



# Utopoly

## A Utopian Research Method

By Neil Farnan

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Chelsea College of Arts  
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# Abstract

This thesis is an account of Utopoly, a new utopian research method that incorporates a game. It is the result of research provoked by a question concerning the validity of using games in the field of utopian studies. My research set out to develop methods that would complement utopian literary fiction by providing more concrete rather than abstract utopian conceptualisations. Speculative forms of utopian discourse are brought into explicitly social, political and economic configurations of utopian thought. Through the Utopoly method participants can experience utopia-as-practice by co-constructing and encountering their own vision of a utopian future.

Utopoly evolved through collaborative practice-based research over several years. It was collectively imagined and improvised through a series of public workshops in which Utopoly was enacted, critiqued and subsequently modified. The method incorporates an adapted Future Workshop where participants critique and analyse established political, socio-economic, environmental situations and then engage their imagination to produce possibilities for a better society. The architecture of the board game Monopoly is then co-operatively 'hacked' to incorporate these visions as alternative features, including values, currencies and rules. Participants then play the new game to negotiate, interact with and evaluate the utopian possibilities they have created.

An important realisation for the method during the research was that the creative and utopian practices that emerged during its development should be incorporated into the method itself. The method then includes various utopian processes such as: critique, improvisation, imagination, playfulness and hopeful narratives of a better future. By enacting the method, a creative event is produced where new knowledge emerges through praxis.

Utopoly contributes to the imaginary reconstitution of society. This thesis concludes with a detailed set of guidelines – like those to enable a game to be played - to allow the reproduction of the method. The method developed has already been used independently by other research groups in diverse contexts. Utopoly therefore creates utopian moments and temporary utopians and is presented as a new utopian research method in the field of utopian studies and beyond.

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# Introduction

This thesis is an account of how a kernel of an idea, to 'hack' and make modifications to the board game Monopoly, grew to become a fully formed utopian research method. The utopian sociologist Ruth Levitas (2013, p. 219) states the requirements for such utopian methods as having characteristics of "...simultaneously critiquing the present, exploring alternatives, imagining ourselves otherwise and experimenting with prefigurative practices".

The research was driven by a question, posed early in the project by an attendee at the *Utopia Now!* symposium (August 2017), "How can games contribute to the imaginary reconstitution of society?". The question refers to the 2013 book by Levitas: *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. I also wanted to develop methods through the research which could enable *concrete* rather than abstract conceptualisations of utopia. I am using the term concrete as derived from its latin root 'con crescere' which relates to growing or forming in layers so that utopia emerges via an active process rather than being predefined as a blueprint. It is formed from 'willful' engagement which is anticipatory and hopeful rather than wishful thought alone.

The methodology presented in this thesis is rooted in art practices and can be described as Practice as Research. Robin Nelson (2013, p. 8) the Practice as Research specialist uses the term to describe "a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice (...) is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry." As such it involves practical knowledge produced through doing rather than abstractly conceived. The philosopher Donald Schön (1994) would attribute such knowledge to experiential discovery via reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action.

A practice-based PhD requires the demonstration of the practice either within the thesis or via a complementary exhibition rather than purely textually. For this thesis it was decided to provide illustrative details of the practice throughout, so that the thesis incorporates the 'exhibition' of the research. This was partly due to perceived difficulties in arranging an exhibition during Covid-19 restrictions, but more significantly to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the practice and research involved, as it unfolded, for the reader in a permanent and associated form. This thesis therefore provides evidence of practice (as images and participant transcriptions) with equivalent

weighting to the textual and theoretical components. The role of the thesis is also expanded so that it can serve as manual of the Utopoly method.

This thesis describes a practice which is at its core about developing experimental research in public. By researching through art, the methodology affords a creative or generative potential which distinguishes it from traditional qualitative methods. Whilst the qualitative research expert Lisa Given (2012, p. 29) has categorised Arts-Based Research as a qualitative method, it could be considered an outlier in this ontology, having different qualities and approaches. For Bradley Haseman (2010, p. 150) the experiential learning researcher, art practice constitutes a third methodological species of research distinct from both qualitative and quantitative research - although it has some alignment with qualitative research values. The distinguishing qualities relating to this thesis concern: the intention of the research, the usage of methods employed, and the production of the outcomes.

Practice as Research has an interdisciplinary tendency and can readily borrow the theory and methods of non-arts disciplines (Nelson, 2013, p. 49). It sits on the opposite end of a spectrum of qualitative research to those which could be described as abstract, detached, objective and having a positivist quest for certainty. The research rigour is supplied by this interdisciplinary nature preferring syncretism to in-depth and strict adherence to the procedures and principles of a single discipline (ibid., p. 34). For Nelson (ibid., p. 60) critical reflection on practice provides a further rigour. According to Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldbberg (2008, p. 241), researchers in qualitative methods and organisational studies, such reflexive practice in research allows a freer attitude towards empirical data which they note is "more about other virtues – creative ideas, for instance – that are not subject to the empirical norm which shackles us to the 'data'". Such shackles can limit creative potential and include principles such as neutral objective observation. Nelson (2013, p. 96) suggests that the experimental and generative nature of artistic research is not well served by a traditional 'research question' (which requires a definitive answer) and instead prefers the more nuanced and open concept of 'research inquiry'. For this research the research question or line of inquiry is then: can a method be developed (through the hacking of Monopoly) which allows temporary utopias to be enacted, in game design and play, through utopian practice?

The intention of Practice as Research, in this thesis, is clearly aligned with the utopian impulse and therefore aims for beneficial social change. There are other qualitative methods that share an aspiration for social change such as Participatory

Action Research. This method, as described by the action and participatory researcher Steve Jordan (2012), has the aim of creating peaceful, just, and democratic societies. In this method researchers can work with a defined subject group who participate in determining and controlling their own research process to ultimately enact social and political transformation. The difference between the research described in this thesis and Participatory Action Research is that the participants involved did not control or design the research and were not a continuous distinct group who could enact change for that community (although the establishment of a working Utopoly method does allow for an organisational application to perform such a role). Most participants were transient contributing to only one iteration to form a temporary utopian community, with participants being openly invited from interested publics.

The public aspect of the methodology is derived from my involvement with the research cluster Critical Practice (see section 1.0 Monopoly to Utopoly). The notion of being 'in public' is part of the ethos and *modus operandi* of Critical Practice who use the term 'publicness' (Critical Practice, 2011, pp. 171-172) to encompass: community, public good, public space, public service, public knowledge and public domain, amongst others. There were several ways the practice of publicness was present during the development of Utopoly. The research was open to various publics consisting of communities of interest formed around the research question. As successive artists, activists and students engaged with the research further groups were attracted, such as French institutional researchers, this in turn led to more interest. Participants self-selected via open invitations to publics constituted around institutions, events, and organisations such as artist communities, galleries, and a science fiction festival. Early research was available in the public domain through published articles and information networks. This continued over the duration of the research and became a useful method of informing and recruiting interested parties to take part in the research. Crucially, one of the outputs of this research is the Utopoly method itself, which is freely available for distribution and use in the public domain.

The methodology shares similarities with iterative design processes with cycles of practice, as participatory workshops to hack Monopoly, and reflexion. The Utopoly method was experimented with over several iterations and evolved through playful 'trial and error'. Features that worked got incorporated into the next iteration and those that didn't were left out until it coalesced into a workable set of guidelines suitable for reproduction by others. Although this thesis reports on 13 iterations, a stable form occurred at iteration 11 - with iterations 06 and 08 being carried out by other independent researchers. This method of practice as research is described by

Haseman (2010, p. 147) whereby "practice is both ongoing and persistent; practitioner researchers do not merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practise' to a resolution." Through the practice the Utopoly method itself unfolded and developed as practised - a form of poiesis and praxis.

Practice as Research typically involves a range of methods to provide evidence of process and to assist with reflexion. Methods such as observation, note taking, audio and visual recordings, mapping & tracing, and analysis of transcriptions were included within this research. Whilst such methods are also associated with traditional qualitative methods such as Observational Research, here these methods are used for a different purpose. The purpose of social science tends towards studying a group of subjects in a particular situation. The data derived is critical to the process and is analysed to derive meaning and knowledge. The knowledge produced is ideographic, being group, time, and space specific. The intention is to be able to predict and possibly influence how a similar group may respond to future events. However, Haseman (*ibid.*, p. 148) relates that practice-led researchers consider such treatment of data limiting and that using traditional research paradigms to translate practice into numbers (quantitative) or words (qualitative), reduces the value of such research resulting in "the dilution and ultimately the impoverishment of the epistemological content embedded and embodied in practice". The educationalist Aaron Kuntz (2016) offers a further critique of traditional social research methods. Stating how they can easily conform to serve a neoliberal agenda by extracting quantifiable and commodifiable value through rational, procedural, and technocratic methods. The analysing of data is used to report on and encapsulate a situation, maintaining the status quo rather than engendering a possibility of change.

With arts-based practice as research it is the practice that produces the knowledge. In this research the images and transcriptions of the participants were analysed and selected to show example instances of reflection-on-action and emerging knowledge-in-doing. The outcomes derived, as images, drawing, experiences, ideas, and text, are used to illustrate, and 'bring to life' the method and evidence people experiencing utopian moments.

Whilst the intention of this art research may differ from other qualitative methods its participatory nature requires an adherence to the same level of rigour and ethical considerations. In line with UAL's Research Ethics each participant was given a briefing information sheet preparing them for what would happen at the workshop and asked to sign a consent form. Personal data was stored under GDPR principles and only used for this research. The data collected (video, audio, photographs) was encrypted and

stored on an external hard drive. The participants were free to withdraw at any time and could decide whether they wished their image to be included or quotes attributed to them. A few participants requested a level of anonymity regarding attribution of quotations. This had an impact on the design of the thesis such that all transcriptions are unattributed – the purpose of the selected transcripts is to illustrate what was said rather than to denote who said what.

What developed as the Utopoly method both answers the question about the validity of using games for utopian practice and fills what I identify as a gap in the field of utopian studies. The Utopoly method creates a utopian space that develops into a game-play format and provides the agency for the utopian imaginary. It offers participants the experience of utopia-as-practice as a counterpart and complement to the more established and familiar role of literary fiction (Levitas, 2013, p. 197) in the field of utopian studies.

Utopian studies is itself an interdisciplinary field and possibly one of the broadest. This research through art practice engages with a wide range of theories and applications in areas of political economics, design, games, planning, educational design, the anthropology and sociology of play, and social psychology. All the fields are encountered through following the practice, rather than researched as discrete disciplines or areas of study. It is utopian art practice, as the main discipline, rather than the hermeneutics of utopian literature that produces the methodology and outcomes of the research. Whilst utopian fictions and games with utopian themes exist, Utopoly is original as a utopian research method. It combines participatory methods with 'productive play' to generate a radical imagination and create a temporary utopian society.

Utopoly as method evolved into two distinct phases: the first was inspired by a 'Future Workshop' (Jungk and Müllert, 1987) and involves the participants taking part in a journey of co-discovery to imagine different formations of the future. A modified Monopoly game board is then transcribed with these future formations. The participants move from the unknown of an empty board to collectively develop and conceptualise utopian values, ideas and desires, which then replace the unknowns of the playing board together with the invention of new playable guidelines.

The second phase is the playing of the game. The players' collective goal is ostensibly to model the transition towards their utopia. However, the actual goal of the whole method is to bring together a group of people to discuss and explore their utopian thoughts, engage them in utopian practice and in doing so form a temporary

utopian society. Utopian processes are present and offered throughout the method and participants can access them as the following: improvisation, critique, imagination, hopeful visions of the future, playfulness and the articulation of narratives, among others.

Through all this there is the possibility of individual transformation. Here a version of utopia is not imposed from elsewhere but is formed through a process that generates itself. The Utopoly method provides the potential for travelling towards utopian philosopher Ernst Bloch's concept of an autopoietic utopia (1995, cited in Amsler, 2018, p. 61). Rather than a predefined blueprint, Utopoly is a self-generating utopia gradually reached through processes which engage utopian latencies and tendencies whereby the 'process is made by those who are made by the process'.

My research is practice-based and at its core it is about developing experimental research in public. People were invited to participate in the research and be co-creators of it and the method has benefited immensely from their contributions and participation. It has also evolved from and been shaped by other projects and methods. It was created from a process of intense collectively-imagined and improvised co-design. What I realised through the research was that the generative processes that the participants engaged in during the making of the method were in themselves utopian. Participants critiqued a situation and, informed by hopeful narratives of a better future, playfully imagined and improvised what changes they wanted in a game-format.

Therefore, this aspect, as an engine of vitality and creativity, has been incorporated into the method as utopia-in-practice. Here participants engage in the development of the game itself. As such it is a step beyond experiencing those rare and novel games of 'critical play' where social issues and speculative ideas are selected and codified by other game-designers. Instead, players construct their own vision of the future in game form and while playing, they experience and explore the new social possibilities they have created.

In addition to a new utopian method, Utopoly is also itself a means of producing new knowledge. The participants generate co-created visions of the future, and these become features of the game. These formations are unknown or not-yet-conscious until released by engaging with the method and playing the game. It is through playing with these scenarios that the participants are able to reflect on the alternative realities they co-created. As they interact with each other and the game they can take part in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. In this way new knowledge is experienced and made in the doing rather than passively received, it is knowledge as praxis. New

knowledge also emerges from narratives which can be produced throughout the method and through these enacted experiences or artistic events.

The utopian method of Utopoly can create a space in which people can re-imagine a different society where values, forms of exchange and social relations can be reconsidered and reconfigured. The method provides the freedom to reframe existing metaphors and paradigms and to develop new social contracts. The research is described in four phases: Inception, Experimenting, Development and Trialling, all interlaced with images and quotes from the multiple participants. The body of the thesis contains the method within it and the method is also presented, for those that wish to run their own Utopoly sessions, as a set of core guidelines. These guidelines form a key part of the Conclusion and are evidence of 'new knowledge' developed by the research.

## Notes on reading the thesis:

### Participant conversations







The thesis includes transcriptions of participant conversations that emerged from the workshops and game-play. These are used to illustrate a particular point. The conversation appears in a green background and is introduced by the speech bubble icon:

Where conversations are split across pages the continuation bubble is used: ■■■

These conversations are purposefully unattributed to retain a level of anonymity and in each conversation participants are assigned a different coloured icon of a person:

(e.g.  or  etc., see example below).

The reader can enjoy reading or exploring the whole conversation or pick up on the underlined key parts. The square brackets indicate an additional note which either helps to describe a situation or is used to disguise gender so that 'he' or 'she' becomes [they].

  "I think when we get one [a domain], we should all have something."  
 "If I land on there, do I have to pay something?"  
 "Yes. You are going to have to pay something!"  
 "Yeah. What do, what should [they - the corporate entity] pay in?"  
 "What do you think [they] should pay in?"

Example participant conversation

### Iterations and Timeline

Throughout the thesis each instance of Utopoly is referred to as a numbered iteration (iteration 01 to iteration 13). The details of the event, location, date and the features that were introduced at that iteration are listed on the Research Timeline on the following page.

# Research Timeline

**Iteration 01** 28th - 29th March 2014

- Utopographies Chelsea College of Arts Triangle Space
- Initial 'hack' of Monopoly Chance cards



**Iteration 02** 9th December 2014

- Critical Practice Chelsea College of Arts Room E305
- Properties and values reimaged & hacked on paper board



**Iteration 03** 6th December 2016

- What Happens To Us Wimbledon College of Arts Wimbledon Space
- Introduced: alternative currencies, corporate entity, monopolist starting set up & start to formulate rules



**Iteration 04** 7th March 2017

- 1st Year Exhibition Chelsea College of Arts Triangle Space
- Introduced: adapted Future Workshop & Laminated board



**Iteration 05** 16th March 2017

- ValueModels Chelsea College of Arts Room E305
- Introduced: autonomous corporate entity



**Iteration 06** 21st April 2017

- ValueModels Galeries Lafayette Paris
- Introduced: Organisational focus



**Iteration 07** 9th July 2017

- Islington Mill Arts hub & community Salford
- Introduced: Special Domains



**Iteration 08** 27-24th July 2017

- ValueModels La Myne, Villeurbanne Lyon
- Utopoly Camp using La Gonette local currency



**Iteration 09** 20th July 2019

- Billiards Room Chelsea College of Arts
- Introduced: Carbon, Credit & Debt, 3D printed skyscrapers



**Iteration 10** 19th October 2019

- Furtherfield Furtherfield Commons Finsbury Park
- Codified rules for game - 1st rule for lusury goal



**Iteration 11** 31st October 2019

- Cosmia Festival Huddersfield University
- Introduced: playing cards for movement



**Iteration 12** 7th January 2020

- Academic Support Away day workshop Streatham Space Project
- Imagining institutional change



**Iteration 13** 25th February 2020

- Critical Design Module Interactive Media (BSc) York University
- Demonstration workshop





# Phase 1 - Inception

## 1.0 Monopoly to Utopoly

The Utopoly method was the outcome of a series of collaborative practice-based action research activities. It has benefited from the cross-fertilization of ideas from events spanning several years. The evolution of the method started with the research cluster Critical Practice based at Chelsea College of Arts. Critical Practice is a collaborative group of researchers and practitioners from the fields of art, design and curating which aims to critically explore creative cultural production (Critical Practice, 2017a). The group operates as an open social network and actively works with others to develop experimental research methods in public forums.

In 2014, as a member of Critical Practice I was concurrently working on the event *#TransActing: A Market of Values* (Critical Practice, 2017b) and ideas for a 'hack' of the board game Monopoly. The term 'hack' is derived from software development and describes a creative but sometimes inelegant solution to a problem. It is also associated with 'hackers' or unauthorised coders who alter the functionality of computer systems to steal or corrupt data, or to reverse inequalities of power. In an artistic context a 'hack' is more akin to an act of *détournement* or the rerouting or hijacking of existing forms or products to create an alternative or opposite meaning.

The 'Market of Values' was a one-day pop up market held in the Parade Ground, at Chelsea College of Arts. It comprised of market stalls which were purpose-built from mostly recycled materials and by stallholders who were invited to trade and exchange values outside of the monetary economy. The stallholders comprised artists, healers, theorists, carers, activists and nourishers. One theme was the exploration of wealth beyond capital: values such as care, trust, creativity and generosity and forms of exchange that coexist with money but have no cash equivalent. The current version of Utopoly is a synergy of aspects of these two projects.



Critical Practice event *#TransActing: A Market of Values* at Chelsea College of Arts

Utopoly - a utopian research method



Hacking Monopoly at Utopographies - iteration 01

The first 'hack' of Monopoly (iteration 01) occurred at *Utopographies: Evaluation, Consensus and Location* (Critical Practice, 2017c), an event co-organised by Critical Practice in March 2014 at Chelsea College of Art, as part of the *Imaginations of the Future* series (Leverhulme International Research Network) where elements of the game Monopoly were redesigned to incorporate utopian possibilities. The purpose was to engage in a "contest of evaluation" (Critical Practice, 2014) with the extant board game Monopoly. The intention was to transform both the values printed on the board and the Chance and Community Chest cards. This first 'hack' of Monopoly was limited in scope but set the process in motion. Four teams were assembled as separate 'communities of evaluation' who then discussed and designed alternative cards. Each team produced related themes with values emerging around the replacement of private property with public goods. No game was played at the session and the output of the first 'hack' of Monopoly was limited to the writing of new and alternative Chance and Community Chest cards.



Alternative Chance cards reimagined and designed - iteration 01

The task of the imaginary reconstitution of Monopoly was incomplete but remained as a future possibility waiting for the chance for fulfilment. This first 'hack' was felt to be so productive that an invitation to continue developing Utopoly was offered on the Critical Practice meeting agenda when I joined the group on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014. It was at this point that I realised the potential for a more substantial project and I started formulating ideas for Utopoly as a method, these ideas would emerge during later iterations. The second 'hack' (iteration 02) took place on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014, during which a new currency called *Claires* (named after a Critical Practice member) was created to replace the representations of cash as the currency in circulation. This time the properties on the board were replaced with utopian values and a game was played.



Using the alternative currency of *Claire's* - iteration 02



Alternative currencies in use at #TransActing: A Market of Values



#TransActing: currency of Creativity



#TransActing: currency of Knowledge



#TransActing: currency of Time



#TransActing: currency of Wellbeing

Some of the ideas and values that emerged from this iteration fed into and were represented in the design of a new set of currencies used for *#TransActing: A Market of Values*. The currencies represented the intangible values of Time, Wellbeing, Knowledge and Creativity. These themes and currencies had an important influence on the ongoing development of Utopoly.

## 1.1 Why Monopoly?

“The vast majority of Monopoly players had no clue that the game was a protest *against* capitalism, not an endorsement of it.”

(Mary Pilon, 2016, p.134)



Traditional Monopoly ready to start playing

Why choose Monopoly? Board games are a familiar pastime and the game Monopoly can be considered a popular and ubiquitous cultural artefact. It has been licensed in 103 countries and translated into 37 languages (Terrell, 2009). The game was invented by Elizabeth Magie, an early feminist and games designer, and first produced in 1904. It was originally titled *The Landlord's Game* and was intended to show how landlords accumulate wealth and impoverish society, and as such, had a didactic quality and intention.

In this earlier version players could choose either a winner-takes-all scenario or one where wealth was distributed evenly via a land tax. Journalist Mary Pilon (2016, p. 18) explains that Magie was heavily influenced by Henry George's work *Progress and Poverty* (1879) and by the Georgist movement. Their belief was that all nature and land should belong to everyone and that people should own the full value of their labour. This contrasted with the current situation in which landowners unfairly benefit, as land itself tends to accrue unearned value through the labour of the community or social capital that surround it.

By using the tangible medium of a game, Magie intended to show how rents enrich property owners and impoverish tenants, and what might be done to counter this. Magie also hoped that children playing the game would have their natural suspicion of unfairness provoked, and maybe apply these ideas in adulthood. It appears that she had an intuitive understanding of what is now known as 'inequity aversion', a concept featured in research by behavioural economist Ernst Fehr and economist Klaus Schmidt (1999). The primatologist Frans de Waal (2016) describes 'inequity aversion' as part of our evolutionary makeup, in part because it is exhibited in other primates.

However, Magie's version of the game is not the one that is well known throughout the world. Pilon (2016) describes how Parker Brothers, the games manufacturer, chose to promote the winner-takes-all version adapted by Charles Darrow, who had claimed it was his own invention. Parker Brothers had a clear business incentive (and possible ideological one) for propagating Darrow's fiction and needed to protect this myth. Their successful marketing campaign stemmed from the story that Darrow emerged from poverty after the Great Depression and achieved the American dream by becoming the first millionaire game designer.

Magie and her form of the game was then effectively airbrushed out of history, such that "The vast majority of Monopoly players had no clue that the game was a protest *against* capitalism, not an endorsement of it." (ibid., p.134). In effect the Monopoly we have today has become a celebration of some of the worst aspects of our economy and normalises activities, such as competitive property accumulation and socially-useless rentier behaviour.

Monopoly has since become a cultural artefact that provides an important and subtle propaganda which reinforces dominant cultural norms. For this reason, Monopoly is an important cultural artefact to 'hack', not just to challenge and illuminate the narrative it propagates in its modern variation but also to reprise Magie's pedagogic function. More than this, developing Utopoly as a utopian method presents the opportunity to go beyond the limitations of an agenda set by the current economic situation. Rather than just being an oppositional counterpart there is the possibility of imagining multiple beneficial utopias outside these constraints. The difference of offering utopian possibilities is between playing a game according to extant rules laid down by others versus being able to change the rules of the game.

For a utopian method, the Monopoly format offers familiarity and provides a simplified model of aspects of a capitalist economy, modelling financial transactions, banking, rentier behaviour, private land and asset appropriation. It also demonstrates the accumulative effect described by economics professor Ricardo Fernholz and mathematician Robert Fernholz (2014) in which small incremental instances of initial luck can lead to enormous disparities of wealth inequality, even if all individuals start with identical assets and abilities. A similar effect is described by economist Thomas Piketty (2014) regarding ownership of financial assets; he argues that whenever returns on capital, however small, are greater than general economic growth, this will eventually lead to a vast accumulation of wealth to the owners of those assets.



Initial luck and advantage is amplified in Monopoly

The modifying and adapting ('hacking') of Monopoly is not a new idea. An early example is Chomageopoly a game about unemployment developed in 1974 by workers from the LIP clock factory in France, who occupied and ran the factory after it faced the threat of closure. Another example is Carpentripoly, part of the Carpentry Shop project, described by participatory design researchers Pelle Ehn and Dan Sjögren (1991, p. 242), a game similar to Monopoly whereby a group of carpenters are given the opportunity to play out ideas and reflect on strategies in different economic, social and political contexts "doing serious work in a local 'study circle'".

These games were very much situated in their present context with immediate, local concerns, while Utopoly gives people the opportunity to both imagine and incorporate values and attributes they would want in a more utopian world. As a 'hack' of Monopoly, Utopoly allows players to collectively determine the values and properties in play as well as the rules of the game. The generative creative nature of Utopoly means it is constantly being updated through different iterations, however some features that work well get adopted and carried through to the next version.

## 1.2 Cultural practice

"Right - look like you are enjoying yourselves."

"An action pose?"

"Look serious, we are changing the world - excellent!"

(Participant, iteration 11)



Participants at the Cosmia Festival, Huddersfield University - iteration 11

The utopian desire for beneficial social change involving economic speculation can seem like an unlikely prospect. The very idea of economic redesign in this age of free market fundamentalism is taboo. However, such cultural change has occurred before and will do so again. Both capitalism and neoliberalism are examples of cultural change and economic design that were purposefully planned and implemented. Both could be interpreted as reactionary strategies employed in response to shifts in power relations.

Modern capitalism, as the economist and social philosopher Karl Polanyi (2001) explains, was firmly brought about by government policy. Institutions and laws were created to push changes in social structures that fundamentally altered human nature and our economic possibilities. According to research compiled by economic historian Philip Mirowski and political scientist Dieter Plehwe (2009) neoliberalism ascended after many years of activity initiated by the Mont Pèlerin Society, and found favour amongst right wing conservative politicians such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

The economic and cultural historian Niklas Olsen (Zamora, 2019) argues that neoliberalism even changed the notion of democracy by replacing the sovereign state with the 'sovereign consumer'. Traditional meanings of democracy become replaced by marketplace deliberation and price setting. Consumer choice in a marketplace then dictates economic production and political activity, and the daily voting in the marketplace becomes the active representation and participation in society. Democracy as a separate public activity is therefore no longer needed because public deliberation can now be carried out in the marketplace.

"If we can imagine the future, visualize it and articulate it, we can create it"

(Darrell Kicker, 2009, p. 175)

The resulting neoliberal hegemony, a particular socio-economic model associated with modern western democracy, which emerged particularly after the fall of the Soviet Union (1991) in what political economist Francis Fukayama (1992) characterised as the 'End of History' became the accepted norm and the assumption of an end of ideological evolution. This is what the philosopher Roberto Unger (2005, p. 1) calls "a dictatorship of no alternatives". However, it is by no means a traditional or natural state for a given society. None of the social or economic systems we live with should be assumed as permanent or totalising. As journalist Paul Mason (2015 p. 217) comments, "When you realize that capitalism, once did not exist – either as an economy or a value system – a more shocking thought arises: it might not last forever".

The current cultural economic hegemony, which overly benefits a few vested interests, is based on a flawed and simplistic understanding of human behaviour and economic activity. Individualism and greed are endorsed over society and community whilst consumerism, perpetual growth and inequality are promoted with damaging consequences for the majority of people and the planet. All these are values incorporated and celebrated by the board game Monopoly. There is therefore a need to pose alternatives to this neoliberal orthodoxy which is characterized by the following: market fundamentalism, privatization, free trade, financialization and lately, austerity.

Social change rests on the ability to imagine alternatives and to voice other narratives. Levitas describes this utopian aspect in *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society* (2013). Utopia is as Levitas states (2013, p. 84), “the imagining of a reconstituted society, society imagined otherwise, rather than merely imagined”. The philosopher Charles Taylor (2007, p. 161) defines the social imaginary as: the ways in which people “imagine the societies they inhabit and sustain”, their expectations, the ways they connect and transact, and their deeper images and norms of behaviour.

However, an earlier and possibly more useful reference is the work of philosopher and economist Cornelius Castoriadis (1997, p. 5-6). Castoriadis considers not only what holds a society together such as its institutions, but more importantly, what brings about new forms of society. These institutions - behavioural norms, language, values and procedures - are maintained through consensus, legitimacy, adherence, belief and sometimes coercion. Each social individual is formed by and therefore contains these institutions, and as such, each social individual reproduces these institutions to the extent that they appear as natural and common sense, fixed and perpetual.

In this respect the educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (2017, p. 20) also provides some insight into these modes of reproduction, highlighting the role of conditioning and the propensity of the oppressed to take on aspects of the oppressor. As their behaviour is modelled to accommodate the system constructed by the ruling-class the oppressed start to buy into the system’s institutions reinforcing the cultural norms for the benefit of the oppressor and becoming an active participant in coercion. However, Castoriadis (1997, p. 131) considers all individuals to have primeval desires and latencies for a radical imagination which is able to create new cultures and institutions in what he terms the “radical social instituting imaginary”.



Participants playing Utopoly at York University - iteration 13

Max Haiven, a researcher in culture and social justice, together with social change researcher Alex Khasnabish (2014, p. 6) describes Castoriadis’ theory of a ‘radical imagination’ as a sociological process, a “tectonic, protean substance out of which all social institutions and identities are made, and which likewise, is constantly in motion under the surface of society, undermining and challenging all that we take to be real, hard, fast and eternal”. Castoriadis (1997, p. 133) suggests that the instituted society disguises or denies the source of its own institution. The dominant culture wants society to ignore and forget how this creative potential brought it about, preferring an acceptance of a myth of stasis, and so this radical imagination is collectively suppressed. It blocks, silences and forbids further social instituting imaginaries.

In order to stimulate this cultural, generating potential, both Castoriadis and Freire highlight the importance of the freeing of society's collective creativity through self-reflective and deliberate activity. Freire (2017, p. 84) suggests the enabling of a critical perception of the world for social contradictions to be exposed. For Haiven and Khasnabish (2014, p. 61) the definition of radical imagination also includes the importance of critiquing and analysing the root cause of social problems to imagine and work towards a better future.

Futurist Darrell Kicker (2009) describes how the futurist theorists Wendell Bell and Oliver Markely extol the importance of going beyond the standard futurist prescription of moving from logical extensions or extrapolations from the probable, possible and then preferable, and instead suggests starting the other way around by imagining the preferable first. As Kicker (2009, p. 175) states, "If we can imagine the future, visualize it and articulate it, we can create it". A key component of Wendell Bell's (2002, p. 37) theory of social change is human agency whereby people are "active, purposeful, responsible, and creative beings whose future-oriented behaviour has consequences for their own lives and for social structures and cultures".

**"...play doubts the social order,  
while ritual integrates it."**

**(Don Handelman, 1977, p. 189)**

Additionally, for Haiven and Khasnabish (2014, p. 96) there is an element to social change which involves the collective building of narratives and stories. It is considered a crucial part of the process required to represent perceptions and encapsulate what people feel and has a formative aspect. As they state "In telling stories we don't simply explain the world as it is; we help bring the world into being". And so, they make the call for research methods that are committed to "animating, enlivening and awakening the radical imagination by creating new spaces and times of dialogue and debate" (ibid., p. 22).

In a similar vein the educationalist and research methodologist Aaron Kuntz (2015) calls into question the efficacy and role of traditional qualitative social research. He considers such research as limited to measuring, recording and extracting data about a social situation but is restricted from, and ineffective in improving the studied subjects' situation. He answers the call of qualitative research and cultural studies researchers Norman Denzin and Michael Giardina (2010, pp. 16-17) who point to a need for social-justice-orientated intervention. The aim of such research is to move from the traditional qualitative inquiry of merely interpreting the world, to one which pursues change and prompt ideas for alternatives by embracing freedom, inclusive democracy and resisting injustice.

If the field of utopian studies concerns itself with 'the imaginary reconstitution of society' (Levitas, 2013), and promulgates that a more concrete rather than abstract utopian outcome is required, then new methods are needed to frame and guide this process. Can critical art-based, ludic methods be candidates as strategies for conceptualizing the future of that reconstituted society? Game designer and educator Mary Flanagan (2010, p. 51) argues that games function "as a technology for creating social relations...Play then, relies on shifting realities or world views", suggesting that games and critical play can contribute to the imaginary reconstitution of society. Could a radical imagination be generated by play? As anthropologist John Schwartzman (1981, p. 55) suggests "'Great' play is creativity", which can generate alternatives to the accepted order. In essence, as anthropologist Don Handelman states, (1977, p. 189) "play doubts the social order, while ritual integrates it".

Such new utopian methods should incorporate many of the requirements for beneficial cultural change described previously. They would accept people as having creative potential and provide a platform for critiquing the economy. They would provide spaces for people to engage in dialogue about social justice and develop narratives to visualize better worlds. They would allow for playful imagination while supporting reflection, and offer the suggestion that change is possible. Utopoly, as such a method, becomes a mini version or embodiment of cultural practice combining social critique with play and providing the utopian space in a game format for this to be performed.



## 1.3 Let's play

“And then this guy said, yeah, ‘anything’ er ‘some things are too important to be taken seriously’. Yeah, and I quite liked that. So, we did talk a lot about being - like a ‘fun society’”, didn’t we?”

(Participant, Iteration 11)



Ready to play Utopoly at the Cosmia Festival - iteration 11

If play can be considered a social tool that contributes to cultural practice, then what has happened to cause productive play to be denigrated, under-valued and under-utilised as an adult activity? Janet Harris (1979, p. 28), a researcher in the sociocultural analyses of exercise and sport, notes how the behaviour and activities of people at play are considered culturally inappropriate and are often chastised with phrases such as, “Stop fooling around and get down to business”. This limiting attitude presumes the primacy of business and is linked to a preference for reason, logic and seriousness. It also represents a misguided belief that such methods alone will produce satisfactory outcomes.

“The opposite of play... is not work, it is vacillation, or worse, it is depression”

(Brian Sutton-Smith, 2001, p. 198)

This attitude has implications for utopian practice, as utopian philosopher Ernst Bloch lamented: (2000, p. 10) “We are poor, we have unlearned how to play. We have forgotten it, our hands have unlearned how to dabble”. Work itself has become increasingly decoupled from playfulness as separate activities with different associated values. Leisure and play are activities that are unpaid and therefore unvalued within the money economy, except when it is a commodity itself and has to be paid for, while work as paid labour is valued primarily as such for the money or wages earned through it. In this money economy there is a requirement to ‘work for a living’ which indicates how wages act as a device of coercive control and has a limiting effect on playful creativity. It is far removed from Bloch’s utopian ideal of work providing fulfilment as a creative, craftlike activity free from exploitation.

This separation starts early on with Kuntz and Kelly Guyotte, professor of qualitative inquiry, (2018) who notes that work and play are separated in state schooling. This was presumably intended to ensure the conditioning of students in what Freire (2017 p. 45) calls the “banking” concept of education. Students are treated as objects or receptacles to receive deposits from the teacher. These deposits are to be retained through memory, with the students’ agency and playful creativity restricted to activities of reformatting and reproducing that which is deemed useful for industry.

Play and work then cannot occur at the same time or in the same place, with learning scheduled in a classroom and play on the playground. This reinforces a cultural hierarchy so that one is considered useful and productive, and the other is seen as leisure to be available when work is finished. However, this distinction need not be the case, as play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith indicates: “The opposite of play... is not work, it is vacillation, or worse, it is depression” (2001, p. 198). As game researcher Jane McGonigal notes, depression is characterised by a “pessimistic sense of inadequacy and a despondent lack of activity,” (2012, p. 28) but work can be enjoyable and fulfilling when we have positive belief in our own abilities and get involved in a focused activity or the playful ‘flow’ of engagement described by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2014). These two positive emotional states are made available through play and have generally been removed from the modern experience of paid work through a drive for efficiency influenced by the industrial engineer Frederick W. Taylor’s Scientific Management. The effect on industrial labour has been detailed by political economist Harry Braverman (1999) where work is controlled, time managed, systematic and repetitive.

A further advance on this change in work practice is the sociological effect imposed by advanced capitalism. Behavioural and political scientist Sonja Amadae (2015, p. xvii) points out that strategic rationality, based on John Von Neumann’s *game theory*, has been used to form and direct legislation, institutional design and public policy. This *game theory* does not view games as: playful, open ended and creative activities, but instead as logic- and rule-based ones concerned with deterministic decision making. While *game theory* is used to predict collective outcomes for civil society, it was problematically formed in response to the threat of nuclear war, and so inherently contains an adversarial nature. It represents the non-cooperative behaviour of adversaries and ignores moral reasoning. People are reduced to narrow self-interested actors, and ideas of classical liberalism such as “no-harm, fair play, consent and contractual commitment” were rejected (ibid.).

The new doctrine described by economic geographer David Harvey (2005, p. 3) is that “the social good will be maximised by maximising the reach and frequency of market transactions.” It follows that collective action, cooperation and even voting can be considered as irrational and unnecessary. Amadae’s (2015, p. 6) research aligns with political philosopher Michael Sandel’s book *What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (2013) in that, “monetizing all value displaces moral and other-regarding dimensions of action”. This narrow idea of self-interest and preference satisfaction has become accepted as natural and common-sense influencing the way people operate in and understand the world.

“Without play, culture might cease further novel change and become rather crystallized.”

(Janet Harris, 1981, p. 30)

In contrast to this assumption of individual, transactional self-interest engaging in play with others as a group activity can be posed as a useful counterpart. Play could have a very productive role in participatory settings in the communal exploration of situations. Ehn & Sjögren (1991, p. 254) suggest that games and play in a participatory function are used “neither to encourage competition nor to teach a theory from above, but to support situated and shared action and reflection.” This feature bears similarities to other playful activities such as the LEGO SERIOUS PLAY® method. The researcher into interactive and creative pedagogies Alison James (2017), describes how LEGO bricks are used to build metaphorical models and symbolic associations and to understand and resolve issues whilst stimulating ideas and creativity. But a key distinguishing feature of Utopoly is the explicit opportunity to generate creative visions of the future, directly engaging with Flanagan’s (2010, p. 52) view of games as “reality engines, frameworks for meaning making”.

In this way speculation about trajectories and possibilities for the future and, ultimately culture can be created by play. Flanagan was referencing Csikszentmihalyi's (1981, p. 17) theory of the paradox of play where reality and play are interchangeable and malleable: "Reality is not an invariant external structure. It is relative to the goals that cultures and individuals create". The role of play is key in this process - its improvisational nature allows alternative social and political spaces to emerge. It is by working with this function that Utopoly operates as a utopian method. Flanagan indicates this potential of games as utopian tools, (2010, p. 50) describing games as "systems for imagining what is possible", but highlights that their application for exploring complicated issues and producing alternative ideas is relatively novel and rare.

### "Critique means altering the 'rules of the game' while playing the game."

(Thomas Lemke, 2011, p. 35)

This ability to play with ideas and possibilities can inform cultural production. For Harris (1981, p. 30) play is integral to the ability to generate cultural change suggesting that "Without play, culture might cease further novel change and become rather crystallized". According to cultural historian Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* (1949) games and play have always had a central role in cultural development and are considered more effective than rational development for progress. As games studies researcher Hector Rodriguez (2006) suggests "The main thrust of *Homo Ludens* is to demonstrate that many valuable achievements of human culture depend less on rational thinking than on a deep-rooted craving for ludic experience". Play can sit in the liminal space that according to cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1987, pp. 99-138) provides a function analogous to that of genetic variation or mutation for society.

Another function of play that I would like to touch upon is that of inquiry-play proposed by Kuntz and Guyotte, (2018, p. 668) a form of inquiry which can also make productive interventions in the status quo. This is similar to Flanagan's role for Critical Play, (2010, pp. 50-52) whereby play is not a diversion, but a way to encounter and engage with environments, activities and situations which are representative of human social relations. Play then can be a tool to help understand and deal with such issues. More than that, Kuntz and Guyotte (2018, p. 670) raise the notion of play as having an "affirmative ethical orientation to necessary social change". As they explain, (2018, p. 665) "Through play, the work of inquiry manifests alternative possibilities, ...Perhaps more provocatively stated: through play, inquiry becomes critical; absent play, inquiry all-too-easily becomes a normalizing process, reinforcing the dominant status quo."

This type of critique needs to be a relational process such that the inquirers who engage in critique are connected to and relational with that which they are critiquing. As social theorist Thomas Lemke (2011, p. 35) states, "Critique means altering the 'rules of the game' while playing the game." This is the embodiment of 'hacking', and Utopoly allows players to exist within the current social and economic model, and to create new rules to progress to a new speculative future, and social understanding. In Monopoly there is only one winner and you are expected to embrace this situation in order to survive and prosper, to be the Monopolist. But Utopoly poses the question, 'What if you didn't want to play that game?' What if you wanted to change the rules? As Freire (2017, p. 94) suggests, while having the capacity for adaptive behaviour, people are also transformative beings and need to not only cope with a situation, but also aspire to change it.

Rather than denigrate games and play, the generative possibilities play possesses should be harnessed, celebrated and utilised. A fundamental feature of the Utopoly method is the use of play - indeed Utopoly itself emerged from play, and play for this method performs at least the following useful functions: exercising the imagination in a creative capacity, as critique or inquiry and as the generator of future possibilities or speculative futures. Now I want to offer it as a utopian method.

## 1.4 Design games as utopian method

“How can games contribute to the imaginary reconstitution of society?”

(Attendee at Utopia Now! symposium, August 2017)

This question was posed after I gave a presentation about Utopoly at the Utopia Now! symposium, Chelsea College of Arts, August 2017. The question refers to the title of the 2013 book by Ruth Levitas: *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. Rather than focusing on a totalized and completely formed utopia Levitas (2013, p. 219) proposes that utopian practice should be understood as a continuing process or method. In this type of practice, the present is subjected to critique, and by exploring and experimenting with prefigurative practices she suggests we can imagine ourselves differently. There is amongst the field of utopian studies a contingent who are quite sceptical about how games could perform this utopian function. This scepticism might be due to a cultural bias against games and also a misinterpretation of the particular type of games being proposed. The fact that the question was raised suggests a need for a more developed answer and a gap in the field.

It was also during the *Utopia Now!* symposium, that Levitas (2017a) vocalised the requirement for new methods of utopian practice. Levitas (2013, p. 197) concurs with Bloch (1986, p. 14) that the current domination of utopian practice by literary fiction is largely ineffectual, and that the new methods are needed which can afford more potency and move from abstract to concrete utopias. Her appeal also indicates a gap in the field and need for new methods which are alternative to literary fiction and that could meet these concrete requirements. For Bloch (1986, cited in Levitas, 1990, p. 15) an abstract utopia is one which involves fantasy and compensatory wishful thinking but does not involve the will to change anything. The world remains the same, but the person only imagines an improved position within it. A concrete utopia instead is ‘will-full’ thinking - it anticipates a real possible future whilst simultaneously affecting the future. For Bloch only a concrete utopia contains hope.

To more fully answer the initial question posed and also meet the need for a new utopian method, which could fill the gap in the current field of utopian practice, I was drawn to the concept of developing Utopoly as a method. In light of this and by exposure to peer review the Utopoly method as my practice has been reformed in terms of its requirements and disposition. This reflective practice has resulted in the reframing of the method as a design-game which aims to contribute to the conceptualising of a utopian future. And so, what started out as a critical art project has evolved to encompass a speculative design-game.

In the field of Utopian studies, the use of such critical art-inspired design-games has been neglected and is therefore my suggested contribution to knowledge. A new utopian method which can provide more concrete (rather than simply abstract) utopian conceptualisations and should be considered a productive addition to the field of utopian studies. In this way, by providing an alternative to utopian literary fiction, the Utopoly method invites people to become actively involved in designing a utopian future rather than simply reading about one.

The use of games as tools to inspire design practice has been established in fields including architecture, business organization, town planning and multiple work settings. In this respect the co-design researchers Eva Brandt, Jörn Messeter, and Thomas Binder (2008, pp. 60-61) alluding to the work of philosopher and sociologist Roger Caillois, (2005) noted particular benefits of board games. They can provide make-believe settings and safe spaces through the scenarios presented on the board where ‘ordinary laws’ and power relationships are temporarily suspended. The board game’s artefacts embody a simple framing of the design situation so that concepts are easier to understand and manipulate. The arbitrary rules and features provide a constraint and a limiting function which can enhance participants’ creativity, while the immersive aspect of the game can also help avoid early judgment and thereby avoid stalling the generation of ideas.

The early Scandinavian participatory design-games of Ehn and Sjögren (1991), using design-by-playing, were inspired by the *Idealized Design* method of systems and organizational theorist Russell Ackoff. Together with the removal of hierarchies, the aspects of play or fun were an important factor in “discarding old mind-sets that inhibit creative thinking” (Ackoff, 2010, p. xii).

“...We have got to restart by focusing on designing the whole...we are going to begin by designing the system with which we would replace the existing system right now.”

(Russell Ackoff, 2010, p. xxxvi)

As writer and social innovator Robert Jungk (1976, p. 17) suggests, this allows for a quantum leap in ideas that would otherwise be prevented or constrained by knowledge of the present. He uses the Apollo space project as an example of a goal driving breakthroughs which previously did not exist. Otherwise, the available options would be restricted to incremental amendments and therefore a continuation of the status quo.

As Jungk (ibid.) asks, “Is this Utopia? Perhaps at first. But what in the past was allowed to remain a dream must now be turned into plans and realities. Alternative life-styles are not just a wish, they are a necessity.” This approach is further explained by Ackoff (2010, p. xxxvi) who relates the story of his own inspiration in 1951 from the CEO of Bell Laboratories: “...We have got to restart by focusing on designing the whole..., we are going to begin by designing the system with which we would replace the existing system right now.” Design-games like Utopoly, could provide a means of developing and articulating such visions.

My utopian method, Utopoly uses and combines two participatory methods that were both utilised in Scandinavian design practice: Jungk’s Future Workshop (see section 3.1 An adapted Future Workshop) and adaptations of the board game Monopoly. By combining these two methods Utopoly’s participatory format becomes a form of artistic research which allows knowledge to emerge through play, discussion, narratives and conversations.



Utopoly image used to advertise the workshops

This contribution to new knowledge production corresponds to creative art research theorist Estelle Barrett’s (2019, p. 32-33) description of storytelling which has qualities of co-production, communality, equality, dynamism and being an evolving mode of cultural production. By engaging in this method of creative practice the participants are conducting a type of research associated with philosopher Donald Schön’s concept of experiential discovery, or ‘knowing-in-practice’. In this format as a design-game Utopoly is both new knowledge as a method and also a producer of new knowledge.

## 1.5 Improvisation as utopian practice

During the initial 'hacks' of Monopoly (iterations 01 to 03) the Chance cards, properties, rules and features of the board were redefined and imbued with utopian values. This was all undertaken as a collaborative endeavour where participants contributed ideas and responded to each other, starting from a blank space, while using the Monopoly board game structure, and moving towards an unknown outcome.

The musician and academic David Toop (2016) makes the link between musical improvisation and utopian practice and there are similarities to be drawn with what is experienced during musical improvisation and the creative process of working collectively to develop Utopoly. Toop describes improvised music as a collective practice where the authority of a composer is eschewed and the resulting group dynamics produce a "making event" (ibid., p.75). A utopian space is created within the group activity and as cultural critic Jordy Cummings (2018) notes, "The best, hence the most utopian improvisation, is that in which artists collectively find this utopian place in a sense that they could not as individuals" so that "the utopia of something new appears out of space".

For Toop improvisation is a vital human attribute which is often undervalued, for "Humans must learn to improvise, to cope with random events, failure, chaos, disaster and accident in order to survive." (2016, p. 5). In essence, improvisation is required when there are no guidelines available to satisfactorily deal with an adverse situation or when the existing knowledge is no longer appropriate. But because there are benefits to improvisation musicians and artists will purposefully put themselves in this position free from direction or textual instruction.

As Utopoly developed I realised that the process of discussing what values the participants collectively valued, how these values were to be distributed, how to 'play', rules, game-play, currencies circulating, etc – was itself important, if not the most important part of the 'method'. And so Utopoly as a method evolved two distinct phases, the first being the 'Future Workshop' inspired phase, where the game-play is collectively produced, and the game-play phase where Utopoly is played.



Critical Practice collectively improvising new features of Utopoly - iteration 02

Rather than come up with a one-off, fixed design for a utopian version of Monopoly, what was more important was to catch that moment of creation or the process of becoming. I thought it would be useful to continue this practice and carry it forward as part of the Utopoly method so that the utopian activity of improvisation should then be incorporated into the method. The difficulty however was that the development of Utopoly as a working method took several iterations and repeating this whole process of improvisation during one session seemed an unlikely prospect (this is explained further in section 4.0 Rules as guidelines). The utopian academic David M. Bell (2011, p. 5) notes that it is impossible for musical performance to be purely improvised as it exists on a spectrum with composition and musicians will be influenced by their past, training and experience. Therefore, the same would apply for other categories of improvisation and that some form of composition is likely.

The issue then for Utopoly was how to enable participants in future iterations to take part in a creative process within a certain composition. In order to do this, it was necessary to provide enough of a structure, a process, or a set of guidelines that would be a liminal space between the current and the future. A place which is open for transition to allow the players to participate in the formation of the new configuration where they could contribute richer qualitative values and be enabled to express their desires for a utopian world. Therefore, the continuing engagement of making the game from a starting framework became part of the method.

One of the key features of Utopoly and what distinguishes it from many other board games is that it requires the creative generation of itself. Participants are invited to take part in utopian practice of collective generation of the features. This improvisational aspect, the ability to create the game and make in-play changes, sets it apart from other activist and pedagogical games. Other games exist which have pedagogic functions, such as teacher and educationalist John Hunter's (2014) World Peace Game, in which children solve political crises on a global scale and Commonsplay where players experience the alternative economics of the commons (2020).

These games, whilst no doubt valuable, provide pre-designed formats for players to inhabit and have been carefully constructed by the designers to achieve a certain didactic experience. Players therefore have no input in creating the format, values in play, layout or rules of the game. As such they are missing a valuable opportunity, as games designer Matteo Menapace (2021) states: "I believe games have a huge expressive potential...It's more than just playing games... We can have the most transformative learning experiences when we make games."

This transformative effect is echoed by Bell (2017, p. 14) who considers improvisation, using music and radical education as examples, an operation of utopia in practice through 'actually existing' and an ongoing process of becoming. In Utopoly participants would not just work through what is possible, but also open up new possibilities for the future, and as participants they become changed by the process of improvisation. Rather than focusing on a fixed version of utopia participants would be living out Unger's view of utopia related by Levitas (2017b, p. 13) as "simply a direction of travel towards the future, determined collectively". The Utopoly method then provides the potential for travelling towards Bloch's autopoietic utopia, in which utopia is not imposed or defined from above but is formed through a process that generates itself. The act of doing the utopian practice creates utopian people and ultimately the utopian society. (This idea is discussed further in 4.1 Improvisation throughout the method).



Collectively improvising features of Utopoly at Furtherfield - iteration 10

Through the improvisational aspects of Utopoly participants can then become actively engaged in a research process rather than interacting and responding to a fully preconstructed format of a purely didactic game. However, they would still have an initial framework for reference and a partial starting position to provide historical and economic context. Kuntz (2016, p.123) notes the importance of understanding how research is situated in historical context and references Lesley Kuhn, a researcher into complex social inquiry, who states that such context is formed from "the very norms that give them common-sensical meaning".

As a research method Utopoly would conform to Lesley Kuhn's (2008, p. 179) definition of research as an "activity undertaken by socially interacting individuals employing various frames of reference that orient meaningful activity". For Kuntz knowledge creation should not be limited to a scientific model which is formulaic and geared to producing discrete units of data. This rigid approach can constrain the dynamic relations of natural learning environments to a form of stasis and miss the knowledge that emerges through messy improvisation. Utopoly would then provide a utopian research method that allows utopian ideals to be envisioned and by embracing improvisation, design and self-generation it provides actual utopian autopoietic practice.

# Phase 2 - Experimenting

## 2.0 Values ecosystem

A key influence on the development of Utopoly was the Critical Practice event *#TransActing: A Market of Values* (Critical Practice, 2017b). One of the themes of this event was to reflect on and critique the role of money in the economy by imagining a market free from financialization. The emphasis was on the vast and overlooked currencies of the economy that exists without recourse to financial exchange, such as care, time, relationships, sharing and knowledge. During the planning of the event the issue of local alternative currencies was raised. The Brixton Pound and the Lewes Pound were given as examples within the broader category of LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems) whose purpose is to retain value in local areas and build community.

We had discussed several values which could be represented in the market, and then imagined currencies which could make the values present visible, and in some ways accountable. A currency working group was formed and as a member I took on the responsibility for creating currencies to enable value transactions in this non-monetary marketplace. The resulting currencies and how they operated played a pivotal role in the evolution of Utopoly as a method.

I was aware that for economies structured around exploitation a mono-currency is a perfect tool for value extraction. If various values can be exchangeable into a single monetary currency any connection with the societal values that formed them - like care, time or knowledge, are lost. This means that any social responsibilities and externalities both negative and positive can be absolved and disregarded. The value the monetary currency represents can be removed and relocated outside and even abroad from the community of its co-creation.



A bustling market of value exchange - #TransActing: A Market of Values

What's more, the type of currency economies use can have a profound effect on how people behave. The mathematician David Orrell and journalist Roman Chlupaty (2016), who both have an interest in economics, explain that a mono-currency can be considered as a technology that has been imposed from the top down, it shapes and informs how we behave and the values we are expected to live by. Money as a technology has generative features - it drives behaviour, it becomes a strand in our cultural DNA. The money we use is intrinsic to the way we behave towards each other and how we relate to each other. If we can mutate the DNA of our economy, we could create new possibilities, values and social relations. What if we could reconnect our currencies with the societal values that formed them?





Pieces of Eight or Spanish Reals 'Royals' divided into separate parts

Visually my initial concept was inspired by memories of the coinage associated with piracy known as 'pieces of eight'. This coin could be cut into separate Spanish 'reals' or royals. It can be thought as the first international currency and an enabler of an early version of globalisation. It has associations with privateering, colonisation and the looting of the Americas (Davies, 2020). If such a coin could be split up into constituent parts, then maybe we should consider a currency made up of multiple values. By reflecting on the intangible and often unacknowledged values what money represents, and is formed of, I considered multiple currencies rather than a single currency.

Money is a particularly difficult subject to understand and define. A publication from the Bank of England (McLeay, Radia and Thomas, 2014, p. 5) states that "Money is central to the workings of a modern economy. But despite its importance and widespread use, there is not universal agreement on what money actually is." To illustrate this confusing situation currency theory researcher Leander Bindewald (2018, p. 193) describes the circular dialogue between the lawyers and economists. Legal practitioners defer to economists for their understanding of money whilst economists "assume the legal profession has a clear definition" and concludes that both are incorrect.

Bindewald (2018, p. 61) reflects on the work of economic sociologist Viviana Zelizer's: *The Social Meaning of Money*, (2017) and points out that while money due to its inherent fungibility (being mutually interchangeable and indistinguishable) has a standardizing effect on aspects of social life, there is also a tendency towards diversification. Zelizer's research shows how, in certain domestic settings, money is assigned to different purposes, thus creating different formations of currencies. These might include designations for rental payment, fuel bills, clothing, food, etc. This observation led Bindewald (2018, p.61) to realise that "In so doing she does not only break open conventional money, but also paves the way to recognise other complementary exchange systems as monetary".

This form of domestic diversified currency could also point to a recognition of a need for a re-emergence of a situation that was quite common in Europe during the central Middle Ages. The economist Bernard Lietaer (2002, pp. 116-147) relates how there were two types of currency systems operating, one for long-distance transactions (and also primarily a store of wealth). The other was for local transactions and was primarily a medium of exchange. Lietaer states that this dual system provided long periods of economic stability and general economic well-being, while after this period, the European nations' adoption of a single long-distance currency was a cause of economic instability and decline.

These theories indicate that my idea for multiple currencies with different formations of values can have a utopian intent. I presented a concept of how this might work for the *Market of Values* to the Currency working group. The idea was to define a set of constituent values that would then form currencies. Visitors and stallholders in the market could be encouraged to play a game in which the purpose was to acquire one of each of the currencies in circulation. This concept was demonstrated using a piece of cardboard with a rough drawing of the layout of the market and a standard pack of playing cards (comprising Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, Clubs).

The idea was to stimulate the exchange of currencies or values while preventing or reducing the accumulation of one particular type. For example: a business that was cash-rich but time poor would need to find people who were time-rich and cash-poor to exchange with. A business that was polluting would need to acquire equal amounts of a mitigating currency to enable it to register full sets of currency on its accounts or balance sheet. We realised that this initial idea was rather ambitious and as the market was scaled back from a weekend to one day, a more simplified approach became appropriate.

It was agreed that there should be four currencies (corresponding to the four suits in a pack of cards). To determine what they should represent we reflected on and were influenced by the ideas and values that emerged from iteration 01 (Utopographies) and iteration 02 (Critical Practice, Room 305). After brainstorming to identify suitable values that we felt were valuable but not easily represented we selected the four we thought to be the most appropriate. The new currencies would then represent the intangible values of Time, Wellbeing, Knowledge and Creativity.



Time



Wellbeing



Knowledge



Creativity



Laser cutting the red felt Wellbeing currencies for #TransActing: A Market of Values



Laser cutting the fluorescent acrylic Creativity currencies for #TransActing: A Market of Values

The symbols representing each value were agreed collectively with the graphic design developed by Critical Practice member, Metod Blejec (who also produced the templates in Adobe Illustrator for laser cutting). I laser cut the currencies and each value was represented by a different material: greyboard for Time, red felt for Wellbeing, birch plywood for Knowledge and fluorescent acrylic for Creativity. In all I produced over 1,400 currencies for use in the Market.



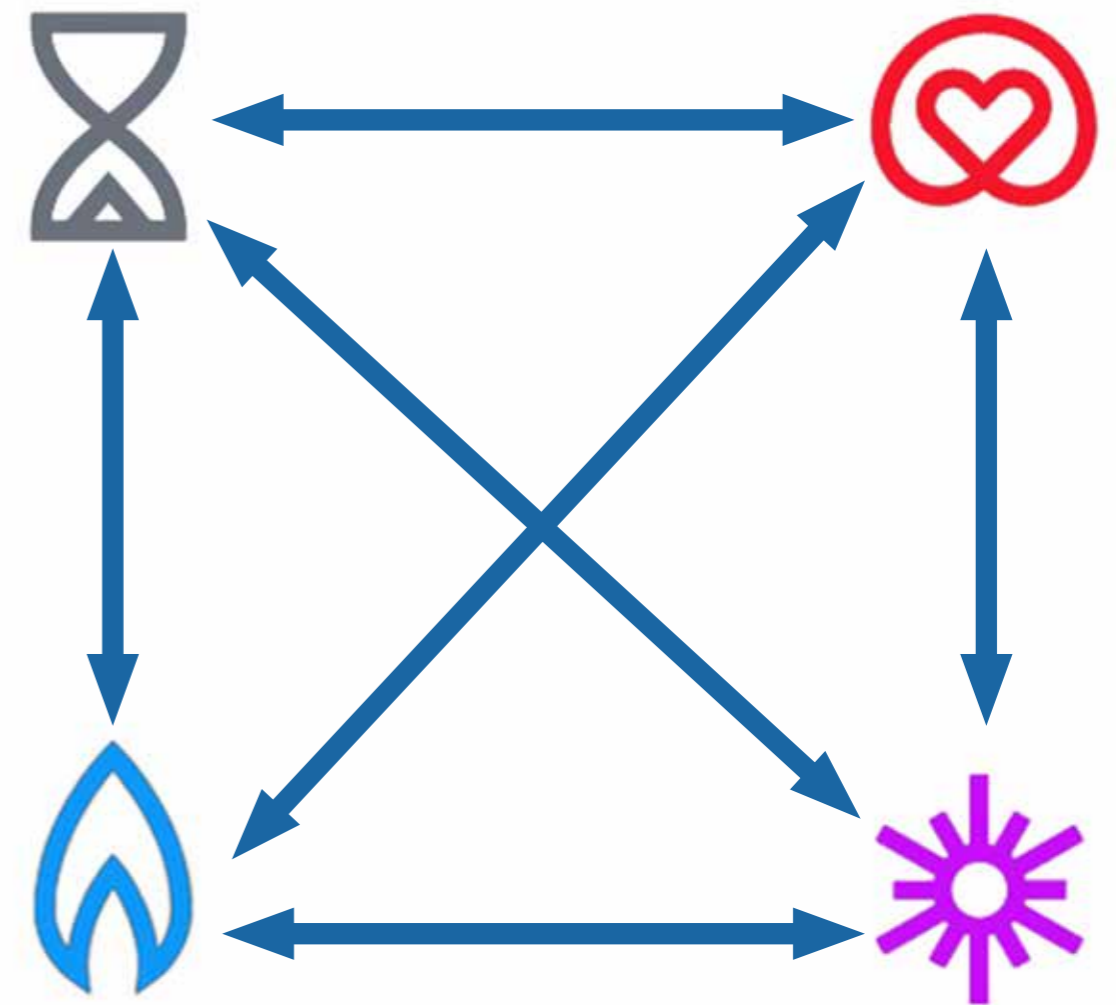
Over 1,400 currencies created for #TransActing: A Market of Values

Once the currencies or values existed in solid form it was possible to make previously intangible value transactions tangible. The currencies then became a device to highlight the very nature of the market itself - the celebration of diverse value relations that have no cash equivalent and the unrecognised values that contribute to a society. As a physical unit of account the currencies allowed for reflection and intensified the attention on the moment when values are transacted between visitors and stallholders.



The bustling market with multiple value transactions at #TransActing: A Market of Values

During the early stages of planning for the Market of Values, a bustling market was envisioned with multiple value transactions. By recognising what makes wealth and selecting values which co-exist but are excluded from the cash economy, the currencies represented an opportunity not just to create a local complementary currency but to change the notion of money-exchange itself. The idea was that Time, Wellbeing, Knowledge and Creativity would create a utopian ecosystem of value exchange.



Ecosystem of value exchange

This ecosystem model points to an alternative way of viewing an economy and social relationships, one where values are in constant circulation through reciprocal exchanges. Lietaer (2001, p. 43-44) explains how the current economic model, the production mode, taxation and monetary system were developed as part of the industrial revolution. While vast improvements in productivity have been achieved, at the same time resources and wealth are concentrated with the owners of production and their associated infrastructures. This formation of a capitalist economy was invented during a time of empire and so is predicated on wealth extraction and growth. This approach is no longer suitable, and a more ecological view of an economy may be more appropriate for the 21st century.

In a similar vein the organisational theorist Russell Ackoff (1974, pp. 31-33) considers how we still employ a simple machine age mind-set based on Newtonian physics and a closed system mentality. The prevailing understanding of human economic interactions is still based on the model of the self-interested and rational homo-economicus (see section 2.3 Utopian players' collaboration). Instead, we live in an age of complex systems and we should work with corresponding theories that appreciate this paradigm. Such theories would need to accommodate feedback loops and the emergent properties derived from complexity, as well as an awareness that continuous maintenance will be required to ensure continuity and prevent tipping into crisis. As political writer and civic society proponent Eric Liu and entrepreneur Nick Hanauer (2016) suggest, rather than thinking about the economy as a perfect self-correcting machine based on a market, the ecological model of a garden is more appropriate whereby active management of cultivation, weeding, feeding and replanting is required.

Our current mono-currency is also debt-based and this feature creates another set of problems. There are a cluster of theories that suggest a debt-based currency by its design will always create scarcity, as Lietaer and journalist Jacqui Dunne (2013, pp. 37-39) explain: banks create loans (which then require more money to be paid back due to interest payments than there is money in the economy), which therefore creates scarcity and inevitable competition. More loans and growth are then required to meet the debt payments, and so on. This feeds into the naive belief that expansion or growth could be continued relentlessly and has proved disastrous for people's wellbeing and the planet.

A debt-based currency also contributes to cycles of boom and bust. Lietaer and Dunne (2013, p. 52) point out that banks amplify economic fluctuations by lending more when business is considered good, but will then quickly cease lending at the first indication of change. The resulting withdrawal of money prevents economic activity, stopping transactions rather than enabling them. Businesses and people are unable to access money to pay back debts and defaults multiply. I realised that debt should be a subject that needs to be addressed, and so in later iterations of Utopoly (iteration 09 onwards) debt was introduced as an explicit feature (as described further in section 4.3 Usury to luxury).

Historical evidence suggests that economies operating multiple currencies are also more resilient (Lietaer, 2002, p. 205). For example: the Swiss WIR has been in circulation since 1934, providing stability for businesses. They can work in a counter-cyclical manner to the 'boom and bust' model and compensate for the withdrawal of a national currency by the replacing of some values with other values (such as time or labour) and therefore allowing the economy to keep working. There are multiple options for complementary currencies, including Time Dollars and Ithaca Hours etc., which operate at levels of sufficiency rather than scarcity, and act as enablers of exchange. By offering alternative currency models, the Utopoly method aims to encourage a conversation between its participants about what values circulating are represented by money, and also about money's effect on a society.

Money's role in an economy is a worthy subject for critique and reflection and I would suggest that redesigning a monetary system is a key component of creating a utopian economy. However, it is important to note that a utopian economy is not an end in itself but an enabler of further utopian aspirations. As Lietaer (2002, p. 9) points out, this is something that is always overlooked - "every modern society - independently of its cultural or political background - has accepted the current money system as self-evident". The French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, the hundreds of countries that have gained independence, all managed to change whole regimes - but they omitted to change money, which was centrally controlled, issued via bank debt and based artificially on scarcity. And therefore, any intentional utopian society that does not change the monetary system is unwittingly embedding a fatal flaw.

This fatal flaw is a key aspect of the capitalist economy and I feel a need to address the statement made by the cultural and political theorist Fredric Jameson (2003): "Someone once said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism."



Currencies from #TransActing: A Market of Values introduced to Utopoly - iteration 03

I am interested therefore in developing methods to create those rare spaces where people can re-imagine a different society, in which values, forms of exchange and social relations can be reconsidered and reconfigured, and we can gain the freedom to reframe existing metaphors and paradigms and to develop new social contracts. I believe the utopian method of Utopoly could fulfil such a role.

I carried the idea of the currencies developed for *#TransActing: A Market of Values* into another iteration of Utopoly at the research event *What Happens to Us* at Wimbledon College of Art in December 2016 (Bradfield and MacDonnell, 2016) iteration 03. This is where the two projects fully interacted. *What Happens To Us* was a participatory event that examined politics within communities and explored the notion of democracy as a system of community formation. It was at this iteration that Utopoly as a 'method' began to emerge, a method for collectively producing possible futures. In addition, the dynamics of the game were changed, which also had important implications.

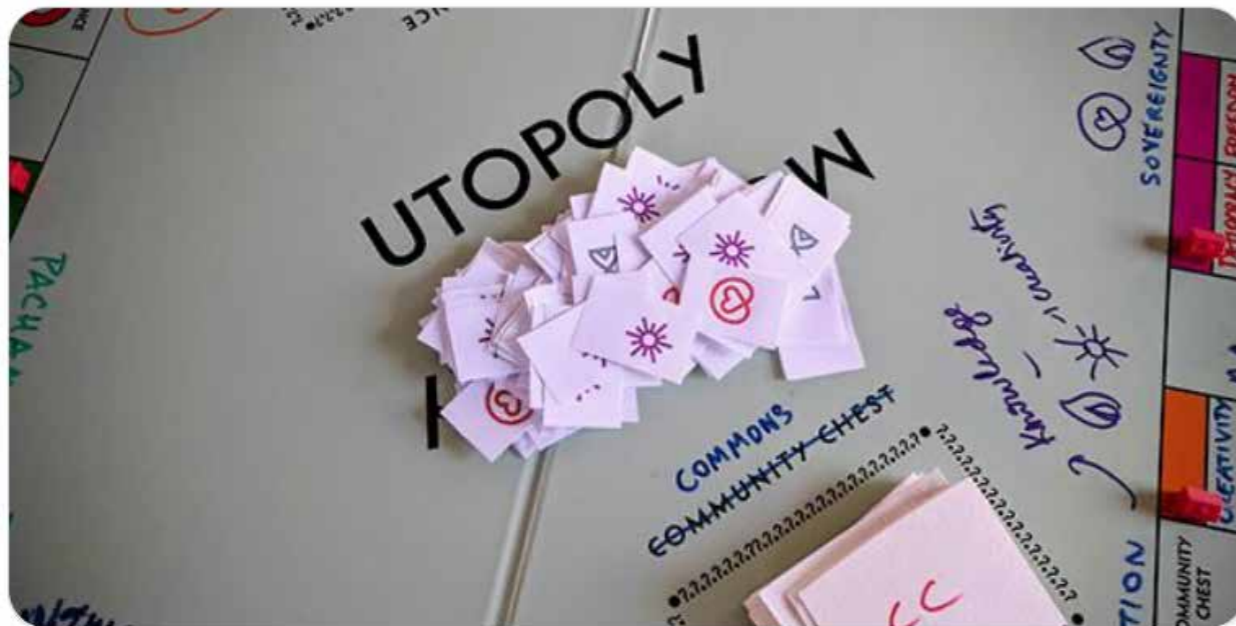
At this iteration one player chose to represent a corporate or financial antagonist who used traditional money and acted against the other players' interests. The rest of the players worked collaboratively using the 'new' currencies of Time, Knowledge, Wellbeing and Creativity. These currencies changed the nature of the transactions normally associated with Monopoly and allowed for experimentation with new monetary and value systems. Utopoly provided a space for inquiry and reflection to reveal and illuminate the role of money and the associated economic system. It was at this event that a new appreciation and consideration of social relations were exposed, in particular the notion of the Commons, an aspect under-valued in our current economic model (see section 2.4 The commons).

## 2.1 Beginning at the end

“The irony of Monopoly is that the winner is ultimately left in control of a non-functioning economy.”

(Neil Farnan quoted in Baglietto, 2017)

 **Donnie Maclurcan #BlackLivesMatter** @donmacca · May 2, 2017  
Irony of Monopoly: the winner is ultimately left in control of a non-functioning economy [furtherfield.org/features/inter...](https://furtherfield.org/features/inter...) h/t @NeilFarnan #postgrowth



1 14 18

The board game Monopoly starts with all the property spaces being available for purchase, and each player has equal amounts of money and so equal opportunity. As the game progresses, through the luck of dice rolls and subsequent decision making, players can accumulate properties and wealth to become the winning Monopolist. This starting formation might suggest that equality of opportunity is a fair and reasonable position for society, and therefore whatever develops afterwards is merited.



Starting position - red hotels indicate corporate entity's initial control of board - iteration 03

The Utopoly session (iteration 03) at the research event *What Happens to Us* provided the opportunity to explore other perspectives. I decided to reverse the natural flow of the game and set up a scenario whereby the starting position for the players was the end position of Monopoly. Properties would not be equally available for purchase but instead there would already be monopoly control of the board. This control would not be by one of the players but by a corporate or financial entity (detailed in section 2.2 An oppositional entity). It would be a dystopian scenario in which the economic and political orthodoxy of financial neoliberalism is the status quo. Here the majority of institutions and resources are either financially owned and controlled by private corporations, or cognitively captured by neoliberal ideology.

This model of ownership and control was represented by placing the red 'Hotel' game pieces (from a standard Monopoly set) on a large proportion of the spaces on the board. This unequal formation meant that the players were confronted with the stark reality of their precarious position, a position which was both challenging and uncomfortable, and which offered the players limited agency. As the players move around the board the likelihood of landing on a space controlled by the private corporations and suffering the consequences was high. In addition, this scenario represents how neoliberal ideology holds back dreams and desires for a utopian future, putting this future in a state of not-yet.



Values and ideas defined as domains in a state of not-yet - iteration 10

In the first part of the Utopoly method the participants discuss and decide which of the values, attributes and features of a utopian future they want represented on the board. In the early iterations these were quite generic spheres of interest or concern, such as education for 'creativity and imagination', improving 'behaviours', 'equality', health care as 'humour', but in later iterations they became more specific, including 'outcome free days', a 'Robin Hood tax', 'Wealth and wages proportional to value provided' and 'trauma schools' etc.

These desires are transcribed on to the Monopoly board to become the property spaces replacing those which previously represented real estate properties, such as Pall Mall or Leicester Square. By having these properties or domains controlled by the corporate entity, the players' utopian ideals are prevented from being realised. The players are therefore tasked with negotiating this situation and have to address how to wrest control of them and prevent further domains falling into corporate control. Their collective goal is to progress from dystopia to utopia and to model the transition from monopolistic capitalism to a utopian economy. They would do this by gradually taking control of the domains and desires they have transcribed onto the spaces on the board.

This innovation of starting at the usual end point of Monopoly sparked a cascade of additional features for the Utopoly method. The first was to set up a contest between the utopian players and the corporate entity that was currently in control of the board. This in turn engendered a collaborative and communal feeling amongst the players as they worked together to achieve their aims within this scenario (see section 2.3 Utopian players' collaboration). This type of behaviour was further enhanced when one participant decided to play the role of the corporate entity, adding to the sense of conflict (see section 2.2 An oppositional entity). All these features were adopted as part of the method and continued to evolve and be built on throughout future iterations.



## 2.2 An oppositional entity

The new starting point of the game in which a large proportion of the board is already controlled by corporate or financial interest necessitated the role of a corporate figure. The figure was to represent the negative aspects of financialised capitalism and neoliberalism. Its purpose was to extract value from the other players and the economy. The intention was then to set up a situation where the players would collaborate together to work in opposition to this figure. As the figure moved around the board it would be able to accumulate even more properties or domains. A feeling of collaborative endeavour is reinforced by the threat of what might happen if the last remnants of the board also fall into private hands.

There were several reasons for positioning the opposition figure as a corporate or financial entity. From a number of perspectives, a corporation can be considered a dangerous, harmful and dominant institution. For law professor Joel Bakan (2005), a corporation is instructed by law (USA) and has rights which encourage it to act as a psychopathic individual willing to exploit others without moral considerations. This behaviour became worse with the onset of policy changes surrounding the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s.

Cultural theorist Lynn Parramore (2016) notes how American corporations became increasingly financialized, with the stock price of a company becoming the key driver for decision-making. As economist William Lazonick notes, these decisions were based on the flawed notion of 'maximising shareholder value' (2014). Business schools taught that if corporate executives focused on performance, then shareholder value would increase. The previous model of retain-and-reinvest was replaced by a focus on distributing and extracting profits (via takeovers, downsizing and stock buy-backs). The shareholder had pre-eminence over all other stakeholders, (the other stakeholders would include those that invest in the infrastructure and knowledge creation utilised by the corporations such as public bodies, taxpayers and workers).



Corporate entity's red hotels contesting with utopian players' green houses - iteration 03

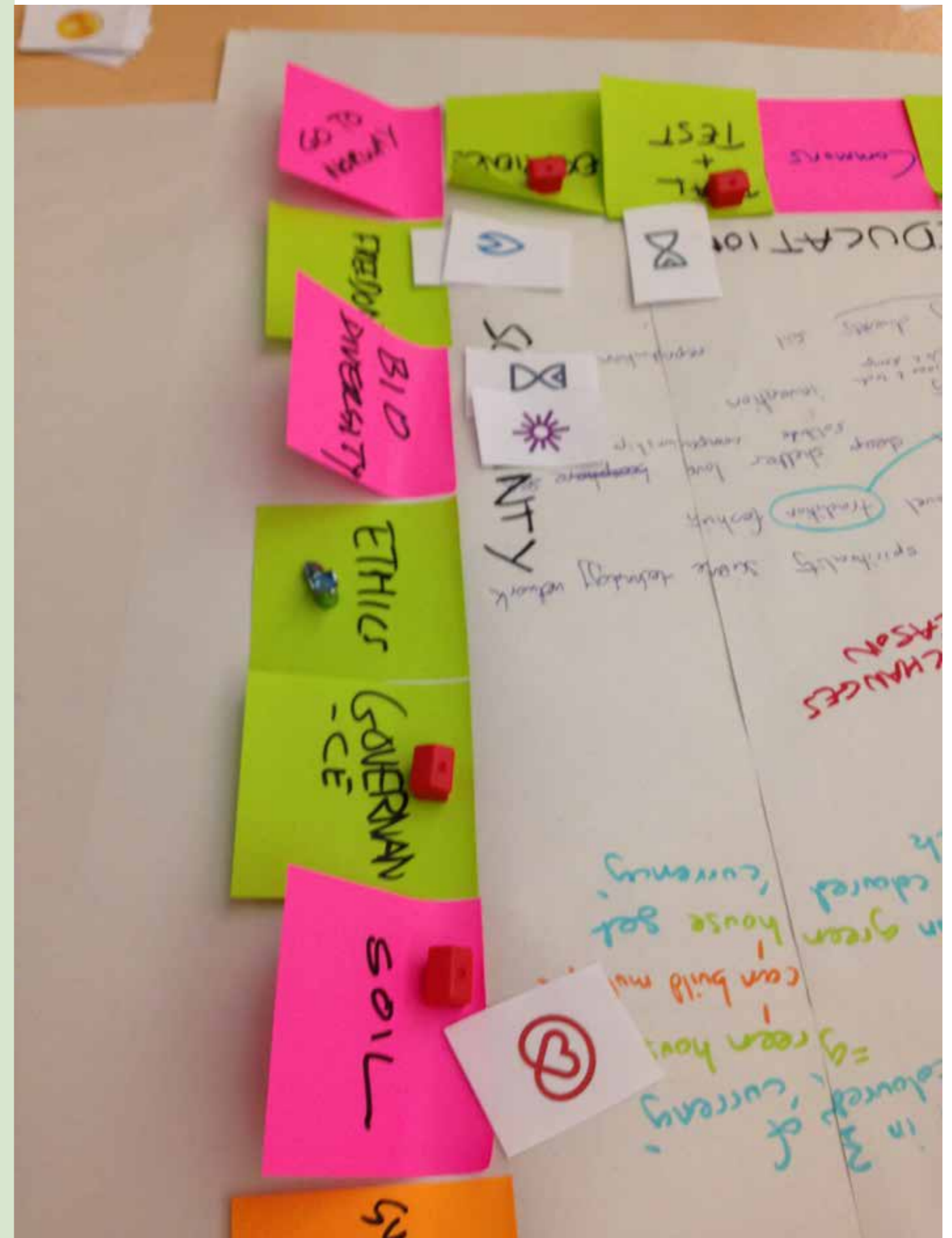
The economic geographers Gibson-Graham (2006, p. 185) note how giant corporations have managed to set the narrative of a society by controlling government policy and labour laws. The "politics of corporate need" ensures people are treated as children who must understand the economic imperative of profits over wellbeing, with the understanding that if the corporations continue to make profits, then all in the economy will be well.

However, the economy is a complex ecosystem, and as entrepreneur and advocate for the commons Peter Barnes (2015) notes, the ideas of “complexity economics” mean that, like a natural ecosystem the economy is adaptive and responds to feedback mechanisms. These feedback mechanisms are derived from the interaction of autonomous agents that follow “simple internally-coded rules”, and if there is a monoculture of corporate agents following rules such as profit and shareholder value maximisation, then the result is a drive to externalise as many costs as possible and minimise wages. The effect for workers, nature and other stakeholders means climate catastrophe, resource depletion, wealth inequality and associated social costs.

In the first game of Utopoly played by Critical Practice at Chelsea (iteration 02), while the participants had initially worked together to create the values and properties for the domains on the board, the individualistic aspects of Monopoly were still retained. The act of creating the corporate figure meant that the game aspect of Utopoly also becomes a more collaborative enterprise. It was found to have a positive effect on the group dynamics, with participants on the same side cooperating for the common good.

At the research event *What Happens to Us* (iteration 03) this corporate role was taken on by one of the participants. They were able to play the game as this figure and inhabit the character. They rolled the dice for moves and made decisions for the benefit of this figure and the corporate body. It was here that further differences between the corporate figure and the utopian players started to emerge in terms of means and modes of behaviour.

The corporate figure used traditional currency (in this case paper tokens as representations of ‘bitcoins’, although only as a symbol of monetary value with no other characteristics of blockchain technology). In contrast, the remaining utopian players used paper tokens representing the four currencies of Wellbeing, Knowledge, Creativity and Time. These different tokens were all of equal value and used to buy (as per Monopoly) or take control of the properties or domains of the board (see section 2.5 Contesting domains). The ensuing contest between the two types of players, with each vying for control, contributes to the drama of the game and is one aspect that makes the game fun. The characteristics of the corporate figure were developed further in later iterations of Utopoly (see section 3.7 Autonomous corporate entity).



Utopian players' currency tokens contesting corporate red hotels - iteration 03

## 2.3 Utopian players' collaboration

"It's an interesting fact about human psychology actually, that we are the most altruistic animal...but at the moment the capitalist system tells us that we're not these altruistic beings, that we obviously are, that we need to step on the necks of other people to get ahead."

(Participant, Iteration 11)

A key cornerstone of the justification for neoliberal economic ideology rests on a flawed conception of human nature. This belief is that people are primarily selfish and will always act in their own self-interest. When approaching interactions with others, people will look to their own benefit and act to profit from the exchange. However, this is not considered a problem because in doing so the economy will work in an efficient and utility-maximising manner. This theory is illustrated by political economist Adam Smith's (1999, p. 119) overused quote, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love...".

In being selfish, people were regarded as acting rationally, a supposition which allowed for a reduced and simplistic model of humanity to be formed, that of homo-economicus. This unitary model became useful for a mathematical understanding of economics and its importance was expressed by one of the founders of neoclassical economics, the political economist Francis Ysidro Edgeworth (1881, p. 16): "The first principle of economics is that every agent is actuated only by self-interest."



Utopian players' collaboration emerges - iteration 03

Edgeworth was working at a time when there was a strong desire for the field of economics to have the same level of scientific certainty and respect that physics enjoyed. In effect, economists wanted to become the physicists of social behaviour, and mathematics would provide a level of authority to the economic profession which would be difficult to question. Neoclassical economics would be based on the assumptions that all the micro level transactions of homo-economicus could be used as the fundamental building block from which macro-level economic activity could be built on. In this paradigm, selfish competition is extolled above cooperation as the natural state of humanity, and what follows is the triumph of 'the market' and financialisation.

However, the acceptance of this belief in a self-interested ideal provoked in me a feeling of cognitive dissonance in relation to my lived experienced and observed reality. This dissonance was also felt by others. Economists and social theorists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (2011) explain that the human traits of altruism and cooperation have been a source of debate in sociobiology and behavioural science for over a century. They point out that people cooperate not just for self-interest but out of genuine concern for others' wellbeing, even when they are not members of their own family. The natural and socially-constructed environments in which our ancestors evolved produced a prosocial nature that promotes positive feelings of satisfaction, pride and elation when engaged in cooperative projects, even when this means personal cost or risk to life.

**“It is becoming widely accepted that our distant ancestors found ways to suppress disruptive self-serving behaviours within their groups, so that cooperating as a group became the primary evolutionary force.”**

(Geoff Mulgan, 2017)

I therefore started looking for ways to steer the competitive, self-interested aspect of the board game Monopoly towards what I believed were these natural human predispositions of cooperation and altruism. At iteration 03 (What Happens to Us, Wimbledon) the introduction of the corporate entity provided the opportunity to develop this aspect. In Utopoly collaboration becomes a required response to certain features of the game-play. There is a contest which is made explicit in that the players are set up in opposition to the corporate entity as it extends control over the game board. This contest is not just to reclaim the domains controlled by the corporate entity, but also to realise the desired utopian values developed from the Future Workshop part of the method, which are nominated and written on the board. It is also to actively work collectively to remove the negative influence of the corporate entity. In this way a group dynamic emerged, a form of inter-group solidarity.

This type of collaborative tendency reflects a form of high-level group selection described in Darwin's theory of evolution. It is a part of his theory which has been selectively neglected or misunderstood. As the evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson (2019, p. 8) points out, an incomplete conception of 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest' were useful for the idea of social Darwinism, which in turn provides a justification for laissez-faire capitalism. Here, self-serving behaviour is considered a natural process with gross inequality the acceptable outcome. By extension, to interfere with this natural process such as providing welfare payments to the poor it was argued would cause societal collapse.

This was not what Darwin's theory argues on the contrary: Darwin was very aware of the value of cooperation as a factor that contributes to the success of our species. As social innovation and public policy theorist Geoff Mulgan (2017) states, “It is becoming widely accepted that our distant ancestors found ways to suppress disruptive self-serving behaviours within their groups, so that cooperating as a group became the primary evolutionary force.” These processes include the social emotions of shame and guilt felt by individuals who act selfishly, and a dislike for unfairness. There is also enjoyment experienced when punishing those who are considered free-riders, or who violate norms of fairness. This is a form of cultural inheritance rather than genetic, although it has led to genetic selection. According to Joseph Henrich (2017, p. 316), professor of human evolutionary biology, genetically evolved adaptations to cultural information have been the central driving force of human evolution for hundreds of thousands of years.

We are, as a species, predisposed to collaboration and altruistic behaviour. However, producing and maintaining cultures which support and respond to these traits is not a given. As Henrich (2017, pp. 143-145) notes, such cultures need to be constructed and managed effectively to continue to be successful. This is why group collaboration and cooperation as alternatives to individual competition become an important feature of the Utopoly method, a feature that was carried forward into further iterations (itself a form of cultural inheritance). Additional scenarios have been developed to encourage and allow the players to work collaboratively. This is discussed further in section 4.6 Extending players' collaboration.

## 2.4 The commons

“the ‘commons’ is both a thing and a process”

(Anna Coote, 2017, p. 5)



“There’s only one Creativity - there is only one of anything left, although what are people low on?”



“I’ve got Knowledge, Knowledge. Creativity...Wellbeing...”



“You’re gonna take from the ‘Commons’ rather than using your own?”



“I don’t understand what...”



“If you use, if you don’t use your own, then there’s a chance that someone else will land somewhere where this is the last one that they need.”



“OK I’ll put that there then.”



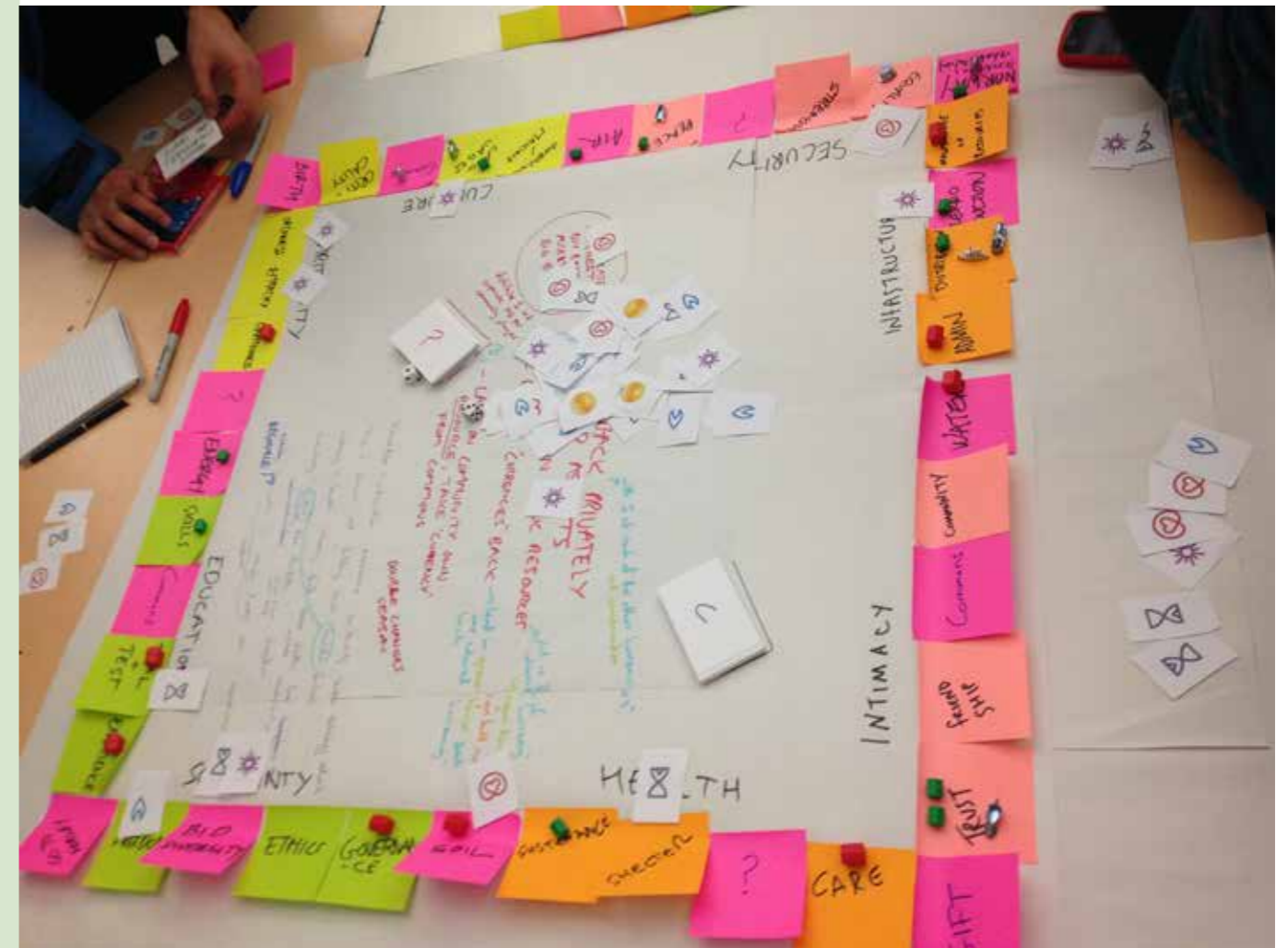
“So that’s a bit of altruism.”

...



“I’m going to move the monkey thing. And I’ll take a Knowledge from the ‘Commons’, no um, Time from the ‘Commons’ - Because I’ve only got one left.”

The nature of the transactions normally associated with Monopoly have been changed for Utopoly. Players no longer compete individually to ‘own’ or control all the values on the domains, but work together for a collectively-discovered common good. This behaviour emerged during iteration 03 (What Happens To Us, Wimbledon) from a combination of the deployment of alternative currencies and the setting up of the corporate entity as an oppositional figure. What these features made apparent was a realisation of a missing element or requirement in our economic relations, the commons.



Currencies available as ‘commons’ in the centre of the board - iteration 03

In Utopoly the commons became both a place and an idea, whereby the centre of the board functions as a repository for resources and therefore instigates an interaction between the players and place. As Anna Coote, head of social policy for the New Economics Foundation (Nef), points out, “the ‘commons’ is both a thing and a process” (2017, p. 5). For Nef the commons encompass all the economic, social, cultural, technical and natural resources necessary for life.

As an idea it also becomes part of the process of how people can gain control of these common resources, and also the resources controlled by private interests. Rather than having social resources delivered or controlled from outside a given community, new activities and relationships are imagined through co-design and are co-produced at local levels. Where the commons are managed for the common good, they perform a generative function rather than an extractive one. This double function is represented in Utopoly - players both interact with what value is available in the centre of the board and with the idea of common resources. This is expressed as a recycling process in which players contribute to the commons and receive resources back for their use.

In Utopoly these common resources and processes provide a balance against the extractive, rent-seeking corporate entity. This formation of the commons in Utopoly is a very simple device but can have enormous resonance. There is a familiar adaptation or 'house rule' of Monopoly whereby fines and sundry monies are paid into the space in the middle rather than to the Bank. This fund is usually claimed by the first player to land on the 'Free Parking' space. While the player is provided with a minor solace or temporary reprieve, the inevitable reality of the Monopoly construct still plays out. By changing the function of the middle space to that of the commons, available to all players, a different relationship is promoted. Players start to appreciate it and form a relationship with it as a resource to be cultivated and nurtured. It becomes a natural repository of wealth and resources which are renewable and regenerative.

The commons itself is a contested idea deeply connected to the historical origins of capitalism. For medieval serfs it provided a level of self-sufficiency and so its removal was necessary to provide the coercion to labour for others. Through enclosure and rent-seeking, the commons became a point of conflict. Feminist and political theorist Silvia Federici (2014) positions capitalism as the counter-revolution that destroyed the (utopian) possibilities of communal peasant societies, which emerged from the anti-feudal struggle of the medieval period. The commons and utopia are intimately intertwined, as philosopher Karl Kautsky (1888) notes - it was the expansion of enclosure during the Tudor period that Sir Thomas More saw as responsible for some of the country's social problems, and so *Utopia* was written in 1516, partly in response.



"Just thinking about your resources. They're not like money and this, just kind of hit me that you're not exchanging critical thinking [Creativity] you're strengthening your critical thinking [Creativity] the same with Knowledge. Time debatable, Wellbeing probably, you've greatly generated that. So, it seems like even though you don't have them on the table, you still have them. But it seems how it's kind of pictorially representative, that individually, you don't have these tokens. But how can you lose critical thinking individually? Because you're gaining it aren't you? Because it's done collectively but you still retain it as well...Your Knowledge as well maybe Knowledge as a community but individual Knowledges becomes developed. Time, I don't know about. Time's a funny one and Wellbeing I imagine your Wellbeing's increased. But it's not seen in front of you, it's seen there. So how do you make that connection between, but you don't have point of view almost on the board because it looks like to me, I still have Credits on the board. So, you're not at a loss, but it looks like you are at a loss..."



"But then they are invested..."



"Invested, which..."



"It's that thing about a lived experience of becoming invested. That's significant somehow."

For Haiven (2018, p. 554) the commons, which encompasses cultural and natural wealth, is what capitalism wants to control and capture in order to produce commodities for the market: "Indeed, the common is precisely what capitalism seeks to organize, coopt and control for its own reproduction and in the name of the accumulation of private profit." In many ways, the currencies in play for Utopoly and developed from *#Transacting: A Market of Values* represent 'common' values that are obscured, financialised and extracted from the commons by capital.

One of the justifications put forward for the privatisation of the commons comes from an article, 'The tragedy of the commons' (1968) by ecologist Garrett Hardin. It refers to the idea that open and free access to scarce resources will result in their degradation and diminishment. It was based on the previous text of economist William Forster Lloyd (1833, cited in Ostrom, 2015, p. 2), who remarked on the poor state of stock animals within common enclosures. Wilson (2019, pp. 112-116) notes that the theory was readily accepted by academics, as it matched models of self-interest which were already embedded in economics and a Neo-Darwinism interpretation of biology. Hardin later realised his work was misinterpreted and retitled it (1994) 'The tragedy of the unmanaged commons'.

It was this missing aspect of management or organisation that is key to a healthy use of common resources. As policy strategist and commons advocate David Bollier (2017) states: "The commons, briefly put, is about self-organized social systems for managing shared wealth. Far from a "tragedy", the commons as a system for mutualizing responsibilities and benefits is highly generative." The economist Elinor Ostrom (2015) won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for debunking the myth of the "tragedy of the commons" by demonstrating the benefits and effective use of common pool resources throughout history. Her 1990 work *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action*, resulted from the study of successfully managed common resources such as woodlands, fishing areas and irrigation water.

The key realisation was that for sustainable use there are certain institutions and methods which need to be in place. Often, these institutions arise as self-organising with bottom-up problem-solving. They emerge as forms of locally relevant rulemaking and incorporate sets of social norms, which include monitoring and sanctions for breaches of those rules. She developed a set of Core Design Principles (CDPs) which enable such institutions to form and can be applied beneficially to a variety of organisations. Sloan Wilson (2019, pp. 117-123) views these CDPs as important for producing and maintaining prosocial and collaborative behaviour.

The idea of the commons has provided recent inspiration as alternative economic models to capitalism and state socialism. The World Social Forum's Reclaim the Commons manifesto (2009, quoted in Weston et al., 2013, p. 218) states: "how commons-based management, participatory, collaborative and transparent, offers the best hope for building a world that is sustainable, fair and life-giving".

The peer-to-peer theorists Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis and Alex Pazaitis (2019, pp. 2-3) consider how the commons can be integrated within the Peer to Peer (P2P) movement, made possible by new technologies of a connected internet and the world wide web. Through the social relations made possible by the P2P paradigm there is the potential for a transition towards an economy that is generative for people and nature.

As Bauwens, Kostakis and Pazaitis (2019, p. 3) state: "P2P can generally be synonymous with 'commoning,' in the sense that it describes the capacity to contribute to the creation and maintenance of any shared resource." This shared resource can be software, design and knowledge which is co-produced as non-rivalrous use-value, as well as more traditional resources like water, air, fish stocks or the radio spectrum.

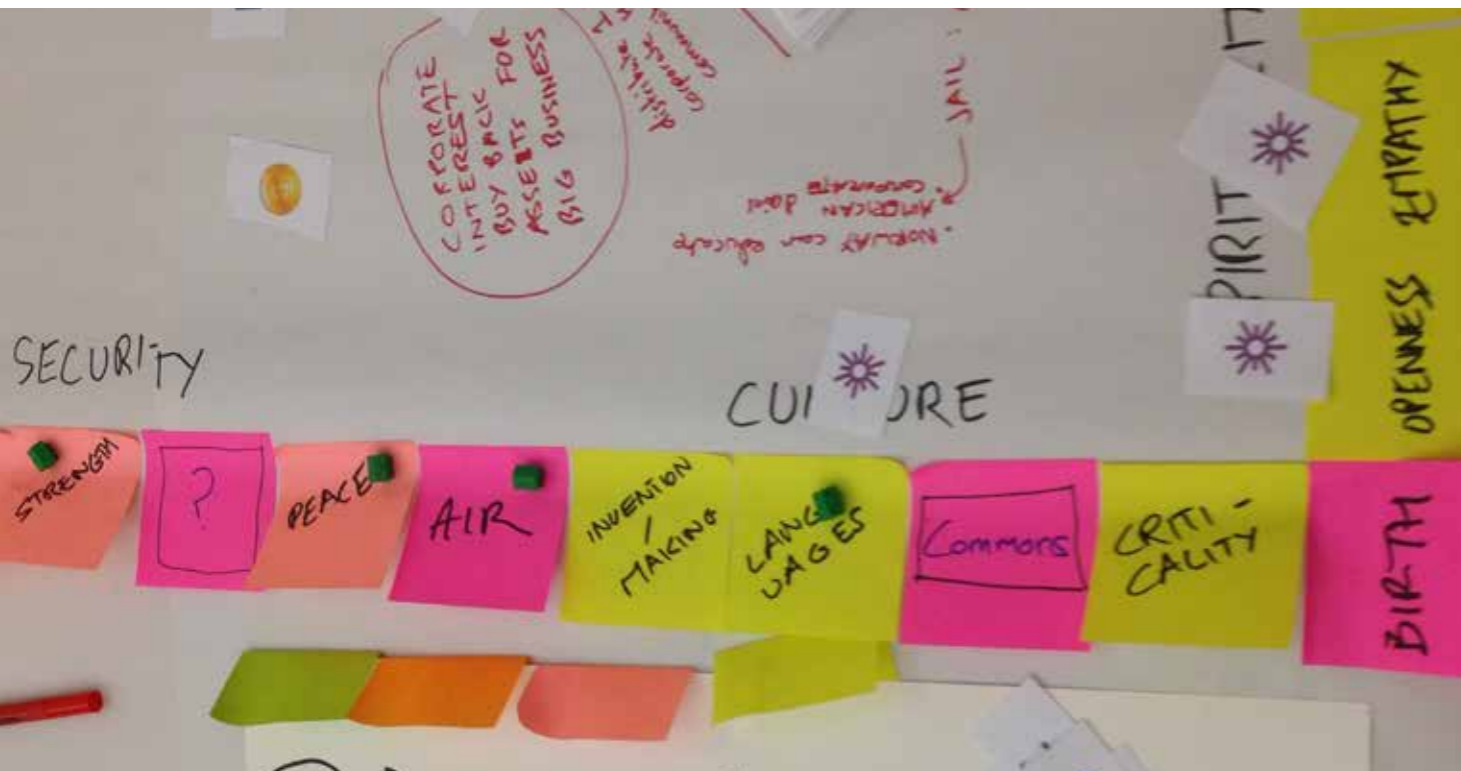
Such production is considered generative rather than extractive because it tends to add value to communities and the commons, so that there is an accumulation of value in the commons. This is what Yochai Benkler, a lawyer of the internet and information goods, calls 'commons-based peer production' (2006, p. 60), and as Bauwens, Kostakis and Pazaitis (2019, p. 47) suggest, it is a modern form of a type of production which "has existed since the dawn of humanity and was initially the dominant form of relationship in nomadic hunter-gathering societies".

By reintroducing this missing generative function, the commons becomes more than just a shared resource. In Utopoly this was another pivotal intervention - as the domains become part of the commons, they could generate value for the commons rather than extract value as rent. This generative aspect of the commons became adopted in later iterations of Utopoly. It was a useful way to further differentiate between the corporate entity and the utopian players, and provide a means to counter the existing advantage of monopoly control by the corporate entity. This differentiation is explored further in section 4.4 Different modes of behaviour.

## 2.5 Contesting domains

“This is interesting. So, some things are going to accumulate more of these things [currencies] than others. And that is going to give us a sense of what ‘actually’ seems to be important in practice then, I have just stated the obvious there haven’t I...?”

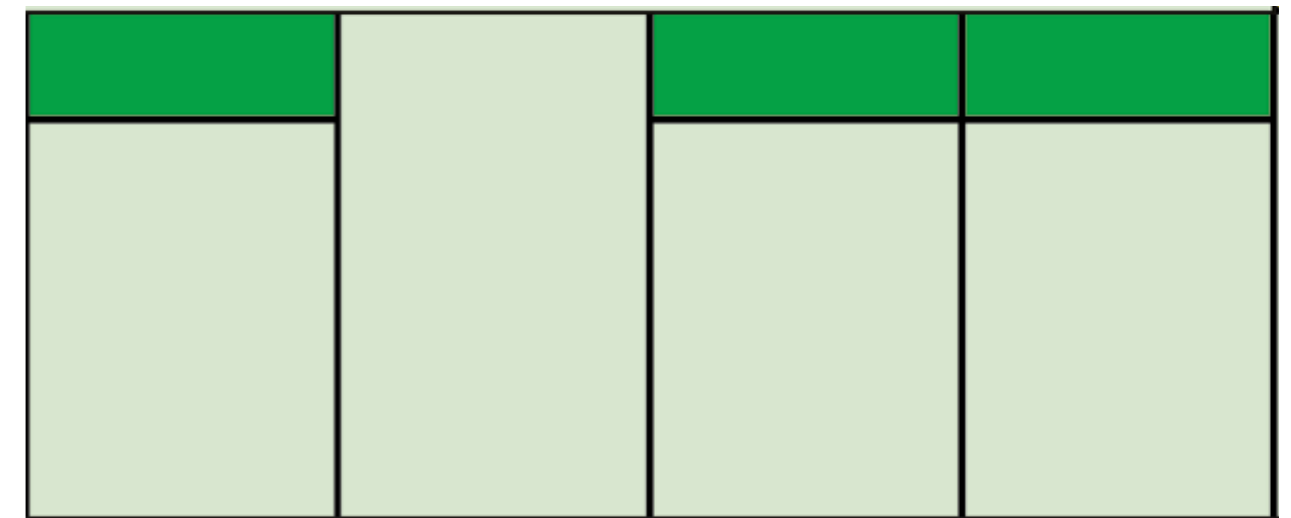
(Participant, Iteration 11)



Domains labelled with utopian values & ideals replace the property spaces of Monopoly - iteration 03

Utopoly gives participants the opportunity to both imagine and incorporate values and attributes they would want in a more utopian world. As a ‘hack’ of Monopoly it allows players to determine the properties, the Chance cards and rules of the game. During the Future Workshop phase of Utopoly the participants decide what values they want represented in their utopian world vision.

The property areas on the Monopoly board are re-assigned with these values to replace properties such as Pall Mall, Old Kent Road, Liverpool St. Station and the Waterworks. These renamed domains can represent physical places, ideas, concepts, behaviours, emotions, values or qualities. There is no specific definition of what can or cannot go in the space, it is left ambiguous. Because the spaces can represent more than properties or real estate, they are referred to as domains.



Spaces of the Utopoly board referred to as Domains - from iteration 04

From iteration 03 (What Happens To Us) onwards, the Utopoly game format developed two contending sides, a corporate entity and the utopian players. Initially the corporate entity has ownership of a selection of the domains, (symbolic of the corporate entity either owning a physical space or the assets, both tangible and intangible). It also includes the associated controlling of ideas and institutions through cognitive capture. The corporate entity’s intention is to prevent the utopian domains or concepts from coming to fruition or entering the commons. They use their control to stymie alternative world views and ensure their preferred status quo continues.



In Monopoly when players land on a property space which is not already 'owned', they have the opportunity to purchase it with symbolic money, with the varying prices listed on the property spaces. The purchase of a property allows the owner to charge rent and extract value. There are additional features incorporated into the game, such as a mortgage function, and additional benefits accruing upon ownership of a full set of a particular colour grouping. This allows for higher rents to be charged and the option to further increase rent by the purchase of houses and hotels. These aspects were not addressed or included in any of the iterations of Utopoly, which allowed for a more simplified game-play to develop.



Interlocking currencies from #TransActing: A Market of Values

During iteration 03 the participants collectively decided to further differentiate the two opposing sides, whereby each would use a different currency to gain control of the domains. The corporate entity would use a symbolic debt-based money while the utopian players would use the interlocking currencies of Time, Wellbeing, Knowledge and Creativity.

The idea of collecting complete sets of the four currencies of Time, Wellbeing, Knowledge and Creativity was a carryover from #TransActing: A Market of Values. This feature was incorporated into Utopoly so that the utopian players, on landing on a domain space once per turn, can achieve control of a domain by placing one of each of the currencies on the domain space. This establishes the idea of an ecosystem of value exchange so that players interact with each other to ensure the correct selection of currencies are obtained.



Four currencies required to win the contest for a domain - iteration 03



Domain controlled by utopian players - signified by a green house - iteration 03



"...we are closer to claiming it...Yes."



"So, what have we got on it already? We've got those two, so we have got Time and Wellbeing needed. Have you got a Time?"



"Yeah, I got a Time...yeah, so I'll land there and use, use some of my Time."



Corporate entity (suited figure) using Credit and utopian player (penguin) using value currencies, contesting to control domains - iteration 10

For the sake of balance, we decided that the corporate entity should also place four of their debt-based money tokens to gain control of domains. In this way a contest is set up whereby both sides build up the required four currencies on the domain space until the first side to reach four wins control of the domain.

The winner of a domain gains all the currencies involved in the contest. If the corporate entity wins, they acquire them. If the utopian players side wins, the currencies are returned to the commons. At iteration 03 (What Happens to Us) this was indicated using the standard Monopoly playing pieces, with red hotels designating corporate control and the green houses representing utopian player control. Alternatively, other objects can be used to denote control such as Lego bricks (as used at iteration 08 [ValueModels, La Myne] and iteration 09 [Chelsea, Billiards Room]) (see section 3.7 Autonomous corporate entity for how this was later developed).



Lego and other objects used to denote control of domains - iteration 08

At iteration 03 (What Happens To Us) there were also different outcomes for players that subsequently land on a domain space, depending on which side controls that domain. For domains controlled by the corporate entity rent was extracted from the players in the form of their currencies. This represents the extraction of the players' Time, Wellbeing, Creativity and Knowledge in corporate enterprises. If players are unable to pay, they suffer the consequences of a time in 'Jail'. For domains controlled by the utopian players, rather than extracting rent they generate value. The player who lands on such a domain receives a currency representing the sharing and reciprocity of a commons-based economy.

Players are free to create and use any currencies they wish, however the guidelines suggest using the currencies developed for *#TransActing: A Market of Values*, and we found four neatly represents an ecosystem of value exchange. This aspect was developed further in section 4.4 Different modes of behaviour.



Celebrating winning their first domain - iteration 09



"But I think someone should try and buy it".



"Yeah. But it means we are spreading ourselves around the board rather thin."



"...We won that – Yeah! we got one. - Yeah Yes...."

Players also feel the dilemma of choosing which domains to contest, weighing up how many currencies they have, and the value of what that domain represents to themselves and the other players.



"1,2,3,4 - 'Rewilding & growing local food'."



"Do we want to put something down on that?"



"So, what are you on here?"



"'Wellbeing' and 'Growing local food'? It suddenly feels like quite irrelevant and it's not at all, but it's weird when you're playing this and you've got like these really huge issues. 'Growing local food' of course it's really important, but on this scale. It's really different. But I'm happy but you know, like I'm happy to give up something. Should I do it? I'll do it.



"Go for it."



"I'll give it the Creativity".

This simple contest developed in real-time by the participants became the core of the more recent game-play, and once in place allowed further rules and activities to be built on to it. Players can make rule changes and create Chance cards that relate to and interact with this core feature. It has also been developed further as part of the wider flow of the game (described in sections 3.8 Special domains and 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game). This game-play provides elements of tension, engagement, jeopardy and fun. Each side then vies for control of the domains and if the corporate entity gains a domain it represents the further financialization of social assets.

## 2.6 The four corner spaces

As with the board game Monopoly there are four corner spaces in Utopoly which have different functions to the rest of the property spaces. In Utopoly the four corners are specific domains preserved as remnants from Monopoly, but are available for reassignment. Although due to time constraints these corner domains are sometimes left blank, when they are completed, they can reflect aspects of the context and nature of the participants involved. The 'GO' space is the starting space of the game and also a marker for when players have completed a full round. The other three are reserved for the functions of 'Jail' and 'Free Parking'.

The two corners relating to 'Jail' are specific domains with a particular purpose. They provide a consequence or jeopardy for the players. A player in 'Jail' must reside there for a specified number of turns and can no longer take part in the game for that time. The 'Jail' feature provides an additional type of interaction for the players. There are three possible ways a player can be sent to 'Jail'; landing on the 'Go to Jail' space, failing to pay rent when landing on a domain controlled by the corporate entity, or as instructed by specific Chance cards.

The renaming of the 'Jail' itself is arrived at through discussion, both in the Future Workshop phase of the method and in the live game-play itself. The outcome can be influenced by personal stories or themes that are pertinent to the group. In later versions the traditional cartoon image of a New York police officer directing the player to go to Jail with a pointing finger was removed to leave the space open for interpretation, but the pointing finger and words 'GO TO' were retained. These can be both positive or negative places and have included: Community service, Norwegian-style progressive rehabilitation, Joy, Utopia, A Virtual Reality Headset, Depression and Healthy Masculinity (a place to be reassigned from toxic masculinity), a Sabbatical, and the Moon. For players who are 'Just Visiting' the 'Jail', it is a safe domain where nothing happens, similar to that provided by 'Free parking'.



Jail is relabelled to become a VR (virtual reality) headset - iteration 10



“It’s interesting you said that, I was just thinking about how people should treat each other. One of the things that came to my head was about men and macho culture and violence. And I guess something, I think, a fantasy that it would be embarrassing to be macho, and it’d be embarrassing to walk around, you know, with people feeling scared of you, kind of thing”.

...

“I’ve recently moved from a neighbourhood where there is a lot of fear, like when you’re walking around on the streets, and you just don’t look at people because the concern that if you look at someone the wrong way, they’ll square up to you. And I live in a different neighbourhood now where I can walk around and feel quite safe. I’ve noticed that I sort of held my colours down ... because you just didn’t want to stand out”...

“But what’s the healthy version of you know, we still want men to be men, women to be women, people who are somewhere in between to feel free to be that.”

“I definitely think I’m gonna put Healthy masculinity.”

“So what are we writing?”

“Shall we put Machismo in jail?”

“That’s the Patriarchy in a box!”



Here during the Critique phase at iteration 11 participants discuss the issue of toxic masculinity. This issue is then discussed again during the Implementation phase and the Jail corner space is reassigned to ‘Healthy Masculinity’ as a result.



“Hey, [we] were having quite an interesting discussion on it. I wrote Patriarchy in the box - Just saying that machismo is not the same thing as Patriarchy.”

“No. This is true.”

“Not in the, not in the context in which it came up earlier. Yeah, but.”

“But I don’t think you would have patriarchy without machismo”.

“I dunno”

“Dropped a pebble into that pond hasn’t it!”

“What’s that saying nature finds a way, nature finds a way”.

“What do you mean?”

“I think men, certain men would probably find a way to keep the patriarchy going without machismo”...

“So, we’ve made machismo problematic then in this Utopia...this is a post-machismo world, and we’re just visiting it”.



“Why don’t we say that it’s like a machismo treatment centre.”

“You have expressed an aggressive gendered identity...”

“I’m gonna put healthy masculinity, if people are OK with that because I feel that...”

“Some of that is a lot of more so to do with education, ...isn’t it. But if you get those things right, you would end up with a healthy masculinity rather than...”



 "Your knuckles are approaching the pavement...beep! beep!"  
 "Now, I think this will get...this kind of scene of people visiting these kind of prisoners, who go:  
 'oh! look at them, with their unreconstructed gender norms!'"



Corporate entity in 'JAIL' undergoing Healthy masculinity re-education- iteration 11

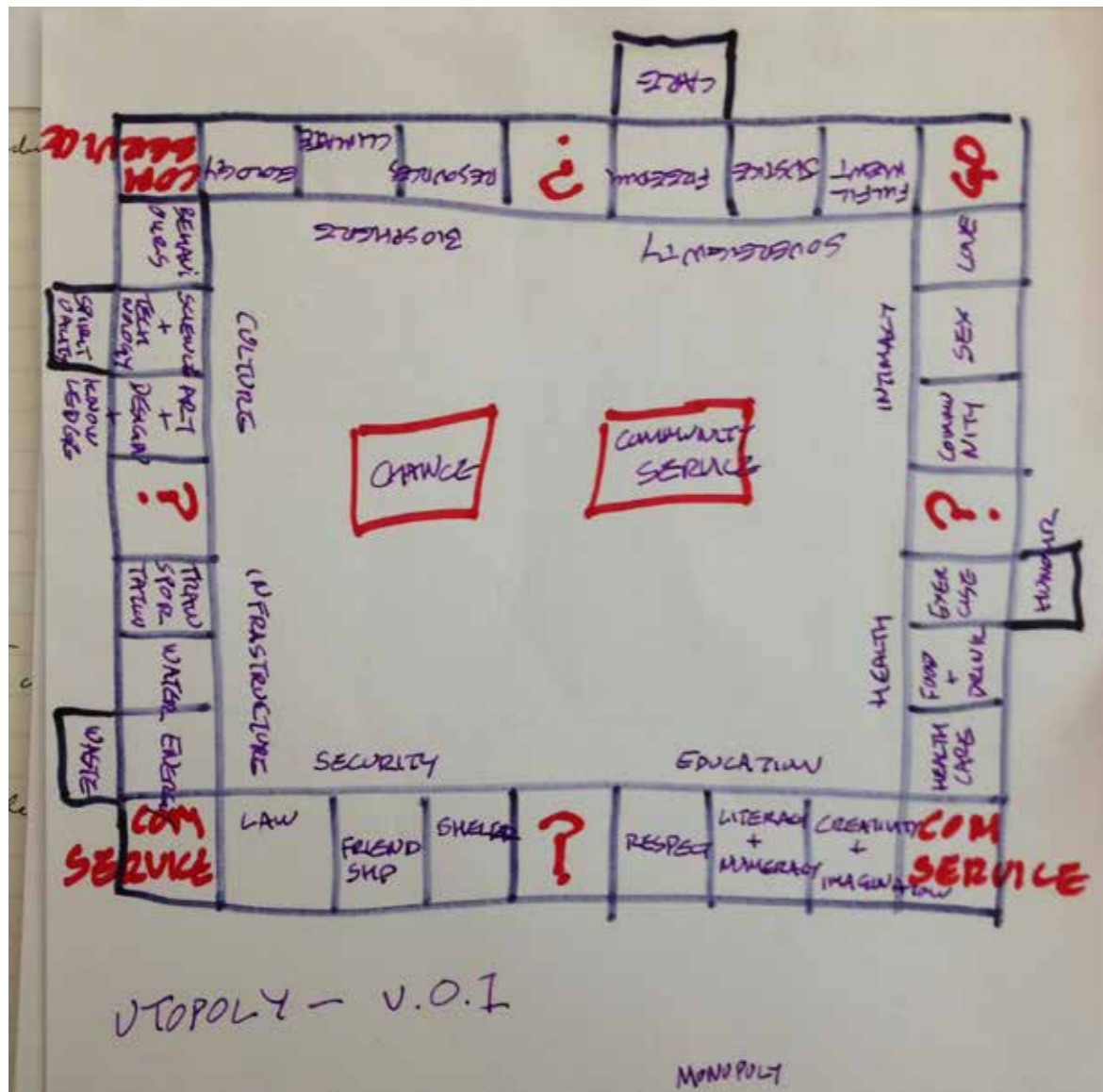


FREE PARKING is redesignated as FREE DOGS- iteration 11

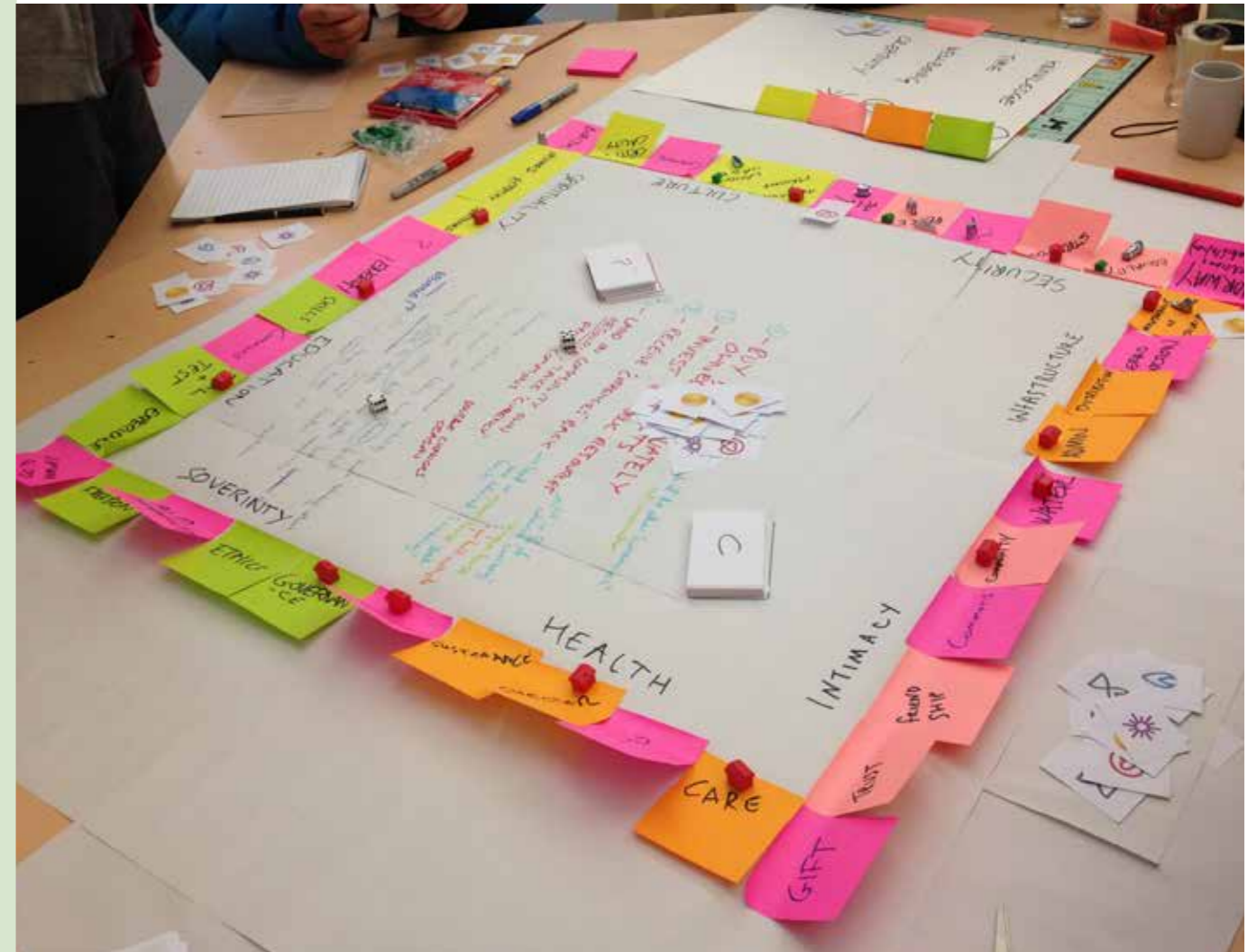
'Free Parking' is provided as a safe haven or respite from the rest of the board and can likewise be a fun feature. At various times, this domain has been reimagined by participants as a Meditation space, and has even been left blank or unchanged. In later iterations the word 'parking' was removed and additionally, the symbol of a car, after it was viewed as a remnant of fossil fuel-dependent transport. This left the word 'Free', which prompted designations of Free Gift, Free Education, Free Thought and Free Dogs.

# Phase 3 - Development

## 3.0 A more usable playing surface



Hand drawn Utopoly board as an initial rough sketch - iteration 03



Post-It notes used to create the Utopoly board - iteration 03

Up to and including iteration 03 at the event *What Happens to Us Wimbledon*, the process of producing a hacked Monopoly board was time consuming. The playing surface was constructed ad hoc out of large sheets of A1 paper, often recycled from other events. The layout of the board was sketched out by hand and the details were either written on to this or on to Post-It notes stuck on to it. However, using Post-It notes was slightly problematic as they tended to curl up, making them imperfect and awkward as a playing surface.

I felt that this aspect of the method could be improved to make the playing board easier to use. I wanted to find a way of reducing the time and effort required for sketching out the board by creating a template. This would leave more time during each iteration to concentrate on the workshop and playing the game. I also thought a more polished construct, which was both permanent and reusable, would be beneficial for future iterations.

The impetus and opportunity for developing such a reusable template came as I was preparing for iteration 04 which was to be part of the exhibition for first-year research students studying at Chelsea, Camberwell and Wimbledon (CCW) at University of the Arts London. The research programme at CCW offers all first-year research students the opportunity to exhibit their current research at a group show. My exhibit was to involve a live session of Utopoly featuring the ongoing workings and outputs from the Future Workshop phase. It would also show this implemented on the Utopoly board.

The fact that this was a public exhibition meant I felt a requirement to produce something more substantial, a physical object to show, a ready-made Utopoly board. Visitors to the event could then view the utopian outputs as a work in progress and could add to them in an interactive exchange.

In trying to work out how to achieve what I wanted from this reusable Utopoly board I was reminded of the PICTIVE method (or Plastic Interface for Collaborative Technology Initiatives through Video Exploration), developed by participatory designer Michael Muller (1993, pp. 211-237). This prototyping method was devised to involve users in software development and had several features which, while not directly relevant for what I wanted, shared some features that Utopoly could benefit from.

The method uses inexpensive, coloured plastic components on a shared reusable workspace, on which participants can add cut shapes, drawings and write on with coloured pens. By using everyday objects in conventional ways, the process becomes non-intimidating and inviting. As Muller (1993, p. 227) notes, the simple structures, tools and colours are used in a deliberately informal and play-like way which engenders an atmosphere of creativity. The shared design space allows for different perspectives to be made visible, and there is an increased enjoyment through a mutual education of taking part in the creative process.

I felt I could adapt these play-like and creative aspects for my purposes and incorporate some of them into Utopoly, including offering the utopian players a choice of different game pieces instead of the standard Monopoly playing pieces. These were a selection of models, such as toy animals and fictional characters sourced from cereal packet premiums, (premiums being 'free' gifts as a form of advertising or incentive for consumption). This aesthetic was intended to induce a play-like attitude or playful mood, providing an emotive link to childhood.



Box of toy-like figures for playing pieces



For a more usable playing surface I wanted to construct a large laminated board visually similar to Monopoly, but with empty spaces on which to write. I was aware from my knowledge of prototyping that if people are presented with a fait-accompli, there is a tendency to accept it as is and are less likely to offer up changes. This new artefact would be the semi-blank canvas, a half-finished product which is open to amendment. It would be a guide to help ease the process rather than an impediment to imagination.

The lamination would allow multi-coloured white-board marker pens to be used so that the board could be repeatedly wiped clean and reused. It would also be foldable and portable for ease of transport. The size was dictated by previous iterations so that at least eight people could sit and interact comfortably with it. The spaces for the domains would be a similar size to a Post-It note so that they could be easily transcribed from the notes developed during the Future Workshop phases.



Large laminated Utopoly board at the 1st Year Exhibition - iteration 04



Visitors interacting with the exhibit - iteration 04

As a finished artefact it saved time and was easier to use, both in the Implementation stage and during game-play (See Appendix A: Large laminated board).



Final version of the Utopoly board (digital layout) used from iteration 09 onwards



From this point on, all my iterations of Utopoly used this large, purpose-built laminated board based on the Monopoly layout. It is presented to the participants prior to the Future Workshop phase to show what the process is aiming to develop and where the journey is going to take them (i.e. completing the empty spaces on the board and playing the game). The board format is useful when images of sessions are reproduced in digital or print format. It is also effective when advertising for participants or used to disseminate the method via social media.

## 3.1 An adapted Future Workshop



Idea generation and categorisation process had similarities to a Future Workshop - iteration 03

In the early iterations of Utopoly up to and including iteration 03 (What Happens To Us, Wimbledon), the process started with a series of discussions and brainstorming around the utopian ideas and values that should replace the Chance cards and property spaces of Monopoly. Participants produced, iterated, refined and finally, grouped and labelled these values into categories using Post-It notes. These were arranged on walls or other large spaces for all participants to see. The group was aiming to produce eight broad categories to match the property neighbourhoods of Monopoly. At iteration 03 these coalesced into Education, Health, Intimacy, Sovereignty, Culture, Security, Spirituality and Infrastructure. Within these Categories were grouped other general areas of concern, such as Happiness, Openness, Empathy, Ethics, Gifting, Trust, Biodiversity, Criticality, Peace, Equality, etc.

We arrived at these categories, to replace the property spaces, via a messy but productive process of argument, disagreement and discursive exchanges. This involved constant revision, trial, substitution and change as ideas developed. I was aware that something was emerging from this creative exchange. In some ways we were groping towards a more formal method but ideally one which needed to keep the productive energy that we had experienced, rather than being stilted by procedure.

Whilst this activity was slightly unstructured it reminded me of the Fantasy stage of a participatory design method called a Future Workshop which was developed by Robert Jungk and social innovator Norbert Müllert, and first run in 1962 (Jungk and Müllert, 1987). I felt that Utopoly would be enhanced by incorporating this visualization and realization method to produce less generic and more specific outputs. And so, at iteration 04 (1st Year exhibition) I decided to introduce an adapted form of a Future Workshop to the Utopoly method.

“...now coming back to this idea that lawyers like from Extinction Rebellion, lawyers and they say the fact that we continue with the status quo is really a lack of imagination. You know and people don't know how to go outside of it...”

(Participant, iteration 10)

The concept of a Future Workshop was designed to allow citizen groups with limited resources to participate in the decision-making process of public planning. The method emerged from Jungk's (Jungk and Müllert, 1987, p. 7) concern that the future and public policy were being decided by a tiny elite in government and big business. Jungk and Müllert (ibid., p. 14) state that this method was developed as a reaction to the military and industrial 'think-tanks' that emerged during WWII and the Cold War, (such as the RAND corporation). Their influence and the competition between opposing political ideologies raised the possibility of further conflict and generated demand for excessive consumerism and technological progress, rather than societal progress.

“It’s like, is this a conscious thing that capitalism is doing?  
...And I think it’s a conscious thing of capitalism, that it’s  
depriving us of those opportunities to think and imagine  
by constantly occupying our minds”

(Participant, iteration 11)

For Jungk there were two aspects to address: a democratic deficiency and a lack of creativity or alternative thought. Jungk reported his dismay that cultural conditioning through education, work and consumerism meant people became receivers of the ideology of the elites, and their natural creativity was suppressed. Even so, Jungk (1976, p. 18-23) had a fundamental belief that all people had the potential for genius, a creative imagination that he believed would be necessary to solve some of the world’s problems, and which should not be confined to the arts or technology but also directed towards social and humane goals.

Jungk and Müllert (1987, p. 29) suggest that rather than using logic or scientific method to infer tomorrow from today, (i.e. via a linear continuation of the status quo) the imagination can open the way for “irrational feelings, yearnings, dreams, and visions – where proposals that at first appear absurd or clumsily expressed [can] lead to the most constructive solutions”. Such an approach could offer the chance to move on from the past to new and better social formations.

A Future Workshop has three distinct stages: Critique, Fantasy and Implementation. The Future Workshop is initiated and driven by a critique of the current situation. This provides the grounding, direction and focus for the activity so that the practice is situated in the present. It then moves on to imagine the future through a fantasised but specific response to that present. The final Implementation phase is concerned with working out the resources and actions needed to achieve this in practical terms.

To adapt for Utopoly, the Implementation stage takes the form of describing and modelling a utopian future in the form of a modified Monopoly game. This new approach then differs from the early iterations of Utopoly in that these three stages are clearly delineated (each stage is described with the results in the following sections: 3.2 Critique, 3.3 Fantasy, 3.4 Implementation).



“...And I think, yeah, it is really hard to just do nothing. And even when I’m like, right, I need to have a day off. Or if I’m ill, and I’m like right I need to rest up, I’ll be there going, maybe I should meditate. Or maybe I should like cook my self something. You know, if I’m resting, I must rest efficiently and productively. And in the optimum way! .... And it’s like this Paradox of Choice of capitalism that you’re always left, thinking, oh, maybe that wasn’t the best thing. So I think that we’re exhausted by all the choices that we have to make, and we’re unable to cease unconsciously trying to optimise our behaviour, even in our like leisure time...”



“...You open your phone, because you’ve got a spare couple of minutes. And then you spend ages doing this thing. And actually, people really want that downtime. And they’re they’ve got all these things telling them, if they have got some spare time, they should do something more worthy with it.”



“Which then links in with the three B’s of creativity, which is an idea from somewhere between 1890 and 1930, where virtually everything that was created was created in one of the three B’s bed, bath or bus. Because there are places where you’re stuck in one place. You can’t do anything else. Yeah. And there’s nothing to focus on. Yeah. So your mind then wanders. And we don’t have that time at all ever anymore. And even in bed, you’re playing on your Kindle or your Ipad or whatever else. And then on the bus, you’re on the phone, and no one has baths anymore..., that level of creativity is not normal anymore. It’s not something that anybody does.”

In his research into the nature of our collective imagination the environmental activist and founder of the Transition movement Rob Hopkins (2019) brings up to date the same concerns that Jungk perceived, but with additional, more pervasive issues. Not only do people have less time to be imaginative, but the time that is available is colonised by a twenty-four-seven internet-enabled consumerist economy. People's thoughts are both distracted and directed away from the possibility of change. With our imagination so stagnated, the changes we are expected to consider are limited to a technological or superficially consumerist nature and yet fundamental societal problems remain. As pain scholar David Morris (1994, p. 152) argues, "utopia in the postmodern era has largely fixed its new location in the solitary, private, individual body". The limitation of reflecting on strictly personal success, either as emotional, financial or physical, is "perhaps the only dreams the powerful wish us to have" (Levitas, 2013 p. 122).



"I just think in terms of education, you need a radical overhaul of education, because we need to be teaching people like empathy, critical thinking, creativity."



"So basically, just change all education to education through play!"

In this respect Hopkins (2019, p. 46) highlights the scholar and cultural critic Henry Giroux's concept of 'disimagination machines', describing how mainstream media and public relations are used by the state and corporations to propagate ignorance and to close down people's imagination. The sociologist Richard Sennett (2018) warns of the danger presented by the internet and social media (notably Facebook and Google), stating that nowadays "Modern capitalism works by colonizing the imagination of what people consider possible." Hopkins (2019, p. 46) notes that this tactic is working well - with facts and knowledge now regarded only superficially, attention spans are declining and curiosity in classrooms is falling.

Hopkins' research shows that play and collaboration are catalysts for imagination but that currently children have diminishing amounts of time devoted to these activities. Both Jungk and Hopkins consider imagination a natural attribute. Adults need imagination training as well, though not through teaching new skills, but rather through remembering their innate abilities provided by more open childlike states.



Students playing Utopoly, Critical Design Module, York University - iteration 13

What Jungk showed through the practice of the Future Workshop was that the exercise of imagination, far from being trivial, had real and concrete outcomes. Hopkins' (2019) research concurs with Jungk that effective and positive change is possible through human imagination, but that this most critical tool has been allowed to decline. The Future Workshop then allows people to participate in developing creative visions of the future. As Jungk and Müllert (1987, p. 5) state, "It helps people to develop creative ideas and projects for a better society. For trying to resist something is just part of the story. It is essential for people to know what they are fighting for, not just what they are fighting against."

The futurist and sociologist Wendell Bell (2011, p. 301) considered the technique to have been very successful, with Future Workshop movements reportedly flourishing throughout Europe and finding a range of applications. As a method though, Bell (2011, p. 305) identified a number of possible issues:

- small groups lacking specialist knowledge
- consequences of actions may be unknown
- value judgements and goals may be parochial
- hopes for social change may be falsely raised
- cynically or incompetently run workshops may limit participation



Playing Utopoly - iteration 11

But for the purpose of Utopoly these issues are negligible. The key features engaged are critique and imagination, while the Implementation stage is used to create the values deployed in the resultant board game. Even accounting for such issues, Bell admits (2011, p. 305) "Of course, future workshops by their very existence go some distance toward creating a more desirable society, because they encourage their participants to become caring, thinking, informed, involved, planning, future-oriented, hopeful, and active people."

To illustrate how Future Workshops generate hopefulness and confidence, Jungk and Müllert (1987, p.15) describe surveys of youth from Germany, France and Switzerland. The surveys reported deep levels of pessimism about their future beyond the year 2000. However, those that later participated in Future Workshops reported feeling much more hopeful and positive. What was the difference? They reported that the first survey asked what they expected the future to be. But the second asked them what future they wanted.

The sociologist and futurist Fred Polak (Polak and Boulding, 1973) sees a link between how future outcomes are influenced by a society's shared expectations. Suggesting that if a generation is able to create positive visions of the future the likelihood of achieving that future is increased. Incorporating this function of a Future Workshop into Utopoly is important. There is a growing need for methods which establish positive visions of the future and these visions may have beneficial implications.

The historian and utopian writer Rutger Bregman (2020), drawing on recent research about human nature, considers how certain theories and stories can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Using the analogy of the medical placebo and its antithesis the nocebo, he considers how the story of a selfish and individualist humanity became reinforced and perpetuated. His writing suggests that the stark rationalist ideas of both the philosopher Douglas Hume and economist Milton Friedman could create cynicism and despair in fellow humans, leading to either inaction or correspondingly individualistic behaviour.

As Bregman explains, such ardent proponents of rationality fail to appreciate the diminishing function of their ideology, leaving no room for the imagination or a generative transformative aspect, whereas the value of a more positive story of humanity would be self-generating and beneficial in itself. This could provide a form of agency which can drive the utopian imaginary. Ultimately if a story or idea is believed, it can come to pass. As Bregman (2020, p. 9) states: "If you believe something enough, it can become real...ideas are never *merely* ideas. We are what we believe. We find what we go looking for. And what we predict comes to pass."

And so, as well as having practical outcomes a Future Workshop partly works by amplifying the utopian function of the imagination. What this suggests is that there is a need for methods which can drive the utopian imaginary, and particularly ones that allow positive stories and ideas to be expressed. This role has become the emphasis of Utopoly so that the Future Workshop and game playing parts are both a means for participants to tell stories and hopes for the future, and to experience the stories of others (see section 3.9 Narratives and knowledge creation).

Adding an adapted Future Workshop to Utopoly has achieved my intention of producing more specific utopian property spaces (domains), while at the same time maintaining the collective, creative energy as experienced in the early iterations with lively discussions, expressions of values and potentials throughout.

## 3.2 Critique



Start of Utopoly with the board set up on the right showing the end point of the journey - iteration 11

Since iteration 10 (Furtherfield), at the beginning of a Utopoly session I explain to the participants that we are participating in an emergent method. I show the Utopoly board, which is set up with some game artefacts, and indicate that this is an example of what we are aiming for. I introduce the Critique stage as the first part of the Future Workshop and start of the Utopoly method. It is a troubling part in which I encourage participants either individually or in small groups to bring up issues that concern them about the society they are living in; topics that routinely emerge include: species degradation, racism, inequality, resource extraction, bullying, etc. and their experiences of it. It is the Critique stage that drives the Utopoly method.

In order that the method is not dependent on me running the sessions, and in order to easily replicate it with minimal facilitation, I produced a set of guides with instructions for each stage (introduced during iteration 09). To test this process, I asked for volunteers to read out the appropriate guide (see next page) at the start of each stage. The guide sheet for the Critique Stage is intended to initiate and help lead the critical process. Occasionally there have been a few queries and I have made some adjustments to the guides to cater for this.

### 1. Critique stage:

We are going to spend about 35 minutes to critique the current economic and social situation.

Take a look at the world and ask what's wrong with this picture?

Ask what or who should the economy be working for? and is it?

Consider the social norms that may appear common-sense but maybe exist to enforce and continue the status-quo.

Can you recognise what is expected of you as a good neoliberal agent, is this a natural way for people to behave?

Are the institutions that influence and govern your lives there to benefit society or maybe just a privileged minority?

What do you see around you that shouldn't be happening? Is it sustainable?

Think about what is missing – what doesn't get accounted for – what is not valued but should be and why is this so?

Consider the things that you value that contribute to your quality of life but are marginalised and considered worthless by the ruling establishment.

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You have post-it notes and large sheets of paper to write down as many ideas as you want - free from challenge of accuracy, validity or appropriateness.

Note down: issues, ideas and statements. Write single words, short sentences, phrases or draw pictures.

Feel free to discuss, expand on and join onto other people's ideas.

Each point can trigger or inspire the generation of further points.

You can build on, combine and develop ideas and notes by making connections and associations.

Don't feel bad if you can't think of anything – it is not a competition - and you will find you can contribute in later stages.

The notes can be placed on an appropriate space such as a wall, board or table which is visible to all and moved around and repositioned freely.

Finally: The notes are then grouped, categorised and structured into related themes or areas and are given titles.

The Critique stage guide sheet - iteration 11



Participants brainstorming and discussing issues during the Critique stage- iteration 10

I will encourage them to ask with childlike innocence the question, 'why?' Why is this so? Why does this happen? Feel free to point out that the emperor has no clothes. I encourage the participants to feel validated and directed by the ethics of social justice, both for themselves and for those they feel are treated unfairly. The possibilities of the Critique stage are almost unlimited and determined by the collective interests of the current participants. People bring to it what they want to raise, what they despise and seek to change. For Jungk and Müllert (1987, p. 59) it was a gathering of complaints, a space to bring up what is on the participants' minds, what bothers them and what they would criticize, and I would confirm that this is my experience too.

The Critique stage uses established research techniques of gently steering brainstorming and group discussion, however what makes this different is the focus and intention of the process. It starts with the idea that participants, rather than feel restrained by acceptance of the status quo or common sense, are allowed to and encouraged to question both. Kuntz (2016, p. 77) notes the importance of disrupting the "normative processes - to make strange the familiar". It is about critiquing the present to allow new possibilities for the future, moving from the limits of knowing to the possibilities of the yet-to-be-known.



Participants grouping and discussing issues during the Critique stage - iteration 10

Starting with a brainstorming activity, participants are encouraged to articulate and note down issues, ideas and statements. This is a divergent process, in which as many points as possible are generated, free from challenge of accuracy, validity or appropriateness, and the more points noted down the better. At the same time discussions can occur simultaneously in pairs or between larger groups for a critical exploration around the selected topic. The purpose is to draw out and expose any grievances and negative aspects participants have about a situation.

The notes are usually made on small pieces of paper such as Post-It notes so that they can be placed on an appropriate space, like a wall, board or table which is visible to all, and can be moved around, added to, subtracted, debated and repositioned freely. These notes are then grouped, categorised and structured into related themes or areas, and these are given titles. The aim is to arrive at the eight categories defined by the Utopoly board structure. This dynamic activity involving group decision-making and discussions around the arrangement of notes and ideas produces often fascinating and lively debate.





Participants discuss the organisation and grouping of critique items - iteration 11



"What's that one? It's upside down. Oh, 'planned obsolescence', planned obsolescence."



"It's a kind of a mishmash in the middle of stuff."



"There's so many things that are stuck over there and things stuck over here."



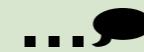
"A lot of it has to do with work in the economy or, time in the economy, really."



"I think that 'It's expensive to be poor' thing that, that there's a lot of stuff around like neo-liberalism down here. And I would put, the 'false scarcity' there. And the 'hard to just do nothing' thing. That, that was that sort of like, here as well".



"Trouble is - it's all interconnected. It does yeah, and then does 'planned obsolescence' go in there as well? Because I see 'planned obsolescence' and 'false scarcity' being... as co-workers for neoliberalism".



"Yeah. Yeah. I would definitely put that there because I think a lot of what neoliberalism has is it is this kind of like, absence of love or care. And, and like."



"Because there yes, that idea of digitising the value of everything. It has a number to it."



"Do we have a working definition of neoliberalism then?"



"Not a working one! No! hah!"



"So, we all know exactly what it is to us."



"Every economic policy decision from 1978!"



"I think. It is a hard one to like explain, this. Because I've tried to explain it to people, and it's basically like the, you know, liberal, liberalism, but for just the what, you know, the 1% or whatever but it's, it's this, this weird mishmash of 1984 and Brave New World. Where it's like, there's all this like, entertainment and this illusion of choice and consumption...but actually, the minute you start testing the boundaries of that freedom, you very quickly find that it's, you know, oh, don't do that. It'll be very difficult for you if you don't behave and consume."



"And also, there's a level that it doesn't work in and of itself, it has to be fudged, you have, you can't let markets freely decide things. In order for neoliberalism to work, you have to - subsidies - quantitative easing - you need to throw money at the banks and others and big industry, car manufacturers and so on, in order to keep them going. Because by the system, as it's, as we're told is given, they should just collapse."

The Critique stage is more than just the start of the Utopoly method, it has value all of its own, which is why it was important to introduce it as a specific, delineated space within Utopoly. During the early iterations, up to iteration 03 (What Happens To Us), the process of defining the utopian domains was nebulous and somewhat unstructured. The introduction of the Critique stage grounds the method in the current and it becomes a 'virtuous inquiry' which is future-oriented and ethically directed. It is part of the knowledge production process with ethical and generative functions and is the precursor to the next (Fantasy) stage. It has a utopian aspect in itself, as Kuntz (2016, p. 26) notes, "Thus, to critique is to more than simply offer criticism; it is to make newly possible, to expose cracks and interstices that otherwise escape processes of meaning-making so that we might live differently."

"As global citizens we are no longer called to just *interpret* the world, which was the mandate of traditional qualitative inquiry. Today, we are called to *change* the world and to do it in ways that resist injustice...".

(Norman Denzin and Michael Giardina, 2010, p. 17)

Kuntz makes an important point in questioning the role of traditional social science research methodologies, suggesting that they are aligned with and support neoliberal values. These rational, technocratic and procedural methods, or what Henry Giroux (2014, p. 46) calls "the dead zone of instrumental rationality", become the justification for interpreting meaning. Kuntz realised that something important is missing. There is no room for creative agency and moral consideration. These methods offer measurements and recordings but no inducement to change. What he terms the 'extractive logic' of recording, quantifying and commodification of data, leaves the subject frozen in time in a form of stasis.



Workings for Critique stage, York University - iteration 13

The gravity of our ecological and socio-economic crisis requires an engaged democracy and so a different sort of inquiry, one which Kuntz proposes (2016, p. 13) can be "(wonderfully) entangled" with politics, so that "Changing how we think about and enact inquiry necessarily involves changing how we interpret and act within the world; therein lies the possibility for productive social change." Kuntz argues that critique should therefore involve intervention, and to not do so is ethically irresponsible.



Initial groupings and categories which can become the basis of the next (Fantasy) stage - iteration 10

This type of critique therefore could be a more potent agent for progressive change. What this shows is that there isn't just a gap in the field of utopian studies for such methods, but also in traditional forms of methodological practice. It appears that what Kuntz is looking for are utopian methods that intervene to prefigure the future, to critically engage with the now or what-has-become, and to then open up space for the future, or the what-is-yet-to-become.

Utopoly combines critique with play in a game format and is the embodiment of this process. Such games that challenge the status quo are rare and considered by Flanagan (2013, p. 251) the "avant-garde of games". Flanagan (2010, p. 51) describes them as either an "activist game" or "critical" play; games that can address social issues, explore complex ideas, imagine futures and reveal transformative possibilities.

The sociologist Norman Denzin and cultural qualitative methodologist Michael Giardina state (2010, p. 17), "As global citizens we are no longer called to just *interpret* the world, which was the mandate of traditional qualitative inquiry. Today, we are called to *change* the world and to do it in ways that resist injustice...". Therefore, the Critique stage is included as the starting point of Utopoly-as-method, where the ultimate aim is to imagine utopian spaces. In this space participants can experience the emancipation of telling their story to challenge the previously unquestioned normative narratives of power.

When running these sessions, it is important to keep in mind the aim of the process which is to populate the Utopoly board, and also be aware of the time available. I usually allow roughly the same amount of time for each of the three stages, Critique, Fantasy and Implementation, which has ranged from 30-45 minutes each. Once the participants have grouped eight or so categories of critiques (there are eight coloured areas on the board, but this is just a rough guide), I gently suggest that it is time to move on to the Fantasy stage.


## 3.3 Fantasy

At the start of the Fantasy stage, I ask a volunteer to read out the guide sheet for the Fantasy stage (see next page). The sheet explains that participants should respond to the outputs from Critique stage and also are free to imagine utopian values independent of it. The Fantasy stage proceeds in a similar manner to the Critique stage with brainstorming, open discussion, writing of Post-It notes and ending with grouping and categorizing the items.




Responding to critique items concerning the pressure to be constantly productive - iteration 11



 "I think this 'Appropriate tech' thing kind of goes with the 'Outcome free days', because it's talking about the like, the deoptimization of humans, because we're not machines. And you know having appropriate tech, because our aim isn't to maximise outputs and maximise profits".

 "Efficiency".

 "Yeah".

 "The opposite of efficiency".



### 2. Fantasy stage:

This is the Fantasy stage – where the magic happens – the Radical Imagination and the play.

The intention is to envision different futures, unconstrained by whether they can be realized or not, they are fantasies of a utopian nature.

We are going to address and respond to the points and issues arising from the Critique stage.

These become the desires, ideas, alternative values, attributes and features of a utopian future.

The critique points can also be 'flipped' or inverted to describe an opposite or contrasting view with a reframing or repositioning of situations for a progressive outcome.

Be playful and let your imagination and creativity free – as Jungk pointed out we are conditioned from school, work and consumerism to be compliant workers and consumers (creativity was reserved for the elites).

As well as responding to the Critique stage, ask yourself:

What is missing, what is not valued by the current system?

What do we value, what should we value?

How would people behave – how should we live?

How should we treat each other?

Consider different social transactions, forms of value exchange and currencies.

What would this new world look like?

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Again, whatever you come up with is useful and if you can't think of anything don't worry it is not a competition – note down words, phrases, short sentences, draw pictures on the post-it notes - free from challenge of credibility, validity or appropriateness.

Feel free to bounce off other peoples' ideas, add to them - engage with them and discuss - respond to and explore emerging themes.

Each idea can trigger or inspire the generation of further ideas.

You can build on, combine and develop ideas and notes making connections and associations.

The notes can be placed on an appropriate space such as a wall, board or table which is visible to all and moved around and repositioned freely.

Finally: The notes are then grouped, categorised and structured into related themes or areas and are given titles.

The Fantasy stage guide sheet - iteration 11



It's like efficiency, where that allows us to actually live better lives... But sort of, you know, just imagine that you were a tourist from our current system, and you turn up in this utopia and you're going, the only thing that's actually on time round here is the public transport! You know, I can rely on that to be on time, but everything else is 'well we'll do that ....we'll start cooking in an hour, you don't need to do it now', and it's sort of this thing of like, it's not a disorganised society, but it's a relaxed society. You know?"

"That's the slogan!"

Here the participants at iteration 11 (Cosmia) were responding to items from the critique stage concerning their accelerating pace of life and the relentless expectation to always be more productive in work and leisure time. The Fantasy stage is intended to be a creative space where participants are invited to work together to review and address the emerging themes and issues arising from the Critique stage.

It is the second core feature of Utopoly which works hand in hand with the Critique stage and is a response to it. For the participants it is the utopian space where the magic happens, where the art or creative imagination can play out. In fact, imagination is used as a reverse magic to break the magic spell of the status quo, or dominant ideology. This type of fantasy is illustrated by culture and fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes (2002, p. xx – xxii), who relates author Erich Kästner's modern fairy tale of an old man informing the world's heads of state how everyone could have houses, gardens, schools and hospitals, all for the price of the last war.



Fantasy stage items and groupings taking shape - iteration 09

The fantasy ideas can be straightforward public good like 'Housing for all', 'Fulfilling Work', 'Free and fabulous Health care for all', 'Embrace diversity' and 'Green energy and clean air'. Ideas do not have to be new - participants can give voice to and share ideas they are aware of, but have not yet become common discourse such as 'universal basic income' and 'universal basic services'. Other times they are more imaginative: 'Trauma schools – educate how trauma can effect each individual', 'Ecocide becomes law', 'Outcome-free days', 'Teaching empathy', 'Radical laziness, compulsory lie-ins', 'Create living waste recycling libraries' and 'Reconsider whether we need wars, re-educate for peace'.



Engaging radical imagination during Fantasy stage - iteration 10

The participants are asked to engage their radical imagination. For Haiven and Khasnabish (2014, p. 3), the radical imagination is the “ability to imagine the world, life and social institutions not as they are but as they might otherwise be. It is the courage and intelligence to recognise that the world can and should be changed”. In the Fantasy stage participants are invited to produce fantasies of a utopian nature, unconstrained by whether they can be realized or not. Which provides the possibility of moving from the limits of knowing to the possibilities of the yet-to-be-known. This is the utopian feature of opening up space for the future and moving towards the ‘what-is-yet-to-become’.

This is also the political space in which the future is open and crucially, not a continuation of the present. Levitas (2013, p. 219) states that utopian practice should be understood as a process of “...simultaneously critiquing the present, exploring alternatives, imagining ourselves otherwise and experimenting with prefigurative practices”. It is the exploring of alternatives and imagining ourselves differently that is the focus of the Fantasy stage.



Brainstorming and discussing Fantasy items - iteration 10

Hopkins argues that constraints can be useful to initiate the imagination (2019, p.124). The Critique stage provides such constraints and sets up targets to work against. It lays out the terms of reference and issues to be addressed, and answers the question ‘What is?’, or the current ‘truth’ of a situation. The Fantasy stage provides the utopian space for another question. In order to unlock the imagination, Hopkins (2019, p.123) asks for questions that begin with ‘What if?’ He cites the proponent of civic engagement Eric Liu and imagination theorist Scott Noppe-Brandon (2011, pp. 32-33) in their call for a move from ‘*what is to what if*’. As a utopian device it is offered as a crack in the door through which to peer to the other side. For Hopkins, it is “an invitation as much as a question” (2019, p. 123).

It is also rare for people to have the opportunity to criticise the existing state of society and work out how to reshape it. As a result, participants can become animated and engaged when given the opportunity to contribute their ideas about what they want in contrast to what they think is expected of them.



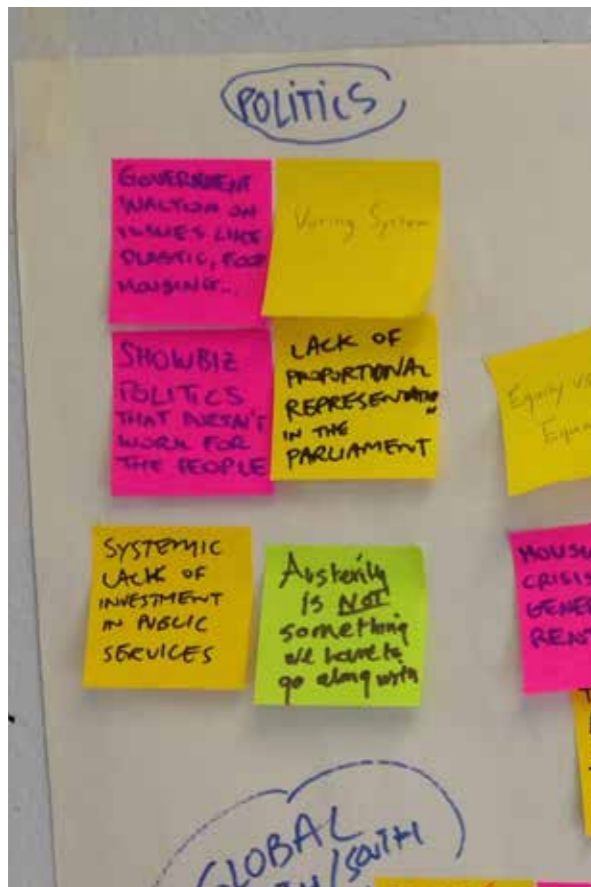
Grouping and categorizing Fantasy items - iteration 09

At the Fantasy stage I encourage the participants to discuss and note down desires, ideas, alternative values, attributes and features of a utopian future. Each idea is written on a Post-It note and added to a shared space, wall or table. A simple response to the critique points made earlier could be to 'flip' or invert the statements to describe an opposite or contrasting view with a reframing or repositioning of situations for a progressive outcome. Again, this is an open-ended, divergent process which provides the opportunity for the participants to respond to and explore emerging themes. For instance, at iteration 11 (Cosmia) the critique items of 'Subsidising methane production', 'Counter-intuitive subsidies', and 'Fossil fuel subsidies' were all combined and 'flipped' to become the converse of 'Subsidise sustainable agriculture, energy and transport'. The longer critique item of 'Optimising ourselves even in our leisure / down time – pressure to be productive - have internalised', spawned several responses such as 'Outcome free days', 'Radical laziness – compulsory lie-ins' and 'not a disorganised society, but a relaxed society'.



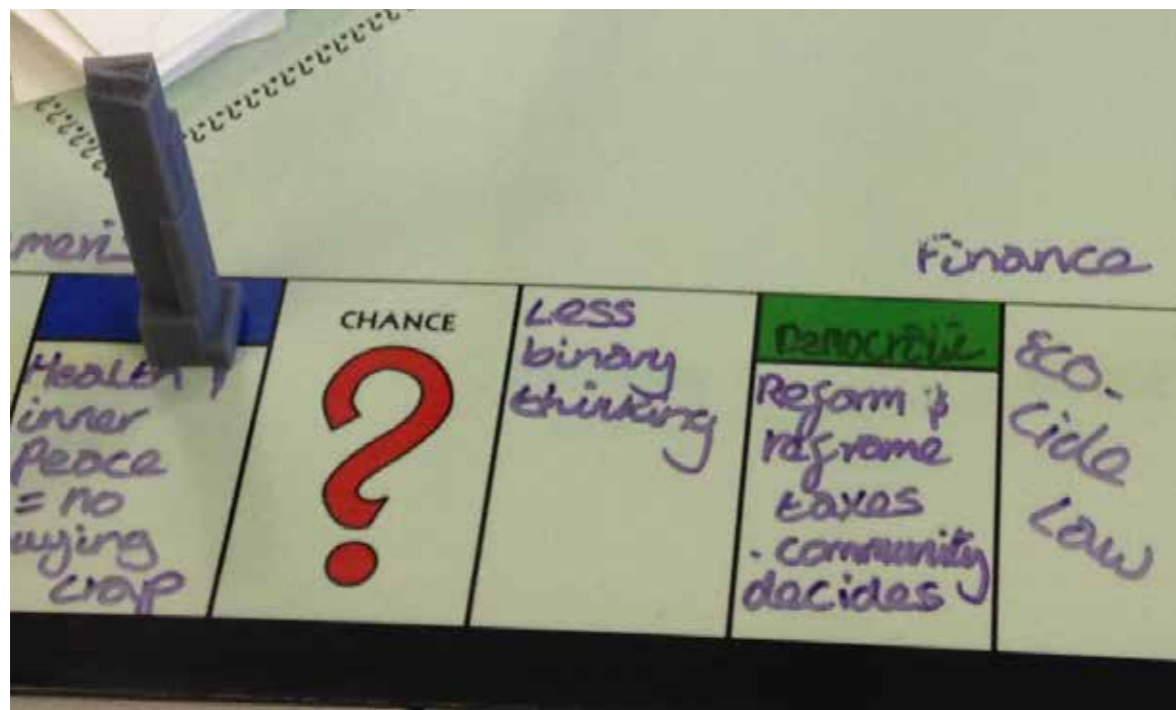
Grouping and categorising Fantasy items - iteration 13

A round of grouping and categorisation of the notes and ideas occurs with accompanying conversation. The resulting taxonomy of categories may later define or delineate areas of the Utopoly board during the Implementation stage (see section 3.4 Implementation). For instance, at iteration 10 (Furtherfield) the following areas were categorised: 'Tech', 'Health', 'Activism', 'Waste', 'Inequality', 'Discrimination', 'Sustainability & Environment', 'Education', 'Housing', 'Finance Systems', 'Global North and South discrimination', 'Consumerism' and 'Politics'. Participants are not limited to responding to the individual items derived from the Critique stage - they can also come up with new items related to the categories, or entirely unrelated, new ideas. What is important is that conversation has been stimulated and knowledge transferred. The guide sheet for the Fantasy stage is intended to initiate and help lead this envisioning process.



Category of Politics from Critique stage - iteration 10      Category of Politics from Fantasy stage - iteration 10

From the discussion on politics (see next page) two utopian ideas emerged: 'Alternative voting' and 'Less binary thinking'. The idea of 'less binary thinking' was to be applied across the board and appeared as a domain in its own right.



'Less binary thinking' implemented as a domain - iteration 10



“And there's a lot under politics as well. This was really interesting to see, where most of them are going.”

“Shall we hit the politics then? Yeah. Politics!”

“Right 'Proportional representation', 'Understanding deep state behind', 'People's Assembly'? Yeah, I can't read that one, there is quite a lot on that...”

“‘Less binary thinking in politics in recognition of individual personality typologies, in terms of conservatism and liberalism’, it is pretty complex. But yeah, less binary politics.”

“Like reductionism?”

“Well just the kind of like, when it's constant 'us and them', then it's not healthy. And like, we start to recognise that some people have personality typology that causes them to go towards conservatism. And some people have a personality typology that makes them go towards liberalism. Then we can perhaps come to a closer central point ...”

“We've got 'Alternative voting', what else is there? 'Understanding Deep State behind politicians' ”.

“What was alternative voting?”

“Well, I, yeah, I said it. Well, maybe I wrote it in a more general sense. It's just the alternative voting, to current voting system, where data gets mixed up for, like a specific way you could do voting. It's called authentic voting but... ”

“What is it again?”

“Authentic voting, so when you actually you get, you can vote. And then you can vote by, you can decide your top 10 or you can basically rate the politicians. And then in the end, that gets summed up and then whoever has the highest score or something like that, instead of like, more binary.”

“Rankings rather than voting.”

“Finally perform like, even though the people have the same politicians in mind for voting if you rank them then the results change pretty much”.





“We no longer have any Joker, Trickster Gods, right. Whereas most mythologies that have multiple Gods, have at least one trickster God. There were some cultures which had that as a major part of their culture. The natives of Nova Scotia used to have basically a satire festival every year, where they take the piss out of the important people. And in Irish culture, the Bards used to have that, to the extent that there are records of unjust clan chiefs killing themselves, because they’ve been totally humiliated by the Bards. And nobody looked up to them anymore. And basically they’re thrown out”.

“Oh that’s how we could deal with Boris - we don’t have that...”

“Using comedy to deflate people.”

“Which is to take out that, excess of hubris or whatever...And then, but yeah, I mean, talking about like the media and stuff. We didn’t talk a lot about the media in there. But just the role that the media has to play in shaping public opinions and people’s, how willing they are, to accept different policies and ways of living and just going back to the satire thing. What do you call it? It’s like, you know, a mechanism for equalising power. So using satire as a tool...”

“Holding people accountable.”

“The check on power.”

“That’s satire it’s not quite that though is it? Because you can hold people to account - without trying to be funny”.

“So deflating people down to...just making sure that they don’t get above themselves”.

“But actually, it doesn’t even have to be directly to them. It’s to how other people see them. It’s taking away some of their power - through humour.”

“Yeah. But that holding people to account thing is really important”.

“Satire is sort of part of that isn’t it?”

“Without the kind of investigative journalism”.

“Yeah. So can I put no private ownership of media in the Fantasy state?”

Trickster Gods might seem an unusual utopian fantasy but during the Fantasy stage the participants are encouraged to build on, add to and bounce off each other’s ideas. There is a relational aspect to the process where shared imaginaries and understandings start to arise, interact and multiply. This effect is recognized by Haiven and Khasnabish (2014, p. 4) who state that “the imaginative capacity of any individual is influenced by and influences others.” This particular discussion sparked by Trickster Gods produced the following Fantasy stage ideas: ‘No private ownership of media’, ‘Equality of power’, ‘Eliminate deference’, ‘More satire as a check on power, accountable’ and finally, during the Implementation stage it became the domain ‘Social norms of satire to humble and hold people in power to account’.



Trickster Gods appears as a Fantasy stage item - iteration 11

Whilst the Critique stage deals with the critical ‘truth’ of the present for each participant, the Fantasy stage involves the possibilities of forming ‘new utopian truths’. The Fantasy stage allows ‘new truths’ to emerge which have not yet been realised to form and express the basis of a utopian desire. The political theorist Susan McManus (2005) describes ‘new truths’ as being dependent on the Not-Yet-Conscious, and that working in this space allows individuals to “viscerally grasp the collective future” (2005, p. 159), referring to Bloch’s notion of how the ‘new’ becomes psychologically born. Together participants practice the work of ‘becoming’ to bring forth that ‘Not-Yet-Conscious’. This involves engaging in the Blochian process of obtaining utopia as self-generating.

Once again, keeping an eye on time available and the progress in generating Fantasy items to populate the Utopoly board, I suggest that it is time to move on to the Implementation stage.

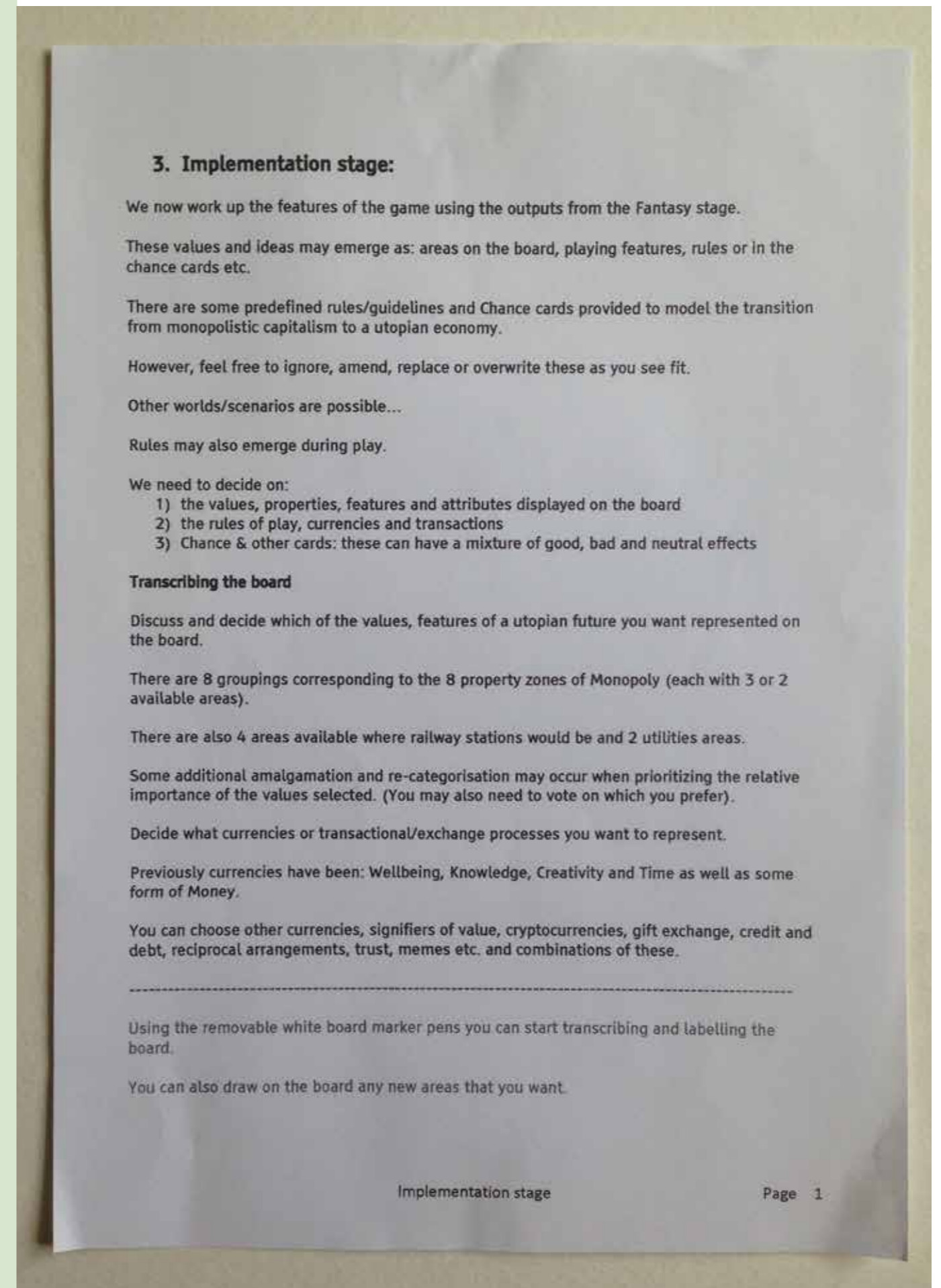
## 3.4 Implementation



Transcribing the Utopoly board with utopian domains - iteration 09

To begin I ask a participant to read the Implementation stage guide sheet (see next page). In its simplest form the Implementation stage involves transcribing the ideas, values, dreams and desires, (the outputs from the Fantasy stage) on to the blank domain spaces on the Utopoly board. This is where the Utopoly version of a Future Workshop varies from the traditional method. A Future Workshop normally culminates in taking the outputs from the Fantasy stage and converting them into real-world solutions. In the Utopoly method the Implementation stage takes the form of transcribing the values at play in a utopian future onto a game format.

There are several features that are open to development, and that can be worked on: the domains and optionally the rules and other game artefacts. The collectively agreed outputs from previous stages can be incorporated into the features of the new game. The generation of the game and its play then represents a snapshot of a desired future situation. The participants are initially supplied with a recognisable 'Monopoly' board (renamed Utopoly) and with empty spaces, which invites and requires that the domains are inscribed. They use the white board marker pens to write onto the laminated board.

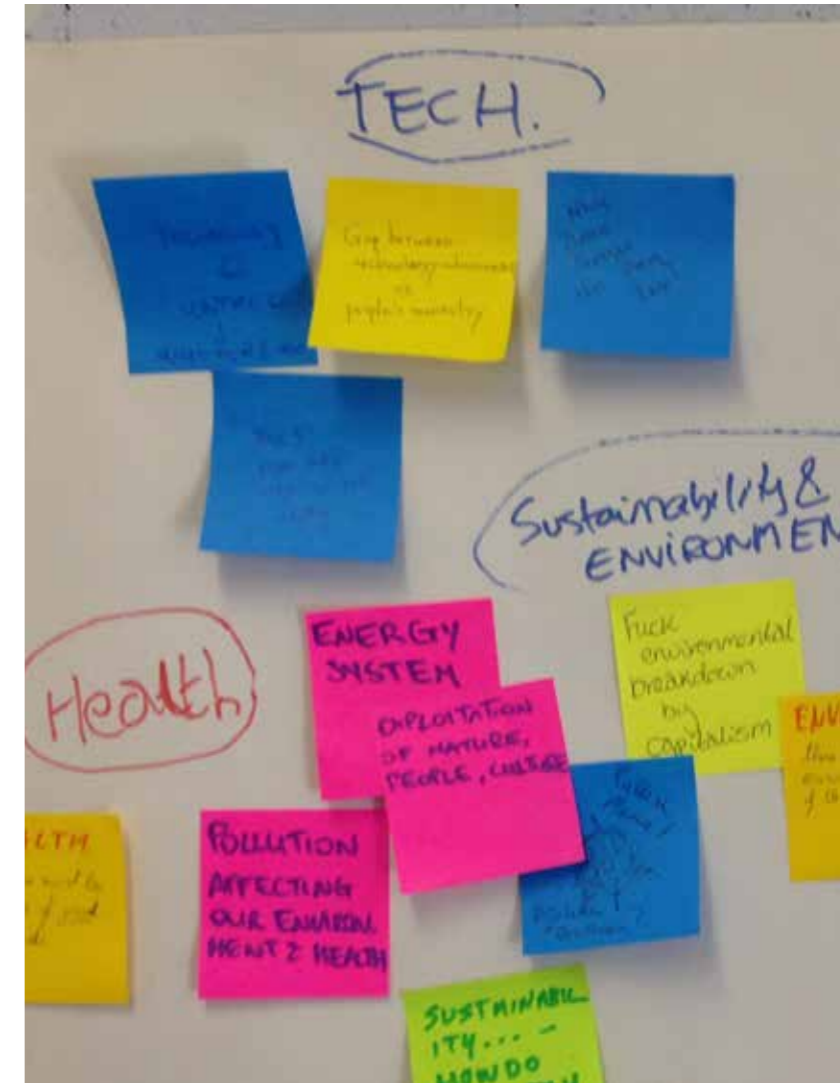


The Implementation stage guide sheet - iteration 11



Transcribing the Utopoly board with dry wipe pens - iteration 13

During the Implementation stage the participants discuss and decide which of the features of a utopian future they want represented on the board and in the game. These include: the values, properties and attributes displayed as domains on the board. However, Utopoly uses an adapted Monopoly board and this board structure imposes limitations. These limitations create the requirement for the participants to both concentrate and be selective on the choices they make and also creative in how these values are eventually written on the board. This is the final winnowing out and selection process. Usually, more values emerge from the Fantasy stage than can be accommodated. Some amalgamation and re-categorisation may occur but ultimately a selection process is carried out. There are 8 groupings (of 2 or 3 spaces) corresponding to the 8 property zones of Monopoly. There are also 4 spaces available where the railway stations would be and 4 more spaces for the utilities (water and electricity), and taxation.



Critique stage Post-It notes for 'Tech' category - iteration 10

The full process for collectively deciding on the contents of the blank domains spans the three stages of Critique, Fantasy and Implementation. There is much lively discussion, agreement, dis-agreement, substitution and erasure. For instance, during the Critique stage of iteration 10 (Furtherfield), the following issues were grouped into the category of 'Tech' (Technology):

- 'Technology & Control -> Who for & How'
- 'Gap between technology advancement vs people's mentality'
- 'Why does Google not pay tax?'
- 'Tools that are not going away'



Fantasy stage Post-It notes for 'Tech' category - iteration 10









During the Fantasy stage the response (on Post-It notes) to the 'Tech' category was:

- 'Tech to augment people's abilities, not replace them'
- 'People realise nature is the answer, not tech'
- 'Tech companies owned by government – commons?'
- 'Hack Facebook, Google to share the tools and resources and ideas that challenge the status quo'
- 'Free Information access'
- 'Don't rely on tech to sort out all environmental problems'



Participants discuss the outputs from the Fantasy stage for 'Tech' - iteration 10



- 
 "Okay, 'Tech' so we've got 'free information access', 'Don't be relying on technology to save our environment'."
- 
 "I wrote that, as well as 'tech companies owned by government'."
- 
 "Okay. 'tech to augment people's abilities, not replace them', 'people realise nature is the answer, not tech'."
- 
 "Oh, we have got a lot of that haven't we?"
- 
 "And um 'hack Facebook and Google and to use - to share the tools resources and ideas'."
- 
 "Could we put De-tech?"
- 
 "Put nature, how about nature and tech like, in harmony or something."
- 
 "Yeah, who was saying like earlier about Oh, it's [tech] good because you know we have all these obvious benefits - nature and tech in harmony yeah?"





“Could we abolish patents - and make them commons?”

“Did you say abolish patents?”

“Yeah? Patents.”

“That is a worry isn’t it, Yeah.”

“So no, there is no intellectual property everything should be open source.”

“I really I like that one until you get to the point where it’s, people create something and it’s, I don’t know.”

“Which is just stealing other people’s ideas to make money from you.”

“It’s like, who has the money to profit from it.”

“Exactly.”

“Whereas the people who had the ideas get pushed...”

“It’s a really difficult one if you think about it.”

“Yeah, it is - is it like absolute, like commons licencing only - like you can’t”.

“There are commons licenses that force you to share the benefits, the improvements they have...”.

“Yeah, that’s interesting, because you know, no tech is ever brand new anyway, they borrow ideas and usually there’s people making for a company and the company owns your licence. You can’t leave and take that with you. Because you’ve signed to say that’s their IP isn’t it, yeah.”

“I think there should be something about who owns these companies, who gets to make decisions, who gets to feed into this because, it’s currently done behind closed doors. Yeah. Especially when you’ve got AI, like you people sorry, you know, yeah. ”



“Do we have another one for Tech?”

“So, what have we got, ‘nature and tech in harmony and commons license’.”

“Make something about it - more like...”

“Ownership?”

“Yeah, ownership - is that the same? commons licence - commons ownership?”

“No, commons license is about innovation. Your ideas being shared? Yeah. And then there’s the ownership of the means of production back to like, who owns the robots? Is it Google? Is it Elon Musk? or is it?”

“Probably!”

“So, it’s ‘Public governance over all the Tech’ Yeah. Great.”












What emerged from this discussion was not a direct transcription of the Fantasy stage ideas but an amalgamation of several ideas into three domains:

- ‘Nature / tech in harmony’
- ‘Commons licenced only’
- ‘Public governance over production’






The ‘Tech’ category domains in play as transcribed on the Utopoly board - iteration 10



-  "I feel like that they are Pall Mall and..."
-  "You feel that they are Pall Mall?"
-  "Yeah, I feel like, I particularly like the 'Hackspace'."
-  "So immediately, we've jumped into the hierarchy of the Monopoly board, oh I'm not putting 'Hackspace' on Old Kent Road."
-  "And I know what I'm putting on Mayfair, the most expensive. I'm putting the thing that I most value."
-  "But there is that thing about like, what I most value yeah, isn't necessarily what other people would most or what is most societally useful"...
-  "We shouldn't be carrying anything, presumably, from Monopoly across..."
-  "Except that maybe it is more what's valuable. There's a question about what's valuable collectively, which might map on to like, which would you least like to lose of all these things, and that has a, or what generates the most value in inverted commas for them, for everybody, or something like that?"...
-  "As we are on the section of 'equality' of this that, and the other the idea of building a hierarchy into the shape of the board seems a bit counterintuitive."
-  "So, there won't be any hierarchy, but we'll still keep 'Hackspace' on Pall Mall..."
-  "Then we've got an invisible hierarchy which would be even better!"

The discussions and debates around which values and ideas are to be represented expose the communal priorities of the group. The act of writing the Post-It notes and making the interconnections or affinities between them is a formation of meaning and the production of knowledge. Where several of the values are similar or related, they may be reworked into one all-encompassing phrase or value, such as 'Nature / tech in harmony', and this in itself may produce a second level of knowledge creation. Once all of this has been collaboratively decided, the board is transcribed and labelled and Utopoly is produced.



-  "So, we could have like, what where the 'Go' is, we could have, sort of the foundations of our society first, you know, then it builds up because a lot of the stuff about, you know, equality and like the 'post machismo' stuff, we could start off with that. And then that's like, providing the conditions for those, like physical spaces and these particular types of economic and social exchanges?"
-  "So, you have to traverse those ways of being before you can fully appreciate the society that would be built."
-  "Year zero, there!"



Utopoly board implemented and ready to play - iteration 11



Co-designing the Utopoly board - iteration 09

There is a second optional aspect to the Implementation stage which gives the participants the opportunity to influence how the game is played (see section 4.0 Rules as guidelines). It is another important feature of Utopoly. In the early iterations of the method, participants worked out the rules for the game which contributed to how the method developed. They collectively determined: the rules of play, the currencies, players' goals, end-of-game scenarios and aspects of jeopardy. They were able to determine how the new utopian economy works and what currencies and types of transactions they wanted. In later iterations (from iteration 09 onwards) this activity became one area which, due to time constraints was less well attended to, and so the method has evolved to operate with a set of predefined guidelines instead.

These guidelines can still be modified, added to or ignored. This improvisational aspect does not need to be completed here but is left open for amendment during the game if required. Similarly, a set of 'Chance' and 'Community chest' type cards are provided, and participants can create new cards relevant to the values and the other game constructs they have chosen. Alternatively, they can work with those provided and have the option to amend later during play (see section 4.11 Chance cards).

Involving the participants in the formation of the game can become a very hands-on intense process of co-design. It is a key feature of Utopoly and is the utopian space in action. By working through the process of critique, fantasy and implementation the game Utopoly is generated and can function as a vision of a collectively imagined and possible future. Utopoly therefore accommodates utopian educationalist Darren Webb's (2013, p. 286) pedagogic requirement for "liberating the imagination from the constraints of common sense, throwing up new solutions to pressing contemporary problems, generating new patterns of desire, and catalysing change."

Such work is a step beyond the critical play of Flanagan (2013), where people are limited to playing a game created by games designers. Here they can engage in the development of the game itself and the building of their vision of the future. When the game is played each participant becomes a player experiencing the new economic and social possibilities they have created.

This provides the opportunity to take part in a utopian moment, modelling the process where the transformation of the self and of the world are interdependent and augment each other. Matter (social stasis) and possibility are considered relational. As sociologist and educationalist Sarah Amsler (2018, p.61) states, "This locates the genesis of possibility not in 'objective' conditions or 'subjective' will, but in their mutual transformation through activities that bring them into encounter with one another". This function is described by Bloch (1995, quoted in Amsler, 2018, p. 61) as being "processus cum figures, figurae in processu", or the process is made by those who are made by the process.

Again, keeping an eye on time it might be necessary to gently encourage the participants to complete the task of transcribing the Utopoly domains, so that there is enough time to play the game. If necessary, to hurry decision making, it can be worth adding a few of the Fantasy Post-it notes that have not already been included. I then suggest it is time to play the game Utopoly, their utopian construct. The game and guideline rules are discussed in Phase 4.

## 3.5 Propagating the Utopoly method



Introducing researchers from the ValueModels project to Utopoly - iteration 05

Shortly after the CCW 1<sup>st</sup> Year exhibition I was fortunate to have a research group from the ValueModels project (Monnin, 2019) visit Chelsea College of Arts from Nice in France. They were invited to have a demonstration of the method and were the first to play a game with the new laminated board, and together we had a lively session. The ValueModels project is concerned with recording values and detecting externalities for institutions and evaluative communities, which are then modelled using blockchain technology. They spotted the potential of the Utopoly method and were taken by it. They have since been inspired to use Utopoly in their own research.



Researchers from the ValueModels project ran a Utopoly camp - iteration 08

I made the Utopoly board design files available under a Creative Commons licence and provided instructions for how to make the board. The ValueModels group have since built their own board and developed their own variations, initially running sessions in Galeries Lafayette, Paris (iteration 06) and also La Myne, Lyon (iteration 08). They have also contributed to propagating it further afield to be adopted by others.

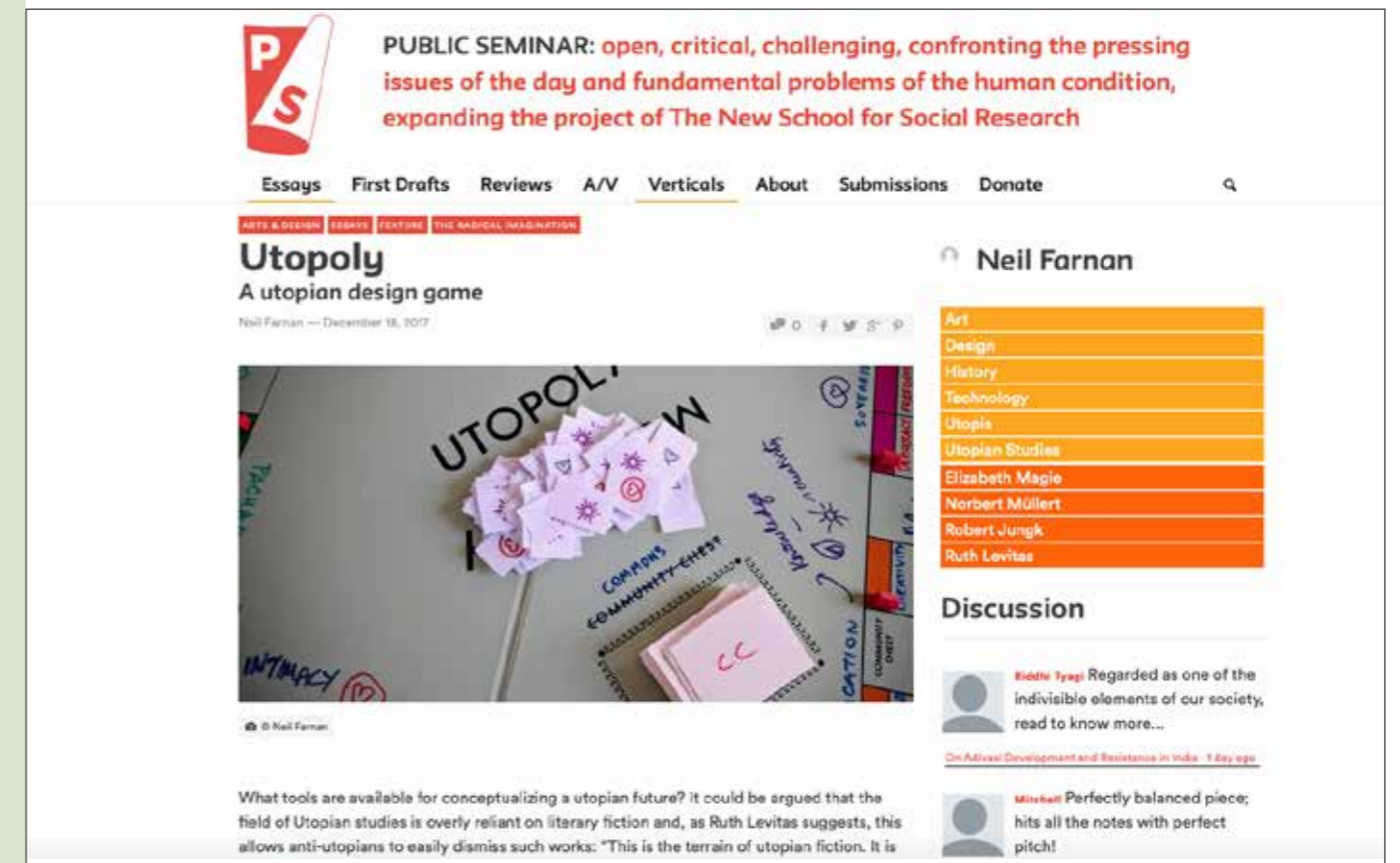


After this event (iteration 05) I co-wrote, with artist and curator Francesca Baglietto (2017), an online article for the art group Furtherfield: *UTOPOLY - playing as a tool to reimagine our future: an interview with Neil Farnan*. An image of the ValueModels group playing with the new laminated board featured as an illustration in this article. The article was published on the Furtherfield website and had a large readership (8,500+ views), and led to a listing on the P2P Foundation Wiki and further propagation of the method.



Article written for the Furtherfield website, published April 2017

The Furtherfield article led to an invitation to write a larger and more detailed piece, *Utopoly: A utopian design game* (Farnan, 2017) for Public Seminar, the New School Publishing Initiative, which is dedicated to the intellectual and cultural work of democracy. The article was part of their Radical Imagination series and is hosted online by The New School for Social Research (New York City, USA).



Article written for Public Seminar, published December 2017

## 3.6 Organisational application

Over the course of this research Utopoly has developed into a versatile and adaptive method. While the initial intention was to concentrate on formulating utopian ideas for alternatives to the current neoliberal orthodoxy, it has since been used in other contexts by many different participants.



Utopoly adapted for Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris - iteration 06



Utopoly in play at Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris - iteration 06

After participating at iteration 05 (ValueModels, Chelsea), researchers from the ValueModels project took the method and ran their own independent sessions. This was a fantastic addition to my research, as the method began to develop and be replicated independently.

Their first session (iteration 06) for the Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette (27<sup>th</sup> April 2017) used a downloaded version of my modified board and their recollections and notes from the experience of playing at Chelsea (16<sup>th</sup> March 2017). At this point the guidelines had not been fully formulated and they also introduced different currencies.

The ValueModels application of Utopoly as method was structured around understanding the current organisational formation of the foundation, and then had the intention of exploring the future of the organisation. In doing so they took the method from a general economic and social outlook to a more specific, localised formation.



Utopoly adapted for Islington Mill arts hub and community, Salford - iteration 07

Discovering utopian possibilities within an organisational setting was explored further when Alexandre Monnin and Manuel Boutet invited me to join them in running iteration 07 at Islington Mill arts hub and community in Salford (this is discussed further in section 3.8 Special domains).



Utopoly adapted for the Academic Support 'Away day' Workshop - iteration 12

Utopoly then provides the potential for groups to imagine institutional change and ultimately bring about changes to an organisation. It was for this type of application of Utopoly that I was commissioned to run iteration 12 (Academic Support, Streatham). The Academic Support group at University of Arts London wanted to inform how future policy and novel ways of working could benefit the university, and also explore their positioning and relationships within an educational organisation. For reasons of privacy the pertinent material content of this iteration must remain confidential.

## 3.7 Autonomous corporate entity

The corporate entity emerged during iteration 03 (What Happens To Us) when a group of players decided that they wanted an opposing force to work against. Its creation had the effect of increasing the collaborative nature of the players (see section 2.2 An oppositional entity). One player took the role of the corporate entity, as a representation of 'the way things are' and because there is no 'blank' starting point, and much of the economic, cultural and social landscape exists under their hegemony. The other players cooperate against this entity in pursuit of their desired utopian outcomes.

This entity as antagonist later evolved into an even more meaningful feature for the game part of the method. It was at iteration 05 (ValueModels, Chelsea), participated in by the ValueModels group from France, that Manuel Boutet made an interesting suggestion. Rather than have a participant play the corporate entity role it could instead be operated as an automaton, a simulated or dummy figure (an NPC or non-player character), which would be moved according to dice rolls made on its behalf by other players.

This was an important moment in the development of Utopoly, as it further demonstrated the structural and systemic situation faced by those with progressive aspirations. It was a realisation that there is no need for the corporate entity to be controlled by a player making decisions about what it wants to do. Its decision-making is mechanistic and predetermined so that it continues to move around the board, accumulating ever more domains. The introduction of the autonomous corporate figure was found to have a positive effect on the group dynamics, increasing the collaborative cohesion of the group playing. This time all participants cooperated for the production of a common good they desired in the face of an emotionless system that lacks moral judgement.



The corporate entity represented by suited figures (architectural models) - iteration 05

During play if there are several utopian players then they will soon start to take control of domains more rapidly than a single corporate figure (see section 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game). This means they would quite quickly overturn the initial advantage of the corporate entity and effectively end the game by controlling more domains (the full ending conditions are set out in the guidelines, see Conclusion - Guidelines for Utopoly). In order to allow continued game play and discussion, there can be more than one autonomous figure moving around the game board, depending on the number of utopian players.



"So who's representing, which figure is representing?..."



"The baddies?"



"Those three."



"Those three guys, the guys in suits - you can have a lady in a suit if you like - would you like a lady in a suit?"



"The Patriarchy has many faces!..."



"We will have to take one off - we might have too many baddies if we are not careful."

For playing pieces, the corporate entity was represented by white plastic figures in business suits and postures. These were sourced from a type commonly used to represent people in architectural models. As the aspirational embodiment of a corporate lifestyle, the figures were to represent the corporate employees, their managers and directors. As such, they move around the board as human tools doing the work of corporate and neoliberal ideology - accumulating and extracting wealth and wrecking the planet's ecosystem. I introduced these figures in iteration 05 (ValueModels, Chelsea) - the purpose was to easily differentiate them from the utopian players' game pieces (an assortment of entities that participants can self-identify with and use as an avatar in the game).



Three autonomous corporate entity figures in play - iteration 11



"Would it not be more fun to have one of us play the corporate character?"



"Well you could do if you wanted to" ...



"So, he can control 'Housing', he controls the 'Environment'!"



[Corporate Player:] "That's great. I'm off to Monte Carlo!"

...



"What I'm contesting is that I don't want to give the Knowledge to them.

I want to fight them with the Knowledge."



"Oh, I see."



[Corporate Player:] "But you've given me the knowledge already because you've used my computer, my internet, you tell me all about your activities on Facebook - I own your personal profile!"



"[player pretends to cry]"

The autonomous non-player character is a useful addition to the method, and it is offered as an initial default option. However, in a number of recent iterations, participants have still chosen to play the role of the corporate entity. Players revelled in the initially powerful starting position and limitless credit. They can perform the useful function of devil's advocate, often inhabiting the role as a cynical pantomime villain bringing an added layer of fun and discussion to the game-play. This aspect reminds me and the participants that whilst some of the formations and actions of the corporate entity may seem like automatons, they still remain useful to vested interests and are directed and employed by powerful elites.

In its simplest form, the role of the corporate entity is to resist utopian progress, to add friction. However, when used either as an autonomous non-player character or played by a participant, it can bring a different perspective and insight into the workings of an economic system predicated on the corporate and capitalist modus operandi. There is a duality and disconnect for people who, through necessity must provide for their livelihoods, either as employees or consumers of a corporation that does not share their personal beliefs or moral objectives. They may disagree with what that corporation does. They may realise that the economic system is not working in the best interest of their families and communities, but are forced into complicity through lack of agency.

The corporate entity thus provides a device to highlight this incongruity. It casts a lens on the fact that the participants must live in the extant world while at the same time working to change it. As Bloch (1971, quoted in Zipes, 2002, p. 147) describes, "The root of history, however, is the human being, working, producing, reforming, and surpassing the givens around him or her."



Three autonomous corporate entity figures ready to play - iteration 11

While the white suited plastic figures represented one aspect of the corporate entity, I decided to extend the corporate entity motif with some additional game artefacts. The game Monopoly comes with a set of small plastic red and green model buildings. Once a property is 'owned' by a player these pieces represent progressive stages of investment and development, with red hotels being the highest level. Higher rents are then demanded from other players who land on them. With the earlier hacks these red hotels were used to denote which domains were owned and controlled by the corporate entity.

The expanded size of the Utopoly board meant these small pieces did not scale well and appeared diminutive, and so were less representative of their associated meaning. Other than the red colouring there was something too innocuous about these pieces for what I wanted to express. The original Monopoly was designed to represent a city with rents being charged for property owning - in today's economy the nature of rentier capitalism has expanded into many more diverse areas.

The entrepreneur Peter Barnes (2016) explains that the concept of rent now includes monopoly profits obtained by certain privileges granted by government, including subsidies, tax loopholes, mining rights and import quotas. The economist Joseph Stiglitz (2013, pp. 45-48) expands this list to the control of labour markets, the financial sector's privileged information, non-competitive government procurement and intellectual property rights. To enact these rent-seeking activities, corporate bodies engage in 'regulatory capture' (ibid., p. 59) and influence government legislation by rewarding regulators with post-government careers in the very industries they are regulating. Then there is a more subtle, sociological phenomenon of 'cognitive capture' where the mindset of regulators is captured through lobbying or through employing people from the regulated industry as regulators.

Barnes (2016) notes how rent-seeking is now endemic: "Many economists use the term 'rent-seeking' to describe the multiple ways special interests use government to enrich themselves at the expense of others. If you're wondering why Washington, D.C. and its environs have grown so prosperous in recent decades, it's not because government itself has become gargantuan, it's because rent-seeking has." I therefore decided that new pieces were required to represent the gargantuan nature of the corporate entity, their extensive rent extraction operations and monopoly power.



Cardboard mock-up designs for the corporate skyscrapers - iteration 09



3-D printed corporate skyscrapers or office blocks - iteration 09

These pieces would be skyscrapers, symbolic of corporate power and prestige. I made some cardboard models to size the pieces appropriately for the larger board, then decided to explore 3-D printing as an option to produce models of skyscrapers or large office blocks (see Appendix B: 3-D printed skyscrapers).



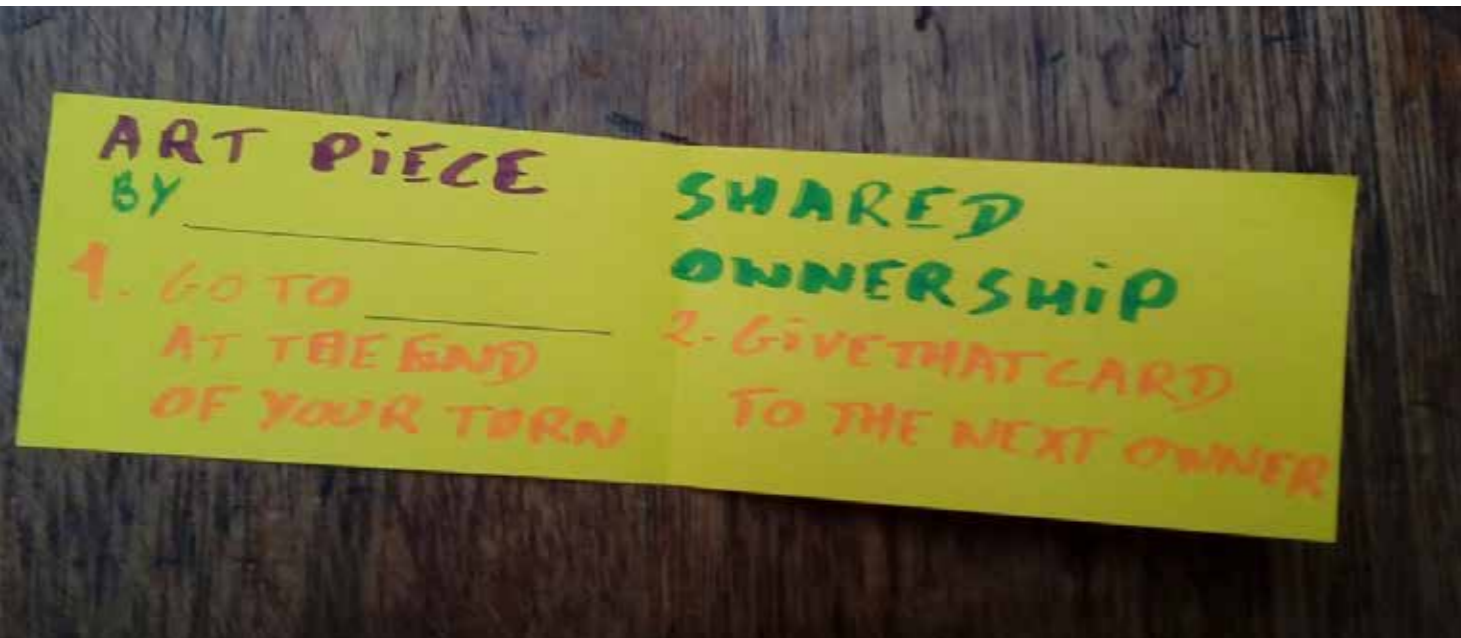
Corporate skyscrapers dominate the Utopoly board - iteration 09

When placed on the board the larger 3D printed skyscrapers visually and physically represented the embodiment of neoliberal power, crowding out and a menace to the utopian players. This bolder symbolism was suitably imposing and intended to provoke a reaction from the players.



## 3.8 Special domains

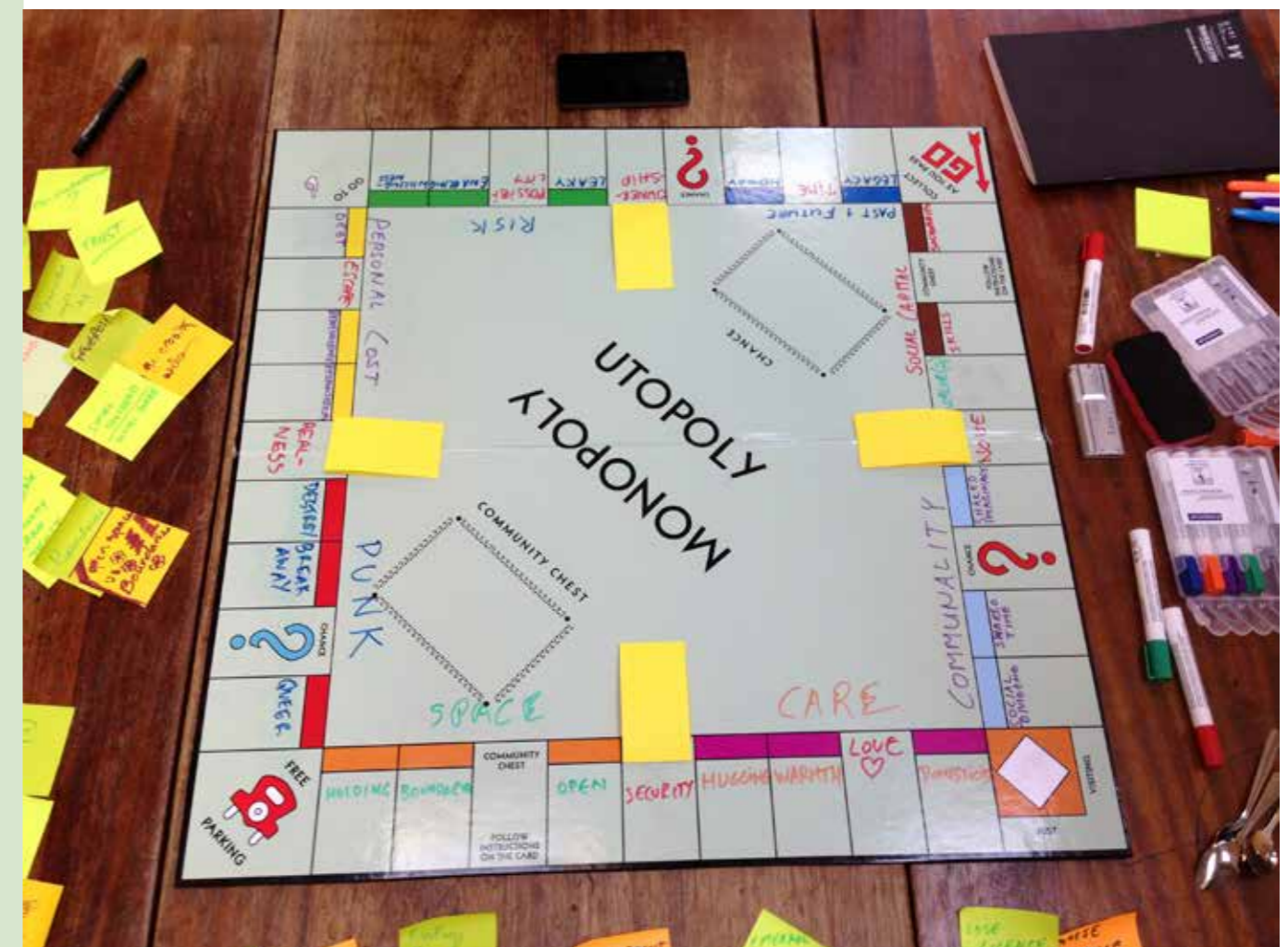
The versatility of Utopoly also allows for the introduction of context-specific features. These can be special areas or domains which perform certain functions that enable the game-play, or relate more specifically to the participants situation. On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017 I joined Alexandre Monnin and Manuel Boutet from ValueModels, who were invited to run a session at the arts hub and community of Islington Mill, Salford. The purpose was similarly to understand the current setting and move forward to new possibilities within an organisation. Here, Utopoly as method was being used to imagine utopic possibilities for an organisation and specific communities and participants.



Manuel Boutet's addition of special domains to Utopoly - iteration 07

They wanted to encapsulate what Islington Mill currently is, and then what it could be, and decided to use Utopoly as a means of formulating and resolving those issues. It was here that Manuel Boutet adapted the game by producing the Temporary Custodian's cards. These were four cards which were positioned on each of the four sides of the board, and were intended to represent the novel funding model pioneered at Islington Mill.

What started as a research project by curator Helen Kaplinsky and artist Maurice Carlin, the Temporary Custodian concept (Islington Mill, 2017) is now an active part of Islington Mill's fundraising initiative. The model is based on ideas around peer2peer distribution, collaborative commons and the sharing economy. It provides an alternative to public and private collecting and explores how art is owned, valued and produced.



Utopoly board with four special domains (yellow cards) - iteration 07

Members of the public pay a fee to co-own artworks with their fellow buyers and become a network of joint owners and Temporary Custodians, and can participate in the future of the artwork. As custodians they perform a caretaking or guardian role and hold the art but do not own it, a kind of distributed ownership based on care. The temporary aspect alludes to Temporary Autonomous Zones, a concept defined by anarchist and writer Hakim Bey (2011) as a utopian space where normative rules and structures of control no longer apply.

Unfortunately, we didn't have time for this new feature to be fully played out or explored during the session, but it is an example of how new forms of currency or modes of transactions could be modelled and explored using Utopoly. The iteration at Islington Mill was useful nonetheless and features of the game and values that emerged were presented as an exhibition during a community meeting. The participants wanted to continue working and developing their version and make their own set for the communal area at the Mill. I supplied them with copies of plans of the board and instructions for printing their own version to do this. While these special domains were not worked out to fruition in this iteration, the idea of introducing such features was re-introduced later in the more developed format.

Such features are useful for adapting the game-play component of Utopoly to different settings and environments. The four special domains become particularly useful for overcoming any imbalances in the game mechanics (this is discussed later in section 4.9 Defining special domains).



Temporary custodian cards as special domains (yellow cards) - iteration 07

## 3.9 Narratives and knowledge creation



“I just think that this might be a nice space to have a conversation between the capitalist sense, and how do you call it and...”

“...the serfs? ha! ha!”

“consumers?”....

...

“There needs to be this aspect that emerges out of those kinds of conversations.

Like kind of, you know, an unknown or wildcard or something.”

“I don’t know - Yeah, the learning points?”

“Yeah, but maybe that’s it – ‘learnings’.”

Throughout the Utopoly method there are multiple opportunities for interaction and dialogue between the participants so that narratives can develop. This can happen as the participants engage with complex and challenging topics to formulate their desired utopian outcomes in the game. Deliberation, reflection, value creation, amalgamation, categorisation, prioritizing and group decision making, all can be performed. Each contributes to the spectrum of knowledge creation in the form of socially- and artistically -created knowledge, as defined by arts and aesthetics researcher Michael Biggs (2019, p. 19). These processes occur dynamically as the participants, in a collaborative endeavour, become engrossed as players and encounter the features and scenarios they have constructed.

“Art education opens spaces for a dialogue placing artistic practices and pedagogical practices as elements of the construction of a common world.”

(Fernando Hernández-Hernández, 2019, p. 64)

In engaging in these dialogues, participants often relate a personal story, share an experience (or one that they have received second hand) that is of interest or concern to them. This narrative may be used to validate a point, for consideration or just for general rumination. Whatever its intention, it contributes to the socially constructed knowledge through stories and narratives. Barrett (2019, pp. 31-32) relates how this concept of knowledge creation is used in Indigenous research from a decolonizing perspective. For example, she states that in Australian indigenous societies, “the primary mode of making, preserving and transmitting knowledge is through verbal and visual storytelling...”. Within this practice there is the concept of interpolation. For Barrett (ibid., p. 31), this “is the insertion of situated knowledge or new understanding of current states of affairs or conditions into established narratives as a dynamic and evolving mode of cultural production”.



"That's an interesting thing though Working Tax Credit, because it's not a bazillion miles away from Basic Income... Years ago I went on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme."



"That was basically the way to keep us off the dole for a year. You could do it every three years. Most of the people I knew did exactly that. You started up a fake business, basically, in order to get fractionally more than the dole. And you didn't get hassled, and then wait a couple years and then do it again".



"Has there been studies of what came out of that cohort of people that did Enterprise Allowance Scheme? You know regardless of the motivation for it ... because I know quite a few people who were on it and they have all gone on to do interesting stuff at one point or another."



"What sort of interesting stuff, I'm curious? It's just from my point of view, virtually everyone I know, who did that, ended up working at things like Médecins Sans Frontières and then doing voluntary, it's not voluntary work, but actually a lot of it is, was exactly.

But it's a charitable type work rather than standard career work".



"I know some people that set up a ...well-respected poetry publishing company ... and it is still going, however many decades later...".

This process is an example of communal and egalitarian co-production of knowledge, and has been adapted to western research methods as 'Yarning'. As such, it is considered a valid mode of discourse for research. This is a collaborative form of meaning-making produced through iterative cycles of storytelling and interpolation, where audience and storyteller are engaged in experiential discovery.

Similarly, for Utopoly, through the participants' discussions and actions they can experience philosopher Donald Schön's notion of knowing-in-practice (1994). Participants are able to experience what it is like to inhabit a world they have created and in doing so they are reminded that they are able to transform and change society. The interactions and engagement with the features of the game produce rich and evolving discussions about their ongoing experiences. It is through playing with these scenarios that the participants are able to reflect on the alternative realities. As they interact with each other and the game they can take part in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.

Utopoly provides the space and opportunity for narrative knowledge-creation throughout the method. In the three stages of the Future Workshop, Critique, Fantasy and Implementation, the participants discuss and relate stories while formulating the values and ideas they want represented as domains in the game. Finally, when they experience game-play, they also interact with what is represented on the domains and generate further discussions. This is a role of art education as described by the arts and cultural pedagogies researcher Fernando Hernández-Hernández (2019, p. 64), something which "opens spaces for a dialogue placing artistic practices and pedagogical practices as elements of the construction of a common world", the common world here being the one the participants have constructed as the game.

The Utopoly method allows participants to experience what Belidson Dias & Tatiana Fernandez, researchers of artistic events as cultural pedagogies, (2019, p. 136) describe as an 'artistic event'. They interpret the philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey's book *Art as Experience* (2005) to describe such artistic events as "an aesthetic experience of being in the world wherein there is a dynamic organisation of forces that go from the construction of values to the accumulation of experiences". The participants of Utopoly work together constructing the values for the domains to be used in the game and then experience playing the game together.



"So 'Health' we have covered..."



"'Activism' here we've got: 'Refuse to pay taxes' and 'We need new words...'"



"'We need new words to talk about this'...' Representations of different forms of activism'. I wrote that, so I can explain that: so, first of all, new words, as in just the word 'activism' I think it can switch off so many people and people who actually need to and can do a lot more. So that's what I mean by new words and then just raising awareness about different forms of activism. So, for example, with XR happening just now extinct, Extinction Rebellion. I just got my settled status. So, I have to be careful not to lose it. So, I was thinking, what is it I can do to still help? So, I found out I can go and wait for people who were arrested and provide tea and coffee - as activism."

In Utopoly the different formations of the future are unknown until they are imagined, agreed on and implemented on the board. Natalia Calderón (2019, p. 96) a researcher in pedagogical experiences through art, highlights the importance of the unknown in knowledge creation: "It is in the process of seeking the unknown when artistic research is able to turn a situation into an *event*."

This concept derives from the art educationalist Dennis Atkinson's book *Art, Equality and Learning: Pedagogies Against the State* (2011). There is a utopian aspect to such events, in which subjects are transformed, by pedagogical relation, into something else. Calderón notes (2019, pp. 95-96) how, through pedagogical relation we are all subjects-yet-to-come and that artistic events can transform us, as subjects, into something else. Meaning and knowledge are produced through artistic events and generate a pedagogical subject. Participants work together in the production of their own meaning rather than having their meaning extracted, interpreted, and authored by others.

Dias and Fernandez (2019, p. 136) discuss how artistic and pedagogical events, in order to move from the unknown to the known, must be processes of both change and learning. By being open to the unknown as a space of 'becoming', they are then both aesthetic and pedagogical. This function can be attributed to Utopoly as an event, which allows for autopoiesis and creates a pedagogical moment.

Calderón (2019, p. 95) restates the views of the artistic research specialist Henk Slager, in *The Pleasure of Research* (2012), that for artistic research to generate real knowledge it should avoid becoming a "stable field or fixed discourse" of academization. "Instead, artistic research should be a convulsion, a destabilizer of reality, a question in itself; a question that needs to be interrogated."

In Utopoly participants take part in this questioning on a utopian journey of co-discovery. They move from the unknown of an empty board through the stages of a Future Workshop (Critique, Fantasy and Implementation) to work out different formations of the future, a future which is unknown until co-produced, implemented on the board and the game-play played. During this whole process something new emerges and knowledge is generated. The nature of knowledge creation and narratives are discussed further in section 4.13 Utopian moments - storytelling and new knowledge.

# Phase 4 - Trialling

## 4.0 Rules as guidelines



"Is there a learning to take from this, as in, we work with and realise that you actually can't beat the system according to these rules.

Then we can come about it differently next time?"



"Because from my understanding, the rules are very flexible?...So, like the new rules that are created..."



"The learning is that there's some place between flexible and inflexible, so you have a proliferation of different rules. And some of them, like for instance, we haven't managed to really kind of...[the corporate entity] rules haven't changed, but we are gaining more and more rules. And most of those are to, are they to our benefit or not?"

The Utopoly method contains two main utopian features. The first involves the development and conceptualisation of values, properties, ideas & desires that are transcribed on the board as domains. The second is that participants can invent their own rules for the game stage. The rules that participants develop are predicated on the discussions from the Future Workshop, such that the ideas and values produced can find expression and be interpreted into the rules of play. The opportunity to develop the rules occurs during the Implementation phase and can continue during the game.

These features are situated in the idea of utopia not as a fixed blue-print or end point but as a process or method. There is recognition that no constructed situation will be flawless and that the future may hold possibilities and different requirements. These are utopias that hold within them the idea of change and of constantly moving towards a horizon that is never reached, but in the process life is improved.

Any game by definition requires a set of rules that players are bound by in order to achieve a predetermined goal (the relationship between rules and games is discussed further in section 4.2 Primary guideline - for a lusory attitude). In Utopoly each set of rules pertains to a specific iteration and can therefore be different for each iteration. As each iteration progressed certain rules were accumulated and retained via a process of selection and refinement. These rules were codified into a base set of guidelines, which became useful to act as a starting point to be offered for future iterations at the participants' discretion. By presenting the rules as guidelines, they contain an invitation to change and so maintain utopian possibilities. Guidelines by their nature are more open to interpretation and divergence, and participants are reminded that these suggested guidelines can be added to or replaced by new rules that they can create.

**"For most people under the age of twenty in Europe and North America, the lack of alternatives to capitalism is no longer even an issue. Capitalism seamlessly occupies the horizons of the thinkable."**

(Mark Fisher, 2010, p. 8)

The original intention of Utopoly as a hack of Monopoly was to imagine new economies and societies, and part of this projected utopia would involve the creation of new, alternative rules to those of the original game. However, it is not always a simple or easy process to create workable rules representing a new economy that also produce a playable game within the time available. There are two issues to address, the first involving the conceptual barriers to imagining new economies. This is partly a problem caused by using Monopoly as the starting point and it is understandable that there will be a level of embedded legacy whereby the rules and format follow the original, and this is still true for some aspects of Utopoly. For instance, the board retains the inherited features of properties which players move around and attempt to acquire using some form of currency.

There is therefore an assumption that the rules will follow those of Monopoly, and as Monopoly models the rules of a capitalist economy, people naturally find it a difficult and daunting prospect to imagine alternatives. It is also precisely these aspects which make it familiar and accessible to most people. This is the benefit of using Monopoly but also what makes it a difficult task to present to the participants: that of hacking Monopoly and by extension, imagining hacking the economy.

“Freedom of thought and movement and the emergence of possibility, however, are only possible if people ‘perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform’.”

(Paolo Freire, 2017, p. 23)

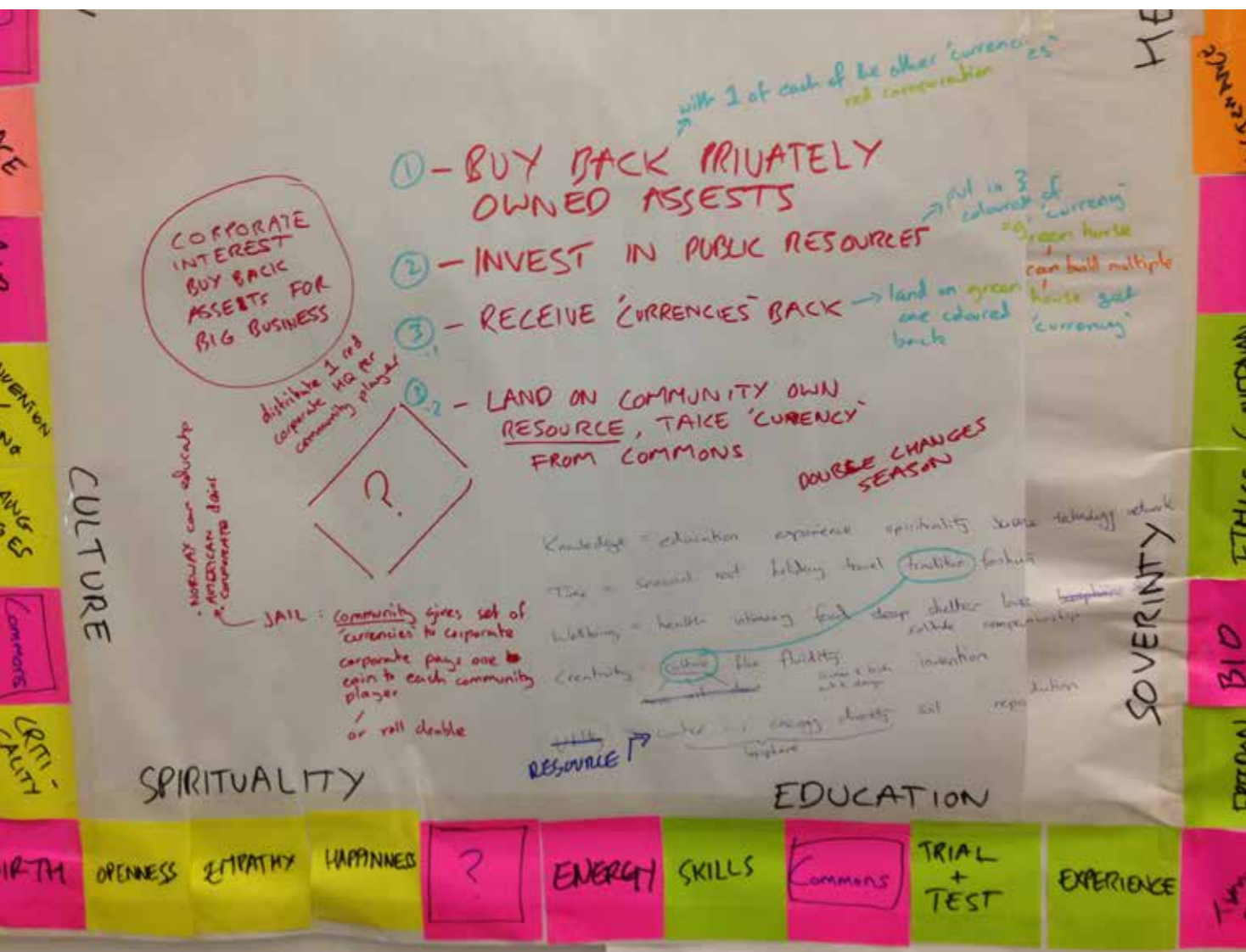
This is precisely the challenge of Utopoly: to move beyond the reassurance of normality, in which people have resigned themselves to the safety of knowing that change is not possible. As Sarah Amsler notes: (2018, p. 16) “The power of big capital, particularly in its financialized and militarized forms, is locked in by institutional capture and cultural hegemony in ways that make illusions about the impossibility of alternatives feel more satisfying than educated hope.” Amsler (2018, p. 61) continues that, as social relationships and material artefacts appear fixed and self-evident, this becomes a prejudiced belief that ‘there is no alternative’.

This idea is further illustrated by cultural theorist Mark Fisher (2010, p. 8) who states, “For most people under the age of twenty in Europe and North America, the lack of alternatives to capitalism is no longer even an issue. Capitalism seamlessly occupies the horizons of the thinkable”. There is no space or freedom of thought for alternative practices to replace or abolish the capitalist technological systems of power. This can happen however as Freire (2017, p. 23) states - if people “perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform”. Utopoly looks to address this issue by firstly presenting the enclosed, monopolised economy (see section 2.1 Beginning at the end) and then allowing the ability to formulate new rules and social structures, reminding players of the possibility of change.



Currencies of Knowledge, Time, Wellbeing and Creativity are introduced to Utopoly - iteration 03

Understanding the difficulty in creating new rules means that sometimes interventions are required to prompt this activity. Throughout the iterations successive rules have come about due to and as a response to the introduction of new features. The first and probably most important of these was at iteration 03 (What Happens To Us). The participants were given a presentation about the alternative currencies developed for the event *#TransActing: A Market of Values*, which had embedded rather than abstract values of Time, Wellbeing, Creativity and Knowledge. The participants were fired with a desire to integrate the multiple currencies into the game, and so worked out how to accommodate them by developing new rules for their use.



Rules developed by participants, inscribed in the centre of the game board - iteration 03

It was also at iteration 03 that two additional interventions emerged: the separation of the corporate entity from the utopian players and the concept of the commons. Together the new rules reflected the interaction of these three features. The initial rules were discussed and the general concepts sketched out in the centre of a large piece of paper, which was also the game board. The rules developed during iteration 03 are described on the following page.

### Main 4 Rules:

- 1) Buy back privately owned assets (the Red hotels)  
(with 1 of each of the other currencies)
- 2) Invest in public resources  
(Put in 3 colours [types] of each currency)
- 3) Receive 'currencies' back  
(Land on Green House, get 1 currency back)
- 4) Land on community-owned resource, take currency from commons

### Auxiliary rules:

- a) Corporate interest can buy back assets for big business
- b) JAIL: Community gives set of currencies to the corporate player.  
The corporate player pays one coin to each community player – or roll double.

### Explanation:

Rule 1: This relates to the starting situation where the corporate entity already owned a high proportion of the board and the utopian players were trying to take control of them to bring them into the public realm or commons. It also relates to the decision to require four of each type of currency to buy the asset.

Rule 2: Also indicates how the utopian players would invest in the resources or assets by successively adding one currency until they had four.

Rules 3 and 4: This was the first emergence of a key difference in the ownership of assets or resources. The corporate entity would still extract rent from the utopian players, however a publicly owned asset would generate value for the utopian players by providing currencies from the commons (see section 4.4 Different modes of behaviour and section 4.7 Enhancing the commons).





"Okay, I suppose where we are at the moment - I know time is limited. I know I was late but how do people want to spend the rest of the time?

Because do we want an opportunity to play?



"[Yes - that is what we are aiming for]"



"We have spent a lot of time on this and I'm happy - I would like to see how it works out in terms of the plays or - I don't mind..."



"Can you give us a bit of help here? So, we can just find the rules."



"Can you do a dry run? so that."



"Yeah."



["Okay, then. If you want to run with how we used to do it...?"]

This set of rules from iteration 03 became the core from which the rules for later iterations were based and further developed leading to the guidelines. These rules were first reused at iteration 05 (ValueModels, Chelsea) however the idea of writing the rules into a codified form evolved during the iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room).

The rules were intended to be developed during the Implementation phase as the final part of the Future Workshop before the game part. Because this is the last part before the game it is more likely to become impeded by lack of time. During iteration 09 unforeseen events meant that time was particularly short, and therefore the time for developing rules was curtailed.

The participants were keen to play the game but collectively we decided that, rather than lose more time developing new rules, we would use the rules from the previous iterations. I therefore explained what had been developed at iteration 03 (What Happens To Us) and offered them up as an option; the participants agreed to accept these rules so that the game could begin.

What I realised from these situations was that whilst my initial intention was to involve the participants in the construction of the rules at each iteration, they may not always be able to do so. The lack of time and a need to accommodate a possible reluctance to create rules meant that not every iteration would be like iteration 03 (What Happens To Us). It would therefore be useful for subsequent iterations to have a base set of ready-made rules offered up as guidelines which players could accept, reject or adapt as they saw fit. I wrote up the guidelines as they were, as a guide sheet (see Appendix C: Guidelines for game-play) and made some amendments and additions where inconsistencies appeared. Although the guidelines continued to be adjusted over several iterations, the codified game-structure we arrived at became a core feature for all subsequent iterations. It was from these guidelines that the generic guidelines which form the Utopoly method were derived (see Conclusion - Guidelines for Utopoly).

I subsequently realised that the participants responded to interventions or innovations such as the new currencies by creating new rules. When new innovations are introduced, this necessitates a corresponding response and so new rules are added to accommodate the new features. This form of improvisation can happen before the game or during the game as different situations are encountered and need to be ruled on (see section 4.12 Adjudicating improvisations).

**"It is possible that the utopias of to-day may become the realities of tomorrow."**

**(Karl Mannheim, 1936, quoted in Sargent, 2008, p. 266)**

When modifications are introduced there is a corresponding response of rule making which was evident in iteration 03 (What Happens To Us). These interventions and subsequent responses can vary in significance. For instance, in iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) I introduced the concept of carbon with the possibility of climate catastrophe, and the players responded by improvising new rules for how to reduce carbon (see section 4.2 Primary guideline - for a lusory attitude). For smaller interventions, such as using a pack of playing cards for movement (see section 4.10 Movement & agency) introduced in iteration 11 (Cosmia), I neglected to take into account the Joker card. When this card appeared, players improvised the rules and decided that the Joker should be allowed in play and be 'wild', allowing movement between 1-13.

There is an interplay between the interventions and the responses or improvisations of the players to accommodate or deal with them. Each new improvised rule gave a relative advantage or disadvantage to either side and so I introduced additional new rules to maintain the balance and the playability of the game (see section 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game). This interplay of improvisational utopian moments in Utopoly became the rules of the game which were later codified into the guidelines. This process exhibited in the Utopoly method is analogous to the way social institutions are formed.

Rules of behaviour are required for all social enterprises in order to mediate political and social relations. Utopian moments of imagination and improvisation inform the reinvention of an existing fixed social or economic structure. In turn these new rules derived through utopian practice can also become fixed ideology, so that there are repeating cycles of utopian activity and ideology. This process is discussed by utopian scholar Lyman Tower Sargent (2008) in a review of the work of sociologist Karl Mannheim and philosopher Paul Ricoeur. As Mannheim states, "it is possible that the utopias of to-day may become the realities of tomorrow" (1936, quoted in Sargent, 2008, p. 266).

It is proposed that the utopia function works both as a precursor to ideology and then subsequently as a challenge to it. It both 'unmasks' the ideology and provides a corrective to it. However, ideologies once embedded can be hard to change, as Mannheim notes - "most of these ideologies are not invented by the individual but are instilled into him by the community, and as they are usually deeply rooted in the unconscious, it is very difficult to remove them" (1936, p. 90). These theories resonate with Castoriadis' (1997) concept of the "radical social instituting imaginary" and its role in forming and reforming institutions.

The interplay of ideology and utopia is modelled in the Utopoly method, in that the game board is initially set up to represent a capitalist ideological framework with corporate control, and the playful emergent and changeable nature of utopia is matched against it. Throughout the method participants are invited to unthink and rethink the current ideology and power structure. The following sections of Phase 4 describe the influence of features and interventions, and how the game part of Utopoly evolved through the following: the introduction of rules, artefacts, activities and their contextual relevance, as well as the responses they elicited.



Participants enjoying playing the game - iteration 11

The ultimate purpose of the Utopoly method is not, however, to create an entertaining game, although to date this is one of the outcomes. Instead, it is to provide a utopian experience whereby in playing the game, the participants can express desires, discuss issues and form new narratives (see section 4.13 Utopian moments - storytelling and new knowledge). Therefore, the guidelines were codified so that the requirement to develop rules would not detract from playing the game.

Creating rules is also part of the utopian experience, and it is as appropriate to develop rules during play than prior to it, although this is always possible. This ability then allows the participants to realise that rules and therefore ideologies are changeable. The participants take part in a utopian process of imagining alternative, socially-beneficial structures, throughout their personal engagement with the whole method.

## 4.1 Improvisation throughout the method

“Improvisation creates utopia,  
and it must do so continuously.”

(David M. Bell, 2011, p. 9)

The act of improvisation can be considered as “actually existing” utopia (Bell, 2017, p. 14), or utopia-in-practice. Utopoly provides the possibility for improvisation through both the Fantasy and Implementation phases of the Future Workshop and the play aspect of the game. The players are not required to comply with the guidelines and are able to adapt and make their own. The features of the board are not predetermined and are formed through the process of the Future Workshop. Both rules and features can be created in the moment in an ongoing process of becoming, which, in turn allows alternative social and political spaces to emerge. Barrett (2019, p. 30) notes how some forms of art making such as improvisation in music, dance and certain poetry can broaden communication and understanding through productive ambiguity and new knowledge creation.

“bringing ideas, people and materials together in  
freely experimental ways can have unpredictable  
and often inexplicable results.”

(Sarah Amsler, 2018, p. 61)

David M. Bell (2011, p. 10) also draws the analogy of improvised music, such as jazz, and considers how the act of producing such music creates a utopian space. Bell (ibid., p. 3) considers improvisation a “muddy phenomena frequently constituted by frustrations and failure”, and suggests that there are limits to what micro level utopian manifestations can do in the wider world. They are, for instance, unlikely to challenge “the messy dystopia of neoliberal capital” (ibid., p. 10). However, he suggests collective improvisation can have a role teaching the “joys of non-hierarchy” (ibid.), showing what collective action can achieve. In Utopoly, we purposefully engage with ideas of social and economic organisation, and by providing the space for improvisation such utopian moments are given the opportunity to emerge.



Participants improvising utopian ideas - iteration 10



“But I reckon it would be very utopian: tiny houses, tiny houses on like, wheels...”

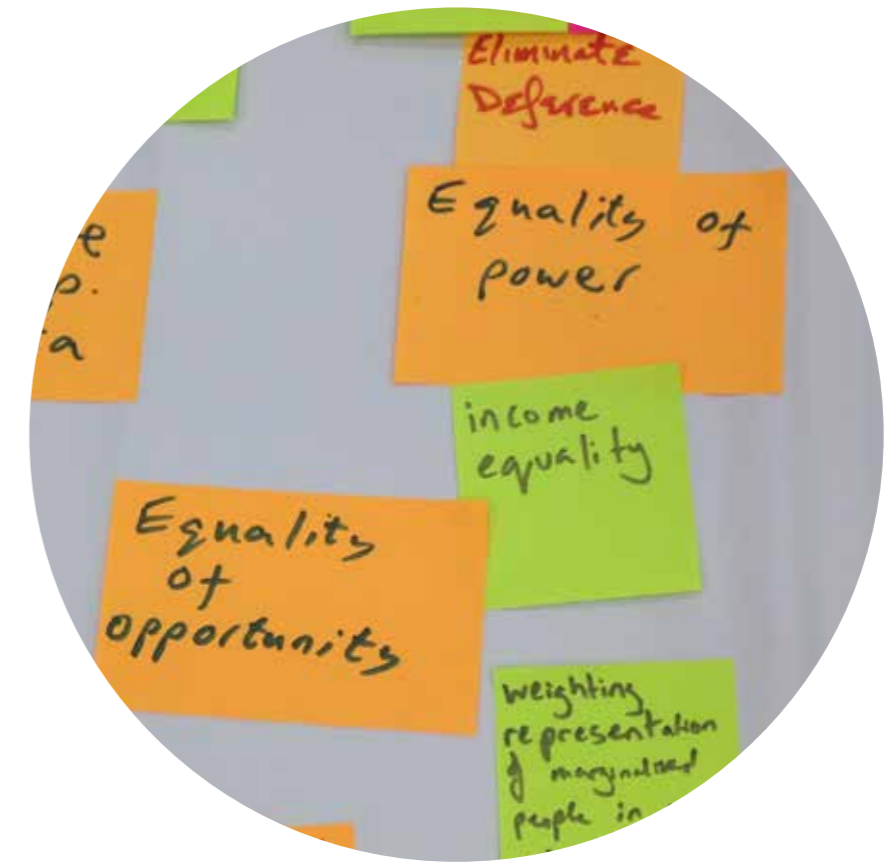
...



“...Little houses, but they, they like people build them and travel about with them. So, they're like, almost like caravans in a way... I trained in architecture previously and it's like a really destructive industry, you know, like, digging down to the Earth and fill concrete and like, these tiny little houses are all you need, really you just need a bed and somewhere to work, to sleep, you know. And I love the idea that you can just hook up a little house, and off you go.”

“For Bloch the not-yet was not a utopic category of the future, but a material force of past, present and future.”

Ernst Bloch (1995, cited in Amsler, 2018, p. 62)



Fantasy items that initiated a discussion on historical injustice - iteration 11

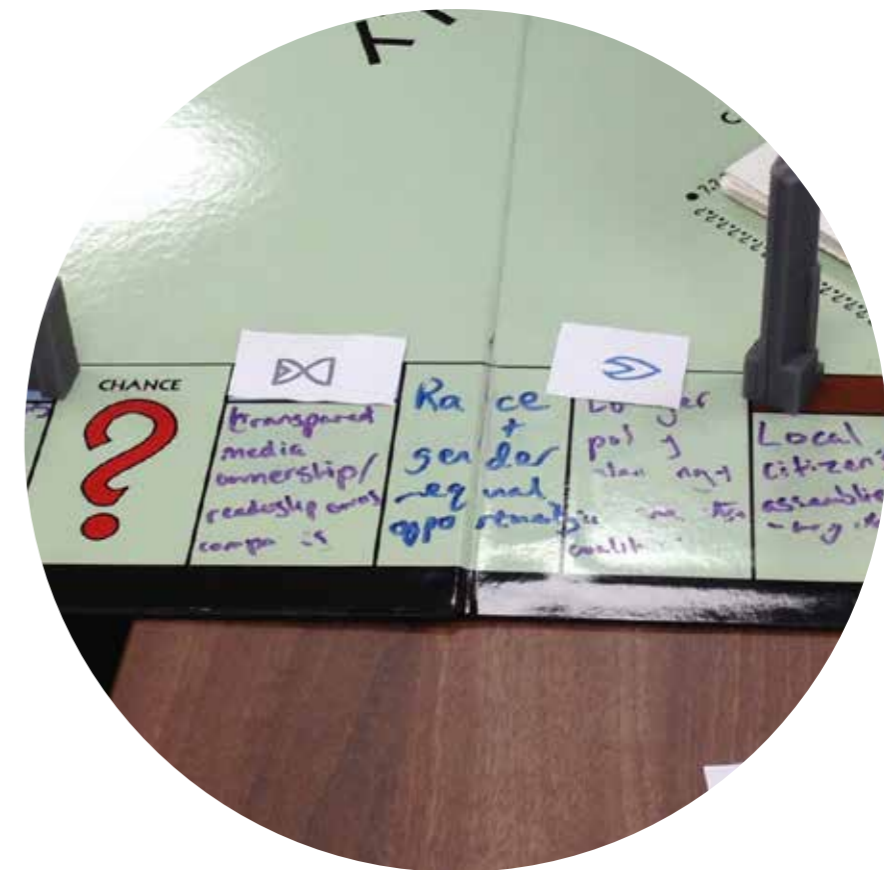


“I think it’s like, I mean, you know, this utopia we’re making, we’ve got to this point from this present. So, colonialism has happened, slavery has happened. And then with that comes the need for like, true reparations. You know, I mean, there needs to be a massive amount of like, resources and investment towards healing generations of trauma. And I think that would have to be recognised, you know, like, we’re not starting from a blank slate.”

“So, I’m thinking, equality of opportunity, and equality of power, but or the basis for how you get things, you know.”

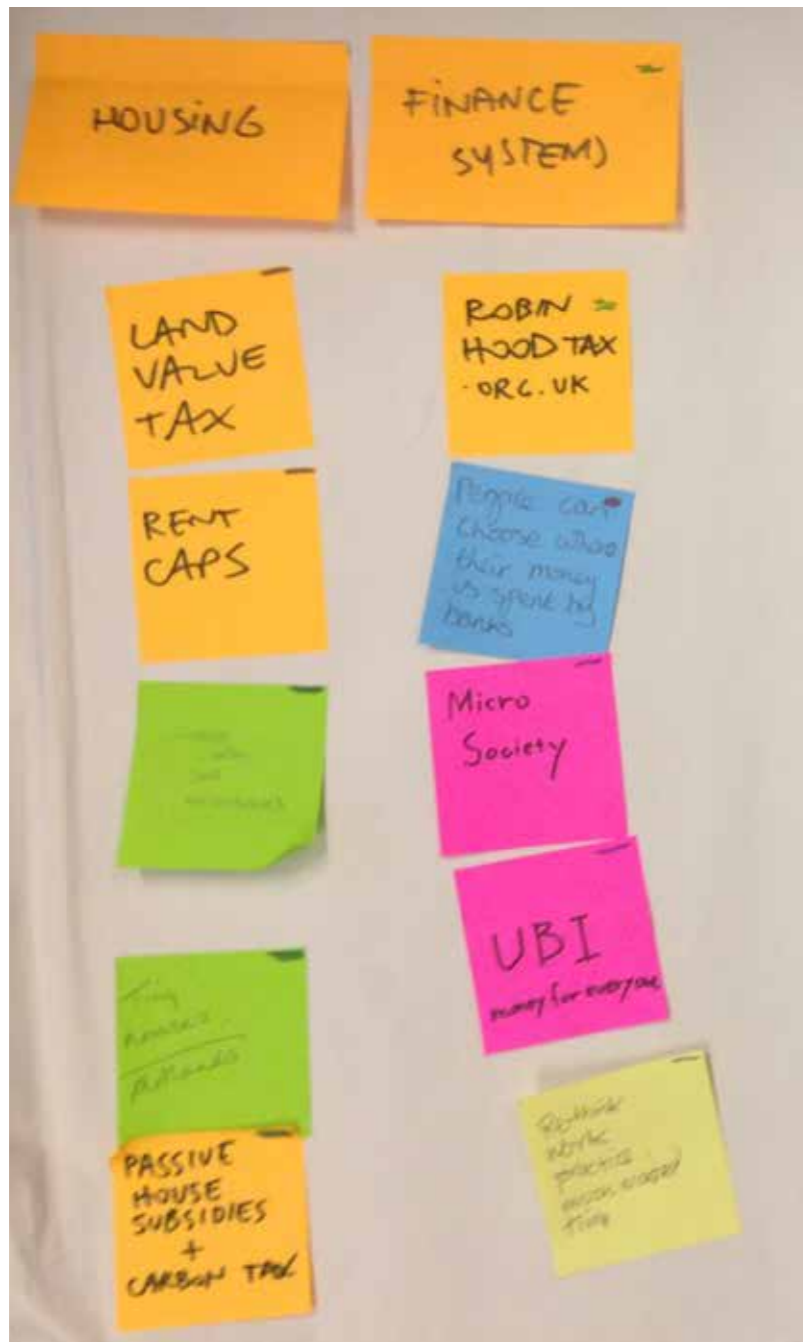
“If this is a utopia, is just being completely colour blind an option? Or is there a requirement for some level of reparation because of past...”

“And representation, I think”.



Domain becomes 'Race & gender – equal opportunities' - iteration 11

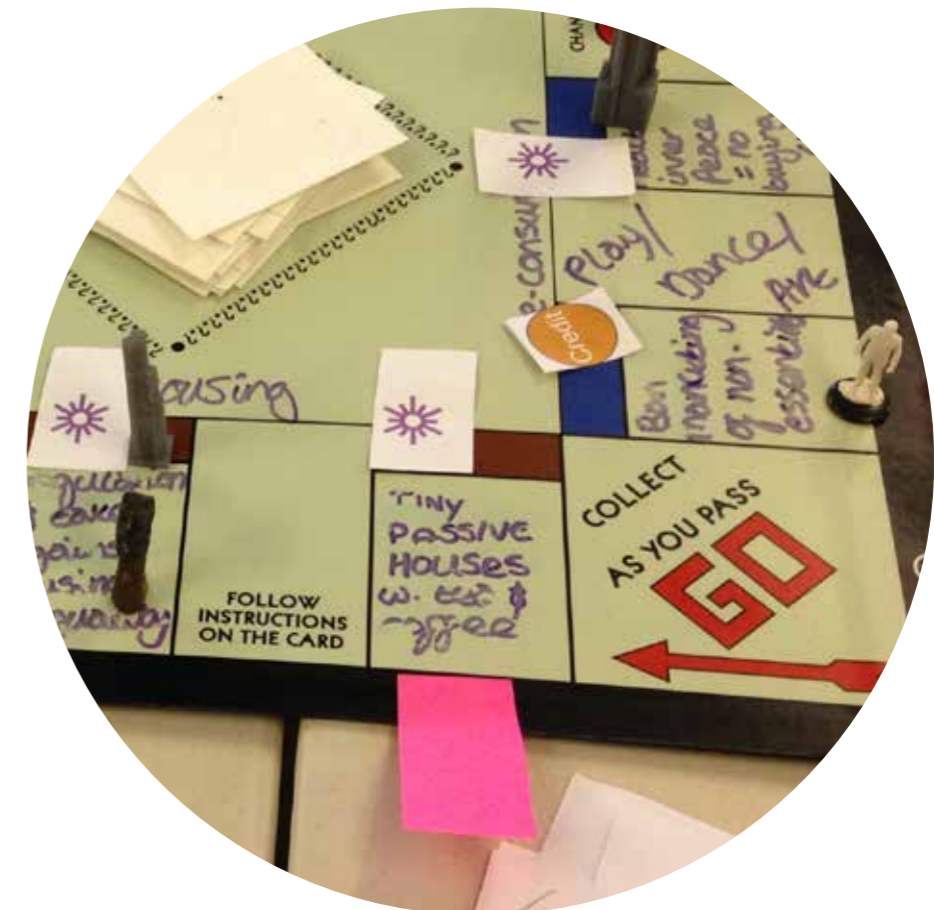
Sarah Amsler relates Bloch's view (1995, cited in Amsler, 2018, p. 62) that the past and the future are interlinked, and that "For Bloch the not-yet was not a utopic category of the future, but a material force of past, present and future," in that people are formed by upbringing and circumstances (the past) and it is people that change circumstances (the present and the future), and subsequently both educate and are educated by each other.



Choosing the domain description from the options - iteration 10



- "Yeah, so if we take 'Housing' first, which of these - we've got 'Land value tax', 'Rent caps', 'Coffee with your neighbours'."
- "What's that? Tiny Houses, Tiny Houses', 'Passive Housing', 'House subsidies' and 'Carbon tax'?"
- "What's a 'Passive house'?"
- "A passive house is one that doesn't produce any carbon and actually, sometimes produces... that captures carbon".
- "So, the first one would be 'Tiny passive houses'!".



The Domain becomes 'Tiny passive houses & Coffee with neighbours' - iteration 10

Barrett (2019) proposes that one of the benefits provided by improvisation is the notion of 'interpolation'. The analogy of interpolation relates to mathematics, whereby algebraic formulae are used with limited data points to estimate or predict other data points which are not yet visible or available. Similarly, the human mind is predisposed for visual inference, filling in the gaps or connecting lines where they may not exist, to make a coherent or whole image, thus, intuitively generating an approximate prediction of where something may be in space and time. Using this analogy, Utopoly enables players to imagine a utopian data point or idea projected into the future and consider how this may be connected to the present.

There is also another function that collective improvisation can perform. As Amsler notes (2018, p. 61), the participants of improvisational practice can engage in Bloch's autopoietic process. The 'messy and experimental affair' where 'objective' conditions and 'subjective' will operate in a cycle of mutual transformation through interactions with one another. It is an instantiation of Bloch's concept where 'the process is made by those who are made by the process'. Here people are transformed by the world, and they transform the world in an iterative, interdependent process, moving from a passive state to one of the potentially active capability-of-doing-other and capability-of-being-other.

For Amsler (2018, p. 63), engaging in improvisation to challenge what is considered 'decided' or fixed can be transformative and can engender hope. There is a difference between working within the existing rules and social structures, and the possibility of creating new ones. Rather than relying on logical, accrued extensions of the present condition, improvisation is the 'magic' ingredient that can provide a source of 'possibility'. It is a process that allows people to go beyond what is considered possible, the difference between ritual and play.

Amsler (2018, p. 61) notes how "bringing ideas, people and materials together in freely experimental ways can have unpredictable and often inexplicable results". This experimental formation is apparent in Utopoly, whereby participants are invited to expand and bounce off each other's ideas. The rules and features of the game are developed collectively, and players can also make changes during the game.



"I think something changed for us, like the fact that, you know, we could exchange all the tokens and we could help each other. And it's not that we're becoming capitalists. It's that we are trying to have a more collective space. Yeah. I think communal, yeah!"



"But I take your point, you're observing it happen like you never really observe this happen. Because of like, 'shit how did that happen?', but actually you can observe. Yeah, oh, oh, right. That's what happens, when that happens. That kind of cause and effect is much closer together somehow."



"Yeah."



"I think that's really useful."

However, the world is always changing and therefore so is Bloch's 'undecided material'. Utopian theorist Tom Moylan warns, "do not lock in the utopian achievement" (Moylan, 2000, quoted in Bell, 2011, p. 9). There is a need to be wary of ideas of an 'end-of-history' type of utopia produced through collective imagination, where learning and utopia as place-in-process are replaced by a form of stasis. For Bell (2011, p. 9), "Improvisation creates utopia, and it must do so continuously" and remain constantly open to an unknown future.

## 4.2 Primary guideline - for a lusory attitude



"How come having 'More Trees' doesn't impact the amount of Carbon?..."

"...or does the Carbon not get affected?"



"It's a good point. So you're saying actually this one should remove Carbons."



"Like, yeah. If we could like - like 'Waste Management'."



"Yes, that makes sense - that would give..."



"Yeah, okay. Okay, so could we take away one of the Carbons, please?"



"Yes."

In Utopoly a utopian space is created which allows participants to develop and define the rules of the game. This can happen before the game starts, during the game, and also via the creation of new Chance cards. However, in order to both incorporate this utopian aspect and for the game phase to be engaging, a primary rule is needed.

Therefore, the first rule in the Utopoly guidelines states: "Guidelines can be added or amended during play: provided this does not prematurely end the game", for example a new rule which allows the players to easily win (see sections 4.11 Chance cards and Conclusion - Guidelines for Utopoly). This ability to create rules means that Utopoly has some similar elements to the Nomic game.

The philosopher Peter Dain Suber (1990), a specialist in open access and law, designed the Nomic game in 1982. It allows players to make changes to the rules of the game where the existing rules are contradictory or insufficient, thus modelling democratic processes of law creation. The benefit of the Nomic game is that its core purpose, rather than achieving any particular winning condition, is to encourage the introduction of new rules which provide material for discussion or which demonstrate problems of legal interpretation.

"The attitude of the game player must be an element in game playing because there has to be an explanation of that curious state of affairs wherein one adopts rules which require one to employ worse rather than better means for reaching an end."

(Bernard Suits, 2014, p. 40)

In order to constrain the omnipotent or unlimited possibilities of rule creation, and therefore sustain the activity as a game, the first rule of the Utopoly guidelines needs to be in force. It is this rule that maintains how the game is played, or what is known as the *lusory attitude*. For example: players were informed that they will lose the game if levels of Carbon breach a set limit, such as 30 units. (This feature was itself introduced in order to reduce the advantage brought about by the cooperative nature of the utopian players). Players at iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) decided during the game that if they controlled the domains of 'More Trees' and 'Waste Management' this should reduce the Carbon which was accumulating on the board. However, they did not remove all the Carbon, as that would ultimately lead to them winning the game, but they were allowed to remove one Carbon unit every time a player landed on that domain (a more limited benefit which kept the game in play and the *lusory attitude* alive).

The term *lusory* derives from *ludic*, a type of play. Roger Caillois (2005) differentiates between childlike free, unstructured and purposeless play as a mindset, or *paidia*, and *ludus*, a playfulness which is structured with players purposefully following a set of objectives for a game. For games design theorist Jon Back (2013), an attitude of playfulness in games is fostered by engagement and commitment. A player becomes interested in the activity and then continues to care for the experience.

Players who embrace the rules of the game and work towards achieving the set goals of the game are described by philosopher of games Bernard Suits (2014) as having a *lusory attitude* or willingness to play. As Suits (2014, p. 40) notes "The attitude of the game player must be an element in game playing because there has to be an explanation of that curious state of affairs wherein one adopts rules which require one to employ worse rather than better means for reaching an end." Here Suits alludes to the fact that the prelusory goal of a game could be more easily achieved if the rules were not followed.

What constitutes a game is a matter of contention, but Suits set out to oppose the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's assertion that games are indefinable. The philosophy and sports tutor Frank McBride (1979, p. 59) states that Suits' definition could be challenged but remarks it "successfully defines a large class of the games playing universe!".

Suits' (2014, p. 43) definition of games is as follows: "To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by the rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude]."

In this definition Suits outlines three aspects required for game playing: prelusory goal(s), constitutive rules of the game and a lusory attitude. Suits (ibid.) also supplied a simpler version of this definition: "playing a game is a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles." Essentially the purpose of a game is the achievement of a prelusory goal mediated by a set of rules which are set in place to make attaining the prelusory goal more difficult or less efficient. If player breaks the rules to achieve the prelusory goal then they are deemed to no longer be playing the game.

The prelusory goal for the participants in the game phase of Utopoly is stated as the condition of 'winning', which is defined in the guidelines (see Conclusion - Guidelines for Utopoly). In this case, for the utopian players the goal is to take control of enough of the domains to ensure the economy reaches a state of symbiosis, and abundant renewable resources are generated to keep control and prevent ecological collapse and unsustainable debt. This goal is hindered by the existence of the corporate entity and the rules which support their initial and continuing domination of the game board.

**"This aspirational model of game design fully employs the cultural technology of games and gameplay in a new way - not as a pastime, but as a means for individual (and ultimately cultural) transformation - the Suitsian formulation of ludic alchemy. The right kind of gameplay, for Suits, terraforms Earth into Utopia."**

(Christopher Yorke, 2018, p.11)

Although this is the notional or professed prelusory goal of Utopoly, the actual goal is something else; to bring together a group of people to discuss and explore their utopian thoughts, engage them in utopian practice and, in doing so educate their utopian desires and start to form a utopian society (see section 4.1 Improvisation throughout the method). Once participants have agreed to take part in the game and be bound by the rules, they assume a lusory attitude.





"So, but then if you're out of this [Currency] for rent and so then you have to pay rent again. Can you? - we need to probably discuss this - take from here or can you, can we just give you one?"



"But did I get my money for going passed?..."



"Yes. You did."



"Because I already had one piece here"



"If you put one Creativity - so you've got that space. But you want to keep one, don't you? All of us have got one. She hasn't got any here. Yeah"...

..."No, don't worry, because we'll just pool it together. Give her the one that you have three of, or something - because just in case."



"Take that!"

The games philosopher Christopher Yorke (2018, p.5) makes the connection between game playing, a lusory attitude and moving towards utopian outcomes. There are two related functions: extending collaborative social cooperation and human transformative possibilities. For example, during iteration 10 (Furtherfield) players were concerned that one of their group would not be able to pay the rent due when landing on a domain controlled by the corporate entity. Whilst Utopoly is designed to enhance collaboration (see sections 2.3 Utopian players' collaboration & 4.6 Extending players' collaboration) additional instances of collective action emerge where the players both help each other and contribute to the pursuit of a common goal.

Yorke suggests that adopting a lusory attitude makes both game-playing and social cooperation possible. He correlates adhering to accepted rules, derived through social cooperation, to that of game playing and that societies with shared utopian goals will have a higher level of mutually beneficial and successful outcomes than those that do not.

This idea resonates with Sloan Wilson (2019) and Henrich's (2017) theories about the competitive advantage that highly cooperative prosocial societies achieve. It therefore makes rational sense to cooperate in utopian practices. Yorke interprets the last chapter of Bernard Suits' work *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia* (2014) as purposing game-play as a tool to transform people into more fully realised individuals.

Yorke describes this finding as Suits' *utopian game design thesis*, (2018, p. 13-17), whereby playing utopian games could condition the players into 'good' utopian people, noting the need for utopian games which can elicit such capacities. Such games would be played (ibid., p.11) "not as a pastime, but as a means for individual (and ultimately cultural) transformation - the Suitsian formulation of *ludic alchemy*. The right kind of gameplay, for Suits, terraforms Earth into Utopia".

## 4.3 Usury to lusory

The Utopoly game aspect evolved to have two principal agents: a corporate entity as the bad agent and the utopian players, or the collective good (see section 2.2 An oppositional entity). Up to the iteration 07 (Islington Mill) these two antagonists operated very similarly and broadly in accordance with the original Monopoly. They both had similar means of acquiring currency (although each used a different type of currency) and domains. The game was primarily about redefining the properties and values of the board as domains and then acquiring these.



Bitcoins used as currency of the corporate entity - iteration 07

At iteration 03 (What Happens To Us) the corporate entity used a token with the bitcoin symbol as its currency. This seemingly arbitrary choice resulted from an initial vague idea of introducing blockchain currencies to the Utopoly session. The session happened to follow a presentation on blockchain technology at the event the previous day which at that time was a relatively new concept. This bitcoin token continued to be used by the corporate entity during the iterations 04 (1st Year Exhibition), 05 (ValueModels) and 07 (Islington Mill).

The simple bitcoin token afforded several purposes I could utilise. Firstly, to further differentiate the two sides, I wanted the corporate entity to have a separate currency from the utopian players. Another reason was to move away from the multiple currency denominations of Monopoly money. I thought that by removing the denominations the game would be simplified and as the currency was less quantifiable the focus would be on value rather than price.



The presence of money - even Monopoly money affects people's behaviour

The presence of money, either real or the Monopoly version, changes people's behaviour. The psychologists Kathleen Vohs et al. (2006) note how "money enhanced individualism but diminished communal motivations". Their research found that attitudes of self-sufficiency are induced when people are in visual proximity to money or images of financial wealth, but empathy and altruism are reduced; and even Monopoly money has this effect. While the bitcoin token would help to remove some of these effects as a currency, this did not quite feel right for subsequent iterations.



Debt raised as concern during critique stage - iteration 04



Debt raised as concern during critique stage - iteration 07



Debt implemented as a domain on Utopoly board - iteration 04



Debt implemented as a domain on Utopoly board - iteration 07

The theme of debt appeared in several iterations and as a key feature of the economy, led me to consider including debt as part of the corporate entity's currency for future iterations. It also opened up the opportunity for an intervention into common misconceptions about the nature of money.

The economist Andrew Jackson and economic researcher Ben Dyson, through the monetary reform campaigning group Positive Money, highlight this common misconception about banks and lending (2014, p. 48): “banks do not make loans by taking money from a saver and transferring it to a borrower, as most of us would assume. Instead, they make loans by increasing their liabilities and assets in tandem, creating new liabilities and a new asset.” This fact was corroborated by the then deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Paul Tucker (2012). Private banks can effectively create new money at will by simultaneously expanding both sides of their balance sheets with assets and liabilities. A new loan appears as a deposit in the borrower’s account which they are able to spend. The creation of money by private banks is now digital and this accounts for roughly 97% of all money creation in the UK economy.

Private banks therefore have enormous discretion over which companies are given money and the future direction of investment choices made in the economy. Technically banks create money rather than credit, as credit is defined (Jackson and Dyson, 2014, p. 61) as requiring a credit risk. However, for the participants I decided that credit and its counterpart debt would be better understood. It also removed the necessity of designing or deciding on a particular currency unit.

“...money is not ineffable, ... paying one’s debts is not the essence of morality, ... all these things are human arrangements and ... if democracy is to mean anything, it is the ability to all agree to arrange things in a different way.”

(David Graeber, 2014, p. 390)

I suggested that the corporate entity used credit as a currency, and pair this with the creation of debt. The corporate entity then has unlimited access to credit. It could create credit at will anytime it was needed and as each credit was created so was a unit of debt. This concept was used to illustrate how new money is created in our economy in the form of loans.



Symbolically demonstrating how Debt and Credit are created - iteration 09

In the game part of Utopoly this credit creation activity is physically illustrated by using a paper token consisting of both credit and debt, and then cutting it in half to produce two tokens, one token of credit for the corporate entity to control domains and one token of debt for the common area.



Debt accumulates in the centre of the board - iteration 10

“We haven’t actually talked all that much about debt. I was just thinking payday loans, that sort of thing. It costs more...expensive to be poor, it’s expensive to be poor!”

“He [Donald Trump] wouldn’t have got anywhere in Britain. If you go bankrupt, you’re not allowed to start up a company for another three years at least. And he, I think he has been bankrupt five times now! And he basically dumps all the debts on other people. Yes, and starts all over again”.

“Because I would really like there to be a reset of the computers, a sort of crash - everybody goes back to zero”.

“It’s something like a...Jubilee?”

Participants at iteration 11 (Cosmia) commented on the structural unfairness around debt and noted how its required repayment is enacted regressively. This emotive reflection based on their lived experience aligns with the work of the anthropologist David Graeber (2014). His research considers the different relationships humanity has had with debt over the last 5,000 years. Graeber notes that the requirement to pay debts is dependent on where people are in the economic and social hierarchy, and the effect of debt is subsequently felt differently. His work highlights how the idea that debt is a question of morality and must be repaid originated in state power. As a result violence is linked to the use of money. What was once a mere moral obligation, now through money’s ability to place a quantitative value on debt, it becomes “a matter of impersonal arithmetic” (2014, p. 14).

This desire for relief from oppressive debt has been recognised as a key function of the Biblical debt Jubilee whereby debts are forgiven at crucial periods. This is detailed by economist Michel Hudson (2018) who notes how, from bronze age Mesopotamia up until the tenth century Byzantine Empire, certain rulers were wise enough to apply a debt forgiveness in the form of a Jubilee to prevent social unrest and societal collapse. He also notes that the biblical concept of liberty was liberty from debt slavery, and that enacting a Jubilee produced widespread benefits: “The effect was to restore balance and sustain economic growth by preventing widespread insolvency” (2018, p. xi).

Graeber considers such an event overdue, and could remind us “that paying one’s debts is not the essence of morality, that all these things are human arrangements and that if democracy is to mean anything, it is the ability to all agree to arrange things in a different way” (2014, p. 390).

## 4.4 Different modes of behaviour

The introduction of debt and credit as the corporate entity's currency made me consider further ways in which to differentiate between the two protagonists. At iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) I thought that it would be interesting to add another dimension to the game which would incorporate alternative modes of behaviour represented by different features. These became part of the guidelines from iteration 10 (Furtherfield) onwards, which the participants were free to accept or change through improvisation.

Utopoly originated as a method to explore ideas for alternative utopian economies and societies. During its creation, I decided that it was important to provide an example of an alternative way of being and behaving. Magie's original Monopoly demonstrates the nature of rentier capitalism and each player, by adopting the lusory attitude of complying with the rules, has to compete with the others. There is only one winner - the last remaining monopolist who owns the majority of properties on the board.

The game models life in a capitalist society where competitive market-based ideology is the dominant formation, and so similarly players are compelled to behave in a capitalist manner by competing with each other. However, there are other ways of organising human societies that do not involve a winner-takes-all mentality. Examples of these have been documented by Sloan Wilson (2019), Henrich (2017) and Bauwens et al. (2019), among others exhibited in prosocial, commons-based and hunter-gatherer cultures (see section 2.4 The commons), but such formations remain relatively unfamiliar within the public sphere.

One of the purposes of the rules, offered as guidelines, is to encourage collaboration between the players. However, to make the game interesting and challenging there remains a competitive element. The later iterations of Utopoly (from iteration 09) model the transition from capitalism to a more utopian society and suggest an approach for achieving this. There are two sides in the game: the corporate entity who aims to continue the neo-liberal status quo, and the utopian players who act collaboratively to bring about a utopian economy. The game proceeds as per Monopoly where each side aims to acquire control of the domains on the board in such a way as to make it impossible for the other side to recover from.



Carbon, climate and environmental concerns - iteration 11

The format of a game allows for the condensation, abstraction and extension of ideas and meaning through the different interpretation of rules, features and artefacts. The corporate entity is a symbolic representation of an agent of the financialised and fossil-fuel based economy. As a product of capitalist ideology it has as its operating principle the requirement for endless economic growth. Its mode is based on extraction, exploitation, short term profit seeking and externalising costs. Its actions and operations therefore create debt and carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>).

Within the game, from iteration 09 onwards, I constructed a narrative which is a broad-brush abstraction of reality using carbon and debt; however there is an underlying truth to it. In the game, the corporate entity has at its disposal a limitless supply of credit (and debt), and as this is created it also produces carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>), which also represents the consumption of natural resources.



Blocks of Carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) accumulate in the centre of the board - iteration 11

In the game part of Utopoly, during these later iterations, the corporate entity's actions, such as landing on a domain or extracting rent from a utopian player, resulted in the placing of artefacts (physical game pieces) which represents blocks of carbon (constructed from dark grey polyethylene packaging foam, 2-3cm square) in the commons area of the board. In addition, the carbon pieces also represent the production of negative externalities, the consumption of non-renewable resources and the destruction of the natural environment.

When a utopian player lands on a corporate-controlled domain, rent is extracted from that player and carbon is produced. In essence there is an implicit notion that by engaging in rent extraction (earning money in the carbon economy), the player is activating a series of related processes that will ultimately produce carbon or degrade the natural environment to produce the required rent.



Utopian player makes use of currencies accumulated in the commons - iteration 12

Alternatively, the utopian players operate an economy based on renewal, regeneration, recycling and natural abundance. The players use a set of currencies which are recycled and renewable. Players can decide if they want to use the existing set of currencies or new ones, or a combination of both.

There is a commons-based system where resources and value are not privately owned but held and managed for the benefit of the whole of society. When a player lands on a utopian-controlled domain it generates value for the commons. The implication is that the utopian players, on taking control of a domain, do so in a manner outside of the carbon-debt economy.

This common resource accumulates in a central pool and can then be used by other players when the need arises (see section 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game). In this way there is a recycling and regenerative process - as the game continues more and more value is available in the commons. The players win if they control most areas on the board or the economy reaches stable symbiosis.

## 4.5 Wicked problem

“If environmentalists are right, the pursuit of growth without end could even threaten the very existence of humanity, ransacking our biodiversity and driving us to unsustainable levels of consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission that wreck the very planet on which our wealth depends. Only in economics is endless expansion seen as a virtue. In biology it is called cancer.”

(David Pilling, 2018, p. 13)

The addition of carbon and debt proved fortuitous because it allowed me to introduce another concept that enhanced the game. At the start of these later iterations of Utopoly (from iteration 09 onwards) the participants are informed of two additional losing conditions in the form of limits to the amount of debt and carbon that can build up.

This becomes highly visible as the blocks of carbon and tokens of debt build up in the common area of the board. The mechanics of the process, the limitless availability of credit and the placing of the resulting debt and carbon in the common area indicates the ease with which corporations enrich themselves, and how the results of short-termism, reckless destruction and waste are foisted on to the community at large. Not only must the consequences of climate change and natural resource depletion be borne but also the policies of austerity to bail out the financial industry and pay their debts.



Catastrophe limit set to 30 Carbon and 20 Debt - iteration 13

Exceeding these limits will trigger catastrophic ecological collapse or insurmountable debt. From iteration 09, the limit of carbon was set at 10 more than for debt because debt was more easily reduced (for example 30 carbon and 20 debt). This difference remained in place for later iterations. The limits can be varied depending on the number of players in the game. There are actions within the game that can increase or decrease carbon and debt through Chance cards or the rules, both of which the players can create and amend.

These additional losing conditions pose a dilemma or what is known as a ‘wicked’ problem for the players to overcome. There are two definitions of a wicked problem. The first concerns an insoluble problem which is difficult to define or understand and has requirements which are changeable, contradictory or incomplete. The second definition is more appropriate here - Cameron Tonkinwise, a proponent of transition design and sustainable design, restates the design theorist Horst Rittel’s (2010, cited in Tonkinwise, 2015, p. 89) definition of a wicked problem: “a problem whose social complexity means that it has no determinable stopping point”.





Carbon and Debt accumulate in centre of the board - iteration 10

The stopping point is when a process or activity will end because of predetermined criteria or time limit. For instance, in the case of climate change a rational society would recognise the evidence of impending disaster and decide to change its behaviour. But because of the complex, interwoven nature of social, political and economic interests this does not happen and there is no stopping point.

For Tonkinwise (2015, p. 85) the current lifestyle of the dominant global consumer class is unsustainable, and also propagates inequality. This lifestyle is encouraged by and integrated into a global pursuit of growth. The Financial Times journalist David Pilling (2018, p. 12) notes how the general public are encouraged to draw the connection, which is tenuous, between their employment, the economy, growth and wellbeing. This relationship is highly dangerous, as Pilling notes (2018, p. 13): "If environmentalists are right, the pursuit of growth without end could even threaten the very existence of humanity, ransacking our biodiversity and driving us to unsustainable levels of consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission that wreck the very planet on which our wealth depends. Only in economics is endless expansion seen as a virtue. In biology it is called cancer".

Tonkinwise (2015) suggests that merely making tweaks to business-as-usual while continuing with the same modes of behaviour and extant production mechanisms will not be enough to resolve the crisis, and that systemic transformation and a cultural transition is required for a sustainable future. The inclusion of a wicked problem to Utopoly therefore provides both a constraint and a sense of urgency.

The wicked problem to be addressed in Utopoly is the current socio-economic system, which has no stopping point except the final stopping point of system collapse. If unchecked the system will keep producing carbon and debt. Carbon is a real material problem for the planet, whereas debt is an abstract social construct. Within the game and within the financialised and fossil-fuel based economy there is a relationship between debt and carbon. If the rate of debt is reaching its limit, players can also choose to reduce debt by creating more carbon - another dilemma, a short-term response to overcome an entirely abstract politically-contrived problem.

The game then is more than solely a contest for control of the board between the corporate entity and the utopian players. There is also a race against time before the carbon gets to uncontrollable levels or the debt becomes unsustainable. The rising levels of carbon and debt impose an added impetus, and the players' minds need to engage with and focus on the challenge of the 'wicked' problem presented to them. The effect of this interaction is described in sections: 4.6 Extending players' collaboration, 4.7 Enhancing the commons and 4.9 Defining special domains.

## 4.6 Extending players' collaboration



"I guess though maybe because we're limited, we should have more of a collaborative decision-making process?"

"That's what I'm wondering, because if we spread ourselves too thin".

"Yeah. Because I just think, I mean, there's a collaborative thing about whether or not I should put that there."

"Go for it though, then."

"Because we don't have time on our side climate change wise."

By adding the wicked problem of insurmountable debt and run-away climate change, the players were presented with a situation that they were required to respond to. Prior to this addition the players' collaboration had emerged as they competed with the corporate entity in gaining the domains that would represent their values becoming features of the utopian economy or society.

While the players are able and expected to collaborate during the game, there is no compulsion to do so. The predicament of being faced with ecosystem collapse and excessive debt are presented as systemic features of the capitalist economy and production model. This additional existential threat was intended to give new impetus and focus for the players to engage in inter-group competition by developing further cooperation and collaboration. In this way collaboration becomes a required response to this feature of the game.



"So I am not a very good team player because I didn't want to give any of my things [Currencies] with the chance of us getting it – it's like no!... mine!...  
...That's my 'Wellbeing' and 'Time'."



Player deciding to add 'Time' to contest domain for the group - iteration 10

Henrich (2017, p. 170) describes how self-serving individuals can exploit opportunities in social organisations, and how such behaviour becomes copied by others as exemplars of success. Over time this can lead to the social organisation failing, if such behaviour is not checked by appropriate social design principles embedded in their culture. Examples of such are Elinor Ostrom's Core Design Principles (Wilson, 2019, p. 117). These principles are akin to the cultural norms that evolved with humanity, and lead to our success as a species. Within the current neoliberal hegemony such operating principles, and institutions that support them, have been actively discouraged and attacked, and while cooperative and altruistic behaviour no doubt exists within many workplaces, it is co-opted to produce surplus value for the owners of those organisations.



Player offering to share currencies with others - iteration 10

Jack Zipes, referencing the philosophers and sociologists Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944, cited in Zipes, 2002, p. 109), reflects how capitalist culture means people have internalized the norms and values of capitalist commodity production, a socio-economic system based on private property, competition and profit. As a result, we are dealing with people who are surrounded by expectations based on neoliberal, individualistic and self-serving competitive behaviours. In such situations where societies are at risk of collapse, Henrich identifies the need for additional inter-group competition in order to revitalise peoples' innate cooperative and collaborative natures over the individualistic.

Henrich (2017, p. 142) notes that altruism and cooperation are still key human traits, although suppressed and submerged by the current economic system, and are an interplay of culture and evolution. The missing features are the evolved social norms, wider culture, practices and beliefs which enhance our natural inclinations towards prosocial behaviour.

In response to adverse environmental conditions such as famine and drought, beneficial social norms such as food sharing, cooperation and risk-sharing became the key features that allowed certain groups to survive over others. This process operated over hundreds of thousands of years; aggressive antisocial people who violated the norms were weeded out while more prosocial behaviour was rewarded. This becomes a culture-gene, coevolutionary process and produces a type of person who, with the right set of social norms, allows a society to function and thrive.

Henrich notes how, in times of stress and uncertainty brought on by crisis such as war or natural disasters, when a community's survival may be threatened, people cling to their community's social norms. We now see this today, as community-minded and beneficial human nature is resurfacing amid wide-spread, global adversity.

## 4.7 Enhancing the commons








Introducing the alternative economic paradigm of the commons to the game created a powerful process that represented the potential for both generating and recycling values, goods and ideas. However, the way that players could draw on the pool of common values to both pay rent and invest in the domains varied over several iterations. Eventually an optimised solution was arrived at, and was added to the guidelines, although players are always allowed to make further changes.

At iterations 03 to 05 (What Happens To Us, ValueModels and Islington Mill) the commons was used in a similar way. The commons' currencies were stored and accumulated in the central area of the board. In addition, the currencies involved in the successful contest to control domains by the utopian players were returned to the commons area. However, these currencies in the commons could only be accessed when utopian players landed on a domain they controlled. When this happened the commons in effect generated value for the individual player rather than extracting rent.



Currencies stored and accumulate in centre of the board- iteration 06



-  "Oh 7 please, for the Tortoise - 'Stronger Communities', oh great – that's nearly my last one!"
-  "But I'm worried about you!"
-  "Well, you can't really land on it and not buy it can you?"
-  "No, you can. You can decide not to bother. You can decide not to pay it."
-  "So otherwise, if you land on one of these and don't have anything to give, yeah. You are in trouble."
-  "But can you also bail someone out?" ...
-  "I assume you can. Because we are a team, yes?"

This process however was slightly limiting and did not fully represent the open and shareable nature of the commons. It also meant that the utopian players still had to rely heavily on individual holdings of currencies, which in turn could eventually leave them short of currencies and give additional advantage to the corporate entity.



"I think when we get one [a domain], we should all have something."



"If I land on there, do I have to pay something?"



"Yes. You are going to have to pay something!"



"Yeah. What do, what should [they - the corporate entity] pay in?"



"What do you think [they] should pay in?"



"I guess that's a question because [they] cannot. [They] don't gain or lose anything from the credits. I think [they] have to pay the tokens".



"Yeah. So, [they] do need the tokens".



"Maybe the tokens can come from... Maybe [they] pay with these tokens, but yeah. Or, [they] then have to, yes, to trade that with something else..."



"I'll buy them with debt, that's what I'll do".



"I think that the ones whose, those in here [the commons] should be just given out to the community".











"That would be my view as well".

At iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) participants were working on their own interpretation of how the commons should operate, developing the rules as they went. A discussion was triggered by the crisis of limited currency and what could be done to help players out, which in turn moved on to the differences in interactions between the corporate entity and the utopian players and the use of the commons.

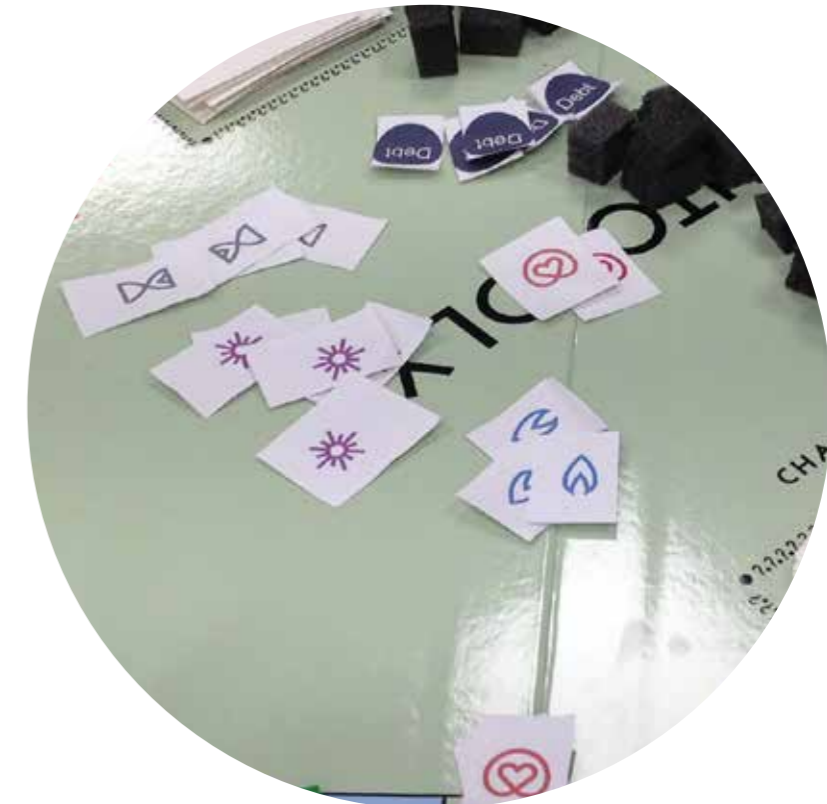
At this iteration, when a domain was won the currencies remained placed on the domain space and didn't return to the commons area. The commons area was the repository of payments from the corporate entity triggered by Chance cards or paying rent to the utopian players. This meant there was no recycling of currencies which added to the shortage of currencies for the utopian players. In his discussion the players expressed a desire to distribute the currencies in the commons, but due to time constraints a process to achieve this was not fully worked out.

Based on the discussions and issues exposed during this and previous iterations, I realised there was a requirement to include a mechanism to deal with the commons and the shortage of currencies in the pre-written guidelines for future iterations. The commons remained a repository of fines and rent paid by the corporate entity, but it would also act to recycle and hold any currencies used by the players to successfully control domains. These currencies would be made freely available for the players to use in order to contest further domains. I realised that if I allowed players to also use the currencies in the commons for paying rent, then the associated jeopardy of failing to pay rent and suffering the consequence of jail became an unlikely event, removing one of the tensions and fun of the game. As such, in the guidelines this was not allowed.



-  "OK, I can give some of my Knowledge."
-  "Are you gonna try and win it or leave it?"
-  "I'm so spread thin guys, okay hang on, hang on, hang on!"
-  "Could we give each other things?"
-  "A good idea, charity - I'm ready for it"...
-  "...we can even at some point, make sure that so put it all, like, just merge and just make sure that we all have enough. So you can..."
-  "I've only got two left. Yes."
-  "So we can just create that..."

As the game progressed, at iteration 10 (Furtherfield) some players found themselves running low on personal currency and the threat of 'Jail' loomed. Discussions emerged around the fact that there was value in the commons, but it could not be used for the purpose of paying rent. The response that emerged was an agreement to pool all the players' resources and currency, making them available to each other when necessary, in order to save each other from going to 'Jail'. What they had produced was a second or double commons. This also allowed players to take risks with their spending, reducing their personal holdings to zero or one, when previously they would be holding back a portion just in case. Knowing that they could rely on the additional commons, the players were able to use their resources more effectively and increase the rate at which they secured domains.



Utopian players' currencies start to accumulate in the commons - iteration 11

This use of the commons became a means to counter-balance the advantages of the corporate entity, but only after a period of time (once currencies have accumulated in the commons). It provided a clear differentiation between the two protagonists in terms of their methods and means (see section 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game).

## 4.8 Ebb and flow of the game



For the utopian players the game begins with a very gloomy outlook. The game is constituted so that utopian players start with limited means and are in a bad position, with the corporate entity having a monopoly control of the board. The corporate entity also has an unlimited amount of credit available to them to purchase control of more domains.



"So, we're kind of at this crossroads. What have we got, 4? which means we are all safe. Oh no, except you have got 1, suddenly we could never, we should never go down below everyone having one in our collective reserve."



"It's depressing"...



"How can we possibly bankrupt [the corporate entity]?"



"[They] have unlimited credit. [They] also basically already have a monopoly on the board before we even start!"



"Yeah".












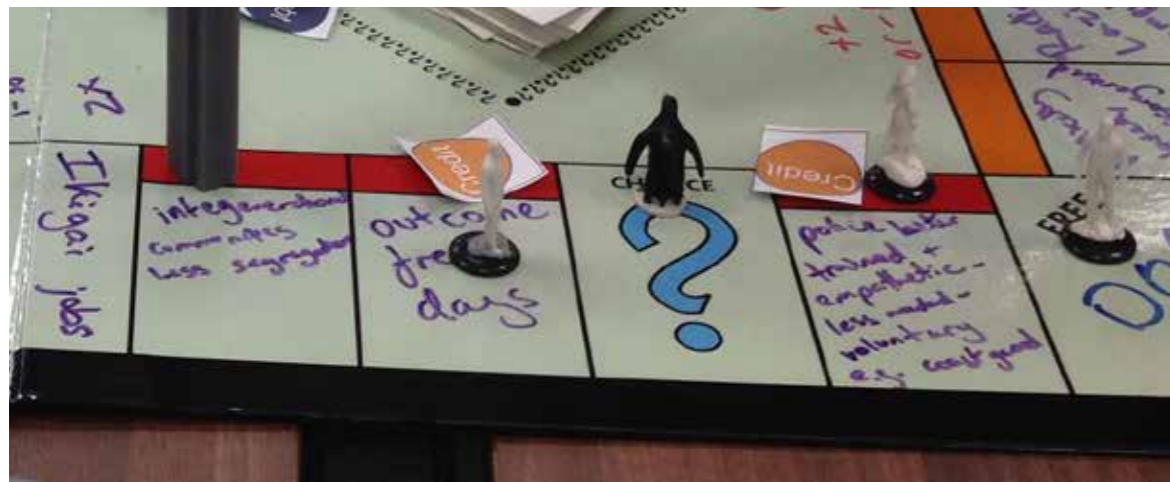
"Yeah, [they] are collecting money before we have any chance to gain anything of ours to collect back from [them]."

The corporate entity has initial dominance with credits, debts and skyscrapers occupy the board, but no domains are owned by the utopian players and there is no value in the commons yet - iteration 11

This premise represents how the neoliberal hegemony is culturally and politically dominant, with the resultant looming existential crises of ecosystem collapse and unsustainable debt seemingly inevitable. There is a vicious cycle which reinforces the power of the controlling establishment, as more and more sections of the economy, society and public discourse fall to cognitive capture. However, there is hope, and a reversal of this situation is possible.









-  "Okay. Where am I?"
-  "So, you can either be here or here."
-  "So, what's the red ones?"
-  "'Police better trained + empathetic'... and 'Less something voluntary e.g. like the coast guard'."
-  "'Less needed' I think".
-  "Oh, it's 'Less needed', Yes".
-  "It's not one that we're all going to want to spend...Our resources on."
-  "Oh, yeah, probably not at the moment is it?"
-  "Alright I'll go for Chance then - go for Chance."



After group deliberation the player (Penguin) chooses to go to Chance - iteration 11

Initially the utopian players have just enough currency to start contesting some domains, but after a while they begin to run low. They must be judicious and strategic in selecting their initial domain targets and marshalling their resources. The early stage of the game is potentially the most dangerous period. There will be a crisis moment when their currency is low and they do not control any domains, which means the generative and recycling feature of the commons is not yet realised. The jeopardy of going to the 'Jail' domain if they have no personal currency is also present.



-  "Oh, two or six. So where is the Dog? So, I think..."
-  "Oh!, two!, two! Have you got some Wellbeing?"
-  "I do have some Wellbeing!, yeah!"
-  "Yeah! Hurrah!"
-  "Have you got one?"
-  "We've got one, yeah, wow!"

However, if the players manage to gain control of some domains, they can start to benefit from the commons and a virtuous cycle can begin. Each currency used to acquire a domain is returned to the commons, which in turn can be used to contest further domains. They can gradually generate more value for the commons and benefit from a positive feedback loop.





First domains controlled by the utopian players and value starts to accumulate in the commons (centre of board) - iteration 11

There are now two processes working within the game which can flow back and forth. They model two distinctly different modes of production and ways of life (see section 4.4 Different modes of behaviour). As more and more of the free spaces or domains become occupied, each becomes a potential site of contest between the competing ideologies.

While the struggle was initially one sided (in favour of the corporate entity) over time the tide can turn with the utopian players gaining more and more renewable resources. One advantage provided to the utopian players is that they generally have more playing pieces than the corporate entity, so they more frequently land on the domains. The likelihood then is that they will over time be more successful at gaining control of more domains. The tide begins to turn with the cumulative effect of common ownership, although this process is not guaranteed, and it is possible for the corporate entity to regain control. The outcome is in balance and is as much about cultural change as it is economic.



Utopian players continue to gain more domains (indicated by the green houses) - iteration 11

This is the point of inflection and the opportunity arises to become a mature and stable symbiotic ecosystem. The mathematician David Orrell and journalist Roman Chlupatý (2016, p. 2-3) reference the work of transition ecologist Eugene Odum to describe this transition. In an immature ecosystem a few dominant species exploit the environment and energy systems, and expand rapidly in a bloom of growth. As the ecosystem matures, there is a move "to a more web-like, decentralized structure in which multiple species interact in increasingly complex ways. The waste of one organism is recycled as food for another, and resources such as nutrients and minerals are conserved". And so, using this analogy for a socio-economic system, after rapid growth, high profits and exploitation of resources, the economy then needs to mature. The emphasis switches to a mode of symbiosis where resources are recycled and exchanged for mutual benefit, and institutions become more concerned with concepts such as civil rights, law and order, education, and culture.

## 4.9 Defining special domains



It was clear from iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) that the players ran very low on currencies and that a means of gaining sufficient replacement currencies had not been worked out. There was also an expressed desire for the domains to have an assigned value or be rated, such that some would be deemed more valuable than others. This was an important aspect that I learnt for Utopoly, because it is possible that the board could become bland, if all the domains have the same effect and value on the game; although different domains would have a symbolic preference for different players, or players would have an emotional attachment to a value represented by a domain. In Monopoly this is not an issue, as properties are graded by real estate value and have different strategic positionings.



"...I think that would be interesting if we were comparing one with another and working out what our hierarchy would be, like this to Mayfair on the board or the Old Kent Road would be interesting."



"For the original rules when you set it up, if you're at home, if you start owning some of these squares, rectangles, such as 'Education', you get perhaps two tokens as you go passed 'GO'. Because you are more educated, more empathetic... explore the way that you're, you know, you're strengthening your community, and so you have to have some sort of reward"...



"...Is there a learning to take from this, as in we work with and realise that you actually can't beat the system according to these rules? Then we can come about it differently next time."..."You are out of credits".



"Yep."



"So the next time one of us played, the problem, that are - if you do accumulate, something or win it's not quite the word, if you were to have an interest in one of these rectangles, you have to get some reward for it. You have to, what is the reward, you know?"...

During iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) players were struggling, trying to find ways of reducing carbon and debt. They had created the domains of 'Trees' and 'Waste management' and realised these domains could possibly reduce carbon, and so they had changed the rules to allow this. These domains became targets for the players. They directed their efforts in acquiring them for the commons and keeping them away from the corporate entity. However, for future iterations the ability to reduce carbon through the domains would be determined by whether participants had created the relevant domains that had some legitimate association with carbon reduction.

If players in future games did not create domains that would be associated with carbon reduction, they would be in a difficult position. However, the idea of special domains (see section 3.8 Special domains) presented a particularly useful option for overcoming this imbalance, and also created a set of preferential domains. I decided to combine these issues and add to the guidelines so that there would be four special domains which would have distinct properties.













Selecting and designating special domains - iteration 11

Once any of these special domains were controlled by the utopian players then that domain would become a double generator of value, and the players could also choose between receiving 2 currency tokens (of the same type) or 1 currency token and a reduction of 1 carbon. Strategically players could choose to accelerate their accumulation of currency and therefore their ability to acquire and control further domains. Then at a later stage of the game they could decide to utilise the special domains' carbon reduction function.



Participants discussing which domains to define as Special Domains - iteration 11



-  "One might be 'Gross domestic happiness' or but where's my 'Outcome free day' or 'Radical laziness'? That's quite nice. Yeah. So does it have to be a particular thing?"
-  "No it doesn't - it can be anything."
-  "So, is there no one on here that would be appropriate?"
-  "Maybe 'Policy Planning' "
-  "Did we have like 'actual participative dem – democracy' anywhere?"
-  "Yeah, we've got that..."
-  "We've got that everywhere!"
-  "Well, there is the deliberative process we talked about?"
-  "Okay, this is what we agreed on was that we will 'start a deliberative process of reforming democracy', so in this room we were going to decide the whole democratic model, we could 'start deliberative process' between us..."
-  "So, we could have 'actual democracy' instead of what we have now, which is kind of like pseudo democracy... I think every election that I've voted in has made zero difference because I've always voted for the Greens and they've never got in in anywhere that I have voted!"



Discussing special domains - iteration 10

“Can we then debate that?”

(Participant - iteration 10)



Discussing special domains - iteration 10

“It’s your policy!”

(Participant - iteration 10)



“Let’s say that is a special one...” [points to domain ‘All policy to rebalance ‘isms’ ’ in the Inequality area].

“Do you want to put something on there to say, represent that?”

“So, you want that one, is that what you are saying?”

“Someone...you said you don’t want to invest in the ‘isms’.

Can we then debate that?”

“So why don’t you want to invest in the ‘isms’ ?”

“You know, I think we decided not to invest in a vaguely phrased, vaguely phrased policy.”

“Okay”.

“I’m gonna think about it, but what do we mean by all policies? all, policy to...”

“So it was...I think you were talking about that like, rebalancing”... 



“It’s your policy!”

“So, if there’s like a, you make laws to...minority groups.”

“Say, you’ve been made a minority. Yeah, to help people...”

“In that case then, yes!”

“You know, what I mean, redress that.”

“Then we would want to invest in that!”

“It’s your policy!”...

“You know, when you win it, you can change the words.”

“It’s all, embracive. It’s very powerful property to opt for.”

The process of choosing which four domains would be designated as ‘special domains’ then presented further opportunities for discussion around the domains and their meanings.

## 4.10 Movement and agency



"And, and we wouldn't roll the dice to decide where you're going, you go where you want to go on the board..."



"Roll the dice in Monopoly style?"



"No personally, I just build a wall around and roll a ball, see where it stops.

Yeah. admittedly You would end up 9 times out of ten..."



"Like being a member of the royal family, where are we going, what am I opening today?"



"James? Take me there. Yeah."

The participants at iteration 11 (Cosmia) suggested that ideally, in a utopian game, players would have full agency to determine where they go. However, this utopian idea would break the first rule of the game aspect of Utopoly (see section 4.2 Primary guideline - for a lusory attitude). It would allow the players to easily achieve the prelusory goal, thus depriving them of the benefits derived from engagement in the game-play. There needed to be some other means of determining movement.

In all the iterations prior to iteration 11 (Cosmia) the method used to determine the moving of the game pieces had been carried over from Monopoly. A pair of six-sided dice are rolled, and the players' pieces are moved the resulting number of domains around the board. Movement therefore depended on luck within a normal associated random distribution from 2 to 12. If players also rolled a double, they could have a subsequent roll of the dice.

One of the participants at iteration 10 (Furtherfield) was the games designer Matteo Menapace. We had a discussion about randomness and agency, and what balance there should be relating to skill, strategic choice and random luck. There is a spectrum of games from, for example Snakes and Ladders, which rely totally on luck and have no agency, to others such as the strategy game Diplomacy which is all strategy - the only luck element emerges from guessing other players' intentions.

Matteo's preference was for adding agency and suggested that instead of rolling dice players could be dealt two cards from a standard pack of playing cards. An Ace would count as 1 with Jack, Queen and King counting as 11,12, and 13 respectively. They could then decide which of the two cards they wanted to select to decide their movement around the board. This adds to the agency and decision-making of the players. As I had no pack of cards that session, I introduced the option for subsequent iterations 11-13 (Cosmia, AS Streatham and York). Players could choose to roll a pair of dice or use the card selection method. The choice becomes: card or dice?



Players are offered the choice between 1 of 2 cards or a dice roll - iteration 11



"Carding or dice rolling?"



"I quite like the cards because then you do actually have an option. When with dice you've only got that one..."



"Eleven or four?"



"It's pleasingly psycho-geographic Neil."



"Oh really?"



"pleasingly psycho-geographic."



"OK."



"the cards...psycho-geography? no? So, I always describe it as the place where walking art, geography, psychology, philosophy meet...So, it's like Situationists on the move, essentially...Yeah, so it's how you interact with the world around you."

The ability to choose between options of cards led one participant at iteration 11 (Cosmia) to remark on the similarities with psycho-geography. The players wander through, explore and respond to the utopian landscape they have co-created and feel how it resonates with them.



Player selecting two cards instead of rolling the dice - iteration 11



"Alright - so I've got 8 or 9 and I am... so that's going to get me onto...?"



"8 will get you here and 9 will get you onto 'Communal meals and shared spaces - Get to know your neighbours'."



"ooph - shall we buy that one?"



Players point out the choices offered by selecting 1 of 2 playing cards - iteration 11

Giving the players this degree of agency meant they could target specific domains relating to the utopian values they wanted, including the prized special domains. It also gave them the ability to target areas that were contested to speed up their acquisition. Because the players are collaborating by offering the choice of two locations to land, each move then becomes a potential for discussion and group decision-making.

While debate and information about players' preferences emerges from this process, one downside of this new level of agency was that it decreased the likelihood that players would land on domains controlled by the corporate entity. They were often able to avoid this situation and so escape the associated issues of paying rent or going to jail. Because of this I considered adding a further rule to limit the number of times players could choose to draw cards, although this was not implemented because enough players still opted to roll a dice and be guided by luck.



Players varied their choice between Dice or Cards - iteration 13

## 4.11 Chance cards



Participants write new Chance cards during the Implementation stage - iteration 09

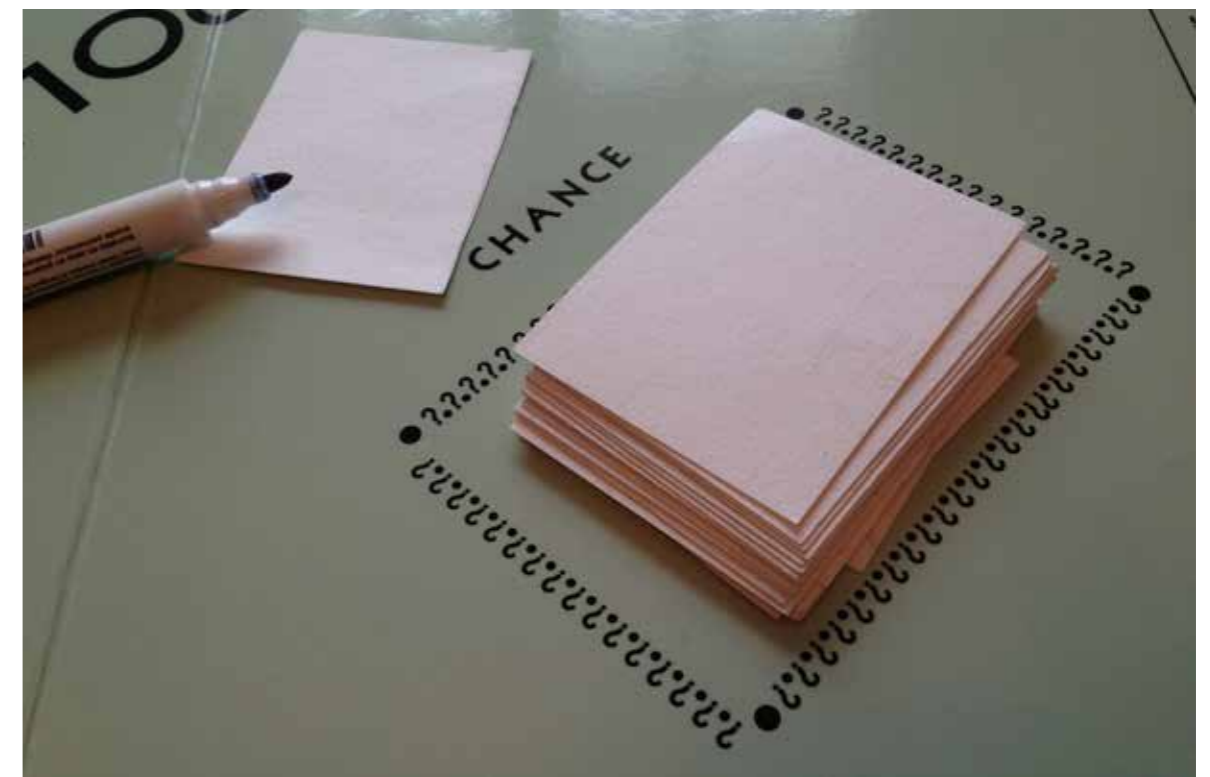
The first hack of Monopoly by Critical Practice (iteration 01, Utopographies) was limited to writing new alternative Chance cards with utopian values. As the Utopoly method has developed this practice was incorporated into the Implementation phase of the Future Workshop. It was intended to introduce a creative feature for players to engage with. As players encounter the Chance spaces on the board the players would take the next Chance card and it would have an effect the game in some way. The idea was for the new Chance cards to be written to reflect the new features and values of the utopian board the participants had created.

This first practice of the hack over time became a less important aspect of the method. This activity was usually left to the later part of the Implementation phase and when time was short, it was not always carried out satisfactorily, if at all. Because of this I decided to provide a pre-written set of Chance cards which featured in all subsequent sessions. These cards featured some of the usual cards familiar to Monopoly such as 'Get out of Jail free', 'Go to Jail' and 'Advance to GO'. In addition, there were new movement cards and cards whose consequences were to increase or decrease carbon, debt or the currencies held by the utopian players.



'Advance to Go' - 'Go To Jail' & 'Get out of Jail free' cards from initial set - iteration 10

The Chance cards are also designed to enhance the notion of prototyping and improvisation. The pre-written set of cards provided is very much hand-written and unpolished, setting a rough-and-ready standard. The players are provided with a plentiful supply of blank cards (scraps of old card). This aesthetic is intended to encourage the players to write freely or draw whatever they want, knowing they can make errors and start again.
















A stack of blank cards are available for writing new Chance cards during the game





The 'Distraction' (mobile phone) Chance card - iteration 10



-  "'Follow Instructions on the card'. Oh! Come on. We haven't seen any good ones yet".
-  "'Distraction' Oh, it's quite a big one."
-  "A mobile phone!"
-  "'You're gonna lose Time. It's a distraction isn't it."
-  "Lose Time?"
-  "Can we just take it out of there? [the Commons]."
-  "I think so."
-  "'How does Distraction translate to losing Time? Obviously, we are distracted wasting..."
-  "Wastes time?"
-  "'We haven't established what's on the screen? So maybe..."
-  "Yeah, so maybe you know we have less distraction - more Time!"
-  "I'm not clear on this...I think on every issue here in relation to the game we have to contest?"
-  "Yeah. Quite right."

The set of starting cards were purposefully weighted in favour of the corporate entity so that more cards acted against the utopian players. This bias carries on the initial set up where the players are at a disadvantage at the start of the game. It also encourages the players to create new Chance cards, which would be favourable to them. The current guidelines also allow players to write additional Chance cards during play. When a player lands on a domain, players have the option to expend one unit of currency and create a new Chance card with the stipulation that the new card relates somehow to the context of the domain they have landed on.

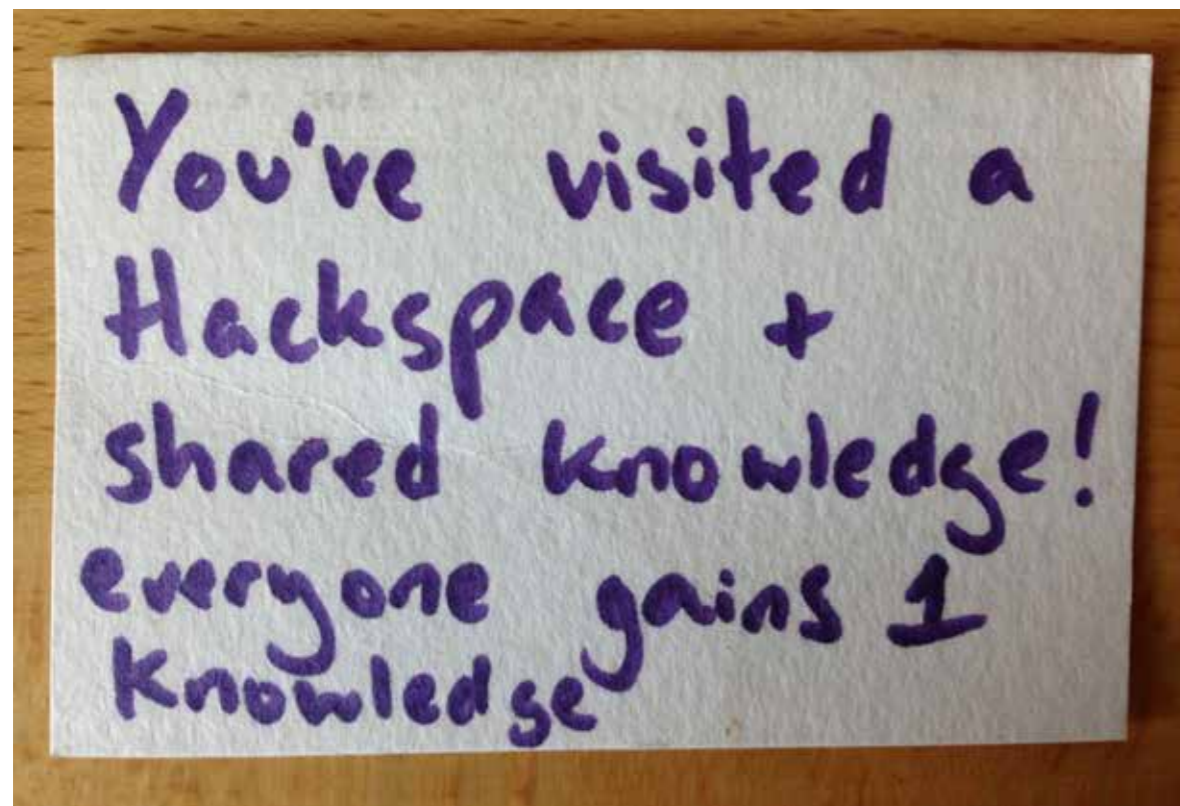
During the game at the Cosmia Festival (iteration 11), a player landed on the domain of 'Hack space + repair cafe'. Which allowed them to write a Chance card relating to that domain.



"Okay, I'm gonna make a Chance card, related to this.

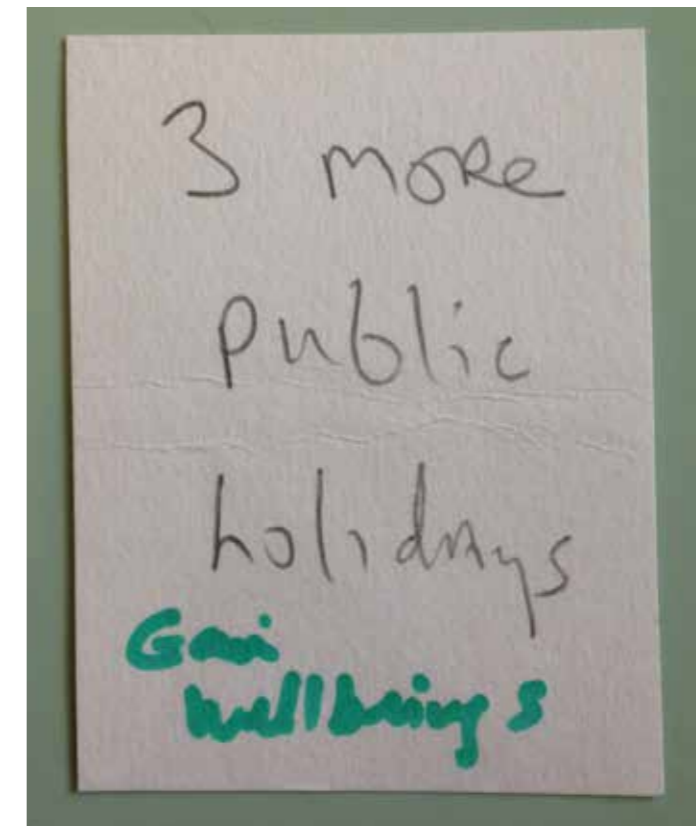
"Here's the Chance cards, the blank ones."

"So, I could put something like everyone gets a Creativity thing because they are at the Hackspace, or a Knowledge maybe?"



The 'Hackspace' Chance card created during game-play - iteration 11

The new card is shuffled into the pack of Chance cards and will emerge at a later part of the game when players land on the Chance space. This represents the players' investment in a value and its potential to 'bear fruit'.



The 'public holidays' Chance card created during the Implementation stage - iteration 09



"Three more public holidays - hurray! So, what should that be?"

"If you are having a public holiday - gain a Wellbeing or something?"

"So, you can get more tokens, that's cool."

"Okay, so isn't it Public holidays isn't it, it's not just a private holiday.

So, we should all get a Wellbeing yes - I would think so."

"I like that so - fair point, fair point."















This feature and associate stipulation has a number of benefits. It requires the players to relate to and engage with those domains and the values' meanings they represent, and therefore stimulates discussion of issues around those ideas. Otherwise, one domain could easily be considered just like another with a different name, as it would have little other effect on the game play. It reintroduces and reasserts the utopian values and ideas that were created from the Future Workshop. It also allows the players to engage in improvisation by reacting to the situation at hand. They can decide what the card provides for the players and compensate for anything they feel is missing from the initial Chance card deck.



The 'Lobbying' card from the initial set of Chance cards - iteration 10

The initial set of cards comprises text, images and icons, but they do not have any consequences stated on them (the rest of the initial set of cards are shown on pages 242-243). This is because each game will depend on what players have implemented on the board and the rules they may have devised. The significance of each card and resultant action is therefore for the players or the facilitator (see section 4.12 Adjudicating improvisations) to interpret. This lack of instruction was intentional, with the expectation that it would trigger further discussion, debate and improvisation. Sometimes interesting anecdotes and entertaining stories would also be forthcoming.



-  "What's that one called - just looking... 'Lobbying'."
-  "Lobbying, boo!"
-  "What does it do?"
-  "What do you think that might do?"
-  "The corporations have lobbying governments or whatever, to make life better for them".
-  "So, I think you have to pay, or you have to pay something into the middle into the corporations. Something..."
-  "Yeah."
-  "That's not him lobbying them?"
-  "No, that's them lobbying - that's them making you worse."
-  "OK - I'll give one of them..."
-  "You have to give Time."
-  "Yep, okay."
-  "Is that giving them more Time to lobby?"
-  "We did a panto for the kids outside the Treasury the other day with XR [Extinction Rebellion] and it was the Prime Minister and he's like, ohh, la, la, la, like with a wig, and then there's the lobbyist. He's behind you! like at the panto. It was brilliant. He's like, no, there's no lobbyists behind me. He's behind you! - It was brilliant. And then the kids had a piñata to find out where all of our tax money was. It was an oil rig piñata, where has the money gone?"



Chance cards (part 1) from the initial set used from iteration 10 onwards



Chance cards (part 2) from the initial set used from iteration 10 onwards

## 4.12 Adjudicating improvisations

The formation of the game is dependent on the participants of the Future Workshop and these are different each time the session is run. There are Chance cards which are purposefully left with unspecified outcomes that need interpreting within the context of the current formation, and the game itself allows for improvisation. All this points to a role of adjudication for unforeseen circumstances which may break out. At iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) an idea was proposed:



"You know like I haven't played it but just watching a movie like that Dungeons and Dragons."



"Yes."



"So maybe I think a games master, that could rule on all these things that come out."



"Or a games mistress, maybe!"



"Or a facilitator perhaps."



"Yeah, I think that's a really good point. Because then it's the facilitator or teacher or whatever you're going to decide..."



"It would be like, the judge."



"Yeah, the wise one!"



"Yeah, Excellent idea."



"And the thing with the trees. Is that, but like one, like, when there is a problem with these things - there is someone else who can decide, the best works, but still, for the fluidity of the game it might be useful. But on the other side it's nice to have these conversations because otherwise you don't get the other side of it. So, I don't know..."



"Yes, that makes a lot of sense."

In essence it was considered useful to have a referee type figure whose role would be to provide adjudication and guidance concerning the inevitably open nature of the game. There could be rules, symbols and artefacts that have been implemented on to the board and for the game-play, collectively devised by the participants. In the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons there is a Dungeon Master (Games Master) who is separate from the players. He/she, set up scenarios for the players to encounter and makes rulings on what the outcomes of events could be including the likely chance of these outcomes, which are then decided by dice throw. He/she also plays the role of non-player characters within the scenarios.

This role should be performed in a non-domineering manner that allows conversations to flow and for all players to be involved. In Utopoly such a separately defined role wouldn't always be needed; it is possible for this role to be spread across the players with decisions made collectively. If this is the case, there is a requirement for players to take on board an even-handed approach of fairness and adopt a lusory attitude (see section 4.2 Primary guideline - for a lusory attitude). The players should always be reminded of the first rule about prelusory goals, so that when adjudicating and interpreting events, situations and consequences of such decisions shouldn't lead to the game ending prematurely.

With or without the facilitator, players will be able to discuss and argue their case and ideas while the game is in progress and at each salient point that comes up. This open approach also encourages more discussion and references the Matrix style game format where arguments and language predominate over technical rules and random chance. Chris Engle (a psychiatric social worker and board game designer) designed the Matrix game in 1988 (Engle, 2016). The idea was an alternative to games which were overly rule-based and numbers-ridden, and as a consequence complicated and boring.

Instead, players describe why something should happen, taking into account anything, the players thought was relevant, and an Umpire decides how likely it is. Initially it used a matrix of key words (hence the name, but subsequently dropped) to help construct the arguments, and incorporated the philosopher Georg Hegel's idea that a consensus of ideas could be arrived at through argument. Players make persuasive arguments that are relevant to the scenario in hand and can even argue for changes to the rules that exist. As a means of proposing exploration of utopian scenarios, this approach fits well with Utopoly, particularly as a method for open discussion and the development of narratives.

## 4.13 Utopian moments - storytelling and new knowledge



"So, because you have passed go? What should we decide you get?"



"Get another token?"



"Yeah, so, I need please, some more Wellbeing...thank you. I am on

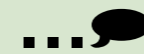
'Complexity and Contradiction', now there is a credit on there. So, what does that mean? I need to contest it..."



"So, there's a learning point, could we have a much more - bigger conversation around that? So, I own it but I don't own it, but I've got, you know an interest in it and you've got an interest in it as well."



"So, it's taking... it can still be influencing. I think there is something about a struggle somehow."



"Okay, so how would you - so the question for the students? I mean, how could you demonstrate, how could you get more of a say in that influence?"



"I think so, maybe it starts with even just thinking what resources do you have to put the disposal of influencing? Like, in a way I think a lot of people think 'oh, I can't do anything'."



"Yeah, yeah".



"But actually, we've all got some sort of agency".



"Yeah. Good".



"So, you get them to think that. So, it has to have that sort of dialogue..."



"...But it kind of goes back to what you were saying, which really resonates with me. And my experience of working with students who have graduated and moving to employment. Basically, so they feel totally demoralised. They feel like they're the only people in the world who are struggling with these concerns. And even just to be able to say, Oh, you know, there's a thing called mutual aid, like we can help each other out. We can develop an informal system of favours. It's really risky, based on trust, but actually, I think for many of them, it's like, oh, wow. So, I don't know, I feel like there's something in there because it's just so anathema to the way that you kind of feel the, it's a common, critical common sense".

The Utopoly method starts with the expression of stories and critiques of situations which are adverse or detrimental in some way, but then comes full circle by providing the opportunity to articulate positive narratives of a possible better future. The last part of the method culminates with a game; however, the purpose of the game is not merely to add entertainment. The game becomes a mediator and catalyst for conversations, stories and narratives. It is this interaction of the players with the features of the game that stimulates the emergence of new narratives or the articulation of untold stories which in turn allows for the production of new knowledge.

In the discussion from iteration 09 (Chelsea, Billiards Room) the game's rules for contesting domains provoked the transmission of knowledge about strategies for enhancing agency in the real world. It is through the players engagement with the rules, artefacts and other players that utopian moments can emerge. These moments are produced as part of the experience of playing the game. Jon Back (2013, p. 34) relates how games researchers Jaakko Stenros and Annika Waern (2010, p. 5) speak of *enacted experiences*, which are produced between the game and the playing of the game. This concept has similarities to Dewey's (2005) *aesthetic experience*, or what Dias and Fernandez (2019, p. 136) refer to as an 'artistic event'. Back (2013, p. 35) goes on to describe games as experience machines, and discusses how rules can be engaged in particular ways to encourage certain results, and thus potentially, to obtain an intended experience.

**"Praxical knowledge is not a priori there to be discovered, but is knowledge as action or 'knowing' that emerges from both thought and biological or sensory interaction or... from aesthetic experience."**

(Estelle Barrett, 2019, p. 31)

Matteo Menapace (2019) augments this idea by drawing on the analogy of user interfaces for computer systems and describes games as *social interfaces*. In particular, he is interested in how games can become "conversational interfaces or conversational frameworks" where the rules and structure of a game can evoke conversations on particular topics. In Utopoly conversations and stories are triggered by aspects of the game and these can also affect the participants by causing latent feelings to surface or connections to be realised. For example: during iteration 12 (Academic Support, Streatham, 2019) the device of carbon blocks and the explicit threat of climate catastrophe elicited this exchange:



"There's a story like, I have optimism about almost everything, because history shows that life works in these generational cycles, and things are bad and better, bad, better, the wheel of fortune turns and turns, but the world killer is climate change, because you cannot do that. And that carbon that really freaks me out to see the carbon building up on the board..."



"But here's the interesting thing that it's about because it is the collection that the existence of all this [the corporate entity controlled board] creates the carbon."



"Yes, yes."



"And that's kind of interesting, because this is, it's actually about connection to decolonisation and decarbonisation. So yeah, that crucial connection that the existence of the fact of predatory capitalism."



"In capitalism, itself, this is how we think about GDP..."



"So, I think what's interesting to come back to the idea, then the connection to the workshops is the materiality of what is. So, all of us do different workshops and work with different materials and processes. And each of those processes produces a kind of correspondence as to something that's going on for you. And a bit like when you come across a component or text, it has resonance for you..."

The experience of playing the game becomes part of a shared story that each player can contribute to. For Barrett (2019, p. 31) knowledge and cultural production emerge from narratives via the process of interpolation in an open and experimental manner. Stories can be revised and amended by having new interpretations and understandings inserted into the living narrative. Utopoly players can bring their own stories to insert into the game and engage reflectively and relationally with the constructed environment of the rules and physical features of the game. This interpolation and analysis can be understood as a "process of production of production" (ibid., p. 33), helping to understand how knowledge is produced from the relational experience of interaction. In this way new knowledge is experienced or made in the doing rather than received or discovered, as Barrett (ibid.) states: "Praxical knowledge is not a priori there to be discovered, but is knowledge as *action* or 'knowing' that emerges from both thought and biological or sensory interaction or... from aesthetic experience."

In Utopoly the term 'story' has different connotations to what might be familiar to the games studies community and relates more to storytelling – these stories also perform additional functions within the method. Most games have narrative features, these can provide merely a framing or backdrop for the game mechanics or be central to the game's concept - where the game is to uncover the 'story'. In Utopoly the framing narrative is the situation to be critiqued - the starting point (socio-economic or organisational). It is the springboard for the stories and narratives developed and told by the participants. Each story can subvert, augment, repurpose and compete with the framing narrative (for example monopolisation and destruction). These stories become enacted in the game-play, where new ones can also emerge. In contrast to carefully crafted utopian fiction, formulated by a single author with a predetermined end, in Utopoly participants share the moment of a story's creation, flux, and development. The multiple stories and narratives that emerge can be both personal and collectively created, they can recall the past or be visions of the future and may be fragmented and unresolved. The stories may or may not be used in the final game but are all part of the weave and thread of the experience. During the Future Workshop phase stories form part of the creative medium for developing the game. This collectively produced speculation can create an explosion of creative play. The participants' stories inform and contribute to the creation of values, characters, artefacts, rules, and ultimately utopian narratives. These game components and narratives can be connected and evolve through future iterations - existing in a state of becoming rather than as finalised features.

In Utopoly participants relate stories both as context of the known, of the here and now, and also of a possible utopia set in an imagined future. For Hopkins, producing hopeful stories of a better future is in itself beneficial (2019, p. 119), as the "mere telling of them can create a degree of inevitability about their becoming reality, and a sense that speaking them out loud is also of great benefit to our own mind, a powerful antidote to despondency and trauma".

However, sometimes these expressed possibilities are not as far in the future as imagined. At iteration 10 (Furtherfield) a particularly prescient discussion developed concerning video conferencing. Frustration was expressed that because the will did not exist to see it widely adopted or there was no impetus to change behaviour, so the benefits of this technology would not be realised:



"What was the one that you pointed out?"



"Oh, it's just a 'Make remote working not suck'."



"Does remote working suck then?"



"It does...the idea comes from trying to travel less so fly less especially. And so the way to achieve that - the alternative could be to create ways to work that don't require too much travelling, whether it is commuting or not doing long, long distance. But for instance, there's a certain prestige, for instance, attached to flying to attend a conference or have a meeting with people in the same space or value attached to having people being flown over to a country to do a course that they're going to want to have a meeting that could happen via Skype or other like Skype, for example. So the way to make remote working not suck is not just a technology issue, but it's also about changing the values around and the practices around work. So for instance, having meetings only when very, very strictly necessary. Before they have meetings that are completely inconclusive, and it's a waste of time for everyone... that's about culture more than technology, dynamics of creating a level playing field where if you are participating in meetings, remotely where everyone else is in the same room, that creates an unbalanced situation. But if everyone had to dial in, for instance, so they can stay at their desk and dial in, then everybody's in the same position."







“Sounds very tech-led.”

“Do you think it is inevitable, do you think?”

“Well the tech is there already, like provided they have a decent internet connection, what I’m talking about is the shift in business practices, work practices.”

“It’s exactly the same thing is trying to like, so it’s education, instead of going through a lecture like a two hour lecture they show up and don’t do anything. Again, that versus just doing something before the lecture, having an online way of talking about it and having a lecture or workshop where people are already informed, they have had to think about it, and use that time to tackle more complex challenging things. It’s called flipped learning, the method, the traditional method, but people are really resistant to change. And they do value like, you’re saying someone coming and talking and just. It’s about, what’s rewarded to the people who so in this case, in education lecturers, who structured their sessions, not in a didactic speaking, at each other two ways, people will try to do something different. They’re not that rewarded. Because they’re not there for that. But yeah, so maybe in the case of businesses, do you think people who try to do things differently, are rewarded currently?”

“No, they are not.”

In fact, the 2020 coronavirus pandemic and consequent lockdowns accelerated the mass uptake of video conferencing as a vital technology for homeworking, and made arguments about the benefits of reduced travel more acceptable. While this is one example of foreshadowing coming to fruition, the need for narratives to express utopian ideas continues but also faces a significant barrier. Hopkins’ research into storytelling (2019, p. 117-119) highlights how the existing narrative promoted to maintain the status quo, such as “there is no alternative”, can shut down imaginative thought. However, for Hopkins (2019, p. 161), hopeful narratives can play a part in allowing imagination to flourish, especially when we are connected to other people in a safe, relaxed environment.



Storytelling during Implementation stage - iteration 11

He proposes that such positive narratives can chart a way forward, shape peoples’ lives and the future direction that a society may take. Similarly, Haiven and Khasnabish (2014, pp. 96-97) are convinced by their research that positive stories and narratives are “crucial components of social struggles both for individuals and for collectives”, but that if no counter narrative exists there can be a “crisis of narrative”, which can be expressed in the reticence of people to tell a story. Individuals can be left fragmented “between present and future, between destruction and creation and between hope and despair”.

**“In telling stories we don’t simply explain the world as it is; we help bring the world into being.”**

**(Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish, 2014, p. 96)**

Following from this, they relate the social movement scholar Eric Selbin’s (2010, p. 4) contention that stories should once more become a part of accepted social science methodology, stating that they are important for capturing peoples’ feelings and perceptions about who they are, what their history is, and be a guide to where they wish to be in the future. This suggests that there is a role for methods like Utopoly to provide the space, environment and seedbed for the production of narratives, discussions and new knowledge creation.

# Conclusion

What began as a simple 'hack' of the board game Monopoly has developed into a utopian research method. As such, it is a means to critique the present, explore alternatives and imagine ourselves otherwise, while simultaneously trialling prefigurative practices. The conclusion of this research project is a method that creates utopian moments and temporary utopians.

The research project was motivated by a desire to meet two perceived needs. Firstly, there was a stated deficiency (Levitas, 2017a) of new utopian methods capable of providing concrete (rather than abstract) utopian experiences. In addition, there was an acknowledgement that the field of utopian studies is overly reliant on literary constructs. The second requirement was to validate the suitability of games as utopian practice. Both have been met by this research project. This new method offers a utopian space in both a workshop and a game format and provides agency for the utopian imaginary. Participants therefore can experience utopian practice at-first-hand rather than rely on reading the works of others.

It is natural for research to be coloured by the cultural, political, and social context of the researcher. It was my perception, through lived experience, that a neoliberal worldview had become all-pervasive and normalised. My initial assumption was that there were few remaining fields where this damaging ideology was being questioned and challenged and that utopian art practice would provide a way to achieve this. The liberty that art practice affords over more traditional qualitative or social science methods would I hoped allow people who had become closed to new ideas be opened to utopian possibilities. The purpose of this research was not to use empirical or theoretical research to uncover a 'truth' waiting to be discovered but to create a method for something new to be created.

Whilst the research methodology has been informed by my experience of participatory design and user research, it was the playful freedom of art, unrestrained by procedural dogma, that shaped it. Together these aspects allowed an initially unstructured and perhaps messy process (although it required significant organising to achieve) to eventually evolve into a more formulated method but which itself contained a generative utopian function.

From the outset the methodology included public participation. The participants were not subjects to be studied, but co-creators in the development of Utopoly. Although the whole process was directed, curated, and facilitated it was by working and responding to the participants as co-creators that gave the richness and content to the research and validated it. The dialogue that developed with the participants was informed by my judgement and intuition to determine and recognise what was useful to develop the method and take forward at each iteration. The research outcome was the Utopoly method and not the data provided by the participants. I consider it unlikely that a purely procedural qualitative method alone would have produced this result and the choice of an arts-based methodology and the value of arts-practice is validated.

In arts practice public engagement comes with risks regarding who would volunteer and whether people would turn up (there were many who expressed interest but could not attend due to different circumstances) I also had a fear that they would not engage or contribute effectively to the process - but on every iteration this proved unfounded. Whilst there was no defined demographic group (that was never the intention) participants gave up their time freely and were self-selecting. They were influenced by the publications about Utopoly which clearly provoked and attracted interest amongst a variety of communities: MA and PhD students, artists, psychology, social design, games design, interaction design, narrative studies, futures research, theatre, innovation, social studies, creative workshops, social activists, and educators amongst others.

In this research as in any group activity (and true of any modern organisation or community) it is difficult to attribute specific contributions, or value added, to specific individuals (other than a few clear instances). Each participant was generally present for one iteration, and each benefitted from the accumulation of contributions from previous iterations and contributed to future ones. What can be said is that all the participants were valuable to the process, and they are listed in the Acknowledgements with appreciation.

As an arts-based speculative exercise, the outcome was not guaranteed or known. What I initially set out to do the was to hack and play a utopian version of Monopoly however, important features only became clear after embarking on the research and in the doing of it. Critique, creativity, improvisation, play, invention, speculation, collaboration, and projection were all integral. The process of deliberation raised debate and conversation so that storytelling became prominent, there was a psycho-geographic aspect, together with transformative utopian autopoiesis. Similarly, as a method there

are no guaranteed outcomes (although to date all iterations have been productive) although each participant can encounter a utopian experience and produce meaningful dialogue. Utopian catalysts or seeds may be planted, and utopian desires educated. Observing the interactions and fun generated at each iteration, together with the very positive and complimentary feedback proffered by the participants, I am confident Utopoly is a valid and useful method.

The Utopoly method was co-created with multiple participants through a series of experimental workshops. Over several iterations of these creative workshops, features emerged which had a positive effect and these accrued and coalesced as the core guidelines for the resulting method. In essence the method involves imagining features of a utopian future which are expressed and experienced first through construction, and second through game-play. The board game Monopoly is used for what it represents, rentier-based monopolist capitalism, together with its general familiarity and simplicity of format.

To begin Utopoly a preprepared board is useful; it is like a Monopoly board but has empty and un-named property spaces or domains. This saves time and acts as an indication of what the participants are aiming to complete. Participants progress from the unknown of these empty spaces to conceptualise their utopian values, ideas and desires, which are then transcribed on to the domains. In the constructive phase of the method an adaptation of a Future Workshop was introduced to bring structure and direction to the method, as desirable futures are envisioned.

In this Future Workshop there is a focus on critique as utopian practice which then leads to a fantasy response. This is the engagement of a playful, collective, radical imagination which produces the utopian features that will populate the board. The utopian function of improvisation is used both to play with the concepts and values that evolve, and to produce guidelines for the game-play. The guidelines form an initial set which can also be amended during game-play. This constructive phase was also a lively time in which stories of the past, present and hopeful narratives of the future are vocalized and expressed as the participants shared their values and desires, and engage with process of populating the Utopoly board.

The Future Workshop method was designed to release creative potential and was predicated on Jungk's belief (1976, p. 20) that all people have latent creative potential which is suppressed by conditioning and ideology. Through developing the Utopoly method other similarly latent characteristics are revealed.

The first characteristic to be introduced in subsequent iterations of Utopoly was an oppositional entity that stood in the way of transition or progress to the participants'

desired Utopia. The game-play part of Utopoly begins at the normal end point of Monopoly (and possibly life on Earth) where one player has initial control over a large proportion of the domains. This sets up game-play jeopardy where the utopian players are induced towards collaborative play as they attempt to wrest control of the domains. The second was the concept of the Commons, with which the utopian players interacted as a repository of shared resources, and for reciprocal practice. The third was the introduction of alternative currencies and a mechanism to contest the control of domains. The domains are transcribed with the players' utopian desires and initially exist in a state of not-yet, that is until they are symbolically acquired through contested game-play. The contest and collaboration to obtain control over domains can indicate priority and preferences, which themselves raise interesting discussion and deliberation. The requirement to use diverse currencies for the contest sets up an ecosystem of value exchange, and suggest that different economies both exist and can be possible.

The alternative currencies also provide a counterpoise to that of a debt-based mono-currency (used by the oppositional entity). This creates two or more competing economies. The status-quo is a financialised market economy based on debt which skews societal values towards individualism and private accumulation. This economy is extractive, exploitative and requires constant growth. It is part of a *wicked problem* whereby the drive for constant growth ultimately leads to climate catastrophe. Working together with the Commons (or another economic sphere), the alternative currencies offer a lens to glimpse other possible economies, ones whose mode of production is sustainable, reciprocal and generative. All these features have become part of the guidelines for the game-play and can be played with, amended or rejected.

Play and playfulness are present throughout the method. Play has a creative capacity that can generate future possibilities, and is a means of cultural practice for the imaginary reconstitution of society. It can also be a means of inquiry with which to encounter situations and manifest alternative realities. A key feature of the method is that new guidelines can be invented before and during the game. While all guidelines are optional one guideline has primacy over the others; no new guideline should prematurely cause the end of the game. This exists to maintain a playful or lusory attitude during the game. All the guidelines are open to interpretation, adaptation, and improvisation through discursive and lively deliberation. There is therefore an adjudication role where the meanings and workings of guidelines or features are debated. The discussions that form the debates for this adjudication are also sources for narratives to emerge.

What became clear as the iterations of workshops progressed was that much of what happened in the workshops and game-play was itself utopian practice, and this generative

process should be retained within the method. Therefore, the resulting method contains aspects of its own creation. It is a form of Bloch's autopoiesis, being self-referential and endogenous - the process is made by those who are made by the process. Rather than the outcome of the research being a fully formed game where the rules are fixed and static, the participants have the ability to generate their own vision of the future. Their reimagined society is then experienced and explored through playing the game.

In a similar vein, while the playing of the game is the end point of the method, it is not the actual goal of Utopoly. The actual purpose is to allow a group of participants to experience utopia-as-practice through the multiple utopian processes available during the method. Their utopian desires are exercised and refined, while the aim is to move towards a utopian society. Through all this there is the possibility of individual transformation to become, even momentarily, utopian through engaging in the process.

Not only is Utopoly a new utopian research method, it is also a producer of new knowledge. Utopoly provides a generative space where people can volunteer stories, dream, speculate, improvise, and discuss idealised and possible progressive futures. The narratives produced through this process can constitute a form of new knowledge. Participants also produce their own artistic events as enacted experiences through engaging in utopia-as-practice, by constructing and playing the game. The method begins in a state of unknown. The participants then co-create and improvise their collective visions of a better future expressed as features of the game. These utopian formations of the future are unknown or not-yet-conscious until released by engaging with the method and playing Utopoly. The processes of discussion, negotiation, construction, and collaboration produce utopian scenarios. Through interacting with each other and the game the participants can experience pedagogical moments. New knowledge is made in the doing - knowledge as praxis, emerging from thought, action and aesthetic experience.

The new utopian research method of Utopoly has already been independently reproduced by other research groups and has been applied to a variety of cultural and organisational settings in the UK and internationally (including France, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana (Fabrique des Mobilités, 2018)). The Utopoly method as new knowledge will not only benefit the field of utopian studies but a range of related fields and communities of practice such as: social design, policy research, narrative studies, social activists & innovators, educationalists, progressive changemakers, visionaries, futurists, social justice movements amongst others. Each participant, and future ones, will benefit from using the method by the utopian possibilities and latent radical imagination it could engender.

## Introducing the Guidelines:

The outcome and conclusion of this research and the contribution to new knowledge is '*Utopoly - a utopian research method*'. The method is condensed as a two-page set of guidelines so that Utopoly as method can be reproduced by others. As well as the guidelines there are some artefacts that need to be sourced or prepared prior to running a Utopoly session. You will need: pens, Post-it notes, paper, a Utopoly board, Chance cards, playing pieces, currency tokens, dice, a deck of playing cards, and a familiarity with Monopoly game-play.

A Utopoly board can be hand-drawn or printed and laminated (see Appendix A: Large laminated board). An initial set of Chance cards (see section 4.11 Chance cards) are also useful together with a supply of blank cards for participants to create their own. Examples of other items such as currency tokens are also provided (see Appendix D: Currencies). As Utopoly is a utopian method, the guidelines, as a starting point, are offered as optional and open for adaptation to suit different situations and contexts. As guidelines they are the protean seed from which multiple varied versions of Utopoly (and utopia) can be derived, while containing some core working components. The method comprises two main parts that correspond to Levitas' (2013, p. 219) requirement for a utopian method. The first part is titled, *Imagining a reconstituted society* and involves "...critiquing the present, exploring alternatives, imagining ourselves otherwise". The second part is titled, *Playing with utopia* and is concerned with "experimenting with prefigurative practices". Ideally the method unfolds in 4-5 hours and requires 4 or more participants.

# Guidelines for Utopoly

**Part 1: Imagining a reconstituted society.** *Ideas, values and desires are derived via a Future Workshop (Jungk and Müllert, 1987) to populate the Utopoly board and develop the guidelines for game-play.*

## Stage 1 Critique *(see Critique guide sheet p. 109)*

1. Critique the current situation as a brainstorming activity; make notes, use words, statements or pictures.  
Discuss these with each other and place notes on a surface for all to see and comment on.
2. Move notes around to sort and group, structure and categorise.
3. Merge or evolve the related themes and label into (ideally) 8 categories.

**Aim:** To engage in critique as utopian practice and allow narratives to emerge.

## Stage 2 Fantasy *(see Fantasy guide sheet p. 119)*

1. Address the results of the critique stage with another brainstorming activity. Discuss collectively to explore utopian alternatives and imagine ourselves differently. Make notes; use words, statements or pictures.
2. Add, or move, sort, structure and group ideas, themes, desires, objectives into categories.

**Aim:** To engage a radical and collective imagination and develop lively discussions, forming narratives of the future as utopian activities.

## Stage 3 Implementation *(see Implementation guide sheet p. 131)*

1. Discuss and prioritise the ideas and categories *(from the previous stages)*. Allow the naming of domains to transform and evolve. These ideas become the domains - Transcribe the ideas on to the Utopoly board.
2. Redefine and label the corner spaces (Jail and Free Parking) in relation to the context established.
3. If appropriate, select alternative currencies *(e.g. Time, Wellbeing, Creativity, Knowledge, or others...)*.
4. Decide who (individual or group) has the role of adjudicator for formalising improvisations and guidelines.
5. Create new Chance cards in relation to the context established or leave until game-play. *(These can add jeopardy or have beneficial outcomes, or can introduce random indeterminate values for discussion)*.
6. Discuss how the guidelines for game-play *(Part 2: Playing with utopia)* can be interpreted, amended and/or improvised during game-play *(for an example see Appendix C: Guidelines for game-play)*.

**Aim:** To experience utopia-as-practice by constructing the values at play and the guidelines for playing Utopoly.

## Pre-Game-play set-up:

1. Create an 'oppositional entity' to represent the old order or reactionary forces that prevent utopia *(for example the corporate or financial entity)*. This can be autonomous, or a role taken by a player or players.
2. Designate a proportion of domains as controlled by the 'oppositional entity' before the game-play starts.

**Aim:** Create jeopardy and a lusory goal, and encourage communal cohesion for the 'utopian players'.

3. Select 4 domains to have special properties *(in relation to the context established)*.

**Aim:** To prioritise and target domains or to counter catastrophes *(see Game-play ends when: 1.)*

**Part 2: Playing with utopia.** *Game-play proceeds as per Monopoly, players explore & experience the board with the collective goal to contest and control the domains to realise their utopian potential.*

1. **Guidelines can be added or amended during play:** provided this does not prematurely end the game.

**Aim:** to encourage improvisation and maintain a lusory (playful) attitude.

2. **New Chance cards can be created during game-play:** relating to the domain a player is on.

**Aim:** to provide a sense of agency and to encourage improvisation and ongoing discussion of a domain's meaning and value.

3. **Movement of playing pieces:** give a choice of a dice roll or one of two dealt playing cards.

**Aim:** to introduce contingency, provide agency and promote discussion of domain preferences.

4. **Control of domains is a contest:** whereby players (on *landing - once per turn*) place their currencies on a domain *(‘utopian players’ use one of each of their alternative currencies, the ‘oppositional entity’ uses Credit)*. The first to reach four currencies controls that domain.

**Aim:** to establish ecosystem of currencies and a contest so that players discuss and target priority domains.

5. **Competing economies and currencies:** *(there can be many...)*

The status quo: is a financial market economy – this works for the benefit of the 'oppositional entity':

- the 'oppositional entity' has limitless access to Credit, but their actions produce Debt and Carbon.
- rent is extracted when 'utopian players' land on controlled domains or go to 'Jail' if they can't pay.
- when domains are won, any contesting currencies are extracted and removed from the board.

Another economic sphere - this works for the benefit of 'utopian players' such as the Commons, State,

Household or other... *(as a repository in the centre of the board for recycling currencies):*

- 'utopian players' use alternative currencies *(they start with 5-10 each & get 1 for passing 'Go' etc...)*
- when 'utopian players' land on their controlled domains this generates currencies for this 'common' sphere.
- 'utopian players' use currencies from this sphere - Except to pay rent *(must use personal holdings)*.
- currencies used by 'utopian players' to win contested domains return to this sphere *(for reuse)*.

**Aim:** play a sustainable & regenerative economy against an extractive, exploitative, and destructive one.

## Game-play ends when:

1. Catastrophic consequence of continuing with the economic status quo is reached *(e.g. set a limit on the Carbon or Debt produced by the financial market economy, which ends the game)*.
2. One side controls most of the domains. *(Either the 'utopian players' reach a regenerative, symbiotic and fulfilling economy or the 'oppositional entity' dominates and stifles utopian progress)*.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Large laminated board



The final design for printing the Utopoly board



Applying the laminate layer to the Utopoly board print

To make the large laminated Utopoly board I consulted with Kaye Pryce, a specialist teaching technician from Chelsea College of Arts. She found a suitable open source Adobe Illustrator vector file of a Monopoly board to adapt on the internet and we used a freely available font (KabinLightDB) which was similar but not quite the same as the Monopoly font for the text. We removed text from the property squares and other features and added the text 'Utopoly' in the centre of the board and expanded the size to 80cm square.

I then consulted with Sharon Vickers from Exhibitions and Reprographics (also at Chelsea) about creating the type of board I wanted. Sharon skilfully crafted the laminated board with a hinged fold. It was also backed by black card and a black 'gaffer' tape surround.

The layout of the board was printed on Standard Matte 180-230 gsm and had one layer of laminate applied on top.



Utopoly print with protective laminate applied

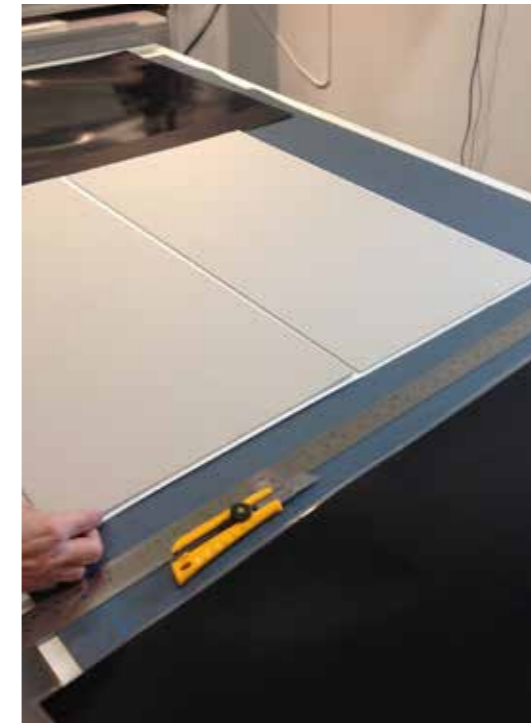
To make it fold in half we used 2 x A1 3mm grey board (to get 2 halves at 80cm length), leaving 1 cm space between the 2 halves of grey board to provide a hinge effect.

The backing was 2 pieces of A1 matte black card, again with a layer of laminate to give a shiny effect and add protection.

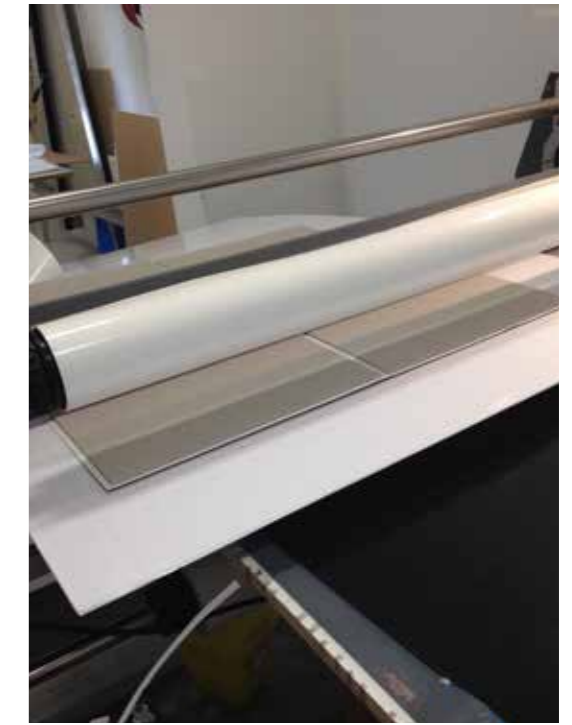
The laminated backing card has a larger border which is folded over the grey board and stuck to provide a smooth and clean edging.

The printed and laminated Utopoly board is then fixed with an adhesive strip and rolled smooth to the backing board.

Black 'Gaffer' tape was then used for the underside of the hinge.



Two pieces of 3mm greyboard 80cm length with 1 cm space for fold



Glueing and smooth-rolling the greyboard pieces to laminated black backing card



Adhesive strip fixing the turned over edges of laminated black backing



Back of board (black card with laminate) with corners cut to provide a neat corner fold

## Appendix B: 3-D printed skyscrapers

I was looking to create some larger model skyscrapers or office blocks to designate corporate control of domains. These would need to be proportionate to the new laminated board and would replace the models of red hotels in a standard Monopoly set. I made some mock-up cardboard designs to get an approximate size and searched for Creative Commons licensed 3-D models on the internet.

I found four that were designed for a modern city chess set and four other models that seemed appropriate (as .stl or stereolithography files).

The skyscraper chess set was compiled, cleaned and made printable by Levi Sitts (sitts314 – Spokane, WA). All were available at: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:151430> (accessed 13 March 2019) and were attributed as follows:

Willis Tower Building – attributed to Mason Thrall and Nathan King

Chrysler Building – attributed to Mason Thrall and Nathan King

Empire State Building – attributed to 3D Warehouse staff

Columbia Center – attributed to 3D Warehouse staff

The other four were attributed to Ryan Zull, (Koodoo25, Koodoo, Chicago) accessed 14 March 2019:

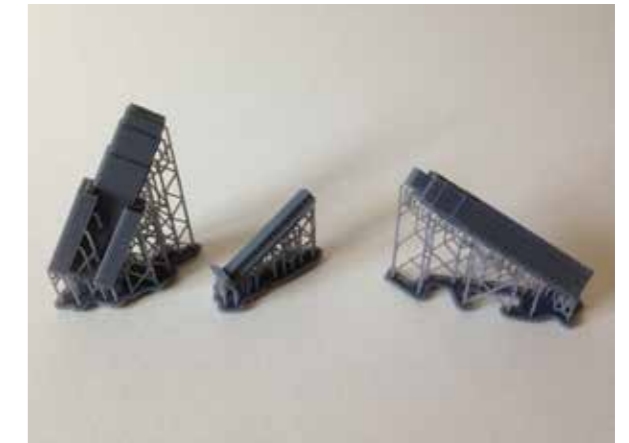
Legacy at Millennium Park - available at: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:3351779>

One North LaSalle - available at: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:3051843>

David Stott Building - available at: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:3351767>

500 Fifth Avenue - available at: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:3351788>

London has a number of Fablabs, Maker Spaces and commercial 3-D printing companies but I realised it was not a trivial matter to take the digital .stl files and get them 3-D printed. At Central St Martins there is a Digital Fabrication Bureau with professional software and facilities. I arranged a consultation with specialist technician Billy Dickinson who was extremely helpful and gave expert advice on printing methods and materials. The digital files did require some fixing and had a number of areas that needed resolving. The models were resized according to my specifications and in addition Billy hollowed out the models and arranged them for printing to save as much material and cost as possible.



3-D models still attached to the sprues from the printing process

I was offered a choice of three colours and chose grey, which was suitably austere. In all, 10 skyscraper pieces (8 types) were made ranging from the largest at 11 cm tall to the smallest at 6cm, with very pleasing results.



All 10 skyscraper 3-D printed models



# Appendix C: Guidelines for game-play

In the event that participants did not have time to develop their own guidelines for game-play, a pre-prepared guide sheet was made available. This guide sheet (see following pages) was used as the starting guidelines or rules that were developed after iteration 09, with some changes added up to iteration 12 (it therefore contains terminology and features relevant to those iterations).

This is *one* example of how the *Guidelines for Utopoly* (pages 258-259) can be interpreted as *starting* guidelines for game-play.

N.B. In these guidelines the oppositional entity is referred to as the corporation or Corporate/Financial figure or corporate player. The utopian players are referred to as collaborative players or the players.

The domains are also referred to as areas.

Currencies are also referred to as Currencies/Values

## Rules/Guidelines for game play

**First rule:** no new rules can be added which effectively end the game (see New Chance Cards)

**N.B.** Due to the improvisational nature of the game it is likely that not all situations are catered for and so these are left for discussion and can be rewritten before and during the game.

There are two sides in the game: the Corporate/Financial figure who aims to continue the neo-liberal status quo and the utopian players who act collaboratively to bring about a utopian economy.

Each side has different facilities and features at their disposal.

The game proceeds as per Monopoly where the basic aim is to acquire control over the board, however there are different winning/losing conditions.

Corporations have a limitless supply of Credit (and Debt) and as this is created it also produces Carbon and non-renewable resources are used up.

The players use a set of Currencies/Values which are recycled and renewable.

Players can decide if they want to use the existing set of Currencies/Values or new ones or a combination of both.

The Corporate player wins if:

- They control most areas on the board (to make it impossible to recover from)
- Carbon reaches point of no return\*, a tipping point of ecological collapse
- Debt becomes too high\* and unsustainable

\*The numbers for this are decided prior to each game. Carbon should be 10 higher than Debt.

The players win if:

- They control most areas on the board
- The Economy reaches stable symbiosis or balance (generating enough renewable resources to keep control)

As the game progresses eventually all the areas will eventually be controlled by Corporations or the collaborative players. Control will swing back and forth as the contest ensues until an end condition is met.

However, the race is on to get to this state before the Carbon gets to uncontrollable levels or the Debt becomes unsustainable.

## Starting

Play starts weighted in favour of the Corporations with several areas already in their control (indicated by the skyscraper pieces). The Corporations also have varying numbers of playing pieces (figures in white suits) depending on how many Collaborative players there are. This role can be either played by a person or as an automaton.

Collaborative players can *select 4 areas which* have the potential, once controlled, to act as *double generators* of Currencies/Values or reduce Carbon (see below 'If a Collaborative player lands on a Commonly held area...').

These 4 areas need to be indicated in some way (marker, card, artefact)

Each collaborative player then selects a playing piece.

They receive 4 of the Currencies/Values (1 of each type) plus a single dice roll (all of the same Currency/Value type of their choice). In total a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10.

They then take turns rolling the dice and moving and responding to the result.

Option: instead of rolling 2 dice, players can choose to select 2 cards from a standard playing card pack (Ace = 1 Jack = 11, Queen 12, King 13). They then can decide to move the value on one of the two cards.

## Activities

### Landing on an area/domain

Players can elect to:

- Put down a Currency/Value as part of controlling an area (see Controlling an area below).
- Put down a Currency/Value to Create a Chance (other) card relating to that area (see New Chance cards and other cards below) for Collaborative players only.
- Other actions depend on whether the area is controlled or not (see below)

### Controlling an area

The Corporate player gains control by once per turn (must land on the area 4 times) placing 4 Credits on the area. (As this is done each Credit also creates a Debit and a unit of Carbon both of which are placed in the middle of the board).

The collaborative players gain control by placing 4 of the Currencies/Values on the area (once per turn) – These must be of different types.

Both sides can place Currencies on the same area to contest the area until one side is first to reach 4.

When the required 4 have been placed on the area it comes under the control of that side.

For Corporations

- All Currencies/Values and Credits that were on the area as part of the contest are retained by the Corporation.
- A new Skyscraper is placed on the area to denote Corporate control

For collaborative players

- All Currencies/Values that were on the area as part of the contest go to the Commons in the middle of the board for use as a common resource. The Credits can either be retained as Credits (to also be used as a common resource) or can be used to neutralise an equal amount of Debt that is in the middle of the board. This Debt and Credit is then removed.
- A green House (or other artefact) is placed on the area to denote common control

### Landing on a Controlled area

If a Corporate player lands on an area controlled by the commons they must contribute to the commons (the middle of the board).

They have the option to:

- pay back a Currency/Value they previously received from the Collaborative players
- pay back a Credit they previously received from the Collaborative players (this will be used to remove an associated Debt from the middle).
- Pay by removing a Credit from the nearest area.

If a Corporate player lands on a Corporate controlled area nothing happens.

If a collaborative player lands on a Corporate controlled area they must pay rent to the Corporate player. This also triggers the creation of 1 unit of Carbon.

They must:

- Pay 1 Currency/Value

If the collaborative player cannot pay the rent from their own resources, they have the option to:

- Go to 'Jail' (or whatever it is now)
- Ask for Credit (the Corporate player creates Credit and Debt and Carbon).

The Credit goes to the Corporate player and the Debt and Carbon go to the middle.

If a collaborative player lands on a Commonly held area that area generates 1 new Currency/Value for the player.

At the start of the game collaborative players will have selected 4 special areas which will act as double generators if controlled – they have the choice to:

- Gain 2 Currencies/Values (of the same type)
- Gain 1 Currency/Value and reduce Carbon by 1 unit.

If other Currencies are in play (players may have decided to use these or they have been generated via Chance cards, then these can be used as Currencies/Values).

Note: Players (Corporate and collaborative) also have the option to both pay rent and also place a Currency to contest an area in the same turn.

### Commons (middle of board)

These resources are available for all the collaborative players for contesting control but not for paying rent. It can also be accessed by the collaborative player to pay to get out of 'Jail' once they have spent two turns in 'Jail'.

### Converting Debt to Carbon

If the players feel the Debt is getting too high they can decide to convert 1 Debt for 1 Carbon.

### Collaborative players gain Currency/Values by:

- Various Chance/Other Cards
- Passing 'Go'
- Landing on a Commons controlled area that generates Currency/Values

### Debt can be reduced by:

- Playing various Chance/Other Cards that reduce Debt.
- The Collaborative players winning a contest and Credit is returned to the middle to neutralise a Debt.

Debt can be converted to Carbon on a 1 to 1 basis.

If a Corporate player lands on a Commonly controlled space and has no Currency/Value (previously obtained from players) then they have to pay in Credit to neutralise Debt.

### Carbon is reduced by

Various Chance/Other Cards will reduce Carbon.

The *4 special areas* selected by the collaborative players once these are controlled

**Passing 'GO'** – each collaborative player gets 1 new Currency/Value of their choice. Corporate Players get nothing.

**GO TO 'Jail'** (or whatever this is now) – this happens as a result of not being able to pay rent or by either landing on the 'GO TO' area or receiving a 'GO TO' card.

Once in 'Jail' (or whatever this is now) unless the players (Corporate and collaborative) have a 'Get out of Jail Free' card they must stay for one turn. Then they can:

- Roll a double to come out of 'Jail'
- Pay the Corporate player to get out (if no Currency/Value then pay with Credit and add Debt).
- The Corporate can create Credit and Debt to get out of 'Jail'
- The Commons can only pay for another player to get out of 'Jail' once they have been in for 2 turns.

### New Chance cards and other cards

There are some Chance (and other) cards already available. During the game the players have the option to make more. If they land on an area (only once per area) they can elect to pay a Currency/Value to create a Chance/other card which relates to the subject/value written in that area. Some discussion may develop about how this is expressed in the game.

It may involve a rule change (refer to the First Rule above) or change/add to the players' Currency/Values.

The new Chance/other card is placed in the pack (decide if this is near the top or random).

### Special Chance cards

- Meme / Idea – travels once around board adding Currency/Value wherever it lands.
- Avoidance path (circumvent, abstain) – players can draw a path connecting up to a dice roll number of areas to draw a path (like snakes and ladders). They then have the option to use it or not.
- Regulation – stops a chosen area producing Carbon.

Make some Chance cards that reduce Debt or Carbon

Make some Chance cards that provide and take Currencies/Values

### Decision making

Discuss and decide what effects each situation will have if not covered by rules, or contentious.

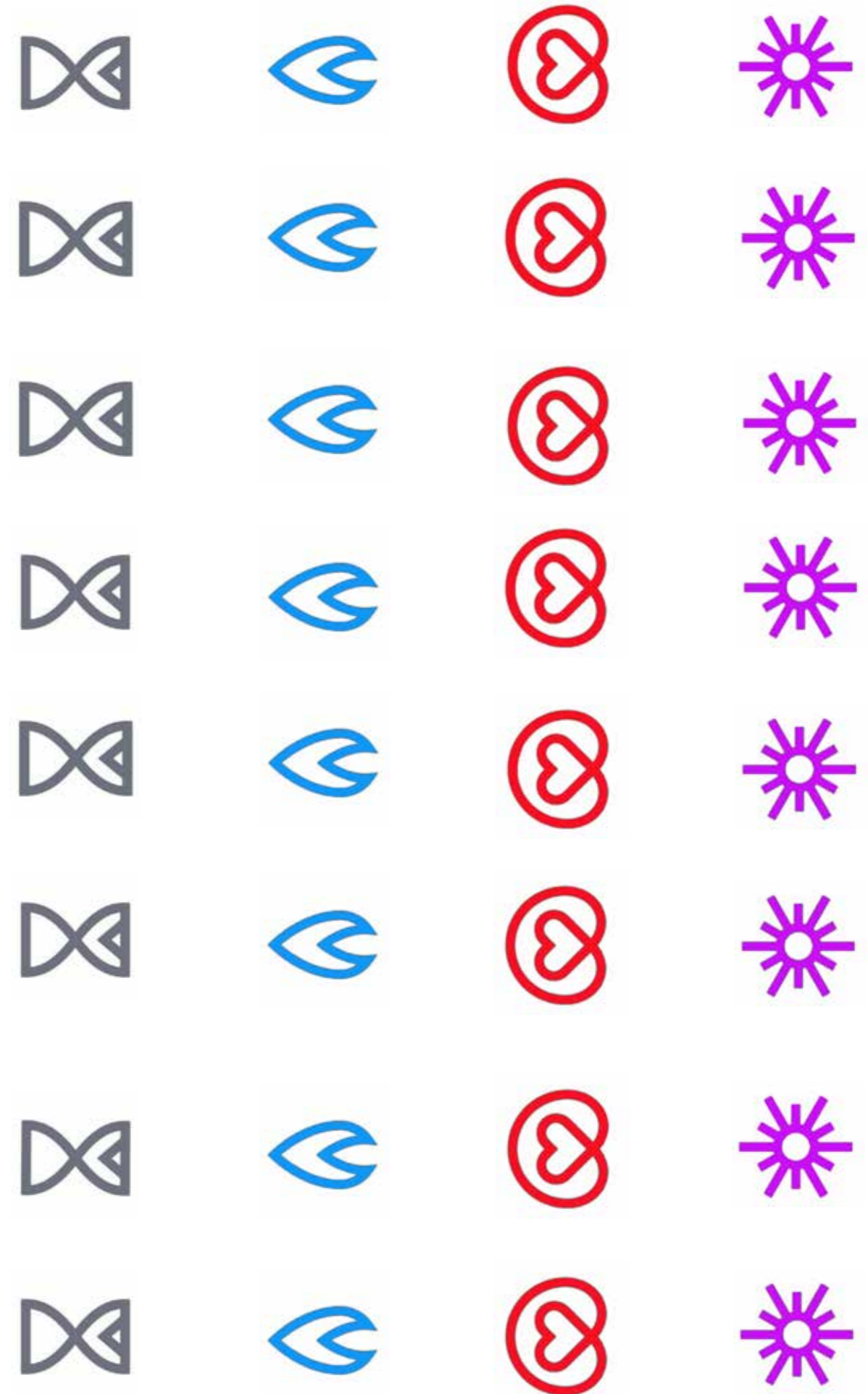
Players can call a vote.

If all else fails, then use 'Paper - Scissors – Rock' to resolve differences.

# Appendix D: Currencies

Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit
Debt	Credit	Debt	Credit

Sheet of paired Credit and Debt tokens for the oppositional entity's currency



Sheet of Time, Knowledge, Wellbeing & Creativity tokens for the utopian players' currency

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