

→ lived oppression is staged publicly
→ spectators intervene as "spect-actors"
→ interventions are debated and refined
→ proposals are drafted in legislative language
→ institutional actors are formally engaged
→ follow-up mechanisms are required

Boal documents that several proposals generated through legislative theatre were formally submitted and debated within municipal governance structures. This marked a decisive shift from symbolic participation to normative intervention.

Legislative theatre therefore differs from sociodrama in its explicit confrontation with institutions. It is not exploratory but propositional. It requires:

→ political literacy
→ understanding of institutional procedure
→ documentation capacity
→ accountability design

Without these elements, it risks becoming symbolic performance.

Comparative Framework

Table 7: Ontological and Political Orientation of Drama-Based Methods

Dimension	Psychodrama	Sociodrama	Legislative Theatre
Analytical unit	Individual psyche	Social roles	Institutional structures
Aim	Healing	Collective understanding	Normative change
Emotional exposure	Central	Present but not central	Instrumental
Publicness	Closed	Semi-public	Public
Accountability	Therapeutic	Reflective	Political

Table 8: Training and Risk Thresholds

Method	Training Required	Principal Risk
Psychodrama	Certified clinical training + supervision	Retraumatisation
Sociodrama	Advanced facilitation + power analysis	Emotional spillover
Legislative Theatre	Theatre of the Oppressed + policy literacy	Tokenisation

These distinctions are not cosmetic; they determine ethical responsibility.

Aligning Drama-Based Methods with Platform Architecture

Digital participatory infrastructures must reflect the ethical status and political orientation of each methodological phase. The configuration of platform components is not a technical detail; it encodes assumptions about publicity, accountability, authorship, and consequence. In the case of **Decidim**, the modular architecture allows differentiated configurations aligned with distinct methodological thresholds.

The table below specifies which components are appropriate, restricted, or activated depending on whether the process is operating in a psychodramatic, sociodramatic, or legislative theatre phase.

Table 9. Digital Configuration by Methodological Phase

Platform Function / Module	Psychodrama	Sociodrama	Legislative Theatre	Rationale
Assemblies / Processes	Logistics only (private)	✔ Active (non-decision space)	✔ Active (formal mandate space)	Assemblies define scope and visibility. In sociodrama, they provide continuity; in legislative theatre, institutional anchoring.
Meetings Component	❌ No recording	✔ Used for event documentation (non-sensitive)	✔ Used with minutes and public records	Psychodrama requires confidentiality; legislative theatre requires traceability.
Debates Component	❌	✔ Framing questions, reflection	✔ Normative discussion of proposals	Sociodrama uses debates for interpretive synthesis; legislative theatre uses them for deliberation and refinement.
Proposals Component	❌ Disabled	❌ Disabled	✔ Enabled and structured	Proposal functionality signals transition to normative phase.

Accountability Component	❌	❌	✔ Activated	Essential for tracking institutional commitments and preventing symbolic participation.
Results / Outcomes Section	❌	Limited thematic summary	✔ Formal decisions and responses	Differentiates exploratory reflection from binding commitments.
Surveys / Forms	❌	Optional (perception mapping)	Optional (prioritisation, feedback)	In sociodrama, surveys can capture thematic insight without forcing decision logic.
Blog / News Feature	❌	✔ Curated reflection summaries	✔ Process transparency updates	Blog use in sociodrama must avoid personal exposure.
Comments	❌	✔ Interpretive discussion only	✔ Proposal refinement	Comments shift from reflective to propositional across phases.
Traceability / Versioning	❌	Limited	✔ Full activation	Legislative theatre requires version control for democratic memory.
Badge System (Gamification)	❌	Optional (recognising participation)	✔ Optional (engagement continuity)	Must avoid competitive logics in exploratory phases.
Time Footprint Tool (e.g., Platoniq module)	✔	Optional (care-oriented pacing)	✔ Visible for accountability timelines	Makes institutional delay visible in legislative phase.

Analytical Interpretation: Methods and Digital Infrastructure

Psychodrama

Psychodrama does not translate to public digital platforms. Its confidentiality requirements exclude recording, archiving, publication, and traceable authorship. Digital tools should be limited to logistics such as scheduling and consent. The platform must not act as archive or deliberative space.

Sociodrama

Sociodrama allows limited digital use as a reflective layer. Platforms can support thematic synthesis and structural mapping, but not decision-making. Proposals, voting, and accountability features must remain inactive to avoid premature closure. At this stage, the platform functions as a collective notebook, not a decision engine.

Legislative Theatre

Legislative theatre requires full digital integration to ensure continuity and impact. Platforms must enable proposal registration, traceability, institutional response, version control, and accountability

timelines. This prevents democratic amnesia and extends the civic process beyond the live performance.

Architectural Threshold Principle

The transition from sociodrama to legislative theatre requires a visible shift in platform architecture. This includes enabling proposals, activating accountability, adjusting visibility, and reframing the assembly mandate. Without this reconfiguration, there is a risk of collapsing exploratory and decision-making phases, instrumentalising participants, and producing symbolic rather than consequential participation.

Platform design must therefore reflect methodological thresholds. Aligning platform configuration with each method ensures that care-oriented spaces remain protected, exploratory phases remain non-extractive, and legislative phases become consequential, while preserving democratic dignity.

Digital participatory infrastructures are not neutral. They shape publicity, authorship, consequence, and memory.

See *Methodological Boundaries, Transitions and Safeguards* in the practical Playbook.

🟢 Part III: Spatial Justice and Hybrid Democratic Design

> *“Spatial design cannot be considered separately from the social and political work that lies in designing deliberative processes. In fact, it must be deeply informed and guided by this work.”*
> INSPIRE WP4 interview synthesis

3.1 Why Space Matters for Democracy

Democratic participation is never abstract: it happens somewhere. Every assembly, from the ancient agora to a Decidim forum, carries the spatial and sensory traces of the world in which it takes place. The architecture of participation, including its surfaces, proximities, acoustics, and thresholds, shapes how people appear, listen, and decide together. Participation unfolds across interconnected spaces and scales, which can be understood as part of broader participatory assemblages embedded in specific socio-spatial contexts (Bussu et al., 2025).

Across Europe, citizens’ assemblies and participatory workshops are often held in spaces not designed for deliberation: sterile conference rooms, institutional auditoriums, or online interfaces optimised for efficiency rather than empathy. The result is a flattening of the democratic field, where embodied presence and relational depth are lost to logistical convenience.

At the same time, spatial justice cannot be reduced to the design of participatory settings alone. It also concerns the broader conditions of **geographically uneven development, territorial inequality, and the concentration of economic and political power**, which shape who can access participatory processes in the first place, and under what conditions. Participation is always situated within these spatial distributions of resources, infrastructure, and visibility.

Spatial justice therefore invites us to work across scales. It insists that the right to participate is inseparable from the right to inhabit space differently; whether by reconfiguring deliberative environments (sitting in circles rather than rows, meeting in parks, libraries, or community kitchens), or by recognising how urban, rural, and peripheral territories are differently positioned within democratic systems.

Spatial justice thus becomes both a **precondition and a practice of democracy**: designing spaces that redistribute visibility, agency, and belonging, while remaining attentive to the structural geographies that enable or constrain participation.

Affect and Spatial Agency in Marginalised Feminist Practices

Participatory spaces are not only social and political; they are also affective and spatial. Drawing from a Deleuzean reading of migrant women’s experiences, INSPIRE researcher Titas Biswas highlights how **affect circulates through space as both a barrier and a force of political agency**. Implicit forms of exclusion, including racism, anti-migrant sentiment, and patriarchal silencing, can render people “unable to speak,” not through overt coercion but through the spatial atmospheres they inhabit.

Yet, marginalised participants also **reshape space through affective tools**: joy, laughter, sarcasm, and conviviality become political tactics, crafting atmospheres of solidarity and resistance. As Biswas writes, despite multiple burdens (race, gender, economic precarity), these women “intuit their way through difficulty,” practicing **relational forms of spatial intelligence**.

This capability to navigate and reconfigure oppressive space should be seen as a **design principle**. It implies that **safe(r) spaces are not neutral containers**, but **co-produced environments where affect, resistance, and imagination are spatialised**. Feminist and decolonial methodologies of care, in this light, are not soft extras. They are **life-affirming spatial technologies**.

This perspective supports designing deliberative environments that account for atmosphere, emotional labour, and embodied navigation of space, especially when working with migrant, racialised, or multiple excluded communities. It also requires **shifting where participation happens**: not only adapting spaces to participants, but bringing deliberative processes to geographically excluded or underserved territories. This includes working across urban peripheries, rural areas, and infrastructurally marginalised contexts, ensuring that access to participation is not conditioned by proximity to institutional centres.

Integrating Social, Political, and Spatial Design

The lens of **Design Justice** (Costanza-Chock, 2020) expands the meaning of democratic design. It asks: ***who designs, who benefits, and who is excluded from design processes?***
When applied to democratic innovation, Design Justice highlights that participation cannot be designed *for* people. It must be co-created *with* them, through processes that acknowledge structural inequities.

In hybrid deliberation, this means designing **spaces of relation** rather than static architectures:

- **Design justice:** ensuring participation is grounded in care, recognition, and mutual learning.
- **Political design:** building institutional mechanisms that sustain inclusion beyond the event.
- **Spatial design:** creating environments (both physical and digital) that make the invisible architectures of exclusion visible and transformable.

In the INSPIRE framework, these three design layers converge into **hybrid democratic design**: a choreography where the aesthetic, the procedural, and the spatial become one.

3.2 Methodological Principles for Spatial Justice

Drawing on insights from INSPIRE pilots, WP4 workshops, and comparative cases such as Barcelona’s Superblocks, Porto Alegre’s participatory budgeting, and civic innovation practices in Toronto and New York City, spatial justice emerges not only as a normative principle but as a **set of actionable design orientations**. These cases demonstrate that inclusive participation depends on how democratic processes are **distributed across territories, embedded in everyday life, and connected through hybrid infrastructures**.

Rather than treating space as a neutral backdrop, these experiences show that democratic participation must be **designed across multiple scales**: from the configuration of physical environments and affective atmospheres to the territorial distribution of opportunities and the integration of digital platforms. In this sense, spatial justice becomes operational through a

series of methodological principles that guide how participatory processes are situated, accessed, and sustained over time.

The table below summarises six key principles and illustrates how they can be translated into both spatial practice and digital infrastructure, particularly through Decidim as a hybrid participation platform.

Table 10: Operationalising Spatial Justice in Hybrid Participation Platforms (Decidim)

Principle	Description	Example (Practice)	Application in Decidim
Polycentric Design	Participation is distributed across multiple physical and digital nodes, reducing dependency on centralised venues.	Barcelona Superblocks: neighbourhood-level assemblies embedded in public space; kiosks and local hubs.	Creation of multiple Assemblies/Processes linked to territories; use of geolocated processes and decentralised entry points.
Co-Design Continuity	Participation is sustained over time through iterative engagement, rather than one-off consultations.	Porto Alegre PB: recurring cycles of deliberation and feedback embedded in local governance.	Use of phases, timelines, and recurring processes; integration of proposals, debates, and follow-up components.
Ecological Grounding	Deliberation is anchored in the specific territory, acknowledging land, environment, and material conditions.	Community-led climate assemblies referencing local ecosystems and environmental impacts.	Use of assemblies structured around territorial issues; integration of multimedia (maps, images, datasets) to situate debates.
Modularity and Adaptability	Participatory infrastructures evolve with community needs, both physically and digitally.	Temporary urban interventions, pop-up assemblies, mobile civic labs.	Flexible configuration of components (debates, proposals, meetings) depending on phase; iterative redesign of processes.
Accessibility and Sensory Inclusion	Participation accommodates diverse sensory, cognitive, and communicative modes.	Workshops using visual facilitation, storytelling, multilingual support.	Use of multilingual interfaces, accessible content formats, and integration of external tools (video, audio, visual materials).

Digital-Spatial Synergy	Digital platforms extend and reinforce physical participation rather than replace it.	Hybrid assemblies combining in-person deliberation with online follow-up and accountability.	Decidim as continuity infrastructure: documentation, traceability, proposal tracking, and asynchronous deliberation.

Designing for spatial justice therefore requires aligning physical settings, territorial access, and digital infrastructures into coherent participatory ecosystems. In hybrid contexts, platforms such as Decidim play a critical role: not as neutral tools, but as **civic infrastructures that can either reinforce or redistribute spatial inequalities**, depending on how they are configured and embedded.

3.3 Reflection: Spatial Justice as Democratic Choreography

Spatial justice turns participation into a **living art of composition**.
The democratic arena, whether a schoolyard, a Decidim thread, or a square surrounded by windmills, becomes a stage where difference is not dissolved but arranged, listened to, and continually reshaped. In this sense, **hybrid democratic design is choreographic**:
a movement between body and infrastructure, between the visible and the invisible architectures of inclusion.

If Design Justice reminds us that to design a space is to legislate emotion, gesture, and relation (Costanza-Chock, 2020). Spatial Justice extends this claim by insisting that democratic practice must also transform and repair the environments in which it unfolds (Soja, 2010). In online deliberation, platforms such as Decidim are frequently framed as neutral infrastructures that simply enable participation. However, neutrality is itself a political design choice (Gillespie, 2010). The configuration of proposal pages, comment hierarchies, voting mechanisms, moderation protocols, and data visualisation tools actively shapes how participants appear to one another and how deliberation unfolds over time.

This becomes particularly visible in what INSPIRE research identifies as the paradox of digital intersectionality versus anonymity. Intersectional inclusion requires that lived experience, positionality, and structural inequality be acknowledged as part of democratic exchange (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2017). Yet many digital platforms rely on anonymity or minimal identity disclosure to protect users and lower participation thresholds. While anonymity can safeguard vulnerable participants from retaliation (Citron, 2014), it can also flatten the social context necessary to understand how intersecting inequalities shape voice, credibility, and exposure to harm. In practice, this creates **a structural tension: how to protect participants without erasing the situated realities that intersectional deliberation seeks to surface**. This tension points to the need for **new approaches to participatory data governance and platform design**, capable of balancing privacy with forms of situated visibility, through, for example, voluntary self-identification, collective interpretation of participation patterns (Time Footprint Tool module developed by Platoniq), or hybrid methods that combine digital traceability with qualitative, context-rich insights.

Political user experience (PUX), as defined in D4.1 therefore operates at the intersection of safety, visibility, and recognition. As Jasanoff (2004) reminds us, technologies are co-produced with

social order; they embed normative assumptions about authority, legitimacy, and accountability. If identity markers are too visible, participants may face discrimination or silencing. If they are too obscured, structural asymmetries risk becoming invisible. Platform affordances such as identity fields, moderation systems, traceability mechanisms, and data dashboards are therefore not neutral features but governance instruments (Milan, 2020).

From the city to the screen, from the ancient agora to the Decidim interface, the **choreography of democracy** depends on how presence is constructed and perceived. Redesigning where and how we meet online requires confronting this tension directly: building infrastructures that protect participants from harm while still allowing the intersectional realities of democratic life to inform deliberation. In this sense, platform design becomes a site of democratic struggle rather than a background technical layer.

⏳ Part IV: Temporal Justice and Democratic Rhythms

> *“Time itself is a political resource, and one unequally distributed.”*
> Participant reflection, Democracy Takes Time: Intersectional Temporalities in Participation and Deliberation Webinar

> *“The revolution will not be fast; it will be rhythmic.”*
> paraphrased from Bayo Akomolafe

4.1 The Politics of Time in Participation

Every democratic act happens in time and is shaped by its tempo.
From public consultations with strict deadlines to 30-minute Zoom deliberations, the **temporal architectures of participation** determine who can show up, who can stay, and whose voice can actually be heard.

INSPIRE’s analysis of hybrid deliberation reveals that time is one of the most overlooked dimensions of inclusion. While digital tools promise efficiency, immediacy, and continuous connectivity, they often reproduce the very inequities they seek to address. Scholars of acceleration have long warned that modern institutions privilege speed as a value in itself (Rosa, 2013), and digital governance frequently mirrors this logic.

In practice, temporal asymmetries shape who can meaningfully participate. Citizens with care responsibilities, shift work, or precarious employment are often unable to engage in synchronous deliberation or rapid consultation cycles (Tronto, 2013). Migrant communities frequently navigate overlapping bureaucratic regimes, linguistic translation delays, and uncertain legal timeframes, creating what has been described as “temporal precarity” (Griffiths et al., 2013). Meanwhile, institutional time, measured in deliverables, reporting periods, and funding cycles, collides with community time, which unfolds relationship-building, trust formation, and processes of recognition and healing. Recent research further demonstrates that these tensions are not incidental but structural: temporal inequalities emerge at the intersection of institutional rhythms, lived temporalities shaped by social position, and the temporal commitments that sustain long-term engagement (Bussu et al., 2025).

Hybrid participation does not automatically resolve these tensions. Asynchronous digital tools can extend access, but they may also fragment attention and compress deliberation into short windows that privilege those already digitally literate or institutionally embedded (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). While such tools can pluralise participation time, evidence shows they cannot fully compensate for intersectional inequalities or institutional inertia (Bussu et al., 2025). The result is a structural mismatch between administrative tempo and lived experience.

Temporal justice therefore emerges as a democratic right. It entails the right to participate at a humane pace, the right to rest and withdraw without penalty, the right to return to deliberation after interruption, and the right for collective meaning to mature over time. From a capabilities perspective (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), this implies not only formal access to participation but the real freedom to engage within temporal conditions that do not reproduce structural disadvantage. Designing inclusive deliberation thus requires attention not only to space and interface, but to rhythm, sequencing, duration, and the political economy of time itself.

Historical Time, Memory, and Deliberation

Drawing on thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Michael Rothberg, and Gilles Deleuze, the IPSOS webinar discussion foregrounded an understanding of time as inseparable from memory and history. Rather than conceiving history as a linear archive of fixed events, this perspective treats it as a contested and living process. Benjamin's critique of historicism reminds us that history is not a neutral sequence of progress but a field of interruption, rupture, and "constellation," in which past injustices demand recognition in the present (Benjamin, 1940/2007).

As INSPIRE researcher Titas Biswas noted, history relates to memory not as archive to data, but as a living, dialectical process. Memory is not simply stored; it circulates, resurfaces, and reshapes political possibility. Rothberg's notion of "multidirectional memory" further destabilises the idea of competitive or singular historical narratives, suggesting instead that memories interact, overlap, and produce new solidarities across differences (Rothberg, 2009). In parallel, Deleuze's philosophy of time challenges linear chronology by emphasising duration, repetition, and becoming, inviting us to understand political subjectivity as shaped by layered temporalities rather than discrete moments (Deleuze, 1968/1994).

This framework has direct implications for deliberative design. Participatory processes often operate under what might be called a regime of procedural presentism: consultations are bounded by deadlines, structured around immediate policy outputs, and evaluated through short-term metrics. Such temporal framing risks detaching deliberation from the historical wounds, colonial legacies, and structural inequalities that shape who speaks and who remains silent. When time is compressed into cycles of consultation and deliverables, historical memory can be reduced to background context rather than recognised as an active political force.

From this perspective, dominant temporal regimes can reproduce historical amnesia and epistemic violence. As scholars of epistemic injustice have argued, when collective memory is marginalised or delegitimised, communities are not only excluded from decision-making but from the authority to narrate their own past (Fricker, 2007). Designing deliberation as temporally neutral therefore risks reinforcing the very asymmetries it seeks to address.

To integrate historical time into participatory design means acknowledging that deliberation unfolds within inherited structures of memory. It requires creating space for testimony, interruption, and the resurfacing of silenced histories. In hybrid and digital contexts, this may involve archival layering, revisitable discussions, iterative cycles of reflection, and facilitation practices that explicitly recognise historical situatedness. Democratic participation, in this sense, becomes not only a process of deciding the future but of reworking the past within the present.

Digital platforms introduce both risks and possibilities in this regard. In Decidim, traceability mechanisms, version histories, amendment logs, and public archives create durable records of deliberation. These features can function as tools of democratic memory, allowing proposals to be revisited, institutional commitments to be tracked, and collective learning to accumulate over time. The capacity to follow a proposal from submission through debate, amendment, and implementation embodies a form of procedural memory that counters political erasure.

However, archival permanence also raises critical questions. Whose voices remain visible in the long term? Which forms of expression are rendered searchable and legible, and which remain peripheral? Traceability can enhance accountability, but it may also expose vulnerable participants

if protective design is insufficient. Moreover, digital memory does not automatically guarantee historical recognition. Platforms may preserve data while failing to contextualise structural injustice.

From an intersectional perspective, democratic traceability must therefore be paired with interpretive care. Archival features should not only record participation but enable return, reflection, and narrative continuity. This may include layered documentation, contextual framing of debates, facilitation summaries that acknowledge historical grievances, and mechanisms that allow communities to reclaim or reinterpret past contributions.

In this sense, Decidim's architecture becomes a site where historical time and democratic accountability intersect. **The challenge for inclusive platform design is not simply to preserve records, but to cultivate a temporal ecology in which memory supports recognition rather than surveillance**, and in which intersectional experiences of time are acknowledged as part of deliberative justice.

4.2 Designing Time: Care, Rhythm and Democratic Relation

Time is not only a container for participation, it is the **medium of relation** itself.
How long we listen, how often we return to an issue, and how we acknowledge silence all shape the moral fabric of democracy.

Research on autonomous forms of politics further reinforces the idea that time functions as a medium of relation rather than a neutral backdrop to participation. Morán's analysis shows how autonomy is enacted through the ability to negotiate pace, delay closure, and resist externally imposed timelines. As scholars of the political economy of time argue, temporal resources are unevenly distributed and structured by labour regimes, care responsibilities, and social hierarchies (Sharma, 2014; Rey-Araújo, 2024). In this sense, temporal justice is inseparable from political autonomy: who controls the rhythm of deliberation largely determines who can remain present, who must withdraw, and whose participation becomes unsustainable over time.

🕰️ Care as Temporal Design

While the design of democratic space often focuses on visible architecture and group structure, the **West Midlands youth-led pilot** reminds us that **care is not only spatial or emotional: it is temporal**. Participants resisted imposed timelines and linear evaluation formats, emphasizing that **mental health, neurodiversity, and emotional safety require flexible, expansive, and cyclical timeframes**. As the *YouRefried* self-evaluation report notes: *"Resting is an act of care and defiance. We didn't want to be evaluated fast; we wanted to be felt"* (YouRefried Report, 2025, p. 6).

This resonates with **Bayo Akomolafe**, who describes slowness as an epistemic and political act: *"The times are urgent, let us slow down"* (Akomolafe, 2017). Slowness here is not inaction, but an alternative tempo that **disrupts the urgency-driven, extractive logic of state-led participation**. In this light, care becomes a **temporal ethic**: one that honors delayed participation, retrospective meaning-making, and emergent rhythms over fixed outputs. This approach aligns with **Sara Ahmed's** understanding of complaint as a slow, bodily and cumulative process, where "the time of institutions is not the time of bodies" (Ahmed, *Complaint!*, 2021).

Designing with **temporal care** means treating pace as a political dimension, not a neutral constraint. It reframes facilitation not only as what is done or said, but **when, how slowly, and with what rest**.

Temporal Design as Democratic Care

If time produces inequality, it can also produce repair.
Temporal design becomes a methodology for shaping democratic processes through rhythm, rest, and recurrence.

INSPIRE identifies three guiding principles:

Table 11: Platform Use Requires Deliberate Design in Hybrid Deliberation

Principle	Application in Hybrid Participation	Effect
Slowness as Method	Incorporate breathing spaces, reflection intervals, asynchronous contributions.	Prevents cognitive fatigue and emotional overload.
Iteration over Event	Replace one-off consultations with cyclic, learning-oriented deliberations.	Builds memory, continuity, and collective maturation.
Rest as Right	Recognise downtime as part of democratic labour.	Validates care and wellbeing as civic practices.

In this model, deliberation is not a sprint toward consensus but a **choreography of attention**, alternating between movement and stillness.

4.3 Deliberation as Temporal Choreography: designing democratic rhythms

The chapter introduces the concept of **Democratic Rhythms**: the temporal patterns that regulate hybrid participatory systems.

Deliberation is typically conceptualized as an exchange of reasons oriented toward rational agreement. Within this procedural frame, quality is assessed in terms of argumentation, reciprocity, and justification. Yet this understanding risks overlooking a more fundamental dimension: deliberation is not only an exchange of arguments, but a choreography of time.

To deliberate is to organize rhythm, sequence, interruption, suspension, and closure. Every deliberative space distributes tempo, allocates turns, structures pauses, and determines when a matter is considered resolved. In this sense, deliberation operates as a temporal choreography: a patterned coordination of bodies, voices, and durations that shapes who can appear politically and under what conditions.

This choreography unfolds along at least four interrelated dimensions:

1. Pace: Who Can Speak Slowly?

Deliberative spaces are never temporally neutral. They privilege certain speeds of articulation: fluency, concision, immediacy. Participants who require time to translate experience into language, to navigate linguistic differences, or to process affective exposure often appear hesitant or insufficiently prepared. The politics of rhythm therefore concerns whose temporality is recognized as legitimate. To ask "who can speak slowly?" is to question whose pace is treated as deliberately appropriate and whose pace is pathologized as delay.

2. Turn: Who Must Legitimate Their Speech?

Formal equality of speaking turns does not erase asymmetry. Some participants enter deliberation already authorized; others must preface their contributions with justification, self-explanation, or appeals to credibility. The choreography of turn-taking thus reveals deeper hierarchies of recognition. The issue is not merely access to voice, but the burden of legitimacy carried by those whose knowledge is not presumed authoritative. Before speaking, some must first prove that they belong (Bourdieu, 1991).

3. Pause: Is There Space for Memory and Repair?

Deliberative theory often emphasizes forward-oriented problem solving. Yet political life is also shaped by grief, historical injury, and unresolved harm. A choreography that allows no pause forecloses the possibility of collective memory and repair. The politics of pause concerns whether deliberative processes can sustain moments of suspension: time for mourning, for recounting experience, for affective processing, without immediately translating them into policy outcomes. Without such pauses, recognition collapses into procedural efficiency.

4. Closure – Who Decides When "Enough" Has Been Said?

Every deliberative forum ends. But the authority to declare closure is rarely neutral. When processes are compressed by institutional deadlines or productivity metrics, closure may precede recognition. The politics of closure therefore concerns who determines when discussion has been "sufficient," and whether sufficiency is measured by argument saturation, emotional stabilization, or administrative constraint

Katy Rubin repeatedly emphasises rehearsal, iteration, and repetition in her interview. Practice-based approaches such as legislative theatre also foreground rehearsal as a democratic temporal mode. As Rubin notes, the value of these processes lies in their capacity to slow down decision-making by allowing participants to test interventions, revisit scenes, and learn collectively from failure. This temporal elasticity contrasts with extractive models of participation that demand immediate positions, and instead treats time as a resource for shared understanding and responsibility.

Where most digital participation operates under a linear, task-based rhythm (proposal → comment → vote → report), democratic rhythms are **cyclical and polyphonic**, integrating different temporalities:

1. **Civic Rhythm** – periodic gatherings (assemblies, performances, rituals).

2. **Institutional Rhythm** – administrative follow-up, accountability loops.
3. **Ecological Rhythm** – alignment with natural and local cycles.
4. **Emotional Rhythm** – recovery and renewal after intense deliberation.

Synchronising these rhythms, rather than subordinating one to another, is the foundation of temporal justice in hybrid democracies. However, these rhythms do not unfold on equal terms. Participatory processes are shaped by broader temporal structures, particularly the pressures of work, care, and the accelerated rhythms of capitalist reproduction, which unevenly distribute people's capacity to engage. In this context, temporal justice cannot be reduced to the design of participatory formats alone. Rather, it involves recognising and negotiating these temporal constraints and "rifts" that structure who can participate, when, and at what cost (Sharma, 2014; Fraser, 2016; see also Davies, 2024). This reconceptualisation of time in participation resonates with recent work on the "temporal rift" in capitalist societies, which highlights the disjunction between lived, social and ecological temporalities and the accelerated, extractive rhythms of production and governance. Pedro M. Rey-Araújo (2023) argues that dominant temporal regimes tend to fragment and devalue forms of time associated with relational, reproductive and care-oriented practices, rendering them marginal within prevailing socio-political and economic frameworks.

4.4 Digital tools for Temporal Justice in Practice

Building on insights from INSPIRE's hybrid deliberation pilots, Platoniq is developing and adapting a set of practical tools to embed temporal justice into participatory design, recognising that time is not a neutral background condition but a political resource unevenly distributed across participants. These tools extend practices observed across pilots and are designed to be deployed in their accountability and policy uptake phases, strengthening the continuity between deliberation and institutional follow-up. One approach is **temporal mapping**, where facilitators co-create a shared timeline with participants, identifying moments of intensity, rest, and reflection. This allows the group to visualise when participation is most and least accessible and for whom. A second practice involves **asynchronous assemblies**, where digital participation spaces remain open beyond live sessions so that participants unable to attend synchronously can still contribute; each new input effectively reopens deliberation, transforming closure into continuity.

To make temporal inequalities visible during the process, facilitators can deploy an **intersectional time audit**, a reflective moment where participants collectively ask questions such as: who is running out of time, whose time is not being valued, and who is carrying invisible temporal labour? Insights from this exercise can lead to recalibrating schedules, redistributing facilitation responsibilities, or introducing collective pauses. **Rest protocols** form another key practice, incorporating intentional breaks such as silent minutes, meditative pauses, or creative rituals that restore focus and emotional balance, treating rest itself as a deliberative technology rather than a logistical interruption. Temporal justice also extends to the design of digital participation infrastructures. Platforms shape how deliberation unfolds over time through deadlines, voting windows, and discussion cycles. While Decidim's modular architecture allows facilitators to adapt pacing, many civic technologies enforce linear participation flows that privilege speed and closure. INSPIRE therefore recommends **temporal customisation at the platform level**, allowing facilitators to extend voting periods, reopen debates, or archive deliberations as unfinished processes rather than closed files. Similarly, digital interfaces could visualise time relationally, representing patterns of community contribution rather than simply counting down toward deadlines. Such design interventions align digital infrastructures with human temporalities,

counterbalancing the accelerationist logic of data capture and creating conditions for more inclusive and reflective democratic participation.

4.5 The Ethics of Pace

Temporal justice is ultimately an ethical stance. It challenges capitalisms' valorisation of speed, efficiency, and productivity that pervades both governance and digital technology (Rosa, 2013). Acceleration is frequently framed as innovation. Yet in democratic practice, speed can become extractive, privileging not only those who can respond quickly, but more fundamentally those who have the time and resources to participate in the first place. It compresses reflection and marginalises voices that require time to build trust, translate experience, or articulate situated knowledge.

To design for slower democracy is not a nostalgic gesture but a normative commitment. It resists extraction, whether of attention, unpaid labour, emotional testimony, or community knowledge. Digital participation environments often mirror platform capitalism's logic of immediacy, constant notification, rapid consultation cycles, and measurable engagement metrics (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). These rhythms risk reproducing structural inequalities under the guise of efficiency.

From a care ethics perspective, democracy depends on temporal conditions that sustain relational life (Tronto, 2013). Care takes time. Trust-building takes time. Repairing institutional betrayal takes time. Migrant participants navigate prolonged bureaucratic waiting. Caregivers manage fragmented time structured around unpaid labour. Precarious workers face unstable schedules that limit synchronous engagement.

However, not all forms of slowness are democratic. When participatory processes do not address the political economy that structures time and the unequal distribution of participatory labour, extended duration can reproduce exclusion by placing additional burdens on those already time-poor. As Nick Durnin argues, large-scale participation is not constrained by willingness or capacity, but by whether economic conditions support people having the time and resources to engage meaningfully. Slowing down within a process does not necessarily make participation more accessible if people cannot enter or sustain engagement in the first place. In this sense, slowness can become a privilege rather than a condition of inclusion.

It is therefore important to distinguish between deepening time and imposed delay. Deepening time refers to the intentional slowing down of specific deliberative moments to enable reflection, care, and relational understanding, while allowing for distributed, asynchronous, and partial forms of participation. By contrast, imposed delay characterises institutional inertia, particularly in the adoption and implementation of recommendations, where delayed responses undermine trust and erode consequential participation.

Slowness, then, is not inherently equitable. It must be carefully designed, bounded, and combined with flexible participation formats to avoid reinforcing the very temporal inequalities it seeks to address.

Designing for temporal justice therefore requires recognising pace as a democratic variable. Participation must allow for return, rest, revision, and maturation of collective meaning. When deliberation unfolds at a humane rhythm, conflict becomes workable rather than polarised, and listening becomes substantive rather than symbolic.

A just democracy should be measured not only by responsiveness, but by depth of listening and durability of engagement. Pace becomes one ethical indicator of whether participation is extractive or transformative.

Within the INSPIRE framework, temporal justice strengthens democratic capabilities not by accelerating participation, but by redistributing time as a democratic resource. Pace becomes a condition of equitable access, sustained voice, and intersectional solidarity. Platform architecture therefore operates as a temporal regulator of democratic agency.

4.6 Design Implications for Decidim

Temporal justice in Decidim is not achieved by slowing everything down. It is achieved by diversifying rhythm. The platform should allow multiple tempos to coexist: urgent response where necessary, sustained deliberation where required, and durable traceability where accountability demands it. Democratic capability depends not on speed, but on whether participants can engage without temporal disadvantage.

Table 12: Operationalising Temporal Justice within the INSPIRE Democratic Capabilities Framework

Temporal Justice Consideration	Design Challenge	Decidim Feature or Adjustment	Democratic Effect	INSPIRE Democratic Capability Strengthened
Extended and Flexible Timelines	Compressed consultation windows privilege institutional tempo	Adjustable phase durations; extended consultation periods; reflection buffers	Reduces temporal exclusion	**DEMOCRATIC DIGNITY** *the freedom and opportunity to recognise inherent democratic worth*
Asynchronous First Design	Synchronous-only formats exclude fragmented schedules	Persistent proposal threads; revisitable debates; editable contributions	Enables return and sustained articulation	**SELF-DETERMINATION** *the freedom and opportunity to determine the aims and forms of participation*
Iterative Deliberation Cycles	One-off consultations prevent reflection	Multi-phase processes; amendment rounds; facilitation summaries	Enables deliberative maturation	**EPISTEMIC EQUITY AND JUSTICE** *the freedom and opportunity to participate as a knowledge receiver, holder, producer and giver*

Notification and Attention Ethics	Extractive attention economy logics	Customisable notifications; digest modes; reduced urgency cues	Protects cognitive autonomy	**SAFETY AND SECURITY** *Being able to participate in democratic life without fear. Incorporates both **physical and environmental security**, as well as **psychological** and **political safety***
Archival Continuity and Traceability	Political cycles risk erasure	Version histories; amendment logs; lifecycle tracking dashboards	Ensures visible policy pathways	**NAVIGATING POWER** *the freedom and opportunity to navigate and endure systems of power*
Time Footprint Tool Module (Platoniq)	Institutional delays remain opaque	Public tracking of response times; visibility of administrative bottlenecks; timeline transparency	Makes institutional tempo accountable	**CONSEQUENTIAL PARTICIPATION** *the freedom and opportunity for participation to have tangible, meaningful influence.*
Recognition of Care Constraints	Care work invisibilised	Hybrid participation; extended windows; multilingual documentation	Reduces structural inequality of time	**DEMOCRATIC DIGNITY**
Protection with Recognition	Traceability may expose vulnerability	Optional identity disclosure; moderated visibility; privacy layers	Balances safety and recognition	**SAFETY AND SECURITY**

System of Badges (Non-Extractive Recognition)	Participation often rewarded only through speed or volume	Badges recognising sustained engagement, listening, facilitation, collaborative amendment	Recognises relational and temporal contributions	**BUILDING COMMUNITY** *the opportunity, space and ability to develop **social and personal relationships** and a **sense of community**, through participation* **+ POLITICAL VOICE** *the freedom and opportunity to articulate political demands, struggles in participation*
Rhythm as Relational Infrastructure	Fast cycles prevent trust	Slower sequencing; relational check-ins between phases	Enables trust and collective belonging	**COLLECTIVE CARE** *the freedom and opportunity to pay attention to, and care for each other through participation*
Community-Led Temporal Structuring	Institutional clocks override community rhythms	Co-designed timelines; community pacing decisions	Aligns tempo with lived experience	**DEVELOPING NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES** *the freedom and opportunity to develop networks, alliances and organising capacity through participation*

Recognising Participatory Labour: The Time Footprint Tool as a Tool for Temporal Justice

A key challenge for democratic participation is that the labour sustaining it often remains **invisible**. Deliberative processes rely on significant investments of **time, attention, emotional effort, and relational care**, yet institutional accounts tend to privilege **formal outputs** such as proposals or votes, overlooking the forms of care work that make participation possible (Holdo, 2020).

This includes activities such as **listening**, **translation of experiences into collective narratives**, **facilitation**, and the ongoing maintenance of dialogue across sessions. As observed in the evaluation of the UK Citizens' Jury on human embryo editing, **care work unfolds both formally and informally** within participatory processes and is often **unevenly distributed** among participants and organisers, raising the critical question of **who carries these burdens and at what cost**.

Within the Decidim ecosystem, Platoniq developed the **Time Footprint Tool / Volunteers Impact module** to address this gap by **making participatory labour visible**. The tool enables participants to **log, track, and reflect** on the time and effort they contribute across different activities, including less visible forms of engagement such as **facilitation, support, and relational work**. From a temporal justice perspective, this is not only a matter of **recognition** but of **redistribution**. By rendering these contributions visible, the tool opens space to question how participatory processes allocate **time, care, and responsibility**; and whether these distributions enable or constrain **equitable participation**.

From the perspective of **temporal justice**, the importance of this feature lies not only in measuring time but in recognising participation as a form of **collective democratic labour**. Democratic engagement requires time resources that are **unevenly distributed across society**, and participation often depends on contributions from those for whom time is already scarce. However, recognition alone is not sufficient. As **Parry (2025)** argues, when participants contribute their **democratic labour**; especially under conditions of constraint or inequality, this investment should lead to **meaningful consequences** within the process. Those who overcome significant barriers to participate should not only be included, but see their contributions **taken seriously, reflected, and acted upon**. When participatory processes fail to acknowledge and respond to this labour, they risk reproducing existing inequalities, privileging those with greater **temporal flexibility or economic security**, while extracting time and care from others without adequate return.

For this reason, the Time Footprint Tool incorporates an additional reflective layer. After completing a task or volunteer contribution, participants are invited to fill in a short **perception questionnaire** evaluating their experience. This questionnaire introduces a **feminist perspective on participatory labour**, asking participants to reflect on how the work performed was experienced and valued. Rather than focusing only on measurable productivity, it invites participants to consider whether the task involved emotional, relational, or care-based work and whether the time invested felt recognised by the collective process.

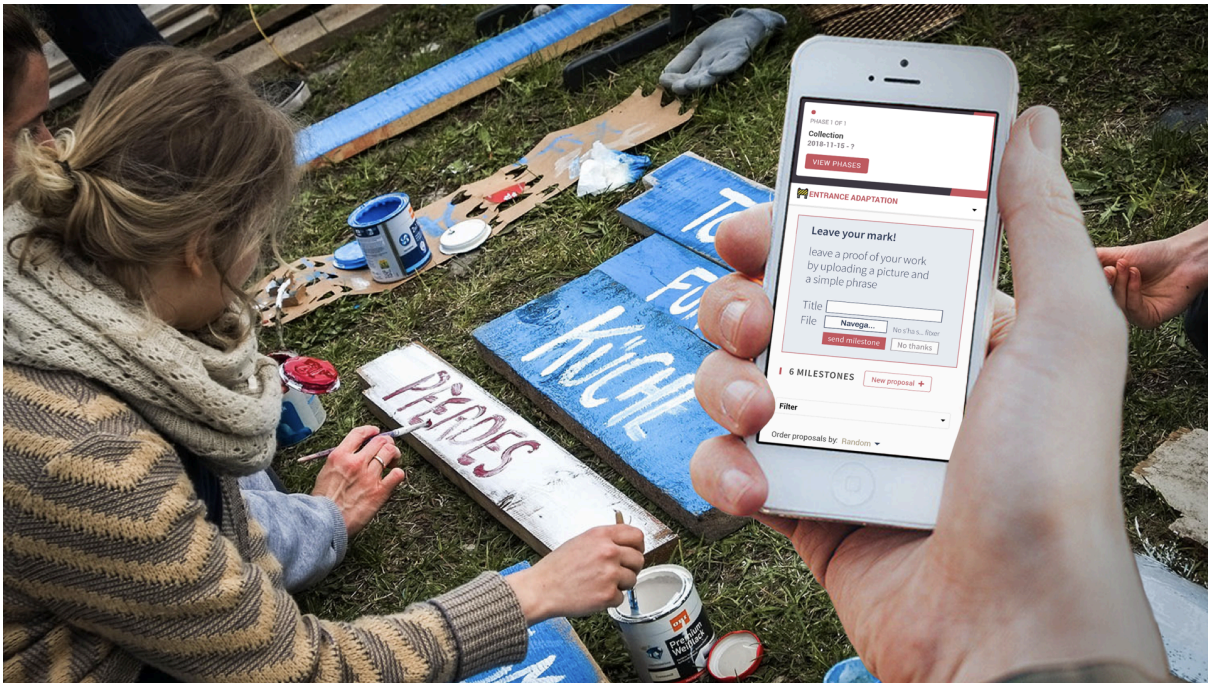


Fig 8. Time Footprint Tool / Volunteers Impact Module in Use. Platoniq

This approach challenges conventional distinctions between *productive* and *non-productive* work. Activities such as facilitation support, emotional mediation, translation, documentation, or community coordination are essential to sustaining democratic dialogue, yet they often remain invisible in institutional metrics. By inviting participants to reflect on the qualitative dimension of their contribution, the questionnaire acknowledges that democratic processes depend not only on decision-making outputs but also on the relational infrastructures that make deliberation possible.

The module also follows strict ethical principles in the collection and interpretation of participation data. Participation in the questionnaire is voluntary, and respondents can self-identify according to their own categories. Personal information is anonymised, consent is explicit and revocable, and participant communities are encouraged to participate in interpreting the results and defining relevant analytical categories.

Seen through the lens of temporal justice, the Time Footprint Tool illustrates how digital participation infrastructures can move beyond simple participation metrics toward a more reflexive understanding of democratic labour. **The objective is not to transform participation into a productivity indicator, but to reveal the temporal and relational investments that sustain democratic life.**

This also points to a broader structural tension. As Nancy Fraser argues, capitalist systems depend on forms of social reproduction such as care, attention, and cooperation, while simultaneously eroding the very conditions that make them possible. In this sense, the Time Footprint Tool makes visible forms of “non-productive” labour that sustain not only participation, but social life itself. By rendering this time visible, it can contribute to politicising questions of availability, exhaustion, and inequality, and support collective claims for the protection and redistribution of time.

When combined with hybrid deliberative processes, tools of this kind help create a more equitable participatory environment by acknowledging the diverse forms of work that enable collective decision-making.

Decidim Badges as Temporal Governance Tools

Within participatory infrastructures such as Decidim, incentive systems can easily reproduce the acceleration logic of digital platforms, rewarding speed, visibility, or frequency of interaction. However, when designed with democratic ethics in mind, recognition mechanisms such as **badges** can operate differently. Rather than functioning as gamified rewards that encourage rapid or superficial participation, badges can become instruments for recognising the **temporal rhythms and relational labour that sustain democratic processes over time**.

In this perspective, badges shift the focus from *quantity of participation* to the **quality, duration, and care embedded in democratic engagement**. Instead of privileging those who post the most comments or submit the fastest proposals, recognition can be attributed to forms of participation that strengthen the collective infrastructure of deliberation. These include, for instance, long-term engagement across multiple stages of a process, contributions that help clarify debates or summarise discussions, efforts to mediate conflicts or translate complex information for others, and collaborative practices such as refining proposals through amendments or building alliances between different groups of participants.

By recognising these contributions, a badge system can support a more plural understanding of democratic participation. Deliberation is not sustained only by moments of decision-making but by a broader ecology of practices that include listening, connecting perspectives, documenting conversations, and maintaining collective attention over time.

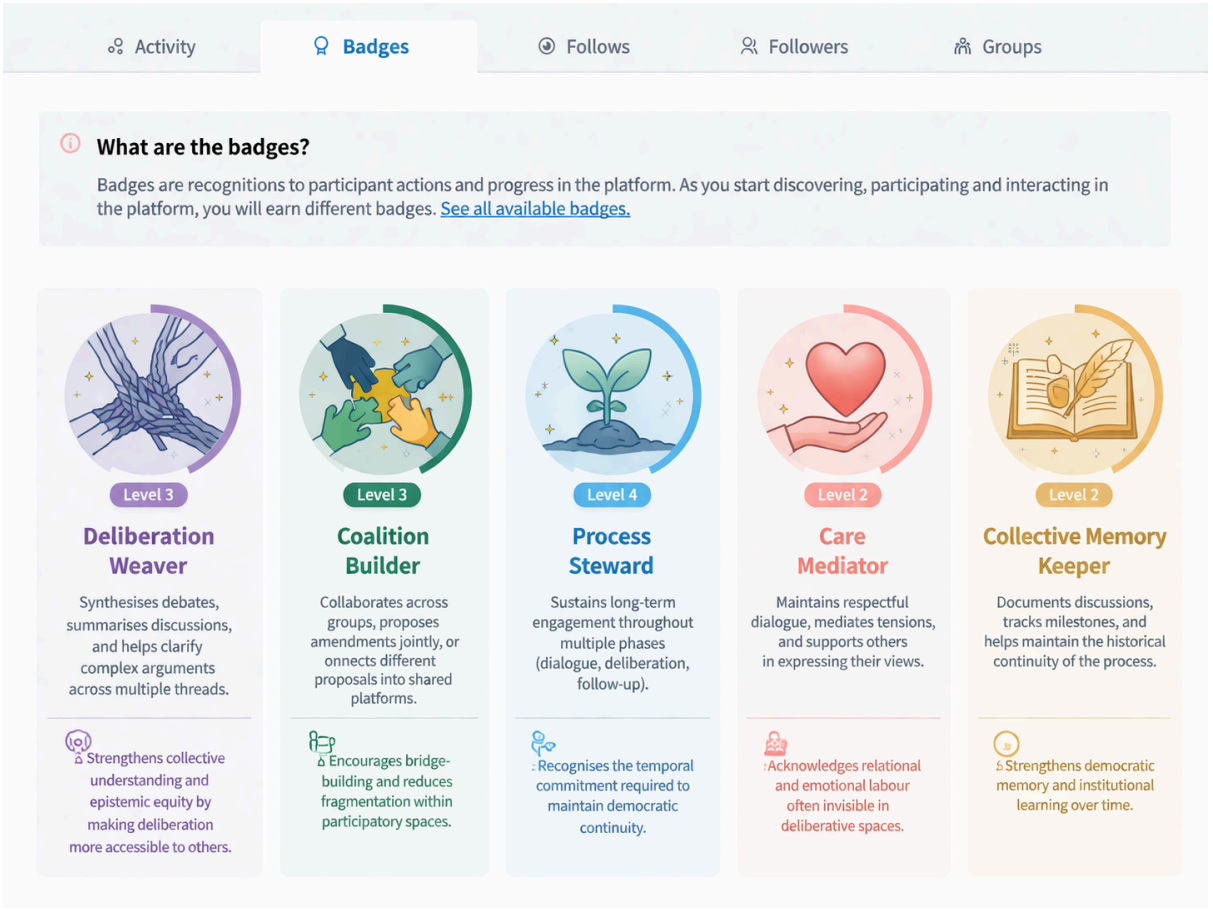


Fig 9. Re-designed badges in Decidim. Platoniq

When badges acknowledge these forms of work, they reinforce several democratic capabilities simultaneously: **democratic dignity**, by valuing contributions that are often invisible; **community building**, by encouraging cooperative rather than competitive participation; **collective care**, by recognising the relational labour that sustains participation; and political voice, by highlighting participants who enable others to engage more effectively. In doing so, badges can also foster a sense of mutual responsibility, making visible the interdependence that underpins democratic participation.

From the perspective of temporal justice, the significance of such recognition mechanisms lies in their ability to **make time visible within democratic processes**. Participation unfolds through different temporal rhythms: some participants intervene briefly at specific moments, while others sustain engagement across months or years. Without mechanisms of recognition, long-term forms of care and maintenance often remain unnoticed, even though they are essential for the continuity of democratic infrastructures. A badge system designed around temporal contribution therefore acknowledges that democracy depends not only on moments of expression but also on **ongoing stewardship of collective spaces**.

This approach also contributes to addressing asymmetries of time within participatory processes. Individuals with greater time resources can often dominate visible moments of deliberation, while those contributing through slower or less visible forms of engagement remain marginalised. By recognising diverse temporal contributions, badges help rebalance this dynamic and support **consequential participation**, enabling participants to see how their sustained engagement shapes the process. In doing so, they also strengthen participants' capability for **navigating power**, as recognition signals which forms of engagement influence the trajectory of deliberation.

Importantly, this system should not be understood as a form of conventional gamification. Ethical gamification within democratic infrastructures does not aim to maximise activity or competition. Instead, it seeks to cultivate **democratic rhythms that value continuity, care, and collective responsibility**. Recognition becomes a way of reinforcing the norms and practices that enable deliberation to persist over time.

In this sense, badges complement other temporal governance tools such as the Time Footprint Tool module. While the Time Footprint Tool makes visible the **temporal investment and labour** participants contribute to a process, badges help redistribute **symbolic recognition** for the different ways that time is used within democratic life. Together, these tools transform time from an invisible constraint into a **visible democratic variable**. Rather than forcing participation to conform to administrative deadlines or platform acceleration, they allow participatory infrastructures to recognise and support the diverse rhythms through which democratic engagement unfolds.

Temporal justice in participatory platforms is therefore not simply about slowing down processes. It is about designing infrastructures where **time becomes visible, accountable, plural, and equitable**. In this context, badges redistribute recognition across different forms of democratic labour, while the Time Footprint Tool redistributes accountability by making participatory effort measurable and discussable. Together, they operationalise **pace as a democratic variable**, ensuring that the rhythms of participation are shaped by collective values rather than purely administrative constraints.

Examples of Temporal Recognition Badges

To operationalise ethical recognition within participatory infrastructures, badges can be designed to acknowledge different forms of democratic labour and temporal engagement. Rather than rewarding speed or volume of activity, these badges recognise contributions that sustain deliberation over time and strengthen the collective quality of participation.

Table 13: Recognition Badges:

Badge	What it Recognises	Democratic Value
Deliberation Weaver	Participants who regularly synthesise debates, summarise discussions, or help clarify complex arguments across multiple threads.	Strengthens collective understanding and epistemic equity by making deliberation more accessible to others.
Coalition Builder	Participants who collaborate across groups, propose amendments jointly, or connect different proposals into shared platforms.	Encourages bridge-building and reduces fragmentation within participatory spaces.
Process Steward	Participants who sustain long-term engagement throughout multiple phases of the process (dialogue, deliberation, follow-up).	Recognises the temporal commitment required to maintain democratic continuity.
Care Mediator	Participants who contribute to maintaining respectful dialogue, mediate tensions, or support others in expressing their views.	Acknowledges relational and emotional labour often invisible in deliberative spaces.
Collective Memory Keeper	Participants who document discussions, track milestones, or help maintain the historical continuity of the process.	Strengthens democratic memory and institutional learning over time.

These badges do not function as competitive rewards but as **markers of democratic contribution**, helping communities recognise the diverse forms of work that sustain collective decision-making. When participants see these roles valued publicly, they are more likely to engage in practices that support deliberative quality rather than simply increasing the quantity of participation.

In combination with the Time Footprint Tool, which records the temporal investment participants dedicate to activities, badges help articulate a more nuanced understanding of participatory labour. Time tracking highlights the **duration of engagement**, while badges acknowledge the **qualitative forms of contribution** that make deliberation possible, many of which also require sustained time commitments that often remain unrecognised.

Together, these mechanisms reinforce a culture where democratic participation is understood not as a sequence of isolated interactions but as a **shared process unfolding through multiple rhythms of contribution, care, and collaboration**.

⏳ Part V: Legislative Theatre and Hybrid Democratic Dramaturgy

> *"When citizens become actors and policymakers become the audience, democracy rehearses its own transformation."*
> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*

Why Legislative Theatre Belongs Here

Parts III and IV established that **space** and **time** are not neutral backdrops to participation: they actively determine who can engage, how decisions evolve, and whether democratic processes can be sustained.
Part VI digs into **Legislative Theatre** because it is one of the few methodologies that already operationalises both forms of justice in a single, adaptable system. This section extends and operationalises the analytical framework introduced in Section 2.4, Aligning Drama-Based Methods with Platform Architecture, which examines a range of drama-based methodologies including psychodrama, sociodrama, and legislative theatre and their implications for participatory design. Within this landscape, legislative theatre is explored as one possible articulation (particularly in relation to its potential to connect deliberation with policy-oriented outcomes), without detaching it from the wider methodological tradition from which it emerges.

Legislative theatre offers a dramaturgical grammar for democracy precisely because it refuses the separation between expression, deliberation, and decision-making. As Rubin emphasises, the stage becomes a space where policy is not merely discussed but rehearsed, enabling institutions to encounter lived experience not as testimony to be extracted, but as knowledge that actively reshapes the deliberative field.

Legislative Theatre functions as a **temporal regulator** and a **spatial re-designer**:

- It **structures time** through clear cycles (scene → intervention → rewriting → policy formulation), ensuring that reflection, response, and follow-up happen at the right pace.
- It **redistributes space** by redesigning the room or digital environment so that participants, not institutions, control where power sits and how voices appear.
- It transforms embodied experience into **traceable policy input**, providing a direct link from lived realities to institutional decision-making.

Placed here, Legislative Theatre becomes the **operational bridge** that turns the principles of temporal and spatial justice into practice. It offers a ready-made democratic choreography: one that can be digitised, scaled, audited, and adapted across pilots and provides a clear workflow for embedding care, inclusion, and accountability into hybrid deliberation.

Digital Legislative Theatre suggests that **democracy itself is a dramaturgical form**, a sequence of scenes, improvisations, and responses.
By digitising the process, INSPIRE ensures that **creative interventions can become legislative trajectories**, not isolated performances.

In doing so, the project contributes an **open source model** for local and European institutions seeking to merge **cultural participation** with **digital policymaking**: one that honours emotion as evidence and imagination as democratic infrastructure.

This section therefore presents Legislative Theatre not as a cultural add-on but as a **practical governance tool**: an adaptable methodology that helps institutions manage pace, redesign participatory space, and convert collective insight into actionable policy pathways.

5.1 Digitalising Legislative Theatre through Decidim within INSPIRE pilots

By structuring deliberation through scenes, cycles, and moments of interruption, legislative theatre aligns with traditions that understand autonomy as the capability to collectively rework political time rather than simply accelerate decision-making.

Merging Legislative Theatre and Decidim, prototypes **a new genre of participatory policymaking**, one where **aesthetic experience**, **emotional truth**, and **policy drafting** coexist in the same civic infrastructure.

This model demonstrates:

- How **embodied creativity** can become **legislative input**.
- How **digital continuity** prevents civic imagination from being lost between events.
- How **institutions can learn to listen aesthetically**, integrating narrative and affective data into governance.

Digitalising Legislative Theatre introduce three key innovations relevant for the broader INSPIRE framework:

a. Narrative-Based Deliberation

Turning policy debate into storytelling fosters inclusion of non-verbal and affective knowledge. Decidim becomes a **repository of lived narratives**, not just proposals.

b. Distributed Authorship

The platform allows for shared authorship: citizens, facilitators, and institutions co-edit the scripts of democracy in real time.

c. Emotional Traceability

Through visual and audio integration, the emotional resonance of theatrical scenes remains accessible during the follow-up deliberations, addressing the affective gap typical of bureaucratic participation.

Platform Use Should Not Be Assumed

Bringing legislative theatre into a digital participatory environment introduces forms of friction that need to be anticipated and designed for. Several INSPIRE pilots have explicitly pointed to the perceived complexity of platforms such as Decidim, particularly when introduced without sufficient preparation or clear purpose. These tensions do not indicate failure, but rather reveal the conditions required for meaningful integration between embodied, relational processes and structured digital infrastructures.

Importantly, in hybrid deliberative spaces, **not all participants, nor all facilitators**, should be expected or required to engage with the digital platform at every stage of the process. Rather than assuming continuous platform use, the decision of when and how the platform is introduced becomes part of the dramaturgy of the deliberative cycle itself. As outlined in Section 2.4 (*Aligning Drama-Based Methods with Platform Architecture*), different methodologies call for different moments of digital mediation, and the presence of the platform should be intentionally positioned within the process: for instance, to extend reflection, document outcomes, or support asynchronous contributions.

This implies that the role of the platform must be clearly defined and communicated from the outset. Participants and facilitators need to understand when the platform is relevant, what kind of contributions are expected within it, and how it connects to the live, embodied phases of deliberation. In this sense, platform use is not a neutral or technical layer, but a design choice that shapes participation and should be treated with the same care as the staging of scenes, roles, and transitions. Without this dual competence, digital spaces risk being perceived as external or disruptive rather than as extensions of the deliberative environment.

This learning is further supported by experimentation beyond INSPIRE, including collaborations with UK-based legislative theatre practitioners to explore the digitalisation of these methodologies in practice. These experiences reinforce the importance of aligning facilitation, platform use, and participant onboarding from the outset.

Within this perspective, the combination of legislative theatre and Decidim can be understood not as a fixed model, but as an evolving configuration of practices, roles, and tools. To support this ongoing adaptation, the modules and configurations developed are being released as open-source resources through a public GitHub repository, enabling further experimentation, contextual adjustment, and collective improvement.

Table 14: Platform Use Requires Deliberate Design in Hybrid Deliberation

Risk or Tension	Observed in Practice	Design Response
Platform use is assumed as necessary at all stages	Some INSPIRE pilots reported resistance and disengagement when platforms were introduced without clear purpose, or perceived as overly complex	Treat platform use as a situated design choice, not a default. Define when and why it is used, drawing on the guidance in Section 2.4
Over-complexity discourages participation	Participants and facilitators may experience platforms like Decidim as technical, external, or disruptive to embodied processes	Introduce the platform gradually and with clear framing, ensuring it responds to a concrete need (e.g. documentation, asynchronous input)
Not all participants can or should engage digitally	Unequal access, confidence, or preference means that mandatory platform use can exclude or silence participants	Ensure multiple modes of participation. Platform engagement should remain optional and complementary to live, embodied processes

Disconnection between live and digital phases	Insights generated in performative settings are not easily translated into structured digital contributions	Design bridging moments where participants collectively translate outputs into platform-ready formats
Lack of facilitator readiness for digital environments	Legislative theatre facilitators may not be trained in platform use, leading to weak integration or abandonment	Pair Legislative Theatre training with platform training, and introduce a platform steward role to support navigation and continuity
Platform introduced too late or as an add-on	When platforms appear only at the end, they are perceived as administrative rather than integral	Position the platform as part of the dramaturgy of the process, with its role defined from the outset and activated at specific moments in the cycle
Misalignment between platform timing and deliberative rhythms	Continuous or poorly timed platform use can disrupt trust-building and collective sense-making	Align platform presence with deliberative phases (e.g. reflection, extension, follow-up), not with constant engagement

5.1.1. From Stage to Platform: The Hybrid Genealogy

Legislative Theatre (LT), developed by **Augusto Boal** in the 1990s, transforms spectators into "spect-actors" who collectively rewrite scenes of oppression into proposals for institutional change. This adaptation transforms LT from a performative event into a **hybrid participatory infrastructure**, where the boundary between civic imagination and formal policymaking becomes porous.

Digitalising Legislative Theatre is not about recording performances, it is about **translating the dramaturgy of participation** into the architecture of a platform.
Where the stage offered **embodiment, immediacy, and catharsis**, Decidim offers **traceability, continuity, and institutional reach**.

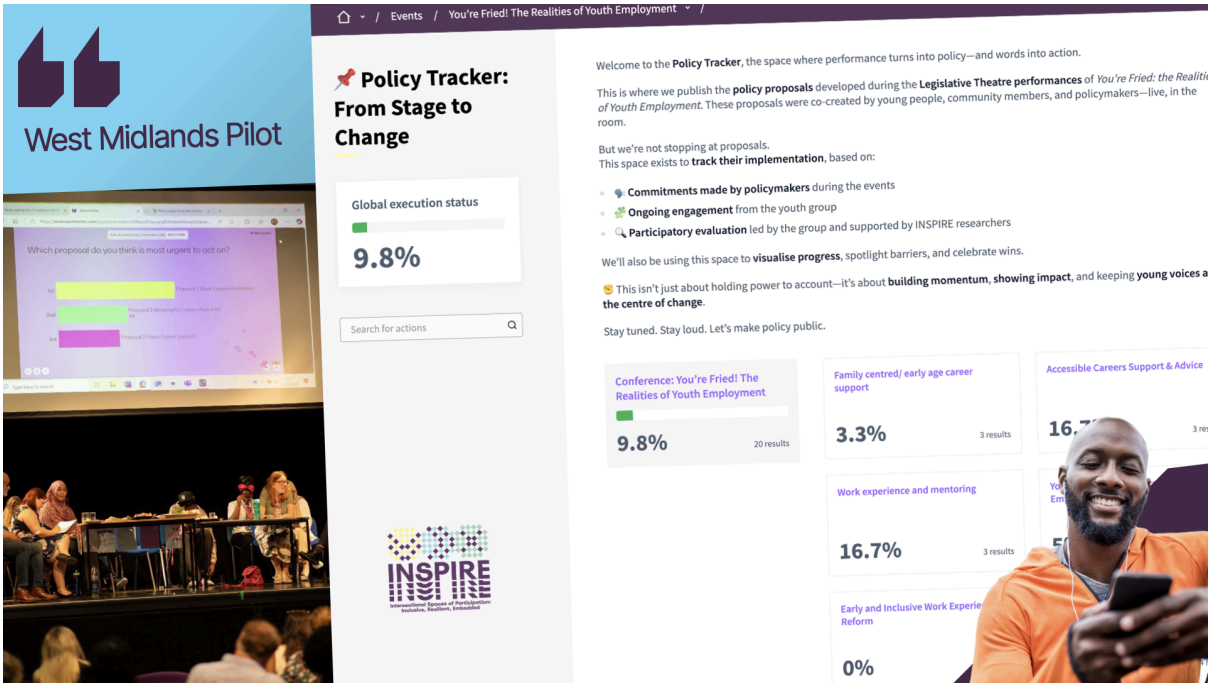


Fig 10. West Midlands Pilot Policy Tracker: From Stage to Change. Platoniq/UoB

The goal is to preserve the affective power of theatre while extending its **political lifespan**, ensuring that proposals emerging from lived experience do not vanish once the lights go down.

The **digitalisation of Legislative Theatre with Decidim** (rooted in the **West Midlands pilot** and now mirrored in **Lisbon and Warsaw**) is both a *hybrid deliberative innovation* and a *cultural device*.

5.1.2 The Decidim-LT Integration Model

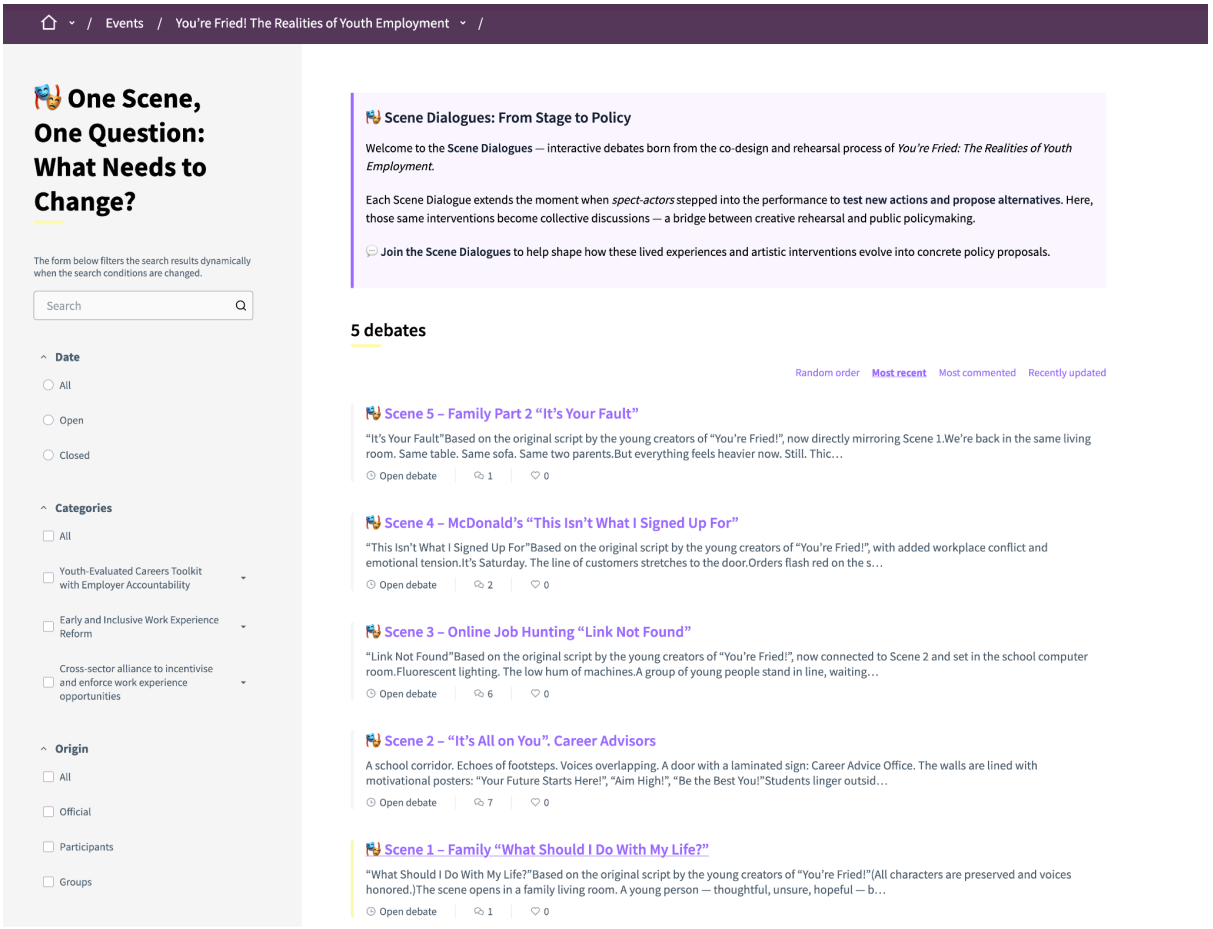
The integration model is structured around a four-phase workflow, where Decidim's modular logic functions as both archive and amplifier of the deliberative process:

Table 15: Mapping Legislative Theatre Phases to Decidim Components and Functions

Legislative Theatre Phase	Decidim Component	Function
Scene Creation: Collective writing and performance of social conflicts. (see fig 11 *One Scene, One Question: What Needs to Change?)*	**Debates Component**	Documentation of scenes as "situations," allowing participants to describe and upload proposals drawn from embodied experience.
Spect-Actor Intervention: The audience modifies the script and proposes alternatives.	**Proposals Prioritisation Tool**	Viewers vote, comment, and remix interventions, generating ranked lists of policy directions.

Legislative Forum: Policymakers engage with the audience's proposals.	**Accountability Module**	Tracks which proposals are adopted, deferred, or under review, linking performance outcomes to formal deliberation.
Post-Legislative Follow-up: Monitoring implementation over time.	**Policy Tracker**	Tracks the evolution of proposals beyond the deliberative moment, making visible implementation, delays, or transformation of commitments and extending accountability across political cycles.

This digital translation ensures **legitimacy and traceability**, turning creative processes into actionable civic inputs.



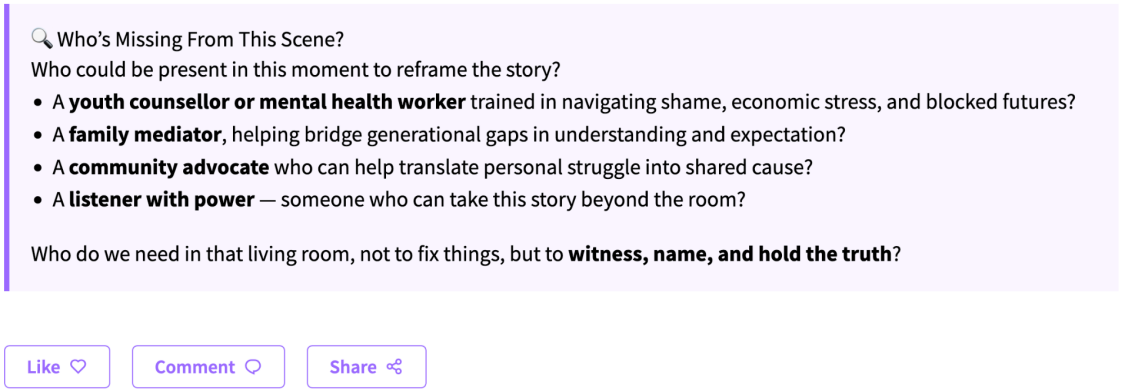


Fig 11. One Scene, One Question: What Needs to Change? You're Fried: the Realities of Youth Employment

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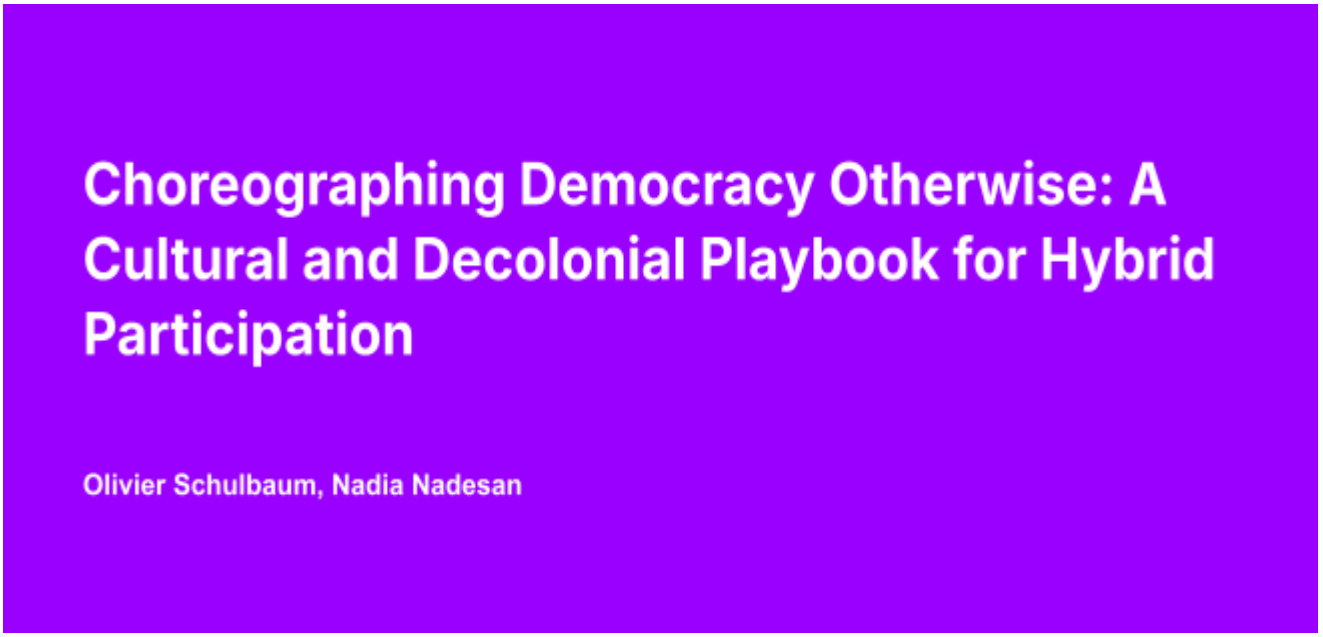
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The Playbook component is still under development. Detailed exercises and facilitation formats will be finalised and published as a standalone, iterative playbook (planned release: October 2026), incorporating ongoing pilot feedback and testing trough their Accountability and policy uptaking phase.

🟢 Choreographing Democracy Otherwise: A Cultural and Decolonial Playbook for Hybrid Participation

This Playbook translates a **pluriverse of democratic genealogies** (Black feminist, Indigenous, anti-colonial, Afrofuturist, and European civic prototyping traditions) into practical cultural devices, designed to help practitioners choreograph hybrid, inclusive deliberation processes.

Each activity or method included here:

- bridges **art and governance**,
- promotes **care, embodiment, and imagination**,
- and can operate in **hybrid settings** (digital + physical).

All are grounded in INSPIRE's **Safe(r) Space** framework, **Political UX** insights, **intersectional temporalities** research and learnings from INSPIRE's **Pilots**

Why This Matters for Hybrid Democracy

Hybrid democratic infrastructures combine **embodied participation, cultural practices, and digital platforms**. When properly sequenced, these elements reinforce each other: embodied methods create trust and narrative depth, while digital infrastructures such as **Decidim** sustain continuity, transparency, and accountability. When poorly aligned, however, digital tools can prematurely formalise discussions, expose participants to risk, or reduce complex experiences to simplified policy outputs.

Designing hybrid participation therefore requires not only technical integration but **ethical choreography between phases**, ensuring that care, reflection, and collective decision-making each receive the appropriate temporal and infrastructural support.

How to Use the Playbook

The activities proposed in this playbook are not only workshops to be completed; they are **micro-institutions of care**: repeatable, adaptive formats that nurture long-term democratic imagination.
Applied together, they form the backbone of **INSPIRE's hybrid dialogic infrastructure**, where art, technology, and policy co-create the grammar of inclusive democracy.

What Is a Visual Dramaturgy Card?

A **Visual Dramaturgy Card** is a compact, multimodal knowledge unit that translates a cultural method, tool, or participatory device into a **visual, narrative, and actionable format**.
It is not a simple "instruction card." It is a **mini-dramaturgy**: a way of staging how a democratic method unfolds; visually, temporally, emotionally, and relationally.

Inspired by dramaturgy in theatre and performance, and by visual facilitation practices from community organising, design justice, and decolonial pedagogy, a Visual Dramaturgy Card makes visible the **story, rhythm, and relational logic** of a participatory tool.
It shows *how* a method feels, *what it activates*, *who it serves*, and *what democratic capabilities it grows*.

Each activity includes:

- **Objective**: What democratic capability it strengthens
- **Method**: Step-by-step structure
- **Hybrid Adaptation**: Digital + in-person versions
- **Facilitator Tips**: Care, timing, and accessibility guidance
- **Derived from**: Theoretical or decolonial source

In hybrid and digital contexts, where methods risk becoming procedural checklists or platform-driven workflows, Visual Dramaturgy Cards restore the **aesthetic, affective, and symbolic** dimensions of participation.
They hold together four crucial elements:

1. Narrative

What the method is trying to transform: the democratic tension or imaginative question it responds to.

2. Rhythm

The temporal architecture of the method. its pace, its moments of intensity, its built-in rest or reflection points.

3. Relational Field

Who participates, how power circulates, and what forms of care, vulnerability, or authorship the method invites.

4. Visual Atmosphere

Symbols, shapes, icons, colours, and textures that communicate the method's underlying mood and cultural genealogy (feminist, Indigenous, Afrofuturist, youth-led, etc.).

Each Visual Dramaturgy Card becomes a **portable democratic script**: a way to communicate the essence of a method across facilitators, communities, institutions, and digital platforms without losing the cultural depth that makes it work.

Rather than standardising practice, these cards create a **shared imaginative field** where methods remain adaptable but their democratic intentions remain intact.
In this sense, the cards function as both **teaching tools** and **governance artefacts**, helping teams design inclusive processes while honouring the emotional, cultural, and political textures of participation.

Methodological Principles for Dialogic Spaces Rooted in Justice, Plurality, and Repair

The following principles emerge from a critical rethinking of deliberation informed by decolonial, feminist, and relational epistemologies. Scholars such as Édouard Glissant, Tina Campt, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Sara Ahmed, and Audra Simpson challenge the assumption that democratic dialogue is best achieved through transparent, rational, and fully articulated speech. Instead, they foreground opacity, refusal, affect, and embodied knowledge as essential dimensions of political life.

Taken together, these perspectives invite a shift from dialogue as a purely verbal exchange toward dialogic spaces that recognise multiple ways of knowing, expressing, and withholding. They also reframe participation as a relational and situated practice, shaped by histories of exclusion and unequal conditions of visibility. Designing for justice and plurality therefore requires expanding what counts as valid contribution, while respecting the right not to fully disclose, translate, or perform one's experience.

The principles below translate these insights into methodological orientations for participatory design. They do not prescribe fixed techniques, but offer guiding commitments for creating dialogic spaces capable of holding difference, sustaining care, and enabling forms of democratic repair.

🔊 Not All Knowledge Is Verbal

Framing:
In Western democratic and educational paradigms, knowledge is often equated with verbal, rational, and linear expression. This bias erases the deep epistemic work carried through **story, song, gesture, rhythm, imagery, poetics, and collective silence**. Across the African diaspora, Indigenous communities, and Global South traditions, these forms have always served as legitimate, and often more powerful, ways of knowing, remembering, and resisting.

By privileging the spoken word or the written argument, deliberative spaces often marginalize participants who bring **embodied, intuitive, or narrative-based knowledge**. This is not just an accessibility issue: it's an **epistemic injustice**. When only certain forms of communication are considered "valid," we reproduce colonial hierarchies of intelligence and worth.

To design culturally rooted and pluralistic deliberative spaces, we must **center the full spectrum of expression** and understand that what is felt, performed, drawn, or intuited may carry more meaning than what is said.

👉🏽 **Ask:** *What is being expressed beyond logic?*

Dramaturgical Implication:

In a deliberative space that honors embodied and symbolic expression, the room itself must become more than a forum: ***it becomes a stage, a circle, a ritual ground****. Facilitators must create conditions where knowledge can emerge through gesture, image, rhythm, and metaphor. This means slowing down the pace of conversation, allowing pauses for drawing, movement, or collective sound-making. It also means refusing to translate everything into speech. What is drawn, danced, sung, or held in silence does not need verbal closure to be valid. These spaces shift from "talking about" justice to* ***performing justice in form****.*

🔕Not All Voices Speak: Silence as Radical Presence

In dominant democratic theory and deliberative practice, “political voice” is often imagined as clear, spoken, and reasoned expression. This vision assumes that legitimacy flows through the spoken word, particularly when articulated in standardized, institutionally legible ways.

But this idea is not universal. It reflects the **colonial-modern equation of speech with personhood, rationality, and citizenship**; a framing long critiqued by Black, feminist, and decolonial thinkers (Spivak, 1988; Lorde, 1984). To equate voice only with speech is to violently exclude those whose politics have always been carried through **silence, rhythm, presence, and refusal**.

Political voice includes chosen silence. It includes the body in protest. It includes gestures, music, poetry, movement, and performance. It includes interruptions, echoes, and absences. Not all voices are oral, and not all political meaning is rational.

To speak is not always to be heard. And to remain silent is not always to be passive.

🎭 Dramaturgical Implication

In dialogic and deliberative design, facilitators often interpret silence as withdrawal, hesitation, or lack of engagement. But from an Afrofeminist and decolonial position, **silence can be strategy**, **healing**, or **sovereignty**. In many traditions, silence is a space of collective memory, of listening across generations, of refusal to perform for systems that extract without returning.

Facilitators must therefore ask:

- *Is this silence a refusal to translate pain into policy language?*
- *Is this silence saying: I am present, but I do not trust this space yet?*
- *Is this body, in stillness, speaking more than language can hold?*

🌀 Consensus Is Not the Goal

Framing:
The liberal ideal of consensus is often framed as the highest achievement of democratic dialogue. But from a decolonial, Afrofeminist, and abolitionist perspective, **consensus can be violent**. It can erase dissident voices, flatten contradictions, and pressure marginalized participants to conform to dominant expectations for the sake of harmony.

True plurality requires **making space for conflict, contradiction, and unresolvable truths**. Not every conversation must end in agreement, and sometimes, the ethical choice is to let divergence stand. Black feminist thought teaches us that **non-closure is not a failure of dialogue**; it is often its most honest outcome.

Designing for divergence means resisting the urge to force coherence. It means embracing ambiguity, holding multiple truths, and resisting the managerial instinct to “tie things up.”

👉🏾 **Ask:** *What truths are at risk if we rush to agreement?*

Dramaturgical Implication: When consensus is decentered, the facilitator is no longer a manager guiding the group to agreement, but a witness to a complex ecology of truths. The room is allowed to fragment, to stretch, to hold conflict without fear of collapse. Time becomes elastic. Scripts give way to improvisation. The design must build in exits, breathing spaces, multiple storylines. Divergence is not seen as a breakdown in the process: it is a sign that people are telling the truth. Rather than ending in a neat summary, the encounter may end with a question, a rupture, or a shared silence. This is not disorder. It is a **radical dramaturgy of coexistence**.

🔊 Institutional Silence Is Designed, Not Declared

Framing:
Institutional silence on racism or colonial violence often manifests not through explicit denial, but through the design of participatory processes themselves. In our experience at Platoniq, formats that prioritise neutrality, consensus, and efficiency can sideline the historical and structural conditions shaping participants' voices. This can produce discomfort with naming power, a tendency to smooth conflict, and limited recognition of experiential knowledge, grief, or anger as legitimate contributions. As highlighted in Dayo Eseonu's webinar *Navigating Institutional Silence*, such silences are often maintained through subtle tactics (inaction, minimisation, deflection, or the policing of reactions) rather than overt exclusion. Designing just deliberative spaces therefore requires making these dynamics visible and creating conditions where historically marginalised experiences can be acknowledged as part of the democratic process.

👉🏽 **Ask:** What is not being said; and how is silence being maintained?

Dramaturgical Implication:
This requires designing spaces where difficult knowledge can surface without being neutralised or prematurely resolved. Facilitators must be prepared to hold tension, name power, and allow expressions of grief, anger, or historical memory to remain present within the process. This may involve slowing down moments of deliberation, creating protected spaces for testimony, and resisting the pressure to immediately translate all contributions into consensus or policy language. It also means recognising and interrupting silencing tactics as they emerge in real time. In this way, deliberation shifts from smoothing conflict to engaging with it, allowing silence to be broken not only through speech, but through recognition, presence, and collective witnessing.

🛑Veto as Refusal and Protection

Veto is not disruption. It is **protection**.

In processes involving racial, colonial, and gendered harm, veto power functions as a **boundary-setting tool** that prioritises safety over flow, and truth over consensus. It allows participants, especially those from historically marginalised communities, to **interrupt, halt, or reshape processes** that reproduce extraction, misrecognition, or symbolic violence.

More than a procedural right, veto is a **relational and epistemic practice**. It enables participants to refuse narration under pressure, protect their testimonies, or withdraw from spaces that feel unsafe or voyeuristic. It honours the **right to opacity** (Glissant) and aligns with feminist ethics of care, where autonomy includes the right to **not be seen, not be explained, and not continue**.

However, translating veto into **digital participatory platforms such as Decidim remains challenging**. These environments are often designed for **continuity, traceability, and contribution**, not for interruption, withdrawal, or refusal. There is rarely a direct equivalent of stopping a process or signalling harm in a way that meaningfully reshapes participation.

👉🏾 **Ask:**

- What happens if someone says “I won’t continue”?
- Are there **safe off-ramps, pauses, or protection zones**, both offline and online?
- Can this space sustain **political and emotional refusal without collapse**?

Dramaturgical Implication: Integrating veto power transforms the facilitator’s role: from guiding flow to **protecting thresholds**. It requires designing for interruption where silence, withdrawal, or refusal are not breakdowns but valid outcomes.

Facilitators must unlearn the reflex to smooth tension. Instead, they must become attuned to discomfort as a signal, not a threat. This means building structural off-ramps into the process: check-in pauses, anonymous exits, and shared agreements that affirm the right not to speak, not to agree, not to continue.

Veto power reveals whether a space is truly relational. If refusal is punished through exclusion, guilt, or erasure, then the space was never safe.

In reparative and decolonial processes, veto is dramaturgical care. It protects participants’ narratives from extraction and performs trust by **not demanding performance**. The rhythm of the session must be elastic enough to hold these refusals with dignity.

🔧 Enabling Digital Veto

While Decidim does not include a formal “veto” function, elements of veto can be **assembled through facilitation and configuration choices**, allowing refusal to become actionable within the platform:

Veto Function	Decidim Translation	Facilitation Role
Pause / Interrupt the process	Temporarily closing or freezing comment threads, assemblies, or proposal phases	**Recognise harm or tension and legitimise interruption** as necessary
Withdraw participation	Editing, deleting, or anonymising contributions	Support participants’ right to retract without penalty
Protect from harm	Moderation tools to flag, hide, or remove harmful content	Use moderation as care and protection, **not control**
Create safe boundaries	Closed assemblies, restricted spaces, or invitation-only groups	Design protected environments where exposure is reduced
Signal refusal or discomfort	Comments, reactions, or facilitator-triggered pauses	Make refusal visible and acknowledged, not absorbed

Slow down or delay decisions	Reopening consultations, extending timelines, or pausing decision phases	Use time as a protective mechanism, not just a constraint
Step out of the process	Allowing disengagement without losing access or legitimacy	Ensure off-ramps are safe and non-punitive
Disappear temporarily (care-based veto)	Ability to step back without activity tracking pressure, maintain access without active participation	Recognise withdrawal as care, especially in mental health contexts
Spaces for healing and repair	Dedicated assemblies with restricted access for reflection, support, or decompression	Facilitate care-centered spaces separate from decision pressure
Anonymous ethical escalation	Anonymous channels or “ethical forum” spaces to report harm or signal concerns	Hold a trusted, accountable space for unresolved tensions and protection needs

🧠Physical vs. Cognitive Ableism in Participatory Processes

From a **democratic capabilities perspective**, these dynamics are decisive. If participatory environments privilege only certain **bodies, speeds, and communicative norms**, then capabilities such as **political voice, dignity, and collective care** will develop unevenly. Participation may appear inclusive on the surface, while systematically excluding those who cannot conform to dominant temporal or cognitive expectations.

This raises a critical shift in perspective. The question is not only **who is present**, but under what conditions participants are able to **remain, express, and influence outcomes**. This includes the often overlooked question of **platform accessibility**: whether digital environments are navigable, readable, and usable across different abilities, literacy levels, devices, and connectivity conditions. Barriers such as complex interfaces, text-heavy formats, or inaccessible design can reproduce exclusion just as strongly as physical constraints. As Parry suggests, capabilities emerge through the **relational design of the space**, not from individual capacity alone.

Addressing ableism in participatory processes therefore requires more than accessibility adjustments. It calls for a reconfiguration of deliberation itself as a **plural, embodied, and paced practice**, where different forms of expression, attention, and presence are recognised as legitimate. This includes valuing **slowness, silence, repetition, performance, and withdrawal** as meaningful modes of participation.

It also requires aligning facilitation and digital infrastructure with these principles. Tools such as **asynchronous assemblies** allow participation to unfold across different rhythms, while mechanisms like the **Time Footprint tool** can make visible the uneven distribution of effort without penalising those who engage intermittently or withdraw for care. Together, these approaches help ensure that participation does not reward only those who can sustain **continuous, high-intensity engagement**, but supports more **equitable and sustainable forms of democratic presence**, both offline and online.

Addressing ableism therefore requires more than accessibility adjustments. It calls for rethinking deliberation as a **plural, embodied, and relational practice**, where participation unfolds across modalities, and where time, fatigue, and attention are recognised as unevenly distributed.

👉🏾 **Ask:** Whose bodies, rhythms, and ways of knowing are being centred or excluded in this space?

Dramaturgical implication:
Ableism is not only a matter of access but of how participation is staged. The dramaturgy of a participatory process determines which forms of presence, expression, and attention are possible. This includes how time is structured, how speaking turns are organised, and which modalities of communication are legitimised.

Designing against ableism requires expanding the repertoire of participation beyond verbal and cognitive dominance. This may involve integrating multiple forms of expression, allowing contributions through movement, image, sound, or silence, and recognising that participation unfolds at different speeds and intensities. It also requires building temporal flexibility into the process, acknowledging fatigue, and creating conditions where participants can step in and out without penalty. Facilitators must become attentive to how exclusion operates not only through physical barriers but through expectations of coherence, speed, and articulation. A space that values only certain forms of expression risks reproducing epistemic hierarchies even when access is formally open.

This reflection draws on insights emerging from the interview with Lucy J. Parry, as well as exchanges with practitioners such as Katy Rubin and the Lisbon-based performance "Reunião" team, a legislative theatre adaptation developed around disability rights within the INSPIRE project.

⚖️Facilitation Is Power

Framing:
Facilitation is never neutral. It shapes the **conditions of speech**, the **rules of engagement**, and the **rhythms of listening**, both in physical and **digital spaces**. In online environments, this power extends through **interfaces, moderation tools, platform design, and ordering systems** that structure who is seen, heard, and responded to.

Facilitators, whether in the room or behind the screen, decide **who gets to speak, for how long, in what language, in what tone, and through which channel**. They can interrupt, translate, reframe, redirect, moderate, or remain silent. In digital contexts, this also includes **highlighting contributions, curating visibility, managing threads, or filtering content**. Every one of these acts is political.

To engage in **decolonial, justice-oriented facilitation** is to name this power and work to **redistribute it**. It means recognising one's positionality, especially when operating from institutions, academia, or the Global North, and actively countering the biases embedded not only in oneself, but also in the **tools and platforms being used**.

This is not neutral moderation. It is **ethical responsibility, accountability, and transformation in practice**. It requires learning to hear **refusal, silence, delay, and dissonance**, including low participation or disengagement online, as forms of **political expression**, not failure.

👉🏾 **Ask:** *How is power circulating in this room and through this platform?*

Dramaturgical Implication:
In the dramaturgy of any participatory space, the facilitator holds the script, even when they claim not to. In digital environments, this script is co-written with the platform, through **timelines, notifications, turn-taking mechanisms, and visibility hierarchies**.

Every decision, **where attention is directed, how time is structured, which contributions are amplified, and which are left unseen**, shapes the emotional and political tone of the space. A facilitator committed to decolonial practice must treat both **the room and the interface as sites of intervention**.

This may mean **pausing or reconfiguring a process mid-way**, resisting the pressure for speed or consensus, or refusing to smooth over conflict when harm is named. It may also mean **slowing down digital exchanges**, creating alternative channels of expression, or making invisible contributions visible.

It always means being attentive to **who is watching whom, who feels safe, who is being ignored, and who is shrinking to fit**, whether on stage, in the room, or on the platform.

This is not performance management.
It is **relational justice in real time, across both physical and digital spaces**.

Methodological Boundaries, Transitions and Safeguards for Psychodrama → Sociodrama → Legislative Theatre

Within the INSPIRE project, drama-based methodologies such as sociodrama and legislative theatre have been explored across different participatory contexts, including legislative theatre processes in the West Midlands, Lisbon, and Warsaw, and sociodrama practices in Hungary. These experiences demonstrate their relevance as tools for expanding how participants express lived experience, engage with structural issues, and contribute to democratic dialogue.

This section clarifies methodological distinctions, facilitator roles, training requirements, spatial configurations, and handover protocols between **psychodrama**, **sociodrama**, and **legislative theatre**, in order to prevent ethical slippage, methodological confusion, and extractive participation.

All three methods draw historically from the work of **Jacob L. Moreno** and **Augusto Boal**, but operate at **different levels of subjectivity, power, and institutional engagement**.

Methodological differentiation (who/what is the protagonist)

Dimension	**Psychodrama**	**Sociodrama**	**Legislative Theatre**
Core unit	Individual	Group / society	Institutionally situated conflict
Protagonist	One person	A social role or situation	A structurally produced injustice
Primary aim	Healing, integration	Collective understanding	Policy and normative change
Emotional exposure	Very high	Medium–high	Instrumental
Publicness	Closed	Semi-public	Public
Institutional link	None	Optional	Required

Psychodrama → works *through* the individual
Sociodrama → works *with* social roles
Legislative theatre → works *against and with* institutions

Facilitator role and authority (what kind of power is exercised)

Aspect	**Psychodrama**	**Sociodrama**	**Legislative Theatre**
Facilitator stance	Clinical containment	Process guardian	Political mediator

Visibility of power	Minimized	Low but present	Explicit and named
Intervention style	Therapeutic	Relational and reflective	Directive and translational
Key risk	Retraumatisation	Emotional spillover	Tokenisation

Facilitation authority shifts as follows:
care-holding → relational containment → political accountability

Training and qualification requirements (non-negotiable)

Method	Training threshold	Why it matters
Psychodrama	Certified, multi-year clinical training + supervision	High emotional risk, therapeutic exposure
Sociodrama	Advanced group facilitation + power & intersectionality training	Collective affect, social conflict
Legislative Theatre	Theatre of the Oppressed lineage + policy literacy	Risk of institutional capture or symbolic participation

Digital Integration: Decidim and Complementary Infrastructures

Hybrid deliberative processes combine embodied participatory methods with digital infrastructures that extend dialogue over time. However, the integration of platforms such as **Decidim** must respect the **ethical status of each participatory phase**. Not every moment of a democratic process should be digitised. Some phases are designed for personal exploration, relational trust, or collective reflection rather than public documentation or decision-making.

For this reason, INSPIRE distinguishes between three methodological stages, each with different implications for digital integration.

Ethical Integration of Digital Platforms Across Participatory Phases

Participatory Phase	Method	Primary Purpose	Role of Digital Tools	Decidim Features and Modules	What Must Not Be Digitised
Care and Trust Building	Psychodrama	Personal exploration, emotional recognition,	Digital tools support only logistical coordination	Event announcements, agenda sharing, participant registration	Personal narratives, emotional exposure,

		relational trust			recordings or transcripts
Collective Reflection	Sociodrama	Identifying shared experiences, structural roles and social dynamics	Digital tools help preserve collective learning without formalising claims	Debate spaces, collaborative notes, thematic tagging, anonymous reflections	Attribution of sensitive experiences, policy proposals, voting mechanisms
Democratic Articulation	Legislative Theatre	Transforming lived experience into public issues and policy proposals	Digital platform becomes part of democratic infrastructure	**Proposals module**, structured deliberation threads, prioritisation tools (voting or sorting), tie-tracker features to identify convergence, anonymity options where needed	Personal testimonies exposing vulnerable participants
Collective Contribution and Participation Work	Hybrid participatory activities	Recognising the work invested by participants in deliberative processes	Digital tools track contributions and enable reflection on participatory labour	**Time Footprint Tool module** allowing participants to start, pause and stop time spent on activities, record milestones, and document contributions; activity dashboards showing total time dedicated by participants	Quantification that erases relational or invisible labour

Institutional Follow-up and Democratic Afterlife	Policy monitoring and civic accountability	Tracking commitments and institutional responses	Digital platform functions as democratic memory and monitoring infrastructure	**Accountability module**, policy trackers linking proposals to institutional actions, social contract commitments, incentive badges recognising sustained participation, implementation dashboards	Archiving materials that violate earlier ethical boundaries

This sequencing reflects a core ethical principle: **digital infrastructures should support democratic processes without exposing participants to unintended political or reputational risks**.

Core Rule

> **What is not ethically public offline must not become public online.**

Digital platforms function as **archives with long political afterlives**. Content shared in participatory processes may later circulate beyond the original context, be reinterpreted by institutions, or remain searchable for years. Ethical facilitation therefore requires careful judgement about **what becomes part of the digital record**.

Methodological Red Lines

While hybrid participation opens powerful possibilities, certain practices undermine both ethical integrity and democratic quality. The following principles emerged across INSPIRE pilots as **methodological red lines**.

What Not To Do in Hybrid Participatory Processes

Red Line	Why It Matters
❌ **Do not conflate participatory methods simply because they use similar techniques** (e.g., enactment or role play)	Similar formats can have very different ethical conditions and purposes
❌ **Do not open personal trauma within participatory governance spaces**	Participation is not therapy; facilitators are not clinicians
❌ **Do not digitise emotional exposure**	Digital platforms create durable archives that can reproduce vulnerability
❌ **Do not rush from care to claims**	Moving from personal sharing to political demands requires collective consent and readiness

❌ **Do not claim facilitator neutrality**	Power is always exercised in participatory processes; ethical practice requires making this visible
❌ **Do not involve institutions too early or too late**	Timing affects trust, feasibility, and the authenticity of participants' voices
❌ **Do not end the process without an afterlife**	Participation without follow-up risks becoming extractive rather than transformative

🌮🎭➜💻 Activity 1: From Bodies to Platforms Lab *(Embodied Political UX → Platform Co-Design → Symbolic Translation)*

🎯 Objective

This activity introduces an embodied approach to political user experience, where participants first experience participation through the body and then translate these insights into concrete platform design decisions, ensuring that digital infrastructures reflect lived realities rather than abstract assumptions. The second step translates embodied experiences of participation into **design decisions for digital democratic infrastructures**, ensuring that platforms like Decidim reflect how participation is **felt, blocked, enabled, or distorted** in real contexts.

This activity builds on INSPIRE pilots and the Lisbon consortium exercise, transforming bodily awareness into:

- platform design requirements
- narrative artefacts (stories)
- symbolic roles

Platform design becomes participatory

Not:
❌ designers decide

But:
✅ participants **co-design interaction conditions**

🧬 Genealogy & Practice Anchor

- INSPIRE pilots
- Political UX (D4.1): platforms as **felt infrastructures**
- Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal): body as site of political knowledge

🧭 Narrative Intention

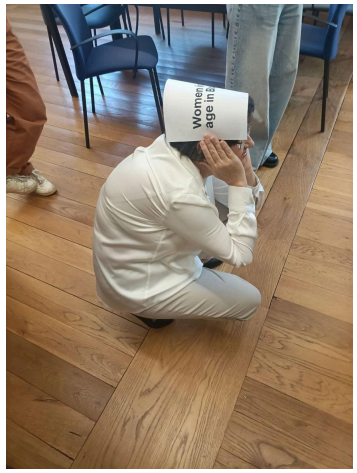
This activity starts from a core premise:

> Democracy is first experienced through the body, and only later translated into platforms.

Participants embody roles and interactions to surface:

- proximity / exclusion
- visibility / invisibility
- flow / blockage

👉 This ensures that digital participation is not abstract, but **grounded in lived, sensed experience**.





⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: From Bodies to Platforms Lab

Phase	🎭 Facilitation Steps	💻 Decidim / Design Translation	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Embodied Entry (Roles in Motion)	Pilot leads or process designers act first → embody their roles. 1 → Youth worker in Birmingham proposes a change. 2 → Disabled actor in Lisbon reimagines expression. 3 → Ukrainian mother in Poland explains her policy proposal. 4 → Young man in Prague challenges stereotypes. 5 → Intercultural woman in Ireland mediates communities. 6 → Siver age worker in Bulgaria	No platform yet → pure embodied sensing	**“This room is our platform: each body a node in democracy.”** “Where are you in this space?” “Who is near or far from you?”	Allow observation instead of movement

	joins a co-designed assembly. 7 → Resident in Budapest reports unsafe housing.). Move in space.			
2. Mapping Inclusion / Exclusion	Other partners join as platform actors → extend the choreography. 8 → Online facilitator keeps debate balanced. 9 → Policy maker joins → redirects priorities. 10 → Observer reflects Participants cluster based on how visible/included they feel.	Translate into **UX insight**: access, visibility, barriers	"Where does participation feel blocked?" "Who is invisible?" Group yourselves → by how seen → or invisible → you feel in democratic spaces. **Closer** → means more included. **Further** → means more excluded. What map of participation → are we drawing with our bodies?	Use distance, gesture instead of speech

3. Gestures of Participation	Groups create gestures representing how they participate (propose, observe, excluded…). Speak → Listen → Protest → Propose → Other… You have 30 seconds → Perform together.	Translate into **interaction types**: propose, comment, observe, blocked	"How do you participate?"	Allow symbolic gestures instead of explanation
4. Building the Platform (Embodied UX)	Participants connect gestures into a living system (flows, breaks, dependencies).	Identify **platform flows**: where participation moves or stops	"Where does participation flow?" "Where does it break?"	Facilitator maps flows visually
5. 🔧 Platform Design Decision (NEW CRUCIAL STEP)	Pause. Translate embodied insights into platform choices.	🏛️ Define Decidim configuration: • anonymity vs visibility • comments vs no comments • moderation style • access barriers	"What would this platform need to change?" "Who must be protected?" "Who must be visible?"	Provide simple design options (cards or choices)

6. Narrative Capture (Bridge to Enriched Story)	Participants identify a key moment from the exercise and narrate it.	📝 Becomes **Enriched Story input**	“What moment revealed something important?”	Allow drawing or short phrases
7. Symbolic Translation (Bridge to **legislative Tarot**. See exercise in this playbook)	Participants transform roles into archetypes	🃏 Cards later published as proposals	“Who are you in this system?” “What archetype emerges?”	Use metaphor instead of text
8. Upload & Traceability	Stories + archetypes uploaded (facilitated)	📝 Proposals (Stories + Cards) 🏷️ Tagged by role, barrier, flow	“How should this live online?”	Allow anonymity, facilitator support

Building on the embodied insights generated through the *From Bodies to Platforms Lab*, the table below structures a **collective decision-making process** through which participants translate their lived experience of participation into concrete design choices. Rather than assuming a neutral or predefined digital environment, the platform is treated as a **political space that must be co-designed**, where questions of visibility, expression, pace, care, and access are openly negotiated. Each dimension invites participants to reflect on how participation felt in the room (where it flowed, where it broke, who was visible or excluded) and to collectively decide how these conditions should be configured in Decidim. In doing so, the table operates as a bridge between embodied political user experience and the technical architecture of participation, ensuring that the resulting digital space reflects the diversity, tensions, and needs surfaced through the INSPIRE pilots.

Design Dimension	🎭 Input from Embodied Exercise	💬 Collective Deliberation Prompts	🗳️ Decision Options (to choose from)	💻 Decidim Configuration Outcome	🧠 Political UX Impact
Visibility vs Anonymity	Who felt exposed? Who stayed invisible?	“Who needs protection to participate?” “When does visibility become risk?”	• Full anonymity • Pseudonymity • Full visibility	Enable anonymous proposals/comments OR require login identity	Redistributes safety and voice (especially for marginalised groups)
Expression Modes	Gestures, silence, non-verbal participation	“How did people express themselves beyond speech?”	• Text only • Text + media • Media-first (image/audio)	Allow attachments (audio, image), enable rich content	Expands participation beyond verbal dominance
Interaction Style	Moments of resonance vs interruption	“Do we want debate or witnessing?”	• Open debate threads •Comment-only (no debate) •Reaction-based (light interaction)	Activate debates OR limit to comments/reactions	Shapes tone: conflict vs care vs reflection

Pace of Participation	Fast vs slow engagement in the room	“Who needed more time?” “What felt rushed?”	• Real-time engagement • Time-delayed phases • Always-open asynchronous	Configure deadlines, staged processes, open threads	Introduces temporal justice (slow participation)
Access & Entry Barriers	Who could not enter or connect?	“What prevented participation?”	• Open access • Moderated entry •Invitation-based	Configure access permissions, assemblies visibility	Determines inclusion/exclusion thresholds
Moderation & Care	Where tension emerged	“Who holds care in this space?”	• Facilitator-led moderation • Community moderation • Minimal moderation	Assign moderators, define rules	Shapes safety, trust, and accountability
From Story to Action	Stories vs decisions in the exercise	“When should stories become proposals?”	• Direct proposals • Stories first → proposals later	Use proposals immediately OR staged conversion	Avoids premature solutionism

			• No proposals (reflection only)		
Collective Prioritisation	Group clustering / symbolic voting	“How do we choose what matters?”	• Voting (ranking) • Endorsement (soft) • Facilitated selection	Enable voting OR endorsements OR none	Shapes power distribution in decision-making
Traceability & Continuity	Flow from body → story → scene	“Should participants follow their story?”	• Full traceability • Partial • No tracking	Link proposals, timelines, updates	Builds accountability and long-term engagement
Symbolic Layer (Tarot Integration)	Archetypes emerging from roles	“Do we want symbolic interpretation?”	• No symbolic layer • Optional • Integrated (Tarot)	Enable card-based proposals / sortition flows	Enables non-rational, imaginative participation

🎮🏛️Activity 2: Decidim the Game. Migration Policy Lab (Warsaw Edition)

A foundational version of *Decidim the Game* is documented in the D3.2 *Digital Safe(r) Spaces Playbook* and available online; the present activity builds on this framework, as well as insights from the Warsaw pilot, extending it through the integration of embodied, narrative, and political user experience dimensions.

🎯 Objective

To co-design a **participatory policymaking process on migration policies** grounded in lived experience from INSPIRE pilots, and to translate it into a **concrete configuration of Decidim**.

Participants design:

- how participation unfolds across phases
- how different actors (refugees, NGOs, policymakers, residents) engage
- and how an existing platform space must be **transformed to support this process**

🧬 Genealogy & Practice Anchor

- Warsaw INSPIRE pilot and *Decidim the Game* workshop
- Migration policy scenario: inclusion, access, welfare, legal uncertainty
- INSPIRE D4.1: Political User Experience (participation as lived experience)
- Legislative Theatre & Enriched Stories (story → policy)
- From Bodies to Platforms Lab (embodied UX → design)

🧭 Narrative Intention

This activity stages participatory policymaking as a **collective dramaturgy**, where migration policy is not discussed abstractly, but experienced through the perspectives of those affected.

Participants design a process that:

- integrates lived experience (refugees, migrants, communities)

- addresses institutional constraints and responsibilities
- makes visible **who can participate, under what conditions, and with what consequences**

The platform is not treated as a neutral tool, but as a **political infrastructure** that must reflect:

- unequal access (language, legal status, digital barriers)
- trust and safety conditions
- accountability of public authorities

🧭 Starting Bloc Scenario: Migration Policy & Civic Spaces

Context
Since 2022, Poland has hosted a very large population of refugees from Ukraine. While temporary protection and access to work, education, and services have been extended, recent policy changes and draft amendments have introduced new conditions and uncertainties around welfare access, healthcare eligibility, and legal status regularisation.

These changes are expected to affect different groups unevenly and have raised concerns among NGOs, municipalities, and refugee-led organisations about exclusion, administrative barriers, and pressure on local services. At the same time, public opinion is increasingly divided, making migration policy a politically sensitive issue at both national and local levels.

The challenge
Design a participatory policymaking process that brings together:

→ local civil servants and municipal departments
→ representatives of national authorities
→ NGOs and civil society organisations working with refugees
→ members of affected communities, including refugees
→ host communities and residents

The process should aim to:

→ address proposed or ongoing changes to migration-related policies
→ acknowledge differentiated impacts on families, women, undocumented people, and other groups

→ integrate lived experience into policy deliberation
→ strengthen legitimacy, transparency, and institutional accountability

Key uncertainties to consider

→ how to include voices facing language, legal, or digital barriers
→ how to balance institutional constraints with rights and service provision
→ how to ensure follow-up and accountability after participation ends

This scenario invites participants to design **intersectional, high-stakes participatory policymaking** under conditions of political and social uncertainty.

💡 How to introduce the shift scenario

→ Read the scenario aloud to the room (2–3 minutes)
→ Invite participants to imagine themselves as different actors within it
→ Ask them to note key stakeholders, tensions, and uncertainties before starting the game

Scenario in Post-its

What if I, as…
→ a municipal civil servant working on social policy in a Polish city hosting a large number of Ukrainian refugees

Could…
→ initiate a participatory process to rethink how recent changes in migration and welfare policies are implemented locally

With…
→ a hybrid process combining
→ an open **process** to structure the policy timeline
→ targeted **assemblies** with NGOs, refugee representatives, and service providers
→ **meetings** and **participatory events** for dialogue between institutions and communities
→ **proposals**, **debates**, and **pages** to collect, explain, and refine policy options
→ **accountability** tools to track decisions and implementation

So that…
→ affected communities can share lived experiences and concerns
→ NGOs and municipalities can surface unintended consequences of policy changes
→ public authorities can make informed, legitimate, and accountable decisions
→ participation contributes to real policy adjustment rather than symbolic consultation

1️⃣🎭 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Analog Workshop

The game treats participation as a **policy dramaturgy**: a designed sequence of interactions in which different actors enter, speak, deliberate, decide, and exit under unequal conditions of power, access, and recognition.

Rather than focusing on tools, the game invites participants to reflect on the **Political User Experience (PUX)** of participation:

- who feels invited or excluded
- who can navigate the process with ease or difficulty
- whose knowledge is valued
- and who carries the burden of participation at each stage

Each card represents a *moment, role, or device* in this dramaturgy. The canvas becomes a **shared script** that makes visible not only decisions and timelines, but also **power relations, frictions, and responsibilities** between citizens and institutions.

By the end of the game, participants should have designed a **hybrid participatory policy process** that is:

- intersectionally aware
- experientially legible to participants
- institutionally feasible
- and accountable beyond the moment of participation.

Phase	🎭 Facilitation Steps	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Scenario Entry (Migration Context)	Introduce Warsaw migration scenario. Participants take roles (refugee, NGO, policymaker, resident). See *Starting Bloc Scenario: Migration Policy & Civic Spaces* above	🏛️ Process (as policy container)	“Who are you in this migration system?” “What do you need or fear?”	Role cards, allow silent observation
2. Timeline Design	Define phases: explore → collect stories → deliberate → decide → follow-up	🧭 Process phases	“Where does participation begin and end?”	Provide simple timeline template
3. Participatory Spaces	Choose spaces (assemblies, targeted groups, public spaces)	🏛️ Assemblies (e.g. refugee groups, NGOs)	“Which spaces are safe for whom?”	Encourage parallel spaces (not one-size-fits-all)

4. Activities Design	Add activities (stories, proposals, debates, meetings)	📝 Proposals (stories), 💬 Debates, 🗓️ Meetings	“How do people contribute?”	Pair offline → online activities
5. Political UX Check (D4.1)	Identify barriers: language, trust, legal risk, time	🧠 Analytical layer	“Who cannot participate here?” “Why?”	Assign “exclusion observer” role
6. Institutional Commitment	Define where authorities must respond (policy changes, justification)	📊 Accountability component	“When must institutions respond?”	Force at least one binding moment
7. Pitch & Dramaturgical Reading	Present process; reflect on power, frictions, participation experience	📝 Blog / documentation	“Is this process fair and real?”	Use simplified reflection lenses
9. Dramaturgical Reading of the Process	The Senior Facilitator (SF) leads a structured reflection, reading	If an act is missing, participation risks becoming	“Where does the process open?”	Use visual mapping (timeline, actors, flows) instead of abstract discussion

Following the group presentations, a Senior Facilitator leads a dramaturgical reading of each process, shifting the focus from technical design to the lived experience of participation. This moment makes visible the narrative structure, frictions, and power dynamics embedded in each proposal.	each designed process as a **policy dramaturgy**, shifting from description → interpretation.	**symbolic or extractive**	“Where does tension or deliberation emerge?” “Where is the decision made?” “What happens after participation ends?”	

🔻 Transition to Digital Workshop

The insights generated through this dramaturgical reading directly inform the digital transition workshop, where identified gaps, frictions, and power imbalances are translated into concrete platform design and configuration decisions.

2️⃣💻 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Digital Transition Workshop *(From Game → Decidim Configuration & Deployment)*

Phase	🎭➜💻 Facilitation Steps	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Process Translation	Take the designed timeline and translate it into structured phases.	🧭 **Process creation (phases)**	“What are the phases of your process?”	Provide pre-filled templates
2. Spaces Configuration	Map participatory spaces into Decidim structures.	🏛️ **Assemblies / Processes / Conferences**	“Which spaces need protection?” “Which are public?”	Offer example configurations
3. Activities Mapping	Translate activities into platform components.	📝 Proposals (stories), 💬 Debates, 🗓️ Meetings, 📊 Voting	“How do people contribute online?”	Match offline → online equivalents

4. Inclusion & Safety Design	Decide on anonymity, access, moderation.	🔐 Permissions, moderation roles	“Who needs protection?” “What risks exist?”	Provide decision options (cards or checklist)
5. Interaction Style Calibration	Define tone: debate vs reflection vs symbolic participation.	💬 Comments / Debates / reactions	“Do we want argument or resonance?”	Show examples of each mode
6. Accountability & Decision Points	Define where institutions must act.	📊 Accountability component	“When must institutions respond?”	Ensure at least one binding step
7. Linking Narrative & Symbolic Layers	Integrate outputs from other activities.	📝 Story proposals 🃏 Tarot cards (proposals + sortition)	“How do stories and archetypes enter the process?”	Provide linking examples
8. Platform Transformation (Deployment)	Apply changes to an existing or test Decidim space.	⚙️ Real configuration (live or sandbox)	“What changes now, concretely?”	Facilitator + tech support

9. Final UX Reflection (D4.1)	Reflect on differences between imagined and configured participation.	🧠 Analytical layer	“Who is still excluded?” “What changed through the platform?”	Use comparison (before/after)

Activity 3: 🎴Embodied History Workshops

🧬 Genealogy & Practice Anchor

- Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: body as a site of critical reflection.
- Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*: enactment as consciousness-raising.
- Black feminist thought (Audre Lorde, bell hooks): the body as an epistemic and political subject.
- Migrant memory work and counter-archiving (e.g. Saidiya Hartman's *critical fabulation*).
- Decolonial pedagogies centering somatic knowledge and collective memory (Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones).

Narrative Intention / Democratic Purpose
To engage the body as an archive of memory, exclusion, resistance, and survival.
Participants collectively re-enact moments of historical or personal oppression, reclaiming agency by embodying alternative actions or outcomes.
By using movement, gesture, and space, rather than debate or narration, participants surface political truths that are often silenced in traditional deliberation.

Transforms:
→ Abstract history → situated embodiment
→ Speech-based deliberation → embodied knowledge
→ Trauma invisibility → shared recognition

Dramaturgical Implication
Shifts the deliberative register from verbal to corporeal. Makes room for collective witnessing, bodily truth-telling, and somatic agency.
Embodied workshops also decentralize verbal dominance and allow for neurodivergent, affective, or non-linear participation.

Digital Deliberation Space (Decidim or equivalent)

Embodied History Workshops are extended into a hybrid interpretive and translation space, where embodied experiences are not only documented but collectively interpreted, contested, and translated into structural and political insights through the platform.

- Upload gesture-based testimonies as video, GIFs, audio, or poetic reflection.
- Annotate embodied scenes with values, policies, or collective learnings.

- Enable asynchronous re-interpretation of movements and responses via video archive or forum.
- Use interactive maps or timelines to situate the body in political geography.

Capabilities Activated

🧍‍♀️ Bodily & Relational Agency 🌀Temporal Agency (linking past and present through re-enactment) ⚖️ Conflict Navigation 💠 Structural Recognition (surfacing embodied impact of policies or exclusions)

🎭 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Embodied History Workshops

(With Digital Deliberation Space/ Platform Facilitation)

Dramaturgical Phase	Facilitation Steps & Description	Prompts for Participants	Unblockers / Adjustments	Digital Deliberation Space/ Platform Activity
1. Grounding & Safety Ritual	Begin with collective grounding: breathwork, body scan, gesture mirroring. Co-create group agreement on non-judgment, opt-outs, emotional safety. Frame the body as archive.	“What part of your body feels most present today? ” “What is one gesture of refusal you’ve used in real life?”	Participation includes witnessing. Allow seated/imagined movement.	Platform team uploads grounding agreements and a short audio or video prompt for async participants. Create Decidim “entrance room” with reflection board.

2. Personal Memory Mapping	Participants recall a moment of felt injustice or social exclusion. They map where in the body it was registered. Use gesture, drawings, or posture. Share in pairs or triads.	“Where did that experience land in your body?” “What movement might speak that truth without words?”	Allow fictional/inherited memories. Opt-in levels of disclosure.	Participants can upload anonymized maps or symbolic drawings. Platform team opens a tagging flow: “Where does injustice live in the body?”
3. Collective Scene-Building	Groups co-create scenes of oppression (e.g. border, eviction, silence). First as it happened, then with empowered re-staging. Focus on gesture and relation.	“Where is power in this scene?” “What gesture interrupts injustice?” “Who becomes visible in the revision?”	Allow multimodal expression. Observers can contribute atmospheres.	Record or document the scenes (with consent). Upload audio/visual snippets and enable annotations. Async participants can respond with parallel re-enactments or reflections.

4. Reflection & Naming	Group pauses. No immediate discussion. Participants name sensations, values, or policies surfaced. Collective harvesting of insights.	“What truth was spoken by the body?” “What does this scene teach us about power?” “What changed in the revision?”	Drawing or journaling as alternatives. Visual documentation of harvest.	Upload harvested values and insights to a Decidim board tagged by theme (e.g. “Visibility,” “Refusal,” “Reparation”). Allow reactions and additions by online group.
5. Return & Archiving	Symbolic exit: exhale, slow walk, silent circle. Invite participants to name or gesture what they will carry forward.	“What one gesture will you carry from this?” “What needs to be remembered, and by whom?”	Anonymous contributions welcome. Include emotional opt-out.	Gestures, scenes, drawings, and reflections are not simply stored, but organised into a **searchable and evolving memory system**. Each contribution is **Tagged** across multiple dimensions: ○ bodily experience (e.g. tension, restriction, expansion) ○ type of experience (exclusion, care, resistance, ambiguity) ○ structural reference (e.g. migration regime, labour system, education, policing)

				○ values expressed (e.g. dignity, refusal, safety, recognition) ● **Multimodal** (video, audio, image, text), preserving non-verbal knowledge ● **Contextualised** in time and process (linked to workshop phase, group, or iteration) 👉 This enables participants to **navigate embodied knowledge as a collective archive of political experience**, rather than isolated testimonies.

🔗 How This Activity Advances Democratic Capability

This exercise activates democratic capability by recognising the body as a site of political knowledge, interpretation, and collective inquiry. Through embodied re-enactment, participants surface forms of exclusion, control, and resistance that are often inaccessible to speech-based deliberation.

Community emerges not through verbal consensus, but through shared witnessing and the capacity to interpret embodied experiences across difference. By translating gestures, sensations, and scenes into collectively tagged and discussed insights through Decidim, participants move from individual experience to shared structural understanding.

The platform enables asynchronous re-interpretation, layering multiple readings of the same scene, and connecting embodied experiences to institutions, values, and recurring patterns. In doing so, the exercise strengthens epistemic justice and structural recognition, while opening pathways from embodied memory to collective claims and political action.

Activity 4: Contested Territories Lab (based on Eco-Storywalks)

🧬 Genealogy & Practice Anchor

- Rooted in *Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's* view of democracy as an ecological relationship, grounded in land-based knowledge and relational accountability.
- Informed by *feminist geography*, *decolonial walking methods*, and *diasporic storytelling*.
- Draws on *eco-somatic pedagogy* and practices of *territorial care* among migrant and Indigenous communities.
- Related to dérive practices, emotional mapping, and collective counter-mapping.

🧭 Narrative Intention
This method reframes space as a site of memory, relation, and democratic authorship. Rather than a backdrop, the city or land becomes a political actor. Participants re-root themselves through shared story, sensory presence, and walking dialogue. The activity resists urban erasure and ecological detachment by asserting migrant and racialised presence in contested spaces. Eco-Storywalks are extended into a **hybrid territorial deliberation space**, where digital infrastructures do not merely document stories but enable **layering, contestation, and collective interpretation of place**.

🎭 Dramaturgical Implication:

Eco-Storywalks transform walking from a passive act of transit into a performative method of democratic co-presence. They make **territory legible through feeling**, and surface the **invisible architectures of exclusion**: what places feel safe, remembered, surveilled, or erased.

By anchoring **story to land**, the activity **reclaims spatial agency** for those historically treated as transient, alien, or voiceless. The dramaturgy does not unfold on a stage but across streets, parks, and thresholds where belonging is contested.

Slowness, listening, and shared direction become civic gestures. Silence is part of the score. As the collective map emerges, it does not aim for accuracy, but for **affective truth**, counter-cartographies of how power and care flow through space.

In contexts of migration, racialisation, and ecological loss, this is not just symbolic: it is a **political act of re-rooting**.

INSPIRE Democratic Capability Activated:
🧭 Building Community
Eco-Storywalks activate the capability to **form meaningful social and spatial relationships**, grounding belonging in embodied presence. By

mapping personal histories onto ecological space, participants co-create **shared narratives** that foster **collective identity**, challenge alienation, and **nurture bonds** across difference.

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Eco-Storywalks

Phase	Facilitation Steps	Prompts for Participants	Unblockers & Accessibility	Decidim
1. Grounding in Place	The facilitator opens with a land acknowledgment or community invocation. Invite participants to become attentive to sensory inputs. Frame walking as a relational act. The digital map is not a repository of stories but a contested space where territorial meanings are negotiated, layered, and translated into emerging sites of collective action.	"What do you already feel in this place?" "What story might this land carry?"	Use printed maps, tactile aids, grounding for neurodiversity. Offer grounding exercise for neurodiverse participants.	Upload audio notes or images tagged by GPS; create a shared starting an (awesome) map on Decidim. Participants upload **first impressions** (audio/image/text) Each entry must include: ● a **feeling** (free) ● a **first interpretation tag**: ○ 🟢 Care ○ 🔴 Harm ○ 👁️ Surveillance ○ 🌱 Belonging **Bridge to action**: Each selected "hotspot" generates:

				• a **discussion thread** • a **proposal stub**: ○ “What should change here?” ○ “Who should respond?” 👉 This connects directly to: • proposals • Legislative Theatre scenes • policy dialogue
2. Paired Storywalk	In pairs or small groups, walk in silence for a few minutes. Then, one shares a memory of migration, movement, or belonging. The other listens and collects. Roles switch.	“What place shaped your arrival here?” “Where did you first feel disoriented or at home?” “What smells, textures, or sounds matter to your story?”	Support for non-verbal storytelling (drawing, photos, gestures). Provide phone audio recorders if helpful.	Participants geo-tag their images or sound clips; upload anonymously if desired. **Reflect via Decidim chat threads or forum**.

3. Collective Mapping	Groups return. Stories are visually placed on a shared physical or digital map. The facilitator guides meaning-making: noticing overlaps, tensions, new understandings of "place."	"What surprised you in this story?" "What connection emerged between you and this place?" "What did you re-member?"	Use low-literacy visuals: symbols, colors, threads. Silence is allowed.	Co-build a digital story map: image/audio/prompt per entry. Invite public to browse with filters like "care," "exile," "belonging."
4. Digital Reflection & Revisit (Asynchronous)	After the workshop, participants receive a link to the collective gallery. They can revisit their entry, see others', and leave reflections or additions.	"What still echoes for you from this walk?" "What would you add, weeks later?" "Who else should hear this?"	Allow audio or emoji-based replies. Translate into preferred languages.	Open a time-limited reflective "thread" on Decidim. Allow asynchronous dialogue and community reactions.

🔗 How This Activity Advances Democratic Capability: Building Community

This exercise enables participants (especially those historically excluded) to reclaim public space as a contested and co-interpreted democratic terrain. Through walking and geo-tagged storytelling, personal experiences are anchored to place and translated into shared signals that reveal patterns of care, exclusion, and power. Community is built not through consensus, but through the capacity to remain in relation while encountering difference and disagreement. By layering multiple narratives onto the same locations, participants collectively negotiate meaning, making visible what is shared, contested, or missing.

Through Decidim, the map becomes a living space for asynchronous dialogue, clustering of tensions, and the emergence of priority sites for intervention. In this way, belonging becomes political: lived geographies are transformed into collective knowledge and starting points for action.

Activity 5: Critical Collages of Memory. Policy Traces Lab

🎭 Dramaturgy Card: Critical Collages of Memory

Objective: To visualise how policy shapes lived experience by transforming personal archives into **collective evidence, pattern recognition, and political claims**.
Derived from:

- **Achille Mbembe** – *Critical collage as method for undoing colonial time and space*
- **W.E.B. Du Bois** – *Visual sociology as a radical act: combining aesthetics, data, and counter-memory*
- **Black feminist archives** – *The body, the document, and the photograph as political record*

Democratic Intention / Purpose:
This activity explores how everyday documents (bills, eviction letters, photos, ID cards) hold the **imprint of policy on people's lives**. Participants reassemble them into powerful collective collages that **deconstruct official narratives** and **build counter-archives** of emotion, belonging, and structural violence. By fusing **data and feeling**, it builds *epistemic justice* and *political voice*.

This dramaturgy makes visible the "unofficial histories" of marginalised lives and claims space for **lived data** to shape policy design.

Democratic Capability (INSPIRE):

- **Epistemic Equity and Justice**
- **Democratic Dignity**
- **Political Voice**

Digital Tool (Decidim or similar):

- Upload scanned artefacts and collages to a shared repository
- Create tagged "memory maps" or policy traces
- Enable asynchronous annotation with reflections ("What story does this document hold?")
- Archive with informed consent and optional pseudonymity

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Critical Collages of Memory

Phase	🎭 Facilitation Steps	💬 Prompts	🧩 Unblockers	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	🔄 What This Changes
1. Invitation	Welcome participants. Introduce collage as political method.	“What object holds a truth others don’t see?”	Facilitator models vulnerability.	🏛️ **Assembly space** (main container) 📝 **Blog / Page** → intro video + framing 💬 **Comments enabled** for first reactions	📂 Archive → 🧠 Collective inquiry
2. Gathering Memory	Participants share artefacts.	“What do you see others miss?”	Silence, emotional cards, scanning tools.	📥 **Proposals component (repurposed as “Artefacts”)** Each upload = 1 entry with: • title + description • tags (themes, institutions) • attachments (image/audio) 👤 Optional anonymity	🖼️ Object → 🏛️ Policy evidence
3. Collective Assembly	Participants create collages.	“Where does policy appear?”	Materials + digital canvas.	🖼️ **Proposals (Collages collection)** OR 🧵 **Debates component** for thematic threads 🏷️ **Tags & categories** (housing, migration…) 🔍 Filtering to reveal clusters	🏷️ Tags → 🧠 Pattern system

4. Narrating the Image	Participants explain meaning.	“What truth is visible?”	Voice notes, anonymous options.	💬 **Comments on proposals** (annotations) 🧵 **Debates threads** per collage/theme 👍 Reactions / endorsements ↪️ Replies for counter-readings	🗣️ Narration → ⚡ Contested meaning
5. Harvesting → Claim Formation	Group identifies patterns.	“What repeats?”	Visual mapping.	📊 **Proposals component (new: “Claims”)** 🔗 Link claims to artefact proposals 🗳️ **Voting / prioritisation** enabled 🏷️ Tags = policy areas 📌 Pin top claims in Assembly	💡 Insight → 🏛️ Actionable claims

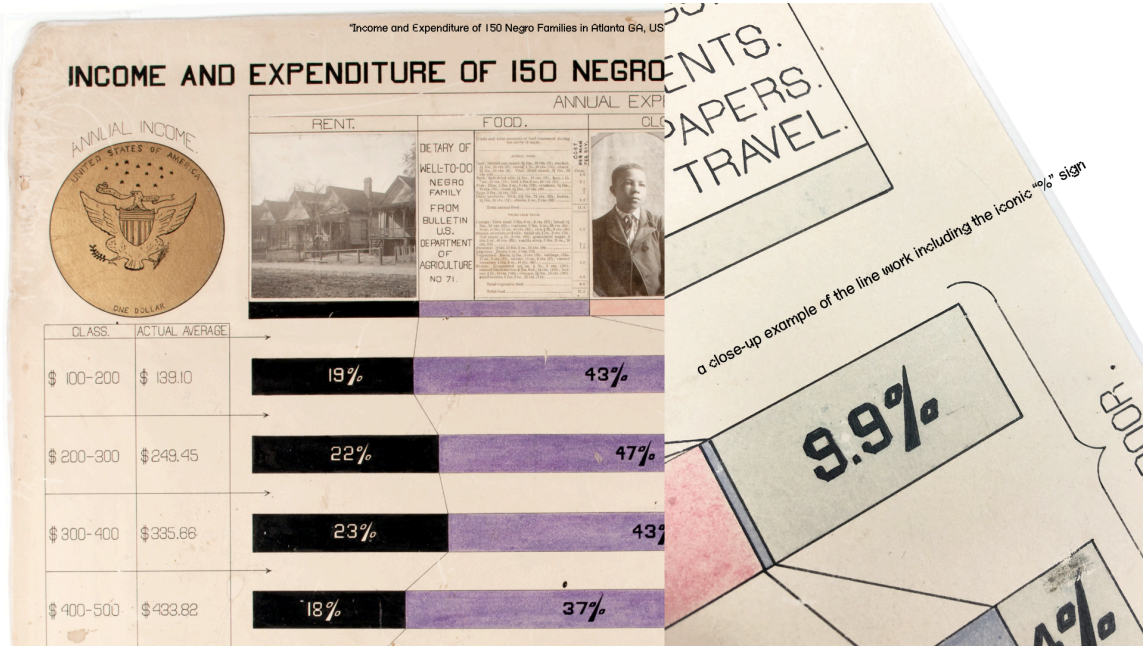
The digital transition in this activity is not a matter of documentation but of **redistributing where interpretation and political articulation occur**. Through Decidim, personal artefacts and collages are transformed into structured, connected, and interpretable units of evidence, enabling participants to collectively identify patterns of exclusion, care, and institutional responsibility.

By supporting tagging, annotation, and clustering, the platform becomes a space for **ongoing sense-making and contestation**, extending the workshop beyond its temporal limits. This process allows lived experience to evolve into shared knowledge and, ultimately, into **prioritised claims and proposals**, ensuring that the outputs of the activity are not only expressive but politically actionable.

🎨 Data as Emotion: Visual Storytelling as Democratic Evidence

We propose this add-on activity as a way to reframe the role of data in democratic participation. If data in democracy is to move beyond abstraction and technocratic representation, it must also account for how people **feel, experience, and embody policy in their everyday lives**. This approach challenges the dominance of purely statistical or textual data by recognising memory, emotion, and narrative as legitimate and necessary forms of democratic evidence. Within the Decidim environment, these elements function as **multimodal evidence inputs**, enabling participants to upload, tag, and interpret diverse forms of expression as part of a shared deliberative process. By connecting images,

sounds, objects, and narratives through common tags and discussion threads, the platform supports the emergence of patterns that would remain invisible in text-based participation alone. This approach expands the epistemic boundaries of participation, allowing affective and embodied knowledge to contribute directly to **collective sense-making and claim formation**.



Why this matters:
Traditional policy data is often abstract, statistical, and dehumanised. This method reclaims **feeling, memory, and narrative** as legitimate forms of data. Inspired by **Du Bois's 1900 Data Portraits**, which visualised Black life with both **rigour and beauty**, this activity treats visual storytelling as a form of **emancipatory documentation**.

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table

Element	🎭 Role in the Activity	📚 Reference / Inspiration	💬 Visualisation for Dialogue	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	🔄 What This Enables
📄 **Personal Document**	Connects policy to lived experience	Audre Lorde	Annotated artefact galleries, image walls	📝 Proposals (artefacts) + attachments 💬 Comments for annotation	🧾 Evidence grounded in lived reality
🎨 **Visual Collage**	Reveals layered and entangled oppressions	Achille Mbembe	Collaborative collages, visual policy zines	📝 Proposals (collages) 🏷️ Tags (themes, institutions)	🧩 Pattern emergence through layering
📷 **Photography / Portrait**	Reclaims representation and dignity	Zanele Muholi, bell hooks	“Wall of dignity”, reaction spaces	🖼️ Media galleries via proposals 💬 Comment threads	👁️ Visibility + recognition across participants
🎨 **Aesthetic Choices**	Encodes affect as knowledge (colour, texture)	W.E.B. Du Bois	Emotional heatmaps, colour-coded narratives	🏷️ Tags + filters 📊 External embeds (Flourish/Datawrapper)	🌡️ Collective sensing of intensity and patterns

🔊 **Sound / Voice Note**	Brings oral and affective testimony	Saidiya Hartman	Audio maps, sound archives	📎 Proposal attachments (audio) 💬 Comments for responses	🗣️ Voice as political evidence
🌍 **Linguistic Diversity**	Validates non-dominant languages	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o	Multilingual artefacts, parallel narratives	🌐 Multilingual interface 💬 Comments in multiple languages	🧠 Epistemic inclusion
🧍 **Body & Spatial Map**	Locates affect in body and territory	Bayo Akomolafe	Body maps, geolocated affect maps	🏷️ Tags (body zones / places) 📝 Proposals linked to location	📍 Embodied experience → spatial evidence
🕰️ **Document Timeline**	Connects personal experience to political time	Du Bois, Barbara Ransby	Lived timelines, policy-life intersections	📝 Sequential proposals or threads 📎 Timeline embeds	⏳ Temporal agency + continuity
🪶 **Symbolic Object**	Encodes metaphor and identity	Gloria Anzaldúa	Digital altars, object galleries	📝 Proposals (object entries) 🗳️ Voting as symbolic selection	🔮 Meaning-making + collective resonance

🕶️ **Anonymous Layering**	Enables safe collective expression	Ruha Benjamin	Graffiti walls, quote storms	💬 Comments (anonymous enabled) 🧵 Debate threads	🛡️ Safety + collective voice

Activity 6 🎭 Enriched Story: A Vision of Oppression to Transform Policy

Objective:
To build scenes of oppression, resistance, and justice from lived experience, not as anecdote, but as political knowledge.
Participants identify a key moment of harm, name its structural force, imagine transformation, and distill symbolic anchors.

🧬 Genealogy & Practice Anchor

- Migrant mothers' self-narration practice in *Diálogos Migrantes. Barcelona* pilot by Platoniq
- Paulo Freire's dialogical pedagogy
- Legislative Theatre methods (Augusto Boal)
- Feminist narrative justice (Sara Ahmed, Patricia Hill Collins)

Democratic Purpose:
This tool restores voice and narrative control to structurally silenced communities. It recognises that **policy begins in story**, and **dignity begins in naming harm**.

Transforms:
extraction → self-definition
testimony → dramaturgy
trauma → strategy
silence → symbolic language

Bridge to Legislative Theatre:
Enriched Stories become the **source material** for Legislative Theatre scenes. The initial "Trigger Scene" often becomes the opening act. Structural forces identified shape the institutional targets. Symbols appear in set, gesture, or dialogue. Justice visions anchor scene transitions.

⏳ **Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Enriched Story**

Phase	Facilitation Steps	Prompts for Participants	Creative Unblockers
1. Grounding	Frame the activity as a tool for political voice, not trauma exposure. Use collective grounding or silence. Invite shared breath or name one thing they carry.	“What experience do you carry today?” “Is there a moment that never left your body?”	Soft soundscape, symbolic object (stone, paper), opt-out cards
2. Trigger Scene	Invite participants to describe a concrete moment of harm: sensory, specific, short. Focus on place, people, and power.	“What happened that made you feel powerless?” “Where were you, and who held control?”	Draw the moment instead of telling it. Choose a colour for the scene.
3. Oppressive Force	Help participants identify the **systemic force** behind the scene, beyond individual conflict.	“Was this just one person, or part of something bigger?” “What structure showed up at that moment?”	Use pre-written cards: racism, borders, care deficit, bureaucracy, etc.
4. Scene of Justice	Ask participants to retell the same scene, but transformed: what would justice look like?	“If the scene happened again, with care, fairness, dignity, what would change?” “What would someone do differently?”	Use gestures: act the difference with your body. Write a short line of dialogue that someone should have said.

5. Emotional Symbol	Invite each participant to find a symbol, image, object, word or gesture that captures their story.	“What object belongs in your story?” “What single word holds it together?” “Is there a gesture that carries this feeling?”	Props, metaphor cards, art materials, music fragment
6. Harvest & Bridge to Theatre	Collect scenes, forces, and symbols. Group and prioritise stories with participants. Choose 1–3 for deepening in Legislative Theatre.	“What themes connect our stories?” “Which stories demand to be heard on stage?”	Collective mapping, clustering by force (racism, housing), symbolic voting with fabric or object

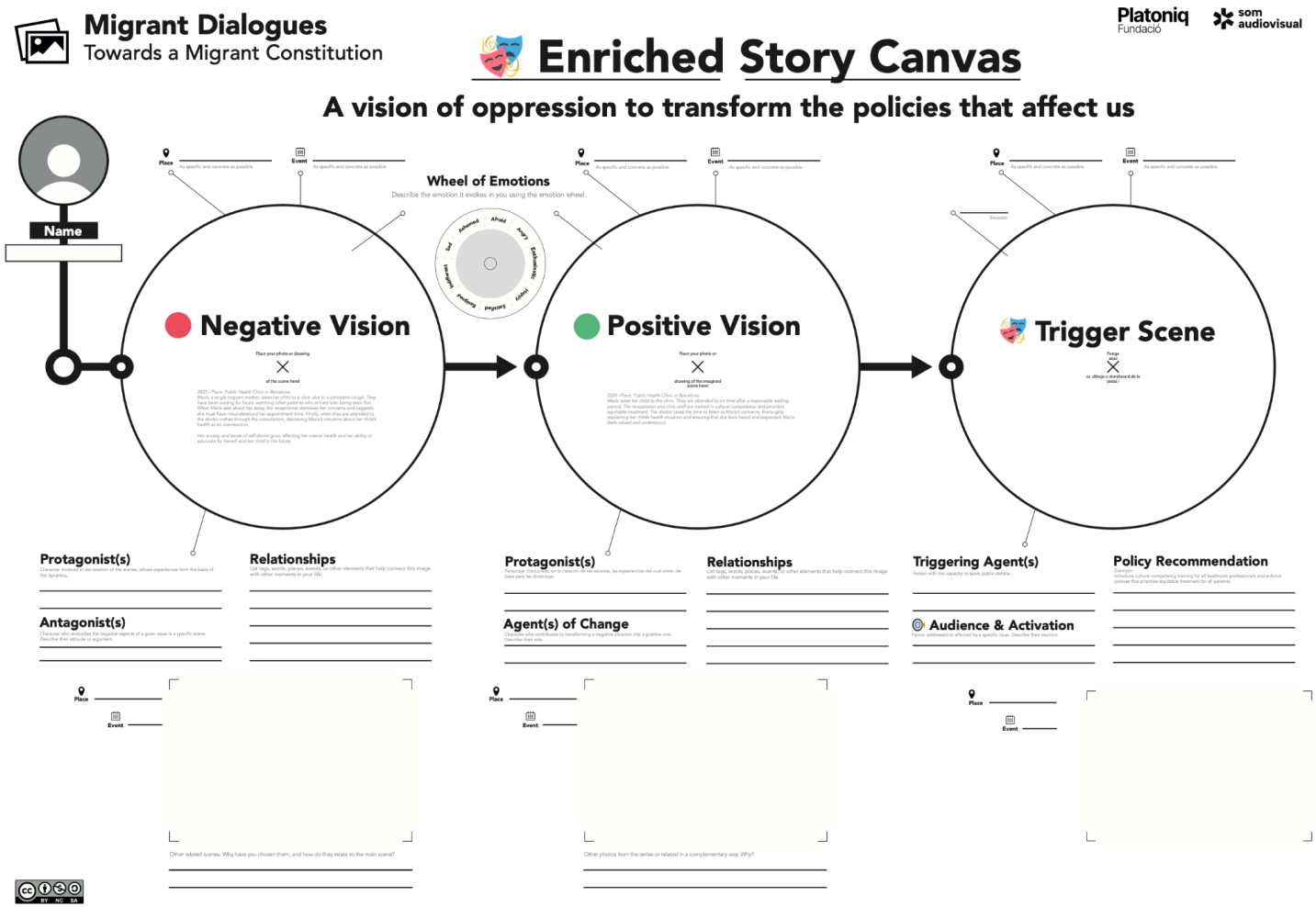
🧵 Outputs for Legislative Theatre

- **Trigger Scenes** → Opening acts
- **Oppressive Forces** → Institutional targets for policy dialogue
- **Justice Visions** → Aspirational scenes to reach or interrupt
- **Symbols** → Props, repeated gestures, scenographic metaphors
- **Participant language** → Dialogue lines or monologues

📚 Theoretical References

- Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*
- Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*
- Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*
- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Emma Goldman, *The Social Significance of the Modern Drama*
- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress*

The Canvas


Migrant Dialogues
Towards a Migrant Constitution
Platoniq Fundació
som audiovisual
Enriched Story Canvas
A vision of oppression to transform the policies that affect us
Name
Wheel of Emotions
Describe the emotion it evokes in you using the emotion wheel.
Negative Vision
Positive Vision
Trigger Scene
Protagonist(s)
Antagonist(s)
Relationships
Protagonist(s)
Agent(s) of Change
Relationships
Triggering Agent(s)
Audience & Activation
Policy Recommendation

Canvas Purpose:
To **identify, narrate, and prioritise** lived experiences of oppression in a way that transforms them into **legitimate political knowledge**.

This activity supports the creation of **Legislative Theatre scenes**, ensuring they are rooted in participant-led narratives, not extracted or invented by facilitators. It strengthens the link between **lived experience, imagination, and institutional accountability**.

🧩 Canvas Sections (Translated & Explained)

1. The Trigger Scene

Prompt:
“What concrete moment revealed the oppression you want to transform?”
Participants describe a specific **scene or situation** that embodies the injustice they faced.

→ *Use in Legislative Theatre:*
Becomes the **trigger scene** in the LT play. Facilitators can dramatise this moment directly.

2. The Oppressive Force

Prompt:
“What structural force was at play?”
Participants name the **underlying system**: racism, patriarchy, borders, bureaucracy, care deficit, housing precarity, etc.

→ *Use in LT:*
Clarifies the **institutional target** of the play and helps avoid focusing on individual conflict.

3. The Scene of Justice

Prompt:
“What would justice look like in this situation?”
Participants **imagine the same situation again**, but this time, with dignity, care, fairness.

→ *Use in LT:*
This becomes the **aspirational scene**, often the “ending” to reach or interrupt during the forum.

4. Emotional Symbols

Prompt:
“What image, object, word or gesture carries your story?”
Participants choose something metaphorical: “a locked door,” “a waiting room with no end,” “a soft voice ignored,” “a document stamped twice.”

→ *Use in LT:*
Used as **props, gestures or scenic metaphors** during the play.

5. Collective Prioritisation

Facilitators harvest multiple Enriched Stories and guide participants to **identify themes or patterns** across them.
Examples: systemic neglect in public services, absence of listening, precarious motherhood.

→ *Use in LT:*
Themes chosen here help define which stories become **core scenes** in the theatre piece.

🌱 Why It Matters

Unlike surveys or direct interviews, this method gives full **narrative and epistemic agency** to participants. They define the problem, name the harm, and **imagine justice** on their own terms.
Used prior to Legislative Theatre, this tool ensures the play is grounded in **experiential truth**, **symbolic clarity**, and **political legitimacy**.

🎭➜💻 Activity Add-on: Publishing Enriched Stories on the platform: From Scene to Proposal

🎯 Objective

To translate Enriched Stories into **traceable, participatory artefacts** within Decidim, ensuring that lived experiences, scenes, and justice visions become **visible, discussable, and actionable inputs** for Legislative Theatre and policy processes.

🧭 Narrative Intention

This add-on ensures that the knowledge produced in Enriched Stories does not remain ephemeral or confined to the workshop space. It creates a **continuity between storytelling, dramaturgy, and institutional engagement**, allowing participants to:

- retain ownership over their narratives
- see their stories evolve into collective political material
- connect lived experience with policy dialogue

Rather than flattening stories into proposals, the process maintains their **multi-layered structure (scene → force → vision → symbol)** while making them legible within participatory infrastructure.

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Publishing Enriched Stories (Digital Bridge)

Phase	🎭 Facilitation Steps	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support

1. Story Structuring	Participants revisit their Enriched Story using the canvas (scene, force, justice, symbol). Facilitator supports clarity without reducing complexity.	📝 Draft template (offline or shared doc) mirroring Decidim structure	“What part of your story must remain intact?” “What do you want others to understand?”	Pair support, allow drawing/audio instead of writing
2. Publishing the Story	Each story is uploaded as a **Proposal** (renamed: “Story”)	📝 **Proposals component (Stories)** Fields: • Trigger Scene • Oppressive Force • Justice Vision • Symbol 📎 Attachments (image/audio/video)	“How do you want your story to be seen?”	Allow anonymity or pseudonyms Offer facilitator upload support
3. Layered Interpretation	Participants and others engage with stories without debate framing	💬 **Comments enabled** 🏷️ Tags (housing, racism, care…)	“What resonates with you?” “What does this reveal beyond the individual case?”	Encourage short responses (word, emoji, metaphor) Avoid “argumentative tone”

4. From Story to Scene Selection	Facilitator and group identify stories to develop into Legislative Theatre	🗳️ **Voting or endorsement** (light use) 📌 Pin selected stories	“Which stories must be brought to the stage?”	Symbolic voting (e.g. tagging or endorsing, not ranking)
5. From Story to Policy Proposals	Translate justice visions into **emerging proposals** (optional second layer)	📝 **Linked Proposals (Policy layer)** 🔗 Connected to original story	“What must change so this story does not repeat?”	Keep language open (principles first, not technical policy)
6. Traceability & Continuity	Maintain link between story → scene → policy	🔗 Cross-linking: Story ↔ Theatre Scene ↔ Proposal 🕰️ Timeline / updates	“Where is your story now in the process?”	Visual mapping of journey (story → stage → policy)

Activity 7: Mirror Rooms (Hybrid Relational Evaluation Space, Physical VS Digital)

A dramaturgical tool for relational reflection.

🎯 Objective

To transform evaluation into a **hybrid, relational, and temporally extended process**, where participants reflect on their emotional and political experience across synchronous and asynchronous spaces. Mirror Rooms enable participants to **witness, reinterpret, and compare their own and others' experiences**, revealing how different participation formats shape expression, silence, and meaning.

Rather than producing feedback, the activity generates **relational traces and evolving interpretations**, supporting a shift from moment-based evaluation to **continuous collective sense-making**.

🧬 Genealogy & Inspiration

- **Black feminist pedagogy** on witnessing and survival (hooks, Lorde)
- **Relational accountability** in Indigenous research (Shawn Wilson, 2008)
- **Temporal slowness** as political ethic (Bayo Akomolafe)
- **Aesthetic co-sensing** and poetic evaluation (Lepecki, 2016)

This activity extends these traditions into a hybrid context, where **digital platforms become sites for temporal layering, reinterpretation, and the redistribution of voice**.

🧭 Narrative Intention / Democratic Purpose

Mirror Rooms interrupt the logic of evaluation as extraction and reposition it as a **distributed, relational, and temporally unfolding democratic practice**. Participants become mirrors for one another: not to assess or validate, but to **hold, reflect, and re-articulate what is lived, felt, or left unsaid**.

By structuring the process across synchronous and asynchronous spaces, the activity makes visible how participation is shaped by **time, interface, and conditions of expression**. What remains unspoken in the immediacy of co-presence may surface later through mediated, asynchronous reflection, allowing for **greater inclusion, safety, and depth**.

Through Decidim, these reflections are not fixed but remain open to reinterpretation, connection, and return. The process does not aim for consensus or closure, but for the cultivation of a **shared capacity to remain in relation across difference, ambiguity, and evolving understanding**.

In this way, Mirror Rooms contribute to democratic practice by shifting evaluation from a tool of measurement to a **space of political user experience**, where participants can perceive and negotiate how meaning, voice, and presence are differently enabled across formats.

Transforms:
✅ Instrumental feedback → Embodied presence
✅ Anxiety of judgment → Shared poetic language
✅ "What did you think?" → "What stayed with you?"

1️⃣🎭 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Analog / Synchronous

Phase	🎭 Facilitation Steps	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Arrival & Sensing	Grounding through breath, sound, slow presence. Frame the space as non-evaluative. Invite participants to connect to a place of belonging or exclusion.	"What part of you arrived today?" "Where do you feel at home in your body?"	Silence allowed. Use objects, images, or music to support entry.
2. Witness Pairs	In pairs, one shares a lived moment of belonging/exclusion. The other mirrors using gesture, word, or metaphor (no analysis).	"Tell me about a moment you didn't feel you belonged." "If it had a texture or colour, what would it be?"	Allow non-verbal responses. Clarify mirroring ≠ interpreting.

3. Group Echo	Collective circle. Participants share fragments (words, gestures, sounds). No discussion. Silence is part of the process.	“What word or image stayed with you?” “Echo something that touched you.”	Use cards, colours, gestures. Affirm silence.
4. Collective Harvest	Participants express insights (draw, speak, write). Focus on patterns without forcing conclusions.	“What patterns of belonging/exclusion are emerging?”	Encourage ambiguity. Avoid analytical pressure.
5. Return & Closure	Closing gesture, breath, silence. Let the space dissolve without synthesis.	“What will you carry from this?”	Offer quiet exit or journaling.

2️⃣💻 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table — Digital / Asynchronous (Decidim)

Phase	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Arrival (Online Entry)	🏛️ Assembly page with grounding audio + agreements 💬 Comment board for check-in	“Where do you feel at home / not at home?” (word, emoji, sound)	Allow anonymous or low-text responses. Multilingual support.

2. Reflection Posts	📝 Proposals or posts: “A place I didn’t belong…” 📎 Attach images/audio if desired	“What stayed with you after the session?”	No pressure for immediacy. Participants can respond later.
3. Echo Threads	💬 Debate thread: “Echoes of belonging/exclusion” Participants respond to others	“Does this resonate with you?” “Have you experienced this differently?”	Enable replies, reactions, anonymity.
4. Pattern Tagging	🏷️ Tags: belonging / exclusion / safety / visibility 🔍 Filtering & clustering of posts	“What patterns do you notice across stories?”	Platform auto-clustering supports pattern recognition.
5. Ongoing Reflection	🕰️ Open thread: “What stayed / what changed?”	“What would you add now, after some time?”	Allow delayed participation and re-entry.

3️⃣🔁 Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Hybrid Return & Comparison

Phase	🎭 + 💻 Facilitation Steps (Comparison)	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Comparing Arrival	Facilitate reflection on differences between entering the physical space and the digital space	“Did you express yourself differently online?” “What was easier to share in each space?”	Use simple comparisons (one word / gesture vs written reflection)

2. Comparing Witnessing	Reflect on pair experience vs asynchronous responses	“What could you not say in the moment?” “What became clearer later?”	Allow participants to refer to their digital posts if helpful
3. Comparing Echoes	Compare group circle vs digital thread responses	“Did new voices appear online?” “Did meanings shift after reading others?”	Highlight contributions from participants who were silent in the room
4. Comparing Patterns	Contrast in-room insights with platform-generated clusters	“What patterns only became visible online?” “What surprised you?”	Visualise clusters (tags/themes) to support reflection
5. Temporal Reflection	Reflect on how understanding evolved over time	“What stayed with you?” “What changed after revisiting the experience?”	Emphasise slowness; allow silence or non-verbal reflection

Activity 8: Hybrid Dreaming Assemblies

🎯 Objective

To slow down deliberation and cultivate **temporal awareness, emotional presence, and speculative agency**, enabling participants to engage in democratic processes beyond urgency, productivity, and immediate articulation.

Dream Assemblies create a space where participants can **sense, imagine, and co-create alternative futures**, allowing meaning to emerge through rhythm, silence, and collective imagination rather than debate.

🧬 Genealogy & Inspiration

- Bayo Akomolafe: slowness and ritual as resistance to acceleration
- Octavia Butler: speculative futures as political imagination
- bell hooks & Audre Lorde: emotional presence and embodied knowledge
- Afrofuturist and decolonial traditions of **collective dreaming as political practice**

Dream Assemblies respond to the acceleration of democratic processes by reintroducing **ritual time, sensory attention, and imagination as forms of political participation**.

🧭 *Narrative Intention / Democratic Purpose*

Dream Assemblies create a **pause inside democracy**, where participants step out of urgency and into a shared temporal field of imagination. Rather than focusing on problems or solutions, the process invites participants to **sense what is not yet fully articulated**, allowing emotional and speculative knowledge to guide collective meaning-making.

The activity transforms:

- urgency → **presence**
- fragmentation → **shared rhythm**
- anxiety → **possibility**
- silence → **legitimate contribution**

Unlike other exercises, Dream Assemblies do not aim at immediate articulation or decision-making. Instead, they generate **“pre-political material”** (images, metaphors, rhythms, and principles) that later inform deliberation, policy design, and collective action.

⚙️ *Digital Positioning (Important Clarification)*

Rather than a full “digital deliberation space”, Dream Assemblies use digital tools as a **temporal extension layer**, not as a primary site of interaction.

👉 Key principle:

> The digital dimension does not structure the process: it **preserves, extends, and gently reactivates it over time**.

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Dream Assemblies (3-Part Structure)

1️⃣🎭 Analog / Synchronous (Core Experience)

Dramaturgical Phase	Facilitator Guidance	Prompts for the Audience

1. ARRIVAL **Grounding & Transition**	The facilitator prepares a sensory transition from everyday pace to collective presence: soft lighting, ambient sound, slow gestures, or a shared breath. Participants physically or mentally "cross a threshold" into a slower temporal field. Cameras may be on or off; attention is on **embodied arrival**, not performance. The facilitator names a simple, grounding intention: *"We enter slowly, without urgency."*	**Prompts:** *"Take one deep breath. What part of you arrives first?"* *"If your mood were a colour right now, what colour are you entering with?"* *"Place your attention on your shoulders. What would it take for them to soften?"* *"Imagine leaving behind today's noise for just a moment. What shifts?"*
2. OPENING THE FIELD **Emotional & Sensory Check-in**	Participants are invited to express their internal state **non-verbally** using colour, gesture, image, texture, or metaphor. This removes pressure to explain or justify emotions. The facilitator encourages noticing rather than analysing. The group witnesses each other's "weather" without comment or comparison. A collective rhythm begins to form.	**Prompts:** *"If today's emotional weather inside you had a form, what would it be?"* *"Show with your hand (just a small gesture) the rhythm you're arriving with."* *"Choose a colour that matches your state. Why this one?"* *"If your energy today were a landscape, what landscape appears?"*

3. COLLECTIVE WORK **Dreaming, Speculating, Co-Creating**	Facilitator reads the dream invitation slowly, like entering another atmospheric layer. Participants create **dream fragments** using multimodal expression: drawing, writing, humming, movement, metaphor. Small groups or pairs weave dream fragments into shared symbolic scenes. Silence is welcomed as part of meaning-making. Facilitator keeps the field spacious, resisting analytical closure.	**Prompts:** *"Imagine a future where your community finally breathes. What do you see?"* *"Let a dream speak through image, colour, or sound, not through explanation."* *"Close your eyes: what does political hope look like from the inside?"* *"Draw the outline of a possible world. Don't think. let your hand lead."* *"What new rhythm might guide a fairer democracy?"* *"In a future that cares, what is the first thing you hear?"*
4. RETURN & INTEGRATION Harvesting Meaning	Participants gently return from the speculative layer. Focus shifts from imagination → insight. Facilitator harvests emerging themes, values, rhythms, metaphors, without forcing consensus. The group identifies "dream principles": soft guidelines that reveal shared longings. Artefacts are summarised or uploaded to Decidim.	**Prompts:** *"What did this dream invite you to notice about our community?"* *"Which image or colour from the collective dream stays with you?"* *"If this dream offered one instruction for the future, what might it be?"* *"What principle does the dream teach?" "What small change in the real world echoes what emerged here?"*

2️⃣💻 Digital / Asynchronous

Phase	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support	🧠 Temporal / UX Intention
1. Gentle Entry (Post-Session)	🏛️ **Assembly Landing Page** configured as a *"Slow Entry Space"* • Embedded moodboard (images from session) • Audio track (same as session) • Minimal text (no instructions overload) 💬 **Comment wall (low-threshold)**	"What stayed with you after leaving?" "Which image or feeling is still present?"	No obligation to respond Allow emoji / single word / audio Mobile-friendly entry	Recreate **affective continuity** Lower barrier to re-entry Extend atmosphere, not "start a task"
2. Dream Fragments Archive	📝 **Proposals component (renamed: "Dream Fragments")** • Each entry = image / audio / text	"Add a fragment that came later" "What appeared after the session ended?"	Anonymous or symbolic entries allowed Encourage non-verbal uploads (image, sound)	Capture **delayed cognition** Validate non-linear contribution Avoid premature rationalisation

	• No required structure (avoid over-formatting) 🏷️ Soft tags (colour, feeling, rhythm; not policy yet)			
3. Slow Echo Layer	💬 **Comments on fragments (no debate UI emphasis)** • Reactions enabled (emoji, short replies) • Threading kept shallow (avoid argument trees) • No voting at this stage	“Does this resonate with you?” “What does this image evoke in you?” “What would you add, not explain?”	Explicitly discourage debate Encourage poetic / fragment responses Allow silence (viewing = participation)	Maintain **affective register** Enable resonance, not argument Prevent “platform drift” into debate mode
4. Temporal Revisit (Deepening)	🕰️ **New Debate Thread (time-triggered)**: “What has shifted?” • Opened 2–5 days later • Highlight earlier fragments • Facilitator curates gentle re-entry	“What has shifted after some days?” “What feels different now?”	Encourage late participation (“night mode”) Highlight that delay = valuable	Introduce **temporal layering** Make change over time visible Redistribute participation to slower rhythms

		“What remained unclear before but clearer now?”		
5. Dream Pattern Emergence (Light Structuring)	🏷️ **Tag clustering (facilitator-supported, not automated dominance)** • Themes emerge: care, rest, safety, repair 📌 Curated “Dream Constellations” post (not top-down synthesis)	“What threads connect these fragments?” “What shared feeling or rhythm appears?”	Avoid forcing categories Allow contradictions to coexist	Transition from **fragment → pattern** without closing meaning
6. Bridge to Deliberation (Optional, Soft)	📝 **New Proposals component (Dream Principles)** • Derived from fragments (not imposed) 🔗 Linked back to original entries • No immediate voting (or delayed)	“If this dream had one instruction, what would it be?” “What should be protected, not solved?”	Keep language open (principles, not solutions) Avoid technocratic framing	Connect imagination → policy **without collapsing it**

3️⃣🔁 Hybrid Return & Comparison

Phase	🎭 + 💻 Facilitation Steps	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support
1. Presence vs Memory	Reflect on difference between in-room dreaming and later recall	“What changed after leaving the space?”	Allow silence or drawing
2. Expression vs Delay	Compare immediate creation vs later contributions	“What only appeared after time passed?”	Accept fragmented responses
3. Collective vs Distributed	Compare shared atmosphere vs individual revisiting	“Did the digital space feel more personal or more distant?”	No pressure for agreement
4. Meaning Over Time	Identify how insights evolved	“What became clearer later?”	Emphasise slowness as valid
5. From Dream to Action	Connect dream principles to future processes	“What from this dream can guide action?”	Keep bridge soft, not forced

🔗 How This Activity Advances Democratic Capability

Dream Assemblies expand democratic capability by introducing **temporal and affective dimensions of participation**, enabling participants to engage beyond immediacy, argumentation, and productivity.

Through Decidim, the process is extended without being accelerated, allowing participants to revisit and deepen their contributions over time. This creates conditions for **slower, more inclusive forms of participation**, particularly for those who require distance, reflection, or non-verbal modes of expression.

Rather than producing immediate outputs, the activity generates **collective imaginaries and principles** that inform subsequent deliberation, ensuring that democratic processes remain connected to **hope, care, and long-term transformation**.

🌙 Dramaturgical Rhythm: Dream Assembly (Real Case: Migrant Dialogues Barcelona)

This is a **full Dramaturgical Rhythm table using a *real case* from the Migrant Dialogues** process in Barcelona. Hybrid session with 12 young people (15–21), some with lived experience of anxiety, housing precarity, racism, and school exclusion. This example shows exactly how a **Dream Assembly** unfolded with young participants, including real atmospheres, tensions, insights, and facilitator moves.

Dramaturgical Phase	Detailed Description (Actual Facilitator Actions)	Prompts & Participant Responses (Real Case)
1. ARRIVAL Grounding & Transition	The session began with a low ambient track (“rain on window”), requested by a participant in a previous meeting because it “helps the room breathe.” Lights dimmed; facilitator invited everyone to sit in a circle or turn their camera off if online. No introductions: just breath. Facilitator said: *“We’re not rushing today. Let your body arrive before your thoughts do.”*	**Prompts Used:** *“What part of you arrives first?”* **Youth responses:** “My chest, it’s tight but here.” “My eyes… they’re tired but curious.” “My stomach, it’s nervous.” *“What colour are you arriving with?”* “Grey.” “Deep blue.” “Orange but dim.”

2. OPENING THE FIELD **Emotional & Sensory Check-in**	Facilitator distributed a set of colour cards physically; online group used a shared slide. Participants picked a colour representing their internal "weather." - Several chose *blue* or *grey*, two chose *yellow* "because I'm trying." A Senegali participant used a hand gesture instead of speech: facilitators accepted it fully. One participant expressed they "didn't want to talk today but wanted to stay." Facilitator validated this as full participation.	**Prompts Used:** *"If today's emotional weather inside you had a form, what would it be?"* **Youth responses:** "Fog." "A cracked pavement." "A field after rain." *"Show your rhythm with one gesture."* Slow hand wave → "tired." Tapping fingers → "alert but stressed."
3. COLLECTIVE WORK **Dreaming, Speculating, Co-Creating**	Facilitator read the dream invitation slowly: *"Imagine a tomorrow where youth mental health is protected; not by crisis services but by the world around you. What do you see?"* - Youth worked in small circles: some drew, some wrote short lines, one hummed a tune. A young caretaker drew a house "with no secret fights inside." An undocumented youth drew "a border made of water that you can walk through." A mixed online/in-person group drew a collective image: a city with "rest benches," "quiet corners," and "free buses at night." Two participants co-created a metaphor: "a school that apologises when it harms you."	**Prompts Used:** *"What does safety sound like in your dream?"* "Silence but not empty." "Laughter that doesn't turn sharp." *"Draw the outline of a future where care has power."* (Images: a sun behind a fog, open hands, a bus stop with cushions.) *"Show a world where you're not exhausted."* "More trees in the city." "A bed that doesn't judge me."

4. RETURN & INTEGRATION Harvesting Meaning	Youth placed their images on a shared board (physical + Miro). Facilitator asked: *"What principles does the dream teach us?"* Group extracted 5 "Dream Principles for Youth Wellbeing": 1. **Rest is not laziness.** 2. **Care should not depend on luck.** 3. **Night-time safety is a right.** 4. **Schools must apologise and repair harm.** 5. **Borders should never block healing.** These were uploaded to Decidim and later became part of the **Legislative Theatre scripts** and policy proposals.	**Prompts Used:** *"Which image stays with you?"* "The border you can walk through." "The bench for resting." *If the dream had one instruction, what would it demand of us today?"* "Slow down the process." "Ask schools to listen properly." "Let us design night-time services." *What part of this dream can become policy?"* "Spaces for rest." "Youth-designed safety routes."

⭐ Real-World Outcomes from This Dream Assembly

Outcome	Description
Dream Principles → Policy Inputs	The five principles were integrated into a working draft of youth policy recommendations for Barcelona City Council's wellbeing agenda.
Imagery → Legislative Theatre Scenes	The "school that apologises" and "walkable border" became concrete scene anchors in the Legislative Theatre performances.
Night Safety → Decidim Proposals	The idea of "youth-designed night safety routes" was uploaded as a proposal, later prioritised by participants.

Rest as a Right → Temporal Justice Insights	This session contributed heavily to the Temporal Justice section of D4.2 and to the rationale for “slow-first participation cycles.”

Activity 9: 🃏 The Tarot of Democracy: A Participatory Ritual Game for Legislative Imagination

Narrative Purpose / Democratic Intention

The Tarot of Democracy is a speculative tool and performative game that transforms policy deliberation into a ritual of political imagination. Rather than presenting pre-defined roles or futures, it asks participants to co-create archetypes that reflect their own social positions, longings, and resistances.

By inviting both community members and policymakers into a shared field of symbolic meaning, the game stages a space of **reversal, listening, and collective foresight**. Inspired by Afrofuturist narrative strategies, legislative theatre, and Black feminist poetics of refusal, it disrupts traditional top-down consultation formats.

This is not a game to "fix" democracy, it's a game to *re-weave its possible futures*.

🃏 Game Premise

> "What if policy began with a card drawn from the collective unconscious of the people?"

Players begin by choosing pre-written roles, but also by **inventing archetypes** from their lived experience of democracy: their griefs, dreams, silences, refusals, solidarities.

These cards then form a **living democratic oracle**, one that can be consulted by policymakers, facilitators, or other participants to **reframe policy questions**, **surface contradictions**, and **channel under-heard voices**.

the **complete gameplay** for *The Tarot of Democracy* should include **both**:

1. A **core deck** of pre-designed archetypes (like *The Sanctuary*, *The Trickster*, etc.) that act as **shared symbolic references**, grounding the exercise in established political-poetic figures.
2. A **co-creative phase** where participants invent their **own archetypes**, drawing from personal experience, community roles, or speculative imaginaries. These new cards enter into dialogue with the core deck.

This hybrid approach honors both structure and emergence, enabling:

- participants to **resonate with or contest** existing archetypes,
- facilitators to **guide meaning-making** with a flexible but coherent symbolic system,
- and policy simulation sessions to **draw from a diverse deck** representing real, collective concerns.

📚 Theoretical Lineage

- **Afrofuturism**: Octavia Butler, Alisha Wormsley's *"There Are Black People in the Future"*, and Ingrid LaFleur's political aesthetic work
- **Black feminist theory**: bell hooks (*Teaching to Transgress*), Audre Lorde (*Uses of the Erotic*), Saidiya Hartman (*Wayward Lives*)
- **Decolonial critique of participation**: Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, María Lugones, Ruha Benjamin (*Race After Technology*)
- **Tarot and resistance**: Alexis Pauline Gumbs, adrienne maree brown (*Emergent Strategy*), and the rise of alternative divination tools as feminist relational tech
- **Participatory policy**: Legislative Theatre (Boal), prefigurative democracy, and the "deliberative dramaturgy" emerging in the INSPIRE framework

🪄 Facilitation Notes

- Use **soft light, fabric, cards, and symbolic objects** to open the space.
- No one must share a card they don't want to. Cards can remain private.
- Encourage **non-verbal creation**. drawing, cutting, gluing, movement.
- For the policy simulation, invite **real stakeholders or elected officials** if safe or role-play them with the group.
- Refrain from "solving" contradictions. Let them speak.

🎙️ Dialogic Capacities for Facilitators

- Comfort with non-linearity and metaphor
- Ability to hold contradictions and multiplicity
- Attunement to intuition and collective memory
- Willingness to decenter rationality as the only mode of democratic intelligence
- Skill in linking symbolic imagination to policy relevance

🌱 Democratic Capacities for Participants

- Symbolic reasoning and storytelling
- Political intuition beyond institutional roles
- Co-creation of shared imaginaries
- Translation of memory into foresight
- Consent and refusal in public narrative-making





🧩 Gameplay Flow

Phase	Description
1. Entry into the Field	Threshold moment using music, breath, or storytelling. Frame the game as a **ritual of democratic imagination**, not a workshop.

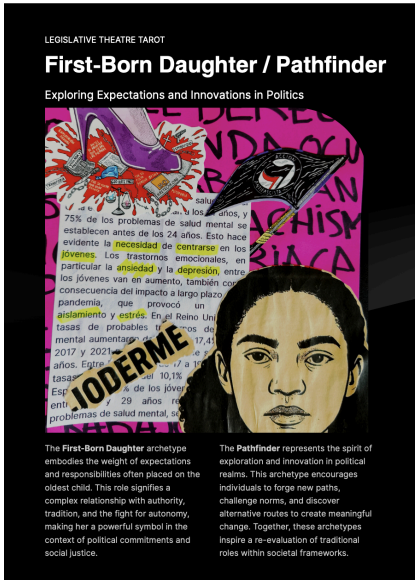
2. Encounter with the Core Deck	Present the 8 pre-designed archetypes with visual cards (or project them). Invite participants to pick one that "calls them" or **discuss who's missing**.
3. Creation of New Archetypes	Prompt: "Who do *you* bring to this Council?" → Participants invent a card from personal or community experience, with name, role, and a ritual or power.
4. Council of Cards	Small circles present their cards (pre-designed + self-made) to each other. Use a facilitation move like: "This card teaches us…"
5. Tarot Reading for Policy	A pressing policy question is posed. Participants do a **3-card spread**: Past–Present–Future, or Block–Gift–Warning. Read from both core + participant cards.
6. Harvesting & Translation	What values, urgencies, visions emerge? Translate into policy rhythms, principles, or creative proposals. Document dream-fragments, not just decisions.

🃏 **Dramaturgical Rhythm Table: Tarot of Democracy**

Dramaturgical Phase	Detailed Description	Prompts for Participants	Unblockers / Alternatives
Arrival & Thresholding	Open with a soft threshold: ambient music, candle, gesture, or breath. Frame the space as a collective ritual.	“What image, color, or ancestor do you carry into this space?” “If democracy were a rhythm, what would it be?”	Invite silence or gesture instead of speaking.Offer symbolic objects or simple body anchoring.
Encounter with Core Deck	Introduce the 8 core archetypes. Invite each participant to choose one they connect with, mistrust, or feel is missing.	“Today, we are not here to answer policy. We are here to dream it differently.” “Think of a moment when democracy failed you. What image comes to mind? What sound?” “Now imagine an archetype that could exist in response to that: an ancestral protector, a collective role, or a disruptive voice.” “You are going to draw this figure. Give them a name. They	Let participants annotate cards with music, texture, or sound.Use voice-only or visual cues if needed.

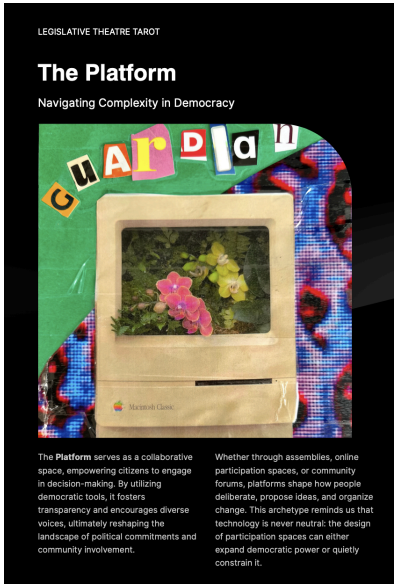
		do not need to be ‘good’. They need to be *true*.” “Later, we will ask: what happens when the Council of Cards meets the institutions?”	
Creation of New Archetypes	Prompt participants to invent their own archetype from lived experience or collective memory.	“Which card calls you?” “Which figure do you mistrust?” “Who is missing from this deck?” “What role does your community need in the democracy to come?”	Offer collective archetype creation for those unsure.Encourage image, gesture, or metaphor instead of text.
Council of Cards	Small groups take turns presenting core and new cards. Emphasize listening, storytelling, and resonance over analysis.	“What does this card demand we learn?” “How would it move in a public space?”	Allow drawing or body language instead of oral presentation.Use a ‘card altar’ as visual anchor.

Tarot Reading for Policy	Facilitator or group poses a real or fictional policy dilemma. Select 3 cards for a spread: past, force, path.	“What does the Trickster say about the urgency of the budget?”“How would the Guardian resist this law?”	Rotate facilitators to break hierarchy.Add soundscape or visual metaphor to support interpretation.
Harvesting & Translation	Participants extract values, dilemmas, and dreams from the reading. Translate symbols into design inputs, proposals, or poetic principles.	“What rhythms or warnings emerged?”“What law or ritual could carry these visions forward?”	Harvest via images or movement.Use poetry instead of summary.Invite asynchronous additions if hybrid.









💻 Digital Adaptation Strategy

⏳ Dramaturgical Rhythm Table. Digital / Asynchronous (Tarot of Democracy)

Phase	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts for Participants	🧩 Unblockers / Support	🧠 What This Enables
1. Entry into the Field (Digital Threshold)	🏛️ Assembly page as **"Oracle Entry"** • Visual deck preview • Audio / poetic framing • Minimal instructions	"What kind of voice are you bringing into this space?"	No need to "understand" the game Allow browsing before acting	Reduces fear of participation Invites curiosity, not performance
2. Encounter with Core Deck	📝 **Proposals (Core Cards)** pre-uploaded Each card = image + short poetic description 💬 Comments for resonance	"Which card calls you?" "Which one do you mistrust?"	Allow emoji / short reactions No need for explanation	Participants engage through **recognition, not argument**
3. Creation of New Archetypes	📝 **Proposals (User Cards)** Template: • Name • Image / symbol • "This card appears when…" • Optional: power / ritual	"Who is missing from this deck?" "What role does your community need?"	Allow anonymous cards Allow drawing/photo instead of text	Enables **low-threshold authorship** Strong for non-verbal participants

4. Council of Cards (Digital)	🧵 **Debate threads per theme** OR 💬 Comment clusters per card 🏷️ Tags (care, conflict, refusal, protection…)	“What does this card teach us?” “Where does it appear in real life?”	Avoid debate framing Encourage short reflections	Creates **collective symbolic meaning**
5. Tarot Reading for Policy	🎴 **Curated post / facilitator action**: 3 selected cards displayed Linked to a policy question 💬 Thread for interpretation	“What does this card warn us about?” “What future does it open?”	No need to be “correct” Encourage poetic answers	Policy reframed through **collective imagination**
6. Harvesting & Translation	📝 **Proposals (Dream Principles / Insights)** 🔗 Linked to cards used Optional later voting	“What should change if we listen to these cards?”	Keep language open (principles, not solutions)	Bridges imagination → policy **without flattening meaning**

🃏 Tarot of Democracy: Advanced Decidim Integration

🔁 Using Sortition + Proposals as Cards

Cards are published as **Proposals**, and the **Sortition component becomes the Tarot draw mechanism**, assigning cards to roles (e.g. policymakers, institutions, facilitators).

1. 🃏 Cards = Proposals

Each Tarot card becomes a proposal entry:

Structure:

- Title → *The Care Weaver*, *The Border Walker*, etc.
- Description → poetic + political meaning
- Attachments → image, audio, drawing
- Tags → care / conflict / refusal / repair

👉 This creates a **living, expandable deck**

🎴 Sortition = Card Draw Mechanism

- Randomly select:
  - 3 proposals (cards)
- Label them:
  - Past / Present / Future
    OR
  - Block / Gift / Warning

Sortition assigns cards to:

Role	Function
🏛️ Policymaker (real or role-played)	Must respond through the card
👫 Citizen / participant	Interprets or challenges
🃏 Card itself	Acts as “voice” in the process

3. 🧭 Policy Interaction Layer

After sortition:

Step	What happens
Cards assigned	Visible publicly
Thread opens	Debate or comments

Policymaker responds	Through the logic of the card
Participants react	Interpret / resist / extend

⏳ Digital Phase upgrade

Replace “Tarot Reading for Policy” with:

Phase	💻 Decidim Spaces & Components	💬 Prompts	🧠 What This Enables
Tarot Reading via Sortition	🎲 Sortition selects 3 cards (proposals) 👤 Assign roles (policymaker, citizen, etc.) 💬 Thread opens for interpretation	“As a policymaker, how do you respond through this card?” “What does this card demand?”	Introduces **role inversion + symbolic constraint**

The use of the Sortition component transforms the Tarot reading into a structured democratic interaction, where symbolic archetypes are randomly assigned to institutional roles, compelling policymakers to engage with collective imaginaries rather than predefined agendas.