

MAYOR GANG
PREDICTION
THE FORCE - 2011
- COMSTAT - needs
OPD + DATA - YOUTH
- FBI - 2008-10
- FBI RT - MICHIGAN
OPD COLLAB.

2012 -
CONTINUE TO
PURSUE FEDS
for JEDS POLICIES
GABRI INHIBIT

MAY 2012:
OPERATION GIDEN
RAIDS in east OAK
- "WASPT - 4 FL WOOD
PHOTOIC
- ATE, MS MARSHALL
OPD COLLAB. etc

"BLUE
THUNDER"
Fed + LOCAL
PROGRAM
2013

March 2011:
All OPD officers
"required" to wear
lapel cameras

OPD's CITY
CRIMINAL TRY TO
IMPLEMENT DAY'S
NIGHT CURFEWS;
ANTI-LITTERING ORD.

100 Block Plan
increased policing in
targeted area
unclear/lack of details
as to where the exact
100 blocks are

OPD starts
Contract w/
CHP - will
Sprovidly sure
money
(OPD budget)

2013
OOL
Building patrol
Vehicle Stops
Community meetings
New tools/apps for
reporting nuisances
- trash/dogs
- sex workers/dance
etc... sometimes
City-wide sweeps
in collaboration with
multiple agencies
- taxi v points
youth curfew/emergency
communications
- inter-agency

3/8/2013
Gang Raid in
Deep Forest
(gang back force)

RESISTANCE
MAY 2011 -
organizing +
activist shell
group (organizational
C2)

BATTS +
RUSSO
LENNETT
2011-12

MAY 2012
OFF OPD + Fed.
RAIDS in East
BEGIN -> FED
CURFEWS, NEW TROOP
W/ FBI SUPPORT

May 2011 - City facing
\$5 million budget
deficit.
40% of budget still
goes to OPD - 4%
goes to it heavily but
contingency funds

Oct 2011
100 Block Plan
Introduced

Dec 2012 -
Judge approves
deal w/ compliance
officer - 2 million
budget

Urban Strategies Ch
report on 100 Block
Plan released
April 2012

2013
Battalion Contract
Approved by
City Council

City administrator
reports may need
\$20 million over
5 years to
bring OPD shells
to 670 officers

OCCUPY
ATTRACT NTL

MAKING CONTESTED FUTURES

A Politics of Designing with People

Shana Agid



MAKING CONTESTED FUTURES: A POLITICS OF DESIGNING WITH PEOPLE

A project submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Shana M. Agid
BA Liberal Arts, MFA Fine Arts, MA Visual and Critical Studies

School of Media and Communication
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University
March 2016

DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Shana M. Agid
March 2016

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I started running a little over a year into this PhD project. Running is good for thinking and for writing. It's good for reflecting on what has taken place and imagining what might come next. There is plenty of time for words to come, ideas to solidify, and concerns to work themselves out. Much of the writing in these pages and the designing work that led to it and from it emerged between footfalls. And, eventually, I discovered that running is also a good metaphor for this process. Being a person who runs gives a familiar PhD cliché, "it's a marathon, not a sprint," a kind of visceral clarity. It acts as an excellent reminder that sometimes the things we must do entirely on our own are never solo pursuits. They cannot be accomplished without the support, intelligence, camaraderie, and tolerance of others. And so it seems appropriate that on a recent run, I began writing these acknowledgments in my head. The list of people who had a hand in bringing me from the start of this project to the end is long, and the critical roles many played are too nuanced to really do justice to them here, but my thanks is deep and straightforward.

Cameron Tonkinwise insisted it made sense for me to pursue a PhD in design to dig deeper into the intersections of making, theorizing, and politics about which we spoke often, over coffee, pie, and beer. Cameron supported and pushed my ideas and questions from the start, and it was he who introduced me to Yoko Akama, whose own work addressed the complexities of designing with people with which I was also concerned. Yoko and Laurene Vaughn signed on as my supervisors, and guided me through the process of doing this PhD, insisting all along that I trust in myself and my questions, observations, and hunches. On many occasions, they reminded me to slow my search for conclusions, and focus on remaining open to the things that would reveal themselves if I could find ways to listen. While those were not always easy conversations, or simple directives to follow, the reward for refocusing and trying out what they suggested was so much more than a little new information. I could see myself learning, see my expectations adjust, and find myself aware of new questions, new places to look, and new ideas of what I might be looking for. Yoko and Laurene, in their own helpfully distinctive ways, pushed and encouraged me. They challenged my expectations of the research while supporting our collective expectations for it, and with their help I was rarely lost for long.

Cameron, Mick Douglass, Liam Fennesy, Neal Haslem, Katherine Moline, Sarah Pink, and Dagny Stuedahl, along with other reviewers, contributed important insights, challenges, and support in RMIT Graduate Research Conferences that helped shape my research trajectory, my sense of the project, and critical questions and observations. Christine Gaspar and Mark Torrey allowed me to sit it in on collaborative design work at the Center for Urban Pedagogy as I was developing my PhD proposal, contributing immensely to my initial hunches and curiosities. I thank them and the designers and the advocacy group participating in the process I witnessed for their generosity, and Christine, especially, for her own work and

for important conversations along the way. María Elena Torre, Michelle Fine, and the rest of the Public Science Project team and participants in the 2011 Critical Participatory Action Research Institute provided critical insights into collaborative process, ethics, and the importance of research for justice very early on.

The impetus for this project grew from teaching and from years of political organizing work. Colleagues and friends at Parsons Design School and the New School helped to set the problem posed through my research and supported me through the process. Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani has been a formidable ally and collaborator, from whom I've learned plenty about getting things done and about the value of taking time to do them well. Our work together has honed my understandings of what it means to work with people, and why addressing the wonderful and frustrating complexities that come with it is so deeply important. David Brody took me under his wing as a colleague, mentor, and friend. In the midst of this undertaking, he offered brilliant feedback on other articles and on my reappointment materials. Knowing I had his keen eye on the rest of my work, made doing this PhD that much more possible. Lisa Grocott offered kindness and clarity, somehow in tandem, when critiquing early drafts of my proposal and helping me to hone salient arguments. She also offered long lunches in which she heard me out, answered questions, and reminded me that someday I really would be finished. Lara Penin and Eduardo Staszowski welcomed me into Service Design at Parsons, and started me down this path. Grants from Parsons School of Art, Media, and Technology and RMIT helped me travel and run workshops for this research. In addition, Susan Austin, Kelly Grossi, Vicky Hattam, Selena Kimball, Laura Liu, Lydia Matthews, Jane Pirone, and Judy Pryor-Ramirez have sustained this project, directly or indirectly.

I have been lucky to have students and teaching assistants who deeply shaped my research questions and what I understand to be at stake in the work itself. Kelli Jordan and Caitlin Webb taught me more than they might know about the joy of learning along with one's students. They challenged themselves, their classmates, and me with their tenacity over more than two years of collaborative service design projects. My conversations with teaching assistants in my Worldmaking class, Doremy Diatta, Nora Elmarzouky, Mateusz Halawa, Randi Irwin, Olimpia Mosteanu, and Luis Tsukayama Cisneros, about critical intersections of design and the political and about the nature of collaboration, challenged me to push for ever clearer language to explore and explicate them. Kristen Davis and Doremy Diatta made fantastic images CR members and I used in the course of our work, and I thank them both for their collaborations and their insightful making skills.

For two years during this PhD process, I also had the incredible opportunity to work with an outstanding team of students and teachers from three different institutions on a major collaborative project. It is not possible to over-emphasize the degree to which that work overlapped with and came to shine a light on the research here. Cassie Ang, Intan Hannah Abdul, Judy Seungmee Lee, Rolando Murillo, Nova Megantara, and Melissa Leo amazed me with their determination, intelligence, and openness. More than once in our design meetings at Parsons I found

myself engaged in a conversation about the very heart of my PhD topic, but through the lens of our collaboration, and was able to learn with them in ways I could not have on my own. Students from the Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School (WHEELS) and the Fortune Society helped to shape my understandings of designing with people in myriad ways. I am certain that this PhD would not be the same without what I learned from Dinora Aparecio, Thalya Casado, Marcus Colon, Suellen Contreras, Michelle Diaz, Saratt Espinal, Ivonne Felix, Walid Ghazal, Yarin Gómez, Wesly Grullon, Eric Liz, Randy Martinez, Raychi Polanco, Dilenia Santos, Amresh Sieunarine, Michaelina Tejada, and Donovan Wilkerson. The co-coordinators and teachers who developed and worked on that project were elemental in asking the important questions about accountability, flexibility, capacity that are central to this kind of work: Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, Ayesha Hoda, John Kefalas, Kerry MacNeil, and Parvoneh Shirgir. They also brought cookies and made jokes and someone was always ready to take notes when we needed it.

In my decades with CR, I have worked alongside some of the smartest and most dedicated people organizing for political change. It is a small enough organization that I would risk identifying those people who appear under pseudonyms in the text of this dissertation by naming those who do not. But, I want to thank members and staff who encouraged me to consider CR as a site for this project, who talked through ideas about how it might work and how to make it useful, who raised critical challenges, and helped me sustain it as it began. Several members from the Oakland and Los Angeles chapters participated in an early workshop that shaped what would become my long-term work with the No Cops group in Oakland. I am deeply grateful for the time they gave and the seriousness with which they took on ideas I could still barely explain so that we might delve into them together. There is not really a way to express both the gratitude and the honor I feel having had the opportunity to work closely with the members of the No Cops group. Their commitment to their own work and their openness to my joining them to design together made for a remarkable site for this research, and for a nascent design practice. It also helped me re-imagine my own political work as we wrestled together with the idea of building a “yes” campaign and imagined what it would take to make it happen. Members gave extra time for interviews, side conversations, email exchanges, and workshops. Clearly, without them, this research would not exist. Perhaps more importantly, without their willingness to engage in critical inquiry into their own work and the practice we made together, the ideas in this PhD would not be as rich, nor would they matter as I hope they might. I am excited about the work the Oakland No Cops group is doing, and I am looking forward to what comes next.

Undertaking a PhD while working full time makes a life outside those two realms challenging to maintain. I nearly managed to do so, but not without a great deal of help and patience from my loved ones. Paula Austin traveled this road with me in more ways than one, providing the right mix of sage advice, tough love, and laughter, without which I often would have been lost. Her own work

offered reminders of why I’d begun this project and she was a constant resource guiding the process and content of my work. Jey Born was my voice of reason and a reminder of what good people can do. His support and questions, offered over dinner, drinks, and baseball games, made untenable things seem possible. Emily Drabinski was a tried and true intellectual and writing partner with an unparalleled and exceptionally well-timed sense of humor. Our Friday coffee / writing dates, Sunday football, and weekend races made this work possible. She taught me how to breathe while running, and that we really only ever have one or two great ideas to which return in different guises. These are lifelong lessons. Tylan Greenstein has been my rock for two decades, and my reminder that what feels most pressing and most important often just is. Betsy Thorleifson kept things together for me when I couldn’t, feeding me incredible food and reminding me about the importance of having a place and people to call home. Emily Thuma reminded me that a project of this duration was possible, and helped me bridge design and critical theories of race, gender, class, and power. Old friends and collaborators, and brand new people, also oriented me when I needed it most. For this, I am grateful to Traci Amerine Colwell (and Brian, Hazel, and Huxley), Carolyn Halley, Priya Kandaswamy, Bruce King-Shey, Paula Mauro, Erica Meiners, Dorris Muramatsu, Erica Rand (who did a generous and key late read of the final draft), LB Thompson, Ari Wohlfeiler, and Lusa Thorleifson Born (who reminded me of bigger things by being born at all).

I am lucky enough as a child of a fairly modern era to have a lot of parents and people more grown than I as supporters and role models. Ann, Bob, Lisa, and my dad did the most basic, and most fundamental thing: they supported me from start to finish, asking just enough questions to know what I was trying to do, but not so many that I struggled to make sense of myself. I could not have done this without them. Along with Barb, Patty, Peggy, Greg, Kathy, Becky, Courtney, Dominique, Dono, Tim, Ted, and Steve, they have, in ways known and maybe unknown to them, given me the strength and resources to do this project, especially in trying times.

And through all this productive mess, from moments of elation and breakthrough to the seemingly more frequent moments of fear, confusion, and being just plain tired, Kerry MacNeil reminded me that this work mattered, and that it was, simultaneously, not the only thing that did. She indulged my desire for walks, for chocolate, for endless discourse, and for quiet. She made space in our tiny apartment for gazillions of notes and papers and wall drawings and tri-fold boards. She made pasta and insisted on trips to the movies. She believed in me when I did not and helped me think through ideas at their most nascent and, again, as I worked them into drawings and words. Kerry and my smart, kind step-daughter (!), Jasmine Hiraldo, have made a home with and for me, shaped by love, wry humor, and dedication to the most important things, for which I am so very grateful.

While I have not yet done a marathon other than this one, I ran my first half-marathon on January 25, 2015, a few days before the second anniversary of my mom’s death. She was diagnosed with lung cancer four months after I passed my confirmation for this PhD. When she died ten months later, running became

a way to be somewhere concrete. Those same footfalls and the simple rhythm of my breathing gave me something on which I could focus when little else would stay still. My mom was, I think, excited about this PhD. And not because of the degree, per se, but because all my life she had fostered my curiosity and, even as I approached 40, fervently supported my constant questioning. She was whip smart, funny, and talented. She taught me early the value of ideas and words, of listening well, of a good sense of humor, and of passion, conviction, and excellent food. She had the ability to focus in and find what she was looking for, and to give it language and life, and she did this with me and for me with a loving generosity that I miss so much. Losing her in the midst of this process shaped it in different ways, from the kindness of members of the CR working group who had only recently welcomed me into their meetings and their work, to the careful consideration I got from my supervisors and loved ones when I considered if I should take a break or keep going. The decision to stay put and move ahead lent even more clarity to this project, and while its focus is, of course, much larger than my personal circumstances, I dedicate this to my mom, whose support and belief in me and whose own strength and intelligence, meant so much.

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ABSTRACT

This PhD research explores how collaborative relationships and capacities for critical knowledge-making emerge and are formed through embedded, situated design with people. It focuses especially on designing in the context of working for social and political change. I conducted the project as an embedded designer-researcher with Critical Resistance (CR), a US-based grassroots organization seeking to end reliance on the interconnected systems of prisons, policing, surveillance, and other mechanisms for control and confinement. Reflecting on over two years of work with CR members, the research proposes the importance of attention to the dynamic situatedness of being a designer working with others in participatory and collaborative design, and to the specific contexts that inform and are created through such work.

This research builds on scholarship in Participatory Design, Service Design, and feminist and critical epistemology that emphasizes the value of collaborative identification of concerns and possibilities at multiple scales and also explores questions of power, position, and the socio-material and political nature of working with groups to make things and ideas. I suggest that collaborative relationships created through an ongoing practice of doing work together, and a designer's capacities to be present for it, are a critical component of shaping and understanding participatory practices and what they can generate.

In my practice with CR, what we designed together both produced, and was made possible by, *how* we created ways of working together over time. My capacities and position as a designer in relationship to members' work were determined by what was of use to the organizing, and through the means we made for sharing ideas, strategies, and goals. In this doctoral submission I argue for an approach to practice that prioritizes what I call "design co-authorship" in which collaborators shape both the *contexts for* designing and *what is designed* in the process of creating a shared practice. This requires a deep and explicit engagement by all participants with the dynamic mess of collaboration, including attention to the contradictions, differences, and open questions that emerge and become part of designing together. Working in such a shared practice is, ultimately, a way of creating not just artifacts, systems, or services, but collective knowing and action. Through these ontological and epistemological arguments, I assert that it is the relationships participants create and the knowledge made through them that come to define how designing matters in participatory and collaborative design.

PREFACE

NAMING THE THINGS OF THE SITUATION

In a manner of introduction, I want to begin by telling a first story of the research on which this PhD is focused, and the contexts that both grounded and compelled it. On a late morning in May 2013, the six members of the Critical Resistance Oakland No Cops working group and I met to begin planning their new campaign. We set up in an office that was not the one we expected to use, but was filled with a soft couch, colorful posters, sun, and enough work space to fit all of us. Susan¹ and I had planned the agenda together, with feedback from everyone, and I was set to facilitate so she could fully participate. I brought snacks and sticky notes purchased with funds from a small grant, we grabbed markers and big paper from the CR office, and we got to work.

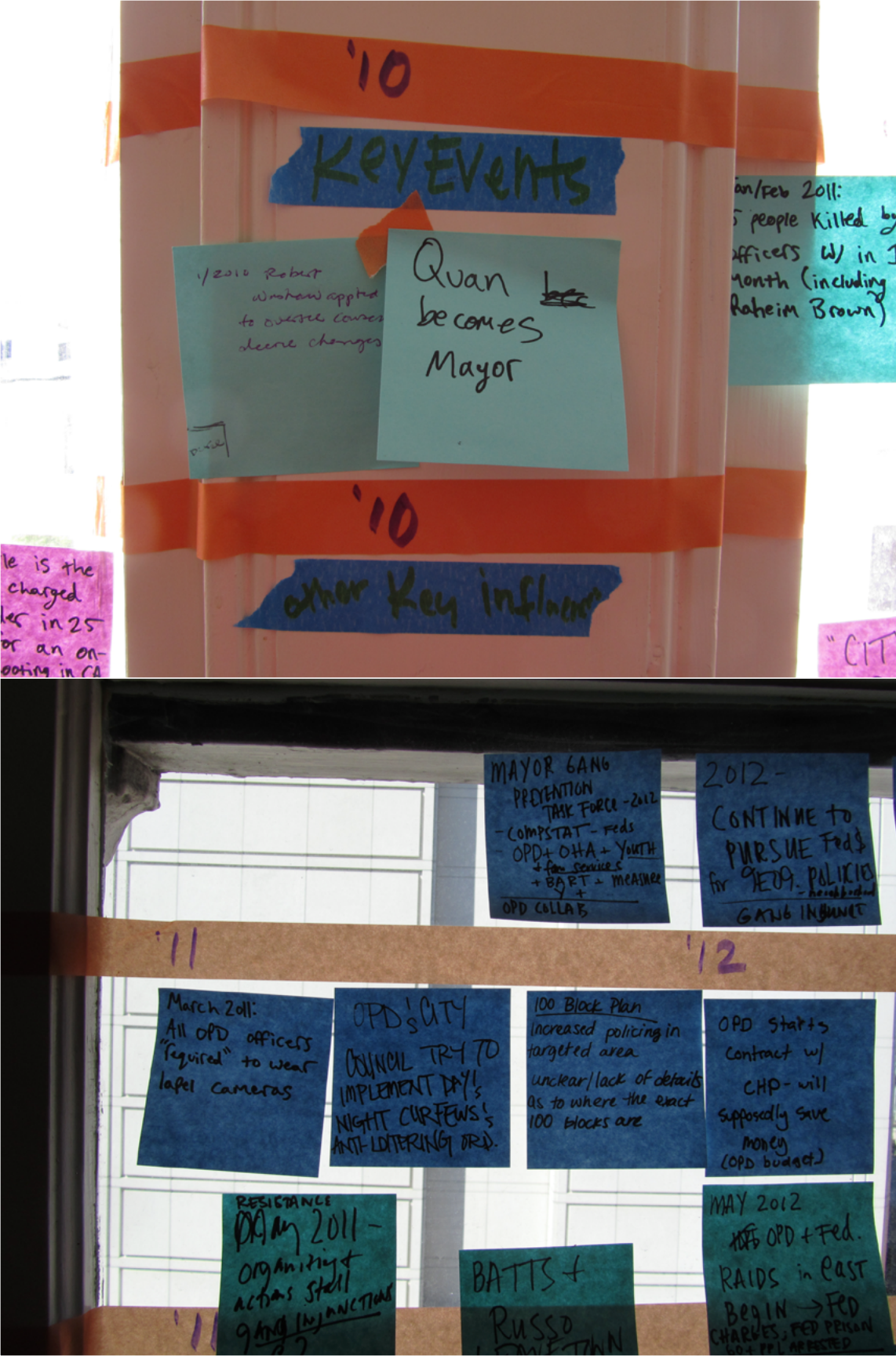
Group members had done research before the workshop to build a rough collection of key ideas, policies, events, and their own hunches pertaining to the recent history of policing in Oakland. To begin, we asked them to choose three things that stood out to them from each of the areas they'd researched, write them on separate sticky notes, and place them on a timeline we'd made with tape on the only available vertical space—a wall of windows.

Backlit, the timeline the group made showed five years of policies, elections, and a rotating cast of characters in charge. It showed a body count, people of color of all ages killed by police. It showed changing neighborhoods, and blocks missing neighbors to prisons around the state. It showed some organized resistance against policing, as well, limited only by our having forgotten to include what CR members called “fight back” as a research focus of its own. As timelines do, it told stories.

In designing the workshop, Susan and I thought that we could start by organizing the members' notes chronologically to make connections between the research areas over time. I'd suggested that after we began to make those connections, the group could explore other alignments by working together to rearrange the sticky notes into emergent themes, producing additional ways to articulate or know what was at stake in the new campaign and what next steps might be. I presented the plan to the group as we started to look at the timeline together.

No Cops members talked through what they saw, adding their memories and analysis as more connective tissue through conversation. When the time we'd allotted for the initial discussion was up, I reminded the group about the next step in the exercise and suggested they go up to the window and rearrange the sticky notes. Instead, everyone stayed in their seats and the conversation continued. At what I thought was another good transition moment several minutes later, I asked again if

1. All of the CR participants in this research agreed to be included here, and are represented with pseudonyms, which are the names used throughout this PhD submission.



the group wanted to go up to the windows and move things around. This time, they said no – they didn’t need to because what they needed to know was already there.

Not sure for a moment what role to play now that they’d re-routed the planned exercise, I listened and I wrote. I made a list on big paper reflecting the key concerns and arguments about which they spoke: *funding for a range of social issues, like poverty or domestic violence or drug use, are filtered by city and federal government through police agencies; city residents keep being told that more police will result in more safety; people don’t feel they have options other than calling the police; there is a story being told by media, police, and even city government that Oakland is terrible; the city keeps picking cops over alternative resources.* From the organizers’ perspectives, these were areas of meaning making with which the campaign would have to contend.

As I listened and wrote what I heard, I began to see how the stories they found in the timeline had historically, and contemporaneously, shaped the problem of policing and harm the No Cops group set out to challenge. What I saw, while specific to Oakland, and therefore new to me in its details, also reflected what I believed as a result of my own years of work with Critical Resistance. I turned the page on the easel pad and began to draw the problem as I heard it being narrated and analyzed. On the left of the fresh sheet of paper, I made a big box representing the story the Oakland Police Department told about policing and itself. To its right, linked by a not-equal symbol, I made another box representing the stories Oaklanders told about policing. Below them I drew a third box representing what we imagined

would be the stories coming from the new campaign. This was connected to the Oaklanders’ stories box with arrows moving back and forth between the two. Additional notes and shapes accumulated to expand and annotate my drawing as the group began to speak back to it and we continued to think through the context, role, and aims of the campaign (Figure 1). Policing fails Oakland, they argued, and this campaign would build and amplify people’s stories, resources, and power, because people don’t have to rely on police.

While I couldn’t have known it at the time, what CR No Cops members and I did together in these few hours showed, and perhaps helped to mold, the shape and character of the practice we would make in the many months to come. But in the moment, once the struggle of feeling fleetingly lost in an exercise of my own design passed, all I knew for sure was that I could listen, and learn, and reflect back what I heard and what I imagined it could mean for the things we’d said we wanted to do. And, I could try to project those ideas—theirs, mine, and ours—forward, as part of the No Cops group’s work.

It was not what I’d expected designing to be, but it was representative of what designing would become with CR. We seemed that day to have learned something together, about policing as a problem, whether for design or organizing. This was arguably something that—in our own ways, separately and together—we already knew, but we’d configured it into a next step, a clear, exciting, if daunting, bigger picture. Even if this step was just one more in the ongoing No Cops groups’ work up to that point, it was also a turning point in our work together, and none of us knew exactly what would come next.

In the year and a half during which this research took place, and in the months afterwards, when I turned to analysis and writing, but continued to work with No Cops, the racist violence of policing reached the main stage of US media and political discourse. From the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri to the strangling death of Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, and the massive public protests that followed them, police use of force against primarily black and brown people was—what seemed like all of a sudden—the focus of national attention. And then the stories really started to come—Freddie Grey died from a severe spinal injury suffered in police custody in Baltimore, Maryland; Sandra Bland died in an apparent suicide in a jail cell after being stopped for a traffic violation, then locked up, in Waller County, Texas; Walter Scott died after being shot in the back by a police officer in North Charleston, South Carolina; Samuel DuBose was killed in his car by a University of Cincinnati campus officer during a traffic stop; it went on. And people continued to fill the streets, the airwaves, and digital media streams in opposition. Still, many—CR No Cops members among them—would argue forcefully that the attention to policing that came in the aftermath of Ferguson, New York City, and Baltimore only shines a light on a long history of an institution with a proclivity for creating violence and harm, especially for people of color, poor and working class people, immigrants, queers, and others. This history is known intimately by people most subjected to policing and imprisonment and who fight, in a

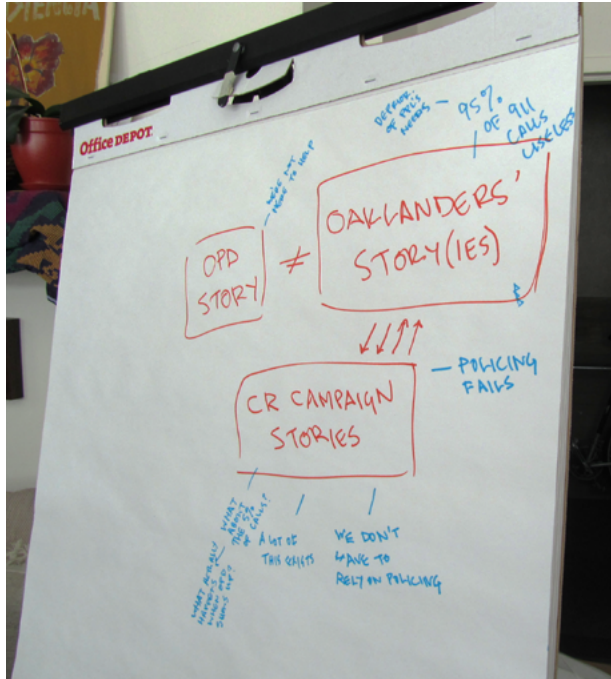


FIGURE 1 Drawing the conversation

multitude of ways, to change or end them. This is the context in and through which my research took place; it shapes the backdrop and, in many ways the content, of this PhD. While my focus in the pages to follow falls mainly on the design relationships No Cops members and I made through and for collaboration, the goal to end this violence and make freedom was always just before us, nudging us ever forward.



FIGURE 2 No Cops members transferring their research onto sticky notes for the timeline

CHAPTER 1

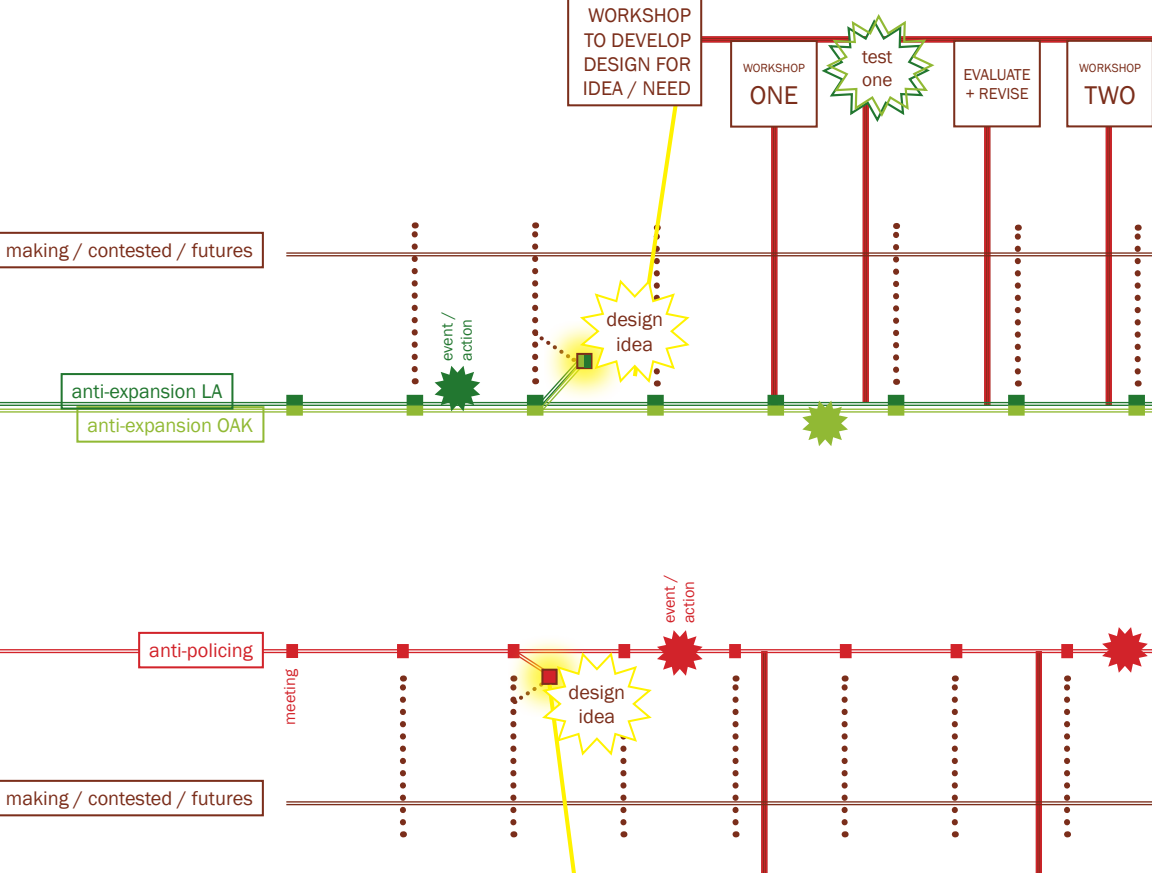
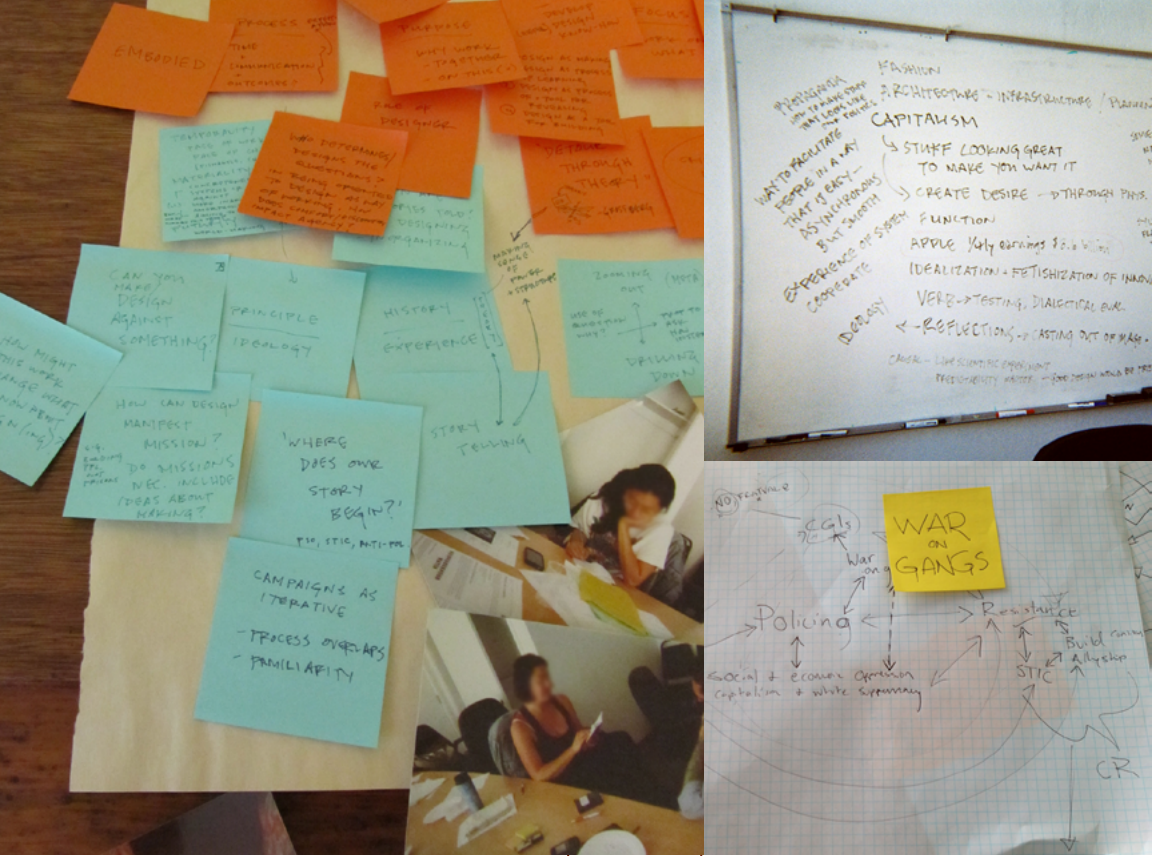
INTRODUCTION

This research explores the collaborative relationships and capacities for critical knowledge making that emerge and are formed through embedded, situated designing with people working for (radical) social and political change. Over the course of two and a half years, I worked with members and staff of Critical Resistance (CR), an organization seeking to end the reliance on prisons and policing to address social issues through the abolition of the prison industrial complex (PIC).¹ I spent over a year and a half of that time acting as a designer-researcher with the anti-policing work group of the Oakland, California chapter. The interactions, artifacts, and processes we made, experimented with, and learned through are the focus of this research.

The relational nature of designing with people is a critically important focus for creating and understanding what happens in, and what matters about, collaborative design processes. In my practice with CR members, what we designed together was both productive of, and made possible by *how* we created ways of working together over time. I argue for an approach to practice that prioritizes what I call “design co-authorship” in which collaborators shape both the *contexts* for designing and *what is designed* in the process of creating a shared practice. This, I suggest, requires a deep and explicit engagement by all participants with the dynamic mess of collaboration, including attention to the contradictions, differences, and open questions that emerge and become part of designing together. Finally, I assert that working in such a shared practice is, ultimately, a way of creating not just artifacts, systems, or services, but collective knowing. That designing produces knowledge is perhaps always the case, but it becomes especially critical when the focus of the design work is on creating social or political change. What is assumed, what is asked, and what becomes known both shape and are shaped by what is perceived as being at stake.

Before undertaking this research, my practice in design happened primarily in classroom-based collaborative design courses, where small groups of undergraduate students and I worked with organizations doing different kinds of social justice work to design artifacts and / or services the organizations could (theoretically) use.

1. I will discuss CR’s political vision and that of the specific group with whom I worked in more detail throughout this dissertation, as one part of my argument is that the specific context, and how it is perceived and told by the people with whom designers design collaboratively is an essential component of design work and relationships. CR’s mission statement and definitions of two key terms and concepts, “prison industrial complex” and “abolition,” can be found in Appendix 1 on page 147. For more term definitions, see the Critical Resistance Abolition Organizing Toolkit (2004) at <http://criticalresistance.org/resources/the-abolitionist-toolkit/>.



I developed a teaching / designing practice in which students and I used Service Design methods for generating design ideas via interactive tools, which we also designed, with our collaborators. In this sense, my work focused on facilitating student design and collaboration, as well as developing and maintaining complex working relationships in that context, while also engaging students in critical reflection on their ideas and processes. What I witnessed among students and collaborating organizations – the varied “successes” and “failures” of our communication and designed outcomes each semester – and what I struggled with in my own approaches to designing with people working for social or political change led me to ask increasingly difficult questions about what this kind of designing could do and how. As such, this practice brought me to the questions that shaped this research as I sought to better understand the possible role(s) of design and designers in relationship to social justice work. And, the project itself came to change my teaching practice as much as my understanding of design as it raised the critical importance of relationships and knowledge-making as nuanced components of collaboration and designing with people.

When I began framing this research in 2011, I found myself facing a conundrum: I was simultaneously excited about what I understood as the possibilities of collaborative systems and service design in social justice organizing and concerned by the limits I perceived in some approaches to what is often called “design and social change.” On the one hand, there was a rapidly escalating discourse on practices, tools, and methods for both designing with people and designing to address “social problems.” This focus pointed to the increasing influence of a range of design fields and approaches that prioritized involving people in design that impacts them, including Human Centered Design (HDC), Participatory Design (PD), Service Design (SD), and Design for Social Innovation. On the other hand, I wondered how prevalent a critical engagement with the terms by which design problems were framed was in these practices. Donald Schön (1983) called the conditions, facts, questions, and considerations through which problems are set in design “the things of the situation” (40). I wondered how these “things” were being imagined, negotiated, and determined, and by whom, and how that differed across fields.²

Through this research, I set out to better understand ways that participants’ assumptions or tacit beliefs about “the things of the situation” might shape our collaborative design process or outcome itself (Polanyi 1966; Schön 1983). I was especially interested in the ways in which differences in participants’ worldviews

might be raised and made part of the work *using* design processes. In this way, I sought to interrogate how communication in collaborative design established how designing happened and what got made, especially in socially-focused projects. At the same time, I wanted to explore how some tools and ways of working familiar to designers might be useful in, and present productive challenges to, the work of social justice organizers. I sought to investigate possibilities that collaborative design, in particular, held for making (visible and possible) the alternative futures organizers are working toward. My initial research questions reflected these ideas. These questions were also informed by my teaching, designing, and organizing experiences and readings across design studies and practice fields.

How can looking at both tacit knowledge and tacit beliefs illuminate what shapes participants’ ways of knowing and making while designing, and how do these shape co-design processes and their results?

How might co-design practices work to make visible and relevant people’s tacit and explicit beliefs about fundamental causes of or contexts for the “problem” on which a design process focuses, especially where those understandings are not shared or are in conflict?

What impact might a deep engagement with design processes have on political and social organizations’ capacities to prototype and test generative alternative proposals for otherwise unimagined futures in the areas in which they work ?

However, the specific context and character of my research with CR both changed some of the dynamics I expected to engage and, over time, reshaped my understandings as other questions arose from the research. When I first proposed this project, I planned to work as what I called a “design facilitator” with CR, identifying design opportunities or ideas, moments of engagement, and then bringing in designers with the skills needed to work with organizers in a collaborative process. My initial questions were based on my expectation, then, that by bringing people together from inside and outside CR, I could meaningfully investigate how we navigated and made explicit our differences in social, political, and experiential understandings of prisons and policing (Torre, et. al. 2008).

Instead, as I worked with CR members, the relevance (and actuality) of my role as a *designer* in the group emerged. This change in my understanding of what I would be doing with them, and the subsequent foregrounding of my role as a designer/researcher in contrast to the more facilitation-based work I’d proposed, shifted the nature of the relationships in, and the context of, the research. This also honed my awareness and understanding of the designer role I took on and of CR members’ and my work together. That this shift in my focus changed the kinds of questions I would come to ask is not meant to imply we had no differences, or that those we had were not important elements of how we worked. The navigation of multiple differences is a major component of this research and my arguments here. But because the occasions on which we worked with a third party with (potentially)

2. In more recent discussions, clear critiques have been raised by Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren (2012b), Hill (2012), and others about what was the especially popular framework of “design thinking” in the moment around which my research began. While people’s critiques of design thinking tend to reflect their own design points of view, Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren’s is notable for an historical comparison to the political origins of PD and the idea of collaboration in (interface / technology) design as fundamentally driven by an ethical position that people should be involved and leading the design of things that shape their lives in fundamental ways, like at work.

different views were far fewer than I'd initially imagined, this moved the research away from my initial focus on the role of doing collaborative design among people with explicit differences in political vision or goals. Instead, as CR members and I worked, other aspects of the relational nature of design collaboration emerged as more nuanced and clear sites for investigation.

Thus, while the original questions didn't entirely recede, they transformed over the course of the project and through feedback and engagement in critique, continued reading, and reflection through interviews and conversations with CR members. The new questions, which emerged and gained specificity as I began my analysis of the practice, reflect this shift:

How did CR members and I make relationships – or relational practices – that allowed us to do (meaningful) work together?

How does duration, working over time, create (different) capacities to develop relationships and meanings when designing with people?

What knowledge is produced in design collaborations? How do participants come to “know together” and what might this mean for collaborative design practices?

Through challenging myself to look into this specific context for layered elements and dynamics of a collaborative design practice, I sought to better understand how designing might play a role in, or be changed by, working with social justice organizers. I argue here that collaborative designing with CR showed that what emerged was neither about the effectiveness of “my” design methods or strategies, nor about capacities for “leaving” anti-policing group members with tools for their work, but about a situated practice we made together through building critical understandings, working capacities, and collective knowledge over time. That practice, in turn, enabled and created changes to our “own” practices in design and political organizing. The experience that emerged through our work together highlighted the importance of negotiations of usefulness and problem-setting as components of learning and acting together.

Below, I turn to the larger contexts for this project, including an overview of fields that informed my work, and to which this research seeks to contribute, primarily in the context of collaborative design fields and the ongoing discussion and practice of design with aims of social or political change. This discussion both grounds my inquiry and foregrounds some challenges to it throughout this research.

FRAMING THE FIELDS AND DISCOURSE

Designing with People: Participatory Design, Service Design, Design for Social Innovation, Co-Design

In a widely cited 2008 article, “Co-Creation and the Landscapes of Design,” Elizabeth Sanders and Jan Stappers map the emergence of co-design as a working

method increasingly in use in design fields in Europe and the United States. They argue that a range of approaches to involvement in design had come into regular practice, from user-centered product design testing to design with people participating as informants and idea generators in early design phases, based on their own expertise (5). They called this (then) emergent set of processes “co-design,” which they defined as “the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process” (6). As Sanders and Stappers' 2008, and later 2014, surveys of the emergent, changing, and evolving landscape of collaborative designing suggest, a turn to involving people in designing processes has been both widespread and consistent with ideas of “contemporary” designing in a range of fields of practice and research.

Different practices of collaborative designing emerged and came to the fore in different design fields, often in specific geographic locations or communities of practice (Binder, Brandt, and Gregory 2008). While a history of these practices, their emergence, and their differences, is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief discussion of some primary approaches to collaborative design will demonstrate the context, and practice-led underpinnings, of my research. My work with CR in this research was framed primarily in relationship to, and seeks to contribute to, discourses and practices in Participatory Design (PD), Service Design (SD), and Design for Social Innovation. Other, related fields, such as Human Computer Interaction (HCI) and Human Centered Design (HCD), for example, also shape the larger conversation about designing with people in and across design practices, and have influenced my practice and analysis.

While much attention to and engagement with various kinds of collaborative designing has come to the fore in the past decade plus, roots of contemporary practices run fairly deep. Participatory Design grew out of the workplace democracy movement in Scandinavia in the 1970s, led by workers in fields where jobs were quickly becoming integrated with a range of computer-based and other technologies. Designers aligned with this movement worked from the belief that people using these technologies should be “critically involved in their design” (Robertson and Simonsen 2012, 2) and made workers participants in the design of these new systems and machines. PD's focus on designing with workers, and understanding their knowledge as intrinsic to good design in this context, is an exemplar of design practices and approaches that began to take the ideas and experiences of people who use designed systems and things into serious consideration. PD also had, and in some cases, continues to have, an explicitly political focus, shaped by attention to “human action” and “people's rights to participate in the shaping of the worlds in which they act” (ibid., 4).

The continued development across design fields of various approaches to designing with people in the decades following the introduction of PD, whether through design scaffolds meant to aid generation and communication of ideas (Eriksen 2012; Sanders and Stappers 2008), observation and engagement in people's workplaces (Ehn 2008; Suchman 2002), or “community”-engaged idea-generation and testing

(IDEO 2012; Kolko 2012), is evident in the more recent emergence of Service Design. Sangiori and Meroni (2011) describe the origin of Service Design (SD), or Design for Services, in relationship to a larger economic shift from products to services in the 1990s. Alongside this sector shift, they note, designers and others began framing a new agenda for design, and means for designing, that sought to support a shift away from more traditional physical and tangible outputs and toward systems that considered larger, integrated networks of things, people, and services. Intrinsic to Service Design is the idea that good services are designed with “genuine insight into the people who will use them,” through which “real value” might be created (Polaine, Løvlie, and Reason 2013, 18). In this way, SD seeks to design engagements, conditions, and possibilities for interactions through which services themselves – from commercial enterprises to public resources – are developed. With a focus on broad and complex networks, and a fundamental presumption that designing a service means designing the *context* for interactions that cannot, themselves, be predetermined, SD develops means for working with people to map what exists and envision what might be made differently, especially where human and non-human interactions are intrinsic to the design.

While Service Design is increasingly used in the public realm, sometimes working directly with government services, Social Innovation (SI) and Design for Social Innovation often side-step “official” structures as groups of people make systems and services themselves. Manzini and Rizzo (2011) describe social innovation as an “articulated and dynamic processes where different actors behave actively and collaboratively in order to imagine and realise desirable social change” (202). In many instances, they argue, social innovation happens among people working on their own, seeking “commonly recognized social change” (201), without professional designers. This practice takes place in what Jégou and Manzini (2008) have called “creative communities,” groups of people that “cooperatively invent, enhance and manage innovative solutions for new ways of living” (30). In this model, groups work on a local scale and create scenarios that meet specific individual and group needs: food access and production, transportation, use of tools and resources, etc. Design *for* Social Innovation links these homegrown efforts with professional design practices. Described by Manzini and Rizzo (2011) as bringing social innovation and PD together, in Design for SI, they argue, professional designers work with people to “start, boost, support, make robust, and replicate” these initiatives (202). They argue that designers in this context take leadership roles working with people to facilitate changes to accepted structures (e.g., individual consumerism) through building on what people are already doing and modeling other options to make these systems viable, desirable, and replicable.

In these cases the role of designers working with others also becomes a focus of inquiry. In Manzini and Rizzo’s analysis of Design for Social Innovation projects they see four positions that designers are taking up, on two polarities: “facilitator versus trigger” and “member of a co-design team versus design activist” (211). The role of “trigger,” in which a designer “makes new initiatives happen,” they argue is

“the most promising...not only because it uses at its best the designer’s specific set of capabilities and sensitivity, but also because it can be very effective in sparking off new initiatives and dynamic social conversations about what to do and how” (211). In helpful contrast, however, Miwon Kwon (2002) argues that in community-based art, “the interaction between an artist and a given community group is...circumscribed within a more complex network of motivations, expectations, and projections among all involved,” including the artist, curators, and “community” members (141). The people with whom these projects are often done, she argues, are constituted as “communities” and involved (or not) in the processes of the “community-based” projects in a “triangulation (of power) between the artist, the sponsoring institution, and the chosen community group” (136). While the players in design contexts may differ, Kwon’s analysis is a critical reminder that designers, like artists in the projects she describes, do not work in isolation or independent of the myriad systems that support and encourage designers’ work in “communities” or in public. Rather, while Manzini and Rizzo seek to celebrate the idea of designers “sparking off” new design work, designers are always already in some relationship to the contexts into which we, and our projects, ideas, or capabilities enter. Who, then, is imagined to have authorial voice in designing the aims and message of a given project is a key question. The dynamics Kwon highlights, of participants’ positions, authorial roles, and the creation of the who, what, where, and why of a project, should also be critical discussion points for collaborative design.

PD, SD, and Design for Social Innovation share commitments to centering people in design processes, but their rationale for collaborating, attention to relational dynamics in co-design practices, and typical designed outcomes differ. Here, I have been deeply influenced by the political framing of PD and attention to the position of designers in relationship to people with whom designing happens, and with all participants in relationship to each other. At the same time, my own practice is rooted in Service Design. As such, this project is built on approaches in SD to designing with people through attention to the details that arise through close observation and facilitated involvement in designing a holistic service system (Stickdorn and Schneider 2011; Sangiori and Meroni 2011; Polaine, Løvlie, and Reason 2013). Working with CR members, I drew on SD research practices I developed in other collaborations to engage all participants in a process of analyzing existing contexts, needs, and desires. That analysis informs imagining a (re)designed system that might address those needs and desires using existing or new resources to meet a specific, often social or political, goal (Agid 2011; 2012). The system- and needs-based frameworks of SD are critically important to the practice approach I took in this research, as they shaped my design approach with CR members. My focus on the political and relational, also central to this work, were drawn more from PD practices and discourse, as they are often not as prevalent in SD. Finally, Design for Social Innovation builds on SD approaches to complex service and system design through practicing design with people who are making those systems with and for themselves, especially in areas of sustainability and cooperation (Jégou and Manzini

2008; Manzini 2014). In this sense, the theoretically self-determined nature of the kinds of projects on which Design for Social Innovation focuses are compelling investigations for my research context, but, like SD, the discourse attends more to the themes and outcomes of case studies and delves less into both political contexts and relational dynamics inherent in the work.³

This research, and what I found through it, are ultimately in conversation with these fields. I argue for an approach to designing (for) systems and services with people that foregrounds what is at stake in how we seek to engage in collaborative design work with explicit social or political aims.

Social and Political Contexts for Collaborative Design

As approaches to designing with people emerged in multiple design fields, the notion of design's social role also became a focus in several academic and industry contexts. In 2002, Victor and Sylvia Margolin published an article in *Design Issues* arguing for designers to take on work with aims to address or alleviate what they called "social problems." This has, in the last decade, especially, become an increasing focus in popular design media, academic design journals, and in the work and web-presence of design consultancies, organizations, and government initiatives.⁴ However, terms like "social" and "problems" frequently go undefined other than to name populations or generalized phenomena, such as "climate change," "crime," "the underserved," "the disabled," etc. What are lost are the mostly unspoken *political* contexts of design practices that fall under the loose (and sometimes contested) umbrella of design for social change. In this work, qualities of what kinds of "ideal" social relationships are presumed to be shared by "society," and understandings of what it might take to produce those conditions, often go under-theorized or un-discussed.⁵ Some acknowledge the role of individual designers' own values or aims in

3. See, for example, Tonkinwise (2010), in which he argues that in an age of the UK's Big Society and government budget cuts, "ethically-minded" design that "scale[s] up existing innovations with redesign" might also be paving the way for permanent government retrenchment in the face of, especially, economic crisis. Fry and Dilnot (2003), Lee (2007), Oosterlaken (2009), and the two-part special issue, "Beyond Progressive Design" of *Design Philosophy Papers* (2011/12) also offer useful arguments, though not limited to Design for Social Innovation.

4. See, for example, Participle (<http://www.participle.net/>), Project H (<http://projecthdesign.org/>), The Design Council (and its RED project) (<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/>), Design Altruism Project (<http://design-altruism-project.org/>), Design 21 (<http://www.design21sdn.com/>), Open IDEO (<https://challenges.openideo.com/>), and DesignMatters (<http://www.artcenter.edu/accd/programs/designmatters.jsp>), among others.

5. For example Thorpe (2008, 2010) writes about the value of using design to address "social" concerns, but presumes a shared sense of what those concerns are and how they can be framed or addressed. Montgomery's (2010) writing on designers' interest in working to create British Prime Minister David Cameron's "Big Society" neglects any discussion of what it means to design for the elimination of government services. Routson (2012) writes on the role of design in re-making a centrally-located all-inclusive police station / court / jail / social welfare hub

shaping which "wicked problems," in what contexts, create design "opportunities," but stop short of problematizing how those ideas might influence design processes intended to "solve" the "social problems" chosen.

For example, Jon Kolko's 2012 book, *Wicked Problems Worth Solving*, seeks to act as a "handbook" for social design and social entrepreneurship. Kolko emphasizes methods for developing empathy and close listening to identify design opportunities with people in longer-term engagements, noting that designers need to be able to listen for cues to inform their understandings of the experiences and contexts of people with whom they seek to design. But he does not offer a simultaneous challenge to designers to see how their own assumptions or values become a lens through which that listening (and designing based on it) takes place. In contrast, Lucy Suchman (2002) exhorts designers to understand the locatedness of design specifically by resisting the apolitical view that they / we work in isolation from larger contexts. Instead, she insists that designers take accountability for "our vision of the world," which is, she argues, "a vision from somewhere" (96) that shapes what and how we design. Tony Fry (2010) argues that to begin to understand the links between design and politics, it is imperative that designers recognize that design *is* a political engagement. Here, I am interested, then, in highlighting specifically the impacts of existing political structures, including those of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, etc. on the contexts in which designers are beginning to work in new numbers, and what we bring to and into those contexts.

Even as the idea and practices of "design for social change" and design with people have expanded, the political focus on people in relationship to systems of power, like work, prevalent in early PD, has diminished in some areas. In commercial design fields, for example, co-design and HCD have been increasingly framed as methods to maximize products and services for marketability.⁶ While what matters or is useful about working with people at the center of design processes is contested, the widespread emphasis on collaborative (or collaborative-like) processes makes this kind of designing a critical and generative research area. Practitioners and researchers in contemporary PD, HCD, and related fields continue to engage debates about the role of power in designing, the ethics of design with people, and possibilities for reimagining design as a practice linked to, and therefore implicated through, designers' locations. These (re)emerging discussions investigate the function and position of designers in design processes, extending critical inquiry into the relational nature of designing, complexities (and importance) of disagreement and difference

but does not reflect on how this might not work the same for everyone. Similarly, Manzini and Rizzo (2011) assert the role of Design for Social Innovation as a means of working toward shared ideas of sustainability, but stop short of delving into what those are, or where people's significant differences in perceptions or experience might matter for that work.

6. In fact, Morelli (2007) seeks to meet the call issued by Margolin and Margolin in 2002 by scaling up social innovations through business strategies making such designs profitable. As Ilse Oosterlaken (2009) argues, however, "...one should not too easily assume that the interests of the poor and of companies are always compatible."

in such processes, and posing challenges to tools- and methods-based approaches to designing with people (Akama 2014; Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012a; DiSalvo 2012; Ehn 2008; Hargraves and Jafarinaiimi 2012; Light 2010; Light and Akama 2012, 2014; Suchman 2002; Tatar 2014).

In this research, my practice with CR led me to rethink *where* to focus in my inquiry into the dynamics and possibilities of collaborative design in the context of anti-prison industrial complex organizing. This rethinking emphasized a focus on nuanced practices of creating capacities for designing with people that exceeded both methods-focused approaches to collaboration and more general approaches to designing for “social good.” In my work with CR members what emerged were critical observations of the development of a practice of doing design together that was grounded in what was *of use* in their organizing. Our working relationships required exploring my own complex experiences and understandings of my position and location as we designed as a part of their work. What we designed together and what it both created and allowed for, then, came to shed light on the role of artifacts, systems, and process, and what they generated in what became our collective design practice. Through my experience as an embedded designer / researcher with CR, I drew on and, in some cases began to articulate challenges to, the design fields with which this research is in conversation.

Design and the prison industrial complex (PIC)

The United States incarcerates more people per capita than any other country (Schmitt, et. al. 2010). In 2014, while overall numbers of people in prisons and jails slightly decreased from prior years, rates of incarceration for women continued to rise, and people of color were locked up at much greater rates than white people, with 2.7% of all African-American men, 1.1 % of all Latino men, and .5% of all white men in the United States in prison. Among women, African-American women were between 1.6 and 4.1 times more likely to be incarcerated than white women in the same age groups (Carson 2015). Geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) has argued that the massive expansion of the prison system in the United States since the late 1970s grows out of that era’s crises of capital and labor, deindustrialization, and the continued racialization of punishment as social control. Rapidly expanding rates of incarceration in the decades since, she explains, are linked to *systemic* conditions that have been less related to the fact of “crime” – itself a moving target defined by laws that are often changing – and more to structures of race, class, and capital in the post-Civil Rights Era, post-industrial United States (12-13). This situated analysis of the rise of prisons and a massive increase in rates of incarceration, especially for people of color and poor people in the US, creates a context for thinking systemically about designing in relationship to both these systems themselves and organized opposition to them (Davis 2003; 2005). Not only did this era produce an explosion of imprisonment, but media and political discourses emphasized “tough on crime” rhetoric and policies, government spending on personnel working in “enforcement” jobs expanded while those in “service” roles

declined (Bohrman and Murakawa 2005), and poor and working class people faced dwindling access to economic assistance and other “safety nets” (Kandaswamy 2008).

Over the last several years, concerns about the growing number of people who are in prisons in the United States have gone more mainstream. Designers, working from a range of perspectives, have also taken notice.⁷ In the UK, the Design Council-funded project of The University of the Arts London, Design Against Crime, proposes that “social design” methods can be used to reduce crime. Lizzie Coles-Kemp (2013), of the Possible Futures Lab, focuses on inquiry into how people define and determine ideas of security in a range of fields and venues, including with families of prisoners.⁸ The Public Policy Lab (PPL) in New York City, whose mission is to “help Americans build better lives by improving the design and delivery of public services,” highlights “Courts and Criminal Justice” projects on its blog (Routson 2012). Here, PPL focuses on the use of design – from communication design to service design to architecture – to “improve” people’s experiences of, or in, systems of policing, courts, and prisons. And, the US-based Architects/ Designers/ Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) has led efforts to organize commitments from designers to oppose, and refuse to design, both execution chambers and solitary confinement units, as well as working through public charrettes to reimagine and repurpose prison sites in California (Jacobs 2012; Sperry 2014).⁹

While this is not an exhaustive list by any means, it highlights one of the key issues in design in relationship to issues of “crime,” policing, and imprisonment. These examples frame different approaches to “the problem,” and therefore consider different routes to, and frameworks for, possible design responses. If the PPL blog highlights examples of “better designed” spaces and systems for policing, prisons, and courts, this presumes that such a space can be designed to work well for people caught in it. Alternatively, ADPSR’s campaign questions the very possibility of designing “humane” cages, especially for solitary confinement, and asks designers to consider the lives and experiences of the people in those cages, especially. Gui Bonsiepe (2006) argues that participation is a process through which “dominated citizens transform themselves into subjects opening a space for self-determination” in which they determine projects of their own (29). In this way, participation in the context of incarceration, policing, and feelings of security raises critical questions about who defines the impetus and aims for design in relationship to harm and safety.

Tony Fry and Clive Dilnot (2003) note that in designing for sustainable futures, “...a great deal of well-intended ‘reformist,’ ‘sustainable’ design activity does little

7. See, for example, the popular news media coverage of what gets called “mass incarceration,” exemplified in this *New York Times* editorial from May 24, 2014: “End Mass-Incarceration Now,” http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/25/opinion/sunday/end-mass-incarceration-now.html?_r=0

8. See also the Possible Futures Lab website: <http://pflab.rhul.ac.uk/>.

9. See also, ADPSR Prison Design Boycott and Prison Alternatives Initiative, http://www.adpsr.org/home/prison_alternatives_initiative1.

more than sustaining the unsustainable” (np). In the context of design and the PIC, the same is likely to hold true. Many design projects in the “social” realm take *as a given* a naturalized idea of “crime,” or the beneficial and “safe” context of the “justice system.” However, in the abolitionist framework of Critical Resistance, the problem is set differently. From this point of view, the system of policing and imprisonment is not “broken,” because it is, in fact, doing what it is meant to do: mobilizing logics of incarceration, surveillance, and policing to lock up ever larger numbers of people of color, poor people, immigrants, and others. With the problem set this way, the aim of abolitionist organizing is not to *improve* the system so it affects fewer people or is less damaging to those caught in it, but is to both fight the use and expansion of the PIC as a system of harm, and to build alternatives to it.

The impact of prison and jail, as well as related institutions, such as policing, courts, and even public schools, is deeply felt by large numbers of Oakland residents, especially people of color, working class people, and people living in poverty (Rios 2011). The Oakland Police Department, in particular, has garnered serious criticism from Oakland residents, especially in the past 15 years, after a unit of police who dubbed themselves the “Riders” was charged with routine abuse, planting evidence, and making false arrests in the mostly African-American West Oakland neighborhood. What is known as “The Riders Case” led in 2003 to federal court oversight of the OPD as a condition of a consent decree with the federal government (Monmaney 2000; Moughty 2011). During the period of my research, this oversight was still in place, and police violence, including the killing of Oscar Grant in 2009 by a transit officer and the severe injury in 2011 of an Occupy Oakland participant by police-fired “non-lethal” projectiles, led to protests and continued scrutiny.

This is the context that informs CR members’ work and, therefore, was the context for this project. In my research, the importance of specificity – of what we name, problematize, and set as goals – that is sometimes lacking in design for social change becomes clear. Design meant to impact issues related to prisons, policing, and surveillance happens in the very particular and contested contexts that produce and maintain the systems designers seek to intervene on, whether to “improve,” “change,” or “abolish” them. By reframing a possibility for collaborative or participatory design around issues of the PIC, and specifically design and abolition, CR members and I framed a specific set of questions to be addressed in this project, which, in turn, shaped the way forward. Here, my research returned to the root of the questions with which I began: how does “setting the problem” in a given design context show up in designing, and what impacts does it have on design processes with people? Throughout this project, variations on this question acted as reflexive lenses through which I came to inquire into and learn through my position as a designer working with CR No Cops members, and our process of problem setting through our work together.

FRAMING THE RESEARCH IMPETUS AND APPROACH

Political ideas and design desires

For better or worse, this project began when I attended an IDEO presentation in 2007 at my workplace. As the designers described methods they’d used to assemble a multi-faceted description of the institution through the eyes of (some) students, I found myself thinking of my work with Critical Resistance, an organization I’d helped to begin six years prior with a group of people committed to ending the prison industrial complex. I wondered how *we* could mobilize strategies for learning about people’s practices, needs, and desires, from their points of view, in order to imagine and build from those stories with them. Could we use an iterative approach, testing out possible alternatives, ideas, systems? Could we use designing to tell stories about the impact of prisons, policing, and surveillance that reflected the experiences of people in those systems? I wondered what this design approach might add to our organizing capacities, and, really, to our ability to win. By the time I began this research nearly five years later, CR was just over 10 years old, and I had a healthy critique of IDEO’s approach to encouraging designers to use their “toolkits” of methods to engage in design with people. Both my initial revelations and that critique shaped the project to come.

My questions in this research are informed by 25 years of political organizing in health care, HIV / AIDS activism, and against the PIC. This includes 15 years working with Critical Resistance as a volunteer organizer and one-time paid staff member in New York City. Precisely because of that proximity and history, I did not intend to do this research with CR members when I began this project. I was concerned both that it would be difficult to gain enough distance to critically reflect on the work, and that I might set a precedent which made me uncomfortable – that one must already be affiliated with or deeply know a group’s work to do design with them. I discuss below the methods I used to allow for critical distance and a reflective process to address the first of these concerns. The second, however, proved more difficult to ameliorate, and my position in the research and vis a vis the CR members with whom I worked is a major consideration of this dissertation. As it turned out, I did find that the deep knowledge I came to share with CR members was critical to our designing together. But this was not as simple as having a history with the organization or with individual members. Rather, while our shared political ideas generated trust and often made conversations about next steps clearer, it was also the process of working together in this specific context over time that constituted my ability to generate “deep knowledge.” While I learned to work with and around the personal discomfort with which I started out, this learning put it in perspective as I found out that knowing deeply, and over time, did indeed matter for designing together.

This research is, additionally, presaged and informed by my work in general, across my visual arts practice, scholarship in visual and critical studies, and a long history of doing visual design and layout work as a part of my affiliations with a range of groups, from *Radical Teacher*, the academic journal whose editorial board

I joined in 2006 and where I later became art director, to CR, where I've done design work at various scales for many years. As I noted above, the research is deeply shaped through my teaching in service design and collaborative design, in which the concerns central to this project are live and persistent. My particular interest in the role of theory in studio teaching and in design focused explicitly on social and political issues grew from the same questions and challenges that informed this research. Critically, this project also re-shaped my understandings of, and approaches to designing with people, organizing, teaching, and theorizing about collaboration and design.

I brought contradicting ideas of what design was or might be with me into this research, which were reflected in how I imagined the possibilities of using design with abolitionist organizers. I had a fantasy of design as a set of tools, methods, and practices that could be applied in different contexts to do the same, general, kind of transformative work I'd heard about in the IDEO presentation. And, I had since developed a more nuanced understanding and critique of what collaborative design entailed and made possible, and knew that my framing of this research included my investment in critically engaging with context in such practices. Because of this contradiction, I might not have noticed that the proposal I made to CR echoed the very approach to designing with people that I was interested in critiquing. If my political and scholarly desires pointed me in the direction of finding out what it could mean to utilize design as a part of CR's organizing, my excitement overrode what I knew. Design is not magic, and yet, I entered into this project proposing to CR that deploying design as a set of tools or methods might enable something entirely new in their / our work. I deferred, perhaps, to my own hopeful vision, the part of me that is always looking for alternatives and new means for preventing and addressing harm. Thus, when, in my notes from early in the project, I said I wanted to bring something to anti-PIC organizing that *wasn't there*, I'm confronted both by the simplistic and hubristic tone of that sentiment and also by its hopefulness, the constant work toward more strategy, more tactics, more possibilities that was the impetus of this project, and informed it throughout. Sharing this understanding here is intended to point to the critical questions and transitions in my own understanding of and approach to practice that took place in this research, at least in part so that other designers might also begin to look closely at how they approach collaboration, and how we might make challenging our expectations a part of practice itself.

At the start of the research, I had an idea of the kind of "design" that I wanted to introduce – scenario-oriented, problem-addressing, future-making – as a form of strategy for abolitionist organizing. As I worked with CR members, however, and I (and we) began making, doing, and designing things, a process of reimagining what "design" would be in this context – that it would include making and negotiating images, organizing time, or supporting internal processes – began. Even so, it took a long time, and space for reflection on our practice together, for me to stop trying to focus on the idea of *applying* design to organizing, and to

begin seeing that what I was doing, and more importantly, what we were doing together, *was designing*, even as it looked and felt different than what I'd expected. It wasn't until I began reflecting on our work through this research that I saw this contradiction, or that I saw how we'd worked around it without knowing in some cases, and been interrupted by it in others. But it is important to acknowledge that it was in the specificity of our shared practice that I (and possibly they) re-imagined what "design" is and how we used design in this project, and in their organizing.

As I will argue throughout this dissertation, it was, finally, the relationships we made and the knowledge we made through them that came to define how designing mattered in this project. The artifacts we (or I) made were integral both to shaping those relationships and to producing capacities for knowing together, even (maybe especially) where people didn't experience them the same way or find them similarly helpful. In the practice forged through this project, design was both material- and process-based, and manifested and functioned in ways I did not expect, and therefore had to listen carefully, sometimes against my inclinations, to identify.

Methodology: Practice-led, design-led, community-based

The methodological investments that shaped this project foregrounded developing a collaborative engagement, both shaped by and useful to CR's work, that brought theory and practice together to make knowledge meaningful to our immediate context and to broader scholarship, particularly in design. I draw on a combination of methodologies from design research, participatory action research (PAR), as well as Critical PAR, which practitioners frame as an epistemological approach to critically engaged collaborative knowledge-production for justice (Torre, et. al. 2012). In addition, theories of power, knowledge-making, and relationships of theory to practice in fields including feminist theory and scholar-activism were influential in shaping my research questions and my practice throughout.

Ezio Manzini (2009) defines design research as "an activity that aims to produce knowledge useful to those who design" (5). He describes this group broadly, including designers and non-designers, individuals and groups. Importantly, Manzini also maintains that useful design research "cannot be implicit and integrated in the design," but must be made "explicit, discussible, transferable, and accumulable" (6). This research project's aims and methods are in keeping with Manzini's notion of design research as both explicit and of use, although I will raise pertinent questions about *how* this research might be useful to designers, as I do not attempt to offer replicable methods, per se.

Using practice-led research based in my participation in CR organizers' context, I grounded my investigation into what became a shifting set of questions, discussed above, which were defined and changed through the process of the work itself. Working through a practice-led methodology brought a critical role to the material objects of my inquiry as well as to the relationships that generated them and put them into use. This way of working prioritizes the importance of what Barbara Bolt (2007) has called "praxical knowledge" (34), developed through use

in contexts where things are being made. Additionally, I drew on Donald Schön's (1983) theory of reflective practice, in which he argues that knowledge is created through practitioners' reflection during and following design activity. It allowed me to be both responsive to, and affected by, the changing context of my research. I discuss Schön's ideas about the development of design knowing through practice below, as a method for analyzing and understanding what happened during the research period.

My approach to this project is also rooted in a feminist theory framework that argues that knowledge is "situated" (Haraway 1991), such that the history, location, and relative access to or lack of privilege of an observer is understood to impact both what is seen and how it is considered relevant (or not). Lucy Suchman (2002) argues that using situated knowledge as a frame allows for an alternative way of coming to objective knowledges through "multiple, located, partial perspectives that find their objective character through ongoing processes of debate" (93). Following on Haraway's assertion that all knowledge is knowledge from somewhere, Suchman stresses that these processes, and the project of locating the *somewhere(s)* of design and designers' practices, means also taking some responsibility for those practices and their effects (92, 94). The concept of situated knowledge, and its contingencies in design processes as well as the relationship of designers to contexts and collaborators or others in design work, shaped my research questions and continually informed and provided means to challenge my approaches and assumptions, revealed through reflection.

Given both the practice-based nature of this research and the relevance of CR members' and my own multiple and complex locations in relation to it, my approach was also informed by what John Law (2006) refers to as the "mess" of research contexts. Law notes that while traditional social science methodologies require the "repress[ion of] the very possibility of mess" (2), much research is, in fact, research into messy scenarios in which covering up ("Othering") the mess denies its structural importance and also excises it from research considerations, even as such traditional research purports to render a representation of a singular reality (8). Light and Akama (2012) introduce Law's notion of mess in to their work on participatory processes in design, calling for a similar consideration of the mess in designing with groups of people. This ability to both make space for, and find ways to diagram, imagine, and write through the messy context of CR members' and my work together was critical to the knowledge that emerged, and supports an emphasis on looking failures, disruptions, and contestations in the eye, as it were, to learn from their place in collaborative design processes.

Finally, participatory action research (PAR) and Critical PAR provided key means for understanding how to engage the "messy" research situation while prioritizing making knowledge useful to both CR and broader design practice. In PAR, a research group made up of people committed to investigating a shared concern works iteratively in a series of loops, beginning with a plan, moving to action, to observation of the results of that action, and finally to reflection, leading in turn to

another plan, another cycle of action and inquiry (Bryman + Burgess 1999; Hearn, et. al. 2009; Wadsworth 1998). Critical PAR emphasizes the epistemological aim of making knowledge through democratic participation that works to "interrogate the gap between dominant ideologies and people's lives" (Torre, et. al. 2012, 171). In this sense, critical PAR is *always* informed by the political context(s) in which it takes place and seeks to have impact. Critical PAR offers useful contributions to shaping practice-led design research with people, especially where one wants to foreground the role of political and social contexts, as I did.

While some approaches to design research, such as Participatory Design, grapple directly with notions of power or conflict, others emphasize the role of co-design and design "in the field" with people as sites of design research, but do not address these complicating and critical factors.¹⁰ Utilizing critical PAR as a methodological reference, along with the practice and theory offered by PD, I set out to create a practice-led design research project that could also argue for an approach to design research that is informed by relationships of power, difference, and experience. This was further shaped by scholar-activists in fields outside design who connect their research into existing social contexts explicitly to people's efforts to know and change them (Gilmore 2007; Gordon 2004).

HOW I DID THE RESEARCH

Being "embedded" – siting the research with Critical Resistance

My research with Critical Resistance was practice-led and conducted while I worked with the group as an embedded designer-researcher. I drew on my experience doing collaborative Service Design, primarily working with students and collaborators to analyze, propose, and design service offerings in relationships to educational sites (schools and alternative education programs), sometimes in the context of incarceration. I brought my approaches and orientation to practices of designing with people into this research from those contexts. Because I was interested in developing ways of working, or designing, in CR's organizing, this meant that I was also discovering, negotiating, and framing that practice, sometimes on my own, and often with CR members, throughout, beginning with the earliest conversations about the project.

After talking individually with members interested in bringing this research to CR, I made an initial proposal to full membership in February 2012 on a monthly national call. I presented a loosely sketched plan for some initial engagement and ideas about both contributions such work might make to CR and what some

10. For example, in Koskinen, et al.'s (2011) book, *Design Research through Practice: From the Lab, Field, and Showroom*, they write, "During the past few years, several researchers have also turned to action research, where the goal is to use knowledge gained by studying a group or community in order to change it" (83). This framing skips over an essential element of action research described by many of the authors cited so far – the involvement of people in the context being researched in defining the research questions and methods themselves.

limitations might be. I proposed a basic structure, if the group agreed, suggesting that anyone interested in working with me could form the equivalent of a “working group,” a formation for projects and campaigns through which most CR work gets done. In a move that would come to deeply shape, if not define, the research moving forward, one long-standing member expressed a concern. She said that CR was short on people-power, and while the project sounded good and interesting, she wanted to amend the proposal. She suggested that I should only join members in their on-going work, and not introduce new work (or a new working group) to the organization. With this agreement, in place, I worked with different members, based mostly in California, to shape and site the project over the next several months. After some trial and error, and redoubled efforts on my part and on the part of chapter-based working groups, I began meeting with the Oakland chapter’s Anti-Policing Working Group during their twice-monthly meetings, via Skype, eight months later.

Over the course of the year and a half of this research, and beyond, I joined first as an observer / listener, then, increasingly as a participant in a range of ways. During this time, the working group had a total of nine members, five of whom were in the group for the full period of my research, three who left the group to focus on other critical needs or left CR during that time, and one who joined the group mid-way through my research. All members’ consent to be a part of the research and to have their voices included in research outputs was obtained through ethics procedures and the research received ethics approval before commencing. Where I quote conversations, email exchanges, or interviews, members are identified by a pseudonym. The members, as they appear in this text, are: Char, Evans, George, James, Jeanne, Martin, Patrick, Sefu, and Susan. For the first several months of our work together, one member of the group agreed to be a “point person” for me, meeting with me between the group’s regular meetings to talk about possibilities for “my project” and work on proposals to the group for possible engagements. Two people, James and Susan, acted in this position with me before the role fell by the wayside as I became more integrated into the group. As the research period progressed, my practice was primarily led by acts of listening, asking, synthesizing, and proposing, familiar to me from my previous experience. While these all continued to be primary ways I acted as a designer in my work with CR members, as I’ll argue in this dissertation, that practice itself evolved as I focused on attuning to its specific context and relational components (Light and Akama 2012). My design practice became distinct through the ways in which CR members and I came to do this work together.

The emphasis of the research, and what I would come to call CR members’ and my relational practice, was on what we did and made together, from creating artifacts to doing “infrastructuring,” or making structures and ways of working that emerge from the interactions of people, materials, and their contexts. Infrastructuring, which I discuss in more detail in relationship to my research in Chapter 4, is theorized by scholars and practitioners as a framework for the emergent, contextual,

and sometimes contested nature of socio-material structures that do work in, and get made through, collaborative design, especially in PD (Star and Ruhleder 1996; Karasati, Baker, and Millerand 2010; Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012a; 2012b; and DiSalvo, Clement, and Pipek 2012). In our work together, CR members and I developed internal infrastructures as means for doing, or furthering, their organizing practices and, ultimately, developing a new campaign. We engaged in practices of infrastructuring as one primary way of designing together that, in turn, framed critical questions and possibilities for the work itself.

Thus, while the participatory action research methods that informed my project typically require that the questions to be investigated are formed, refined, and researched by the group together, CR’s and my designing led to new questions with which our design work contended. In this way, there were aspects of this research for which the questions were more or less mine alone, even if I discussed them with CR members and they were shaped (and reshaped) by the process of our work together. Additionally, the *design* questions and problems raised throughout the course of the project came to constitute another set of inquires that were, if not consciously framed as such, collective questions raised by the work.

Interviews

Beginning in May 2012, I conducted interviews with No Cops group members. I asked a series of open-ended questions about their ideas about “my project;” how they perceived our use of design in their organizing work; and if or how working with me as an embedded designer was having an impact on that work. In later rounds of these interviews, I also asked members who participated to walk through a series of artifacts and photographs from work we’d done together over the research period and talk about anything that stood out to them. In all, six members of the group participated in interviews, some once, some two or three times over the course of the research period.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Bryman (2001), argue that interviews with co-researchers (or collaborators, in this case) allow a researcher to do “member checks” (Lincoln and Guba, 314) or “respondent validation” (Bryman, 273), in which the researcher asks co-participants to check the researcher’s interpretations and offer their own understandings of the design work and artifacts produced.¹¹ It is worth noting that there are multiple instances in these interviews, especially in the second and third rounds, conducted once the work of my research and their campaign development were well underway, in which CR members and I begin “doing design” through making proposals, working through disagreements, or imagining next steps in the work. While only some of these manifested in actual action, it arguably demonstrates one way in which No Cops members’ and my practice context fed the research context and vice versa; when we were talking about designing and the No

11. For more on using notes, photographs, and artifacts as prompts for reflection in research, see Kellehear (1996), Wadsworth (2001), and Koskinen et al. (2011).

Cops groups' organizing, sometimes the lines between "research" and "organizing" contexts were negligible, as it all became "our work."

In addition to acting as a significant source of information about the project and a challenge to some of my assumptions and concerns, these interviews, then, frequently acted as sites of what Robertson and Simonsen (2012) call "collective reflection in action" (15). As I will argue in this dissertation and show in the exhibition, doing this reflective work together created capacities for knowing together, or making knowledge, through the process of doing the design, organizing, and research work that made up our engagement. The interviews emerged as one of several sites where No Cops members and I learned things together that were of use in their, my, or our work. Accordingly, I draw on these interviews throughout the dissertation to frame ideas, mark design developments, explore arguments and disagreements, and suggest theories of practice shaped through the project.

Reflective writing, discussion, and critique

In addition to practicing reflection with CR members, my research into and through my practice was developed through written reflection, discussion, and presentations of work in progress. These together acted as sites – from fairly private to entirely public – in which I was able to think through and attempt to make sense of the multitude of ideas and themes emerging in my research. This method builds on Schön's (1983) argument for "reflective practice" as a mode of knowledge-development through practice, in which designers, and others, both reveal and become able to see and understand what takes place, and how, in a practice-led context. This happens, he argues, as participants respond to emergent circumstances in the work itself (reflection-in-action) and see it after-the-fact as a means of learning what took place (reflection-on-action).

I maintained a research blog, which I used during the research period to report and reflect on the day-to-day happenings in my research context. This primarily focused on meetings and conversations with the No Cops group and individual members, and included questions, provocations, design ideas, and concerns. The blog acted as a repository of my reflection-in-action (to the extent I saw and could record it) and reflection-on-action. In addition to the blog, and sometimes as a part of it, I retained notes from conversations, emails, meetings, and in-process design work throughout the research. As I will discuss below, this writing, while it helped to hone some of my questions and observations in the moment of the work itself, also functioned as a source of data through which I came to investigate and understand the practice No Cops members and I created in our work together over time.

This research was also shaped through rigorous critique and development in work-in-progress presentations to peers and supervisors. In regular supervision meetings and twice-yearly Graduate Research Conferences¹², I tested out ideas of

12. The Graduate Research Conference (GRC) is a practice of the School of Media and Communication at RMIT in which students present work-in-progress for feedback from

what I thought I saw happening in my research and posed critical questions about, and ideas for, next steps to take or ways to understand what had happened to that point. This forum for critique, similar to the interviews I held with No Cops members, gave me another lens through which to see the research materials I reported out. The process of temporary synthesis, question posing, presentation, and feedback helped to solidify, negate, or shift ideas at critical moments throughout the research. It also provided opportunities for structured reflection that complimented the collective reflection with No Cops members and my reflection on my own. The outcomes of these multiple forms of reflection, along with the artifact- and process-oriented design work the No Cops group and I did as we did "infrastructuring" through our designing together, generated the material with and through which I undertook a methodical diagram-based examination of this research and practice.

Diagramming

Processes of designing, engaging, writing, and then collecting, organizing, re-positioning, and drawing acted together to allow me to put my practice-based experiences, reflections-on-action, and nascent hunches "over there," away from me, so that I might try to make sense of them (Kolko 2010).¹³ This was especially valuable when the process demonstrated challenges to my assumptions, acting to reorient my research questions and leading to key developments in my understandings and arguments. This approach to design-led research through "multiple modes of reflection" creates what Grocott (2010) refers to as the "continual negotiation [of] the back talk, insights, and propositions generated from the inter-related activities of designing, writing, and framing the research" (50). Schön (1983) describes "back-talk" as information or indicators offered to a designer in a "conversation with the [design] situation." The designer makes a "move" into the situation, and the situation "talks back" (79). Schön characterizes a "good process of design" as one in which this conversation with the situation is reflective. Grocott argues that a designer-researcher's engagements with the materials and ideas of a project serve to "amplify the back talk the designing generates," so that one can work in relationship to what the design situation, and the designing itself, is "saying" more directly (54).

So that I could both create critical distance from my practice experience in order to analyze it and formalize some organization of the plethora of information made, gathered, and reflected-upon over the year and a half of my embedded work with CR, I had to introduce a structure that would allow me to engage with the material of the research / design. In order to interrupt my inclination to default to an understanding of "my practice" as instances of "designing" with CR that were

external panelists twice a year throughout their candidacy.

13. In a 2011 talk at the College Art Association Cameron Tonkinwise and I argued for writing in design education as a means of "othering" designers' thinking and processes so that they and others might critically reflect on them. Our teaching and scholarly collaborations helped to shape my thinking and longer-term practice about the work of writing about practice.

already recognizable to me as “designing,” I needed a way to find my practice by allowing it to “speak” through the back talk of the work itself.

To do this work, I organized these materials in successively analytical ways, using sorting, drawing, and reflective writing. I first traced the evolution of the language others and I used to represent what we understood my practice, my position, and our work to be. Secondly to extrapolate meaning from them, I made a series of Venn diagrams through which I experimented with relationships between what took place discursively and in action in my practice. These acted as what Grocott (2010) calls “diagnostic diagrams” which allowed me to “provisionally fix” the many elements at play in the research context so that I might begin to “assess what they... reveal[ed]” (194). In making the drawings, I worked – in the most literal, haptic sense – with the “data” from the project to try to see and understand it, and allow it to challenge my assumptions. By coalescing the piles of evidence from my research practice, helping to sort and organize them, and acting as a means for conversing with the situation, the diagrams became a part of the process by which I located my, and our, design practice (often against my expectations and to my surprise). The drawings’ subjectivity is relevant to their place in my reflective process; they are maps of that process, twice over, first organizing my initial reflections through experimentation and synthesis (Kolko 2010), then catalyzing later reflections.

Practice notations

Together with interviews and critical readings, the diagnostic process shaped the major questions and arguments put forth in this practice-led project. The reflection and argumentation that resulted is evidenced in the written dissertation as well as in the “practice notations” that accompany each of the three main chapters (and will be included in the PhD exhibition). These “notations” derive from the use of dance notation as a means of planning for or documenting dance. While a serious consideration of the nuanced conversation and debates surrounding dance notation is outside the scope of this discussion, it is worth briefly noting that I discovered it while looking for a way to draw across time while also showing multiple elements occurring at once. A notation in Edward Tufte’s *Beautiful Evidence* (2006) of a 18th Century French *contredanse* (Figure 3) showed exactly this, what Tufte calls “still-land displays of evidence that moves” in which “reading *down* each column describes sequences *within* a movement [and] reading *across* describes the sequence of movements” (32-3). The practice notations I use here seek to do this as a means of engaging in what Grocott (2012) calls “figuring” to both explore and show the practice-led research process and propositions in total, and as they developed in time.

While some dance notations, like the image in Tufte’s book, are carefully constructed diagrams of how a dance *has been done* and how it *should be done again*,



FIGURE 3 Dance notation showing elements of each movement on the vertical axis and the unfolding of the dance on the horizontal axis

and in this sense are both transcriptive and prescriptive, others are more open and speculative (Goldberg 1976; Heyward 2015). Grocott argues that “figuring” is undertaken by designer-researchers as a means of working explicitly with the tension between reflection and speculation. She writes:

...if speculate, as a synonym for reflect, can be defined as the capacity to think deeply about something, then in using the term I am also alluding to its second definition: to take a risk. In this way speculation-led-reflection can be understood as the designerly act of attempting to figure out and contemplate while also venturing out to playfully explore possibilities (140).

My use of “practice notation” seeks to both map what took place in my work with No Cops members over the course of our practice together, and to enrich and complicate that narrative using No Cops members’ ideas and reflections, primarily from interviews, along with my own reflection-in- and -on-action to develop a fuller, messier picture of what happened over time and in any specific moment. In this way, the practice notations act to hold the experience and assertions of the design and research at the same time as attempting to make evident the looping, cyclical, and speculative nature of the designing process, the organizing work, and my / our attempts to make sense of them both, separately and together. It is important to note that as they are themselves artifacts of my reflective process in this research, the notations are not meant to be stand-alone images or graphic representations to be read without explanation or out of the context of the larger submission. Their inclusion in the exhibition will also contend with their role as process artifacts and the ways in which they are bound to the larger analytic context, as well as possibilities for their continued use in my practice.

The “movements” in the notations are also reflected in the written dissertation, acting to organize the research period through unpacking instances of emergence, conflict, or coalescing. They represent the moments in which we designed our practice together through our work. If movements in dance notation designate a section of a dance – the action between transitions – then in the practice notations and dissertation text, the “movements” explore how CR members and I came to shape and define our practice and their campaign.

In a lyrical discussion of Remy Charlip’s dance notations, critic Anna Heyward (2015) describes the difference in his drawings from others’:

...the very idea of trying to hurry along in the wake of a dance and record its movements is inelegant. But Charlip’s dances show us the fluidity between the dancer and the scribe: they allow us to think of notation as a way to invent movement, rather than just try to preserve and petrify it. One of the chief features of his drawings is their accessibility – they’re like invitations to the audience to join in. (np)

Similarly, rather than being prescriptive guides to collaborative design methods, or entirely faithful or complete representations, the practice diagrams seek to act as

points of entry with as much relevance for those of us who did this specific dance as for those who might attempt dances of their own, later on. Acting to hold the tension of reflection and speculation, these notations suggest that what mattered in the collaboration – what allowed for and was generative of a shared, contextually specific, and nuanced practice guided by their organizing work – was also always being made of what was and what we could press ourselves to imagine, in small and large ways.

COMPONENTS OF THIS PhD SUBMISSION

This PhD submission has three components: the written dissertation open on screen or in the reader’s hand now, an exhibition of project work and analysis, and a presentation in which I will address the ways in which this research changed my approaches to and understanding of my practice(s) of designing with people, in this and other contexts. The dissertation is framed around specific moments across the period of my design-led research in which interactions, conversations, the processes of making artifacts, and the negotiation of our relationships and work together shaped both the nature of the work and my understandings of it. Each chapter, as I discuss in more detail below, focuses on one or more artifact(s) or systems and the processes by which they were proposed, imagined, made, discussed, and in some cases abandoned. Through a discussion of both what took place at the time, and my (and sometimes CR members’ and my) reflection and analysis on those moments, I build an argument for an embodied, specific, and relational practice of designing with people. I also argue that the nature of such a practice is necessarily political, and that this has added relevance in work done with the aim of creating social or political change.

The exhibition includes artifacts from CR’s and my work together and the practice notations discussed above. Taken together, these materials tell one story of our designing, organizing, and knowledge-making and how these grew from and helped to create a shared, relational practice. Using a combination of artifacts I made either as prompts or for use in the No Cops group’s work, excerpts from interviews in which designing began to take place, and the practice notations, the exhibition imagines these as materials of embodied, reflective, co-authoring practice. This proposes that what is shown and explored in the notations is another significant outcome from the research, through which my reflection on practice examined what CR members and I did and revealed the dynamics and importance of duration, context, knowing, and relationships as components of designing with people. While I do not suggest the practice notations are templates for guiding or recording design process, necessarily, I do propose them as an example of engaging in “figuring” as a critical practice in collaborative contexts.

Finally, my presentation brings the findings of my research into conversation with both the work that CR members and I did to build what is now a campaign called the Oakland Power Projects and my own conception of collaborative design

practices moving forward. Building on my argument that No Cops members and I co-authored our design work together, I discuss the continued complexities and possibilities of that practice, and the ways we kept learning to speak to and through our work and our relationships. The continuation of our work is a critical coda to the arguments I make in this dissertation and the exhibition. Our capacity to design together, or use design as a component of CR's work, continued to be intimately tied to the needs of the group, our perceptions of what could be useful to design (sometimes shared and sometimes not), and our willingness to risk together toward an agreed upon (political) goal. The presentation focuses on the transformation of my practice through this research and includes reflections on what my proposal for design co-authorship and the highly contextualized nature of problem-setting mean for my work as a designer and teacher in these contexts moving forward, and as a contribution to Service Design and design areas that fall under the general umbrella of "social design," in particular.

Chapter synopses

The chapters ahead explore and address specific moments in the course of my design research with Critical Resistance through which my practice, and ours together, was imagined, questioned, shaped, and understood. Throughout this dissertation, with the exception of the practice notations at the start of Chapters 2-5, all of the images included are artifacts from CR No Cops members' and my design process, working as illustrations of events and exchanges I discuss in the text. In Chapter 2, I explore the development of what I call a "relational practice," in which my position in the No Cops group was being shaped and our ways of working together evolved through negotiations and discussions of visual artifacts, made for use in the group's organizing work. This "relational practice," I argue, created a foundation for what emerged over the course of the project and, in my reflection-on-action, revealed a way of thinking of design practice in terms of interaction and engagement over time.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the position of a designer in collaborative design practices, arguing that rather than imagining the designer at the center of scenarios in which co-design exercises and experiences are framed and scaffolded by them, we might reconsider the position of the designer as variable and shifting, moving in relationship to one's collaborators and what is considered *of use* in the work. Here, I suggest that the development of a relational practice, and collaboration over time, creates different parameters for understanding and doing design with people, including noticing and working across difference, disagreement, and contention about what is necessary and what the nature of "the problem" requires.

In Chapter 4, I argue for what I call "design co-authorship" as a practice in which the contexts for designing and the designing processes themselves are collaboratively determined and shaped. I map the development of this dynamic in the No Cops group's and my work, through their re-positioning of me as a member

of the group, our increasingly co-generated design processes and outcomes, and a shared, and emphatically complex, practice.

Through the notations, chapters, and presentation, I propose an approach to practice as *being in-relation-to*, and therefore as a dynamic, embodied, and contextualized process. In this sense, I do not make specific recommendations for methods or practice applications. Based in the research, this theory of practice suggests ways of thinking, and critical engagements with difference and contestation, toward making situated, relational design practices with people that are deeply embedded in and engaged with the contexts and "problems" they frame. Additionally, this approach is invested in building collaborative design practices that are productive of collective knowledge and capacities for action. While a desire to create replicable practice *methods* is understandable, and familiar in practice-led design research, it is also arguably less appropriate for the kind of relational, co-authoring practice I am arguing for here. Following on the epistemological call raised by Light and Akama (2012) for more "critical reflection on our participatory practices" (9), this PhD seeks to participate in re-imagining the aims of practice-led research in collaborative design to emphasize inquiry into the situated, embodied, and relational dynamics that shape those practices, the complex political contexts in which they take place, and the kinds of knowledge and action they allow people to make for themselves.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING A RELATIONAL PRACTICE

“I mean it’s your project, right, but it’s not necessarily your work...”¹

INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2013, I sent an email to the No Cops group. After a few initial months working together, I had to step away from our relatively new relationship for personal reasons. I wrote to say I was ready to get back in touch and get started again. I thanked them for having been patient, said I’d been trying to keep up with what was going on through the listserv, and suggested a date to rejoin them. Since I stopped attending meetings in mid-January, the group had started to shift their focus from a neighborhood-based campaign to end gang injunctions² in North Oakland, which seemed already to be falling out of use, to combating new policing approaches being introduced by the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and the city. These approaches, the most recent of which was called Ceasefire, were consistently changing, but in CR’s analysis each pursued similar strategies and aims. Thus, while I didn’t know exactly what the work – theirs or mine – would look like on my return, I wrote, “I’m looking forward to seeing you all again.”

No Cops members were balancing a few discussions and ideas at once. They were talking about how they might frame a victory in the disuse of the gang injunctions, even when they hadn’t been legally dismissed.³ They also wanted to talk about additional policing schemes being discussed across Oakland and how CR

1. Patrick, pers. comm.

2. Gang injunctions are a tool used by local governments and police to use the civil court system (as opposed to criminal laws) to issue a broad restraining order against alleged “gang members” in a specific geographical area. The gang injunction prohibits named individuals from doing a range of activities, including some things that are already prohibited under criminal laws, such as selling drugs, and, significantly, other activities that are not, such as wearing certain colors, being in groups of people, being with specific other people, or being out after a designated hour. In Oakland, gang injunctions were neighborhood-based, and often named several “John Doe” individuals (these can be used to detain people not explicitly named, but still suspected or targeted by police), as well as people who did not identify themselves as gang members. For more, see Green and Pranis, 2007.

3. The remaining gang injunctions in Oakland were dismissed two years later, in March 2015, at which time CR and the Stop the Injunctions Coalition claimed a major victory. See, for example, Mohamed Schek’s press release published on commondreams.org March 6, 2015:



might target these as a follow up to the gang injunctions. And, in the interest of identifying a next-step campaign, the group had begun conversations with allied organizations to ask what policing-related issues were impacting them or could be places for CR to focus energy and organizing.

In this early part of our work together, when the relationship between “their organizing” and “my project” was in formation and the focus of the No Cops group was itself unknown, what it might look like to “design” with members remained open-ended. While we’d begun some mapping-related research and activity specific to the gang injunctions and North Oakland before I’d stepped away, members no longer saw this as an immediate need. So while I did not know *what* I’d be doing on my return, we had agreed that I’d continue to sit in on meetings, and this was my next step. Thus, even as what CR members and I didn’t know seemed easier to name than what we did – about what they were doing next, about how “my project” or “design” might be of use in their work – *how* we planned to move forward was, at least, set.

This chapter builds on scholarship in Participatory Design (PD), in particular, that focuses on how designing *works* with people in collaborative design. Ann Light and Yoko Akama (2012) propose that in order to both understand and talk about what happens in participatory design contexts, designers should shift from framing PD as a range of replicable methods to seeing it as an embodied “participatory practice” (2). Arguing that “the act of designing with groups of people involves an embodied knowing” (2), they insist on the importance of foregrounding working with and through “social processes,” which both precede the involvement of a designer and are produced by designers’ engagements, with intended and unintended consequences (2). A designer’s performance of methods in the specific and changing contexts in which designing with groups of people takes place, and their engagement with their own and others’ knowledge, history, feelings, and desires, are informed by and productive of what the authors call “embodied knowledge” (9). This embodied knowledge is both subjective and experiential, built from the specific interactions with a given group of people and the feelings and possibilities or limits that arise, and from practice over time with ways of working and critical reflection “on our own designing” (9).

I am particularly interested, here, in the ways in which understanding designing practices as embodied – taking place both in a specific time and place, and through the actions, decisions, experiences, and cumulative knowing of the designer-engaged-with-people – opens up possibilities for theorizing CR’s and my long-term design project, and the role of all participants involved. Lucy Suchman (2002) brings feminist theories of situated knowledge to bear on the relationships that shape, and are shaped by, collaborative design engagements. She suggests that in these contexts designers might become aware of, and understand our positions in relationship to,

a “rich, densely structured landscape of identities and working relations,” inclusive of the “subtle and profound differences that actually do divide us” (92).

An embodied design practice is shaped by the landscape to which Suchman refers. Through acknowledging the “subtle and profound differences” between and among designers and the groups of people with whom designers work (or for whom they design, in some cases), as well as the individual and collective “identities and working relations” that both precede and are produced throughout design engagements, Suchman proposes, after Donna Haraway, that we might become “answerable...for what we learn how to build” (96). These understandings of position, location, and relationship are only of use insofar as designers, as Light and Akama suggest, are able to bring them, and their contingencies – the possibilities for upset plans, rerouted exercises, and reimagined outcomes – into practice. In this way, working with disruption and collective reimagining, rather than seeking to guide people and ideas into imagined paths of agreement, becomes a means for making design work. Suchman suggests participatory design that is based in the particular and located knowledges of participants and developed through collective understandings “of [objects’] production and use” builds “collective knowledge,” allowing what is designed to become “effective” (96).

In my research with Critical Resistance, No Cops group members and I developed what I call a “relational practice” from and through “embodied” and “collective” knowing (Light and Akama 2012; Suchman 2002). This practice was rooted in our exchanges, as I’ll discuss in this chapter, and mindful of the contexts in which it took place, those we as individuals brought with us along with the ones we created through our work together. The term relational practice, while not prevalent in design literature, is utilized in both feminist theories of work and in nursing. In the former, relational practice refers to ways of doing work and engaging in workplace interactions that are frequently gendered as “feminine,” such as team-building or looking out for group goals, and go unrecognized as *work* (Fletcher 1998; 1999). In nursing, scholar-practitioners identify relational practice as an approach to patient care through “authentically interested inquiry into another’s (and one’s own) experiences” that highlights nurses’ “relational capacity” over behavioral techniques of communication (Doane 2002, 401). While there are significant differences between these contexts and that of my research – between a hierarchically organized paid workplace or a nurse-patient relationship and No Cops members’ and my relationships – they remain instructive, as they point to the value (and de-valuing) of relationships as a sites of, and routes to, meaningful work.⁴

4. While I will not focus on theories of relational practice in management, feminist work, or nursing fields in this submission, it is worth briefly noting their key arguments: Fletcher (1998, 1999) argues that there are four categories of relational practice that are constructed as gendered (feminized) forms of work that often are critically important in the workplace, but routinely dismissed as actual work (whether undertaken by people identified as women or men). Those are what she calls “preserving,” “mutual empowering,” “achieving,” and “creating team.” In each, the actions of (mostly) women doing this relational work sought to preserve

<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2015/03/06/victory-oakland-residents-city-attorney-dismisses-controversial-police-gang>.

In my research, I began using the term “relational practice” in the process of my reflection on CR members’ and my work; the phrase emerged in my notes as I tried to name what I saw. Thus, I use “relational practice” to refer to the practice that developed over time and through acts and instances of proposing and thinking together through our work to produce meaning and objects or representations significant for the aims and vision of the organization, in large and small ways. Significantly, the development of this practice involved a gradual “interweaving” of what I had been calling “my project” and “their work,” and a related shift in my own position in relationship to both, as I became a participant–designer in the working group, bringing my own histories of political work and my close ties to CR as an organization. My use of the term brings together proposals in design for more carefully considered inquiry into what takes place in designing relationships and what that might mean for and about designing with related concerns in other practice-based scholarship. The approach to relational practice I propose here, then, extends theories of embodied and collective practice to on-going work with a group of people in a specific context who are working toward a shared, if complex and difficult to imagine, social and political future.

In this dissertation, I argue that No Cops group members and I designed a relational practice through our work together which determined what “design” became, and what was made useful about it, in the ongoing project. This chapter examines critical early developments in CR No Cops members’ and my practice together as we began to work on a series of related, but largely unplanned, design and organizing engagements. Individually and collectively, we brought experience and knowledge to the table that also facilitated our capacities to enter into this work together. CR members brought extensive knowledge of the landscape, their previous anti-policing organizing in Oakland, networks of allies, and a range of facilitation and organizing skills, including, critically, the means to listen and negotiate difference within a group. I shared some of these skills. I brought the ability to listen and facilitate, along with a history of political organizing. I also sought to use my experience visualizing arguments and ideas for both internal communication and public dissemination. During this period, we drew on these skills and began to learn how to work (with design) together, through our experimentation with discussing,

tasks and goals, the relationships in the workplace that allow work to happen well, one’s own capacity to have power and contribute, and activities meant to construct the social reality of a team (1998, 169). Fletcher argues that relational practice activities are not seen as “work” especially in work environments where what is explicitly valued are more standard (gendered masculine) narratives of achievement, including “autonomy, self-promotion, and individual heroics” (1998, 175). In nursing, “relational practice” is an approach to both nursing and nursing education which foregrounds nurses’ capacities to be-in-relation to patients, as opposed to relying on communication protocols and methods as a means for creating connections to patients and loved ones in their care (Hartrick 1997; Doane 2002, 2014). Critical questions about how one relates to patients and others, what one is bringing to the “relational moment,” and what assumptions one is making or how one is focusing one’s attention are foundational to the approach to practice (Doane 2014).

proposing, and doing strategic thinking and decision making facilitated in part through designed artifacts. This work was formative of our relational practice at its most nascent stages.

MOVEMENT 1 Drawing Ceasefire

In my first meeting back, one of the group’s discussions focused on Ceasefire, a policing approach developed and used in Boston and Chicago in the 1990s and 2000s (Kennedy 2001; Skogan 2009), that was in the process of being introduced in Oakland, ostensibly to address gang-related gun violence. The Ceasefire strategy proposes what is often called a “carrot and stick” approach. The “carrot” refers to access to opportunities – such as jobs, or education and training – for individuals targeted in the program. The “stick,” on the other hand, is the deployment of the full force of the laws available to arrest and charge people with what are often enhanced federal gun and gun violence charges that carry long sentences, sometimes in a federal prison far from home (Kennedy 2001). While implementation looks different in different cities, the standard starting point for Ceasefire is what is referred to as a “call-in,” in which police ask people who they are targeting with the policy to come in to a meeting where police and city officials introduce the “carrot and stick” options. If the police believe that the people “called in” stop the violent activity of which they are being accused after that meeting, they gain access to the carrot; if they do not, they get the stick (Rios 2011). Oakland introduced Ceasefire in October 2012 (Bulwa 2013), and the program was in full swing at the time I rejoined the group.

CR members were talking about whether and how to rally against Ceasefire’s implementation. During my absence, they organized with other local groups to oppose Oakland hiring a consulting group, Strategic Policy Partners (SPP), led by Robert Wasserman and William Bratton, a former police chief of both Los Angeles and New York City who championed “stop and frisk” practices that are used disproportionately to target people of color (New York Times 2010). SPP leadership was holding meetings around Oakland to talk to residents about their proposals. No Cops members decided to develop a series of flyers to circulate at these meetings, focused on challenging the OPD’s arguments for Ceasefire and sharing CR’s arguments for alternatives to policing. They would argue that Ceasefire was one of several rotating plans that would neither work to address the problem of “gang violence,” as it was articulated by the city, nor what CR identified as root causes of harm or police activity in Oakland, such as lack of employment opportunity or the racist targeting of people of color by police.

Throughout the meeting, I mostly listened. I had a lot to catch up on; I was learning as they spoke about what had gone on while I was away, and we did not come back to the work we’d done before I left. But when members drafting the Ceasefire flyer sent it out, and Martin raised the possibility of adding “graphics” to the flyer over the group’s email listserv (“...it’d be great to have a carrot-and-stick

image, potentially with a police baton as the stick...”), I wrote back. I said that I didn’t “mean to butt in, but, if you all want me doing this kind of thing, I’d be happy to work on making an image for the flyer.”

In the thread of emails with the working group that followed, I asked for suggestions and ideas members had about what “the image should convey” according to CR’s argument about Ceasefire. I picked up on the idea of using a police baton, or nightstick, to represent the “stick” and asked about trying out an image of a nightstick breaking a carrot as a possible visual metaphor for CR’s counter-reading of the Ceasefire strategy as one in which the threat of policing undermined or displaced the possibilities of offering services and access to opportunities. While Martin liked that idea, Susan suggested that the “carrot” in their analysis was more like an illusion than a thing being “broken,” and wondered about the possibility of showing it as “disappearing.”

With this negotiation in mind, I worked on three loosely drafted images. While I took specifics about how to represent CR’s argument from our conversations, I also brought my general understanding of, and experience with, CR’s ideological positions to the table, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3. I sent the draft images out (See Figure 4), explaining: “Susan pointed out that part of the argument is that the carrot doesn’t really exist in the first place - that it’s a phantom that ends up being used to justify a specific kind of police action, so rather than going with the carrot being smashed by the nightstick idea, I tried to work with the carrot hiding the nightstick, or the nightstick (police violence and intrusion) masquerading as a carrot (opportunities for employment, etc.) - so I mocked up a police baton with carrot tops attached to the top of the stick with electrical tape.”

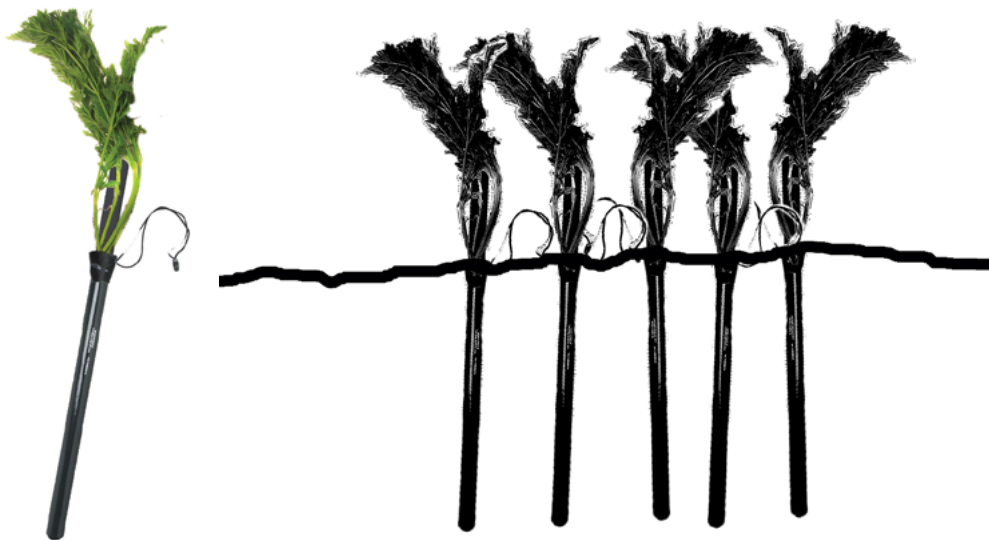


FIGURE 4 Carrot and stick digital sketches

Along with the images and explanation, I suggested we could discuss them further over email or in the next meeting, and, based on feedback, talk about how to make a “not-draft image.”

At this juncture in my research, because of unexpected personal circumstances and a shifting political landscape, the No Cops group and I hadn’t done or made much together, except a commitment to seeing what we might make or do. It was this commitment that led me to jump in and offer a role for myself in drafting images for the Ceasefire flyer. It was also, though, my own concern about finding out what my role might be, what “design” might offer, and about keeping my research moving forward, that prompted me to push into a way of working – making images – I hadn’t imagined as a part of the role I would be taking on when the research began. And, CR No Cops members’ and my relational practice formed through precisely these kinds of conversations and interactions, often about designed artifacts or proposals, during which we developed collective ways of knowing as we negotiated their meanings and uses. The ideas we surfaced and produced in this way were, in turn, sometimes shared and sometimes contested. As I’ll explore in more detail in the following sections, talking through these draft images and the more refined images that followed created a ground on which to build ways of both working and making meaning together. This took place even as the nature of “my project,” “design,” and “our work” was being determined, by me, by the working group members, and by us together.

MOVEMENT 2 Making strategy: the carrot and the stick

In the meeting and email exchanges beforehand, members batted around ideas generated from the images I’d sent. They discussed how it might clarify their meaning if we placed the nightstick-as-carrot into the hands of various actors, like the Chief of Police, or a generic cop, and delved further into possible visual metaphors that could explicate CR’s analysis of Ceasefire as a component of ongoing policing strategies in Oakland. As we looked at the mocked up images, members of the group threw out associations, ideas, and challenges:

Who is being treated like “an animal” through the use of this “carrot and stick” analogy?

What if something is being done with the stick, some activity? So rather than the object, show the actor implementing the pain and suffering?

Or what about a cop pulling a nightstick out by the carrot top?

Or maybe the act of violence is in the use of the idea / object, so the carrot can stay a carrot if the actor is using it as a stick...

In this conversation people’s ideas ranged from expanding on the metaphors already in use, to asking deeper questions of the use of the “carrot and stick”

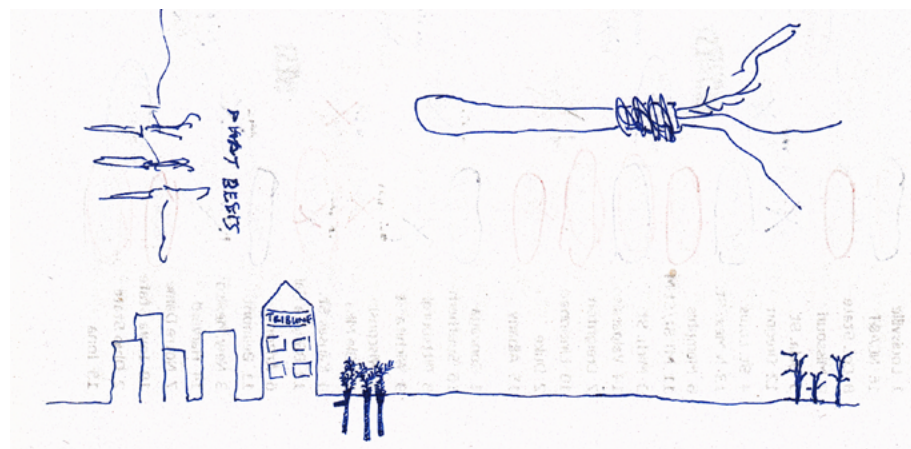


FIGURE 5 Imagining two Oakland through a rough visual metaphor

metaphor by authorities like police and city officials, to nuancing CR's own visual arguments to pinpoint their critique. As group members talked about how these images, and ideas for riffs on them, might produce meaning relevant to their goal of resisting Ceasefire, they explicated the possible double-meaning available in the images: on the one hand, an image of police and city strategies and, on the other, of CR's counter-reading.

At my desk, I pulled out another image I'd sketched the day before the meeting, but hadn't circulated. Despite my concerns about making *too many* suggestions, the direction of the conversation led me to propose an extension of this visual / strategic metaphor, represented in my thinking drawing: a very rough approximation of an Oakland horizon, moving from the downtown area where City Hall is on the left to a "garden" or plot of land on the right. Near the city buildings on the left side of the line were three police baton carrots in the ground, and on the right were tops of "actual" carrots, as if growing from the ground (See Figure 5). I wondered aloud if there was a way to extend the metaphor we were talking about to an idea of "two visions of Oakland." If the carrot in Ceasefire was an extension of (or screen for) continued police violence, I asked, then could "actual" carrots represent the vision of Oakland being pursued by CR and their allies, like services or alternatives to current policies and practices? George suggested that maybe the argument CR was making was not only that the OPD was using "the façade of services and jobs [carrots], but that if we invested in more 'carrots,' we could create a different kind of Oakland." What if, he asked, the group created a "carrot campaign?"

By the end of the meeting, the discussion prompted by thinking together about how to hone and edit the meanings conveyed in the carrot and stick image drafts had turned from one about representations for a series of fact sheets, to one about – even if only in the most propositional way – a campaign idea that might reflect CR's vision and goals. The draft images I generated for the proposed Ceasefire

materials became artifacts that combined ideas about strategies, a framing of the problem presented by Ceasefire and the stories the OPD told about it as a policy, and images as metaphors for both of these, from CR's political point of view and with CR's goals in mind.

In an interview about ten months later, conducted as the campaign continued to take shape, Martin talked about the discussion of the proposed carrot and stick images as an example of the work he saw "my project" doing with the group:

...while...we didn't put that on a flyer and hand it to people as an effective thing...I think it helped us to challenge ourselves to think...which then made our work more effective. I think we're at a place...in this project that I see as a very long term project, that when I think of the history that we have in [it], I think that our project now would look very different if we didn't have that entry into thinking about fighting Ceasefire and thinking about what that could look like graphically from a design perspective. And while we could go back and physically use those externally, I think it was a strong part of our process internally to get where we're at... I think it's less the drawings that we got out of it and more the brainstorming process of what that could look on a piece of paper, which is still what we begrudgingly call our campaign (laughter). Right, like we don't want this to be "the carrot campaign," I have numerous qualms with that title and none of us have proposed another name that we've been willing to go with⁵... I don't think that's a bad thing, and I think part of that is because that was one strong visual that was connected to the political target that's the same political target that it always has been... (pers. comm.)

Even though the images did not get used for this (public) purpose, our discussion of them and attempts to make decisions about how they might be most useful in articulating CR's political vision served to hone and articulate that vision to No Cops members themselves, and to me, through the process. In this instance, the aim of the sketches was at first primarily to serve as drafts for an image for a flyer. But, as I proposed and made them, I engaged CR members in initial conversations about what their meaning should be, which led group members and me to think together about what mattered about the meanings these images could convey. The offer to "make an image" for a flyer became an effort to articulate the group's political argument.⁶ Thus, these images and their uses developed *through our en-*

5. In an interview, one member noted that in an a conversation with another CR Oakland member, they talked about one set of concerns about the "carrot campaign" name, which was eventually replaced through a naming workshop: "Something that James pointed out to me... which has been in my mind ...it's about the title of the project, and he's like, 'if you title your campaign with something that's reliant on half of an imperial metaphor, that's fucked up'... and I'm like, 'oh yeah, that *is* fucked up'" (Susan, pers. comm.).

6. I also proposed the idea of a series of images – ideograms that could work together on several fact sheets to act as a visual language of opposition to police policies that might become familiar or replicable. Thus, in these initial design exchanges I was proposing what I would

agement with them. In other words, in their use as design artifacts in the No Cops meeting, and in the context of the group's conversations about determining a next campaign focus, the images transformed. The sketches came to speak strategically as they took on a larger strategic role, engendering conversation and debate about how to frame Ceasefire as a problem, and possibly, how to approach policing more broadly as a campaign focus.

Talking about these images led to an additional possibility for the campaign work No Cops members were looking to take up: a campaign focused on building, and building on, community-determined resources. As Martin, quoted above, noted, the name "carrot campaign" stuck around, even after the idea of the "carrot" as a metaphor lost some utility and began to be questioned. In a subsequent interview he reflected:

What it did for us ... I think it really helped us think about the campaign development process that we were going through and how there were certain pieces of it that we really did want to focus on and other pieces of it that we wanted to move our work away from. And I think that...while we didn't actually engage [the images] in public ways, it was a really helpful tool for us to process that shift. And I think that shift was a really important one away from targeting individual policing schemes and toward trying to think about what kind of resources we do want that don't rely on cops. (pers. comm.)

These ideas, however, were not generated solely or primarily through the images or the conversations they produced; the context that first called for them pre-existed this design exchange. In our initial efforts to work through and with design together, CR No Cops members and I were also working through and with the desires and visions of the organization and individual participants (including me). This context deeply informed the process through which the carrot and stick images became artifacts that also contained strategies as we attempted to negotiate and use them. Thus, the images as artifacts in a participatory process acted as elements through which we developed capacities early on to work together to produce meaning internally, and, possibly, externally. In this way, we could consider the images *in this design context* part of what Pelle Ehn (2008) calls a "design thing." Ehn has theorized "design things" as "meaningful potentially controversial [socio-material] assembl[ies]" made up of objects, people, and their interactions, and constructed "for and with the participants in a project" (3). In this view, it was neither the images themselves, nor what might be made of them, concretely, as we worked and re-worked them that were the key elements in the participatory design process. The sketches were just one element in the larger whole of making our relational practice.

Even as this was taking place, however, I expressed concern about my role in my writing. In my research blog, I ruminated about my political alignment with

have imagined to be a more systems approach, something that linked the immediate to a broader set of design moves, even if I still was quite unclear as to what that might entail.

CR making my connection with the group, and therefore designing with them, possible. My reflection in the moment reveals a concern with the line between my role as a designer (listening, proposing, making), and my role as a political ally or even fellow CR member as I was trying to work out a line between my "design" ideas and my "political" ones. As our work took place, I moved from "not wanting to butt in" to making proposals with the group and on my own. These proposals were strategic in nature and framed by the larger political questions in CR's practice, which was, although not specifically *here* in Oakland, mine as well. Looking back on this moment gave me another way of seeing it. As a group, we built on what we all brought to the table to develop design possibilities through negotiations of design and politics in a specific context, with a sense of the problems before us and of acceptable outcomes. I also entered a negotiation between, on the one hand, my role within the group and the kind of design outcome I imagined when I proposed the project and, on the other, what I thought "design" might allow and what I began to imagine could actually constitute "design" *work*.

The question of design-based faculties and authorial power – the idea both of what designers bring to working with people and how their roles are situated – is, as discussed in the outset of this chapter, critical to framing arguments for approaches to collaborative designing.⁷ In the act of creating our relational practice over time, whether this was explicitly clear to us in the moment or not, No Cops members and I were also navigating how my position in the group would work. As I will discuss throughout the dissertation, my own assessment of, and concerns about, how much power I had either as a designer making suggestions and proposals or as a long-term CR member, were a constant source of reflection and learning. Negotiating the generative role I imagined for "design" at the same time as I sought to limit the authorial power of my voice meant reimagining both my position and the possibilities of design throughout the project. And while I would not suggest that all designers must approach designing with people with the same goals, I will argue that we must make our own positions, investments, and interests explicit (Suchman 2002). This, then, requires us to be(come) invested in finding our places, both so that we can try to know what these might be, and so that we might articulate them to ourselves and others. Rather than saying that designers simply have an obligation to disclose our positions, I am suggesting a practice of designing with people in which we acknowledge, again and again, that the work of locating ourselves will be ongoing and surprising as much as it might be predictable and planned.

MOVEMENT 3 Representing Critical Resistance

I left the meeting having offered to work with an illustration student to further develop the carrot and stick images. When I reached out to the student, I tried to

7. See also, "Social and Political Contexts for Collaborative Design" on page 17.

determine how to frame the political content of the group's work and goals without risking alienating her, as I didn't know her ideas about policing or prisons. At the same time, I wanted to be direct and clear about the goals of the images, since at this juncture, the group had invested a fair amount of time in talking about them and I'd become more invested in them as evidence of "my work."

In my initial email, I gave her a brief overview of both my research project and CR's focus, along with a general inquiry about whether she'd be interested in doing some illustrations. I explained that the No Cops group "argues that policing strategies (and police) in Oakland are currently targeting poor people and people of color, and they are trying to push for changes that prioritize voices and needs of the people experiencing a lot of police contact in their neighborhoods" and that the images were in relationship to that work. She replied quickly, saying, "I do believe an inherent racism and classism exists within police enforcement," and that she'd "love to hear the concepts I came up with." I sent her the draft images I'd made, along with more detailed information about Ceasefire and the ideas about how the carrot and stick metaphor could be made to represent policing from the No Cops members' and my discussions, including the proposal to "put the carrot/nightstick in the hands of police" (pers. comm.).

She sent back three developed sketches building on both my initial digital images and the conceptual ideas the group and I had tossed around in the previous meeting (See Figure 6). She took the request to "put the carrot/nightstick in the hands of police" and created a drawing of a police officer as wolf with rabbit ears. As she explained:

This...shows the disguised nightstick in use by a group of officers threatening to enter a home. The policemen are wolves, playing off the idea of "a wolf in sheep/rabbit clothing," and I decided rabbit ears would be more fitting with the carrot. (pers. comm.)

She also built on the metaphor we'd provided, adding a sketch of a wolf wearing a rabbit mask, the mask on its own, and the carrot nightstick. She developed her explanation behind the wolf here:

I can change the wolf to be a human if you'd prefer, but I thought making the officer an animal (especially a cunning pack-animal), might work better as it negates gender and race. A wolf also holds an innate meaning of trickery and danger (Little Red Riding Hood and other fairy tales). (pers. comm.)

Consistent in significant ways with the No Cops group's analysis of policing as a system of, or reliant upon, violence, and not a system that would work well if it weren't for individual "bad cops," the illustrator built on the intended conceptual focus to deepen the meanings available in the images she returned to us.

In this exchange, I represented my own work, as a researcher and embedded designer, and the work of the No Cops group, as Oakland-based organizers, in language and ideas I hoped would effectively communicate the ideas of the group.

CR members' and my conversation at the previous meeting took new shape as a design / illustration brief, with the strategic intent firmly embedded. In the illustrator's hands, the political positions and the metaphors discussed by the No Cops group became further evolved, with references she articulated in her explanations of the images she developed. Since my offer to "mock up some images" weeks before, I continued to act based on what seemed useful in the moment, even as I wondered what kind of work I was doing, and how it differed from the rest of the group's work, if it did at all. I sent the illustrator's sketches on to the anti-policing working group, along with her written explanations.



FIGURE 6 The illustrator's Ceasefire sketches

MOVEMENT 4 Negotiating meaning(s) as designing

They liked the new drawings, but we didn't get to talk much about them. With two weeks, sometimes three, passing between each No Cops meeting, talking through ramifications of the quickly shifting context of the city's policies and statements about policing for CR's work could take up the better part of a meeting. Items the group had planned in the previous meeting to carry over sometimes seemed less critical, or what presented as actually urgent in the moment could shift.

At this meeting, group members were primarily focused on determining a next campaign, and, by the end of the night, they were fairly clear that Ceasefire wasn't going to be the main target. Given this, even though they liked the images themselves and their visual, strategic language, they were less immediately useful. As Susan reflected just over a year later, after the current campaign was moving ahead:

...these images are doing the important work with debunking the idea of what Ceasefire is. And without another layer of what we could be contributing to the discussion...it wasn't like a rich enough thing for us to pursue that would actually be abolitionist, it was just like anti-cops. Not that that's not abolitionist, but I don't think then we would have a hook... "no here's really what we need," or...the kind of programming that would work. And I think what this project that we're building now might do is give us some content to be like, "These images or this cartoon is what *is*—or [is] what the police are doing—and here is actually content and context for something more..." But, yeah, we just sort of lost steam around them. (pers. comm.)

But, in the long conversation about campaign ideas, Jeanne asked if we might consider the "carrot campaign" idea raised in the last meeting, even if George had suggested it "a little tongue in cheek." What would it be like, she asked, "to campaign for rather than against?" Or, could a campaign like this begin to develop answers, "for all the times we've been asked by City Council, 'Well, do you have a different plan?' and we could say, it's right here, with [financial] numbers to show money moving from policing [over half the general fund] to other resources [gardens, services, etc.]" And, this could even go a step further, "to ask how we can build some of that stuff without their money, so that we can say, 'we know how to get *X* without using your money.'" By the end of this meeting, the group had agreed to research this and two other campaign possibilities generated from their ally conversations.

In my research blog and in my attempts to articulate the work with CR No Cops group members when we spoke about my research at this time, I consistently questioned what "design" and "my project" were and what they might be. I still imagined, as I had when I pitched my project to CR, that both for my research and for the organization, I should be bringing something *new* to the table. I presumed that this new thing would take a design form I could recognize – a new strategic approach, an event modeled in some way on charrettes or public workshops – and, also not be a form that was already familiar to me and to CR members in CR's work – making images or layouts for outward-facing materials. At times, I was

torn between making my work useful to the No Cops group's work, regardless of the form it took, and wanting to successfully propose these "new" design methods, investments I'd brought with me into the research, which were also tantalizingly close to the surface of members' interest in "campaigning for."

However, as we continued to work on the Ceasefire images, I began to reflect in my blog on the role "the visual," and these images in particular, might be playing in the articulation of ideas, problems, and possibilities in the No Cops group's planning. I wondered:

... if the images acted as accidental props to hone the goals of the group as they are working toward a campaign focus... And because they liked the images, and didn't necessarily want to toss them, it almost seemed to lend itself to a strategic / planning conversation that was as much about seeing a place for their concerns about Ceasefire as [it was about] a part of a larger campaign or strategy...

I hadn't intended to use the images to start a strategic conversation; my focus was on making images for a flyer that would be compelling and legible as a metaphor for CR's political argument. But I began to notice that through my engagement in the conversation surrounding the image ideas that resulted – their meanings, their visual forms, and their possible uses – they became a part of the larger design context (Ehn 2008) we were also creating, the "socio-material assembly" of people, artifacts, and context that began to form around the initial sketches.

This became especially apparent as George's idea, articulated through the metaphors rendered in the images, emerged as an important part of what, arguably, was deeply at stake for the No Cops group at the time, and what they would take up as their next organizing campaign. As Jeanne explained:

...even though we didn't use any of these illustrations specifically in any of our stuff I actually think they helped articulate the campaign goals really well, or get people thinking about, maybe not the campaign goals, but how to articulate the campaign. (pers. comm.)

Our work together defining and talking through these images made me wonder what I might be able to design as scaffolds for strategizing in future interactions. In my blog, I wrote "...how [can I] maybe start working with [images as props] in a more intentional way – what role can imaging the strategy, logics, even felt sense of what's at stake in the work, play in helping to focus or create conversations that hone those very things?" Despite my ongoing questions about what "design" and "my project" might be, I began to learn from the work we were doing and to (re) imagine both.

Donna Haraway's (1991) theory of situated knowledges helps to frame the role these images, as objects of discussion, played in catalyzing both theorizing and action through conversations about them. Haraway suggests that a "politics and epistemology of partial perspectives" allows for inquiry that remains open to

being made whole through “points of view, which can never be known in advance” (191). When working with the carrot and stick images, participants’ points of view were in formation, impacted by our own perspectives, and also by the discussion in the room and the political context taking shape outside it. By bringing these points of view into conversation, the carrot and stick images drew together our “partial perspectives,” allowing us to imagine and theorize toward possible action as a result. The naming of the problem at hand – one vision of a “carrot” as a form of controlling violence and another as the opportunities and resources CR and its allies were seeking to “grow” – led to a group member’s off-the-cuff proposal for an alternative political vision, the “carrot campaign.” In this sense, the experience of “doing design” with the group, a concept and position I was still trying to understand, shifted from being in a listening role waiting to point out opportunities, as I’d proposed, to making artifacts together that could become sites of or catalysts for thinking together, or theorizing (Ehn 2008; Grocott 2010).

As these meetings took place, my blog entries show that I noticed that the focus of “my project” had started to shift from being largely propositional, based on my ideas or desires for what might be, to being “more short term and to include and build on work we’ve already done...” I was less likely to “[frame] (or feel the need to [frame]) work as ‘my project’ versus just the work of the group...” as I started “getting more integrated into the group...and there [was] beginning to be less of an artificial separation between ‘my project’ and the work of the group...” This shift from an external framing of “my project” and the work generated by or through it to one that was both more “internal” and leading to what I saw as an increasingly “co-designing framework,” meant that the context of the No Cops group’s work – their ideas, strategies, concerns, and desires – began to drive the work I was doing with them.

I’d begun to experience, if not articulate, a shift in my position and the possibilities of the project and work I’d proposed. And, while my reflection writing reveals that I was still nervous and confused about my role and my position in relationship to both the group and to being a “designer” or executing “design,” the work itself began to take shape through our collaborative actions, despite my discomforts *and* in ways that continued to complicate my hopefulness about “bringing design” into CR’s work. My blog posts around this time show a tussle with myself about wanting to work “bigger” by doing externally-facing design workshops at the same time as feeling a loss of control of the project as it became integrated into, or increasingly determined by, the work of the No Cops group.

In the weeks in which we talked about and made the Ceasefire images, and took on researching, proposing, and defining a new organizing campaign, it became increasingly apparent to me that my work, whether I recognized it as “design” or not, was being shaped through the No Cops group’s work. As we did and made things together, I found myself proposing steps that were framed primarily in connection to the work of the group itself. In this way, I began to gain capacity to recognize a shift toward understanding my design position. This was, of course, not a linear

process, as I’ll show, and included (several) returns to frustrations and confusion about my role and the use of design in the group’s organizing work, including a stubborn resistance to the group members’ inclusion of me as a working group member *and* researcher. But, in my reflection writing at the time, as we began to find a rhythm of pushing ideas and questions back and forth between us, I started to imagine and make sense of how both what design would be in this work and what it would be useful to design would be determined by and through that process. This reflection-on-action took on increasingly collaborative forms as my engagement with the anti-policing group continued (Eriksen 2012; Robertson and Simonsen 2012), as we began to create embodied and collective knowing in an increasingly relational practice. This would eventually contribute to a growing ability to make our positions, and our desires for what we did together, explicit through shared work.

But in the early months of our collaboration, my made-as-we-went understanding of both my position and the possibilities of what we were doing together were shaped by my own reflections-in the process of working with the group. My immediate understandings of what materials, conversations, or approaches to making “my project” relevant to “their work” were based on the “back-talk” of the situation (Eriksen 2012; Grocott 2010; Schön 1983). Through trying to find and shape a working relationship and position between “my project” and the members of the working group and their strategic and political aims, I began to notice which things⁸ were resonating in our working together and to begin to emphasize those things, even if I had lingering questions about why they worked to foster conversation, led us toward defining work, or helped us to theorize together. The images, meeting conversations, and contextual circumstances in which CR’s work took place throughout the time of the project all came to shape my in-the-moment understandings, to bring what I did and made into close relationship to what was at stake for CR members working against policing in Oakland, even as their own sense of that work was taking shape.

MOVEMENT 5 Researching the “Carrot Campaign”

When the group divided up into pairs at the end of the April 10th meeting to research campaign ideas, they were short one person. The group asked if I’d be willing to work with them and which of the ideas I was most interested in researching. I answered honestly: I was most interested in the “carrot campaign.” While I could see a role in all of the campaign ideas for the kind of public, participatory design of alternative stories or systems that I was still envisioning as the focus of my contribution, and of my research, this one appealed the most. In addition,

8. The use of the word “thing” here is distinct from Pelle Ehn’s “design things,” which I refer to earlier in the chapter. Donald Schön (1983) discusses as intrinsic to “problem setting” in a given design situation, the process of identifying or setting the “things of the situation” (40), in the act of finding or establishing the parameters of the scenario.

in years as a CR member, I'd long been interested in how we might understand, shape, and build alternatives to the prison industrial complex. In many ways, my initial fascination with design, as described in the introduction, was precisely tied to how I imagined it might help to produce these kinds of "building" projects in which people could make abolitionist alternatives. While all of the campaign ideas seemed important, the possibilities for the "carrot campaign" were most aligned with how I'd been drawn into design as a practice in the first place.

Knowing this, the request to join a pair and to say where I'd prefer to work – as if I was a member of the group and not an outsider – made me immediately nervous about my position and what this new way of working with members might mean. Despite my concerns, I wrote in my blog that I "...decided that this felt a lot like volunteering to work on [the carrot and stick images], except that in this sense I'm helping the group get work done that is generated by them (in increasingly close proximity to my work with them)." My reflection began to reveal a shift from proposing, or volunteering, to being guided by what the No Cops members needed taken up.

We had two weeks in our pairs to research, talk, and present ideas about the campaign contexts based on guiding questions about campaign interest, expertise, and capacity in the group; opportunities to build with allies; the political terrain and relative "winnability" of the campaign; and whether the idea fit well with CR's vision and mission. Jeanne and I divided up reading materials about Ceasefire from other cities to look into the "carrot" idea as it was used in those instances so we could better understand what was or wasn't actually offered. We also looked at other Oakland-based campaigns for redefining necessary resources and building opportunity programs. Jeanne suggested we could build on a previous organizing effort called Plan for a Safer Oakland (PSO), which CR had created with an ally organization of former prisoners, All of Us or None (AOUON). PSO made a set of demands and counter-proposals in response to earlier efforts to impose curfews on people on parole in Oakland. We imagined how the "carrot campaign" could return to some of PSO's questions and demands, but focus even more on what to build (as opposed to demands to end other policies and practices seen to generate un-safety through limiting people's opportunities). We drew on this history, and examples of other projects, such as the Storytelling and Organizing Project (STOP), which collected people's stories as a means of identifying and building on their experiences and ideas of alternatives to prisons and police intervention, to frame a possible campaign. The "carrot campaign" could identify "targets" or "carrots to grow," by talking with Oaklanders and gathering stories about their experiences in and desires for Oakland, as well as their experiences with police and alternatives to policing.

As I worked in this pairing I continually tried to "see where [I was] expressing a strong opinion about campaign direction or political strategy, as opposed to speaking about the use of design as a way of working..." While I might have been an extra (virtual) body present to help with the work to be done, I was also

increasingly trusted as someone who could do that work. Being in this position – even if I couldn't see it then – undoubtedly *included* this political imagining and positioning. The group's inclusion of me challenged my understanding of my role, not because I imagined myself to be neutral, but because I had imagined myself, in ways that were increasingly mistaken, as an outsider to the daily workings of group idea development, research, and decision-making. I'd seen my role as a designer as one that was embedded in relationship to "my project" but removed in relationship to the No Cops groups' processes, including internal negotiations and debates.⁹ But the lines between "my project" and "their work" became more porous as we worked together, connecting, in turn, to a coming together of the "design work" and my position, resulting in a shift in how I needed to understand my practice.

Even with an evolving, if nascent, understanding of how my role as a designer with the group might be shifting, I was still unnerved by being involved in such an explicit way with arguing *for* any one thing. I wrote in my blog that I had "been thinking about my role as more on the side of facilitating the work the group wants to do rather than becoming a part of the process of deciding." I voiced this concern to Jeanne as we worked on our research. Her response was straightforward; it seemed clear to her that the working group members had "given me work" and, now that I was doing that, they were more or less seeing me as another member of the group. Otherwise, she said, they'd likely have raised their concerns themselves (pers. comm.).

My fears about having influence or expressing "political ideas" as opposed to "design ideas," which would persist and change shape over the rest of the research period, were frequently addressed on the spot when I voiced them throughout the project. The expectation that my political views and investments were aligned with the group's – I was a CR member, just as they were – made my connection to their work more likely. Susan explained it this way:

...if you were not a member of the organization, [I hope] that a person doing design might be able to [add capacity] anyways, [saying things] like "I'm seeing this gap..." or, "You talked about visual things, why don't I do a little bit of leg work that might go somewhere or might not go somewhere?..." But that's like being an active member in the organization: "I'm going to send out these cartoon possibilities," or "these carrot and bunny wolf drawings." And [in] a lot of work within CR sometimes you go far afield, or do something that's not an explicit task...and it might not be picked up right away and being ok with that. That's the leg work, I feel like, of being an organizer. You do a little bit of something, it might not be what the group is doing at that moment; the group might not need to pursue that, it's like checking out a site to maybe do tabling or like outreach to an organization...I'm saying all this to say I don't

9. I was also aware that it was mostly unprecedented in CR for a member not locally based to be a part of decision making in that local chapter's planning. I didn't want to compromise my integrity in either position, as CR member or design researcher.

know what the potential is for relationships of design that are from a quote “outsider,” right, or a hired thing...which is to say that I don’t think that it can’t work, but I feel like this process is going particularly well because of your history with the organization. Which might just be the distrust, or not being sure of how well radical politics [can] be served by people who aren’t familiar with that. (pers. comm.)

I understood that my inclination to imagine clear distinctions between a designer’s facilitation role and a group-member’s decision-making role was, as I wrote in my blog, “a point of false separation.” My actions – observing, conversing, pitching my own design or design methods ideas into the work of the group – made me a part of choices being made and the ideas being discussed, even if what I did was primarily in response to perceived aims and goals of the group members. Additionally, as I began to allow for the possibility that my role was as a group member with a specific focus (to think about design, whatever that might mean), my knowledge of CR’s decision-making culture helped temper my concerns about having an opinion or hope in the decision-making process around the new campaign. I wrote at the time: “...the norms of CR dictate that the group works by consensus and so there is always an effort to come to a decision together and to commit to it fully, regardless of where one started out, so I could see my being treated as a member of the group as a kind of buffer – there is already a presumption that I’ll get on board with what the group, which includes me now, decides to pursue in the end.”

On the one hand, my familiarity with CR’s culture, and the understanding among No Cops members that we shared a way of working to which I was not only accustomed, but committed, created a foundation for their trust in me. It also allowed me begin to see myself as a member of the group without being concerned that this would give me too much power. On the other hand, I was also concerned by the idea that my inclusion in the group, or our shared political ideas, would compromise the applicability of my design research, as I discussed in the introduction. Perhaps because of this concern, I couldn’t gain language or insight into how else I might conceptualize my move into group membership until my reflection-on-action pushed me to imagine design, and my possible positions as a designer working with CR No Cops members, differently through an analysis of what we were making and doing, and of the practices and relationships central to that work.

This evolution throughout the time of the research set the stage for a shifted idea of my own practice, and ours together, as inclusive of these multiple positions, mine and CR members’. Ultimately, there were far fewer distinctions between me, “my project,” and CR as the work itself came to shape, and in turn, be shaped by, our engagements with each other. On the weekend we were about to begin a campaign planning workshop for the “carrot campaign,” Patrick noted:

I think it was a fairly seamless transition into having this new aspect of our [the No Cops group’s] work, and I think you did a really good job of kind of presenting it as – *I mean it’s your project, right, but it’s not necessarily your work,*

right? In some ways, so you’re kind of leading things or facilitating things, or making things go via resources or RAs [Research Assistants] or whatever, but really allowing the campaign, or CR’s work, to drive what you’re doing. (pers. comm.) [emphasis added]

What I was doing with the group, and the idea of what that work might do and why, was emerging as deeply intertwined with the work itself. The contexts and relationships in which it took shape and took place also helped to determine what we did. The development during the project of this shared practice, of what I call a “relational practice,” as *the* practice in which CR members and I were engaged, determined the nature and focus of our working together moving forward.

MOVEMENT 6 Drawing a proposal: the circle diagram

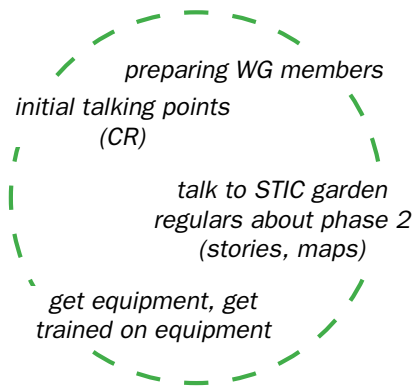
The presentations of campaign possibilities ended up being extended over two meetings, a month’s time. In the first meeting, each pair presented the context of the campaign idea and the group discussed which seemed like the best next step for No Cops based on timing, strategy, allies, capacity, and the overall impact each might have on fighting policing in the city.¹⁰ No Cops members had new questions about the ideas, and were interested in having more concrete ways to imagine what each might look like as a campaign. The group decided to have pairs hone each idea and present basic scenarios and begin to try to answer some of the questions raised about each campaign.

As a next step, in my pairing, we worked on articulating – by way of an example and a larger strategic model – a proposed system or outline for how the “carrot campaign” idea could work. Jeanne suggested that we link the story-collecting aspect of the campaign to a community-led garden that had been founded and maintained by CR allies who had been targeted by the Oakland gang injunctions, with participation from some CR members. We devised a way of staging the components of the idea we’d presented in general terms before, breaking them down into four phases through which the group could identify and build a series of targets or “carrots” that would fall under the umbrella of a larger campaign. We wrote an explanation of the phases and I decided to try out making a diagram of the proposal, which I thought could help to explain the way we were imagining moving the campaign forward.

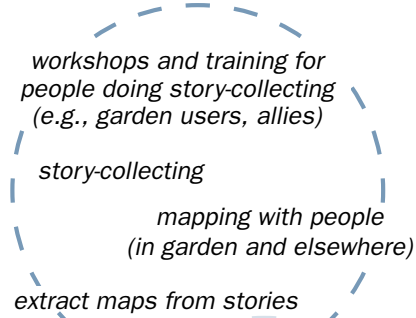
The diagram (See Figure 7, page 60) shows the campaign as taking shape over the four “phases,” with each phase represented as a circle with a few words

10. People asked if the focus of the “carrot campaign” would be on redirecting city funding to support things other than policing, what was articulated as a “justice” campaign, or if the aim would be to build up Oakland residents’ resources and strategies without the city, a “self-determination” campaign. This question would come to factor in the vision and goals statement written by No Cops members that accompanied the overall strategy. It is also interestingly reminiscent of questions asked in reference to “social design” and social innovation work.

**PHASE ONE (1-2 months):
PREP AND
TRAINING UP**



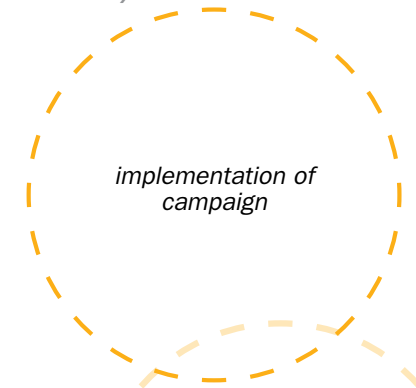
**PHASE TWO (3-6 months):
STORY-COLLECTING
AND MAPPING**



**PHASE THREE (1 month):
MINING A CAMPAIGN**



**PHASE FOUR (Timeframe TBD):
CAMPAIGN CARROT /
TARGET 1**



Phases 2 (or 3) to 4 repeat under the umbrella of the carrot campaign (WG can keep working from the same stories, or continue collecting), identifying additional carrots, and building responses / campaigns around each, with PE materials and workshops that link them

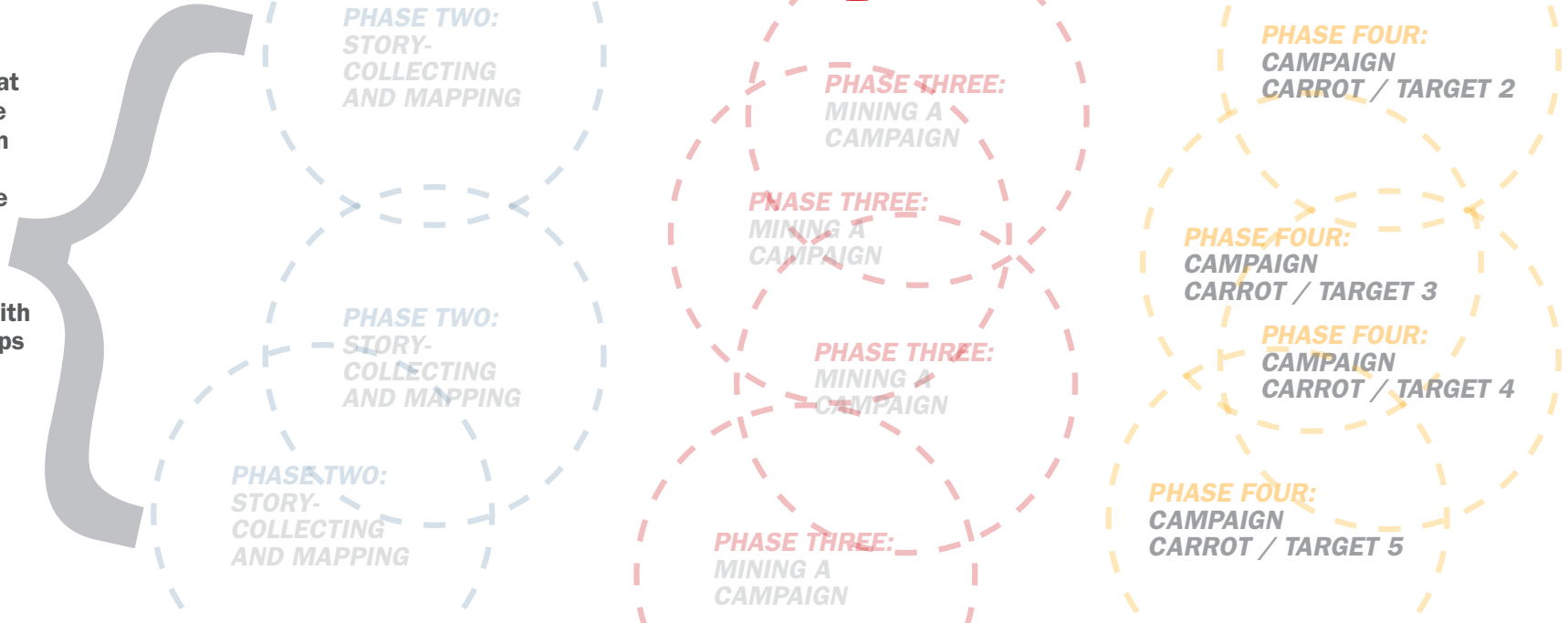


FIGURE 7 The “circle diagram” proposing steps and organization for a campaign

describing what will happen in that stage inside the circle. Four circles of different colors run across the top of the diagram. For stages two through four, which represent roughly a story-collecting phase (phase 2), a mining phase to choose a target from stories (phase 3), and a campaign or project implementation phase (phase 4), the circles are repeated vertically underneath as slightly transparent circles of the same color, showing in a vertical line the repeating nature of these phases of the campaign, and the aim for it to eventually address multiple “targets” or “carrots.”

When we presented the diagram to the group in the next meeting, Patrick immediately said that it “put [the way they’d presented their ideas] all to shame,” in the way it helped him see the ideas we were talking through. In an email follow up, I asked him *what* it helped him to understand. He responded:

I liked the diagram because it visually summarized the four phases. You can see right away, four phases. The notations were clear and it gave a sense of the flow of the campaign (circles moving vertically down the page) and how we might be simultaneously working on more than one “carrot” but also that some might be completed. The diagram also gave a sense of continuity (at least for me, not sure if this was intentional) that the first three phases would be ongoing, which I think for this kind of campaign makes sense. (pers. comm.)

The diagram worked as a means for conveying time and process and, for him, it allowed the campaign to be ‘see-able’ along lines of specific concern: time, capacity, tasks, and the goals of each task.¹¹ This image, which members would come to call the “circle diagram,” arguably required the written component be read alongside it to be clearly understood at the time of this initial conversation. But, the diagram took on the ability to stand in for the *idea of the campaign* as the group began to define the campaign by doing it. A year later, Martin noted that “now when we think about the phases, I think of [them] in different colored circles” (pers. comm.).

Members of the No Cops group described the circle diagram as performing a consistent range of roles, both as a visual artifact and as a strategic one. These observations, even declarations, of utility shed light on not only the role of this one designed image, but on possible ways of understanding what “design” might be in the context of our work together.

What I think is interesting is that it’s a map of the container rather than what the campaign is. Right? It’s a map of the process, that’s like choosing a carrot, choosing a target, doing the interviews, without being hinged on what is the target and how is that going to change in relation to time, place and condition. (Susan, pers. comm.)

11. One question that came up and resonates in the continued engagement with monitoring ongoing city and police policy and actions, was how this campaign, described as it was in the proposal, would be focused on anti-policing, which seemed intuitively clear to some people, but was not, in fact made clear in what we sent out.

I feel like this has been a real guiding piece for like when, you know, the group gets tripped out about going too slowly or where are we and then being reminded of like, “Oh these things happen simultaneously,” like the lighter colored ones echoing below. I feel like that has been confidence building for the group, like “Ok, it’s not just a total linear thing, or a progression from start to finish and we’re never going to be back at phase two, or it might take a while or be simultaneous...” (Susan, pers. comm.)

I think this [circle diagram] is incredibly helpful—we refer to this all the time, still even though we’re way off time, yeah, pretty far off time... I think this visual really helped people see the relationship between the different parts. (Jeanne, pers. comm.)

I think some of the things that have definitely been helpful is making a lot more visual representations of the work and the potential work because I’m a lot more of a visual person and so that has helped me get a better grasp of things because I feel like some of the other folks in this group are a lot more word-y, and it’s hard for me to follow that shit unless I write every single thing down, so I feel like that’s been really useful. (Sefu, pers. comm.)

... for whatever reason I think this project has been something that has been challenging to see the way forward or to—I don’t know, there have been some challenging things about it and I think it’s because it’s not like the other campaign we’ve done, and I think this has helped bring out the potential of the project... (Patrick, pers. comm.)

...we’re having to figure out a formation that maybe isn’t—that seems newer to the organization and this project is helping us do that... [I]t’s helping give shape to the varying stages that we need to go through to achieve what we want to achieve, which is something that is a little more ephemeral, or something that gets at like a, disrupting logic is different than stopping a bill (laughs), so like giving a little bit of structure to that and then also... thinking in terms of the long term shape of it and then stages of how to do it... So that’s structure in—oh my gosh—in multiplicities, you know what I mean, so it’s like we’re disrupting logic, so that means that we have this long term shape that we need to form and then we have these little shapes that we need to form, but we need to figure out how to do it so that it’s replicable over and over and over again, because we’re coming at policing from this angle based on this thing that makes us safe, instead of policing, and then the next angle and the next angle... (Evans, pers. comm.)

Through members’ descriptions and discussion of the diagram, some of which appear above, at least four characterizations of the diagram emerge, which are not at all mutually exclusive. It is a visual description of the campaign (proposal) that

could be internalized as a map or memory of the “container” and steps agreed to. It is also “confidence building,” or “inspiring,” because it’s not linear and allows for continued, multiple points of entry, over time, and sometimes over periods of time that have gone on longer than the group might have hoped. Because it is an image, using text, but organized to make sense visually, it is something that works differently than verbal description, which is helpful to some members (while, as I’ll discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, not to all). And, finally, the circle diagram allowed CR members to take on a new way of imagining what an “affirmative” campaign could be, especially where there are clear differences strategically from the kind of oppositional campaign they’re accustomed to. In this sense, it “creates structure” where there appears to be none. While people in the group responded to the diagram differently, and articulated its usefulness in different ways – highlighting their own concerns, needs, or priorities for No Cops’ processes – it acted to do what Bannon and Ehn (2012) have highlighted, after Latour, as “drawing together” “matters of concern” (56-7), or working in the design process to make productive connections from differences, while holding the space for that difference as a part of the design work.

The group decided to take up the “carrot campaign” as their new focus. Members thought it “lent itself to using and pushing forward CR’s capacities and skills,” that it “had a concrete timeline,” was “building with people what abolition looks like,” and “could impact policing in Oakland.” While there were details and important considerations – how to make a clear link between the campaign ideas and outline and reducing reliance on policing; whether it would move ahead as a self-determination or justice campaign, or both; and how to make sure the group moved beyond collecting stories – there was excitement about taking on a “yes” campaign.

The “circle diagram,” which has remained unchanged since this meeting, became a highly used reference for the campaign, both internally to No Cops members and in the group’s efforts to discuss the campaign process with their comrades in the larger chapter. While the overall timeline for the campaign development was much slower than what was proposed and what the group desired, by and large, the “circle diagram” is now a means for remembering where the idea began and what the vision was that the group agreed to. Along with other critical defining pieces, such as the vision statement and goals for the campaign, this diagram both catalyzed people’s understanding and continued to produce shared meaning or address questions as the campaign moved forward. The diagram, and subsequent acts of *using* it to define, describe, and discuss the campaign steps and goals acted as a means for producing collective knowledge (Suchman 2002) over time in our designing together. As we used the diagram for this purpose – to set the terms of the campaign, from political strategy to basic tasks – our interactions about it helped to define and describe our relational practice.

Additionally, for some of the No Cops members, my role in this process was affected both by the collective experience Jeanne and I brought as organizers (Susan, pers. comm.; Jeanne, pers. comm.), and by the duration of my presence in the

working group meetings. Referring to the range of work I’d done with the group up to that point, Patrick put it this way:

I mean this is relatively recent, but...you worked with Jeanne on the carrot campaign design, and I think that that was more—not just because the diagram made a lot of sense to me, but the presentation of the campaign itself...there was something about that that not only, I think, kind of made you more a part of the workgroup and less like somebody just sitting in, but also I think that the ability to see how the work that we were already doing with mapping and looking at all...the different resources and things we want to build in Oakland or we already see as being resources in Oakland, having done all that research already, how that could really support...that particular campaign, not that it couldn’t have supported the other campaigns, but I think your ability to assimilate that kind of information was helpful in making a really clear campaign proposal. (Patrick, pers. comm.)

I followed a hunch, building from the Ceasefire images, that “the visual” might perform as a catalyst or object through which we could “see” and discuss ideas, theories, strategies, and steps (Eriksen 2012; Hill 2012). But, it also seemed to me that it couldn’t *just* be the fact of these being images, or more visual than text-based, that made them useful to the group. The Ceasefire images and the circle diagram were useful not only because they were images, though this was sometimes a tempting focus for my inquiry, but because they became more or less absorbed into or central to the work *insofar as they were, and remained*, useful. Further, what made an artifact or process more or less useful may have had something to do with their material or visual design, as I’ll discuss further in the following chapters, but it was also deeply impacted by how we were working together as a group to determine what was of use, and what the nature was of the problem we sought to address through the next No Cops campaign. In other words, the larger process of working together meant that we made and did things (we designed) to think through the work, in order to move it forward. Rather than design being evidenced or embodied in artifacts or proposals, although I would argue that these are both parts of designing, designing became a way of making and doing things that allowed the group (and me) to theorize and strategize their political work as we developed it and put it into practice.

CONCLUSION

The relative advantage of hindsight may be that patterns of practice and engagement emerging from notes, artifacts, and interviews reveal areas that received too much concern or focus in the moment or, alternately, went unseen altogether. My persistent concerns with both understanding “design” in relationship to my work with CR, and navigating my position first in a proposed “design facilitator” role, then as a designer-researcher, and then as a participant-designer-researcher in the

group, remained at the forefront of my experience. Looking back, these concerns sometimes masked the shape of the work itself, as well as ways ideas of both “design” and “my project” changed as that work with CR members progressed.

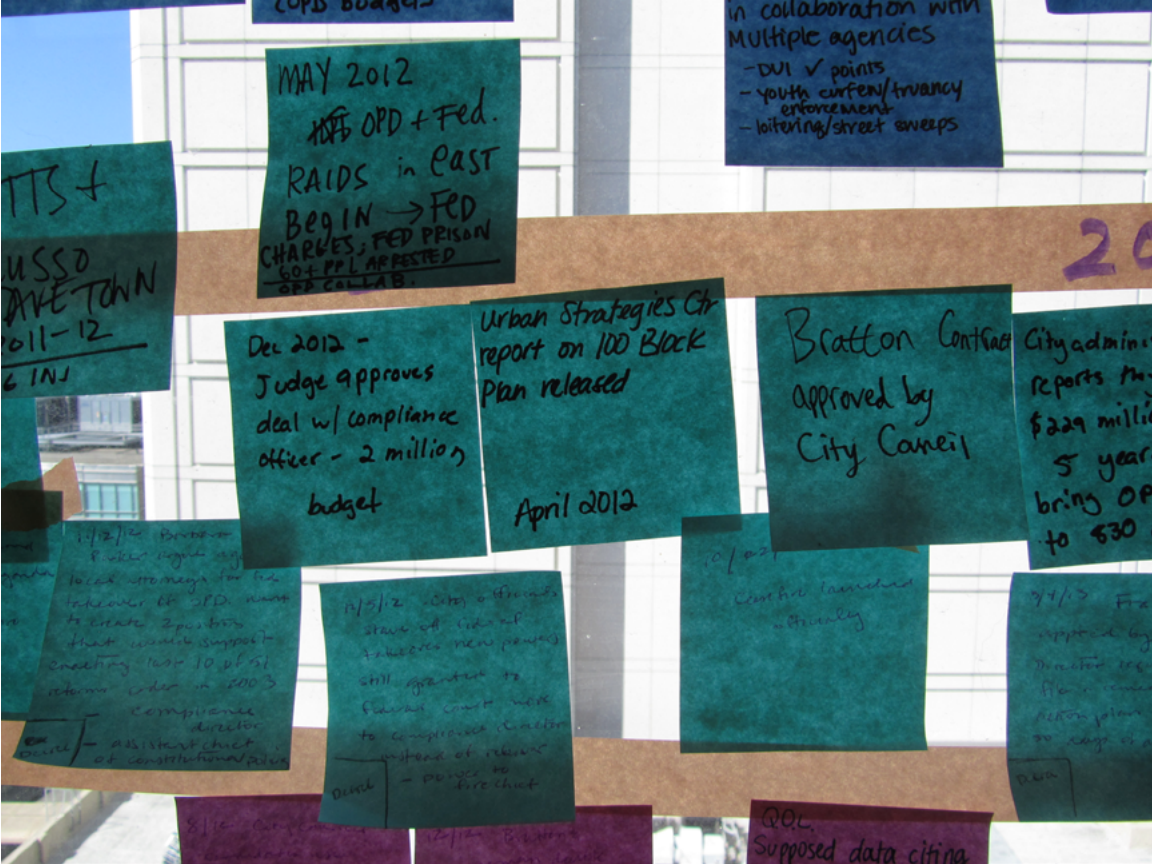
A longer view led me to three arguments that help to re-imagine several of the concerns that presented themselves in the course of the work, though not to resolve them, as I believe that would be counter-productive. First, my understanding of what “design” might be, and what about it could be useful to CR, changed over time through our work together. Secondly, while the way I used images with CR was in some ways not typical of their process, it was not just that they were images, but it was how we used them, that began to shape our engagement with designing as a means for thinking and acting together. And, third, this happened in the context of an “interweaving” of what had been “my project” and “their work,” through which we developed (or designed) a relational practice that shaped how we worked together and what we did.

In the period discussed in this chapter, my idea of my work shifted from one focused on what *might be designed* in relationship to abolitionist organizing to what, specifically, CR members and I *were making and doing*. Perhaps the most significant element in this shift rests in what happened to my understanding of what design would be and how it would be used in my research. Working with CR members, developing through practice a “socio-material assembly” that reflected the group’s and my “matters of concern” (Bannon and Ehn 2012), reshaped my vision of what we would make and what mattered about it. I’d imagined and proposed to CR members early on that something like a radical service design proposal for alternatives to addressing harm might be a kind of outcome made through this project. Instead, what we actually made and used included artifacts like the “circle diagram,” which helped members understand a proposal to build a campaign that would envision and build alternatives to policing (and addressing harm) by listening to people’s stories and ideas.

The inherent value in what was immediately *of use* to the No Cops group came to shape the larger idea of what it meant to design with members in this context. What seemed valuable to design or do was contingent, and varied based on what was needed in the moment, but also as guided by CR’s long term goals. Even still, our ideas of what could be useful or meaningful in this sense were not absolute, constant, or necessarily shared, as I’ll show in later discussions of ideas that failed or limped along because we couldn’t agree on their relative value in the campaign work. Thus, what is important here is not the evolution, necessarily, of a shared sense of what to do or make. Rather, what stands out are the ways in which my practice, in relationship to their work, became increasingly defined – for me and for CR members – over time and through our negotiations of meaning, relevance, and need in terms of what it did or could do, and what we did with it.

From a bird’s-eye view, then, I came to see that what had begun as “my project” and “their work” had, through this process of making and doing, thinking and theorizing, together, begun to do something that in my notes I called “interweav-

ing.” My emergent practice was shaped and guided by the CR No Cops group’s organizing, by what we were doing together, and by how we shared that work. Taken together, these contexts and ways of engaging with each other developed our relational practice. Unlike conventional articulations of co-design (which I examine in the following chapter), it was less the case that we were using design methods or processes to enhance or change their work in a specific way. Similarly, I was not bringing users or organizers into a project with a more or less pre-determined set of parameters about what we were seeking to design (a product, service, system, workflow) and drawing on their expertise to do so. The shift created by CR members’ amendment to my original proposal to the organization’s national membership – from introducing new work to an involvement with ongoing CR organizing – situated “design” and “my project” in another way. It required navigating the relationships between them to build a way of working together.



CRITICAL RESISTANCE

has seen the harm that imprisonment, policing, surveillance, have done to our communities. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure.

CHAPTER 3 POSITIONING THE DESIGNER IN COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

“... We don’t know what anti-policing looks like in an effective way, and... you don’t know what the effective way to bring design to grassroots organizing looks like...”¹

INTRODUCTION

As the No Cops group began planning the campaign’s next steps in May 2013, prisoners at one of California’s supermax prisons, Corcoran, were several days into a hunger strike to oppose and challenge solitary confinement. Another working group in the Oakland chapter, as part of a larger coalition, was organizing a march at the prison in support of the strikers and they needed help. No Cops members, citing the urgency of the strikers’ cause and conditions, joined in. While they worked on the Corcoran mobilization, we agreed that I would make a timeline and compile materials from a recent campaign planning workshop into a storyboard, both focused on next steps in the new campaign (these are a subject of Chapter 4). On their return two months later, work on the campaign resumed in earnest.

The group’s first goal was to bring “phase 1” of the circle diagram to life, which included laying basic groundwork for the story-collecting that would generate the ideas and targets for the “Carrot Campaign.” As we talked through strategies and logistics, larger questions about whether, how, and when to begin “going public” about the new campaign began to emerge. These negotiations, my and our efforts to design in response to and in anticipation of them, along with the continued development and shape-taking of my position, our work, and our practice together, are the subject of this chapter. I focus on the collaborative design processes surrounding proposals to design two outward-facing artifacts, an “outreach piece” and the 2013 Year in Review (Figure 8 on page 71 and Figure 9 on pages 72-75). These were both created as part of ongoing conversations about how to talk to people about the campaign as it took on a life outside the collective imagination of the working group. Members sought both to get people excited to be involved and to explain the idea of the campaign itself, which would aim to fight policing by making and amplifying alternative practices and resources, an idea not entirely familiar in CR or outside it.

1. (Martin pers. comm.)

These materials, and the processes through which we engaged with them as a group, both produced and reflected multiple, contradictory, conflicted, and changing ideas and needs in the campaign as it developed. In the six month period discussed here, from November 2013 to May 2014, we developed the “outreach piece” and Year in Review in a nested way; we all quickly made the Year in Review together in the midst of a longer, drawn out discussion of the possible outreach piece, of which I made multiple iterations. The artifacts we designed and debated were informed by different, if not entirely contested, ideas of what *kind* of interactions the group wanted to have, and invite, through them, and how useful the materials could be in facilitating those. Through each, we sought in different ways and from different perspectives, to address questions about defining and describing the campaign in relationship to other, ongoing No Cops work and goals.

As we worked, my position and role in the group also continued to take shape. It had solidified in the months prior, leading up to the campaign development workshop and through the group’s request that I help to keep the new campaign moving ahead in small ways while they turned to Corcoran support. My designing work with the group through the period covered in this chapter derived from what I heard expressed in meetings and over the listserv – the desires, needs, concerns that emerged in relationship to moving the campaign forward. At the same time, I continued to offer and propose my (own) ideas in relationship to what I heard, consistently focused on public engagement and participatory formats based in my experiences in Service Design and exposure to interactive technology-driven tools. Increasingly, I spoke from a political or “CR” perspective as much as, or in close connection to, a “design” one, proposing design ideas that were tied to political and strategic ones – some of which members of the No Cops group agreed with, and others, not as much. In our work together, we continued to create a practice together.

Practitioners in a range of design fields have, especially in the past decade, written extensively about the emergence, use, and dynamics of what is most frequently called “co-design” in the design of interfaces, spaces, systems, products, and services. Addressing the histories of collaborative or participatory design frameworks, investigations and explications of co-design have set out different, but related, ways of understanding and enacting the positions and roles of designers working with others, whether professional designers or “non-designers.” Some arguments focus primarily on co-design as an approach in which designers provide scaffolds, frames, or formats that then organize “non-designers” (or other designers who are not themselves facilitating) to participate in design events or activities. These design engagements usually aim to build new ideas, understandings, and, typically proposals or interventions, but also sometimes knowledge and new questions (Björgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren 2012; Eriksen, 2012; Heapy & Parker 2006; Holmlid 2009; Manzini 2014; Manzini & Rizzo, 2012; Sanders and Stappers 2008, 2012).

Others, especially in case studies that pay specific attention to relational dynamics and questions of power in design contexts, take a view that designers are in situations of complexity that act, also, to determine designers’ roles through the course

of the design process (Akama 2014; Akama and Light 2012, 2014; Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012; Lee, 2008; Manzini 2014; Suchman 2002, 2006). These authors suggest – through analysis of a range of practice-based experiences and observations – that designers’ roles and their positions are shaped in significant ways by the processes and relationships created by and through design engagements.

These ways of characterizing co-design and participatory design are not mutually exclusive, and can be imagined to exist on a kind of continuum of *focus* for design research, as opposed, necessarily to a continuum of practice in which people only take one approach or another. However, it is also evident that attention to both the political histories of, for example, Participatory Design (PD), and the contemporary politics of designing with people tend to be more thoroughly addressed and centered in the latter, where there is more discussion about the dynamics and complexities of, rather than methods for or outcomes of, engagement.²

In my research, CR members’ and my relational practice developed through working together to shape and begin a viable campaign; our collaboration(s)-in-action shaped the nature of how we designed together. As this took place, my own role as a designer shifted to a more explicit “designer/member” role and, through this, my position as a designer working in collaboration with the No Cops group became increasingly variable and in motion. Unlike some prominent articulations of co-design, discussed above, I did not act *primarily* as a catalyst, developing scaffolds or experiences to organize No Cops members’ (designing) work. Rather, in our practice, my position shifted in response to the needs and ideas of the group, desires for experimentation versus familiarity, and, most critically, group and individual understandings of what would be most *useful* in the specific moment of our work together. In other words, the Oakland anti-policing group members were leading our design work because they were leading their own work. In this way, our relational practice bore a resemblance to both historical and contemporary approaches to PD by taking leadership from those for whom the design would need to work best, even as, I would argue, the shifting nature of my own role necessitated (or

2. For example, in Sanders and Stappers’ (2008, 2012) or Holmlid’s (2009) approaches, the focus of discussion about co-design is on the benefits to design outcomes from the inclusion of “multiple stakeholders,” “non-designers,” “users,” etc. but without a concomitant recognition of the differential positions or power relationships of those involved (e.g., workers as co-design participants versus paying customers or executives). In Holmlid’s case, he argues explicitly that Service Design can improve on PD by leveraging its approaches to create “neutrality toward different actors and their goals” (9). On the other hand, authors such as Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren (2012), Lee (2008), Light and Akama (2012, 2014), and Suchman (2002, 2006) focus, in a range of ways, on the relevance of systemic and interpersonal political and social dynamics as active contributors to co-design or collaborative design processes and contexts, in most cases expanding early PD’s focus on emancipatory access for workers to designing systems they would have to use to the nuanced and multifaceted conditions in which designers in PD, Service Design, and related fields increasingly find themselves. These discussions highlight several such factors, including the role and experiences of the designer and participants, the histories and contexts of a design collaboration in process, and, while to a lesser degree in some cases, the failures and challenges of designing with people.

grew from) an openness to unstructured or unplanned processes and outcomes in the context of the No Cops groups' goals.

Even as our practice was guided and shaped by the group's work, my capacities to contribute ideas, strategies, or resources other group members or I saw as specific to me meant that I also proposed, made arguments for ways of working, and contributed to the overall strategy of the campaign components on which we worked together. As I will argue below, what we imagined, decided, and did in our work together ultimately developed in a layered and shared process. But it seems important in the overall understanding of the dynamics and working relationships that shaped "designing with" in this project to note that in the process of our work together, my position as "the designer" shifted (from their or my expectations) and was repositioned (to new understandings of what I was doing) multiple times. This movement *as a way of being in relationship*, I suggest, was critically important to building our capacities to design together, even (and especially) as I found myself resisting or feeling challenged by the changing nature of my "designer" position and seeking to find my way with No Cops members and their / our work. Seeing this in the course of my reflection first unsettled, then clarified, my understanding of our relational practice and what this experience might mean for designing with people more broadly.

Policing in Oakland A Year in Review 2013

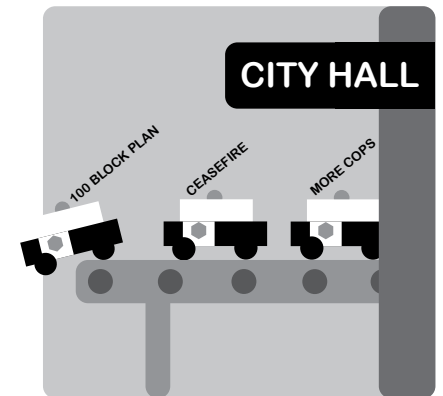
Oakland residents mistrust what the city offers by way of policing. Hundreds of people attend City Council meetings to protest new policing schemes from gang injunctions, Operation Ceasefire, loitering ordinances, youth curfews, or the Bratton-Wasserman contract. And while the city government continues throw more than 50% of the general fund into policing, ramping up surveillance and raids, collaborating with the FBI, Homeland Security and other federal agencies, Oaklanders continue to struggle with fundamental issues such as lack of employment, homelessness, services for those coming home from jail and prison, and quality education. These systemic issues are at the heart of what causes violence in our communities. No amount of police chief musical chairs or Operation Ceasefire smoke and mirrors is going to create strong communities for Oakland. In fact, these programs create exactly the opposite.

POLICING SCHEMES

In 2013, Oakland politicians and the police department continued to muddle through policing scheme after staffing project that directly impeded residents' access to sustainable and healthy community investments. Despite repeated public relations blitzes to sell the idea that new or repeated plans could make policing work in Oakland, policing continues to fail our city.

Since 2009, Oakland has seen five police chiefs— three in 2013 alone. This game of musical chairs has been fueled by resignations. In May former Oakland Police Department (OPD) chief Howard Jordan abruptly resigned just hours before a press conference scheduled to release results of a report from consultants Wasserman and Bratton. Anthony Torbio assumed interim chief responsibilities for only two days before he was replaced (taking a demotion to Captain) by Sean Whent, who is still adrift in the interim position. In December Bob Murray of Bob Murray and Associates, the Sacramento executive consultant charged with finding a new chief, quit in frustration, saying that city officials were meddling in the hiring process. The City spent \$100,000 towards this failed search process. The task of hiring a new chief then fell into the hands of Mayor Jean Quan and then-City Administrator Deanna Santana, who has since been fired by Quan this month in what has been described as a "very public train wreck". Despite a persistent lack of clarity and transparency from City Hall, Oakland politicians continue to cling to the presumption that police staffing is the beginning and end of the problem.

At every public appearance, Mayor Quan, along with many City Council members, cite the size of OPD staffing as a priority investment. "We'll continue to grow our police force...we need to get to at least 800, with a goal of 900," she said during her State of the City address in early 2014. Despite attempts to swell OPD's ranks with police academies, the Department remains under 700 and suffers from attrition as officers resign, move to other cities, and retire. The morale in the OPD is low. While politicians continue to promote a larger staff as the silver bullet to address public safety, the fact that people don't want to work for OPD suggests that increasing police staff is likely not the cure-all remedy they say it is.



In the past few years, Oakland communities have weathered the 100 Block Plan, Gang Injunctions, a 5 District Plan, and Ceasefire. To what extent will the City and the OPD continue to prioritize policing schemes over people-oriented programs and services?

FIGURE 8 Elements of various iterations of the proposed outreach piece (opposite page)
FIGURE 9 The 2013 Policing Year in Review (above and following pages)

OUR IDEAS
QUESTIONS
DESIRES
NEEDS

OUR VISION
PLANNING
COLLABORATION

OUR SOLUTIONS
OUR OAKLAND
OUR SOLUTIONS
OUR STORIES

OUR OAKLAND
our SOLUTIONS

Policing is failing in Oakland. We know that Oakland can keep our families and communities safe without relying on the cops. We are talking with people about their experiences with the cops and about what people think makes their communities strong. Through these conversations we are learning what safety looks like in Oakland and how to expand it. We want to reject the idea that policing is the only way to address to harm and highlight alternatives that actually work.

HOW IT WORKS:
We're collecting interviews and ideas from people all over Oakland to find out what people know, wish for, suggest, need, and want to build. From these conversations and ideas, we'll work with people to identify projects, plans, and campaigns to bring what people see, know, and want into our city, building our capacity to build our Oakland each step of the way. Open the flyer for an example and to share your ideas!

CRITICAL RESISTANCE has seen the harm that imprisonment, policing, surveillance, have done to our communities. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE BY SHARING YOUR STORY AND IDEAS? CALL OR EMAIL US TO SCHEDULE A CONVERSATION!

510.444.0484
oakland@criticalresistance.org
www.criticalresistance.org

Draw or write on this map to share where you spend time and why. Where do you feel at home? Safe? Are there places in Oakland that you think are a refuge or a resource for you or people you know?

You can also show us what you wish for or want: is there a spot that really needs something: facilities, resources, conversations?

It will help us read your map if you use a dark pen (like a sharpie) and write clearly!

Take a photo of your map and send it to [emailaddress@criticalresistance.org], or drop it off at [GARDEN ADDRESS].

Operation Ceasefire is another policing scheme that the City has promoted. While the OPD refers to the project as “our primary violence-reduction strategy”, Oakland communities experience Ceasefire as another in a long line of policing schemes involving aggressive raids, media spin, and misinformation. In March 2013 OPD, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), FBI, and other federal agencies raided 24 homes in East Oakland, claiming that the people targeted did not respond to the coercive incentives offered by Operation Ceasefire. “Today we kept our promise,” former OPD Chief Jordan said about the violent raids. The San Francisco Chronicle later revealed that the people arrested had absolutely no connection to Ceasefire and that the press conference was misinformation stunt. In response, community members mobilized to City Council meetings and voiced their criticisms. “The Ceasefire interventions are used more to intimidate and threaten than to build relationships,” a lawyer said. Another resident noted, “Ceasefire is another trick to pull more money into policing and take money away from real solutions.”

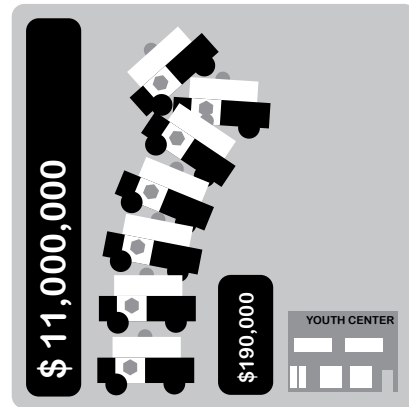
Lastly, Mayor Quan continued the stream of misinformation at the State of the City address in early 2014, claiming that homicides have flat-lined and the decrease in violence is thanks to Ceasefire. Media coverage debunked this lie, revealing that homicides have actually increased 20%. This pattern of misinformation leaves Oaklanders questioning the City’s priorities. To what extent will they continue to prioritize policing schemes over people-oriented programs and services?

RESOURCES

The stubborn reliance on policing to address all of Oakland’s issues harms this city. Oakland continues to pay the social and economic costs of the legacy of the Riders, and feel the antagonism generated between community members and cops through policing projects such as gang injunctions, sweeps, raids, and stop and frisk. The impacts of investing in quick fix policing approaches rather than in the kinds of programs and services that have been proven to stabilize communities in the long term, such as community centers, illustrates a stubborn, blind dedication to misguided solutions.

Over the course of 2013, Oakland spent nearly \$2 million to finance payouts for law suits related to civil rights violations or use of excessive force by OPD. The vast majority of this was for Oakland Police Department (OPD) actions during Occupy, \$65,000 was also for beating Kazeem Upshaw in North Oakland as he attempted to help three people who had been shot. OPD alleged that Kazeem had been interfering with their work. It’s clear from looking at OPD’s track record that these kinds of incidents are not the exception but the rule.

During 2013, Oakland spent over \$4 million contracting with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to support OPD. On January 21, CHP officers shot and killed both Antonio Mestas and Jose Munguia within hours of each other. These actions by CHP, though alarming to residents in East Oakland already plagued by police violence and surveillance, hardly registered a blip for OPD and the Department did not say that it was investigating the incidents or that it would revisit its contract with CHP.



In June 2013, news broke that the West Oakland Youth Center—developed by youth and grassroots organizers over five years—would not open due to a lack of funding to operate the center and staff its programs. While the City later found the \$190,000 needed, Mayor Quan and City Council didn’t hesitate to allocate \$11 million for 82 Ford Interceptor SUVs for OPD in December 2013. That’s almost 60 times what the city struggled to find six months earlier for youth programming and space.

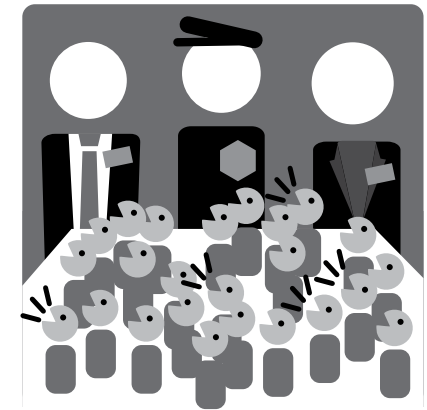
In July of 2013, the Oakland City Council accepted a \$2 million Department of Homeland Security grant to build the Domain Awareness Center (DAC). While the City originally claimed that the massive \$10.9 million surveillance system would be primarily used to monitor activities at the Port of Oakland, it was later revealed that the system would be open ended and that it would be expanded to include traffic cameras, license plate scanners and gunshot detectors as well as closed-circuit video feeds including 700 cameras at Oakland public schools and 135 cameras at the Coliseum. As the city’s track record proves, it was once again willing to spend millions to monitor community members’ movements, associations, and activities. Not surprisingly, the DAC contractor, SAIC or Leidos Holdings, Inc. not only engaged in shoddy business practices by over-billing the city and keeping billed software and gadgets for themselves, but in October 2013 information surfaced showing that SAIC was in violation of Oakland’s Measure T, which prohibits the city from doing business with entities that knowingly engage in nuclear weapons work. Many residents and organizations, including the ACLU, Electronic Frontier Foundation, North Oakland Lighthouse Mosque and the Oakland Privacy Working Group and have opposed the DAC and have turned out to City Council meeting to share their outrage. Strong community opposition to DAC eventually influenced the Oakland City Council to vote on March 4, 2014 to restrict the DAC to a primarily port-focused operation by removing citywide Shot Spotter maps and city traffic cameras from the system, and requiring any further expansion or information-sharing decisions to come before the Council for approval.

These examples of city strategies stand in stark relief to the financial burdens many community members face including ongoing poverty and joblessness, the high cost of housing and lack of access to healthy, affordable food. When Oakland prioritizes money for policing rather than funds for solutions that actually work for our communities, it doesn’t just mean belt-tightening, it means that Oakland residents are being harmed physically, psychologically and financially.

CONSULTANTS

Oakland’s City Council has consistently invested in trusting outside consultants to tell them how to solve Oakland’s crisis of policing rather than paying attention to the consistent stream of concrete, realistic, cost effective solutions suggested by residents and organizations across the city. In 2013 the City of Oakland continued its trend of trying to address the ways that policing fails Oakland by spending millions of dollars bringing in outside consultants. These people get brought in to look at the Oakland Police Department’s policies and practices and to make recommendations. Here are just two examples of how Oakland leaders pursued this failing strategy.

2013 began with the City wanting to include “supercop” William Bratton in an already controversial consulting contract with Strategic Policy Partnership. The consultancy generated a firestorm among Oakland residents and sparked broad but cohesive opposition organizing against the appointment. Bratton, who is infamous for pushing zero tolerance policing practices such as stop and frisk and police sweeps, faced so much opposition that the terms of the contract were changed to limit his contact with the public. The results of the \$350,000 investment



With a booming industry in consultant “problem solving” being generated by the OPD, there seems to be little incentive to develop and implement plans that will actually support the long term health and stability of Oakland’s poor communities and communities of color. The parade of consultants cost the Oakland residents over a half-million dollars in 2013, and there’s no sign that City officials are ready to listen to what Oaklanders say we want and need for our city.

Bratton and the rest of the Strategic Policy Partnership team have been unimpressive. In particular, the report capping off the multi-year contract lacked any concrete analysis or recommendations. According to Geoff Collins of the Oakland Police Foundation, “Anyone can give a list of all the programs and say get involved. There is no strategy there.” City Councilperson Desley Brooks noted, “The report states the obvious”.

After more than a decade of failing to comply with the terms of a federal court order mandating changes to the Oakland Police Department’s policies and practices resulting from the “Riders” lawsuit settlement, in 2013 Thelton Henderson, the judge overseeing Oakland’s compliance named Thomas Frazier as Compliance Director of the OPD. Frazier, who already held a \$100,000 consulting contract to assess OPD’s response to Occupy Oakland, was hired at a yearly salary of \$270,000. After less than a year on the job, however, Judge Henderson fired Frazier claiming that his position was duplicative with the Federal Monitor also assigned to the OPD (it is interesting to note that Oakland has already seen three different monitoring teams as well). That monitor, Robert Warshaw, who former police chief Howard Jordan has described as “rul[ing] by fear and intimidation” will be paid more than \$1 million for his monitoring work, which Jordan suspects will provide a financial incentive to keep the city out of compliance.

With a booming industry in consultant “problem solving” being generated by the OPD, there seems to be little incentive to actually develop and implement plans that will result in the long term health and stability of Oakland’s worst off neighborhoods. Robert Wasserman, the lead consultant for Strategic Policy Partnership, mentioned publicly several times that Oakland is “policing resistant” suggesting that the level of mistrust and animosity toward policing by Oakland residents makes it difficult for consultants to make recommendations. We wonder, then, why instead of listening to the city’s residents and their ideas about ways to increase public safety and community health, that city leaders favor formulaic approaches from outside consultants.

CONCLUSION

The people of Oakland know what we want and need. We want an end to all police violence, including the violence perpetuated by the constant threat of surveillance and arrest, especially in poor communities of color. We want affordable housing and stable employment. We want you to stop detaining and deporting our people through collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We want you to stand up for our youth by creating and maintaining accessible, safe youth centers, and by keeping our schools open and well-funded. We want a true re-investment in the people of Oakland.

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

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**POLICING
fails
OAKLAND**

MOVEMENT 1 Sending a propositional sketch for going public

As the No Cops group determined how to bring the campaign’s phase 1 (developing questions, consent forms, a plan for first steps) and phase 2 (starting to collect stories / conduct interviews) into being, finding ways to talk about the campaign to allies, possible interviewees, and their fellow chapter members emerged as real need, and one about which there was some anxiety. Given the relatively unfamiliar shape and focus of this campaign, it proved harder to explain than members liked. It was not in response to a specific crisis or policy, and what it would actually *make* was still unknown, which some thought might make communicating clearly about the goals especially difficult. Within weeks of the group being back at work on the campaign, ideas about whether, how, and in what form to speak publicly about it came up fairly consistently. In late September, I offered to mock up an idea for an outreach piece in response to what I’d been hearing in the meetings.

Because of discussions surrounding the work I’d done on timelines and storyboards over the summer (see Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion), I knew, more or less, that the group was both interested in me contributing through suggesting design ideas inclusive of political strategies and trusted me to work from what I heard them saying. By now, my working style, engagement, and capacity to propose and follow hunches had been shaped by the transition into my being considered a member of the group. I dove into the creation of an outreach piece that I suggested could both “[explain] the campaign and [build] involvement / excitement / knowledge.”

I sent a sketch through the listserv: a rough drawing of a two-sided outreach piece, designed to fold into a small, pocket-sized booklet (Figure 10 on page 78). The front included a catch-phrase (I borrowed “Our Oakland, Our Solutions” from the Plan for a Safer Oakland, on which the original campaign proposal was based) and references to the goals of the campaign to build people-driven vision and resources. In addition, I imagined there would be text about the campaign and how to get involved, contact information and a brief description of CR. On the back I proposed we create an interactive map of Oakland, on which we asked people to “make your mark!” by writing in existing resources, things they thought were needed, or ideas for what could make Oakland stronger or safer without police. I suggested that these could be collected digitally or physically, and said I hoped this would allow us to aggregate the maps and make them available online, ideally in a way that could show people’s maps layered on one another, making an alternative vision of Oakland. In my email, I noted that this was “something to get a conversation started about what is needed in outreach materials” and said it was a jumping off point, “even if the first jump is away from it.”

A basic process had begun to solidify in our work, beginning with the carrot and stick images: a need surfaced, someone made a proposal, the group or members of the group discussed and refashioned that proposal, and together we negotiated and attempted to design a useful or relevant outcome, whether it was an artifact, a process, or both. While I still wrestled with understanding my role in the group at this juncture, it was, in fact, clear that they had “given me work.” Indeed, this way

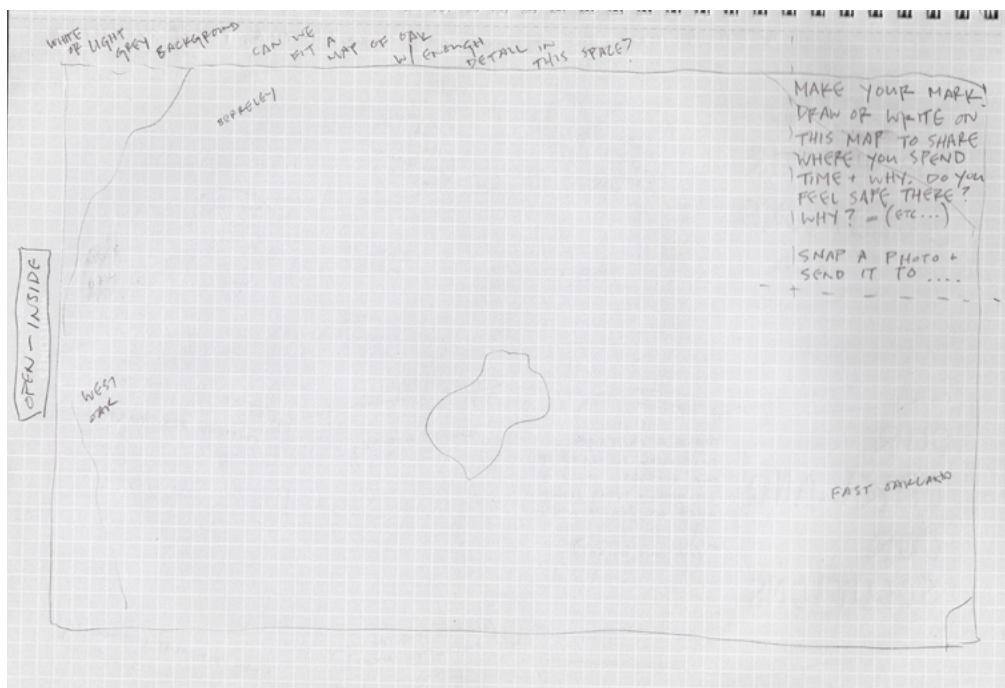
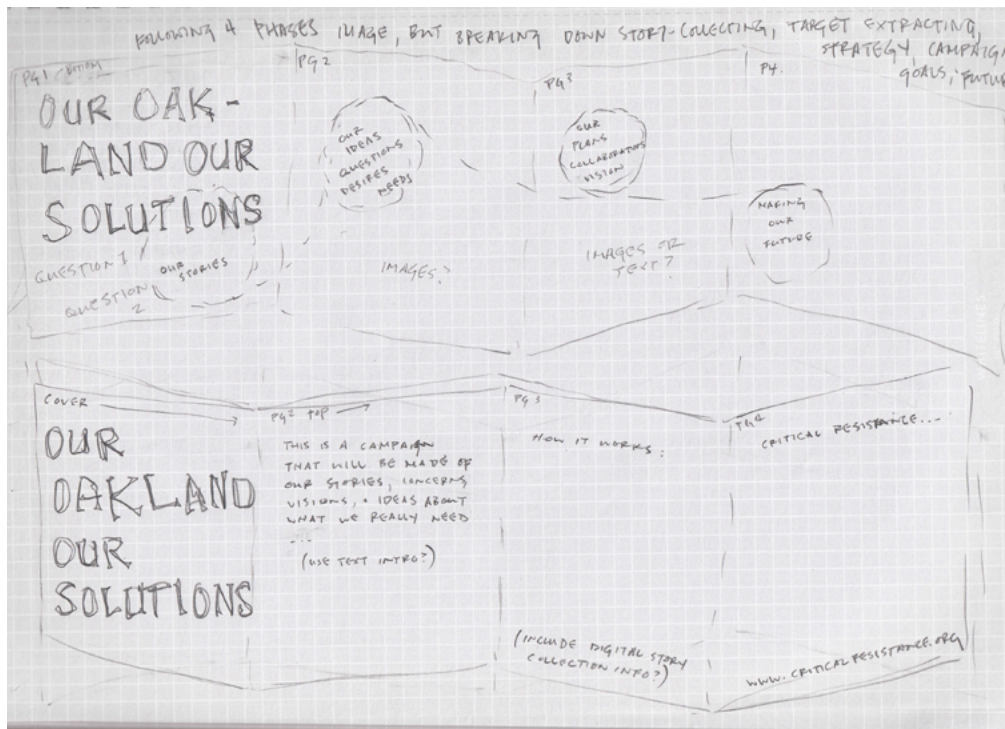


FIGURE 10 The first rough sketch of an outreach piece idea

of working is consistent with how a lot of work in CR gets done – small groups or pairs create proposals, as we did in the campaign research phase discussed in Chapter 2, share those proposals with the larger group for feedback, and then sometimes return to small groups for more work before the whole group takes it forward. In this way, our capacity as a group to work iteratively, even if on less familiar projects or ideas, was buoyed by the practices already in place before “my project” began. The group’s ability to “give me work” fit into this model of shared responsibility and communication of ideas, even if their decisions to do so might have been very specific to the relationships we developed through our work together. Of course, this process is consistent with art and design practices of proposal and critique, as well, lending itself to ways of working familiar to me and to the practice we were making together.

In this instance, I hoped my outreach proposal could reflect what I’d been hearing and also start us working on a designed artifact and process, modeled on participatory design, that might invite Oaklanders to frame “the problem” of policing and real security alongside the No Cops group. I imagined that I was bringing familiar (organizing) questions and unfamiliar (design) questions together, and was certain that even if the group didn’t know exactly *how* to articulate the campaign to others at this point, that a piece aimed at getting people interested and involved could be a good entry point for engagement.

MOVEMENT 2 Negotiating the outreach proposal

A month later, with prompting from a group member to revisit the sketch, the group and I talked through the proposal. Overall, No Cops members seemed interested both in the idea of publicizing the campaign and in imagining this artifact / engagement as another way in which people might be able to contribute ideas to it. One member noted that the proposal might address some of the specific concerns about how to talk to people about this different, “offensive,” kind of campaign:

...you’re not going to be pointing to this particular thing that’s happening at City Hall, or that’s happening with the OPD, and we’re going to say, “This is what you can oppose and here is some information about it.” I think for people it’s going to be more nebulous. And I think for most people having visuals to be able to better understand that or to be able to engage with it in some way, which I think is the thing about the map. I don’t know that people are going to walk away with that piece of paper and understand exactly what we’re trying to do, but I think that they’re going to be able to show you on a map, and then be able to take a picture of it, or show it to somebody else, and then can be like, “Hey I got this cool thing today and this is what...we were talking about, and...this is this place in our community...and I feel this about this place.” (Patrick, pers. comm.)

While the idea of some kind of participatory mapping was interesting, members had questions about how it might work, questions that I couldn't answer with any precision, as the proposal I made stretched beyond my own technical proficiency. While one member expressed excitement about the possibilities, another suggested that the use of the maps wasn't really clear from the sketch or my verbal description, and that seeing some actual examples of what people might do with them could help make their utility more imaginable. They asked to see a version that reflected details we talked about in the meeting, and more information about how the mapping part might work. We planned to review it when we met again in the new year.

As I'd imagined and proposed, we used this basic sketch as we had the carrot and stick sketches and the circle diagram before – as an artifact through which to negotiate ideas about the campaign and strategies for its development – alongside the *specific* role of an outreach tool as a part of that work. And while this way of working through designing had begun to become familiar to No Cops, to me, and to us, I was still focused in significant ways on what I was contributing as a designer that was *new* (especially aside from “the visual”). In these exchanges I hoped to facilitate an orientation toward tools or methods in service and participatory design, in this instance, that I thought could enhance or compliment strategies of engagement that were already familiar.

But upon reflection, with a growing understanding of the critical nature of designed artifacts' and processes' *use* to the No Cops group's work, I looked at this moment another way. While I maintain(ed) a strong interest in the possibilities of and for participatory elements in the larger organizing strategies for the campaign, this interest was sometimes shared by members of the group and sometimes not. To complicate matters, it was also not uniformly interesting, or not, to all members of the group at once. While some talked about “being really excited to engage” the interactive aspect of the proposed piece (Martin, pers. comm.), others couldn't imagine how it would work or what use the information might be. As such, this proposal that the group design additional modes of participation for the campaign *also* created a situation in which disagreements about what would be useful, when surfaced and became a part of the discussion of the design proposal itself. If designing in our relational practice hinged in part on making theory and artifacts that had timely and appropriate utility, then the practice of designing together also raised different ideas of what that might mean as well as whether or not to pursue certain ideas at different moments.

Conflict and difference of opinion are, of course, endemic to engaging proposals, especially where designed artifacts function to introduce ideas and hone meanings, as discussed in the previous chapter (Björgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren 2012; Ehn 2008; Grocott 2010; Hill 2012). Within CR specifically there are also expectations that disagreement is endemic to political organizing. CR's ethos, structures in place for member development and political education, and, in particular, the consensus decision making process, noted in Chapter 2, that is central to how CR members do their work, acknowledge and build expertise among members for (trying) to allow

for and work with and through the different kinds of conflict that arise. These can be as varied (and related) as disagreements about strategies and tactics, organizational direction, taking on responsibilities and carrying through with them, and being mindful of race, gender, class, and other privilege and how it plays out in the day-to-day work of CR groups. I was already closely aligned with CR's political goals and actively involved nationally (over many years) and so could draw on my understandings of how CR “worked,” and on the very skills – such as facilitation and systemic analysis – I learned through my informal education as a CR organizer. Additionally, I shared a working history with members of the group by this time. Our shared knowledge and expertise as CR members and / or political organizers arguably rubbed off on our designing together. However, in my “designer” role, I was still unquestionably “feeling my way” (Light and Akama 2012), trying to know the parameters of my (design) practice with No Cops members in this specific context. I was learning to hear the back-talk of our relational practice, in which designing was both process- and artifact-based and where what was “talking” was not just a space or material, but an amalgam of voices, conditions, histories, and desires. And, critically, I was listening along with others (Eriksen 2012; Robertson and Simonsen 2012), arguably, even with other parts of my (political) self.

Our negotiation of my outreach piece proposal demonstrates a moment of “shifting” in my practice with the No Cops members. Through the process of our designing together, what I'd presumed my position to be in one moment – making design proposals based on the group's expressed needs and my sense of design opportunities or possibilities – *shifted* as we discussed that proposal and bumped it up against the ideas of the group and competing needs of the campaign and larger context. In this sense, I became unmoored in my understanding of what my, and even our, practice was meant to be, and moved into a situation of uncertainty. This shift, or unmooring, happened in the pivots between my proposal, group members' responses, and my / our next move. I may have started out by framing or creating a context through which I engaged the group in a design process or question, but as they took leadership in articulating what was useful or necessary to the work, my position shifted to participating in a process driven by them and framed by those articulations. I may still have played the role of a facilitator, working with the group and my design skills and ideas to synthesize responses to the proposal as we moved it forward, but I was guided by the group's reframing of the priorities before us. It was in learning to work with these shifts that we built our practice together, and that I came to understand my own practice within it.

In this respect, I began to experience what Lucy Suchman (2002) critically identified as designers' “situated” positions *as designers* in practice with others as a condition of being in dynamic movement in the work with CR.³ Suchman's argument

3. Suchman, as I noted in Chapter 2, builds on Donna Haraway's (1991) argument for “situated knowledge” as a means of arguing for a feminist objectivity that is derived from a multiplicity of situated perspectives. In Haraway's account, one critical part of this situated knowledge is shaped by experiences of power, especially in relationship to race, gender, sexual-

highlights two intertwined ideas about designers' roles in knowledge-production in (technology) design: that we must be attentive and accountable to both the *ideas and experiences* we bring with us into design situations, and to *our positions vis a vis* others in design processes (including "users" and colleagues). My practice with CR consistently revealed the importance of the first of these. In addition, it led me to experience the second of these – my position as a designer in relationship to others – as one of being placed, moved, and located-in-relationship-to the people with whom I designed and the contexts for our designing.

It was again, in part, the early intervention of CR members' own needs and desires for any work we might do together on the shape of this project – the amendment to my research proposal the proscribed this project requiring CR members to take on "new work" – that paved the way to our development of this relational practice over the course of the research. The impact of members' positions as leaders in the process is important for understanding the work that took place throughout. Rather than consistently rallying the group around new ideas about ways of working or incorporating "design," my design proposals with and to the group sometimes resulted in *shifting* my in-the-moment understanding of my position from facilitating "new ideas" to navigating my way closer to what was needed and useful in the moment. In this sense, what Light and Akama (2012) call "attuning" and "saturation" were means for becoming oriented to the situation of a design process through developing a deep, embodied sense of what was at stake in the work, and what was of use, so that I might become an agent in it.

MOVEMENTS 3 and 4

Designing theory / strategy: Imagining the Year in Review

Before the new year, members of the Oakland chapter considered a proposal to shift the focus of their work out of a concern for what many saw as difficulty making real headway in campaigns because members were stretched beyond capacity. When the No Cops group met again on January 8th, it was unclear exactly what would happen next, as a decision was not meant to be reached until the next chapter meeting, but the group decided to put work on the outreach piece on hold. During this hiatus, the second in six months, No Cops members continued to meet and talk through their own ideas about the new campaign's possibilities for abolitionist anti-policing work. While the abrupt halt to the campaign work in the

ity, nation, and ability. Haraway's argument, more so than is directly articulated by Suchman, is that one's knowledge and experience of power-differentiated access to resources, or exposure to harm, shape how one is situated and, therefore, what is knowable from that perspective. While this notion of "situated" is highly relevant to my arguments about looking at what designers and others bring into design situations (see, for example, Agid 2012), I am focusing in this moment on Suchman's more design-focused use of "situated" to refer to the location of a designer (and the knowledge and experience they bring) vis a vis others in a design situation, and suggesting that this might be understood to be a dynamic position.

No Cops group was jarring, it also solidified people's desires to learn how to talk about the goals, vision, and process, all of which we did through what was emerging as a designing/organizing practice. An idea that one member first suggested back in September 2013, to create a broadsheet that publicized ongoing monitoring of policing in Oakland, resurfaced as the group talked again about why they were keeping track of policing news and what to do with it. What if, they asked, we created a Policing Year in Review, using the monitoring information as a means to challenge the OPD story of policing and build knowledge about resistance efforts?

Even as the group waited to decide with the rest of the chapter about what would ultimately happen with the No Cops' campaign, this idea took root. One member describes the vision for the Year in Review as a strategic engagement with both ongoing policing practices and the nascent campaign's goals of collecting and amplifying alternative experiences and strategies:

I think that...what we chose to focus on is really smart. So, what are the things that they're saying in terms of what they're going to be producing that are going to make us more safe? ... How are they utilizing resources to do that, and what are we, what are the people, what are Oaklanders doing to 1) solve those problems, and 2) push back against policing? I think that that's a really smart frame. And I think that that's a really important resource to continue to produce, just in general, but definitely in terms of thinking about this project in particular when we're thinking about stories that are being told and disrupting those stories and using collective narratives to disrupt an oppressive narrative that's coming up. (Evans, pers. comm.)

By the time the CR Oakland chapter determined to maintain the anti-policing workgroup, and continue the new "carrot campaign," the Year in Review was well underway.⁴ With the goal of distributing it at a public forum planned by Oakland's mayor, we produced the piece in a few short weeks, sharing the work among us. In the No Cops meeting at the end of February as I listened to the group talk about the main arguments they wanted to include, I had an idea that we could use boxed graphic representations of the key themes and inset them near the relevant text as "call-outs" to make for easy entry-points to these themes. Sitting at my desk in New York, I quickly sketched out the idea with a Sharpie on a loose piece of paper and held it up to the camera of my computer. I talked through how I envisioned this piece with text and these images, where the images acted as metaphors and /

4. With this news, even as work on the Year in Review was happening, we revisited the outreach piece, which had been left on the table in January. The group determined that it would make sense to wait three meetings, or six weeks, while they returned to collecting interviews and we continued to listen to them, in order to both "refresh our memories" about the campaign and language and to see if more ideas for what to include in the outreach piece might be clarified from listening to people's ideas in the interviews. I return to this later in the chapter.

or synopses and could stand out in the visual layout. As I spoke, Jeanne said: “That is such a good PhD moment – that is exactly how it’s supposed to work!”⁵

While it’s possible that she was primarily referring to my drawing and showing as acts of designing with the group, I would argue that the engagement she called out can be interpreted in another way which helps explicate the development of the group’s and my practice together. In addition to my excited offering of an idea for how the Year in Review might *look* in order to be effective at reaching people, and the group’s practiced ability to “read” my sketches from 3,000 miles away over a pixelated video, this interaction in the meeting also reflected No Cops members’ and my increasing comfort with working together in the moment through propositions and negotiations of political meanings as a designing process. In other words, I wasn’t only suggesting a layout, but a strategy for communicating the political message, both through a particular kind of graphic imagery that emphasized or exemplified the group’s arguments, discussed below, and by allowing those images / ideas to take up some real estate on the page. The recognition of this moment, then, even if Jeanne was talking more specifically about my use of a rendering of an idea to communicate to the group about something we could make, speaks to our growing capacities for making “designing” a part of our normalized ways of working together, and of making knowledge together, even as what we meant by designing differed or moved around.

MOVEMENTS 5, 6, and 7

Collective designing: Making the Year in Review

We agreed to a format and thematic categories for the Year in Review, and the group gave me to go-ahead to try producing images with a research assistant, whose Illustrator skills, experience in transdisciplinary design, and general interest in designing with people around issues of space and place I thought would enhance them. I had argued for a slightly different approach to using images than was typical in CR propaganda, leaning toward flat, greyscale images which I imagined would read like wayfinding signage, directing people’s attention to the political and strategic arguments in the Review text (and could also be easily reproduced on the CR copier). Rather than focus on either images of protest or images of state violence or harm, I suggested we try to exemplify and amplify the arguments in the text through what I imagined as, and we called, infographics.

In my reflections at the time of doing this work, I noted that my history in CR – both as a member and as a person frequently called upon to make images or design

5. Members of the No Cops group were consistently demonstrating their interest or investment in my PhD work, both in shows of support for my learning or literal progress in the degree, or, as in this moment, through observations of our work that they thought did, or didn’t exhibit connections to my research. In interviews, as noted in the introduction, some members talked about their concerns about whether what we were doing at any given moment was “good” for my project or not.

reports, posters, and other materials – shaped my responses and my advocacy for an aesthetic direction. This was the case even as the specific negotiations with the No Cops groups were also determined by our current and ongoing work together. I had already spent over a decade in CR thinking with others about what it meant to try to picture abolitionist ideas without relying on images of oppressive symbols or contexts (chains, bars, jail cells) or resorting without specificity to images of “freedom” and resistance (birds, green spaces, raised fists).

In one interview, Martin suggested that using images that are not photographs allows for what he described as a “fictional” space to emerge. Making a conceptual link between the art of Emory Douglass, the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, and the types of images in the Year in Review, he explained, “... organizing, and particularly what we do, and what the Panthers did, [is] about imagining something that [is] different. You can’t take a photo of imagining something that is different” (pers. comm.).⁶ It also seems important to note that I continue to struggle with these questions, so in instances in my work with the No Cops group in which I or we developed images and other visual designs, these questions were always already present. By asking No Cops members to take the relative risk of experimenting with a less familiar kind of imagery as a form of content in the Year in Review, when other more familiar image ideas were also put on the table, I was pushing both my own interests and inquiry about political imagery and engaging members in that investigation through what had become our shared work. These negotiations, while perhaps more familiar to me in my history with CR, overlapped with others in the larger landscape of the research to further shape my practice as I built on that history in the specificity of this collaboration.

While I had a general sense of what I wanted these infographics to look like, I knew I would need some help producing the images themselves, and asked my RA to work with me. We met at a local coffee shop and proceeded to sketch out some of the ideas the writers gave me for specific statistics and themes that might be good focal points for the graphics, as well as some I wanted to try out (Figure 11 on page 86). Like my exchange with the illustrator about the Ceasefire images, I again entered into a working relationship ancillary to what I was building with the No Cops group, but where my ability to communicate the key ideas in the work was critical for making images that were true to CR’s political ideas. Additionally, I was invested in finding out what we could do, and if we could use the visual strategy No Cops members had agreed to try out to successfully convey those ideas.

Over a table at the café, we first talked about the three themes and I sketched out the one idea I already had pretty clearly in mind for a comparative “chart” showing massive inequity between funding for police cars versus funding that had

6. The visual style of Douglass’ drawings and paintings is very different from the kinds of graphics we made for the Year in Review, but the correlation Martin drew was to the ability of the images to propose a way of thinking or imagining that exceeded photographic representation. Talking about these images, Jeanne noted, similarly, that “there’s something about the additional work that infographics do versus just like, ‘Ok, here’s a picture of a cop’” (pers. comm.).

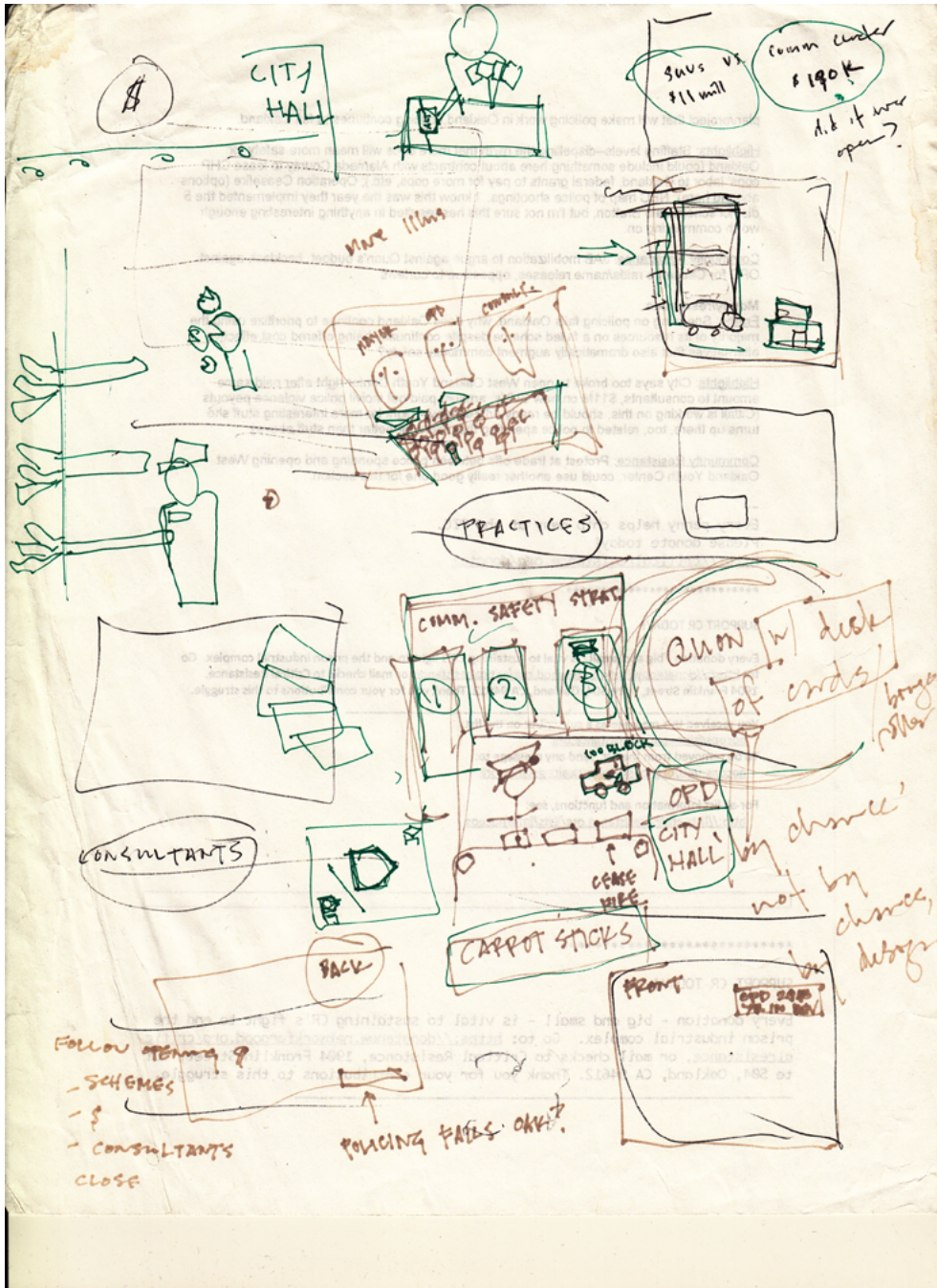


FIGURE 11 Working sketches for Year in Review infographics addressing three main themes: policing policies, resources, and consultants

been denied to open a youth center in a poor / working class neighborhood of color in West Oakland. I made a rough sketch of that idea and talked about the kinds of shapes and figures I imagined. She pulled up some images of wayfinding figures on her computer, and we picked out references that we thought worked well. Then we turned to the more complex themes – the constantly shifting policing policies and the city’s reliance on expensive consultants to manage and make changes to policing infrastructure and strategy. We passed a pen back and forth, while testing out our ideas on each other. Finally, we arrived at a conveyor belt turning out revolving policing plans and a scene of looming consultants, ignoring the voices of the people “below” them. In the next meeting, the group and I went over the sketches, and I redrew and revised, showing changes over our video connection. By the end of the meeting, we’d agreed on three “infographics” for the Year in Review, and moved toward the final layout.

Given our previous experience working with the illustrator, this was not a new practice for the group or for me. In this instance, we had more specific clarity about when and for what purpose we’d be using the images we made. And, our collective capacities to work with an “outside” designer to imagine and execute ideas that originated in the No Cops’ group’s work, and would return to that context, were facilitated by the shared, relational practice we had developed, which allowed the group both to trust me to make ideas that were strategically relevant and to critique them and redirect where they did not work. Strictly speaking, decontextualized, the production of the Year in Review might be the most stereotypical co-design project that took place in the course of this research. It is also, to some extent, a role I’ve been in with CR members in different places dozens of times over the 15 years I’ve been a part of the organization: making the visual layout for a piece of propaganda. However, I would argue this instance of designing was, in fact, determined more by the development up to this point of our relational practice, in which designing became a way of working to navigate ideas, generate theories, and, in cases like this one, figure out how to articulate and demonstrate those externally, as well.

I took on both a familiar role, working with CR members to produce a thing that could circulate, and a less familiar one, *more distinctly shaped by this context*, in which I proposed ideas that I thought could do the strategic work of the Year in Review in a way that echoed some of the larger arguments of the new campaign about the problem of policing in Oakland, and as a system in general. In this way, I was, along with other members in the group, a content producer, working with everyone to create a political message and a tool for the larger organizing project. Martin noted that it “integrate[d] some of [my] skills and resources and it was something that we all, I think every single member of the group, collaborated on creating in different ways...” (pers. comm.). This was, then, in a broader sense, a “PhD moment.” The No Cops group and I found ourselves and our work increasingly intertwined, collaboratively shaped and generated through ways of working – such as making and negotiating meaning through artifacts and designing processes – that we continued to develop together.

Whereas I'd experienced myself *shifting* from my expected designer role in the previous set of exchanges around the first drafts of the outreach piece, in the production of the Year in Review, I was "re-positioned," as I made proposals to the group for strategic, content-based image-making but within the larger context of material that was largely familiar to No Cops' organizing practices. This shift, from proposing a scaffold to introduce participatory engagements through an experimental outreach piece to collaborating on content and layout for a broadside making links between analysis of police activity and policies to the nascent anti-policing campaign, revealed the variability of the "designer" role I'd imagined and (re)aligned it to and through the emergent and timely work of the group in a given moment. The feeling of confusion, vulnerability, and curiosity that is the nature of these shifts, then, also became an experience of being a designer in a collaborative process. Being open to my own movement inside my practice was a critical component of being available for it, and for the work.

MOVEMENT 8 Revisiting outreach

As the time the group had chosen to return to the outreach piece came around, an alarming email went out over the listserv: the Stop the Injunctions Campaign (STIC) garden, which Jeanne and I had proposed as a home-base for this campaign, had been given an eviction notice by the City of Oakland. They had 30 days to vacate. While a full discussion of the garden's history falls outside the scope of this dissertation, it is worth noting that a threat to the garden was perceived as a threat to years of organizing work CR and STIC had done against the gang injunctions, as well as an incursion into the small bit of space survivors of the injunctions carved out to continue building alternative resources in their neighborhood. The notice, left, ironically, by the Department of Neighborhood Investment, had to be addressed. This occupied much, but not all, of the working group's efforts in weeks to come.

In the early April meeting, though, we talked about the revision of the outreach piece I'd done since we'd last discussed it. Before the meeting, I suggested that a hand-drawn map of relevant parts of the city might be more inviting for people to mark up than the Google map I'd put in as a placeholder previously. I asked members to share specific boundaries of the city I might use, and if they thought it would be more conducive to people's participation to include lots of details or just major landmarks. Based on their responses, I mocked up a map for the layout and, while it still seemed a bit too busy and hard to navigate to me, I sent it off for additional feedback.

As members' understandings of what, in fact, the campaign might be doing and how it might work started to gain clarity, their sense of what was needed in an outreach tool also changed. In this meeting, some members expressed a need to have something they could use *now* to talk with people concretely about the campaign, which meant that what had been exciting and compelling about the draft version's open-endedness and general ideas about CR's efforts towards self-determined resource

building a few months before, now seemed limited and less sufficient. Susan, who everyone agreed tried using the outreach piece the most, explained her thinking about the piece in progress:

I think this is a good container. I'm thinking about what I was saying before about [how] "Our Oakland, Our Solutions" is so vague, and knowing when I've been passing it out to people I needed to explain a lot, and wanting more on this thing. And then also had this simultaneous thing about...the significance of needing policing to be...always, part of how we're explaining it. And so maybe that was my unresolved dissatisfaction with this and not knowing what proportions need to be devoted to being like, "This is anti-policing," or like "Policing fails us," or, more than fails us, is incredibly repressive...and not knowing how to work that into this campaign tool. (pers. comm.)

Additionally, some members noted that while the mapping capacity might eventually be interesting, it did not lend itself to the kind of use they needed in the moment.

With those concerns, there was still interest in testing the piece, and there was opportunity; a large May Day march seemed the perfect place for members to try it out, regardless of whether or not they were able to engage people in using the mapping / drawing part on the back. We agreed that I would make a version of it that simplified the layout and folds and tried to optimize it for being printed on the copier at the CR office. I reminded the group that I needed feedback on the map and Jeanne agreed to look at the text and edit it. The day before the march, I sent a final version to the group to test, along with a PDF diagram of how to fold the printed piece, and asked them to let me know how it went (Figure 12 and Figure 13 on page 90).

On the heels of the successes with the Year in Review, and seeing the growing interest in speaking publicly about the campaign (which, at this juncture, did not have a name, making this kind of public speaking somewhat difficult), I had a renewed excitement about the possibilities offered by some kind of outreach material. It also seemed to me and, especially, in the conversations of group members, that the logic of using a map to engage people in the ideas of the campaign was less valuable, or that its relative use was a point of contention. Patrick explained that from his perspective:

I do think it's interesting with this project that we continue to return to mapping in some way in these different iterations, but never quite get to the... maybe it's just not the right time, but I think there have been multiple times when we could have been using maps and we haven't (laughs). ...Some of it I do think is that there may be a couple folks in the group who can't get their brains around why we would use maps, but I also think that it might be something about maybe this project or campaign is actually less geographically focused or geospatial, or whatever the word might be, than maybe we originally conceived of it, and so for whatever reason the map...keeps presenting itself, but maybe isn't the right tool...maybe there's some other tool... (pers. comm.)

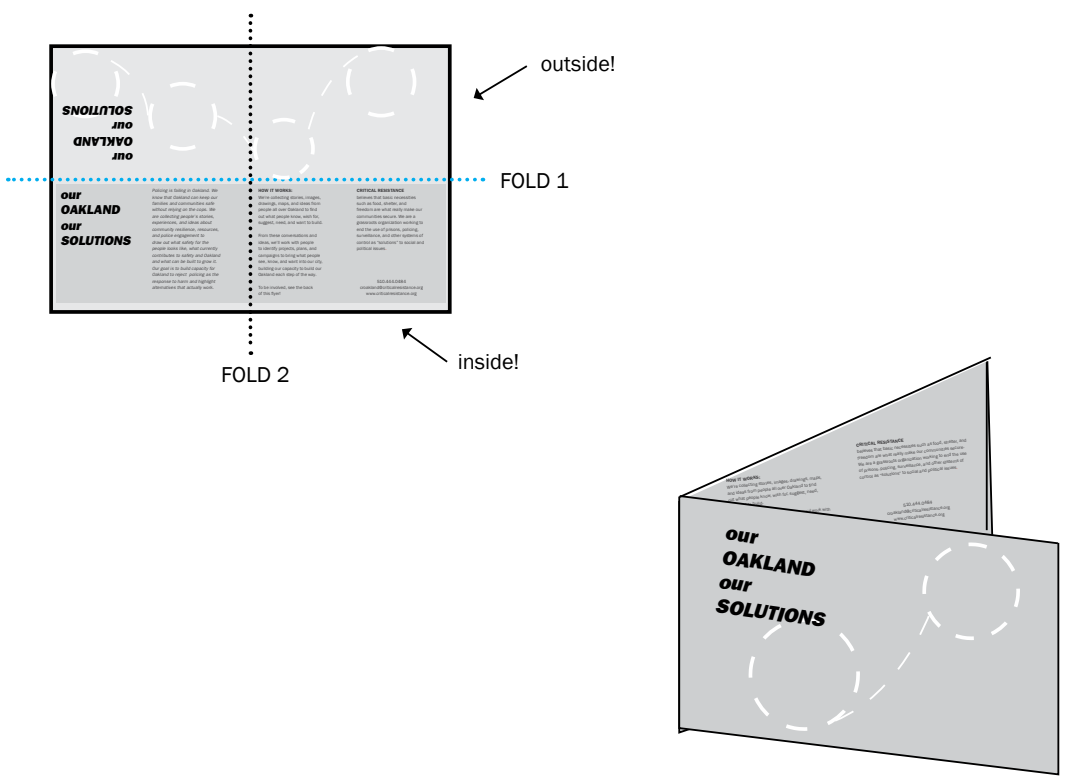
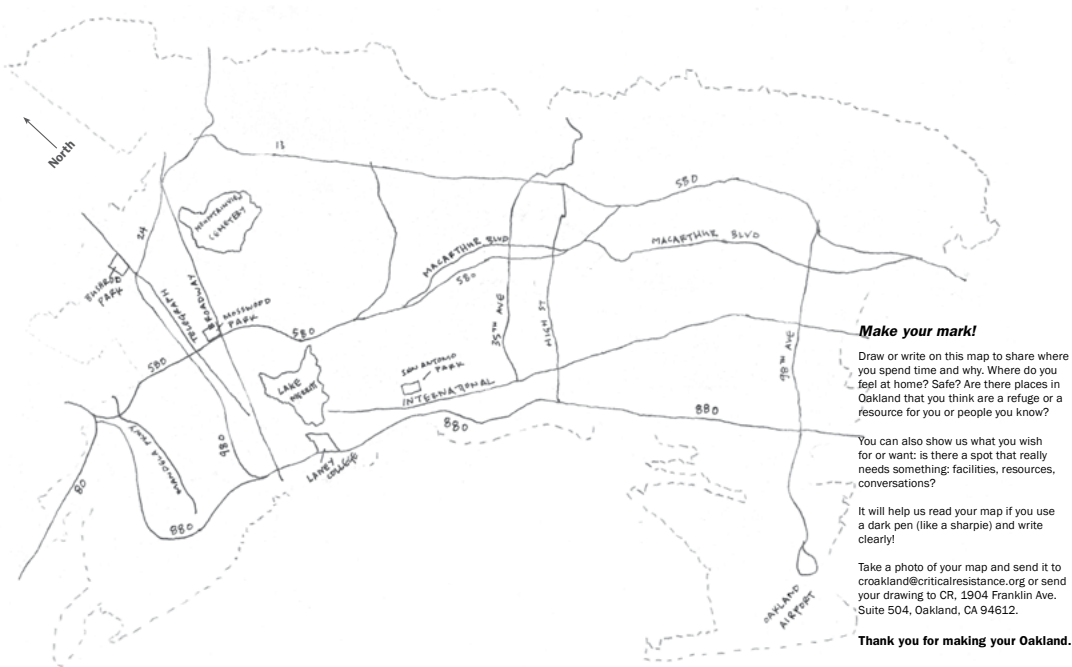


FIGURE 12 The first draft of a hand-drawn map for the back of the outreach piece
FIGURE 13 The folding instructions diagram for May Day

In my reflections at the time, I also began to ask if mapping was still important and, wondered the piece itself could really be made useful. Next to the concreteness of the garden eviction defense and the relative clarity of the Year in Review, the outreach piece I'd originally proposed seemed less viable. But I was resolute in my interest, and there was interest among some members of the group in the idea, at least in theory, of using outreach materials to have “information going in two directions,” as Martin put it, so we tried again (pers. comm.).

Unfortunately, due to my oversight in the layout, the piece I sent oriented incorrectly. The printing happened at the last minute before the group needed to take off for the march, and so they didn't have time to look at the diagram I sent, or ask me to make changes in time, and the piece itself remained mostly unused and un-usable for the May Day event. Even though I fixed it soon after, these kinds of technical glitches point to the combination of relational, geographic, and technological dynamics that had an effect on the work CR No Cops members and I did together. They were sometimes brought on by my own stubbornness about introducing more complex formats that I hoped might be compelling for the group and people with whom they were talking, sometimes by poor technology transfer, sometimes by not being able to work through forms and formats in person, and typically by some combination of these. In this sense, my work with the group sometimes fell short because of my own miscues or fell to the wayside as is the nature of some of CR's organizing work, as multiple members pointed out in interviews. One defining aspect of some members' assessment of my membership in the group, as noted in Chapter 2, was that I did work that might not be taken up. Like them, I was willing to try things out, make proposals, and see them remain unused or not used right away.

As I struggled with letting go of the idea of my research and my role as a designer benefitting CR's work by introducing “new” ideas that were not always useful, or useful *yet*, it was sometimes harder for me to let things fall away, or make changes to them through close listening to the specific or emergent needs of the campaign or the group. On the other hand, as No Cops members and I continued to work together, and the culture of the working group expectations extended to me, the understanding that everyone did work as exploration, and that this, too, was considered meaningful and productive, even when not ultimately used, allowed for the kinds of flexibility that made risk-taking possible. These negotiations, while rarely made explicit, except in the context of interviews, were also critical to the shaping of our relational practice, as we sorted out how to work with and toward what was needed, even and especially when we did not necessarily agree.

MOVEMENT 9 Reorienting: Navigating next steps

Before what would be the final discussion about the outreach piece in this form, I sought advice from a colleague in communication design with extensive experience in digital mapping and space-making and -claiming. At another café table in

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OR BUILD IN OAKLAND?

draw or write your idea, or share something that you know already exists

----->

GARDEN STORY
text here about the garden as an example of what this campaign is working to make / build / create (or some other example)

What would you make?

another part of New York City, I showed her the most recent draft of the outreach piece and asked for feedback. It took her no time at all. “The scale is too big,” she said, “and there are too many questions here.” She suggested a focus on one area of the city, perhaps, or different versions for different areas, with one or two specific questions. Her critiques made sense to me – the map also struck me as difficult to use. And, I knew it was unlikely that we could have different versions for different parts of the city, because we already knew from the interviews that people who lived in one part of the city referred to other areas when answering questions about where they spent time or liked to be. With my colleague’s knowledge in mind, and the given general shift away from a geographic focus for the campaign, I started to imagine that maybe a blank space with information about the campaign and an invitation to contribute by writing or drawing the answers to one or two questions would be a more productive and open “format” for the kind of interactive piece I continued to champion (Eriksen 2012). (Figure 14 shows continued iterations of the outreach piece in this vein.)

In the late May meeting, we had a robust discussion of the piece that revealed, again, differences among members in how they perceived its potential uses and in ideas about what might be valuable ways to engage Oaklanders through the campaign. The conversation revolved first around the use of mapping, both in general – e.g., whether it could or should be an aim of the campaign to build an alternative map of Oakland, as some of us had imagined, now, months ago – and specific to this campaign – e.g., whether it would be a neighborhood-specific or geographically-based campaign. Secondly, members differed in their thoughts on whether it was useful for an outreach piece to also solicit ideas or interaction from people, or if people would engage with it. Some asked if the piece we’d been looking at in various iterations was clear enough, or now needed to include much more information about the campaign. Some suggested the open-endedness could be engaging to some people, even if it was confusing to others. The clearest consensus that evening was that the piece we’d been working on, in fits and starts, was not quite right, and that some other version, or something else, might be better.

I noticed, and mentioned to the No Cops group, that what had started as campaign material some of them felt was premature because there was not enough to say, had become a piece some thought wasn’t *specific* enough. At the time, I saw this as a shortcoming of the piece itself; not only was it not finding its way to good use for the group, it was no longer even articulating a clear or exciting idea. Even as I understood that this process was part of the ongoing growth of my participation in the group’s strategizing, whether or not we all agreed on what would be of use at these specific moments, I struggled with the idea that the piece itself, after months of trying to make it work and trying to foreground it to be tested and refined, seemed to have failed. In retrospect, as part of the larger trajectory of our work together, however, it is also possible to see that in those six months, the group’s sense of the campaign had solidified, as had our practice together, and the negotiation over the outreach piece during that period, along with the work done together on the Year in

FIGURE 14 Experiments in possible interactive formats for the outreach piece

Review in the interim, was one of several sites in or through which that had taken place. As Evans observed, “you can definitely see how the outreach piece developed as our campaign and our project unfolded” (pers. comm.). In this sense, the shifting ideas of, propositions for, and debates about, the relative use of the components of the outreach piece were also, quite simply, happening in the flow of shaping the campaign itself. Our negotiations over the outreach piece reflected fundamental questions being raised in the course of the work about the work, and, in turn, the context in which it was taking place was being made through our making together.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the period discussed in this chapter, the campaign itself became increasingly grounded in the day-to-day work of the group. At any given moment, my contributions and my positions in that work were multiple. We talked about, I proposed, and we tested more than one design idea and system at once, all of which focused on either organizing the group’s movement or engaging with the public about its ideas and arguments. My focus on the outreach piece and the Year in Review here is an exploration of the relative position(s) in which I put and / or found myself in relationship to the No Cops group and in the context of our still-evolving relational practice. The processes through which these materials were imagined, proposed, discussed, and made, were generated in different ways, and produced different kinds of back-talk. The conditions of the design situation revealed both content-specific concerns dictated by the nature of the problems being set by the No Cops group and me and relational dynamics we made and navigated in order to design / work together. In this sense, what in the design “talked back” was, along with the designing itself, increasingly situated in a layered and shared process, in which my position as a designer was in motion.

As the two examples in this chapter show, what it meant for me to operate as a designer in the group meant different things at different times, and did not guarantee that I was in the position of framing, staging, or facilitating all the time. And when I was, the group did not always do what I hoped, imagined, or asked, nearly always because these things bumped up against what one or more people saw as necessary and useful for their anti-policing work or the development of the project in that moment. Thus, while much contemporary research into co-design practice focuses primarily on what designers working with others *do as designers*, in order to see and make sense of CR’s and my designing, I could not focus solely on an analysis or accounting of my actions, resources, or methods. Most of the “tools” we used in our work grew from the context itself, and so while I did bring ideas from past experiences, and there were some staged “design events” in the course of this research (Eriksen 2012), what primarily emerged was *work*. That work, as evidenced here, delineated and shaped CR No Cops group members’ and my relational practice. It was, especially as the projects moved forward (both my research and the group’s campaign), often finally shaped by the needs and ideas about what

was or could be of use, as determined by the members. While I sometimes proposed extensions of those ideas, shifts or differences in approach, or additional ways of thinking about them, in the instances where the nature of the problem at hand was contested – either in the group or between my proposals and the group’s ideas – the decision-making, meeting, and working processes of CR and the No Cops group took precedence. In this way, my research builds on and expands recent (re)turns in Participatory Design. It points, first, to the relevance of emphasizing both the evolving and historical political contexts in which designing with people takes place. And, secondly, it demonstrates the importance of looking closely at the nature of the relationships and engagements produced by and through collaborative designing.

As No Cops group members’ work became my work, and I became a part of the group, what my position as a “designer” working with them entailed and allowed for was perpetually shifting. At times I was executing ideas I was asked to work on, at other times I was proposing my own ideas and trying to organize the group’s interest in them, at other times, still, I worked in close, generative collaboration with one or more group members as a “subgroup,” to complete one designated and delegated chunk of the work to be done for a specific goal.

In reflection on the period in which we engaged these artifacts, the movement between what was known and unknown, what seemed “ready” to be shared publicly and what some members saw as too new or unformed, emerged as a way of thinking about members’ relationships to the campaign and anti-policing work more broadly. In addition, these acted as guides for my own learning in my capacity as a designer with the group, as I began to find my way in what had become a shifting position vis a vis the group’s work. In the later negotiations of the outreach piece, I found myself “re-positioned” once again, this time in the somewhat precarious position of advocating for something that not everyone imagined to be useful, while also seeking to listen for the needs being articulated by the group so that I might make relevant changes to proposed designs. In this sense, I now occupied a kind of middle ground between outside designer / guest and member of the group, and was still working to find my way to an understanding of what it meant to design in this context, now, especially, in the face of a perceived failure. Martin helped me to see the striking parallel between the No Cops campaign development and my own research process when he framed the links between them this way:

I think that though there is this physical design work that you’ve supported us with...[the] positive experimentation that you’ve brought with that has been, and maybe in a similar way that I was describing, [that] we don’t know what anti-policing looks like in an effective way. Maybe this is too much, but it seems like you don’t know what *the* effective way to bring design to grassroots organizing looks like, and so you’ve like come with different experiments and ideas...I really appreciate that and appreciated the humbleness with which you’ve brought that. (pers. comm.)

From this perspective, I can begin to understand our experience with the outreach piece as important because I, and we, learned what might work differently from what didn't work, perhaps especially where pieces of what didn't work in that instance were so clearly linked to what I'd hoped to "bring" to CR from a design framework. Additionally, the relative success of the Year in Review helped to show the group and me what it might mean to learn to work together in specific ways that relied on an increasing co-development of content and strategy as the stakes of the campaign and the No Cops group's overall political work were clarified. Susan characterized the process of making the Year in Review as a component of the larger campaign and group work in this way:

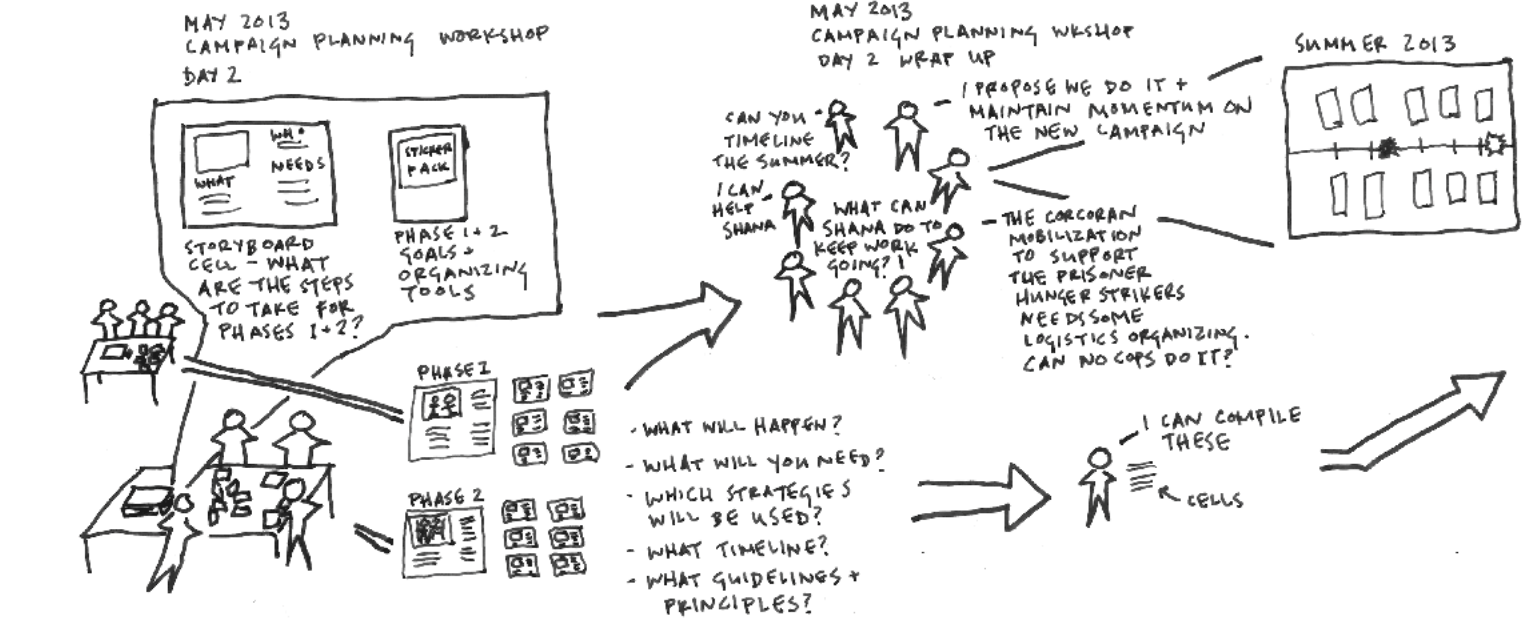
So again, while this didn't go as public as it could have, I think our meeting process of being like, "Let's agree on what the three fields of focus are, that's like schemes, consultants, and resources," tightened up our analysis, at least internally, and then the visuals even more. And in outreach I feel like any of us would be like, "And yeah, then the West Oakland Youth Center, it's like this much money versus all this money for SUVs." We should know these things and if it takes making a piece of propaganda and spending a meeting talking about what's going to be on the propaganda, that's the organizing practice of building a shared analysis... I think it's kind of amazing that our small group, since it is like four or five people, then [it's] not a...subcommittee making this stuff, but it was: ...we agreed on the clusters, Martin and Evans filled in the clusters, then what has been the media subcommittee, which is me, Jeanne, and Patrick, did the writing and then you did the infographics... if our group was 16 people, then there would be 10 people who were totally alienated from the process and would have to read it to come to an understanding of what it is. I think there's something kind of wonderful about our shared group that then we were able...to have a participatory process of building a shared analysis. (pers. comm.)

Working through these "experiments and ideas" came to shape the nature of our practice together, and to reshape my ideas of what it meant to be engaged in a collaborative design process and practice, more broadly. We developed capacities for co-designing through our relational practice, engaged ways of designing together that we created over time and through shared experience, including both contestation and negotiation. This practice, in turn, continued to take shape as my position as designer was de-centered, and my position as a designer / member required flexibility in relationship to the leadership and direction of my collaborators. What began to emerge in and through our work together was what I call "design co-authorship," in which the processes and ways of collaborating described above began to frame an increasingly shared process, inclusive of disagreement and challenge, rooted in the goals and aims of the No Cops group, and reflective of our capacities for risk-taking, learned together over time.

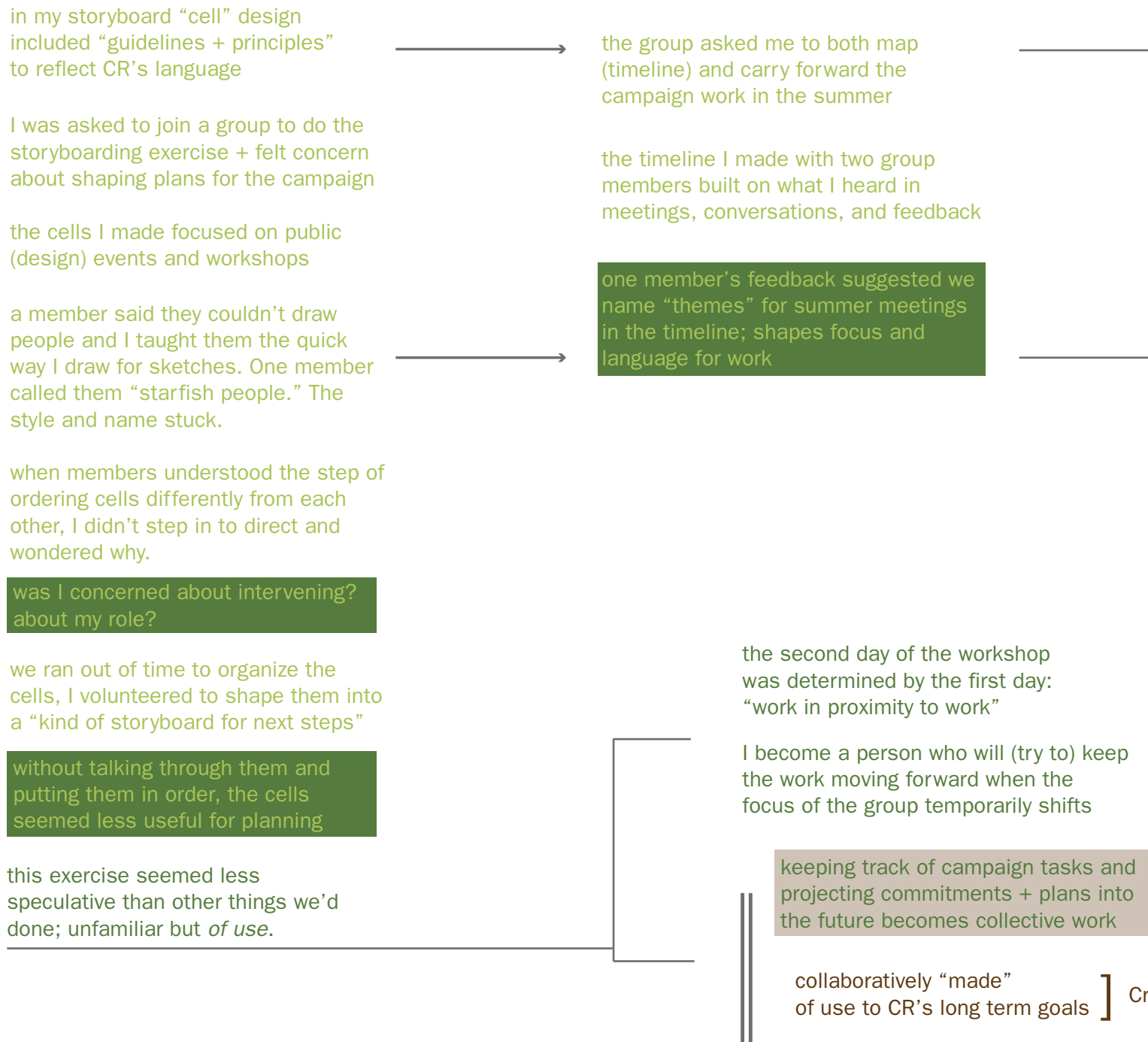
WHAT TOOK PLACE: the timeline and story of designing

MOVEMENT 1

We use storyboard "cells" to imagine and talk about steps in the campaign; No Cops takes up support role in other work; they ask me / I offer to help maintain momentum on campaign work



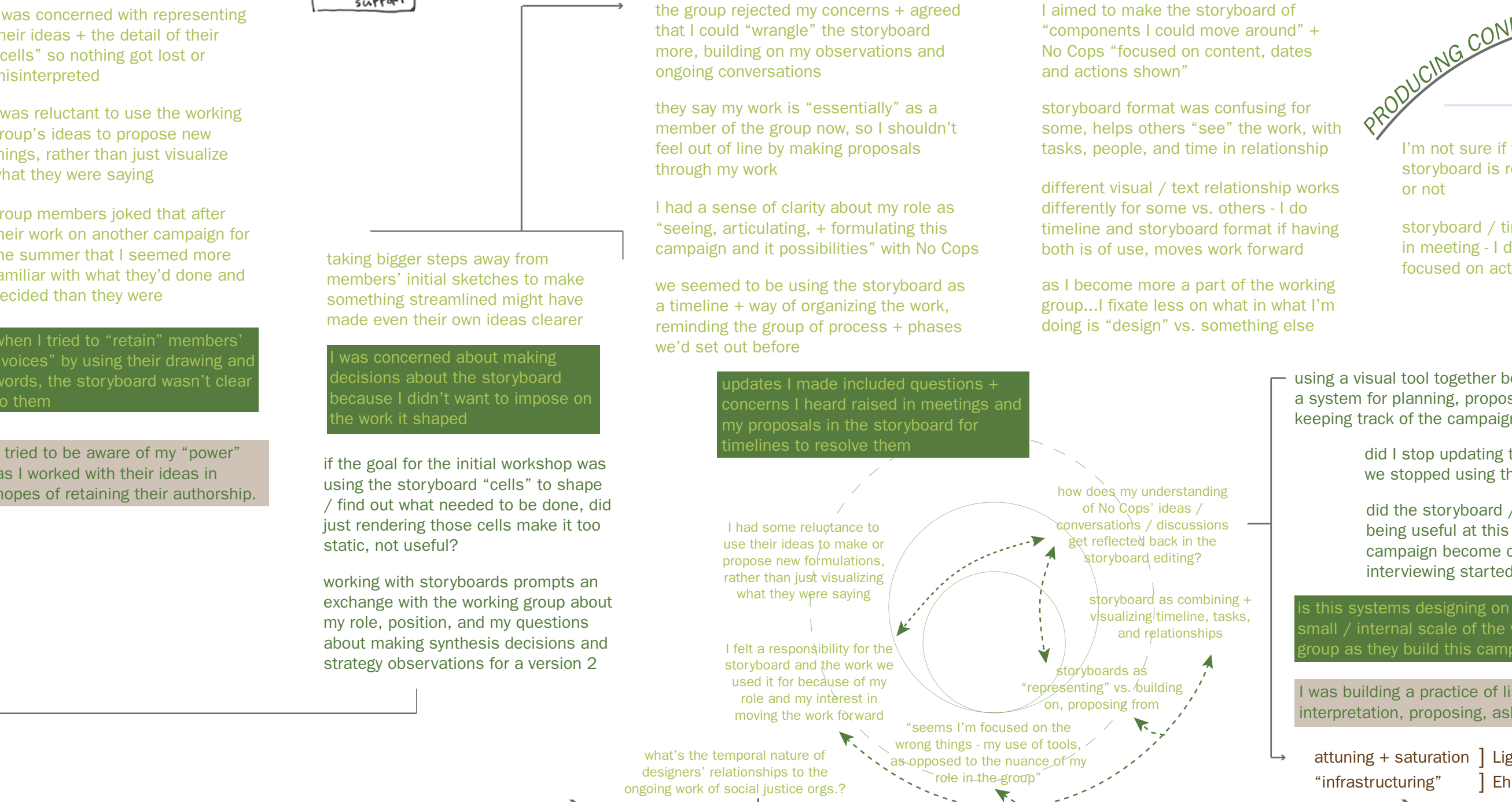
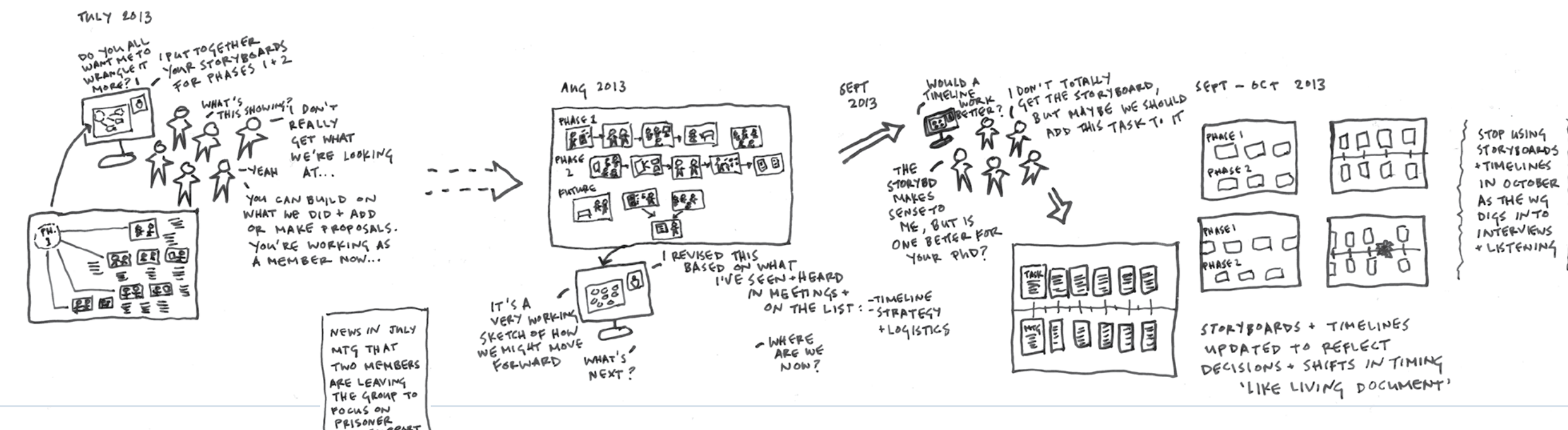
ANALYSIS & CRITICAL FRAMEWORKS: reflection-in-action reflection-on-action context



- key reflection-in-action reflection-on-action or critical & contextual references / arguments links and movement through time reflection-in-action added to or changed through reflection-on-action reflection-on-action added to or supported by critical & contextual references / arguments snapshots from analysis of practice, including reflection-in-action & reflection-on-action

MOVEMENT 2

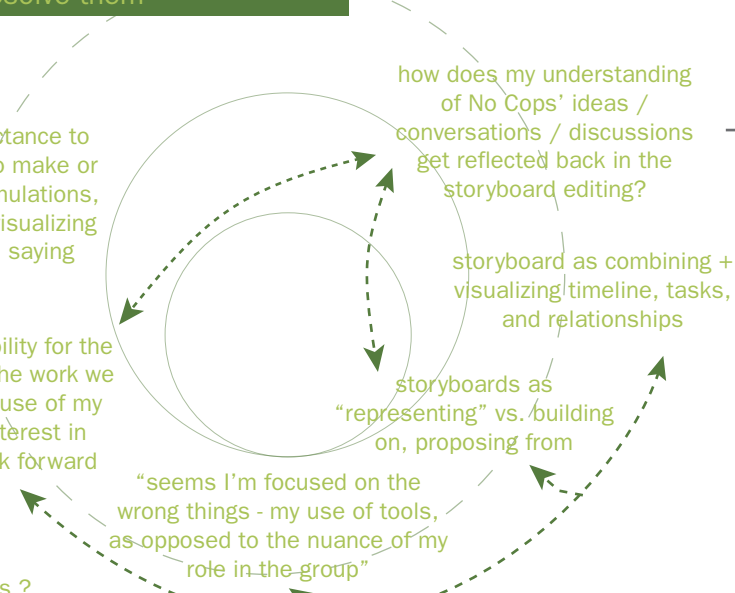
We look at the compiled storyboards; the group finds them confusing; we agree that I will try again, and "wrangle them more;" we use storyboards, and then timelines, in meetings and I update as we go



when I tried to "retain" members' "voices" by using their drawing and words, the storyboard wasn't clear to them

was concerned about making decisions about the storyboard because I didn't want to impose on the work it shaped

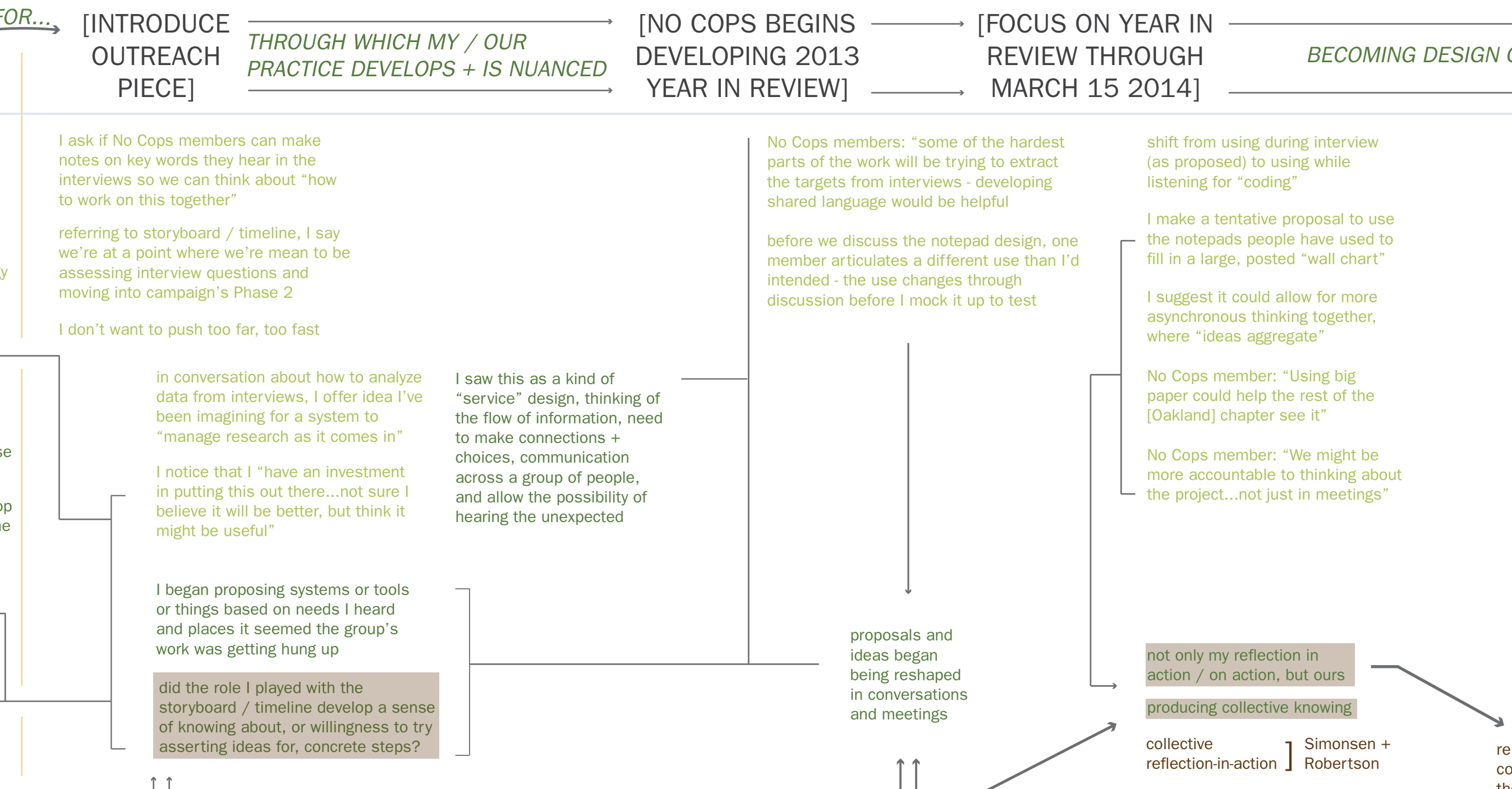
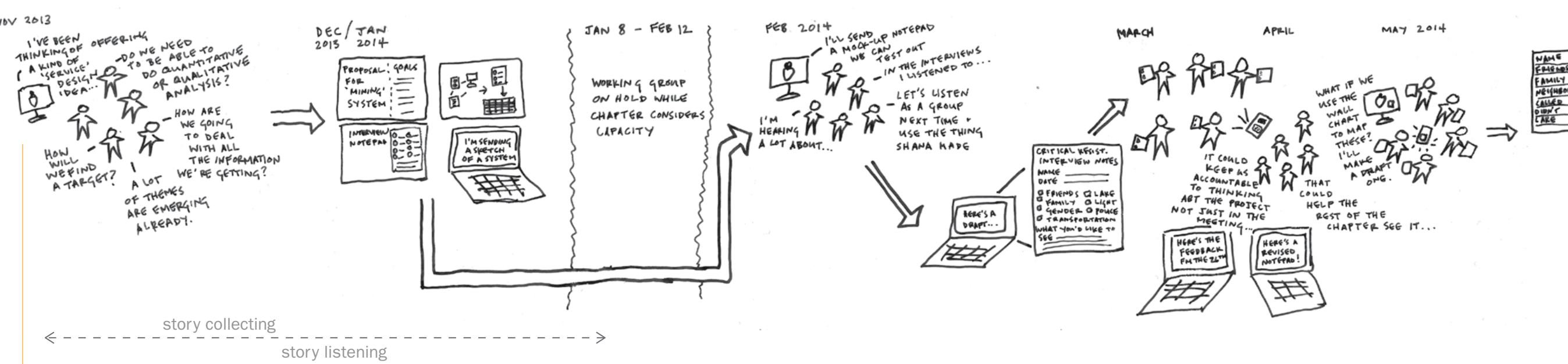
updates I made included questions + concerns I heard raised in meetings and my proposals in the storyboard for timelines to resolve them



My perspective is that these kinds of things are hard for me to use... I think that this [storyboard cells / workshop] was a really good practice for us to imagine out in order to build up some like shared discipline of like what the phases are going to look like... I think that what was great about this [timeline] was the ways in which we were trying to hold ourselves accountable to these dates... I think that what was great about this [storyboard] was that it was a... I think that what was great about this [storyboard] was that it was a...

MOVEMENT 3

As the campaign development continued, questions arise about how to work with information coming into the group through interviews conducted with Oaklanders; I propose a system for "mining" the interviews, shaped and honed by the No Cops members and me through use.



[INTRODUCE OUTREACH PIECE]

THROUGH WHICH MY / OUR PRACTICE DEVELOPS + IS NUANCED

[NO COPS BEGINS DEVELOPING 2013 YEAR IN REVIEW]

[FOCUS ON YEAR IN REVIEW THROUGH MARCH 15 2014]

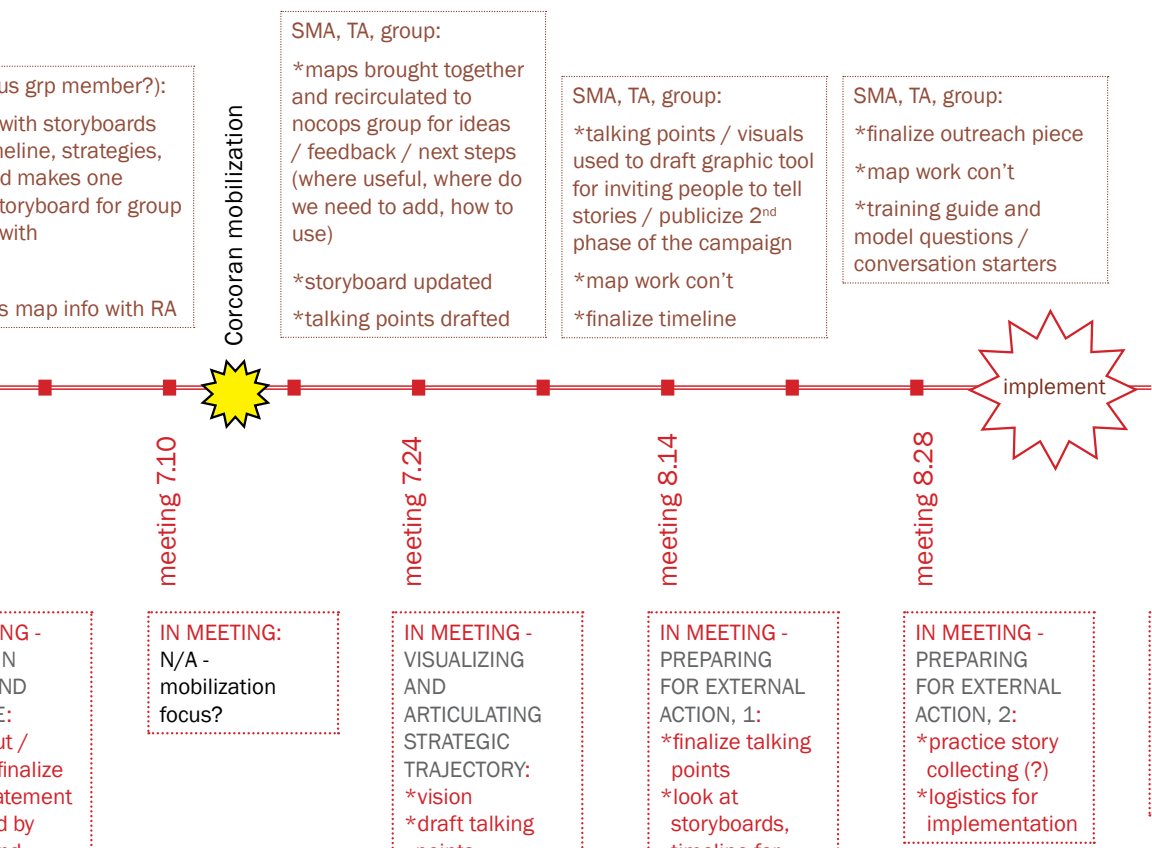
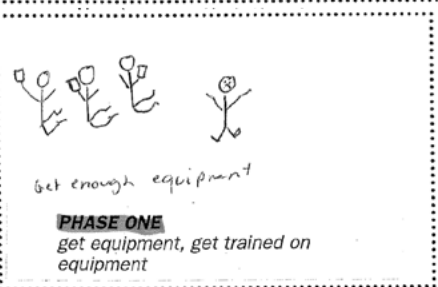
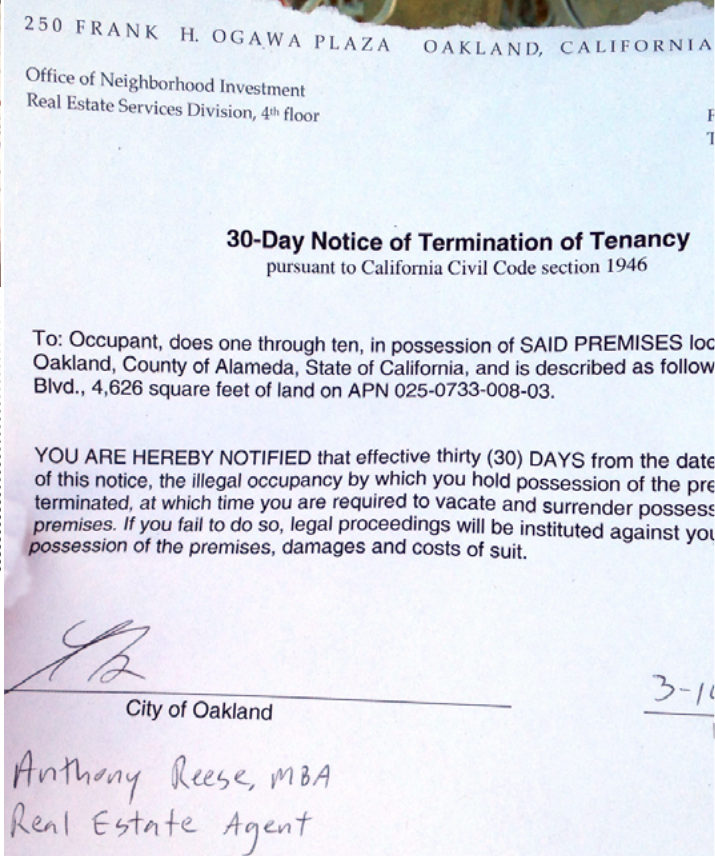
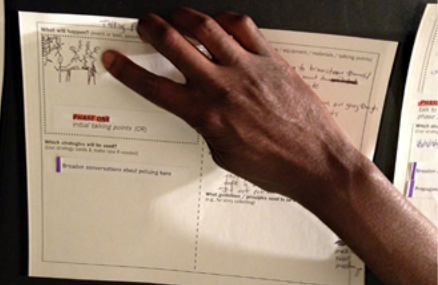
BECOMING DESIGN CO-AUTHORSHIP

...what ended up happening I feel with these is that they drifted more off from us utilizing them... I think that it was a really good practice to begin building buckets that we're trying to look at... I think that the care we're taking and the time we're taking and the time that we've brought things to the table and then questioned them and then stepped back and stepped forward and stepped back and stepped forward has been a long process of what I've described to some friends as like we've been in like kind of like a fertility stage and now we're taking baby steps... I think that something that we've been talking about as a chapter has been how to identify what are the spaces or windows of opportunity to organize around the PIC...

VOICES

My perspective is that these kinds of things are hard for me to use... I think that this [storyboard cells / workshop] was a really good practice for us to imagine out in order to build up some like shared discipline of like what the phases are going to look like...

Simonson + Robertson relational to mutual: co-authorship as a condition of the / our (design) work



CHAPTER 4 DESIGN CO-AUTHORSHIP

“And so we’re all with our eyes outwards, looking at what next to do...”

INTRODUCTION

When I reflected on the work No Cops group members and I did to move from the “circle diagram” into campaign planning, I saw that as we worked together “my practice” was increasingly constituted by instances of collaboration in which what I had been thinking of as “mine” started to become diffused among people in the project. I began to understand that my practice was neither only mine nor only or mostly articulated by me. It was, instead, increasingly not only collaborative and participatory, but *co-authored* more than co-designed, as that term is typically used. If an accepted idea of co-design is, in part, determined by relationships between designers and participants in design processes in which their positions as organizer and actor remain fairly constant, as I argue in Chapter 3, co-authorship refers to a shared practice in which both the contexts for designing and the design-work itself are collaboratively shaped. In this sense, I began to see my work, and my position(s), as produced discursively and in the flow of the work of the group, incorporating values, ways of doing things, and histories specific to them (some known to me, some I learned along the way). As I tried to track my own practice in the work being done, I wondered if what No Cops organizers were doing could also be understood as part of that practice, not because I laid claim to their work but, on the contrary, because my practice didn’t exist, was not recognizable or relevant, outside theirs or ours together.

In this chapter, I focus on the design and use of two internal systems, one for time- and task-keeping and strategizing, and another for “mining” information from interviews to develop campaign “targets.” The work documented and discussed here bookends the designing of the outreach piece and 2013 Year in Review on which I focus in the previous chapter and expands that analysis to include designing that both led up to it and followed from it. Here, I argue that the ways we found and made to work together emerged in layered, even simultaneous, moments at this juncture, producing possibilities for designing and knowing together.

Design co-authoring not only exceeds the design of a specific artifact or system, it also stretches beyond engagement in a facilitated or coordinated design activity,

1. Susan, pers. comm.

such as a co-creation workshop. In this sense, what I am calling design co-authorship (the relationship), or co-authoring (the process), builds on what practitioners and researchers in Participatory Design have articulated as “infrastructuring.” Star and Ruhleder (1996) argue that infrastructures, far from being static structures that “[sink] into an invisible background” (112), are emergent and contingent systems made and re-made through people’s practices with materials. In PD, the idea of “infrastructuring” has emerged in the last decade to refer to the work of designers and others in creating information (and other) infrastructures that are recognized as both complexly relational and ongoing (Karasti 2014). Of particular relevance here is an idea of infrastructuring that focuses on understanding, and therefore approaching, design with people as building dynamic human and other resource alignments around and through collaborations in design (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren 2012b; DiSalvo, Clement, and Pipek 2012; Karasti and Baker 2004; Light and Akama, 2014).² Moving beyond the constraints of discrete, if participatory, “projects” focused on making specific, and time-limited objects or systems, the concept of “infrastructuring” shifts the focus of designing with people onto engaging the contingent and temporal nature of building working relationships, technologies, and socio-material processes, especially under social, political, or cultural pressures (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren 2012a; Light and Akama, 2014). Bannon and Ehn (2012) also emphasize making the productive presence of difference in design processes and contexts, what they call “controversy,” an intrinsic component of collaboration. Design co-authorship, as a theory of and approach to practice, presumes these complex dynamics and contexts for designing and focuses on building an explicit and intentionally relational practice through engagement over time with the questions, goals, and concerns that ground a group’s work together, and are developed through it.

This approach builds on the notion of “participatory knowledge-building” in Critical Participatory Action Research. Critical PAR practitioners suggest that participants not only build on what they know from their own experiences, but contextualize and work through that knowledge by moving through multiple iterations of critical theorizing and historicizing, developing questions, analyzing, and taking action (Torre, et. al. 2012). The “knowing” made in these research contexts exceeds a primarily instrumental notion of participants’ contributions, and emphasizes the dynamic production of, and struggle for, knowledge as part of political engagement in (re)making the world they are researching. This echoes and builds on Paulo Friere’s ([1970] 2010) theories of knowledge-making in liberatory education practices in which, he argues, “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry...in the world, with the world, and with each other” (72).

These epistemological claims for what is at stake in making knowledge in participatory ways about the experiences, needs, and desires of people and groups of people who are outside of, and often subject to, dominant structures of power and discourse provide a critical take on collaboration. I want to extend these decidedly political arguments, in keeping with and building on recent re-articulations of PD as a political practice, to what might be at stake in designing with people. In some respects, this echoes Bannon and Ehn’s (2012) emphasis on “drawing together” people’s often differentiated “matters of concern” as a focus of contemporary PD as a means for designers to hold open possibilities for “finding alignment” across “heterogeneous perspectives” (57). However, I am interested here in the specificity of designing up-close with others to make *collective knowledge toward action*. In this sense, I argue that design as No Cops members and I came to practice it together was generative *primarily* of ways of “knowing together” in order to take action. We made knowledge and capacity through making processes and artifacts, but also through our commitment to each other and the work. This was not predicated on sameness, but it did require us to negotiate meaning, forms, and praxis for the specific purpose of building an anti-policing campaign.

Design co-authorship, then, extends the idea of co-design to explicitly name both the discursive processes through which CR members and I made proposals and meaning through figuring out how to use design in their work, and the ways in which these processes, developed over time, necessitated and allowed for collaborative ownership or voice in our work together. This shared practice is what I discussed in Chapter 2 as a relational practice, and in Chapter 3 as one in which the position of the designer is acknowledged as embodied, specific, and variable. In design co-authoring, the practice itself is co-produced through acts of proposing, making, doing, and theorizing together.

There was, importantly, not a straightforward before and after in the process of the research period in which I recognized the emergence of this co-authoring possibility and then shifted my practice and approach to work in this way intentionally. While I would argue that it is precisely the capacity to make explicit connections between the variable position of a designer working with groups of people and one’s efforts to build a relational practice that might allow for some transformation of how designers work with people, I cannot say that I saw it unfold neatly in my own work here. Rather, what I was able to see and do in the moment differed a great deal from what became visible after the fact, or even as the work continued to develop. In the course of the project, my own orientation to issues of authorship, power, and meaning were in flux, shifting and being shaped by the relational practice the group and I were making together.


MOVEMENT 1 Imagining the campaign: storyboarding workshop

After the group agreed on a campaign to pursue, the work of developing, strategizing, and planning began. In May 2013, I proposed that I design a storyboarding

2. Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren (2012a) cite Star and Ruhleder’s 1996 discussion of infrastructuring as “an ongoing alignment between contexts” (130).

<p>What will happen? (event or task, people, places)</p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; height: 150px; margin: 5px;"></div> <p>Which strategies will be used? (Use strategy cards & make new if needed)</p>	<p>What will you need? (props / equipment / materials / talking points)</p> <p>What's the timeline?</p> <p>What guidelines / principles need to be made or considered? (e.g., for story collecting)</p>
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Talking Points

<p>What will happen? (event or task, people, places)</p>  <p>PHASE ONE initial talking points (CR)</p> <p>Which strategies will be used? (Use strategy cards & make new if needed)</p> <p>Broaden conversations about policing here</p>	<p>What will you need? (props / equipment / materials / talking points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time out a meeting to brainstorm themes/narrative that we to want to do focus on and communicate - Two people to work together on going through input, developing draft talking points <p>What's the timeline?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If groups feels we've already talked through themes/narrative enough then take a week to develop talking points. - If not put on no-cops agenda a brainstorming meeting <p>What guidelines / principles need to be made or considered? (e.g., for story collecting)</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">next meeting then schedule draft + p for week from next meeting</p>
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exercise to help us focus on, and determine together, next steps. On the second day of a campaign planning workshop (also discussed in the preface), we started to make storyboards mapping out the work of the first two phases: preparing to collect stories, and beginning those interviews and talking to allies about the new campaign. I provided the group with storyboard “cells” to use to propose and describe steps in the campaign work, with an area to draw or write something describing the step, and a series of questions and prompts to frame it, including: what might be needed for the step to happen, what general guidelines or principles it might require, and what strategies could be used (Figure 15). I handed out packets of “phase 1” and “phase 2” stickers with text from the “circle diagram” naming the major components of each phase, and stickers featuring strategies and tools the group had identified the day before as strengths from previous campaigns that could be applied in this one. I encouraged them to use these and add to them. Before we started, I explained that the goal was for everyone to make several cells based on their ideas of what needed to happen to do phases one and two, and that the next step would be to organize them as a group, making a plan for moving forward.

No Cops members decided to break into two smaller groups, each focused on one of the phases, and asked me to join one of the groups. Following their lead, and in my move from facilitator to participant, I dove into making the storyboard pieces with my group.³ When I pulled the two groups back together to try to build a complete storyboard from the small groups’ work, however, time was short. We didn’t have the capacity to discuss how the individual “cells,” and anything members would add to them, might come together into a comprehensive way to move forward. Instead, I proposed that I take the cells and shape them into a “kind of storyboard for next steps,” and send it to the No Cops group to talk about at the next meeting, and they agreed. As I discussed in Chapter 3, however, in the weeks that followed, the No Cops group was deeply engaged in support for prisoner hunger strikers. Anxious not to lose momentum on the new campaign, and building in part on my proposal to collect the storyboard cells, the No Cops group asked if I could work with two members to make a summer timeline that mapped immediate campaign tasks and other work we agreed I’d continue until they were back.

In my reflection on this moment, as I note in earlier chapters, I began to see that as we continued to work together, my (design) work was increasingly determined primarily in proximity and response to CR’s work. The storyboarding workshop

3. As we worked, one member suggested that it was difficult to draw some of the ideas she had, and I jumped in, explaining not only that I couldn’t draw particularly well, but that I’d learned from a colleague how to make quickly drawn human forms that I now used frequently when teaching. I showed the group a basic form, a circle for a head, and then a loose four-pointed star for the arms and legs, what Susan called a “starfish person.” The drawing style, and the term, stuck. It became a shared visual language that, for some, worked to show people (usually group members) involved in specific actions over time, acting as a means for “seeing” oneself carrying out that work. I discuss this – and the ways in which it did not work that way for everyone – in more detail below.

FIGURE 15 Storyboard cards: blank (top) and completed by a No Cops member (bottom)

evidences the use of a design method – the kind I’d imagined in my initial proposal to work with CR – to do political organizing in a way that was unfamiliar to No Cops group members. But, unlike other proposals I’d made up to this point, for example, to do public design-led workshops around issues of policing or safety in Oakland, this design activity had a concrete relationship to the group’s emergent campaign. The storyboarding exercise, if risky in its newness, was a means to theorize, strategize, and plan concretely at the same time. Its effectiveness was then, critically, based on an investment in determining agreements and actions specific to the work at hand. These, in turn, were based on CR members’ shared principles and understandings, the organizers’ experiences, and the conversations the No Cops members (and I) had been having over the several weeks of campaign research prior. As a design strategy and engagement, the storyboards, and their use by the group, were determined by and through the context in which we found ourselves.

Martin described the cells made in the workshop as “a way to visualize exactly what we’ve been talking about and really break each step down” (pers. comm.). Their utility, he explained, was in how they allowed the group to think through the campaign steps:

At that point I was thinking that it was kind of one of the slow pieces that was really important, going through each - making sure that we had as much foresight as possible into what this campaign was going to require...One of the things we talked about when we did this...writing down these ideas, none of it necessarily means that we were going to do these things. We’re not committed, but it’s like an important brain exercise to think about each little piece of the step along the way. (pers. comm.)

In this way, the design activity of making a storyboard functioned primarily as a means for thinking together about how to imagine concrete steps to move toward what remained a new and relatively unclear mode of organizing for CR members, creating an “offensive” campaign. On the one hand, it allowed for marking out possible steps without requiring that those steps be followed or go unchanged as the needs of the group or the campaign evolved. And, as Susan suggested, having gone through this exercise together also allowed the group to have some touchstones moving forward, “so that then we wouldn’t be like, ‘What are we doing?’ or like, ‘I don’t know what’s next’” (pers. comm.). While the storyboard format didn’t work equally well for everyone, the group exercise in the context of the campaign planning workshop helped to create a means for thinking about and discussing time, strategy, and needs for the campaign.

The storyboarding exercise we did and the timeline we made and followed that summer helped to shape the language and direction of our work together. Both through my inclusion in the storyboarding process, and in the unexpected decision that I synthesize the storyboards and work on the summer timeline, I had become even more deeply involved in the day-to-day work of the No Cops group, and entrusted with moving parts of that work forward.

These negotiations, between my design proposals and capacities, the group’s emergent needs and commitments, and our decisions about how they would overlap and intersect, demonstrate the relational design practice that was taking shape as we learned to work together. In an interview with Patrick that took place between days one and two of the campaign planning workshop, we discussed my project and CR’s work. He expressed some concern that “...maybe [it] hasn’t always been that clear where exactly we were going to end up (laughs)...so I thought that [it’s] been interesting that you’ve kind of let us meander around the project a little bit, and finally, finally we’re at a point where it’s actually moving somewhere.” My response, that I perceived a similar, but different exchange, that “you guys are letting me sit there while you’re doing work (laughter)...” illustrates this emergent negotiation, and the mutual concern and appreciation that shaped it. As I said to Patrick then, our different ways of framing what was going on in our work together “...speaks in some ways to trying to figure out what that dynamic is between my project and the work of the group...” (pers. comm.).

While I don’t know that I fully understood the practice implications of this exchange at the time, I thought aloud to Patrick, saying that “...I’m actually just trying to learn about where I suggest things and where you all suggest things and where we mutually come to an agreement about what would be useful.” This exchange, like the negotiation of design activity and organizing work discussed above, foreshadows a version of what I would come to argue is the co-authoring that eventually defined our design practice.

MOVEMENT 2 Finding “voices”: Compiling the storyboards, v.1

In my first attempt at compiling group members’ storyboard cells from the workshop, I used all of the drawings and words in their individual cells as a way to maintain a direct connection to their ideas from the workshop, prioritizing No Cops members’ authorship of the campaign process. I only edited text where there was repetition, and I grouped images together where people drew related steps in the campaign planning process (Figure 16 on page 107). In this sense, I aimed to keep their voices (and hands) doing the “speaking” in whatever I made, as a means of intentionally engaging the relative power of my position in the moment as the person re-organizing, and therefore making meaning from their work. Just after the July meeting in which we first looked at this compiled storyboard together, though, I acknowledged in my blog that my design in this instance had “kind of failed...”

The group had a really hard time reading this version of the storyboards. This may have been in part because significant time had passed since they had made, written, and discussed what was in the cells, and much had taken place in the work to which they’d temporarily turned their focus in that time. The momentum from day one of the retreat in May, what made it specific and concrete in the moment, had been interrupted. And, while we planned to facilitate a return to campaign planning using this compiled storyboard as a means of maintaining continuity, the version I made from their cells, despite my efforts to retain their “voices,” didn’t create that

**PHASE ONE (1-2 months):
PREP AND
TRAINING UP**

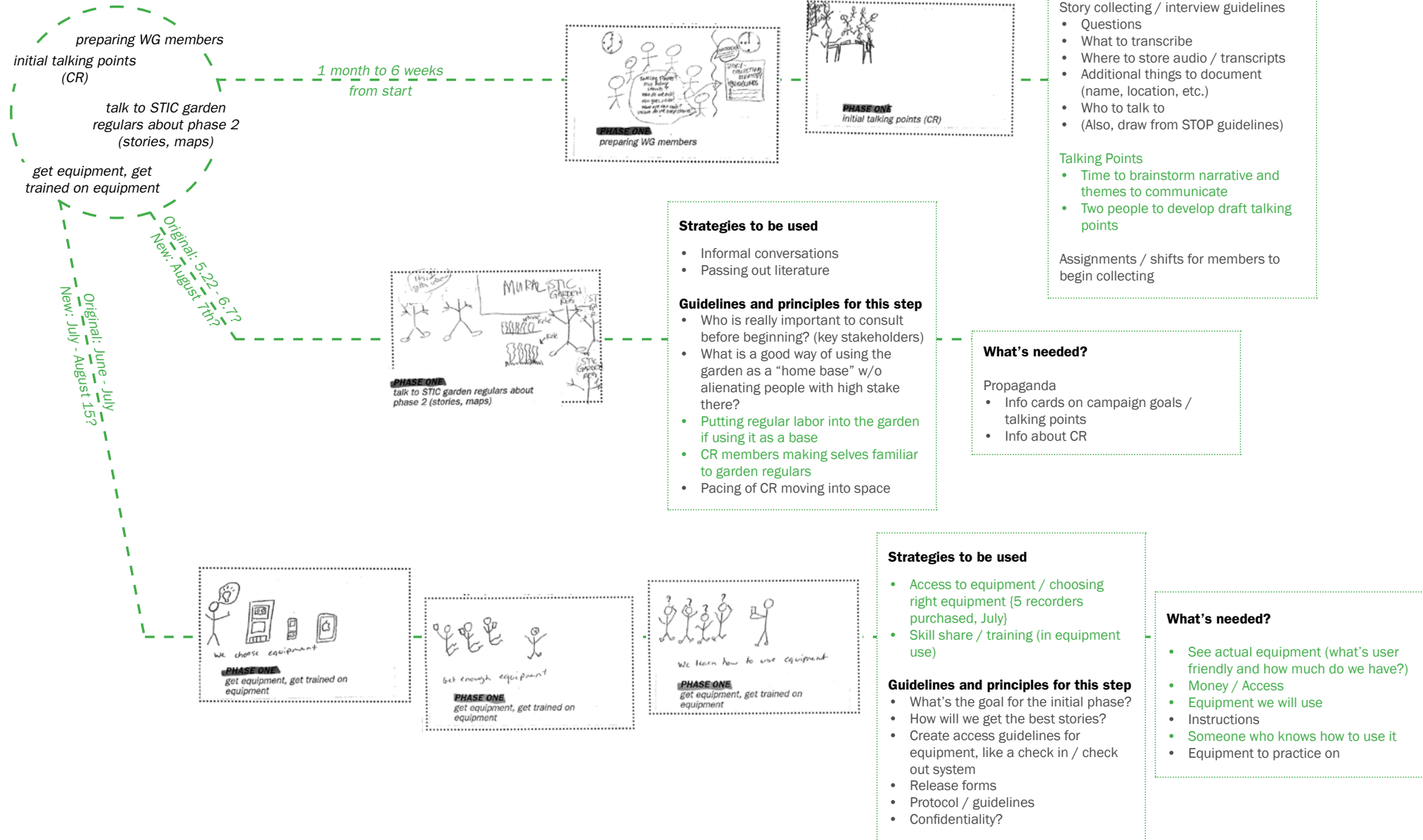


FIGURE 16 A first version of a compiled storyboard for phase one of the new campaign

recognition. Rather, it was crowded and somewhat hard to navigate; it was full of ideas and steps to take, but was not a clear, useful reference for moving forward.

In a collaboratively written article on doing PAR inside prison walls at Bedford Hills, a prison for women in New York State, Fine and colleagues (2004) discuss the complexity of ensuring that all participants are meaningfully a part of all aspects of the research, from setting questions, to collecting data, to, critically, interpreting that data (189). While my research with the No Cops group was not conducted as a PAR project, I use PAR in this research as a means for thinking through and theorizing my and our collaborative *design* practice. In that capacity, it is a useful reminder that the right to and responsibility for “analyzing and interpreting” along the way was all of ours. Fine and colleagues describe a situation in which co-researchers inside the prison expressed concerns about exploitation that could manifest from being a part of data collection but not analysis, given concerns about getting materials inside the prison to be analyzed without compromising other prisoners’ privacy. In this case, I erred in not including *myself* in that “us,” especially as No Cops members had already begun to include me, even as I sought to be aware of my own position of interpretive power as the person making the visualization, the design artifact, in the moment. As a result, the visual design choices I made in my efforts to manifest what I imagined, too simply, as ethical or power-aware co-design choices rendered what might have been the least useful artifact of the project to that point.

Indeed, in our discussion of the first version of the compiled storyboards, No Cops members rejected my concerns about overstepping. Rather, they asserted that my work in the group was, now, “essentially as a member of the group” (pers. comm.). They said I should feel comfortable making proposals about the campaign through my design work and in meetings. This didn’t end my tendency to persevere about my position, which, as I discuss in Chapter 3, would continue to shift and change as a condition of our relational practice. But it did indicate to me that I needed to take seriously their invitation to be a part of the group, or their assertion that I was making this – the work – along with them, no matter those concerns. I asked the group if they’d like me to try again, to “wrangle” the storyboard and create a version we could use to articulate, formulate, and keep track of the work we all thought needed to be done to move the new campaign forward. They agreed.

MOVEMENT 3

Revising and reimagining: (Re)drawing the storyboards, v.2

Before the next meeting, I sent around a new version of the storyboard (Figure 17 on page 110). It showed three rows of cells, which aligned more or less with the phases from the circle diagram, but also read, as Patrick noted, like a “little comic strip” (pers. comm.). This time, I redrew everything, synthesized ideas, and created proposals in the storyboard for timing, flow, and basic strategies for building the campaign. In an email to the group I explained that I “built on what we did in person in May, tried to think about realistic and ideal timing for moving for-

ward, and highlight both timeline and strategy / logistics.” I also noted that, “This should be considered a very working sketch of how we might move forward, and is meant to be messed with.” In the meeting, we looked at the storyboard together and talked through tasks, timeline, and process represented in the drawing. Based on our use of it, we agreed to treat it as a “living document” and I committed to updating it between meetings.

In my reflections over the next several weeks, I noticed that we were using the storyboards as a timeline and a way to organize ongoing work in ways that also made connections to the process and phases agreed to through the circle diagram. In each meeting, I talked through changes to the storyboards, questions that were being raised, and ways we might address them. Like the carrot and stick images and the circle diagram before them, the value of the storyboards seemed primarily to be in their utility to the group’s work in the moment.⁴ But I also began to notice that it might not only be the artifact itself that was *of use*. In my research blog, I asked myself if in trying to locate what “my practice” really entailed, I was “focused on the wrong things – on my use of tools, for instance, as opposed to the nuance of my role in the group.” While the storyboard and timeline (see fn. 4) were visual artifacts that developed into tools for planning, proposing, and keeping track of the campaign work, I also *narrated* them, and the changes I made to them, from meeting to meeting. In this way, as Jeanne noted, part of my role in the No Cops group had become asking in meetings if we could look at specific materials I made, including the timeline / storyboards. Providing this reminder became a part of what I did in the group, she explained, saying that “even really really good tools are only as useful as the memory...or opportunities to use them” (pers. comm.).

I began to think of the storyboard / timeline as a system (design), internal to No Cops, that I was both responsible for and invested in. In other words, they grew out of the early development of our relational practice and extended that practice as what I did came to encompass not only making proposals and artifacts related to them, but facilitating their use in the ongoing work of the group. In this way, I began to reckon with the shifting nature of my role (and of the role of “design” in this work), and further develop my practice as one that might be defined through listening, interpreting, and proposing (or what Light and Akama (2012) would call attuning and saturation).

4. This was complicated by different members’ reactions to the format of the boards themselves. While they were, for some, a way of “envisioning yourself doing that stuff” (Patrick, pers. comm.), for others, they were “confusing” to look at and make use of (Susan, pers. comm.), and even as we were using them, Jeanne said that she didn’t really “get the storyboard” before suggesting we add a decision to them (pers. comm.). In response, I offered to put the same information and ideas into the timeline format I’d used over the summer, which some members found more useful in its form and representations. For the few months we used the storyboard / timeline I kept both current so that the tool would be available and legible to different people in the group who “saw” information differently in each format, and, I hoped more useful to the group as a whole in this way.

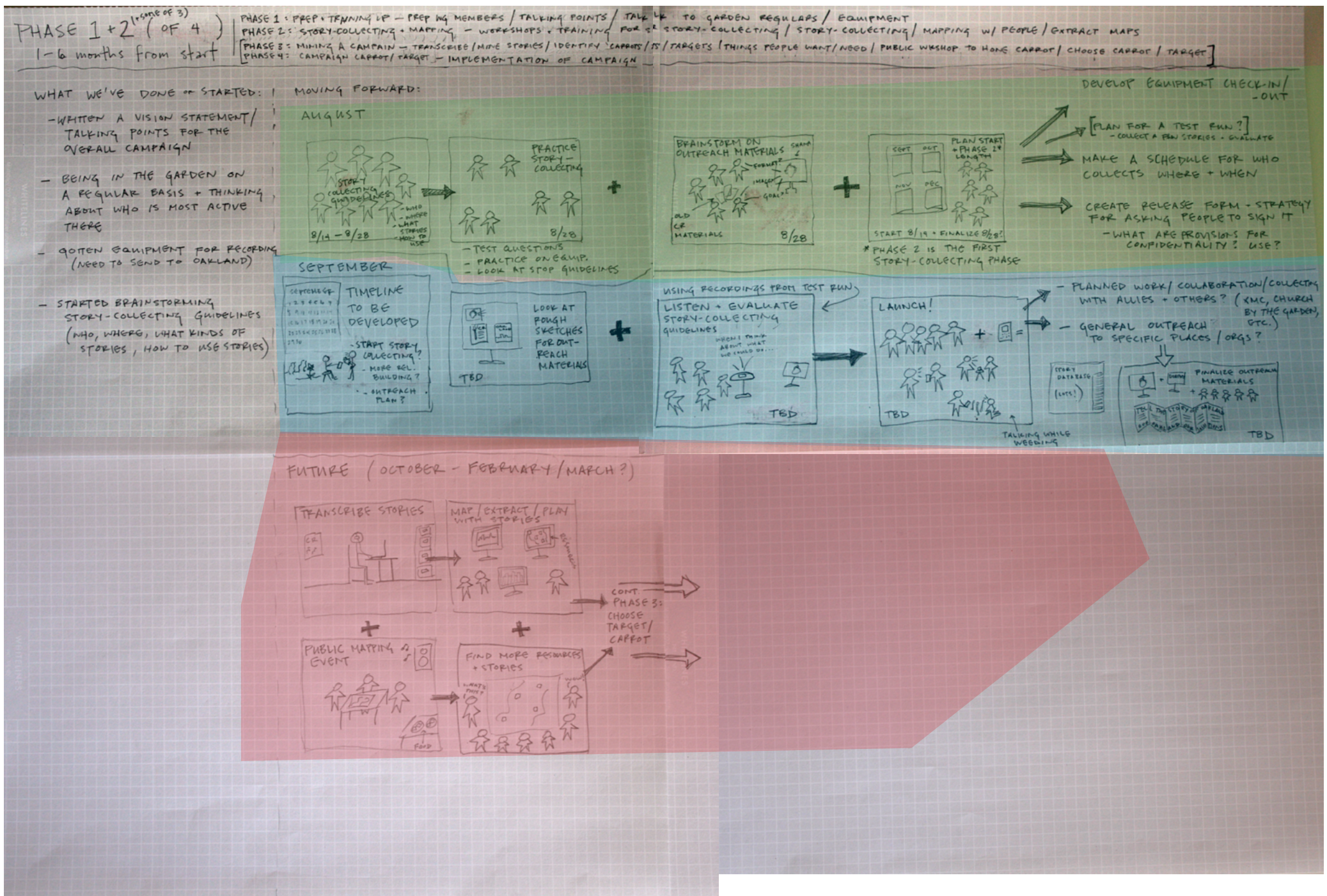


FIGURE 17 A second version of the compiled storyboards, including proposals and ideas from ongoing conversation and strategizing

These designing situations, exchanges, and artifacts continued to take shape as sites for producing and negotiating meaning in the group (see Chapter 2, where I introduce and develop this argument). As No Cops group members and I developed ways of working together over time, our efforts at making meaning became capacities for making knowledge together as a part of our practice. The storyboards / timelines focused this knowledge inward, on the campaign itself, creating relationships between navigating time in the campaign and committing to a new way of organizing against policing. As Evans framed it:

I think that what was great about this [storyboard / timeline] was the ways in which we were trying to hold ourselves accountable to these dates. And what was helpful about that was that it made it so that we had to keep pushing the project forward, even though at the time certain pieces of it still felt less concrete. ...By utilizing the timeline we were able to overcome that thing [where] because we haven't done this before, because it can get really theoretical at times, that we can just let it go on and on, instead of being like, "No, no, no, we're actually actively building something, so by October, this thing needs to be done (laughing)!" Because we're making something, and even if there's not an external deadline against which we're working, we're actually generating those things for ourselves. (pers. comm.)

In addition to helping concretize this new way of working driven by CR's articulated goals and timeline, and the ideas central to it, the storyboard / timeline also acted as a collective memory or reference point for people who had been involved in the group from the start, and for new people joining along the way. Susan argued this was "good for a group that is slow building, that requires, or has a high value on consensus and on moving forward on things in agreement with each other." She explained:

I think it is kind of good, maybe in an organizing group where people are coming in and out, or might have 10,000 different memories that they could dump into a period of time, or get confused about or rewrite history in all sorts of different ways, [to have] at least a unified list of what we did. It's partial, it's not every last detail, it's not every email, but it's something that we can agree on what happened and what is and what we've done together, which I think helps people from freaking out that we're doing nothing or that we've wasted our time or that we didn't do what we could have done. ...I think it's good for a group such as ours that's like, "We have a goal, we have a way we want to move forward, we have an idea of where we're going." It's always up for debate, right?, it's always up for like, "Is this the best way forward? What are we going to do? How did this actually happen?" (pers. comm.)

Through designing together, we navigated the unknown (of the campaign and of design in social justice work), made affirmative moves in campaign development, negotiated differences among our ideas and perceptions of critical goals (with more

and less success), and continued to build common narratives or points of reference, what Patrick called "collective accountability," for the campaign (pers. comm.). These simultaneously developing characteristics of our work together, I argue, built a foundation for the design proposals and negotiations of position and relationship I explore in Chapter 3.

While we used the storyboards and timelines for a relatively short time, about three months, they acted as a literal and figurative space through which we negotiated and generated a way of designing together that represented the beginning of a shift from the possibilities afforded by co-designing specific experiences, methods, or tools, toward design co-authorship.⁵ Taken together, the cumulative experiences of working through the storyboards, the outreach piece, and the 2013 Year in Review, created conditions for what came next, a proposal for a system to manage information coming from interviews with Oaklanders and determine a first campaign target, to which I turn below.

MOVEMENT 4

Proposing a (service) design for knowing: The "mining" system

In the time after the No Cops group and I developed and used the storyboards and timelines, the campaign itself began to take shape. This raised myriad questions about how best to begin interviews with Oaklanders, where, with whom, specifically, and with what outcomes in mind. Some of this developed in and through the storyboards / timelines, and some of it exceeded them. These conversations led to other proposals for artifacts – the outreach piece and 2013 Year in Review, detailed in Chapter 3 – and to a range of instances and dynamics of designing together. Throughout this year, I became more accustomed to making proposals based on needs and ideas I heard group members express. And, as I argue above and in Chapter 3, the No Cops group's and my work together produced conditions through which my / our practice developed and was nuanced by our negotiations over what was useful to, necessary for, and meaningful in the creation of the new campaign.

As the group began conducting and listening to interviews for the campaign, I started to hear people's questions and concerns in meetings about how to process the information and ideas in them to find themes that could lead to a first "target"

5. Evans, in talking through how the group used the storyboards and timelines, noted that the group's use of them "drifted off." Thinking aloud about what might have happened, though, Evans suggested a critical idea for how some of the working practices we designed became a part of the group's work, even if they shifted in their form (or the artifacts themselves fell out of use). Evans reflected: "And maybe as we started doing [the campaign work], those things just became more integrated and that's why we didn't use [the storyboard / timeline] as much. I would be interested in thinking through the next go-round if that's something that – maybe that's what we're doing already with the workplan [the format, drawn from campaign planning practices in CR, used most recently to track, plan, and articulate campaign steps]" (pers. comm.).

for the campaign. I offered to draft what I called a “system proposal” to “manage research as it comes in.” I had been imagining a design of interlocking but simple systems that would allow the group to listen and organize what they heard, bringing together individual understandings from interviewers and the collective work of the group. I thought that these would need to take into consideration a number of factors: the flow of information; the need to make connections and choices; a capacity to communicate across a group of people; and an openness to possibilities for hearing new and unexpected things, which seemed especially important for this process and for figuring out what to make through the campaign, how, and with whom. My hunches about how such a system might work drew on my experiences in service design, in which building an ecosystem of information, exchange, and interaction is a means for accounting for complexity and multiplicity in any given context (see, for example, Sangiori and Meroni 2011).

I created a proposal in three parts (Figure 18, beginning on page 114), including a system for managing and storing interviews, doing notation of themes and ideas using what I called an “interview notepad,” and gathering the information from the notepad pages onto a large chart in the shared Oakland office. Martin’s description of using the interview pads both on his own and with the group explicates how this system might be used:

Our interview process is fairly complex and...it’s hard for me to think about really how we’re getting through phase 1 and phase 2 to phase 3 and 4. I think this is the tool that is going to push us, that we’re going to use to get there...I think that [it] helps us to think about the interviews as we’re doing them or immediately after; we look at this thing and we’re like, “Ok how does this fit?” Not only like “That person’s response was really interesting,” but also...when I look back at this sheet and I’m checking off boxes, I think about, “Oh yeah, that’s not only something that was interesting in that person saying it, but it was interesting because every single time I’ve done one of these interviews I’ve checked off that box.” (pers. comm.)

It wasn’t a “service” in any usual sense, but this system proposal, like the storyboards / timelines, aimed to facilitate internal organization and knowledge-making, which the group (and I) saw as important to making the campaign move forward.

We took the proposal on one piece at a time, as needs emerged in the work. When we started with the notepad, I suggested that the group could brainstorm categories to include, from which I would make a form that they could use while interviewing. But, as a group, members who had been doing the interviewing said that using the pad *during interviews* would be difficult. They were busy trying to engage and listen to the people with whom they were talking, often about complex and difficult topics like experiences of violence and fear, as well as their hopes and desires for their lives and their city. Taking notes on a form, they said, would detract from that interaction. Additionally, members suggested, it would be easier to figure out categories to include on the pad itself through listening to interviews together,

**Notes from the process
of thinking through this
proposal / idea:**

GOAL (OF TOOLS / SYSTEM):

Be able to draw ideas, themes, targets from interviews / stories (and other materials, e.g., maps)

*Make notations + observations during or immediately after interviews

*Begin to build / collect thematic areas of:

- concerns
- opportunities
- resources
- needs
- strategies
- feelings (like, for ex., feeling safe when there are / aren’t people around, building relationships with people outside times of crisis, etc.)

*Be able to choose themes and targets that align with / advance anti-policing political goals or build capacities to delegitimize / limit policing in Oakland.

Questions / things to look out for:

*Involve people (people interviewed, others, outside CR) in “selection” of targets / themes? In development of campaign or projects?

*Not lose sight of / connection to anti-policing political framework

*Engage / how to engage across political ideas and experiences? Who (broadly) are we / is this campaign talking to? Or, put another way, where / with whom, does the information and ideas needed to move away from policing sit?

NEEDS FOR ADVANCING CAMPAIGN:

Recording themes / emergent ideas in a consistent, sharable way

*With flexibility and room for growth / change / newness in what is “found”

Periodic evaluation (and choosing)

*Time-based: Could set basic timeline and political / strategic goal of identifying a new target every X months; build on cyclical / cumulative design of the campaign structure

[Use this to get started? First 1-2 rounds?]

*Evidence-based: Could set an information or theme threshold - pick one when it is clearly emergent; keep an open (visible) record of themes emerging that can be reviewed at meetings to look for critical mass / emergent target

[Use this after jumpstarting with time-based? Rounds 3 on?]

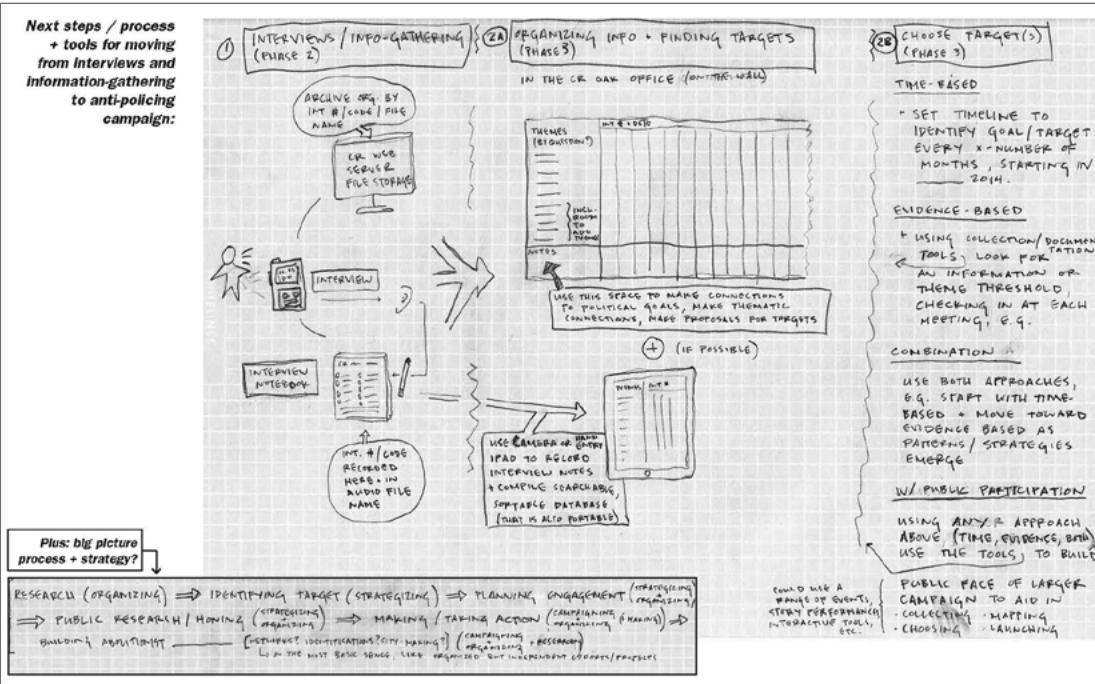
Criteria for targets? (a filter / check on building campaign targets)

*Increasing resources, resilience, while decreasing police involvement / use

*Increasing self-determination (through resisting policing focus of city? through developing range of “alternative” resources, broadly speaking, e.g., not just alts to addressing harm?)

Name?

FIGURE 18 (Above and on following page)
Components of the “mining” system proposal for finding and working with information from the Oakland resident interviews



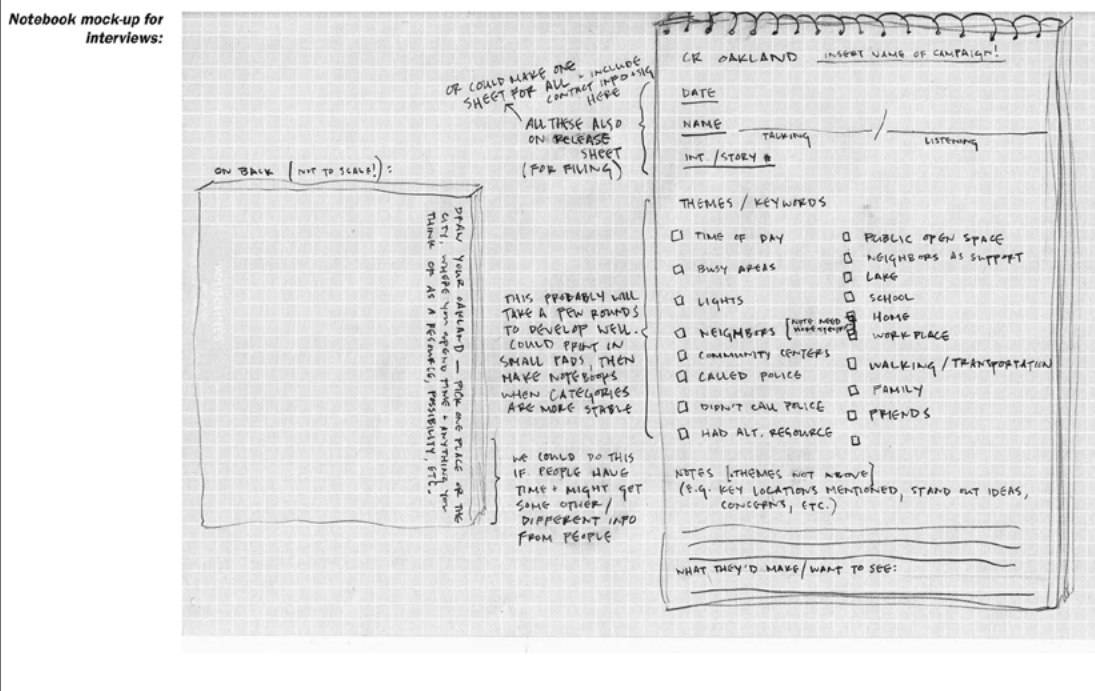
rather than brainstorming them individually, as I'd proposed. They noted that the hardest part of the work might be trying to extract targets from the interviews, and that developing some shared language by doing collective listening would be helpful. This discussion, following from the re-directing of my initial proposal, both established a theory for the practice of listening together to create "shared language" and articulated how *best* to make the notepad useful. In this way, the meeting space became a place for designing and redesigning both theory and practice together.

I made a mock-up of the proposed form (Figure 19 on page 117), and populated it temporarily with categories I drew from the interview questions and No Cops members' discussions of the interviews to that point. Because the group agreed that they could best determine what needed to be included on the form through listening, the mock-up reflected both my own ideas for a format that might be useful and a provisional list of themes that, while based on my listening to the group and observations of what might matter in finding a campaign focus, was also intended to be altered. Members tested the draft notepad (at a meeting I missed) and sent me feedback, along with items to add and others to remove. They noticed that when they listened to interviews and reflected on them together, the notepads "helped them think in similar ways" (pers. comm.). Like the storyboards and timelines, the notepad – reimagined and redesigned through discussion and use over time and in the context of a range of campaign-planning and -development work – created possibilities for making useful knowledge through observing, listening, and reflecting together. As Jeanne suggested:

...I actually do think that having some of these chunks that are exactly the same, the format's the same, will also help with coding or however we want to talk about the analysis we do, the information we get from the interviews. Each of us thinks in really different ways, so I think the presentation of the information left to our own devices would probably look very different. So I think it's a way of just establishing a baseline for information that is translatable across all the different individuals in the group that somebody can use if they're not around all the time. (pers. comm.)

And, even though Jeanne preferred listening as a group to the interviews and talking substantively about them as a means of learning what they might reveal or suggest in terms of campaign targets, she observed that the notepads could work well if "we start being deluged with interviews and we decide to [listen separately]." In this case, she said, "that will be very helpful for me to be able to remember stuff to be able to talk to the group about it later. ...So that I can be like, 'Oh here's this stuff we care about, here's this stuff we've agreed...'" (pers. comm.).

Testing the notepad led to further conversations about how to gather and use the information coming from the interviews and how to make the notepad as useful as possible for this purpose. I suggested that we think about mocking-up a second part of my original "mining system" proposal, a wall-sized chart where members could transfer the information from their individual notepads and look at all of



critical resistance oakland
campaign story-collecting

Date 3/26/14 C
Name _____ N
Interview / Story # _____ Ir

themes + keywords		tf
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> time of day	<input type="checkbox"/> neighbors as support	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> busy areas	<input type="checkbox"/> lake	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lights / lack of	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> home / house	
<input type="checkbox"/> neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/> school	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community centers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> workplace / drug recovery program	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> called police	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> walking / meet	
<input type="checkbox"/> didn't call police	transportation @ bus	
<input type="checkbox"/> had alt. resource	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> family	
<input type="checkbox"/> public open space	<input type="checkbox"/> friends	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> isolation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> church	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gender	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

Notes (theme ideas, key locations, stand out ideas, concerns, etc.) No

East Oakland, Maxwell Park really liked
his workplace. Reliance Alameda about Biking
around seeing change happen. foothill + E 20th

What they'd make / want to see in Oakland: Wh

Rec center - Oak Knoll - Basketball, swimming
job opportunity / internships / volunteer
kids hand out and have a good time

right in their own neighborhood. Not walking through
group of guys w/
have called cops on son and then refused
to open door for cops when son on run

reliance on cops / refusal of cops

if = authority, police need training
prevention - avoid situation - community solutions
to help single parents. if there was another
solution we would have done it.

young black kids can't have any fun -> cops show up
stew of kids - nothing for them to do
job opportunity

the information together. Group members, who had been struggling to articulate the campaign internally to the Oakland chapter, noted that having something like that up in the office where volunteer members of the group came in and out regularly, could “help the rest of chapter understand the project more” by helping them “see it.” Additionally, having a big poster up could help the No Cops group itself be “more accountable to the thinking about the project, without being like ‘let’s sit down and look at it,’” and it could extend beyond “something we spend 30 minutes talking about in the meeting.” Jeanne noted that she imagined it could move the campaign process forward acting, as she thought it would, as “less of practical tool that guides the thing, [but] more like a symbolic tool that guides the thing...this is an illustration of the ideas.” I suggested that, in that way, the wall chart could be a “place where people’s ideas would aggregate, but not [have to] be an aggregation of every last thing.”

I had proposed the whole system at once, early in the development of the campaign, but it only came into being over time, as I worked with the group to mock-up and test individual components – first the note-pad, then the wall chart – when they expressed a need or readiness. In this way, we determined together (even if based on proposals I made) how they would be used, why, and to what end. While there are things I did “on my own” in the process of creating this system – proposing it, sketching it out, designing sketches of the tools and some mock-ups – in my reflection on this work in the months that followed, I began to notice that I wrote about an increasing amount of “my” designing as “ours,” as work we all did together. In that reflective writing I asked myself, “So why this time? Why did this work [from the storyboards through the mining system] all seem shared to me when I [looked back on it]? Does it have to do with the evolution of my understanding of the collectivity or shared-ness of the work? With the retrospective sense that it was shared because it became shared?”

No Cops members’ reflections on the storyboards, timelines, and “mining” system help to answer these questions, at least in part. First, as Patrick argued, some of what we designed “provide[d] a platform on which to understand how to move the work forward.” He explained:

I see [the storyboard and the “mining system”] as a way of like, “Ok so we need to push this piece of the work forward, this is something that we have to do in order to be able to sort of better understand the project or even to be able to do the project,” and so these design pieces are facilitating that, or even making it go, in some cases. (pers. comm.)

In this sense, our practice together, as it developed over time, allowed us to make things of use to the group, reflective of the needs and concerns of people involved as well as the strategy and timeline of the campaign itself, in order to continue designing both the campaign and the theory and working systems that supported it. So, even as I made proposals or responded to emergent group needs, what was ultimately talked about and made useful to the No Cops group’s work was almost

FIGURE 19 A test use of the first draft of the interview notepad

exclusively collaboratively shaped and generated, including through struggle over meanings, pace of the work itself, or the usefulness of a given artifact and process at any given time.

In addition, the systems the group and I made, and our capacities to hone those systems for specific uses when they were needed, allowed the No Cops group to both facilitate and keep a record of the work and their / our commitments over weeks and months. This included setting and clarifying expectations for making knowledge or strategy together in the group for anyone joining after those decisions had been made. As Susan suggested:

I think [the interview notepad is] a really good consistent tool to have, so that if anyone comes into the project, we can be like, "Oh yeah, this is the thing that we're working with. It's not perfect but here's what we've agreed to use. And, you just joining the group, you're going to use it. Let's revise it if you need to, but...this is the timeline, this is the thing we've been working on, this is where we're at in the project, this is the one thing that we use to do this, and then you put it up on the wall (laughter), and that's how you share it back." It's part of the process. So it's like, "Don't just listen to the story and write down your random notes and put them in a folder." (pers. comm.)

This observation is consistent with other members who talked about the internal systems we designed in the service of shaping and launching the campaign as both creating ways of talking together or remembering together, but also acting as parameters for others trying to see or understand the group's work. In this way, designing together was an extension of organizing together, and helped to make sense of political goals and vision so that they could be articulated both in and outside the group (see discussion of the creation of the 2013 Year in Review as another example in Chapter 3).

This context for our designing was critical, as it determined both what problems the group posed as a focus for our work and the framework for what could be considered ideal, or even acceptable, outcomes. As Evans reminds us:

...something that we've been talking about as a chapter has been how to identify what are the spaces or windows of opportunity to organize against the PIC. And then how do we move ourselves - our labor, our skills, our resources - into a vehicle or formation that takes best advantage of that? ...Because we're thinking...of long term resistance in Oakland, or to the logic of policing... there is not this small window of opportunity [that means] we need to figure out how to gather around this particular thing... We're having to do a formation that...seems newer to the organization, and this project is helping us do that. (pers. comm.)

Martin emphasized the simultaneous frustration and importance of the time taken to develop the campaign, and its relationship to the group's ability to know

critical resistance oakland
campaign story-collecting

Date 5/14/14 Name _____

Interview / Story # _____

themes + keywords

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> time of day | <input type="checkbox"/> know your rights |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> busy areas | <input type="checkbox"/> lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lights | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> home |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> groups | <input type="checkbox"/> workplace |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community centers | <input type="checkbox"/> gender |
| <input type="checkbox"/> called police | <input type="checkbox"/> walking / biking / transportation / BART |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> didn't call police | <input type="checkbox"/> family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> resisting police | <input type="checkbox"/> friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> had alt. resource | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public open space | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> neighbors as support | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Where in Oakland? ?

Quotes
Communication between ppl
is really key
@pe ppl cd be safe w/ rec chrs
resonates

Notes (theme ideas, key locations, stand out ideas, concerns, etc.)
- to trust "Cops means to have some" recognize
- in a firmest situation of robbery -> neighbors built a
stronger system of communication & shared safety.

What they'd make / want to see in Oakland:
Community centers
gang prevention

FIGURE 20 Second draft of the interview notepad in use

the work we were doing could have the potential magnitude of impact that would make it worthwhile. He explains:

I think that the care we're taking and the time we're taking, and the times that we've brought things to the table and then questioned them and then stepped back and stepped forward and stepped back and stepped forward, has been a long process of what I've described to some friends as...like a fertility stage. And now we're taking baby steps... I think the care that we've taken will make it so that this project makes us incredibly well poised to fight policing in Oakland, and not just specific police policies, but policing. (pers. comm.)

The process surrounding, especially, this final system under consideration in this research exemplifies what Toni Robertson and Jesper Simonsen (2012) have characterized as "collective 'reflection-in-action'" (15), in which participants working together through participatory design engage and reflect on the design materials, experiences, and processes themselves collaboratively. At this juncture in our practice, the moves that determined what got made, why, how, and to what end were made together, through negotiations, navigations, and ways of knowing we increasingly shared. This, of course, did not mean that the members of the group, or the members and I, always agreed, saw eye to eye, or had the same experiences of either those negotiations or of the artifacts and processes we made. Like the storyboards and timelines, the notepad and wall chart didn't work in the same way, or as well, for everyone. But, as tools that allowed for processes and goals to come to fruition, goals on which the group had explicitly agreed, members and I were able to design ways of working together, even when provisional, that we hoped were moving us and the campaign closer to the vision of making policing in Oakland obsolete, small step by small step.

CONCLUSION

The work itself, my work with CR members and theirs with me, became increasingly overlapping and shared over the course of the research. It was, in large part, defined and driven by what we understood as both theoretically and strategically on point and of use in their work, often in the moment. As Susan characterized our emerging practice:

...the basic structure of the group is the same...but also...it's like you're that person on the ship's bow, too, with your eyes toward the design or how might things be facilitated better in the project sense. And so, we're all with our eyes outwards looking at what next to do, like you are doing that also. You're doing it, so it's not the same [as before I joined the group's work], but we're all continuing to do what we do... (pers. comm.)

This way of working, and building the capacity for it, is what I am calling design co-authorship. And, I believe that as much as we came to that way of working together as we did it, that upon reflection on this process through the research-based

work of mapping it out and finding out what had taken place, I also developed new ways of seeing what we had done, designed, and built. I came to imagine my practice as relational, my position as variable and shifting, and ours as a practice that was increasingly co-authored. In this way, I started to imagine my practice as tied up with theirs, so that increasingly in my reflection on the process as a whole, it made sense to articulate even work I'd done on my own, technically, as shared work. My making on my own did not exist, in terms of the theoretical and organizing work it allowed for or built on, outside of our making together. I want to reiterate that I am not proposing that using "shared" or "co-authored" in this sense privileges or prioritizes resolution or lack of difference. Far from it. It is, I would argue, only in the continued negotiation of ideas, desires, imaginings, needs, and authorial capacities that such a practice might thrive.

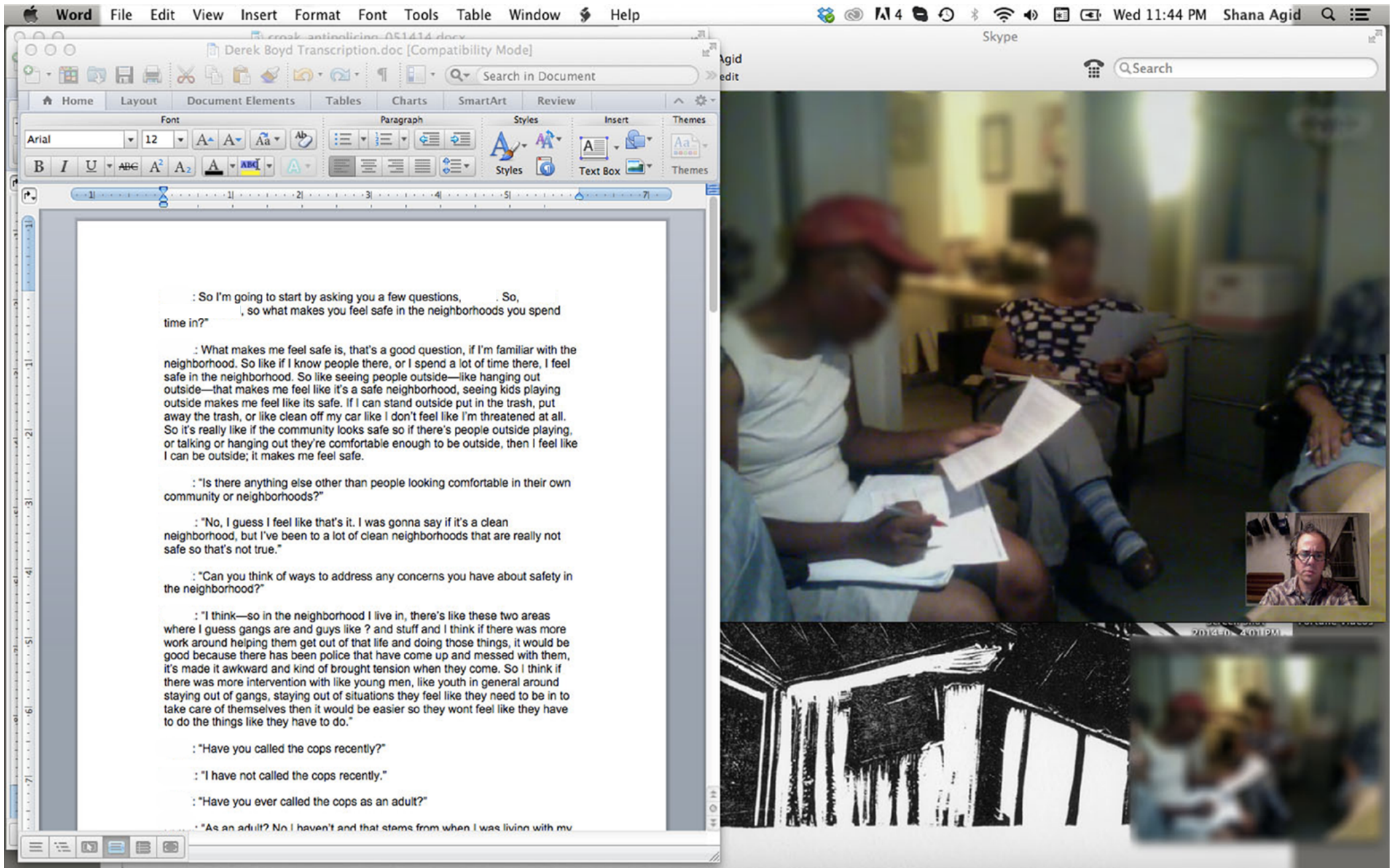
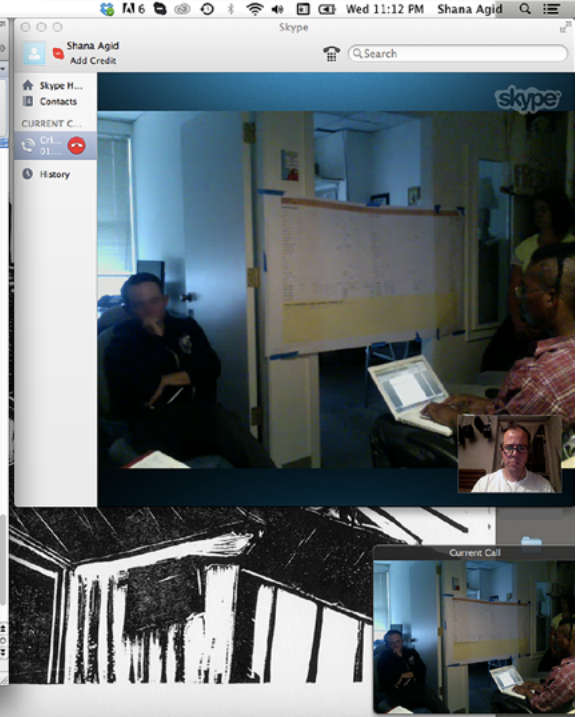
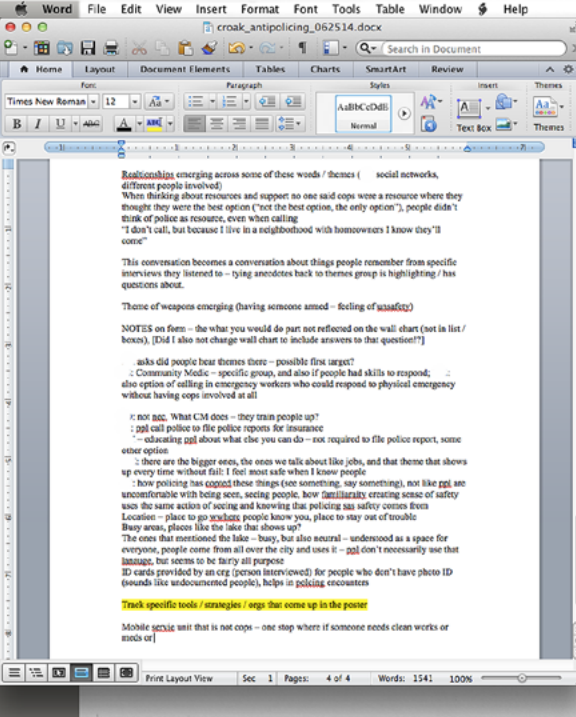


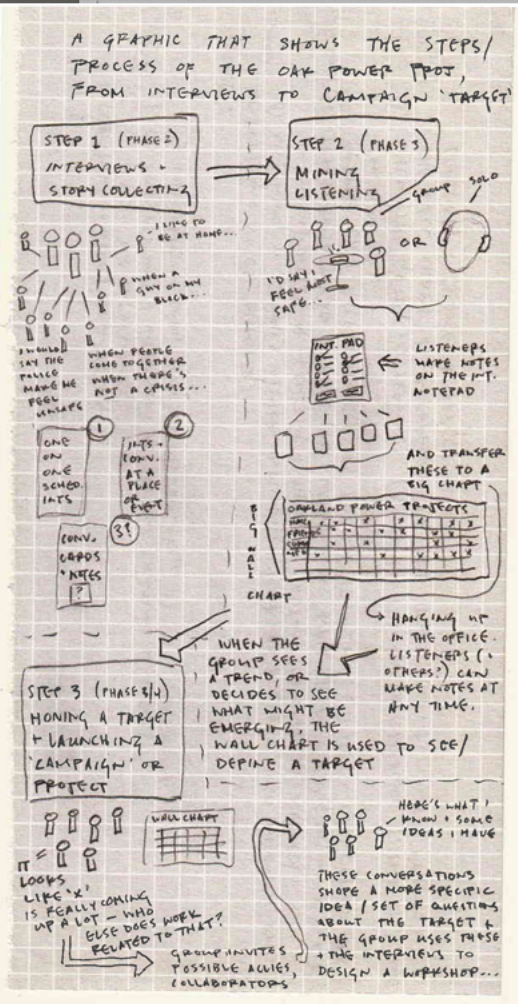
FIGURE 2 I Using the second draft of the interview notepad in a listening session



CONCLUSION

MAKING CONTESTED FUTURES

...I think that for people on the ground who maybe aren't already doing this work or people who are doing the work already, I think there's only so many times you can say no to something without getting a little bit demoralized. And I think it's important in really long term kinds of fights - I would like to think, but I don't think that the PIC is going to be abolished in my lifetime...there are people who have been working against the PIC and who are now elders, who are older people, and, you know, they've seen shifts and changes - so I think it's important to try to infuse our work with some kind of hopefulness, some kind of agency... We're always talking about self-determination, but a lot of times there's a complete lack of being able to direct our own work, and so I think that that is really important, But I think, too, and this is something that Jeanne has brought up a number of times, but, again with the "no"s, we're always on the defensive. Always [being] on the reactive is not that smart, and this opportunity to have a campaign that is on the offense, where we're like, "we reject your solutions"...I think you gotta kind of change tactics sometimes. You can't use the same strategy over and over, because they get wise to you, so, for that reason, too. The hopefulness is I think...that is why I think I keep coming back to CR, you know, even though our work is sometimes very difficult, but it's the ability to imagine something that is completely different.¹



"I think that it is in so many ways safer to be able to have people that are going to be there not only when crisis occurs because then they've built relationships with people around and can engage with folks in the neighborhood to address things when they happen."

WHAT I SET OUT TO KNOW

When I began this research, I imagined that I would create a collaborative design project with people fighting against the prison industrial complex in which I acted as a facilitator, bringing design process and practices, often through other designers, to my collaborators' political organizing work. I wanted to investigate how communication in that process worked to surface or sublimate participants' different ways of setting the problem to be engaged through our designing, and to see if and how design, as a process of iterative making with people, might work for organizers. Fittingly, given what I would come to ask and know about designing in this context, it was through the act of determining the parameters and site for the research, the nature of the relationships that brought it to life, and the work CR members and I did, that my questions shifted.

1. Patrick, pers. comm.

As the ground moved steadily under my feet throughout the project, I came to ask how it was that we were making relationships – or relational practices – that allowed us to do (meaningful) work together. I asked what the impact of duration – the length and kind of time and proximity in our collaborating – was on those relationships. Additionally, as it became clearer to me that CR No Cops members and I were immersed in trying to understand the contexts, internal and external, for their struggle against policing in Oakland and *for* something else, I also began to ask how the work we were doing was productive of ways of “knowing together.” These ways of knowing, and what we came to know, both shaped and were shaped by our practices of designing and organizing. I became increasingly curious about whether designing with people could produce not only solutions or interventions, but questions, theory, and strategy.

First, I sought out this particular design research context because I believe something is at stake in how we imagine, understand, and practice designing with people, especially in work that seeks to make social or political change. In particular, I brought with me to this project a concern for how designers can engage in designing with people, developing practices that are both responsible and responsive. In this sense, I am interested in how my work as a designer is both grounded in and aware of the work, goals, and visions of collaborators – those with whom I enter into shared practice. Simultaneously, I wonder how asking questions, or offering prompts or challenges with this awareness in mind, might also be part of building (something) together. Being attentive to the specificities of a particular design site or relationship also means engaging with time, duration, and what role we as designers play in creating things (connections, processes, capacities) that last and work where they are made (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren 2012b; Light and Akama 2014; Suchman 2002).

Secondly, I wanted to explore how design(ers) working with social justice organizations or, as is frequently the case, on what are identified as “social” issues generally, might be challenged to reimagine what it means to be situated and located in design collaborations (Suchman 2002, 2006) in terms of our own relationships, especially, to systems of power. Critically important here, is designers’ willingness to acknowledge that we “design from somewhere” in what is framed as social change work, and that we recognize and learn to speak about our own positions vis a vis the work and the people with whom we choose, or are invited, to design. Whether and how the contextualized nature of any design engagement is made explicit (or not) as part of those collaborations remains a slippery part of designing for “change,” given the inevitable collisions of different perspectives and experiences that are fundamental to designing with people around “matters of concern” (Bannon and Ehn 2012).

Third, what is at stake in designing with people, and learning through our own practices what this means, is, of course, what is at stake in the work *we join into*, even if it is also ours or becomes ours in the process. I was concerned with how CR members and I could create capacities in and through our organizing /

designing practice to do what cultural studies scholar Lawrence Grossberg (2010) calls “tell[ing] better stories about what’s going on” (6) in order to “articulate the negativity of the present to the positivity of the future” (94). As my research progressed, I wondered if and how designing together was also productive of “knowing together” and what this meant for what design could do to change the dominant narratives about police or, more to the point, what it might mean to feel safe and free in Oakland. Listening to the group’s stories, and with them to Oaklanders’ stories, opened up possibilities for the stories we could tell, in turn – possibilities for new questions, strategies, and imagined futures. And this took place at multiple scales, as I learned; the knowledge we made supported and grew from our work designing internal infrastructures of the working group as well as the Oakland Power Projects campaign now underway.

The belief that something specific and of consequence for designing with people and for social and political change matters in this research – not only in this project, of course, but in the fields taking on these critical practice concerns – deeply shaped my questions and how I imagined and worked to conduct my practice. At the same time, my investment in what might be at stake for my own work, for CR members’, and beyond, also left me open – to productive confusion, to the vulnerability of not-knowing, and to the possibilities afforded by surprise. Over the course of the research, my questions expanded and changed as I learned from the practice we made. Those questions came to reflect increasingly nuanced understandings of what was taking place, and, ultimately, what I learned through it, to which I turn below.

WHAT I KNOW NOW

A final story

In early June 2014, I Skyped into a No Cops retreat from half-way around the world, in Melbourne, Australia. It was early morning for me, and winter; in Oakland it was a bright, summer mid-day. The group convened to assess where they were, after several interruptions, in moving the campaign forward. Over the course of the conversation, No Cops members decided they were ready to try to pick a “target” from the interviews and launch the campaign. When their discussion turned to *how* to do this, I suggested that they try out the giant wall-chart I’d sent them just before I left New York. Its goal, I reminded them, was to be a place to aggregate the information they were recording on the interview notepads in hopes that it would facilitate finding patterns or themes in the interviews themselves. They divided up the interviews, giving me three to listen to, as well, and set a deadline for everyone to complete listening and transfer their notes from the pads to the wall-chart. Two weeks later, the No Cops group sat in front of the heavily annotated chart and chose a first target: working with health care providers to de-couple access to mental and medical health care from policing. Shortly after, the group named the campaign the Oakland Power Projects, and this became the first “project.”

Throughout the research period, questions about how to do the things the group wanted to make possible were often recursive and cyclical, presenting not



so much as new problems, but as familiar ones that remained unresolved: how to talk to people about the project, how to make sense of an “offensive” campaign, how to chose a path forward. This is often where our designing activity stepped up, creating ways to insert ourselves into the problems of organization or knowing that presented themselves, and to reach next immediate steps. In this way, the wall-chart I’d initially proposed as a means for making sense together of their interviews with Oaklanders re-emerged as a tool that was ready to be used when No Cops members agreed that - in the big picture of their campaign planning and work up to that point - it was time to pick a first “target.”

While the wall-chart, in its use, served this critical, instrumental function in the No Cops group’s work, it did this because it was also a site for continuing to make knowledge together to move that work (and the group’s goals) forward. It was, as Evans noted, “a transition point. ...we got to sit there with all of the material that we were drawing out and [ask], ‘What do we do next given all of these patterns and themes that are coming out? What is the most exciting to us? What is the most interesting? What do we think will bear the most fruit?’ and ask ourselves questions about that” (pers. comm.).

By this time in our work together, No Cops members and I were engaged in a process that allowed us, not without missteps or limitations, to design together by making ways of arguing, articulating, and knowing. Susan noted that the wall-chart, while “holding the particulars of every story,” was focused on finding patterns, “... ideas people have about what is needed, again, in these times when only dominant things are visible or available.” The chart’s utility to us as a group came, she noted, in part, “because we live in the same clarity, we do have a lot of shared ways of seeing things” (pers. comm.). Patrick said the wall-chart was a “collective analysis tool,” that “it clearly worked, because we came up with something, and I think that was probably the fastest decision we ever made in this project” (pers. comm.). In this way, the wall-chart stands as an example of what we’d come to learn to make together: it was context-specific, but it was also a simple, imperfect manifestation of what was needed, and of our capacity, built over time, to move through what we knew and didn’t know to try to make what was needed, provisionally, again and again.

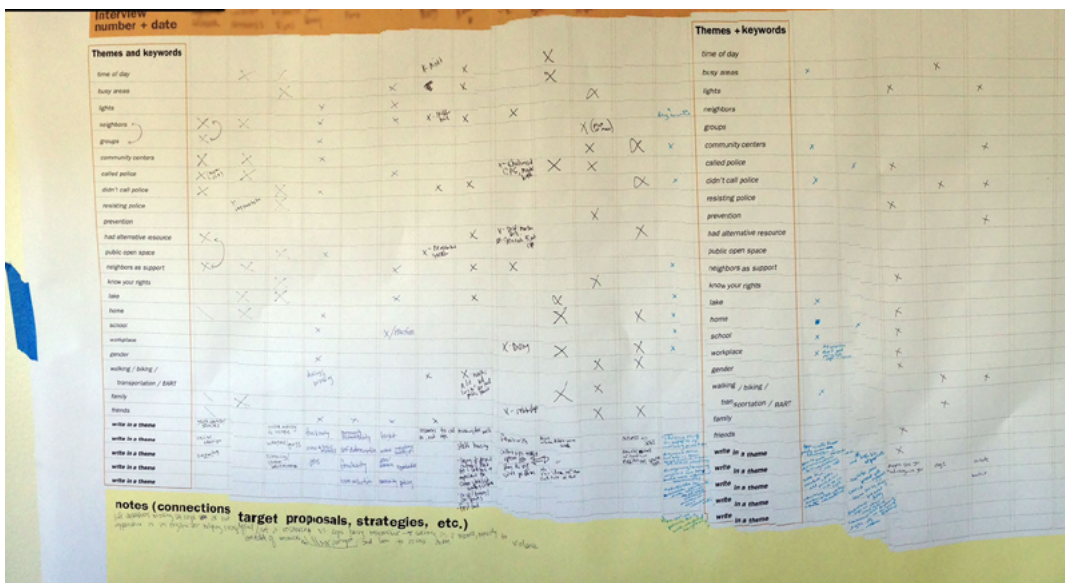


FIGURE 22 No Cops members using the wall chart to choose a first “target”
FIGURE 23 A view of the first wall chart with information from interview pads

A final proposal for practice

It is perhaps self-evident to argue that designing with people is a fundamentally relational practice. However, as scholarship of PD, especially, over the past two decades demonstrates, *how* we create those practices, and how we do or do not look closely at the dynamics of power, difference, alignment, desire, etc., that form in and through them, remains a critical question (see, for example, Akama 2014; Bannon and Ehn 2012; Björqvinnsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012a; DiSalvo, Clement, and Pipek 2012; Karasti 2014; Lee 2008; Light and Akama 2012, 2014; Roberston and Simonsen 2012; Suchman 2002, 2006). In my research with Critical Resistance members I found that what we did, and struggled to do, in our (design) collaboration was linked to our capacities to see and build on alignments,

navigate dynamics of power, and negotiate and articulate differing ideas of what was useful. These capacities were shaped in turn by what we did together and how we approached that work.

While I arrived at the language of “relational practice” through my reflection on No Cops members’ and my work together, two insights from nursing scholarship help explicate what is at stake in the idea and the experience of it. First, relational practice develops through practices of *being present* for interactions with others, and building capabilities with people through those interactions. Gweneth Hartrick Doane (2002) argues that having and using “tools” intended to produce connection or communication sometimes limits people’s actual abilities to build relationships that allow for meaningful engagement by focusing on “performing skills” rather than being engaged in “interested inquiry.” Secondly, a focus on skills and methods for creating participation can shift a practitioner’s focus to “problem-resolution” as opposed to allowing one to remain open to the ambiguity, conflict, learning and growth that can develop in relationship (Hartrick 1997). While the context of design collaboration is quite different from a nurse-patient relationship, the idea is critically important, still: that practices which allow for complexity, open-endedness, and growth depend more readily on *relationships built between people through inquiry and interest*, than they do on tools used to produce connection, information, and transfer of knowledge.

Understanding collaborative practices as relational ones, in this sense, is a useful and still necessary reminder that what is made with people, including design practices themselves, is specific. The artifacts, scaffolds, and processes CR members and I made, from the start of this research through to the final story above of the wall-chart, were both catalysts for and the ever-evolving results of what we created through our engagements together, our relational practice, and our *work*. In this sense, what is done, or takes place, or is made in practice-led research like that which I undertook with CR may not, indeed, be replicable from site to site, on purpose. Rather, my research leads me to propose a way of entering into and engaging in doing design with people, or, practicing design collaboration, that foregrounds *being in-relation-to* as a dynamically situated and critical approach to designing, in which participants design together, in an ongoing way, the contexts, aims, and outcomes of a given design situation (Willis 2007). This, as I have shown, takes place in and through moments of agreement, instances of contestation and difference, and the multiplicity represented by any given group of people.

Asking in my research what might be made, and made possible, through designing with people for social justice led to a transformation of my sense of *where* designing with people happens, and of *what*, therefore, designing with people is and how it takes place. What emerged was an understanding that in collaborative design practices, relationships are being designed, over time, alongside and through the design of artifacts or systems. In other words, I was not only a participant in a collaboration, but was in a *state of relationship* as one (ontological) condition of designing with people. Thus, my capacities as a designer working with CR members,

and theirs as organizers working with me, to be *present* for our work together was one key component of designing in this context. This included building a relational practice through trial and error, work in small groups, and discussion in No Cops meetings, emails, and interviews. It also depended on our mutual willingness to do work that didn’t get used, to argue and disagree, and to listen and to ask questions. Even as my position vis a vis the group and their / our work shifted, we remained in relationship, developing ways of being, and designing, through process and over time. This dynamic state of relationship both grew from and came to shape the nature of our collaboration and the development of means and occasions for design co-authoring as we moved along through the very non-linear process of creating the Oakland Power Projects.

This research revealed that how one is positioned as a designer, or how we imagine those positions, matters for what gets made, whether we are making artifacts and systems or knowledge for taking political action. I was embedded in Critical Resistance’s ongoing work, a social justice organization of which I am a long-term member, but I was neither a resident of the city where the campaign was rooted nor physically present for most of our designing together. My position as both an insider in CR and a geographically removed sometimes-outsider mattered to the work we did and the relationships we made through and in order to do that work. I chose CR as a site of this research because it was my commitment to our political vision that drove my interest in whether and how design might play a role in our capacity to win. That I am concerned with “winning” – which in this case, meant making inroads toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex – influenced how I came to understand with No Cops group members what designing might be in relationship to their work. This perhaps contributed to my ability to be led by what was *of use*, even when it meant feeling my position shifted and unmoored.

I became a part of the day-to-day work of the No Cops group, over time and through interruptions to the group’s work and my own availability. This gave me both insight into that work and proximity to the people with whom I did it, allowing me to become a part of it as they invited me to do so. And, the way in which I was situated in the group and in relationship to their work challenged me to see myself in relationship to my collaborators consistently, such that my work was – no matter how long it took me to see it this way – not separable from theirs and ours together. I argue, then, for a relational practice in which designers acknowledge our positions as variable and in-relation-to, open to being shifted according to movements produced by the designing context, and to the problems set by and through the (designing) work.

From this perspective, designing with people is a form of and means for making (useful) knowledge together through reflection and speculation, or what Lisa Grocott (2010) calls “figuring.” I initially raised the notion of figuring in the introduction to discuss my own reflective research process. I return to it here to reimagine figuring as having the potential to be a *collective practice* of working with the tensions between reflection and speculation in specific contexts with collaborators. If reflection is a

considered looking-back-on a situation, speculation, Grocott suggests, “makes it possible for a process that is not predetermined nor directionless...” and “preferences a discursive engagement between speculation, reverie, and analysis – requiring the establishment of a propositional space for ideas to be put forward, critiqued, developed...” (89).

Reflection on our work together showed that CR members and I balanced what we knew with what remained unknown, imagined, even longed-for. Together we negotiated tensions between the known things – organizing and policing histories, working across time zones, notes and task assignments, making flyers and e-blasts – and the unknown, speculative things – how to make an “offensive” campaign, how to design with people in political organizing. Evans’ discussion of the storyboarding and timelining, in relationship to other processes we designed over the course of our work together, demonstrates this productive tension:

I think it’s necessary work for us manifesting what we want to have happen...and so we definitely integrated it, which I think is pretty clear. It’s just interesting to go back and see, to remember what it was like to have it be both exciting and kind of unnerving to be like, “We don’t know what we’re doing, (laughter) we don’t know what it’s going to look like, we’re trying to sort something out new.” ...I think that now, what’s helpful about even going back to this, is that I trust that we have a series of processes that we can engage in to generate what we want to generate out of them...I think that’s why I’m excited about working on [next steps for building the campaign infrastructure] because I like that we have this set of things, these five or six processes that we can engage in that will build out a project, and *that* every time can look different, but we know that it works to do them as long as we do those things. (pers. comm.)

Evans describes the processes and outcomes of our designing as both producing “exciting and unnerving” questions about the unknown campaign the group proposed to do, and creating provisional, functional devices for engaging with them. Evans suggests that some of those processes can also continue to be relied on for the specific purpose of “build[ing] out a project,” even as what that means or looks like changes over time and into the unknown future. Through figuring, engaging in the tension between our reflective and speculative thinking to make meaning, we not only developed elements of our design practice, but we came to know, and not-know, together as one critically important part of that practice. Negotiating the tension between reflection and speculation as a likely, if not inevitable, space for abolitionist organizing, also produced a kind of longer-term sustainability of resources for No Cops members’ work.

Finally, then, I suggest that designing with people requires generative not-knowing, engaging in speculation as “reverie and analysis,” as a part of making knowledge together. Following on Akama’s (2015) argument for considering between-ness in co-designing as an “awakening” on the part of designers and other participants to “emergence, serendipity, and transience” (272), I propose that designing with

people is at its strongest when these design practices remain provisionally open, designers’ positions dynamic, and designers committed to (hearing) the people engaged in them. Taken together, this means that making knowledge through designing together is active, unplanned, and sometimes happens by chance, in the interstitial spaces. What becomes known is also changing, it is made while looking backwards and projecting forwards, all while also trying to move, step by step, toward one or multiple goals.

In this way, designing with CR No Cops members became a collective practice of what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) calls “making power” (248) among collaborators, and, critically, in the context of the work itself. Gilmore contrasts “making power” with the more conventional notion of “taking power,” which presumes a straightforward opposition of structure (“it”) to agency (“us”), and power as something “we” can take from “it” (248) as people seek to make social or political change. Making power, on the other hand, involves generative force: building capacity through “purposeful action” and creating “powerful alignments [that] begin to shake the ground” (248). In the language emerging through this research, making power can be imagined as one possible manifestation of being in-relation-to, an outcome of the work people do together to organize / design / listen, often in complex conditions, as we make knowledge for action. It was, in part, No Cops members’ and my efforts to “make power” as part of a broader abolitionist movement that produced our very local, specific capacities for co-authoring and, in turn, the designing that took place through that way of working.

A BIGGER FRAME

As the debates around and calls for action to do socially-engaged design continue, details matter. How designers choose, and acknowledge that we are choosing, “social” or “political” projects or contexts and, therefore, possibilities for setting the problems and questions to which they will attend, is one such detail. Understanding that when we design with people, we create the conditions (the relationships) through which that designing takes place – and that this is happening whether we approach it with intention and care, or not – is another. How, then, we set about making relationships through designing, and through which designing happens, also matters. How we make these relationships and the practices that come through them shapes what we seek to build, how open we are to being shifted, to learning new contexts, to taking leadership from collaborators and becoming transformed by what we are taught, to being open to ambiguity in addition to failure. This includes the inevitably complex factors of power (ours and others’), position, and time. And, finally, how we engage with the knowledge-making capacity of design, and how that knowing is made useful, and to whom, especially in designing with people, is another important detail. Clearly, not all collaborative designing is shaped in the specifically delineated political terms that were central to my research, and to CR’s and my practice. However, for the ever-expanding use of design to “do social good,”

or “impact social issues,” the question of making power, determining whether it is even an aim of the work, and if so, whose power is in play, is critical.

Continuing what is an ongoing and robust conversation about how we practice design with people within and across fields doing collaborative designing, and how we reflect on and understand what takes place in that work, is critical for addressing the ideas raised in this submission. This research aims to enter that conversation by offering an approach to practice with people that focuses on the potential, and complex dynamics, of working as an embedded designer in collaboration with others over time, as well as a political argument for design collaboration, especially in work aimed at making social / political change. In this way, we might approach designing with people as practices through which all participants intentionally engage spaces of imagination, vision, and possibility, while firmly grounding ourselves in both the historical and political contexts in which our work takes place, from which it emerges, and to which it returns, again and again.

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APPENDIX 1

CRITICAL RESISTANCE MISSION STATEMENT & KEY TERMS

CRITICAL RESISTANCE MISSION STATEMENT

Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). We do this by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it reflect communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.

PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (PIC)

Prison industrial complex (PIC) is a term we use to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems.

Through its reach and impact, the PIC helps and maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and similar privileges. There are many ways this power is collected and maintained through the PIC, including creating mass media images that keep alive stereotypes of people of color, poor people, queer people, immigrants, youth, etc. as criminal, delinquent or deviant. This power is also maintained by earning huge profits for private companies that deal with prisons and police forces; helping earn political gains for “tough on crime” politicians; increasing the influence of prison guard and police unions; and eliminating social and political dissent by people of color, poor people, immigrants, and others who make demands of self-determination and reorganization of power in the US. All these things are parts of the PIC.

ABOLITION

PIC Abolition is a political vision with the goal of eliminating prisons, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment.

From where we are now, sometimes we can't really imagine what abolition is going to look like. Abolition isn't just about getting rid of buildings full of cages. It's also about undoing the society we live in because the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and controls millions of people. Because the prison industrial complex is not an isolated system, abolition is a broad strategy. An abolitionist vision means that we must build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future. It means developing practical strategies for taking small steps that move us toward making our dreams real and that lead us all to believe that things really could be different. It means living this vision in our daily lives.

Abolition is both a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal.

From the Critical Resistance website (www.criticalresistance.org) and the CR Abolition Organizing Toolkit (2004).

APPENDIX 2

RMIT ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



**Design and Social Context
College Office**

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Australia

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22 April 2012

Shana Agid

Dear Shana,

Re: Ethics Clearance

Project title: Making/contested/futures: Communication, power, and meaning-making in co-design processes focused on social and political change

Applicant/s: Shana Agid

Register Number: CHEAN A&B-2000604-11/11

Your amended ethics application has been reviewed and approved by the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN). Your application has been approved at a Low Risk classification and will be reported to the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee for noting.

Your ethics clearance expires on 21 April 2015.

Data storage

Please note that all research data should be stored on University Network systems. These systems provide high levels of manageable security and data integrity, can provide secure remote access, are backed on a regular basis and can provide Disaster Recover processes should a large scale incident occur. The use of portable devices such as CDs and memory sticks is valid for archiving, data transport where necessary and some works in progress. The authoritative copy of all current data should reside on appropriate network systems and the Principal Investigator is responsible for the retention and storage of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

Annual/Final report

You are reminded that an Annual /Final report is mandatory and should be forwarded to the Ethics Officer in December 2012. This report is available at; <http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/committees/hrec>

Amendments

If you need to make any amendments to your project please submit an amendment form to the Ethics Officer. This form is available at; <http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/committees/hrec>

Should need any further information please contact the Chair, Assoc Prof Heather Fehring on heather.fehring@rmit.edu.au or contact Lisa Mann on (03) 9925 2974 or lisa.mann@rmit.edu.au

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Mann
Ethics Officer
DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN)