

# **Sharing power in our communities**

*Designing better spaces for everyone*

Stéphanie Ouillon – FOSDEM 2017



**« Diversity »  
and  
« Inclusion »**



# **Reflection of our western society**

**THEN WE SAID**

**DIVERSITY IS OUR GREATEST  
STRENGTH**



**It's about power.**



**Larger structures of power**  
(social, institutional)

**shape**

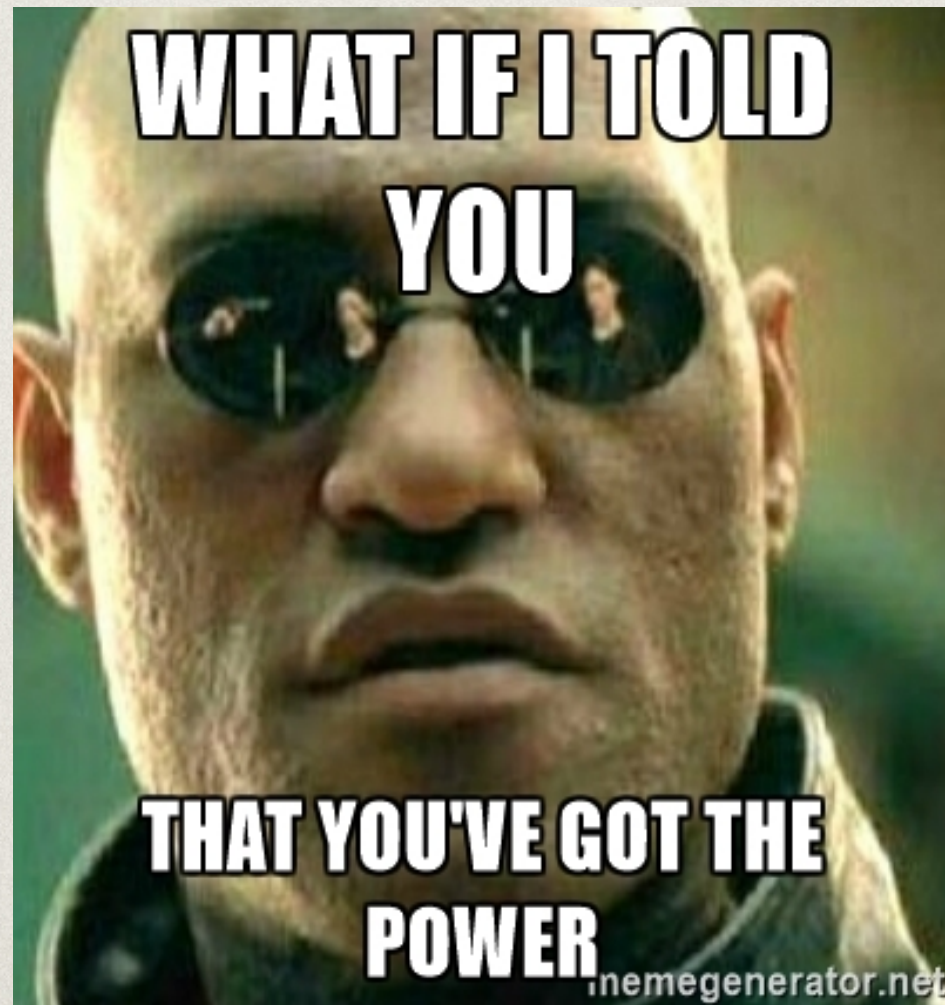
**individual power relationships.**



**=> Individual  
and  
collective  
empowerment**



**What it means to be on  
the better side:**





**I am legitimate to  
occupy space.**



**My opinion is  
considered as (more)  
legitimate.**



**I can make the decisions  
for myself and for  
others.**



**People have fewer  
negative prejudices  
against me.**



**Changing the rules in  
our communities.**





**By dismantling  
power inequalities  
and  
norms we learned.**



**Becoming more aware of  
how we interact with  
each other.**



**Change how we:**

**Debate**

**Decide**

**Collaborate**

**Make**



# Goals:

- Neutralizing hierarchies
- Deciding together
- Empowering



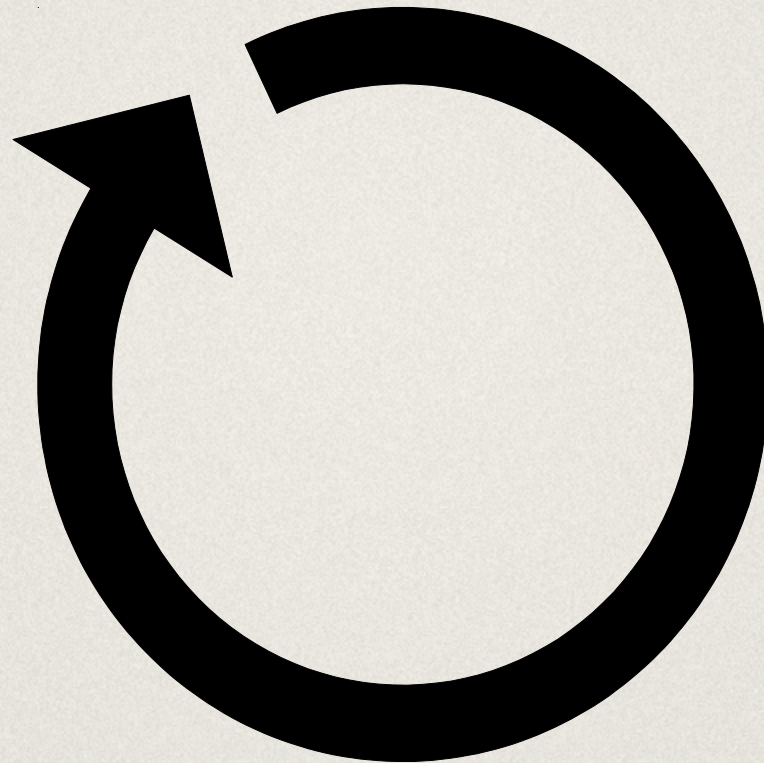
# Steps for organizing

**1. Observe/Listen**

**2. Design**

**3. Implement**

**4. Test**





# 1. Observing and Listening





**Who talks, decides, is  
there?**

**Who is silent, listens,  
is absent?**



**Who is paid, legitimate,  
enthusiastic?**

**Who is put aside,  
angry?**



**« people who are marked are generally viewed as “having something” that unmarked people do not have. That “something” can therefore be subjected to remarks, questions, debate, praise or critique; »**

*Julia Serano, How Double Standards work*



**« the unmarked person  
escapes such critical analysis  
by virtue of the fact that they  
are not seen as having that  
“something.” »**

*Julia Serano, How Double Standards work*



# Who do you mark?





**« The marked group is unfairly singled out and plagued by assumptions and stereotypes that the unmarked group does not face. »**

*Julia Serano, How Double Standards work*



# Double standards

- **Universal assumptions**
- **Hierarchies**
- **Stereotypes**
- **Attribution**

*Julia Serano, Excluded*



# **Forms of invalidation**

- **Mentally incompetent**
- **Sexualized**
- **Immoral**
- **Sick, unhealthy**
- **Anomalous**
- **Fake, inauthentic**

*Julia Serano, Excluded*



# INCLUSION





- Who includes who?
- According to which rules?
- Who needs to adapt?
- Do we change how we make decisions?



# Meritocracy and do-ocracy





**Repeating power  
patterns and inequalities**

**because some things are not  
being explicated and discussed**



# Questions

- Who has access to ressources to contribute?
- Who has the power and abilities to « do »?
- Who makes decisions and according to which values?



# **Risk of homogenization**

**e.g: mentoring and accepting  
work of people « like us »**



# **« Do-ocracy is more efficient »**

- **What/who are we winning and losing?**
- **Why do we need to go fast?**

**=> Balance to find**



# **Toolbox for detecting patterns**

- **Listening skills**
- **Double standards**
- **Invalidation**
- **Organisation mapping**

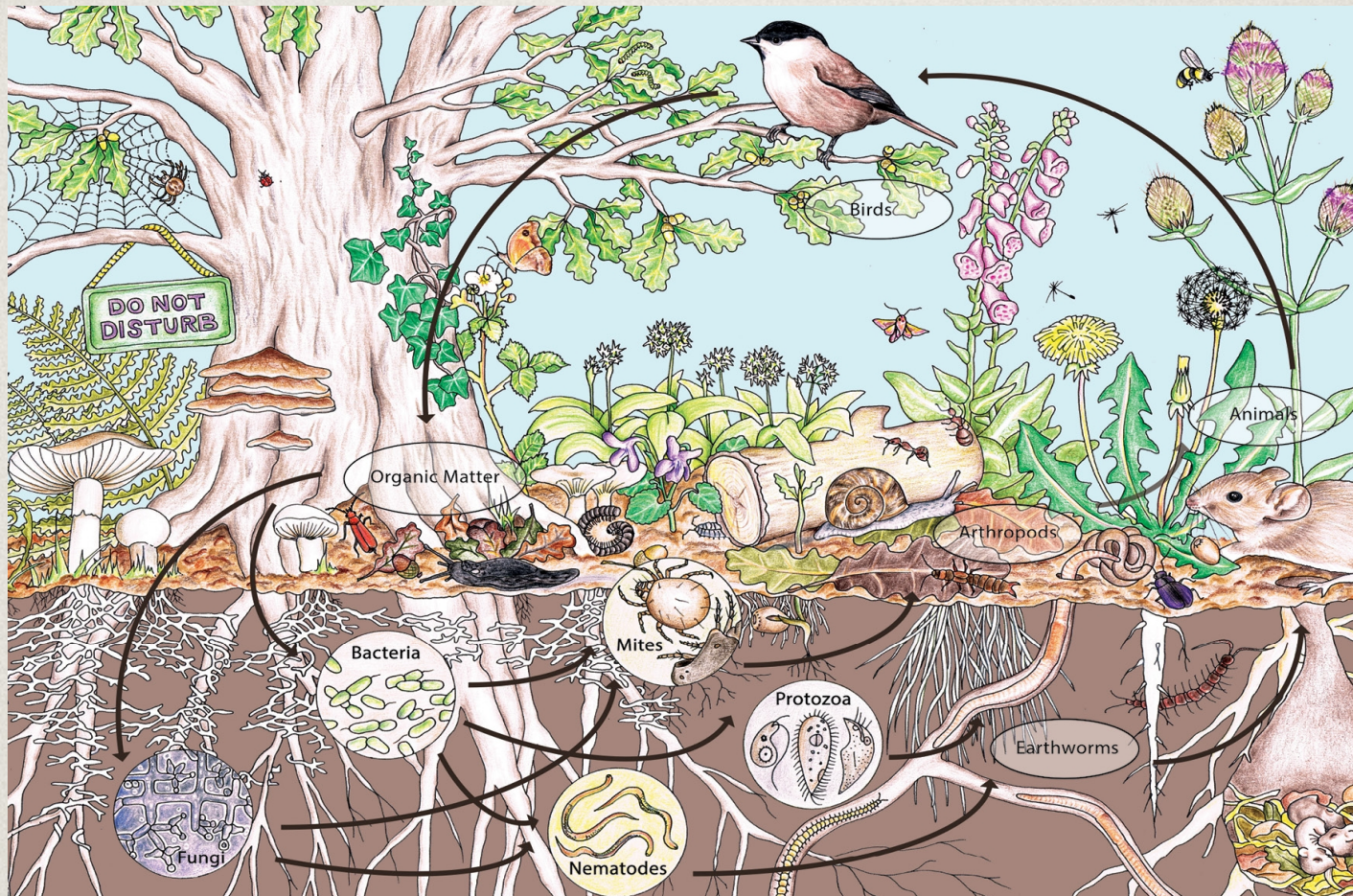


## 2. Designing





# Following the example of permaculture





# **Toolbox for designing**

- **General principles**
- **Concrete methods**
- **Collective creativity**



Everything changes. There is  
no unique model in time and  
space





# **Design Principles**

- **Pay attention to what/who is silent or absent.**
- **Expect and respect emotions.**



# **Design Principles**

- **Rotate.**
- **Design to allow learning skills and evolving.**



# Design Principles

- **The ideal system doesn't exist, but you can get closer to something fair.**



**Learn and adapt methods.**



# **Some methods**

- **Decision made with collective consensus**
- **Sortition**
- **Rotation of roles**
- **Games**



# **Some methods**

- **Communication**: gender inclusive, questionning common insults, etc.
- **Accessibility**



# 3. Implementing





# COOPERATION



Spongebob Squarepants vector trace by kusaef, ©Nickelodeon



# A craft needs:

- Good will
- Skills to be developed

*Robert Senett, Together*



- **Listening well**
- **Behaving tactfully**
- **Finding points of agreement and managing disagreement**
- **Avoiding frustration in difficult conversation**



# **Get informed of social realities and inequalities**

- **Knowledge in context and history**
- **Empathy**



# **Sharing power** **as a craft**



# **Toolbox for improving our « sharing power » craft**

- **Good will**
- **Dialogic skills**
- **Knowledge in power patterns**
- **Knowledge of yourself!**



# **Toolbox for improving our « sharing power » craft**

- Know when to speak up and when to stay silent
- Bolster voices of others



# **Toolbox for improving our « sharing power » craft**

- **Learn what's different between what's anecdotal and systemic**
- **When you mess up: acknowledge, apologize, stop.**



# 4. Test





**We are not Chuck Norris.**





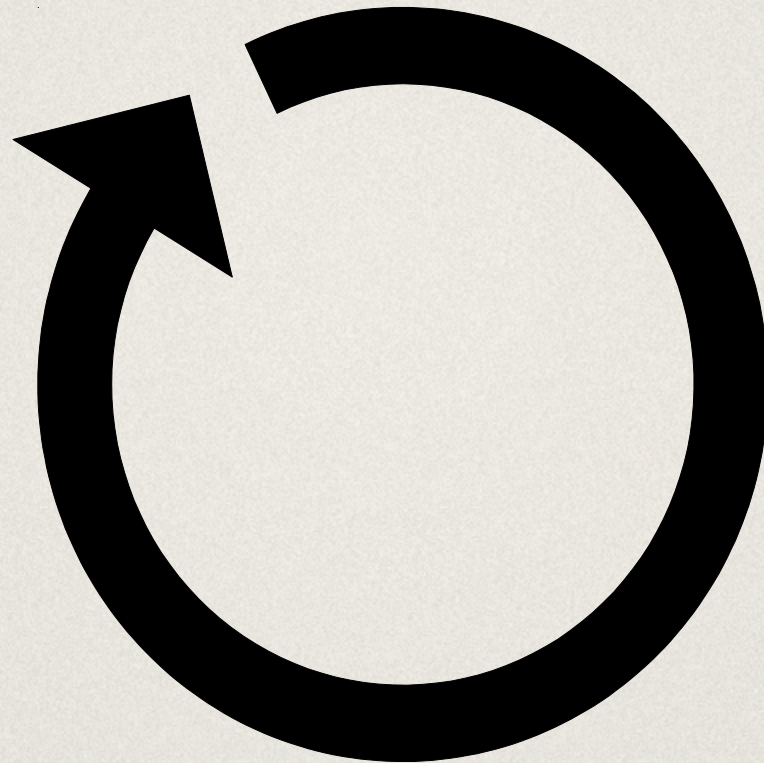
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# Conclusion



# « A world made of multiple worlds »

*Jérôme Baschet,*

Adieux au capitalisme,

Autonomie, société du bien vivre et multiplicité des mondes



**Commons**

**+**

**Social equality**

**=**

**alternative  
political spaces**



# To go further (English)

## Online resources:

- Feminist Perspectives on Power, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/>
- How Double Standards Work (understanding the unmarked/marked distinction), Julia Serano  
<http://juliaserano.blogspot.fr/2015/01/how-double-standards-work-understanding.html>
- Intersectionality : The Double Bind of Race and Gender, Kimberley Crenshaw (interview)  
[http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publishing/perspectives\\_magazine/women\\_perspectives\\_Spring2004CrenshawPSP.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publishing/perspectives_magazine/women_perspectives_Spring2004CrenshawPSP.authcheckdam.pdf)
- Autonomous government I & II, Freedom according to the Zapatistas  
<http://mexicosolidarity.org/sites/default/files/EZLN-%20Autonomous%20Government%20I.pdf>
- How Can You Make a 'Real' Difference? Try These 9 Acts of Everyday Radical Activism, Everyday feminism  
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2017/01/everyday-radical-activism/>



## To go further (English)

### Books:

- Circles of Power: Shifting Dynamics in a Lesbian-Centered Community, La Verne Gagehabib and Barbara Summerhawk
- Together, Robert Senett
- Excluded, Julia Serano



## To go further (Spanish)

### Online resources:

- Gobierno autónomo I & II, La Libertad según I@s Zapatist@s  
<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/library/cuadernos-de-texto-de-la-primer-escuelita-zapatista-gobierno-autonomo-1/>
- Micropolítica de los grupos, Para una ecología de las prácticas colectivas, Vercauteren, Crabbé, Müller  
<http://micropolitiques.collectifs.net/IMG/pdf/micropoliticd52a.pdf>



## To go further (French)

### Sites :

- Les attributs du pouvoir et leur confiscation aux femmes, Antisexisme.net  
<https://antisexisme.net/2012/04/09/le-genre-et-lespace/>
- Micropolitique des groupes, pour une écologie des pratiques collectives,  
Vercauteren, Crabbé, Müller  
<http://micropolitiques.collectifs.net/>
- Constellations, trajectoires révolutionnaires du jeune 21e siècle, collectif  
Mauvaise Troupe  
<http://constellations.boum.org/>

### Livres :

- Adieux au capitalisme, Autonomie, société du bien vivre et multiplicité des mondes, Jérôme Baschet (livre)