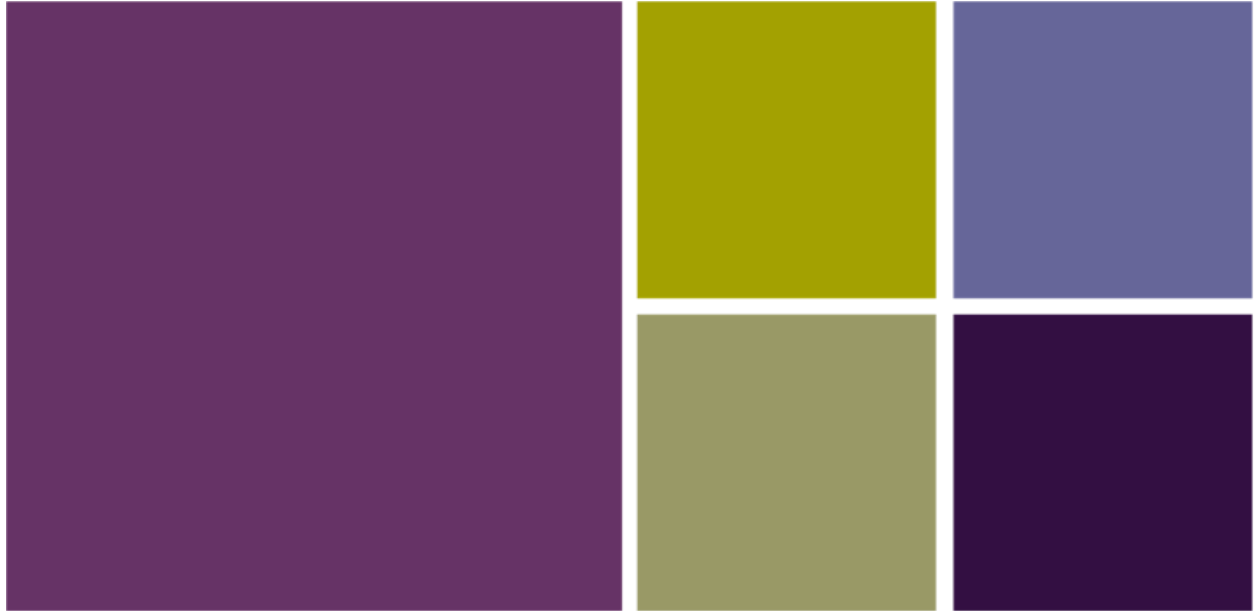# A COUPLE OF JOKES

USING HUMOUR IN MULTICULTURAL COUPLES TO STUDY CO-CREATION AND METHODS OF GENERATIVE DESIGN

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This exegesis is submitted to the Auckland University of Technology for the MCT

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Creative Technologies
Colab
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Attestation of Authorship

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements'.

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Acknowledgements

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

"You can't map a sense of humor."
― Terry Pratchett, *The Color of Magic*

This chapter introduces the research project 'A Couple of Jokes'. It gives an overview of the structure of this exegesis and contains a section in which the researcher is positioned in the context of this study.

1.1 Abstract

This exegesis presents and discusses an exploratory Co-Design project that was conducted between June 2014 and February 2015 in Auckland, New Zealand as research for the Master of Creative Technologies degree at AUT University. The study used fieldwork and methods of Generative Design Research to investigate humour in multicultural couples, and its methodology was based on recent theories and models of Co-Design. A key aim of the project was to develop Generative Design tools according to the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012), and consider ways to support different levels of creative expression as well as encourage visual ways of communication in line with key principles of Design Thinking. The fieldwork part of the project was divided into three distinct data collection phases: exploration, focus and application; each phase created new insights regarding the underlying methodology and the methods that were used, and advanced how the couples thought about, explored and expressed their experience of humour together. The project found that Co-Creation with couples requires a specific set of Generative Design methods and presents a selection of four tools that have been found to be effective in the context and purpose of this study. Furthermore, the study suggests the concept of a 'template' that can be used when planning a Co-Creation workshop with couples. Finally, the findings of this project suggest that there is an opportunity for future research to apply the principles of generative methods and Design Thinking to create something that could reduce the time, effort and words needed to share humour between multicultural couples.

1.2 How to Read this Exegesis

It is important to note that although this project has been framed around investigating humour in multicultural couples, its focus clearly lies on the development and testing of methods and tools of Generative Design Research.

This Co-Design project set out to answer the following research questions:

1. *Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?*
2. *What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?*

This exegesis spans five chapters that summarise one full year of Co-Design research. The research journey began with the identification of a gap in the literature, which is discussed in chapter two. It then went to considerations around a suitable methodology and to preparations for the data collection phases of the study, as described in chapter three. The three individual fieldwork phases and their findings are discussed in chapter four. Finally, the overall analysis of the project's findings resulted in the main conclusions of study, which are briefly summarised below and discussed in more detail in chapter five.

- The study highlighted a number of findings that might be useful to future Co-Creation projects that seek to work with couples in a group setting.
- A set of four generative methods was identified as specifically applicable to multicultural couples in a Co-Creation context.
- The results of this study helped to develop a template for the structure of Co-Creation workshops with couples. It is based on a fusion of the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach by Sanders and Stappers (2012) and uses the findings of this study around Co-Creation with couples.
- The couples in this study cited the factors time, effort, and words as the main reasons for why inconsistencies in the sharing of humour from their respective cultures exist. The sharing of humour from the partner's respective cultures has been found to be less of an issue for the multicultural couples in this study as might have been initially assumed.
- The findings suggest that there is an opportunity to help improve humorous communication between two people from different cultures.

Certain similarities in regard to terminology exist between the field of Co-Design, which uses generative methods to stimulate idea generation in creative ways, and the field of Generative Design, in which algorithms or biological processes generate products of design. Although both approaches are part of the broad field of design, they operate under distinct frameworks and use different methodologies. It is important at this point to clarify that whenever the terms Generative Design Research, Generative Design methods or the term generative (in isolation) are used in this exegesis, it is done within the framework of Co-Design.

1.3 Structural Overview

This research project was divided into three stages: preparation, fieldwork and analysis (Fig. 1). The preparation stage consisted of a review of the literature in the field of Design Thinking, and in particular on the theories of Co-Design and methods of Generative Design Research, as well as the topics of multicultural couples and humour. The preparation stage also included planning the form of the overall thesis such as determining the underlying methodology, focus and scope of the project, the structure of the different fieldwork phases and the design of the specific generative methods and tools that would be used. It also included obtaining Research Ethics approval from AUTEC, AUT's Research Ethics Committee (See Appendix A). As can be seen in Figure 1, the fieldwork stage of the project was made up of three distinct data collection phases called exploration, focus and application.
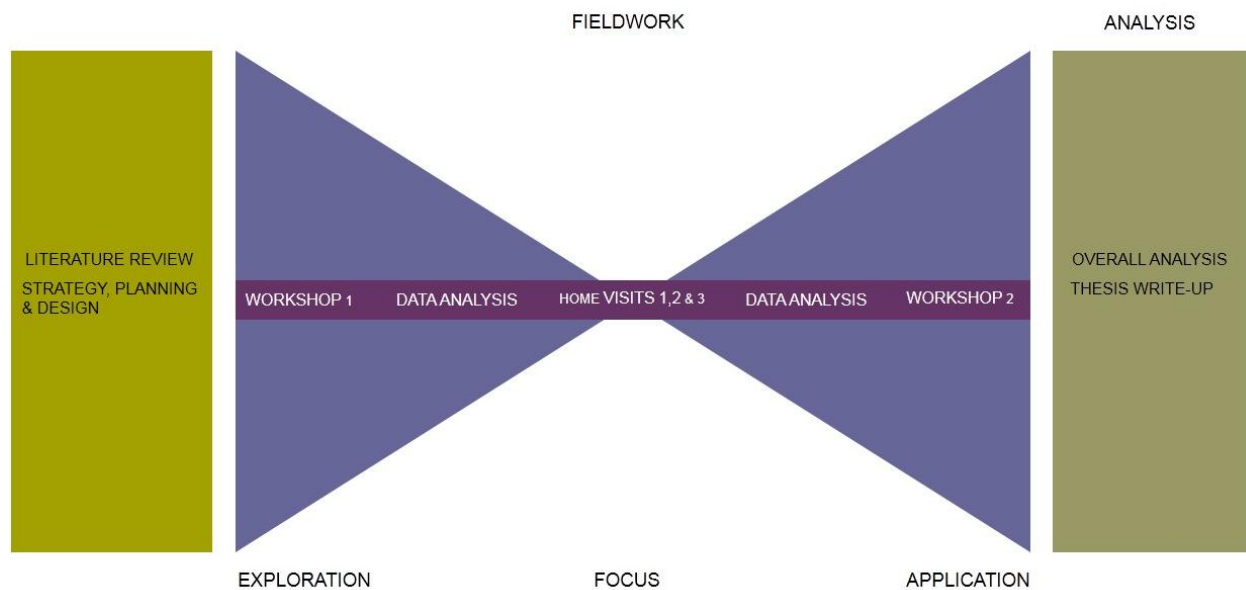
Figure 1. **The structure of this project.**

The findings of each data collection phase were analysed individually to inform the direction and structure of the next phase. The exploration phase started with work around participant sensitization, preparing five multicultural couples for a subsequent Co-Creation group workshop, which had the aim to inspire the participants as 'experts of their own experience' to explore their knowledge around humour in multicultural couples, and to help them with methods of Generative Design to generate as many ideas as possible around the topic. The collected data from this phase was then analysed and used to inform the direction and focus of the second data collection phase. This was comprised of three home visits with three individual multicultural couples that all centred on the key findings of phase one. Again, the data from each of these visits was analysed separately to inform each consecutive session. The third and final phase of the fieldwork stage of the study was the application phase, where three multicultural couples attended another Co-Creation workshop that had the aim to inspire the participants to apply the principles of generative methods and Design Thinking to create a prototype that could reduce the time, effort and words needed to share humour between multicultural couples. Finally, the last stage of the project consisted of an overall analysis of the findings which led into the final write-up of the exegesis and its conclusions.

A problem of exploratory design research is that of the chicken and the egg: one needs to communicate the methodology, strategy and expected findings to supervisors, the ethics committee, participants and others before any work on the topic has been done (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). It is therefore common for exploratory design studies to make changes to their methodology and strategy as the first findings emerge. In that respect the strategy of design research borrows from the feedback-loop of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in that it accommodates for unforeseen situations and allows them to be absorbed into the research structure as appropriate. This permits the

researcher to react to unexpected findings and make them part of the research, giving it a new direction. This principle also applied to this research project, as it emerged soon after the first data collection phase that it would be better to change the strategy of the study from a set of iterative workshops to a Diverge-Converge model, moving from exploration over focus to application. The Diverge-Converge Approach is a common structure of design research studies and is used in most creative processes (The Fertile Unknown, 2010). It describes a way of thinking that starts at a large scope, spanning the entire field of interest to begin with (or even reaches beyond it), with the aim to create as many ideas and insights around it as possible. In a next step, the most important or interesting points are taken into focus, narrowing the field again. Sometimes this process is iterative, with some or all of the steps being repeated. The fieldwork stage of this study applied an iterative form of the Diverge-Converge model for data collection, moving from an initially large scope over a more focused view back to a wider perspective, as depicted in Figure 1.

1.4 Positioning of the Researcher

The researcher's undergraduate education is not in design but in the social sciences. She holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Education and has worked as a trainer in the corporate sector for the past three years. In the early stages of the researcher's university education, her view of knowledge and truth was very much in line with that of the scientific method. She was eager to learn the tools of the trade of positivist psychological research (Pierson, 2013; Farruggia, Bullen, & Pierson, 2013), was it not the only way to create true knowledge around the human experience (Paranjpe, 1993). By detaching oneself from the research and using questionnaires, scales and statistics one produces measurable truths that explain how people think, feel and behave. Or so she thought. As her learning progressed, so did her doubts around the validity of applying empirical methods to social research questions. The researcher sought to learn more about qualitative methods, specifically under a feminist paradigm (Hyde & Else-Quest, 2013). Here was a view of knowledge and truth that not only acknowledged the influence of the researcher's own being in the research process, but welcomed the subjective truths this research paradigm produced. It was much more in line with her emerging beliefs that generalizability of one's findings was not the 'holy grail' of all research efforts. She started to doubt the widely populated psychological teachings that a study's findings are only of value if they can be successfully reproduced (Punch, 2009). The researcher was not able to put this doubt into words at that stage, but something in her kept wondering what should be wrong with studies that used the personal feelings, thoughts and views of small groups of participants to formulate new knowledge and understandings.

She now knows that nothing is wrong with this view, but that the question about what constitutes knowledge and truth is as old as the history of research itself, and will always be a matter of debate. What matters is to know for certain what one believes knowledge and truth to be and why, and to think and act accordingly (BonJour, 1985). It was after the researcher had worked alongside some studies that operated under the premise of PAR (Harre & Blythe, 2014) that she started to realise this was a way of thinking about research that aligned with her own beliefs. Doing research with and for

participants, the owners of new knowledge, involving them in every step of the process, feeding back insights and using the entire research process to make a tangible difference was what she wanted to do. Eventually, the researcher entered into her postgraduate education in Creative Technologies, which taught her about the frameworks of Design Thinking and Co-Design and introduced her to Generative Design Research and methods of Co-Creation. This knowledge was what finally tied everything together. Generative Design Research is often applied in the front-end of design, but can also be used to investigate questions that would usually be located within the social sciences, as Co-Design theory and methods heavily borrow from psychological and sociological research (Sanders & Stappers, 2012), and the strategy of Co-Design research projects is closely related to that of PAR. Here was a methodological framework that used flexible yet valid methods that could be used to research real-life questions in a collaborative way.
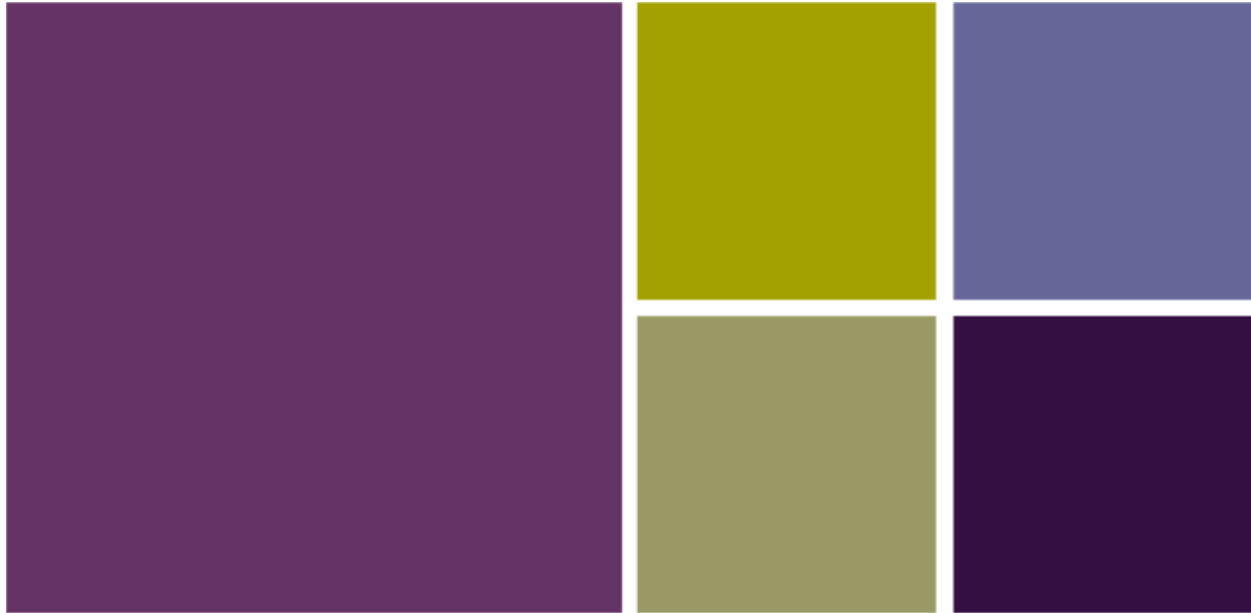
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on Design Thinking, Co-Design and what previous research in this area exists that has exclusively worked with couples. It also discusses existing research around multicultural couples and humour.

2.1 Overview

As has been noted before, this project has been framed around investigating humour in multicultural couples, but its focus lies on studying co-creation and methods and tools of Generative Design Research in this setting. To provide the necessary context for the overall rationale, aims and methodology of this thesis, it is important to discuss them against the background of relevant research. Figure 2 gives an overview of the structure of the literature review and shows how the different sections of this chapter relate to one another. It is important to acknowledge that all topics discussed below fall under the general field of Participatory Design, as can be seen in Figure 2. However, a comprehensive review of the extensive body of literature in this area of design research would go beyond the scope of this work, which is why its discussion is limited to a brief acknowledgement of the main thought leaders in this field. Although the discussion focuses on literature relevant to the methodological background of this thesis it is also important to present an overview of studies that have applied these frameworks to work with couples, and to review the existing research on multicultural couples and humour.

Figure 2. **The structure of the literature review.**

2.2 Brief Acknowledgement of the Literature on Participatory Design

Participatory design (PD) is a framework that goes back to social movements in Scandinavia in the 1970's, when workers were first encouraged to be involved in the systems design of their workplaces (Schuler & Namioka, 1993; Asaro, 2000; Merritt & Stolterman, 2012). One of the basic principles of Participatory Design, which is also often referred to as 'the Scandinavian approach', is that the design process has an agenda of minimising power hierarchies between the researcher and the participants or users; is working directly with and for the users or participants; leverages collaborative

ways of working and develops specific methods used in individual research contexts, designed to help users or participants express themselves (Greenbaum & Loi, 2012). As this thesis is mainly based on more recent theories and methods of Design Thinking and Co-Creation, a comprehensive discussion of the extensive field of PD would go beyond the scope of this work. It should be noted however that the areas of Design Thinking and Co-Creation are only small sub-sections of Participatory Design, and that the researcher is aware of the work by Bødker and her colleagues (i.e.Bødker, Ehn, Kammersgaard, Kyng & Sundblad, 1987; Bødker, 1996), Beck (2002), Schuler and Namioka (1993) and others, to name just some of the thought leaders in the substantial body of literature that has facilitated the change that the landscape of design research has undergone since the 1970's.

2.3 Design Thinking

On the Internet, the term Design Thinking is used liberally: a search on Google currently delivers close to 160 million hits. The concept is frequently discussed in popular literature (e.g. Merholz, 2009; Ursrey, 2014), there is a plethora of free resources available that aim to teach the principles of Design Thinking (e.g. IDEO Riverdale, 2013; Iversity.org, 2015; Complexity Lab, 2015) and many schools, among them Stanford and Harvard Universities, now offer Design Thinking workshops aimed at the public. Design Thinking has been called a paradigm (Dorst, 2011) and "a philosophy, a mindset and a methodology" (Mitroff Silvers, Rogers, & Wilson, 2013, para.6), and has been defined as based on an optimistic attitude, and a focus on empathy, multidisciplinary, teamwork and creativity (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Liem & Sanders, 2013; Mitroff Silvers et al., 2013).

In its most basic form, the approach takes essential principles of the design discipline and formulates them so they can be applied to areas that would traditionally lie outside of the scope of design. The widely-spread use of the term today has mainly been popularised by the work of David Kelley and Tom Brown of IDEO and their colleagues (e.g. 2001; 2008), but references to Design Thinking as a process emerged as early as 1987, when Rowe first referred to it in his book with the same title (Dorst, 2011). Today, Design Thinking refers to a variety of approaches in research, education, business and industry and its applications range from the use of creative brainstorming sessions in meetings (Gray, Brown, & Macanufo, 2010) over questions of social innovation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Liem & Sanders, 2013) to issues in business and industry (Dorst, 2011; VanPatter & Pastor, 2015). Anyone that has ever had the pleasure to be part of a well-attended meeting in any industry will know that especially larger groups have a tendency to get lost in the discussion about the pros and cons of an approach, without ever arriving at a concrete formulation of the solution. One of the reasons for the rising popularity of Design Thinking is that it recognises this issue and offers a refreshing approach to addressing it. Be it managers or workers, teachers or students, designers or non-designers, a degree of collaboration is necessary in most professions these days, and the advocates of Design Thinking make it easy to recognise the value of its methodology. Design Thinking workshops, as shown in Figure 3, are promoted as an easy and fun way to work (Idealog, 2014), and sometimes even seen as a quick fix or magic bullet for success (Walters, 2011).

Figure 3. **Example of a Co-Creation workshop.**

As with anything that seems almost too good to be true, some due care should be taken. Large qualitative differences can be found between approaches that claim to be based on Design Thinking. Many make little or no reference to solid design theories or models, and focus only on the tools that Design Thinking has to offer (e.g. SAP 2011; IBM Think Academy, 2014; Ursrey, 2014). Particularly in the context of design research it is therefore important to differentiate when referring to Design Thinking, as it has become an umbrella term for a variety of rapidly developing design research approaches. If done without distinction, simply referring to Design Thinking may detract from important standalone approaches to Co-Design, such as the frameworks of Co-Creation and generative tools, or Make-Tools (E.B.-N. Sanders, 2000). This thesis consciously tries to avoid a blanket approach. Whilst it is acknowledged that the main paradigms of Co-Design and Co-Creation are located within the wider framework of Design Thinking, Co-Creation, and the use of generative tools are an important standalone methodological approach to design research. The remainder of the literature review will concentrate on the detail around the theory of Co-Creation and generative methods and tools, as they build the underlying methodological framework of this thesis.

2.4 Co-Creation and Generative Methods

When compared to the beginnings of Participatory Design, Co-Creation as a method and a mindset in the year 2015 has retained many of the core principles of PD, whilst developing a more specialised approach to Co-Design and design research. In its core, it is a way to share the decision-making process that is design (Aspelund, 2014) with the people that will benefit from the end result of the process. Co-Creation acknowledges that the people in the focus of a research or design project are 'experts of their own experience', and as such hold knowledge that anyone on the outside will not be able to access easily or comprehend (E.B.-N. Sanders & Stappers, 2012). Thus, in Co-Design the role of the designer or design researcher is not to lead participants through a series of steps to deliver their expressive knowledge in a passive way. On the contrary, the designer or design-researcher plays a supporting role throughout the process, tasked with developing context-specific method sets or Toolkits for each new project, with the goal to enable participants to express potentially deep-seated knowledge that is difficult to verbalise.

This view represents a shift in the field of design research towards research that is concerned with methodological questions *about* design, and away from more project-based research *for* design, as defined by Frankel and Racine (2010). This new view of Co-Design as a way of doing research about and through design, for and with participants, is what can only be called a paradigm shift in the mindset of design research. Co-Design has moved away from the designer or design-researcher acting in the role of the experts, asking *how* to design for end-users, and towards working with participants to explore *what* to design (E. B.-N. Sanders & P. Stappers, 2014). Co-Creation projects often operate in the 'fuzzy-front-end' of the design process (Fig. 4), where the how and what are still undecided (E. B.-N. Sanders & P. Stappers, 2014). The terminology refers to the fact that the strategy of a Co-Creation project is often unclear to start with, and only developed after working together with the participants to create a better understanding of what it is that should be designed.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

Figure 4. **The front end of the design process. From Sanders and Stappers (2008). Copyright 2008 by Taylor & Francis Publishers. Reprinted with permission.**

It will be interesting to see where the next developments in this area will take it. E. B.-N. Sanders and P. J. Stappers (2014) are certainly optimistic and speculate about a future where everyone designs and the design processor is a collective activity. Today, the result of this paradigm shift can be seen in the explosion in Co-Creation methods over the last few years (E. B.-N. Sanders & P. Stappers, 2014). Studies addressing an

enormous range of questions went out to develop their own methods to suit their needs (e.g. Westerlund, Lindqvist, Mackay, & Sundblad, 2003; Hill, Capper, Wilson, Whatman, & Wong, 2007; Walsh et al., 2010; Xie et al., 2010). In the spirit of this new 'designing-with' mindset, and to make for easier reading, in the context of the discussion of this thesis the term researcher will henceforth be used to describe both classically trained designers and design researchers, and the term participants will refer to both end-users of design products and participants of design research.

Earlier studies of Co-Creation did not necessarily have a certain model of Co-Design that built the basis of their approach, and as a result they tend to be more oriented towards project-based research for design. A seminal paper in this field was published by Gaver, Dunne and Pacenti in 1999. In this well-cited project, Gaver et al. used carefully designed packages containing postcards, photo albums and more to evoke responses from a group of elderly people in Italy. The aim was to get inspiration from the participants and to use the findings in their resulting design work. Ground-breaking in many ways, the work of Gaver et al. is an example of a design-based study, rather than a Co-Creation project in today's sense. In their recent article "Probes, Toolkits and Prototypes: Three Approaches to Making in Codesigning", Sanders and Stappers (2014) explain the difference between this early version of Co-Design and later examples. According to their differentiation, Gaver et al. applied their probes with the mindset of the designer as the expert, defining their probes first and foremost as artistic artefacts, and using the responses they evoked exclusively for their own learning, rather than feeding them back into the Co-Design process and share their insights with the participants. In that sense probes as methods of design research should be seen to sit towards the outer edge of the Co-Design framework, because they are used to inspire the researcher's own thinking and design process (Fig. 5).

Figure 5. **The relation of probes, prototypes, Make-Tools and Toolkits to the principles of Co-Creation.**

In contrast, tools of generative methods and prototypes are used to give participants a way to express themselves creatively to uncover their own knowledge or develop design products that are of immediate concern to them. A such, these generative methods sit further towards the core of Co-Creation. Later studies of Co-Design developed such Toolkits (e.g. Hussain, 2010) and used prototypes (e.g. H van Rijn, van Hoof, & Stappers, 2008) as their generative methods, and with that moved further along the spectrum towards true collaboration and Co-Creation.

Today Sanders and Stappers (1999; 2000; 2003; 2008; 2012, 2014) are leading the field of Co-Design and generative methods and are the editors of a journal with the same title. Together with their colleagues (Kaptein, Weisscher, Terken, & Nelissen, 2009; Sleeswijk Visser, 2009; Helma Van Rijn, Bahk, Stappers, & Lee, 2006; H van Rijn et al., 2008; Visser, Stappers, van der Lugt, & Sanders, 2005; VanPatter, 2014) they have laid the foundations to a body of literature that has grown exponentially since the early 1990's. The most notable result of this is the rise of specialist terminology and theoretical models in the field, a sure sign that an emerging theory is on the way to develop its own standing in academia. The theory of Co-Creation has been introducing a steady stream of new definitions and expressions over the past ten years, the result of an increased focus on methodologies of design research. Recent Co-Creation studies specialise in "Contextmapping" (Visser et al., 2005), a conceptual subset of Co-Design. When describing most Co-Creation studies today, one would they operate in the "fuzzy front-end of design", and use the "Converging Perspectives Approach" (Elizabeth B-N Sanders, 1992) to develop a mix of methods that encourage participants to say, do and make. They apply them in the mindset of the researcher mainly acting as the facilitator, guiding participants along the "Path of Expression" (E.B.-N. Sanders & Stappers, 2012).

This new, deeper understanding of the purpose of generative methods is what is new to Co-Design, and what opens the mindset and methods of Co-Creation to new areas of investigation. More and more studies emerge that tackle areas and questions previously untouched by design research. Over the past ten years, researchers have used generative methods to learn more about the experiences of people with dementia (H van Rijn et al., 2008), children with amputee legs (Hussain, 2010), autistic toddlers (H. van Rijn & Stappers, 2008) and families (P. J. Stappers, van Rijn, Kistemaker, Hennink, & Sleeswijk Visser, 2009). Under the Converging Perspectives Approach, the researcher deliberatively combines Make, Say, and Do-Tools to create a setting that allows participants to unearth deep and meaningful new knowledge and insights they never knew they had. A more detailed discussion of these concepts can be found in chapter 3, where they will be reviewed in the context of the methodological background of this thesis.

2.5 Co-Design Research with and for Couples

Even though there are no Co-Creation studies to date that have explicitly focused on multicultural couples, there are a few examples that work exclusively with or for couples. Most of them focus on communication and feelings of intimacy between couples and set out to design a product that addresses these aspects (He, 2013). There is a small but

very interesting set of studies in this space, for example the project of Wallace et al. (2013), who worked very closely with an elderly couple in co-creating jewellery as a way of expressing their personhood. The special part was that the wife was affected by dementia, and as the couple worked together their jewellery became much more than an expression of themselves, as they created a legacy of their lives for their family. Lottridge, Masson, and Mackay (2009) worked with couples that had to live apart for various reasons to explore technological design opportunities in that space. They created the concept of *MissU*, a private app that acts like a private radio station for couples and lets them fill 'empty moments' with sounds of their everyday lives. The study of He (2013) took a slightly different approach to the topic of intimacy, by looking at how couples collaborate in their every-day lives, and how achieving a task together may facilitate feelings of intimacy. The author argued that couples may collaborate differently than teams in the workplace, and the aim of the study was to explore what specifics a technology may need in order to truly fit a couple's style of working together. The study used methods of Co-Creation to explore how couples work collaboratively, asking participants to sketch, answer interview questions and make design-artefacts together. The project produced some interesting insights, such as that couples need less planning and conceptualisation for their collaborative projects in comparison to teams at work because their goals are more closely aligned. Design implications were that it would be useful if a new technology developed for these couples allowed them to document their collaborative experience and to set non-pressuring goals.

Although interesting and insightful, the work of He (2013) and the other aforementioned studies do not make any reference to the theoretical frameworks available today to plan and structure a Co-Creation study, and to guide the alignment of the methods with the goal of the study. It would have been helpful to learn what the rationale behind their specific methods was. In particular, by reading the reports the reader cannot determine if the authors considered the specifics of working with a couple or not. The literature is clear on the fact that couples have their very own culture (Brok, 2004), so it follows that any methods that are developed for working with couples must consider the uniqueness of this constellation. A close-knit team, with their own language and inter-dependencies a couple develops complex dynamics that shape how they think and behave when together. Couples that participate in research do not do so as individuals, and this has implications for how one should plan Co-Creation methods around them. A gap around these considerations can be found in all of these Co-Design studies working with couples, but as Hassenzahl, Heidecker, Eckoldt, Diefenbach, and Hillmann (2012) point out, the lack of considering relevant psychological findings is a common phenomenon in design research:

> *"To design for relatedness, especially for close relationships, requires a profound understanding of people. To identify the extent to which designers of the artefacts exploited psychological theories, models, or empirical findings, we reviewed the reference lists of the 92 publications and located references to theoretical or empirical psychological work. Despite our large scope […] we identified only 44 publications with at least one external reference. In other words, slightly less than half of the artefacts (48%) made explicit use of external theoretical and empirical psychological knowledge. (p.12)"*

This point was taken into consideration when planning the methodology for this study, and was the main reason why the methodological background was extended beyond the theories and models of Co-Design to include relevant findings from sociological and psychological research as they apply.

2.6 Multicultural Couples and Humour

To start with, it is important to define what is meant when talking about multicultural couples and to explain the rationale for choosing this terminology. In the context of this research project, multicultural couples can be made up of the same or different sex, have grown up in the same or a different country, have been together for between 1 and 20 years, and are married or not. Their common denominator is that at least one of them speaks a different first language and has parents who are from a different culture than their partner. This definition encompasses and extends beyond the terminology used in most of the literature, which talks about intercultural marriages (Romano, 2008), intercultural couples (Bystydzienski, 2011; Karis & Killian, 2008), interracial couples (Perlas Dumanig, 2010) or multilingual couples (Piller, 2000; Tien, 2013). These terms were considered too narrow for reasons explained shortly, and so henceforth the words multicultural couples will be used throughout this work when referring to participants.

The first reason for settling for the term multicultural couples is that the researcher believes that any genuine, intimate relationship between two people should be considered equal, regardless of its legal status. Secondly, in line with definitions of other authors in the field (Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, & Monakes, 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011), culture should be understood in its widest sense. In the first instance it can be defined as a set of social norms and values, customs, traditions, symbols and artefacts, beliefs and behaviours that people use to understand and identify with the world and one another. But Bustamante et al. and Bystydzienski also make important differentiations, which have been applied in this study. The first is that culture is transmitted across generations, hence the definition that any couple in which at least one partner speaks a different first language and has parents who are from a different culture is seen as a multicultural couple. The second point is that culture is a fluid concept and that the boundaries we draw when talking about different cultures are not necessarily experienced in the same way. The researcher understands that people may not identify exclusively with one culture alone, so in this study the culture of a participant was defined by whatever a person though it was.

Romano's (2008) book on intercultural marriage is a modern classic in the field and identifies a wider concern with the experiences of multicultural couples. In his foreword, Romano states his motivations for writing the first edition (now more than 20 years ago), which were remarkably similar to the ones that underlie this study. A deep interest in multicultural couple's stories and the similarities and differences between them are the drivers behind his inquiries, and his work is one of the most comprehensive on the topic to date. Nevertheless, his observations around humour in this context are general and somewhat sparse, covering less than a paragraph. He merely observes that the humour

of different cultures is difficult to learn and understand and relates a few examples of multicultural couple's difficulties in understanding each other's humour.

Delving more deeply into literature around multicultural couples reveals a gap with no significant research on this topic identified to date. Research of humour in multicultural couples (Ruch and Forabosco, 1996; Weisfeld et al, 2011), humour in 'normal' couples (Barelds and Barelds-Dijkstra, 2010; Ziv, 1988), or even research about multicultural couples in general is lacking, with a remarkably small body of literature to be found on these topics. Sullivan and Cottone (2006) conducted a literature review of the work around counselling for intercultural relationships and concluded "little empirical research has been done with intercultural couples" (p. 221). Most books and studies about multicultural couples have been written from a counselling point of view, with the aim to identify issues specific to married multicultural couples and to provide appropriate advice (i.e. Habib, 2008; Karis and Killian, 2008). These studies mostly focus on relationship stressors and problems that arise from the differences between the partners. Bustamante et al. (2011) did an interesting study in which they conducted ethnographic interviews with five multicultural couples to establish what these couples would cite as culture-related stressors to their relationship, and how they dealt with them. In this study, humour was clearly identified as an important coping mechanism for the couples and as a main factor for their relationship success. Also surprising is that Bustamante et al. (2011) seem to be among the few authors to date that have explicitly focused on the positives within multicultural relationships.

Most other works on multicultural couples that mention humour do so on the side, as something that came up when talking to couples about a different topic (Bystydzienski, 2011; Seward, 2008; Tien, 2013). Tien did an exploratory study on the communication of multicultural couples, asking how cultural and language differences may affect their relationship. The study took a general approach to the topic, interviewing different couples and using methods of thematic analysis to extract clusters of meaning from the data. Interestingly, at one point Tien relates a couple's experience around watching movies together in their non-shared language, i.e. Cantonese. The English-speaking partner explains that he first needed to learn a lot more about his partner's culture to understand the humor in those movies, and that this new understanding allowed them to new create inside jokes together, fostering a feeling of closeness. This insight around the interdependence of cultural knowledge, understanding of humour and closeness was an early finding in this study, and drove much of the thinking behind developing the project methodology; yet Tien's approach was broad and she does not explore this issue further. Outside the counselling literature there are studies that look into how multicultural partners use language (Perlas Dumanig, 2010; Piller, 2011), their feelings of intimacy (Heller & Wood, 2000), how they stand towards infidelity (Druckerman, 2007), their marital adjustment (Ruebelt, Singaravelu, Daneshpour, & Brown, 2015) or how they construct their identities (Gonçalves, 2013; Luna, Ringberg, & Peracchio, 2008), but none that asked specifically about humour. There are a few studies conducted by researchers with a background in psychology that did focus on humour in intimate relationships (De Koning & Weiss, 2002; Cann, Davis, & Zapata, 2011), but they worked with 'normal' couples, and therefore left the cultural component out of the

equation. In conclusion, after a thorough review of the literature it can be said that as far as the reseracher is aware, to date this thesis represents the first study to focus on the humour in multicultural couples as the topic of inquiry.
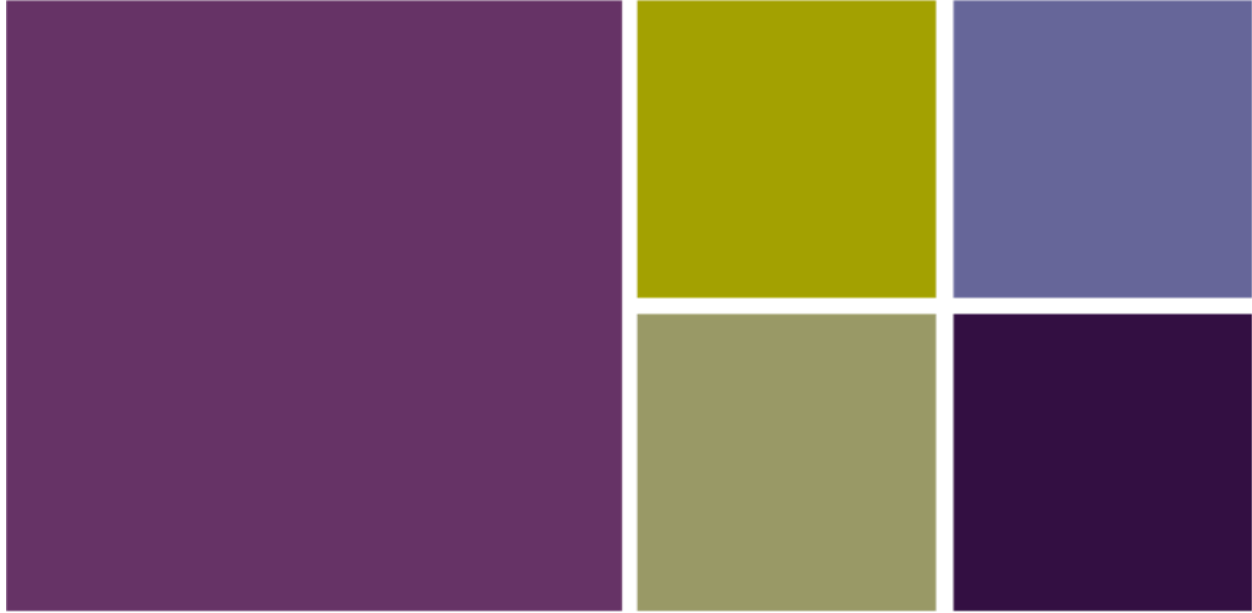
CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the focus and scope of the project and introduces the methodological background. The research rationale and research questions are explicitly stated, and the recruitment and sampling processes are discussed. Finally, the reader is introduced to the participants of this research project.

3.1 Focus and Scope

Planning to conduct an exploratory research project poses some unique challenges. One of the problems is that it can be difficult to define the focus and the scope of the study, as everything and anything may seem related and important to some degree. Usually time and budget are naturally limiting but, in addition, conscious decisions have to be made around what does and what does not relate. An explicit plan of what findings to include and exclude greatly helps steer the overall project. This is important not only because without a clear definition one would simply run out of time and money, but because one would get lost, hopping from idea to idea and thus moving further and further away from the initial research questions. To determine the focus on scope of this thesis the researcher heeded the advice of Sanders and Stappers (2012), who define the focus of a study as "that area of experience which you want to 'fully' understand" (p. 128). In this sense, the focus of this exploratory Co-Design research project was to develop methods of Generative Design Research, and to test how they would be useful to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context. Part of this aim was also to develop the methods under consideration of a set of specific characteristics identified as important in this context, and to see in how far these considerations supported the effectiveness of the methods in this study. In contrast, the scope of a study is defined as the wider field around the topic of interest that is still related to the research questions. For this study, the scope includes all findings around the experience of multicultural couples and humour as far as they can be explored with methods of Generative Design Research.
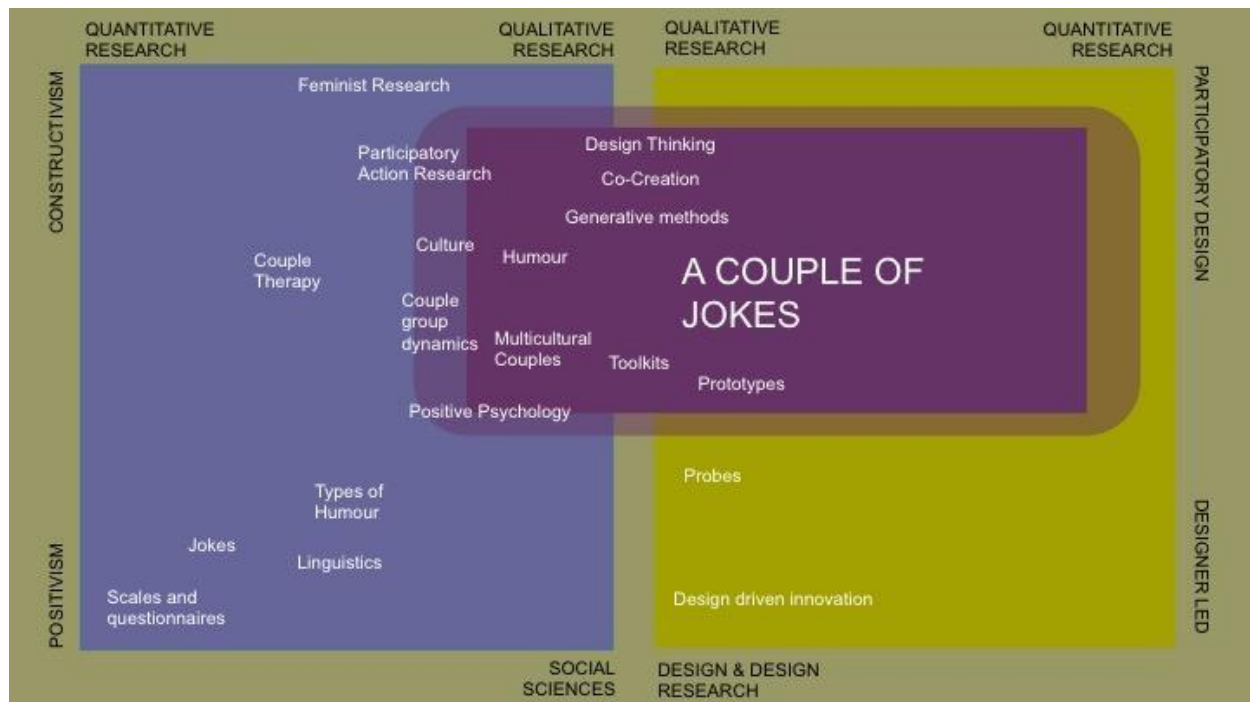
Figure 6. **A diagram of the focus and scope of this study.**

As shown in Figure 6, the core of this thesis is located within the field of design research. The frameworks of Design Thinking and Co-Creation and their methods of Generative Design Research build the methodological background of this study, which all sit within the PD area in the landscape of design. As can be seen, this research project also considers findings from the social sciences as they apply. This decision was made with regards to the earlier mentioned criticism of Hassenzahl et al. (2012), according to which design research projects that work with couples often fail to consider important psychological findings. The rationale for this decision was to strengthen the overall theoretical basis of the project, without shifting the study's focus on methods of design research, nor its location within the Co-Design framework. This is can be seen as depicted in Figure 6, where the study focus is shown to concentrate mainly on matters of design research, but is also shown to reach slightly into the field of the social sciences. This is also because the topics of multicultural couples and humour are usually located within those fields. The frameworks and methods of Design Thinking and Co-Creation are also shown to bridge a gap between the social sciences and design research, as they borrow ideas and findings from qualitative research in the social sciences. This is also why elements of PAR are shown to touch the outskirts of this thesis as well, as PD is closely related to PAR in the social sciences. Other areas that touch the scope of this project are questions around culture, couple group dynamics and principles from positive psychology. Anything not shown to lie within the shaded areas is defined as too far removed from the overall aim of this research project to be included in the scope of this study. The following sections will elaborate on the motivations for locating the topic of multicultural couples and humour within frameworks of Co-Design research, and discuss the evidence and reasoning that provide the basis for the research questions of this thesis.

3.2 Research Rationale

The initial motivation for investigating the topic of humour in multicultural couples comes from the researcher's personal background, who is German and lives with her New Zealand (Kiwi) husband in Auckland. Over the years, they have met and socialised with a great mix of similar couples, where one partner is from a different cultural background and speaks a different first language as the other. Sharing their experiences as multicultural couples was and still is a popular topic among the researcher, her husband and their friends, and has never stopped to fascinate them. Specifically the question of how they as multicultural couples experience humour has been the point of many long discussions and has sparked the author's research interest. The previous review of the literature in this field showed that a big knowledge gap exists around this topic. Although there is plenty of research in the field of cross-cultural humour and jokes, especially from a linguistic (Chiaro, 2006; Bell & Attardo, 2010; Shardakova, 2013) or psychological (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997; Habib, 2008) angle, and whilst some studies have specifically investigated humour in couples (De Koning & Weiss, 2002; Cann & Zapata, 2011) none have included the multicultural factor.

The researcher is not aware of any studies to-date that have focused on the experiences of multicultural couples around humour. Any project that was going to research this topic would therefore have to be exploratory in nature, and it would be a

matter of careful consideration to decide what methodology and methods such a project should employ. The following section will discuss the specifics of these considerations in relation to the topic of the experience of humour in multicultural couples.

Most literature on research methods mentions the importance of choosing a methodology that suits the research question, and not the other way around (e.g. Carter & Little, 2007; Punch, 2009). In this sense, the methods of a study that is interested to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour would need a very specific set of characteristics. First of all, like many other real-life phenomena the topic of humour is multifaceted and complex, not alone because someone's individual sense of humour is very subjective and varies from person to person (Ruch, 1998). Correspondingly, a set of methods used to research this topic would need to be well-designed enough to be valid, yet flexible enough to be applied to such an ill-definable concept as humour. In addition, the methods would not be used to do research *on* participants, but to work *with* multicultural couples to support them in their exploration of their personal experiences. Consequently, the methods would need to inspire the couples to work together to exchange their thoughts, ideas and feelings and become active creators of new knowledge. It follows that research methods suitable to encourage participants to explore this topic should be applied in a collaborative, creative research setting. Because of this, the methods would also need to offer a considerable degree of enjoyment to participants, first and foremost because participants would need to use the tools to be creative, and therefore would have to want to work with them on their own accord. Methods that are boring or unengaging would have difficulties in accomplishing this. Furthermore, research on creativity (Walker Russ, 1999; Baas, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2008) shows that positive emotions significantly support creative work, a finding that is supported by theories and research on the concept of flow, which comes from positive psychology (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Most important, however, is that without methods that facilitate a degree of fun there would be few opportunities to explore the topic of humour.

As a final consideration, any study developed to work with couples needs to take into account that they build a special unit of two people that has its own dynamics (Brok, 2004), as has been previously touched on in the literature review. Methods that aim to work with couples need to allow for the fact that they are hesitant to break out of their shell and work in a larger group (Coché, 2011). When developing methods that aim to encourage a collaborative working style, one has to consider carefully how this can be achieved in a group consisting purely of couples. The following section will discuss the methodological background of this thesis, and will explain how its methods were developed in regards to the aforementioned considerations.

3.3 Methodological Background

This section will argue that the methodologies of Design Thinking and Co-Design, as well as methods of Generative Design Research, should be used as the main frameworks for a study that aims to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour. The discussion will make reference to relevant evidence that helps to show why these methodologies and methods are particularly suited to meet the

aforementioned requirements for research around the experience of multicultural couples. As mentioned before, it is important to ensure that a study's methodology aligns with its overall aims. The ideologies of Design Thinking and Co-Creation support the objective of this thesis to enable participants to become active creators of new knowledge. This is because Design Thinking and Co-Design are part of the larger framework of Participatory Design, which historically sought to flatten power hierarchies in the working industries (Asaro, 2000). The basic mindset of enablement and the recognition that new knowledge first and foremost is produced for and owned by the people that created it still underlies the mindsets of Co-Design and Design Thinking. Another supporting factor is that these methodologies can be used to create knowledge that extends beyond the library, applies to real-life and captures the authentic human experience (Buchanan, 1992). In addition, as has already been mentioned in the literature review, methods of Generative Design are usually specifically designed to fit a certain research project (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). As the previous discussion has highlighted several factors are important for consideration when doing research into the experience of humour in multicultural couples, methods that can be developed specifically to meet these criteria are an ideal solution. The remainder of this discussion will focus on how generative methods can be used to meet all of the criteria that were highlighted in the previous section.

It was shown earlier that the topic of humour in multicultural couples would be best explored in a collaborative setting that would allow the participants to share their ideas, thoughts and feelings with each other, with methods that are valid yet flexible and contain an element of fun. One of the essential concepts of Design Thinking is the use of designerly methods in collaborative settings (Salonen, 2015). In contrast to methods that merely encourage or facilitate discussion among members of a group, Design Thinking methods encourage people to become creative and use different ways to express themselves, such as through visuals, crafted artefacts or prototypes that need little or no words to express a concept (Ambrose, 2015). By sketching, drawing or making something with their hands, people can literally get their ideas out of their head and onto the table, which allows them to move from simply talking about a problem to a first iteration of a solution in a very short time. These methods invite people to be active and creative, and if designed right can be a lot of fun to complete. By combining these Do and Make-Tools with interviews or discussion groups borrowed from social research, so-called Say-Methods, the researcher can create a unique combination of generative methods to support her research aims. This Converging Perspectives Approach of design research was first suggested by Sanders in 1992 and draws together findings from the social sciences about how people think, learn, remember and behave. The rationale for using a mix of Say, Do, and Make-Methods is that it allows the researcher to help participants access different levels of their knowledge (Figure 7). These can range from easily verbalised, every-day knowledge sitting on the forefront of the mind to deep-seated, unconscious feelings, knowledge or dreams.

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Figure 7. **The methods of the Converging Perspectives Approach. Design-researchers that match their methods to the level of knowledge they want access will find it easier to help participants express themselves. From Sanders and Stappers (2012). Copyright 2012 BIS Publishers. Reprinted with permission.**

The different types of methods stimulate people in different ways and hence allow them to engage more or less deeply with their knowledge. Methods that make people think or talk about a topic will let them access surface-level knowledge, whereas doing or using something will let them engage deeper and encourages them to express deeper-seated knowledge. Methods that ask people to make something, i.e. generative methods or Make-Tools, will access latent and tacit knowledge (Cramer-Petersen & Marijnissen, 2012), which are forms of knowledge formed by experience: unconscious and almost impossible to express in words (Mascitelli, 2000). This idea of using generative methods to access deep-seated knowledge is what drove the development of the concept of 'the Path of Expression'. The term was coined by E.B.-N. Sanders and Stappers (2012) and describes a model for harnessing knowledge that borrows from memory and learning theories in psychology and education (Fig. 8). The model describes how generative tools of doing, saying and making help move participants along the timeline of their personal experience, from the present to the past all the way into the future. It is a model that can be used to plan and structure a design research project, providing a red line and the bar against which new methods can be measured.

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Figure 8. **The Path of Expression. The Path of Expression takes participants along the timeline of their personal experience, from the present (1) to the past (2) via their needs and values (3) all the way into the future (4). From Sanders & Stappers (2012). Copyright 2010 BIS Publishers. Reprinted with permission.**

It follows that a well-planned Co-Creation session should follow the Path of Expression approach, leading participants along the timeline of their personal experience. At the beginning of this journey stands the sensitization phase, which helps people reflect on their current experience around the topic, and evokes memories and thoughts of past experiences. Sensitization happens before participants move into the generative phase, where methods of Co-Creation help them to access their underlying feelings, thoughts, needs and values, which allows them to discover future possibilities. To start this process, participants need to engage with the wider scope of the topic, so they can start to explore their thoughts and feelings around it (E.B.-N. Sanders & Stappers, 2012). Not even professional designers could be expected to go from cold to red-hot engaged with a new topic over the course of one workshop session, leave alone everyday people. Creativity does not quite work like that; it needs time for ideas to form and then incubate before we can engage with them in a productive way (Wallas, 1926). Based on the psychological concepts of priming and the spread of activation (Collins & Loftus, 1975), sensitization allows participants to be prepared for the topic they will be working on so their ideas have time to form and develop. Priming is unconscious, but assists greatly in accessing the equally unconscious deeper levels of tacit and latent knowledge that are addressed during later parts of a Co-Creation project, as participants progress through the Path of Expression.

When designing the personal research journey for the participants, the researcher can use Say, Do, and, Make-Tools strategically to guide participants through the creative process. This element of guidance is important because not every participant will be equally comfortable at the same level of creative expression, and thus different people

will need different forms of support. Sanders and Stappers (2014) divide people's levels of creative proficiency into doing, adapting, making and creating (Table 1).

Table 1
The four levels of creativity

	LEVEL	MOTIVATED BY	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
1	Doing	Productivity	"getting something done"	Organizing my herbs and spices
2	Adapting	Appropriation	"making things my own" or "make it fit better"	Embellishing a ready-made meal
3	Making	Asserting my ability or skill	"make with my own hands"	Cooking with a recipe
4	Creating	Curiosity	"express my ability"	Dreaming up a new dish

Note. **Adapted from Sanders and Stappers, 2012, p. 39. Copyright 2010 by BIS Publishers. Reprinted with permission.**

To support people across all stages of creativity, Sanders and Stappers suggest researchers develop methods that cover the entire spectrum, following the Converging Perspectives Approach. They should make some methods that can lead people who are at a 'doing level' of creativity, some that guide those at the 'adapting level', others that provide scaffolds to support those at the 'making level', and lastly offer a clean slate for participants who want to truly create. A series of studies by Bonde Sørensen (2010) successfully applied this model to research into people's experiences around finances for a Danish bank. Bonde Sørensen strategically made and used generative methods of the Say, Do and Make-types during her Co-Creation sessions, following the Converging Perspectives Approach. This approach allows the researcher to harness the collective creativity of everyone involved in the design process. As Sanders and Stappers (2014) state:

> "*[a] key ingredient of the designerly ways of doing research is that they involve creative acts of making:* […] *design researchers making generative toolkits, participants using these toolkits to make expressive artefacts and discussing those, and codesigners creating and evaluating prototypes, often in iterative cycles*" *(p.6).*

It follows that group workshops are an ideal setting for Co-Creation sessions. They can be used to help stimulate a group's collective creativity to generate as many ideas and insights around a topic as possible. There are of course other good reasons for working in a group workshop: its diversity offers different perspectives and creates dynamics that can help to create more ideas in less time (Visser et al., 2005). It is a social activity and as such can be a lot of fun, the importance of which for stimulating creativity has already been discussed earlier. Realistically there are also a few downsides to take into account when thinking about group workshops: group dynamics and dominant

participants can cause more passive individuals to get overlooked and their voices go unheard. Personal opinions on touchy subjects may not be expressed to the same extent as in a more intimate setting. Groups are also harder to keep on task and more likely to slide into a form of social get-together, losing the element of group work entirely. Apart from the normal pros and cons that come with group work, group work with couples poses its very own challenges. As previously discussed, couples have their own dynamics, and anyone planning to design group workshops for couples needs to consider those. Although written from the perspective of couple's therapy, the explanations around couples and group dynamics of Brok (2004) and Coché (2011) can also be applied to Co-Creation group workshops for couples.

According to Brok (2004), the main challenge when designing a group session for couples is that they are already an existing, functioning system, and the facilitator is the outsider who needs to create a completely new working group from the collection of all these subsystems. This is supported by the writings of Coché (2011), who states that couples are hesitant to integrate into any kind of group. This means the facilitator needs to find a way to carefully break open the existing couple-systems, and bring them together into one team, where the couples are not tempted to retreat back into the safety of their mini-team, but are willing and open to work as individuals in the group. A workshop developed for multicultural couples would need to ease the participants into the session, allowing longer than usual to go from icebreaker to group work. Being creative together requires a certain sense of group connection that has to be built up. To summarise, the discussion in this section has shown why the methodologies of Design Thinking and Co-Design, as well as methods of Generative Design Research, should be used as the main frameworks for a study that aims to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour.

3.4 Research Questions

The main purpose of this thesis was to develop methods of Generative Design Research based on recent theories of Co-Creation, and to test in how far they would be useful to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context. Specifically, the methods would be designed according to the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012), and consider ways to support different levels of creative expression as well as encourage visual ways of communication. Part of the aim was also to see in how far the specific considerations around designing generative methods for couples supported the outcomes of the methods in this study. These aims resulted in the formulation of the following research questions:

1. Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?
2. What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?

3.5 Recruitment and Sampling

Since this study planned to work with human participants, formal ethical approval from the Auckland University of Technology Research Ethics Committee (AUTEC) was sought and granted before commencing the recruitment process, which consisted of advertisements posted in the researcher's gym and social media page. As will be discussed in more detail in chapter four, after the first workshop the data collection method was changed to extend to individual home visits with participants, and a formal amendment of the initial ethical approval was sought and granted for this as well (see Appendix A). Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and the recruitment process did not involve any form of coercion. Upon expression of interest, all participants received a detailed information sheet and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix A) before data collection commenced. The recruitment documentation informed participants that they would receive a small gift and some refreshments during the workshops, which represented a small reimbursement for the time and effort participants invested in the project. Several guidelines from different sources advise on the question of whether or not to compensate research participants for their involvement (Research Ethics Policy and Advisory Committee University of Toronto, 2011; Committee for Protection of Human Subjects University of California, Berkeley, 2012). It is generally agreed that the value of the compensation should represent a token of appreciation, and not be so high that it might motivate participants to do something they would otherwise not want to do. This is of course a relative statement, as the perceived value of something can greatly differ between people. All recruited participants in this study were professionals, and it was decided that a gift with a value of twenty New Zealand Dollars would not unduly coerce them.

It was initially feared that the study's brief might be narrowing the pool of suitable participants too much and that the nature of the research may be too demanding of people's time. Despite this, finding enough interested couples that fit the brief did not pose an issue. This was an unexpected outcome that might be due to the size of the multicultural community in Auckland. After the first two couples had responded to a post in the researcher's local gym, the rest of the participants were recruited via snowball sampling, as already participating couples referred their acquaintances to the researcher. In total, there were eight different couples that participated in this research project. The nature of the study and its research questions meant that the more sensitized participants were to the topic, the more likely they would be to contribute more to the overall project. It was therefore seen as desirable that participants would partake in as many data collection phases as possible. At the same time, the researcher was aware that this may not be achievable for all couples, as the data collection phases were spread across several months, and each session demanded a considerable amount of time from the couples. The strategy and timeline of the study therefore allowed for the fact that new couples may need to be recruited for each data collection session, and that these new participants would need to be prepared for the topic.

3.6 Meet the Participants

From the eight different couples that took part in this study, two attended more than one session. Augusto and Olga took part in all three phases of the study, and Diana and Hartmann attended both the first and the third workshop (Table 2).

Table 2
The participants of this research project

Augusto and Olga
Augusto was born in Brazil and identifies as Brazilian. His 1st language is Portuguese, his 2nd language is English. Olga was born in Siberia and identifies as Russian. Her 1st language is Russian, her 2nd language English, and her 3rd language Portuguese. They communicate with each other in English.

Diana and Hartmann
Diana was born in Germany and identifies as German. Her 1st language is German; her 2nd language is English. Hartmann was born in NZ and identifies as Kiwi. His 1st language is English. They communicate with each other in English.

Amanda and Emma
Amanda was Born in NZ and identifies as Kiwi-European and Māori. Her 1st language is English. Emma was born in NZ and identifies as Kiwi. Her 1st language English. They communicate with each other in English.

Vaughn and Kittin
Vaughn was born in South Africa and identifies as Kiwi. His 1st language is English; his 2nd language is Afrikaans. Kittin was born in the Philippines and identifies and Filipino. Her 1st language is Tagalog, her 2nd language Ilocano, and her 3rd language is English. They communicate with each other in English.

Jyoti and Gabriel
Jyoti was born in NZ and identifies as Indian and Kiwi. Her 1st language is English; her 2nd language is Gujarati. Gabriel was born in Hong Kong and identifies as Kiwi. His 1st language is Cantonese; his 2nd language is English. They communicate with each other in English.

Diana and Justin
Diana was born in Bulgaria and identifies as Bulgarian. Her 1st language is Bulgarian, her 2nd language is English and her 3rd language is German. Justin was born in Fiji and identifies as Kiwi. His 1st language is Fiji Hindi; his 2nd language is English. They communicate with each other in English.
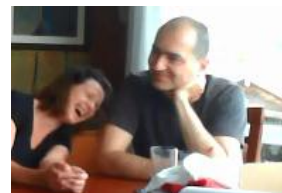
Meegan and Riccardo
Meegan was born in NZ and identifies as Kiwi. Her 1st language is English, her 2nd language French, and her 3rd language is Italian. Riccardo was born in Italy and identifies as Italian. His 1st language is Italian, his 2nd language is French and his 3rd language is English. They communicate with each other in English.

Jono and Maiko
Jono was born in China and identifies as Kiwi. His 1st language is Mandarin; his 2nd language is English. Maiko was born in the Netherlands and identifies and Kiwi. Her first language is English; her 2nd language is Dutch. They communicate with each other in English.
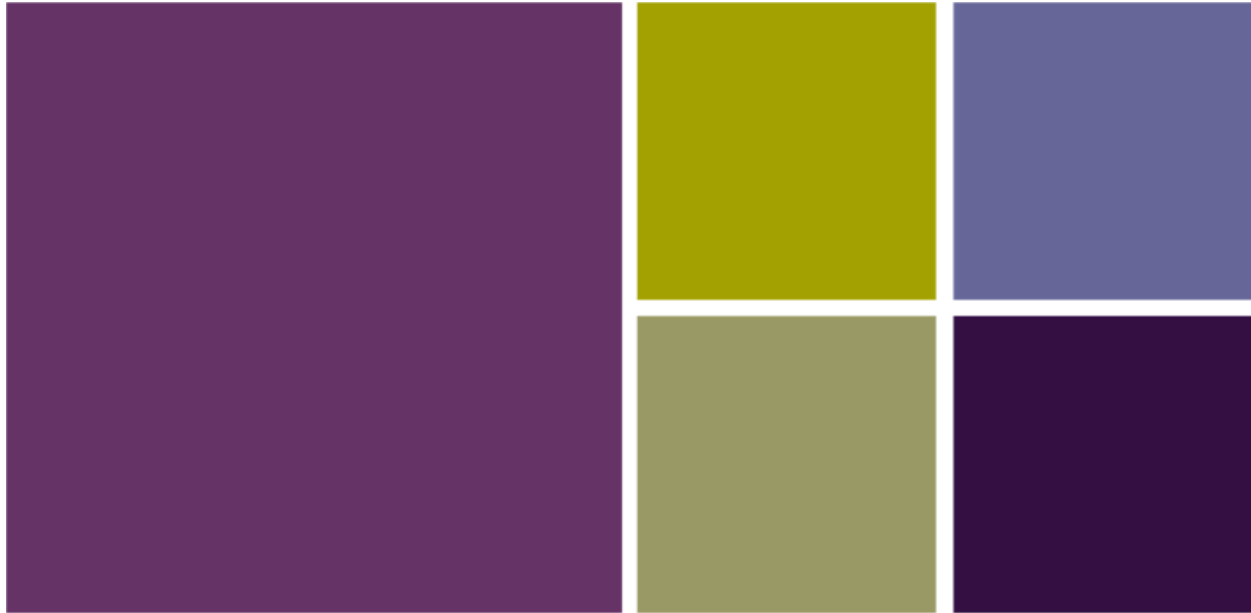
CHAPTER 4: Project Report

This chapter presents and discusses the events of the four fieldwork phases exploration, focus and application, focusing on key insights and findings.

4.1 Preparations

Anyone who has ever relied too heavily on their smartphone for navigation while on a road trip through New Zealand has learned the hard way: without a map, you get lost. Drawing from her own experience and that of Sanders and Stappers (2012), the researcher started her research journey with a 'preconception mind map' of what she thought she knew about humour in multicultural couples and what she hoped to find (Fig. 9). Just like the participants, the researcher is a partner in a multicultural relationship herself and as such an 'expert of her own experience', and was aware that this would shape how she would think about this research project.

Figure 9. **Preparations. A mind map of the researcher's preconceptions at the start of the project (left) and her 'mind map on the wall' (right).**

As Visser et al. (2005) explain, making one's own preconceptions explicit reduces the risk of projecting them onto the participants. In addition, having a preconception mind map from the start helps set the direction of the overall project. It also serves as a reference point for later, once the new knowledge about the topic has grown, and any new insights and findings might seem almost too obvious. It is important to be able to show that despite possible impressions of going full circle, the events and experiences gained through the research now serve as a backup for a particular point of view. The next step of the preparation was to lay out the overall strategy of the study and to plan each individual phase, and again the researcher took a note out of the book of Sanders and Stappers (2012) and started with a 'mind map on the wall' to organise her thoughts and learnings from the literature (Fig. 9). Considerations around timelines, resources and deliverables were all part of the map, as well as early ideas about methods and tools. After these early preparations it was time to launch into the first phase of the fieldwork stage of the study and to create the generative methods for the exploration phase of the project.

4.2 Phase 1: Exploration

4.2.1 The Sensitization Toolkit

The Sensitization Toolkit for the exploration phase of the study was designed according to the principles of the theories of Co-Creation. The theory of the Path of Expression states that the included generative methods need to take participants on a journey through their own experience, reaching from the present over the past into the future. Along the way, the researcher needs to provide sufficient scaffolding to support different levels of creative expression, and choose an appropriate mix of Say, Do, and Make-Tools to access different planes of knowledge. This is called the Converging Perspectives Approach. The design of the generative methods for the Toolkit also rests on principles of Design Thinking, according to which they should encourage participants to express themselves visually where possible. In addition, the methods were designed with the aim to be flexible yet valid, and last but not least they aimed to be fun to complete. Figure 10 provides an overview of the methods designed for the Sensitization Toolkit, and how they relate to two theories of Co-Creation. The section will go on to discuss the main considerations relating to the design and development of the Toolkit and its methods.
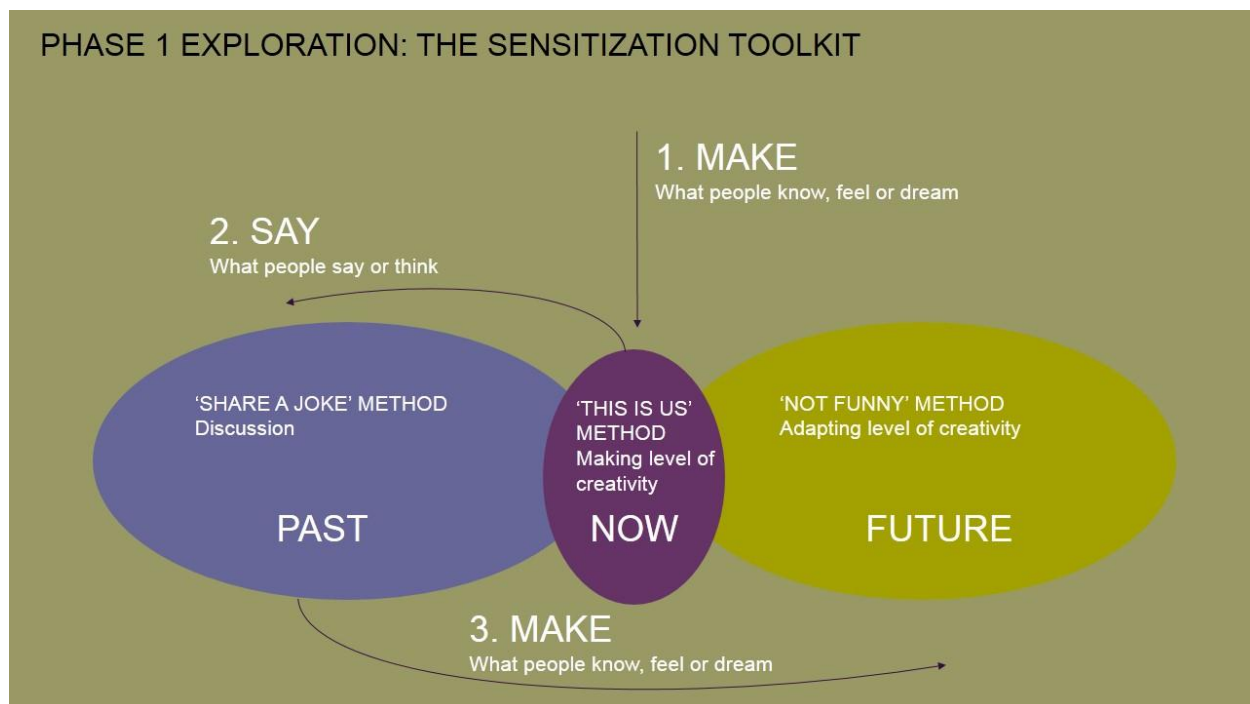
Figure 10. **The structure of the Sensitization Toolkit. It is based on two theories of Co-Creation, the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach, as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012).**

As can be seen in figure 10, the first method was a Make-Tool, which aimed to access deep-seated knowledge of the participants by asking them to work together and create a representation of themselves as a multicultural couple. To make for easier reading for the remainder of this discussion this method will be called the 'This is Us' method or tool. This generative method stimulated the couples to think about themselves in the

here and now, and can therefore be seen to build the start of their journey on the Path of Expression. The couples were asked to bring their creations to the workshop and use it to introduce themselves during the first icebreaker session. They could choose to either work with a blank canvas or to use a world map as a guide for their ideas. This choice between working on the 'adapting' or 'making level' of creativity was offered to cater for participants with different needs for creative expression. Two couples chose the option to work freely, and three couples preferred to use the map as a starting point.

The second method was a Say-tool and took the couple from their current experience into the past by asking them to delve into their memories and share their favourite joke with one another. In the provided workbook (see Appendix B), it was suggested they note down their favourite joke in their first language and, if that first language was not English, to also write down the translation of it. The partners were then asked to tell each other their joke (if applicable, the translated version of it), and had the option to watch a video that showed the reactions of people that had just been told a translated joke (Shabbir & Bramley, 2014). Methods that stimulate people at the 'say level' only address knowledge that sits on the surface and is readily accessible. Accordingly, although this method was used with the intention to stimulate an exchange of thoughts on the topic, it was also seen as a bit of fun for the partners. During the workshop, it was referred back to this exercise, and the video from the Toolkit was shown again, this time to the entire group.

The last method was another Make-Tool, and intended to take participants into a space where they could imagine a situation in which they may not be able to share humour, by asking them to make a map of things they cannot laugh about. Each partner was asked to make their personal mind map first, and then to join the two versions together into one. The couple was encouraged to reflect on the similarities and differences of their two halves, and to bring their combined mind map to the workshop, where all maps were compared and discussed by the entire group. This tool was located at the 'adapting level' of creativity, and a ready-made canvas was provided as a starting point to guide participants that did not naturally feel at ease with this level of creativity. In a trial run with friends, this tool had been slightly controversial, as it sparked a lot of questions about how the statement of 'things you cannot laugh about' should be interpreted. It was decided that this ambiguity was, in fact, desirable, as it assisted the aim of the method to stimulate the couple's creativity and engagement with the question and by doing so, with the general topic of humour and each other. The goal was not to get the couples to create an objective definition of what constitutes humour and what does not, but to get them to reflect deeply on what the topic means for themselves. This thinking followed another advice of Sanders and Stappers (2012), who state that "[researchers] can use ambiguity as a resource for sparking creativity" (p. 45).

The content of Sensitization Toolkits should encourage participants to think about the wider scope of the topic of interest, but not yet hone in on the focus. Otherwise, participants may arrive at the workshop with already prepared answers (Visser et al., 2005). For this study, the sensitization tasks were supposed to draw the participant's attention towards the more general concepts of humour and culture, whereas the

methods in the generative session would be designed to focus on their experiences around humour and their multicultural relationship. A lot of time went into reading and thinking about existing generative methods (Sanders, 2000; Cramer-Petersen & Marijnissen, 2012; Gray, Brown, & Macanufo, 2010; Sanders & Stappers, 2012), and then ideating, sketching, prototyping and reiterating different versions of methods, to eventually decide on and develop the three that would be used in the Toolkit. In its final form, it contained a hardcopy of a workbook with three small tasks, instruction kits with the associated materials, as well as a set of craft supplies (Fig. 11).

Figure 11. Developing the Toolkit. The Sensitization Toolkits (left) and workbooks (right) for the first Co-Creation workshop.

This development process of the individual components of the Toolkit was guided by the previously discussed main concepts of the theory of Co-Creation, as well as the practical tips of Sanders and Stappers (2012). The exercises in the Toolkit were designed to get participants to think about themselves as a multicultural couple, and to reflect on the more abstract concept of culture. As already stated in the earlier definition, culture is not a fixed notion with clear boundaries. On the contrary, it is very fuzzy, can mean many different things to different people and is not something that can be expected to sit clearly defined on the forefront of everyone's mind. Culture is a concept that most people form an unconscious understanding of, making it a form of tacit knowledge. This means that the idea of one's own culture is not something that can be readily expressed in words, and may need to be communicated in other ways. This is where the use of generative methods comes into play. In addition, once prompted with the right methods, many people would state that they have more than one culture, a view that was confirmed more than once by participants during the first workshop.

Sanders and Stappers (2012) suggest that one should look for a certain level of ambiguity in the visual material sourced to create generative methods. Visual material that can be interpreted in several ways can produce greatly differing results, depending on a person's viewpoint. Incompleteness is a form of ambiguity and exploits people's tendency to add parts of their own imagination to fill in an incomplete image. This effect is called closure and most commonly used in comics (McCloud, 1993). Based on these concepts the materials sourced for this study were chosen to have a certain level of

ambiguity to them. To direct the selection criteria towards the right themes the researcher started with a list of words that she associated with fun and humour. This method is another tip that comes from the practical experience of Sanders and Stappers (2012). She sourced license free photos from the web, bought a selection of stickers that showed both symbols and words relating to her list, selected crafts that she perceived to be fun and abstract at the same time and made all other supporting material herself, such as the instruction cards or canvases for the generative tasks. Figure 12 shows a small selection of materials included in the final Toolkit.

Figure 12. **Examples of a final Sensitization Toolkit (left) and material set for a generative method (right).**

Clear plastic bags were used to pack each kit set for the individual tasks, so participants could see what was inside without needing to open each bag. The importance of packing the individual kit sets correctly proved to be a point that was initially underestimated. In tests with friends, it quickly became clear that the good intentions of giving each couple as much material as could fit into a bag actually had an adverse effect: people would get so distracted by all the sequins, glitter and different coloured pens that they missed the task instructions, or even worse, got so overwhelmed by the mass of material that they did not know where to start. This realisation resulted in more time spent labelling, packing and re-packing the sets until the instructions as well as the material were organised in a way that would make sense to the participants. It was important that the Toolkit and the methods within it were designed right, because the participants would be working on them in their own time at home, and the researcher would not be able to explain anything to them or elaborate on any unclear instructions.

Visser et al. (2005) have written some very useful practical tips for creating Sensitization Toolkits, which are based on their experiences in practice. In essence, these recommendations state that designing a Toolkit is always a trade-off between too much and too little detail. The authors advise not to over-perfect a Toolkit to the point where it looks and feels too sleek, as participants might feel scared to engage fully with it. Workbook pages and exercises that leave little room for interpretation are not motivating to engage with. At the same time, if instructions are not clear enough they will be confusing, and if the Toolkit lacks an air of professionalism it will not make participants feel like they are taken seriously as the 'experts of their own experience'. Because of

this, considerable time was spent on the look and feel of the workbook, creating a visual theme that consisted of typography, colour choices and imagery. A simple logo was chosen and used for all collateral in this study, including instruction cards, participant information sheets and information signs on the day of the workshop. The researcher spent time binding the workbooks to make them more appealing and bought special coloured cardboard boxes to contain the entire Toolkit set. Hand in hand with the look and feel of the Toolkit goes its actual content, and the way it is organised and applied. The order of the sensitization exercises was aligned with the order of the methods that had been developed for the workshop, with each sensitization task building the base for a method in the workshop.

The tasks in the Sensitization Toolkit were designed to stimulate engagement with each other and around the idea of culture, but also around fun, laughter, and humour. Although the tasks were supposed to be stimulating and fun to do, they were also not supposed to be too time-consuming. Participants volunteer their personal time for the research, and therefore time and effort should be kept to a minimum. Estimating how long each exercise would take the couples to complete was very difficult, even after a few trial runs with friends. This is mostly because participants tend to invest more time and effort into generative tasks than required, as they perceive their investment to be of personal value to them (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). It was estimated that the participants would spend no more than forty minutes over the duration of one week on the Toolkit. This estimate turned out to be far too conservative, as participants later stated they had spent closer to one hour on each separate task. The five multicultural couples that were recruited for this research project were handed the Toolkits in person and had at least one week to complete their workbooks. Starting the process of preparation a few weeks before the actual workshop allowed the participants plenty of time to become engaged with the topic of multicultural couples and humour. It created a base for their thinking and allowed the workshop to pick up from there. It meant that a common ground could be assumed, and they could then be led further into the topic with a series of methods that prepared them for the final generative task. Handing the Toolkits out in person followed the example of Visser and Stappers (2007), who say that even though time-consuming, this way of delivering the Sensitization Tools is the best way to ensure that participants are comfortable with the Toolkit and what is expected from them. The researcher also found this to be a good decision, as she could address questions around the Toolkit and the upcoming workshop as she handed out the Toolkits, and had a chance to form an initial relationship with the couples before they would meet in the workshop.

One final issue to consider and decide on was if for the purposes of analysis, the couples needed to hand over their finished creations to the researcher, or if it could be arranged so they could keep them. True to the participatory mindset of Co-Design, the researcher believes that all research done together belongs first and foremost to the participants, including all physical and intellectual creations. It was anticipated that they would spend considerable time and effort on making something that expressed who they are and what they were about. These artefacts would be precious and also private to some degree, and the researcher fought a small but real battle with herself on how to

go about this. In the end, the choice was left to the participants. They were asked to bring their work to the workshop session, but it was made clear that they could also take them back home again, together with the special Toolkit box they had received. The researcher was prepared to suffice with a photo of their artefacts in those cases, but in the end none of the participants decided to take their work back home with them. Nevertheless, this is an important consideration to make when planning a study in the Co-Creation framework: to stay true to the principles of working with and for the participants at all times.

4.2.2 The First Co-Creation Workshop

The initial preparations for the first Co-Creation workshop can be likened to the work of an event planner, and consisted of organising a time and venue, but also details such as drinks and snacks, sufficient parking and signage. It was important to set up the workshop location correctly, so the researcher visited it beforehand to make sure it suited her plans. On the day, the room was going to be configured according to a previously draughted plan (Illus. 1), to ensure all activities could flow as intended.
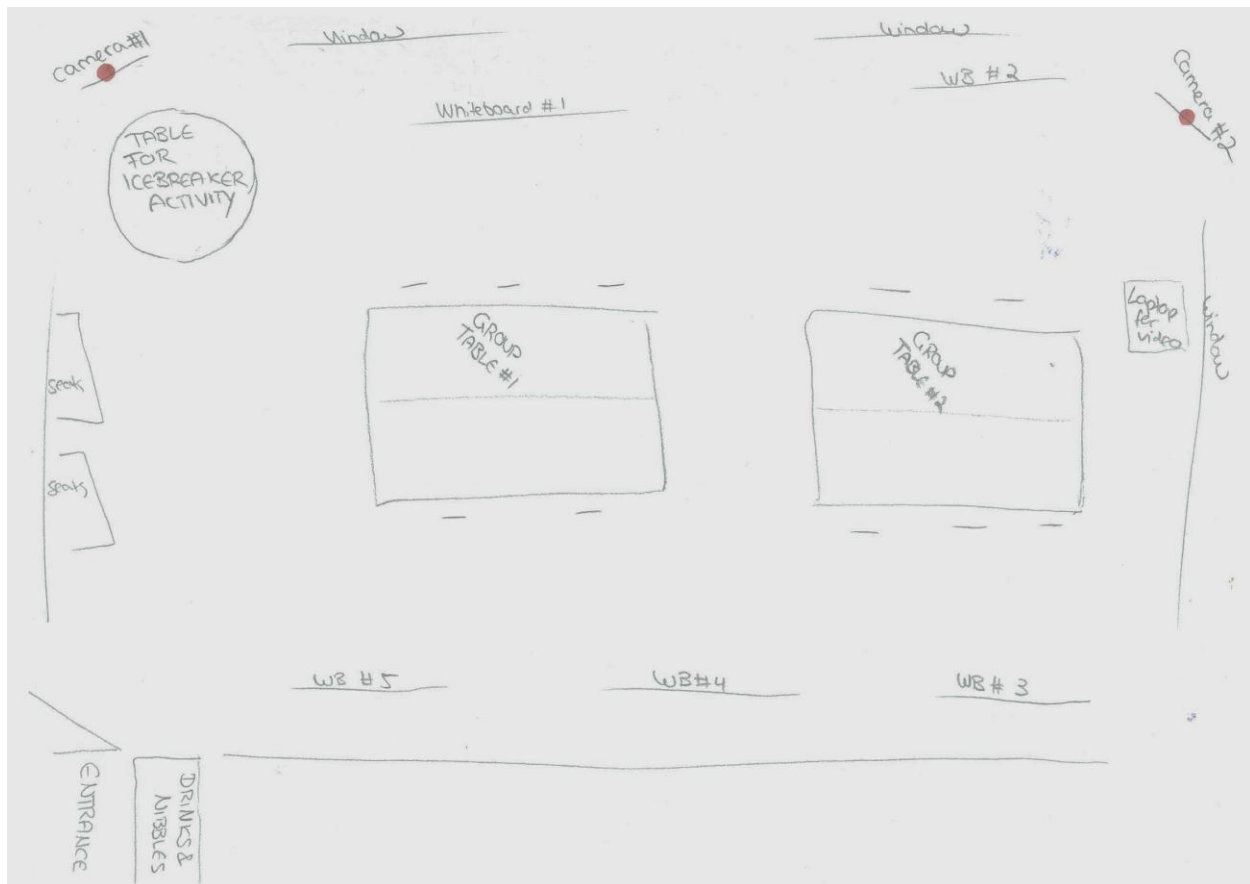
Illustration 1. **A sketch of the workshop premises.**

As a final step in the preparations, the researcher conducted a test run of the entire workshop. She completed this together with her husband, to check if there were any unforeseen practical hitches and if the aspirational timeframe of two hours would be sufficient. After this, the methods that will be discussed in the remainder of this section

could be put to the test with a real group of participants in the first Co-Creation workshop of this study.

There they were, a group of ten slightly nervous participants and one really nervous facilitator. The researcher had put out some drinks and snacks to start with, and everyone was making polite conversation. In her head however, her thoughts were racing: had she remembered to bring everything? What if no one was going to go along with the methods she had so carefully designed? Whatever else she was worrying about during those terrifying first few minutes, once the session started she had no time or reason to worry about any of them. Whoever has facilitated any type of group workshop before will know how much concentration and multitasking skills it requires to keep the session going and on track. The researcher's experience as a trainer in the corporate sector helped her with this, but one still needs to consider and focus on very different things whilst facilitating a Co-Creation workshop. The task of the facilitator in this exploratory Co-Design session was to encourage ten everyday people to come out of their shell and go on a two-hour journey together, the direction of which may have been sketched out, but where the exact outcomes were unknown to either of them. The facilitator needed to be involved enough to encourage these people to engage with each other and the methods presented. At the same time, she needed to stay out of what was happening as much as possible, as the ideas that were of interest were those of the participants, not of the facilitator. She needed to create a balance between the different contributions, by making sure the more withdrawn personalities did not get drowned out by the more outgoing characters, and for that she had to work out quickly who was who. The facilitator had to bring people back on track when they started to veer too far towards the outer edges of the scope of the topic and, most importantly, pick up on key points and steer the discussion on those towards a deeper level. What exactly those key points turned out to be will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter, which will also cover what their analysis meant for the further direction of the study.

Just like the Sensitization Toolkit, the methods of the Co-Creation workshop were designed according to the recent theories of Co-Creation and models of Design Thinking, i.e. the Converging Perspectives Approach and the Path of Expression, with the aim of supporting visual communication. In addition, its overall structure was developed under consideration of the main aspects raised by Brok (2004) and Coché (2011) regarding group work with couples. According to this, the workshop sought to ease the couples into the session, allowing a longer lead-time than usual to move from the initial introductions to group work, so they had time to break out of their mini-teams. A series of methods was designed around this purpose, with the aim to prepare the participants for the final generative activity. An icebreaker activity that asked the couples to introduce themselves as a team would build the start, and then the workshop would move on to an activity that still allowed the couples to work together and just required them to share their ideas with the group. Only after this would some group work be introduced, where everyone was required to work together. The final generative task would ask the group to split in two, assigning each partner to a separate group. The aim

of splitting the couples was to create a fresh perspective on the topic, preventing couples from falling back into their mini-teams. As mentioned previously, the workshop methods were developed in conjunction with the sensitization methods, with two of the workshop activities based on the tasks of the sensitization phase. Figure 13 gives an overview of the overall structure and individual methods of the Co-Creation workshop and shows how the workshop methods related to those in the Sensitization Toolkit.
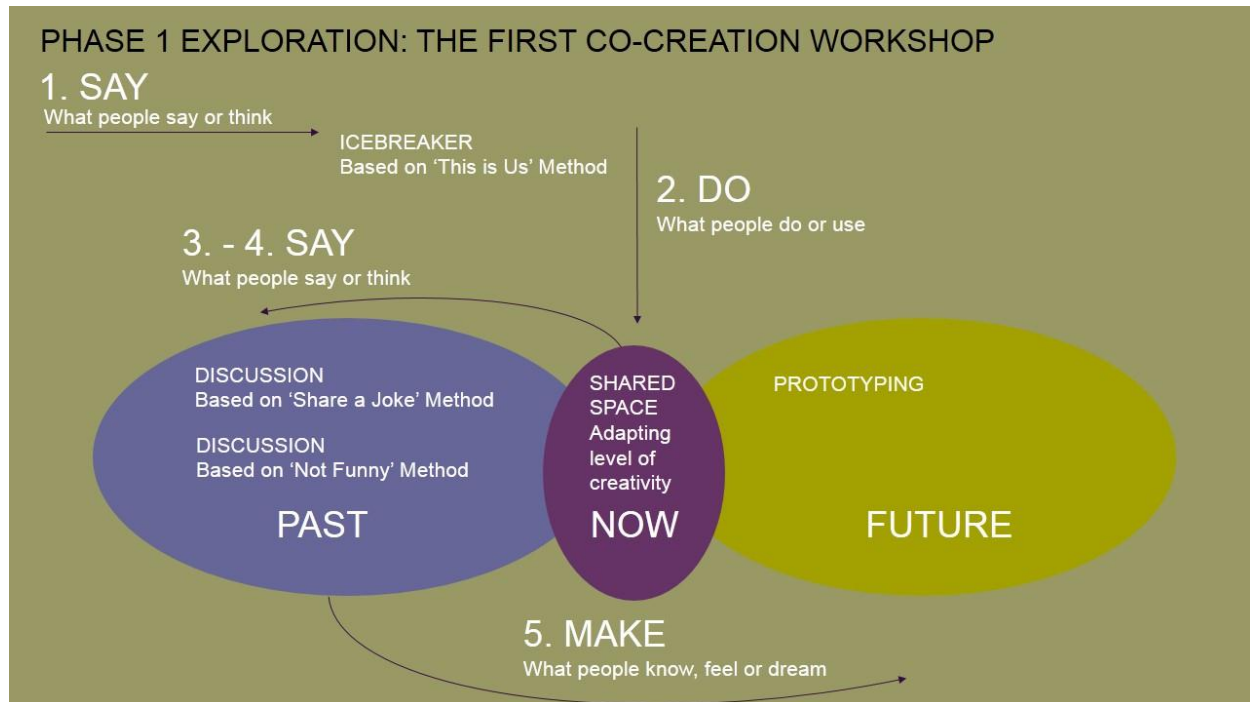
Figure 13. **The sequence of the Say, Do, and Make-Methods developed for the first Co-Creation workshop. These were designed based on the Converging Perspectives Approach and followed the Path of Expression.**

Just like in the preparations for the sensitization phase, the workshop methods went through several versions, with manyWAT ideas dreamed up and dismissed again in the process, until a total of four methods plus an icebreaker activity were eventually finalised. The icebreaker task asked participants to introduce themselves using the artefacts they had created during their sensitization phase. As described earlier, the generative method that served as the base for this Say-Method was called 'This is Us', and had asked the couples to work together and make an artefact that represented themselves. The icebreaker activity was followed by a Do-Tool, which will henceforth be called the 'Shared Space' method, and which was located at the 'adapting level' of creativity. It was designed as a way to visualise how much of the humour from their different cultural backgrounds the couples shared with each other. In that respect, this method was the first step for the participants on their Path of Expression, as it showed them what their sharing of humour was like in the here and now. It was also created as a way to encourage the couples to break out of their duos and ease them into working together as a group, as it initially allowed them to work in their own little teams, and then to share their results with the overall group. The next two methods were Say-Tools, which used the artefacts from the sensitization phase to encourage further discussion

among the participants. The first of these activities was meant to ensure that everyone was on the same level in the conversation, and for this purpose the group watched the video (Shabbir & Bramley, 2014) together that had been an optional activity in the Sensitization Toolkit. It had been included to offer some material the couples could relate to and talk about, and the group discussed the effects of translating a joke into another language. With this, they delved back into their memories of the discussion they had during the sensitization stage, and as such were taken backwards on their Path of Expression. It was a good way to lead into the next Say-Method, which asked the couples to compare and discuss each other's mind maps of what they though was not funny, which they had created in the sensitization phase. For this purpose the separate mind maps were joined together to one big collage on a table and using this as a reference point, the participants shared what humour means to them as part of a multicultural couple.

The final generative method was an adaptation of the 3-12-3 brainstorm as described by Gray, Brown, and Macanufo (2010), where a short Say task is followed by a Make-Tool. To begin, each participant was asked to reflect on the workshop's previous activities and discussions, write down their key takeaway points, and share them back with the group. The resulting pool of key thoughts and insights, phrased as short statements, provided the basis for the following generative activity, which asked the couples to split into groups and create a prototype of 'something funny for a multicultural couple'. This Make-Tool had the aim to take the feelings, ideas, and thoughts the participants had created throughout the course of the session and project them into a possible future. This method was located at the 'making level' of creativity, and it was anticipated that a lot of scaffolding and facilitation would be necessary on the part of the researcher to help the participants in their creative process of making a prototype.

For the first activity in the workshop after the icebreaker, the 'Shared Space' method, each couple was assigned one whiteboard each, which depicted two circles next to each other that overlapped in the middle, similar to a Venn Diagram (Fig. 14).
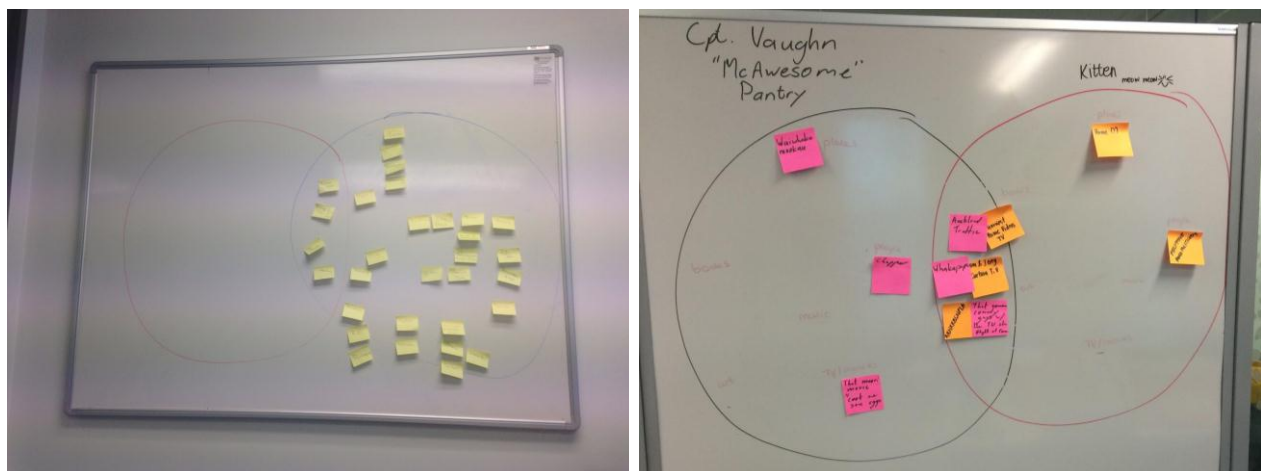
Figure 14. **The 'Shared Space' method. A prototype of the 'Shared Space' generative method (left) and whiteboard after completion of the activity in the workshop (right).**

Each circle contained the same set of words; categories of what each partner deemed to be funny in their own culture. Each participant was asked to write on sticky notes as many examples under each category as they could think of, with the option to use their first language as they did so. The instructions around this activity purposely did not elaborate on the definition of 'your culture', as its interpretation was to be left up to each participant's individual understanding. The facilitator made clear that it was optional to base the examples on one's own understanding of what is funny, or on what is generally seen as funny by most people in a person's culture. This option was offered to prevent participants from feeling like they were put on the spot. As with previous methods, the aim of this activity was not to focus on the sense of humour of the individual participants, but to encourage an exchange first between the partners, and then with the wider group. Referring to stereotypically funny things offers the possibility to refer to the taste of an anonymous mass, rather than having to expose one's own sense of humour.

Sociological research shows that many people regard their sense of humour as a vulnerable trait (Billing, 2005). The aforementioned considerations were therefore seen as important, and in this point set this study apart from other studies of design research that have worked with couples, which usually do not refer to psychological or sociological knowledge (Hassenzahl, Heidecker, Eckoldt, Diefenbach, & Hillmann, 2012). After each partner had written down and posted a selection of funny things under each category into their circle, the couples were asked to swap sides and move any examples of their partner that they knew or recognised into the shared space in the middle. The result was a visualisation of each couple's shared humour, the reason why this method has been called 'Shared Space'. This method sparked some engaging conversation between the partners around their understanding of humour and culture, and from there a lively exchange among all group members developed, as the dialogue moved from individual couples to the entire group. Once the participants had become more comfortable as a group, the next two Say-Methods flowed seamlessly. The discussion revolved around the particulars of humour in different cultures, and the meaning of humour and culture in general.

The last activity was a generative method that started with a brainstorming session and then moved into group work. The time for the reflection phase was limited to one minute, which helped to prevent over-thinking, making it more likely that the share back would focus on key takeaway points (Gray, Brown, & Macanufo, 2010). All comments were noted for further analysis, but for the main part the share back exercise was meant to bring the focus of the workshop back to everyone's front of mind, so that each participant had a pool of ideas at their disposal as they moved into the making part of the activity. After the initial share back round, the group was split in two, separating each couple. As mentioned previously, the reasoning behind this was to allow the groups to approach the task with a fresh perspective, working together unhindered by the dynamics that a team of partners creates. The result was two groups that consisted almost exclusively of males vs. females, with the male group having one female member of the same-sex couple. Each group was seated around a table with a variety of crafting materials in the middle. The groups were asked to build a prototype of 'something funny for a multicultural couple' and were given three minutes to come up

with a first iteration. Just as with the initial brainstorming part of this method, the time limit was implemented to prevent over-thinking. The main point of interest during this task was the dialogue within the groups as they created their artefacts, and their elaborations on them afterwards. The actual form of the final result was not of main concern. The process of making itself was meant to generate deeper insights, as it prompted participants to stop talking about the concepts that had emerged during the discussions, and translate them into something tangible. This required a different kind of thinking and was more likely to access the participants' knowledge formed by experience. It was the kind of information most likely to be of interest, but hard to come by through mere discussion.

As expected, despite the large amount of priming that had preceded this generative activity, the groups required a lot of facilitation from the researcher. The main challenge was to coach both groups towards understanding and accepting the open brief, as most participants thought they were expected to adhere to some form of preconceived specification. Although it was made clear that the groups were free to experiment to make their own version of 'something funny', both groups were initially somewhat uncomfortable with the openness of the question, and were waiting for guidance. Following the Converging Perspectives Approach, the researcher was prepared for this and offered alternatives for different levels of creativity, encouraging participants to think freely and three-dimensionally, but also providing a ready-made canvas that the groups could use to frame their thinking. Although Gray, Brown, and Macanufo (2010) advise to start with a general brief to maximise the opportunity for participants to ideate freely, they also suggest design-researchers give more specifics around the question as required to help participants get started.

In this study, the researcher slowly introduced more help by suggesting the groups think of an imaginary amusement park for multicultural couples, and what specifics such a park or the attractions in it would need to have to be fun or funny. Once the groups had started to make their creative artefacts, normal dynamics of group work started to unfold, with dominant participants taking the lead whilst more reserved participants tended to sit back and watch. During this phase, the researcher needed to continue a more subtle form of facilitation, encouraging individual participants to overcome their reservedness and contribute their thoughts and ideas to the collaborative effort. At the end of this exercise, the researcher asked each group to elaborate on what they had made, and also asked for feedback on this generative activity. One participant remarked that it would be interesting to repeat this activity with different group constellations. At this point, earlier considerations regarding the flexibility of the workshop's structure paid off. As mentioned previously, a main goal during the planning phase had been to create a sufficiently flexible strategy, mainly with the planned generative methods in mind. Their open composition and the fact that this workshop was their first official pilot test made it likely that they would not play out exactly the way they were initially planned. Sufficient room in both the workshop's timeline and agenda meant the researcher was free to act on the participant's suggestion, and so the generative activity was repeated, this time with mixed-gender groups. After the second round of the generative task, each group was asked again to review what they had made, and this time both groups had

something to say about the reasoning behind their creations. In a final discussion, participants were asked to summarise their impressions of working through the final generative method, after which the session was wrapped up. With the end of the workshop, the first data collection phase of the study was over. Having produced some very interesting insights on the general topic of humour and culture, it was now time to review and analyse it to see how the data related to the specific research questions, and how those findings would impact on the next phase of the study.

4.2.3 Discussion of Phase 1

To recount, this research project had been divided into three separate data collection stages: exploration, focus and application. This had been done because it was expected that the early stages of an exploratory research project are likely to produce unexpected findings that can have an impact on the structure and direction of subsequent phases. It was therefore necessary to analyse the data that was created during each phase separately before the next phase could begin. The following section will briefly discuss what data analysis methods were used in this study, and then present the key findings of the first phase in relation to the research questions, which are restated below:

1. Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?
2. What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?

Together, the sensitization phase and the first workshop had produced over two hours' worth of video material, as well as several boxes full of artefacts and completed workbooks. The next few weeks were spent sorting through the material and transcribing all recorded conversations to make them easier to review. The data was then evaluated using a mix of thematic analysis and "analysis on the wall", as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012). Thematic analysis is a method that is frequently used in sociological research to extract meaning from qualitative data (Punch 2009). By grouping clusters of statements or observed actions together, the researcher can organise what was said and done at different times by different people into common themes. In a Co-Design research project however, this data does not stand in isolation. The events during a Co-Creation workshop revolve around the artefacts that participants have created, and most of the thoughts and ideas that they voice have been elicited by their creations in the first place. This is why an 'analysis on the wall' is necessary to bring what has been made and what has been said and done into relation. 'Analysis on the wall' is similar to thematic analysis in that it uses the large space of a wall to group the designerly artefacts that were made during the session into clusters of meaning. Together with the transcripts and the video recordings they create a coherent picture of a Co-Creation session. Sanders and Stappers recommend using this method for studies that have no more than about seven participants, to avoid getting lost in masses of data. Because this study mostly treated each couple as one coherent unit, 'analysis on the wall' was still deemed as appropriate to use.

To recapitulate, the Sensitization Toolkit had consisted of three generative methods that had been designed according to the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012), as well as considerations around supporting different levels of creativity and visual communication. The Co-Creation workshop had also been made up of three methods that were based on the same theoretical background, plus and icebreaker activity (Fig. 15).
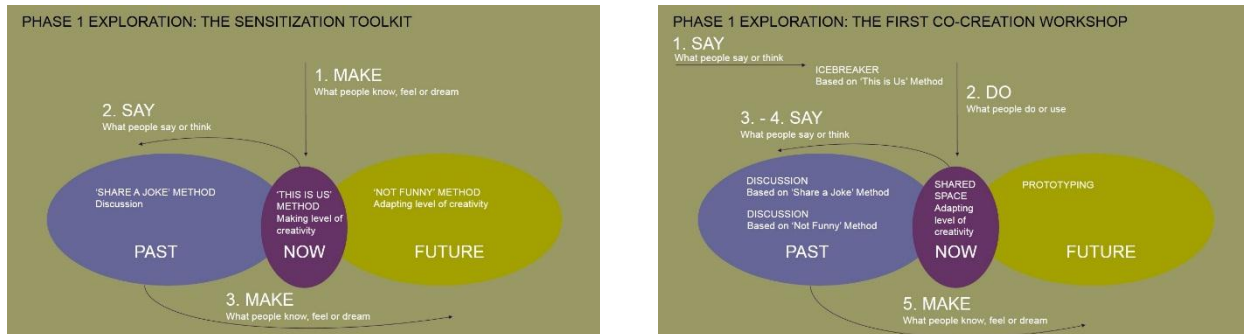
Figure 15. **A recapitulation. The diagram shows the structures and different methods of the Sensitization Toolkit and the Co-Creation workshop of the first data-collection phase of this study.**

For the first exercise in the Sensitization Toolkit, the couples had been asked to create a representation of themselves as a multicultural couple. The icebreaker that started the workshop was centred on these artefacts, with the aim to make the initial and often dreaded task of introducing themselves easier for the couples, and to allow the participants to gain a deeper impression of each other from the start. It allowed the couples to delve back into their experience of making the artefact together which, as it turned out, had provided them with a lot of things to talk about. It meant they could focus their presentation of themselves on describing their artefact and what it stood for, how they came to make their particular creation, what they found easy about it, what difficult, and what they talked about whilst making it. This resulted in a richer and more engaging first interaction with each other than a more traditional icebreaker would have created, where people are merely asked to state some facts about themselves (MindTools, 2015). It certainly accounted for a lot of laughter early on in the session, which helped to create an easy and relaxed atmosphere. Based on research which shows that positive emotion increases the likelihood and relevance of idea generation for creative problem solving (Isen, 1999), it can be said that this generative method paved the way for the expression of the group's collective creativity.

The discussions that resulted from this activity highlighted the pros and cons of selecting this generative method for the Sensitization Toolkit. The positive side was that it had inspired a lot of thought, and therefore created a lot of material to talk about during the early stages of the workshop. In particular one partner in a female same-sex couple with New Zealand and Lebanese backgrounds, who had been together for over twenty years, told the group that she had enjoyed the exchange that was generated from completing the 'This is Us' exercise together:

Amanda: "For me it was the dialogue, it was about how we, we reconnected on, on, on our journey from when we first met right through to my children come to live with me as teenagers [...]"

After reviewing the video footage and transcripts, it emerged that the couples made frequent references to the discussions they had shared whilst working on their sensitization tasks. This confirmed that the methods had stimulated the partners' engagement with each other and the overall topic of culture and humour. However, it also became clear that what the couples described provided only a glimpse of what could have been observed if the researcher had been present whilst the couples worked on their generative tasks. As discussed in the previous chapter, the concept of sensitization is used to stimulate participants' levels of cognitive and emotional engagement with a topic, and the data created during the sensitization phase is merely seen as a side effect (Visser et al. 2005). In the early days of Co-Creation however, probes and the data that was obtained through them were often the primary interest of the researchers (Gaver, Dunne, & Pacenti, 1999). It now became clear that this reasoning should also have been applied to this study. The workshop had been planned to relate directly to two of the three sensitization tasks, and this allowed the researcher to rekindle some of the participants' previous discussions. What remained available for data analysis however were only recapitulations of much more complex thoughts and feelings that had been present earlier, supplemented by the artefacts and completed workbooks which the couples had handed back. It became clear that these were only fragments and provided a mere glimpse of how each participant had been inspired by the three generative tasks of the Sensitization Toolkit. The collected data did not provide the same depth that had obviously been present as the couples had worked through the generative methods together in their homes. This realisation was the catalyst for a change in methodology for the next data collection phase, from the initially planned follow-up group workshops to individual home visits.

The different Make-Methods of the Sensitization Toolkit had offered the participants options around the level of creative expression they could choose, a consideration that was based on the theory of Co-Creation. To recapitulate, this theory states that everyone is creative, and with the right level of guidance can be led towards a level of creative expression that they feel comfortable at. Working creatively and in visual ways with Make-Tools opens up deeper ways of expression, tapping into knowledge that goes beyond words. For the 'This is Us' method, which had asked the couples to make a representation of themselves, they had been given the option to choose from a blank canvas, or one that showed a world map for inspiration. Whilst presenting their version in the workshop, one couple who used the blank canvas said they did not feel the other canvas showing a map left them enough room to express who they are and what they are about. Another couple, who used the map as a starting point, said they chose it because they found it hard to express themselves visually and preferred some guidance:

*Diana: "I just ah, wrote things down because it was, I find, I found it quite hard to
draw pictures with these things and just to explain or to yeah, to display um what
that's about us, saying about us"*

However, despite expressing doubt in their creative ability, this couple produced a rich
visual representation of themselves, using a mix of personal photos, crafts and words
(Fig. 16).

Figure 16. **Examples of participant's creations. The artefact of Amanda and Emma, who chose to
work freely (left) and that of Diana and Hartmann, who preferred a little more scaffolding (right).**

The fact that these couples used different approaches, yet all produced artefacts that
were a rich representation of themselves, affirmed that the options given for this method
supported the participants to express themselves at their individual levels of creativity. It
was humbling to review how long some people had spent on the representational
exercise: the two couples that had opted for the 'making level' version of the task and
had chosen to represent themselves with a creation entirely of their own both reported
to have spent well over one hour on it - and it showed. The couples had clearly put a lot
of thought and effort into them, and all of them said that they had really enjoyed working
on their artefact together. Together, the findings around the effectiveness and fun factor
of this method were taken as support that it had been well designed and was valid for
the purposes of this study, which aimed to find ways to stimulate creative expression in
an enjoyable way, with the purpose of facilitating deep engagement with the topic at
hand. It was thus deemed appropriate to reuse it in the following phases of the study.

The aim when creating the sensitization workbook had been to stimulate free creative
expression in the participants, however, the second Say-Method had been framed to be
completed in writing. It had asked the couples to write down their favourite joke in their
first language, and if that first language was not English, to also write down the
translation of it. In hindsight, designing the pages with written jokes in mind was a
limiting factor that should have been avoided. Despite this, it is even more encouraging
to see that it did not stop participants from expressing themselves in the way they saw

fit, and ignore the provided guidelines. Several couples used the provided space to express themselves not only in words, but also visually (Fig. 17).
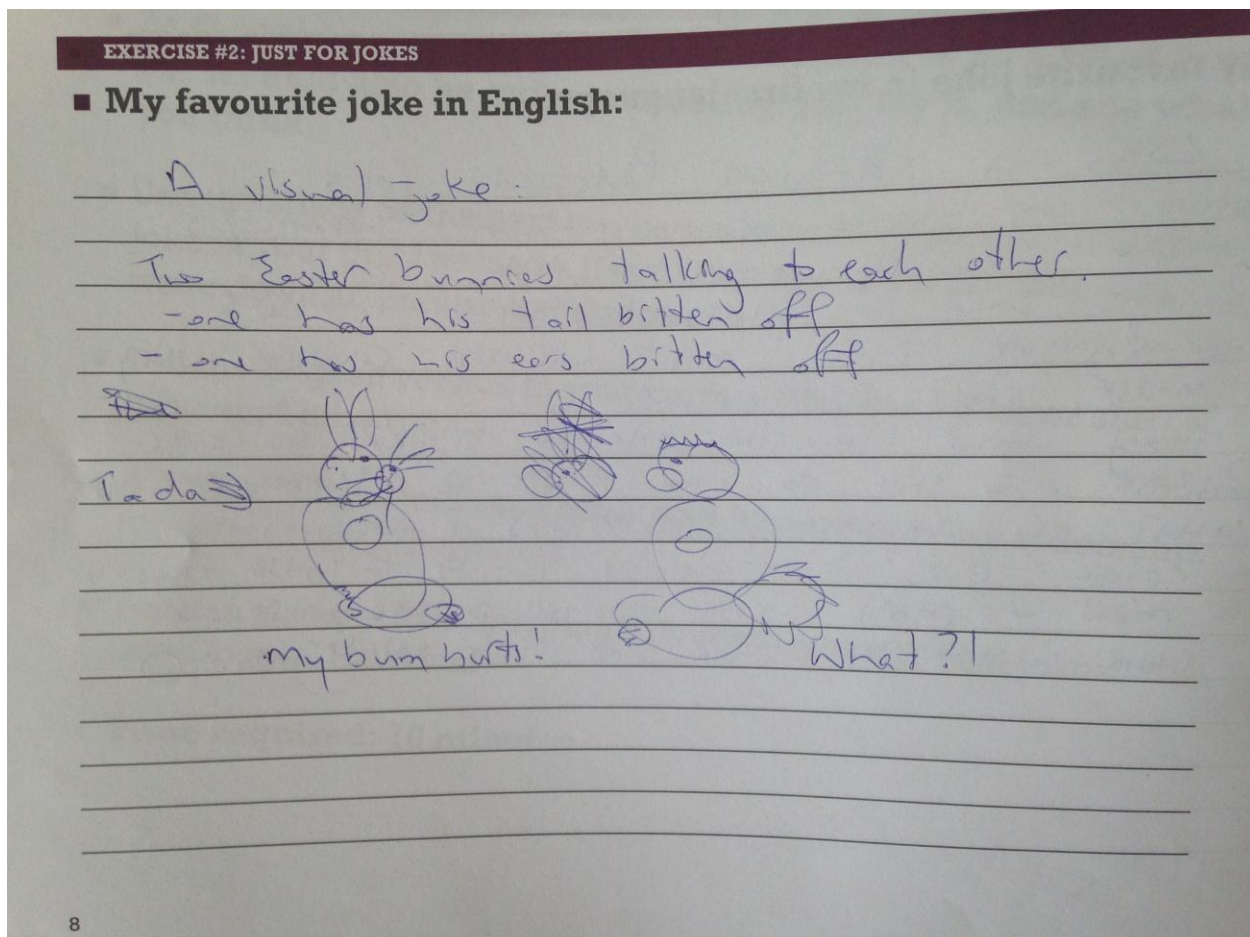
Figure 17. **An example of a visual joke from a workbook of one of the participants.**

The result of this method is a rich collection of funny jokes, sketched drawings and notes in the returned workbooks, and going through them one can almost hear the laughter coming from the pages. This supports the conclusion that just like the first method, this activity also stimulated the creative expression of the participants in a way that was fun and stimulating for them. Feedback from the participants confirmed that this method also facilitated an exchange on the topic of humour and culture between them. In addition to the exchange of jokes, an optional part of that same method had been to watch a short video on translating jokes together (Shabbir & Bramley, 2014). This had been included to offer some material the couples could relate to and talk about, which is why it was also replayed during the workshop for those that had not watched it together. The footage of the group discussing the effects of translating a joke into another language shows that playing the video helped all participants to become more comfortable with each other, which is reflected in the tone and depth of the exchange. It was obvious that the video facilitated a lively discussion among all group members, as the dialogue moved from individual couples to the entire group. In that way this method supported the creation of a strong base for the group's sense of

community for the remainder of the session, something that can be difficult to achieve in a group made up entirely of couples (Brok, 2004; Coché, 2011). With this, the purpose of the video to purely provide some discussion material had been extended, as it resulted in the unexpected finding that it can be used to overcome barriers between group members that can exist in workshops that consists only of couples. Overall, by not playing out exactly as intended the second generative exercise had delivered more insights than if it had gone to plan, an effect that is often found in exploratory studies.

For the last sensitization activity, each participant had created a mind map of what they did not find funny and then the partners had combined their halves into one. In the workshop, the separate mind maps were then joined together to one big collage on a table and the couples were asked to compare each other's maps. As described earlier, a main consideration around this Do-type method had been about the purposely ambiguous formulation of the question what participants did not find funny. It was supposed to stimulate critical thinking, and therefore deeper engagement with the topic of humour and culture. Although this aim was achieved, and in that regard the method can be considered a success, it also resulted in a very broad take on humour that eventually went beyond the scope of the study. As anticipated, the exact interpretation of the question turned out to be a central focus point of the discussion in the workshop. This supported the point of Sanders and Stappers (2012), who state that ambiguity in Co-Creation methods facilitates engagement and divergent thinking in participants. It was also confirmed that this method did make participants think deeply about the topic: one participant explained how it had provoked her to reflect on her stance towards humour aimed at cultural stereotypes:

> Jyoti: "[…] what I found interesting doing this exercise is that I realised that since dating Gabriel I found that I didn't find jokes about Asians funny. So before I was like ah whatever, doesn't really matter to me personally, but now when I hear someone say an Asian joke, for example, I'm like (makes a cringing sound). Yeah, so that's something that's come out of that."

This comment indicated that these concepts played a role for at least one couple in the study. The literature suggests that matters related to culture and race can be a potential challenge for multicultural couples (Sullivan & Cottone, 2006), and this comment suggests that it might also influence their experience of humour. However, upon reflection it was decided that this point lay too far outside of the scope of this study, and was therefore left as a potential point to be followed up by research operating under a different framework. Further into the same discussion, another participant stated that his partner often does not understand his jokes. His partner then clarified that even though she might not initially find them funny, the subsequent discussions and resulting explanations offer her a chance to learn:

> "He cracks jokes […] a lot […] and it teaches me about stuff and I'm like ah, now I get it […]"

It was encouraging to see that these mind maps, which were the result of a Do-Tool, were used as the base for a discussion that went deep into the matter. It would be

interesting to see if an approach that did not use this type of generative method, and followed a simpler question-and-answer structure, would have facilitated a similar depth of engagement. Despite achieving an unexpected depth of critical thinking, for the purposes of this study the method provoked a discussion that went too far beyond the scope of the research project. It may be possible that a different kind of facilitation on the part of the researcher could have steered the conversation more towards the intended direction, but on the other hand it may simply not be possible to generate a focused discussion from a purposely ambiguous question. Since the next phase of the study was going to be all about focus, it was decided that this method would not be reused in this context.

Apart from tying closely into the generative methods that had been part of the sensitization task, the workshop also used two new methods to engage participants with the topic. It was the first time these methods were used in a Co-Creation workshop made up entirely of multicultural couples, and both methods developed slightly differently to how they had been planned. Notwithstanding the unpredictability of these outcomes, they did not pose a problem for the course of the project. The emergence of unanticipated developments had been accounted for, and thus these findings could be integrated into the structure of the research. To recapitulate, the first method was called the 'Shared Space' task, in which the participants posted examples of funny things of their culture into one-half of two overlapping circles, and then the partners swapped sides and posted the examples that they knew or recognised into the 'Shared Space' in the middle. The results of this Do-activity can be seen as a success in relation to the aims of this method, as it sparked a lot of engagement between the partners regarding their understanding of humour and culture, even among couples that had been together for a long time. The method managed to evoke the interest of partners that otherwise had no reason to talk about what they now discovered about each other. It also turned out to be a useful tool for the visualisation of patterns. Analysing the data from the 'Shared Space' activity showed that the couples were fascinated to see a visualisation of what they knew of each other, and surprised by the examples they did not know. Although all couples had stated to know and understand each other well, more than once during this activity someone would have to ask their partner for clarification on an example of something funny from their culture:

> Gabriel: "Yeah cause I'm not sure, like yeah I understand dress up, but I'm not
> sure what, I suppose Indian culture like dress up [...] so like [addresses his
> partner] guy dresses like girl sort of thing?"

As predicted, maintaining a loose definition of the term culture during this activity proved to be a valuable consideration, as it provoked some participants to question this point:

> Jyoti: "I had a hard time with uh, the, my culture finds funny, 'cause I was born
> here, but I'm Indian. So what is my culture?"

A strong take-away point from this exercise was how this method visualised imbalances within the couples in regards to what they knew of each other's cultures. In many

instances, one partner posted more examples into the middle than the other, and some of those participants discussed their observations with the group:

> *Diana: "Hartmann didn't, doesn't know anything of mine … I know a lot of Hartmann's though."*

> *Augusto: "Well, yeah we have uh, she know a lot about my stuff, I didn't get anything over here."*

This discussion indicated that for some couples in the study, their reference frame for humour was not equal. At another point, it was also mentioned that at least one couple experienced a form of language barrier:

> *Augusto: "Yeah yeah, I can't read, I'm trying to learn how to read in Russian but it's quite hard [...]"*

The literature highlights both these factors as potential challenges for multicultural couples (Romano, 2008; Perlas Dumanig, 2010; Grosjean & Li, 2012), but at this stage of the study it was not clear if the couples actually saw any of this as an issue. The points were therefore marked for further follow-up in the subsequent focus phase of the study. With regards to the emerging plan to introduce individual home visits, this method showed potential for further application. After seeing its success in the workshop, it was deemed a useful tool to facilitate a conversation among partners, so it was adapted for the later home visit sessions.

Another new generative method that was put to the test in the workshop was a form of the 3-12-3 brainstorm (Gray, Brown & Macanufo, 2010), where the participants were split into two groups, and after an initial brainstorm and a share back round (the 'say part' of the method) were asked to create a prototype of something funny for a multicultural couple (the 'make part'). As mentioned already in the earlier description of the workshop session, this method benefited the most from the study's flexible approach to how the generative methods would be applied in practice. It meant that after the first round of the 'make part', suggestions from the participants could be integrated into an impromptu second iteration. Because of this, the researcher was not only able to instantly implement a second, improved, version of the tool, but she could also compare the differences between both versions in the subsequent data analysis. This allowed her to draw conclusions about the pros and cons between them. Reviewing the footage from the 'say part' of the method made it obvious how much participants had been stimulated by the previous activities, and that they had reflected seriously on the topic. All participants had something insightful to say, and most points that were shared centred on their freshly formed definitions of humour and culture.

Most participants expressed at least once that in their opinion, humour depends on context. Worded in different ways by different people, it was overall agreed that a certain shared reference frame needs to exist before humour can be successfully shared between people. One participant stated that for her, humour is about connection. This was noted as important in the light of the previously mentioned finding, which had

showed that the common ground of multicultural couples is a lot smaller than for other couples. Other interesting points were made as well. Another participant remarked that upon reflection, she had come to realise that the types of things she and her partner laugh about seem rather mundane. All of these insights into what multicultural couples understand humour to be and how they experience it were valuable information, and were noted down to be followed up in the subsequent focus phase of the study.

After the share back round, the two groups entered into the first round of the 'make part' of the method and proceeded to create prototypes of something funny for a multicultural couple. At the end of this round, the researcher asked each group to elaborate on what they had made, and also asked for general feedback on this activity. Especially the all-female group had a lot to say about what they had made together and shared their thoughts on how they had worked as a group (Fig. 18).

Figure 18. **The all-female group of the first round of the Make-Method. They had a lot to say about their creation.**

Further review of the footage on the last generative method of the workshop made it obvious that the intentional split of the couples, which had resulted in one female and one male-heavy group, had an unforeseen effect that affected the working style and output of each group. Although unexpected at the time, upon reflection this development could have been predicted. The all-female group took the task quite seriously and easily fell into a collaborative working style that included a lot of dialogue, coordination among group members, and resulted in fast progress towards a solution. In contrast, the male-heavy group instantly slipped into a more jovial approach towards the

task and focused more on 'having some fun' rather than 'making something fun'. As mentioned above, this effect could have been foreseen, as research, as well as experience, consistently show that women find it easier to work as a team than men, who tend to be more competitive and hence less likely to cooperate during group work (Booth & Nolen, 2012; Kuhn & Villeval, 2015). Without analysing this finding too deeply, it explains why the all-male group struggled to take the task more seriously and preferred to concentrate on joking with each other rather than to stay on task. In hindsight, this split should have been avoided to make it less likely for this dynamic to develop.

As described before, after the first 'make round' one participant remarked that it would be interesting to repeat this activity, this time with mixed gender groups. As already mentioned, this gave the researcher the opportunity to compare the similarities and differences between the two iterations. One observation that stood out from comparing the two rounds was that except for once, the groups always built their prototypes around the optionally provided canvas. This had initially been provided with the intention to support participants that did not feel comfortable with the 'make level' of creativity and preferred some guidance. It would have been interesting to see if without this option, the creations would have turned out to be less constrained by the general attributes of a paper canvas. It was also notable that the second time around both groups were visibly faster to start working collaboratively, and both tables created more in the three-dimensional space (Fig. 19).

Figure 19. **The second round of the Make-Tool. Participants created more three-dimensional artefacts during the second round of the activity, but still only worked within the constraints of the provided canvas.**

Different to the first iteration with male and female groups, the review part of the second round showed that now both groups had something to say about the reasoning behind their creations. Two comments, in particular, were crucial feedback for the researcher,

as they suggested that working with generative methods had given the participants a new perspective:

> Hartmann: "You don't have to tell a joke, … can be something to look at, an object or … like a picture or … someone … draw something …"

> Vaughn: "… you can tell a joke, but you can also show a joke, communicate it in a visual kind of way."

These final comments were particularly encouraging feedback, as they reflected the underlying assumptions of Co-Design and Design Thinking. They show that unbeknownst to them, the participants had absorbed some of the basics of the theory behind Co-Creation and the principles of Design Thinking. Overall, the analysis of the data of the first phase showed that despite sometimes not going to plan, the sensitization phase and the workshop had been a success. Most of the time, the unplanned situations created unexpected and valuable findings around the methodology and the overall topic, and sometimes they helped to reveal how something could be done better in the future. This outcome is mainly due to the flexible strategy of the study, which allowed the researcher to be reactive to input from participants and amend her approach as required. In addition, all methods had been found to be effective with regards to the aim of the study and had delivered results that helped to answer some aspects of the study's research questions. Taken together, the participants' creations, discussions, feedback, and dedication support the conclusion that the generative methods in the Sensitization Toolkit and the workshop engaged people with the topic to a degree that went above and beyond what had been expected. However, there was still a lot of work required to cover all aspects of the research questions. The next phase of the study consisted of a series of home visits that focused on the main findings from the first workshop, with the aim to elaborate further on them. The next chapter will describe the key events and findings from this phase of the project, and discuss how they shaped the remainder of the study.

4.3 Phase 2: Focus

4.3.1 Planning

Up to this point, it has continuously been stressed that one of the main characteristics of an exploratory study is its need for flexibility in strategy and structure. Delving into a topic that has not been looked at before requires the researcher to be prepared for the possibility that even the most carefully developed approach may no longer be suitable once the first findings have been produced. However, it is not always possible to safeguard against these eventualities or to accommodate for changes, however beneficial or necessary they may seem. Sometimes decisions and arrangements have to be made well in advance, and it may not be possible to return to the drawing board after the project has started. Fortunately, this was not the case in this study, and some adjustments to the methodology could be made after the first phase of the project, which had a positive impact on the overall outcome of the research. As previously mentioned, formal ethical approval was obtained to accommodate for this change. Initially, the study had been planned to consist of three iterative group workshops, each

session building on the insights of the previous one. Now the second Co-Creation workshop was replaced by a set of three home visits. All three home visit sessions were treated as separate sessions of the same phase of data collection, and the findings they produced were analysed at the end of each session in the same way as had already been done at the end of phase one. In this way, the learnings from one session could be used to inform the next one. There were several motivations for the change in methodology: firstly, it had become evident during the first phase of the study that the generative methods included in the Sensitization Toolkit needed to be applied differently to deliver the desired insights. Secondly, it was realised that the next phase of the study would benefit from a more focused approach, working more closely with some of the couples to elaborate on the main insights from the workshop. Finally, the first Co-Creation workshop had shown that group work with couples can have a lot of benefits, but also poses unique challenges that may stop the partners from engaging fully with the situation.

The sensitization methods used in phase one had successfully prompted the participants to engage deeply with their experience of humour as a multicultural couple, but it had not been ideal to make them part of a Toolkit that the participants used in their own time at home. Because of this, the couples had exchanged a lot of crucial information that the researcher had no privilege to. The second phase of the study sought to recreate the more intimate setting that had been present whilst the couple worked through their Sensitization Toolkit, in the hope that it would produce a similar depth of information. The researcher planned to visit no more than three different couples in their home, where she could observe the exchange between them first hand, as they worked on a generative task in absence of distractions such as formal time constraints or group dynamics. In addition to this, the second phase of the study was going to have a lot more focus than the initial phase, and to achieve this the researcher planned to work more intimately with a smaller selection of couples. As mentioned in the previous section, among other findings the group discussions had provided evidence that the typical challenges for multicultural couples cited in the literature do exist among the couples of this study. To hone in on those key points, an additional set of new methods was developed to supplement the existing generative methods. With this new structure, the study was starting to follow the Diverge-Converge model that was to become its final strategy.

Three couples volunteered to participate in the home visits. It would have been best if all of them had already been part of the first phase of the study, because they would have been already sensitized to the topic. Also, the home visits sought to focus on points that had been raised during the Co-Creation workshop, so couples that had already been part of that journey of knowledge creation could be expected to find it easier to relate to the purpose of the home visits. Unfortunately, only one couple, Augusto and Olga, had time to partake in this part of the study. The other two couples joined the research project during this phase. Diana and Justin had been referred by another couple that had participated in the first workshop, and Meegan and Riccardo were on holiday in New Zealand at the time, and made contact with the researcher upon learning about the study from a mutual acquaintance. Because Augusto and Olga had

already been sensitized to the topic, the form of sensitization for the other two couples had to be carefully considered. It was decided that the home visits would provide an ideal setting for the researcher to spend some time with each couple and help them become engaged with the research topic. Instead of creating a separate Sensitization Toolkit that the participants would use independently prior to the visits, the researcher would create one single sensitization method that she would work through with the couples at the beginning of their session.

Overall, the first home visit applied a set of four generative methods plus an initial Sensitization Tool. Two of the previously tested generative methods were reviewed and amended, to make them more suitable for the home visits and the new focus of the research questions. The first method had originally been developed for and tested in the Sensitization Toolkit, where it had been called the 'This is Us' method and had challenged participants to work creatively to make a representation of themselves as a multicultural couple. The reviewed version would use the same structure, but be more focused in its aim, asking the couples to make a representation of how they feel about humour in their multicultural relationship instead. The second method to be amended had originally been developed for the workshop and was called the 'Shared Space' method. The original version of the 'Shared Space' method had asked the participants to post examples of funny things of their culture into one half of two overlapping circles, and then the partners swapped sides and posted the examples that they knew or recognised into the shared space in the middle. This method would basically stay the same as in the workshop, but be adapted to a smaller scale to better suit a more intimate home setting. Whilst modifying both the Make and Do-Tools for the home visits, the researcher used what she had learned during the first phase of the study. Rather than choosing collage material for the 'This is Us' method based on a list of keywords that she had generated herself, this time she used words that had been frequently used during the discussions in the workshop. This extended the range of materials in her new Toolkit to include concepts she had not thought of previously, such as family, sharing or togetherness (Fig. 20). She had also learned how to pack the Toolkits appropriately, to avoid overloading participants with options.

Figure 20. **Examples of materials included in the new Toolkit.**

To make the 'Shared Space' method suitable for a home setting, the researcher created a paper canvas in an A3 format that showed the same basic features as the whiteboards in the workshop: two overlapping circles, each populated with a set of

categories. She bought smaller versions of post-it notes so that the participants could fit their examples into the smaller circles on the paper canvas (Fig. 21).
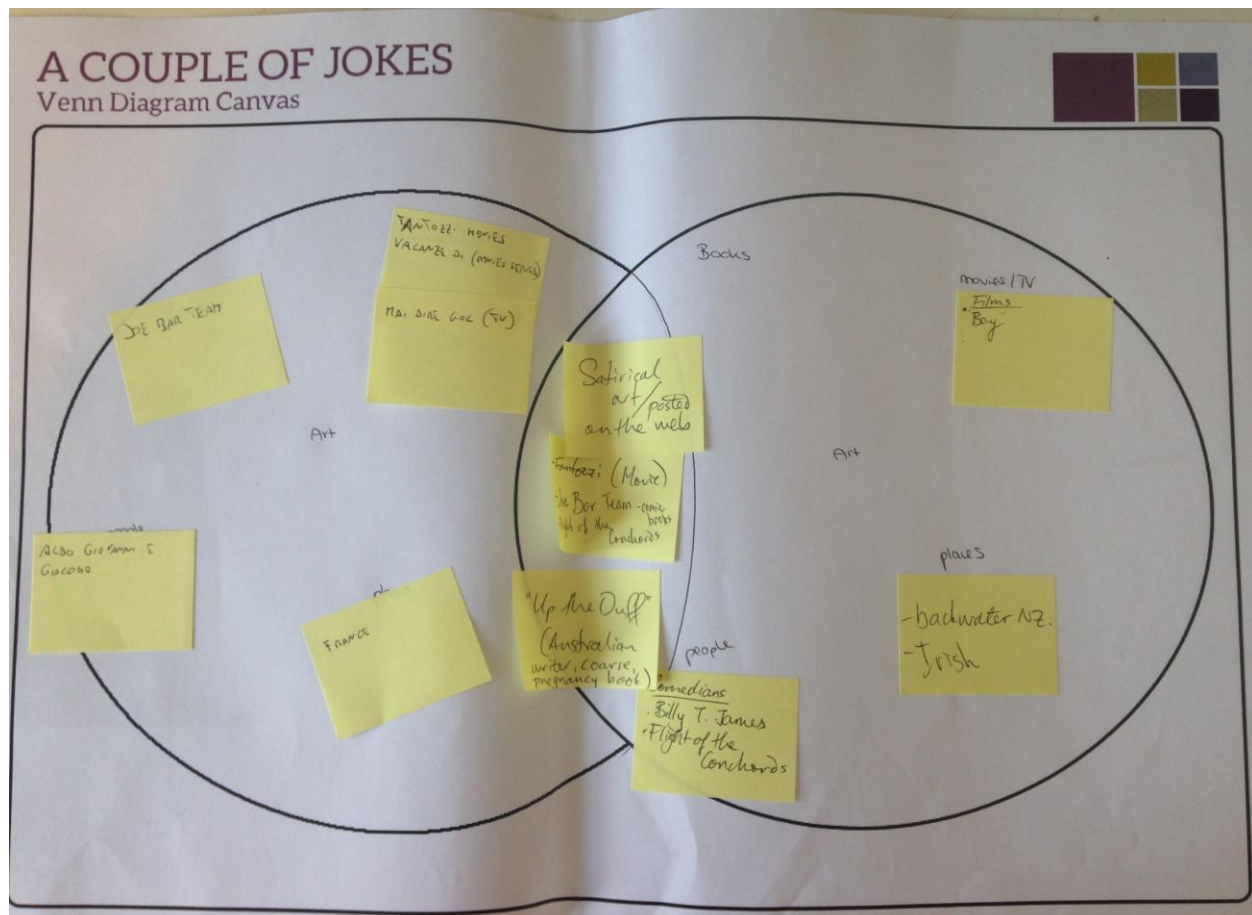
Figure 21. **The adapted 'Shared Space' method. This version was used in the home visit with Meegan and Riccardo.**

In addition to the two amended generative methods, the researcher introduced two new methods. One was a Say-type method in the form of a set of open-ended questions and the other was a Do-type method in the shape of a mapping exercise. Both methods were designed to prompt the couples to elaborate on the key findings from the workshop. The exact use of the questions in the Say-Method was somewhat provisional, and they would be used as they fitted around the overall structure of the home visits. This was done so the questions would not detract from any new findings that may emerge during the discussion. The new mapping exercise was an attempt to follow up on an idea that had emerged from the workshop: the couples had agreed that timing and context were important to their experience of humour. They had expressed the opinion that a humorous remark made at the wrong time or in the wrong context between them has a greater likelihood to fall flat, as the risk of misunderstanding is much higher. The new Mapping-Tool tried to prompt the couples that participated in the focus phase of the study to visualise their feelings before, during, and after a situation where it was difficult to share a humorous experience. For this, an Emotional Experience Map similar to those frequently used in customer-centric design research

(Veryday, 2015) was prepared. Usually, participants are asked to map their feelings across a situation's timeline, categorised into before, during and after. In this study, the particular situation that participants were supposed to map was an example of when a humorous remark between them fell flat. How did each partner feel before, during and after such an event? The aim was to try and pinpoint what might define the right or wrong time and context for humour between these multicultural couples. After the two new methods had been developed, the new set of methods consisted of four generative tools. The additional Sensitization Tool was going to be a loosely structured Say-type method, the exact content of which would depend on the individual couples, but generally revolve around their personal cultural backgrounds and languages. Just like the methods in the first phase of the study, they were structured according to the Converging Perspectives Approach and attempted to lead the participants along the Path of Expression. Figure 22 provides an overview of the final Toolkit for the first home visit.

PHASE 2 FOCUS: THE FIRST HOME VISIT

1. SAY
What people say or think

SENSITIZATION METHOD

3. DO
What people do or use

2. MAKE
What people know, feel or dream

Revised 'SHARED SPACE' METHOD
Adapting level of creativity

Revised 'THIS IS US' METHOD
Making level of creativity

'EXPERIENCE MAP' METHOD
Adapting level of creativity

PAST

NOW

FUTURE

4. SAY
What people say or think

'QUESTIONS SET' METHOD
To be used as applicable

5. DO
What people do or use

Figure 22. **An overview of the structure and methods of the first home visit. The fourth method was a set of questions to support and steer the overall direction of the discussion but were to be used only if they fit into the overall dynamics of the session.**

As shown in figure 22, the initial sensitization method is followed by a Make-type tool that addresses the partner's deeper-seated knowledge around themselves as a multicultural couple, and how humour plays out between them. It starts their engagement with the Path of Expression by addressing their thoughts and ideas concerning their current situation. The third Do-type tool moves to a more observable level of interaction and takes the partners into the past by making them think about examples from their individual cultural backgrounds. Both methods prompt the participants to think deeply about the topic, and so prepare them to make the jump to the future (method number four). Although the Experience Map in itself does not prompt

the couple to imagine possible scenarios, together with the fifth Say-Tool it may allow couples to express concepts that do not yet exist. Whilst working on the preparations for the home visits the researcher was conscious of the fact that she would be a guest in the participants' homes, and that taking up their private time and setting up video equipment in their private space was no little thing to ask. She ensured that participants knew what to expect at all times and that she adhered to all arrangements that were made, such as being on time. Just as with the previous data collection phase, the researcher was aware that she should not be too demanding of participants' time, and she informed each couple that the visit would not take longer than two hours. The following section will discuss each of the three home visit sessions separately, focusing in particular on why and how the structure and generative methods were revised for each visit, and how the changes affected the outcomes of the sessions. A summary at the end of this chapter will explain how the combined findings helped to answer some of the remaining aspects of the research questions.

4.4 Home Visits

4.4.1 Home Visit 1: Meegan and Riccardo

Since Meegan and Riccardo were new to the study, their session started with an explanation of the overall aim of the research, which lead into a conversation about each partner's culture, where they were from, and what languages they spoke. This general conversation helped to engage the couple with the study's overall topic, and constituted a short sensitization phase that provided a natural transition into the first generative exercise. This asked the couple to make a representation of how they felt about humour in their multicultural relationship. Just like in the first Sensitization Toolkit, the couple was provided with a blank canvas and crafting materials for this task. Unlike the first iteration of this exercise, however, there were no other options to choose from to offer more scaffolding for their creative expression. Instead, the researcher used questions and prompts as required to guide the couple on their way of their personal creative expression. However, after some initial facilitation, they did not need a lot of help, as the provided materials encouraged a lot of conversation between the partners, and the researcher was left to observe the exchange. The conversation during this exercise lead into the revised 'Shared Space' task, and just as during the workshop, the partners surprised each other with a lot of the funny examples they cited from their respective cultures. As before, the researcher assumed the role of the observant listener as the couples explained to each other the meaning of a particular example. This often led to other thoughts the couple wanted to share directly with the researcher. The last generative task asked the couple to use the Emotional Experience Map to chart their feelings before, during and after a situation where it was difficult to share a humorous experience.

The first home visit session was primarily an opportunity to test if the revised versions of the generative methods also worked in a home setting and if, together with the two newly introduced methods, they would generate the same depth of exchange that had been present when they were applied in the Sensitization Toolkit. It also offered the chance to investigate if the difficulties of sharing funny things from their own culture that

the couples had raised during the workshop were also experienced by Meegan and Riccardo. In that respect, the results of this first session delivered findings that had an impact on the direction and focus of the rest of the project. The first generative method had been created to encourage the couples to engage with each other and the topic, by making a representation of how they feel about the humour in their relationship. Upon a review of the exchange between Meegan and Riccardo as they worked on their creation, one can see that they had a lot to share with each other. Their discussion during that first task shows that they have a strong base of shared humour together, and that the provided materials clearly inspired them to reference many personal jokes that they had created together. The spontaneous and creative use of the provided materials confirms that the sensitization method had been sufficient to prepare the couple for the following generative method, and that this was well suited to engage the participants and provoked them to think deeply about the topic. It was therefore decided that this method could be reused in its current form for the next two home visits.

The second generative method had been an adapted version of the 'Shared Space' task, and whilst working on this exercise Meegan confirmed that she found it difficult at times to share funny things from New Zealand with Riccardo, whereas he said it was easier for him to share Italian humour with her. This imbalance in what each partner knows of the other's culture in terms of humour is similar to what had been described by the couples in the workshop. However, in the workshop there had been no opportunity to investigate this point any further, and to find out if this disconnect was an issue for them. Now both partners had the time to elaborate on this. They expressed the opinion that their location had a lot to do with the imbalance in what funny things they shared with each other. Because they live in France, which is a lot closer to Italy than to New Zealand, Riccardo's Italian humour was more topical than Meegan's New Zealand humour. Meegan also explained that despite gaps in what she and Riccardo knew about the humour of their respective cultures, they had created a strong new base of shared humour together. This suggested that instead of focusing on the fact that there might be a disconnect, it might be more useful to use the home visits with the next two couples as an opportunity to look into what solution could lever off the already shared humour the couple has created together. Upon further reflection, the sequence of the first two methods in the home visit sessions was reviewed, as it was found that the 'Shared Space' method was better suited to start the conversation between the partners, and that the 'This is Us' method flowed logically from that as a way to deepen the exchange.

Important insights were gained from the first application of the new Do-type method in the form of the Emotional Experience Map during the session with Meegan and Riccardo. The couple did not use it as initially intended, but their interpretation highlighted a better way of framing this method. Expressing their thoughts in their own way divulged crucial information about the sharing of humour between them, and gave rise to a series of similar discoveries later on in the project. In its initial form, the map asked the participants to draw a wave across the page, to chart their feelings before, during, and after a situation where it was difficult to share a humorous experience. Instead, Meegan started to draw a simple model that she used to explain that she

needed more words to make something that seemed funny to her in her culture understandable for Riccardo (Fig. 23).
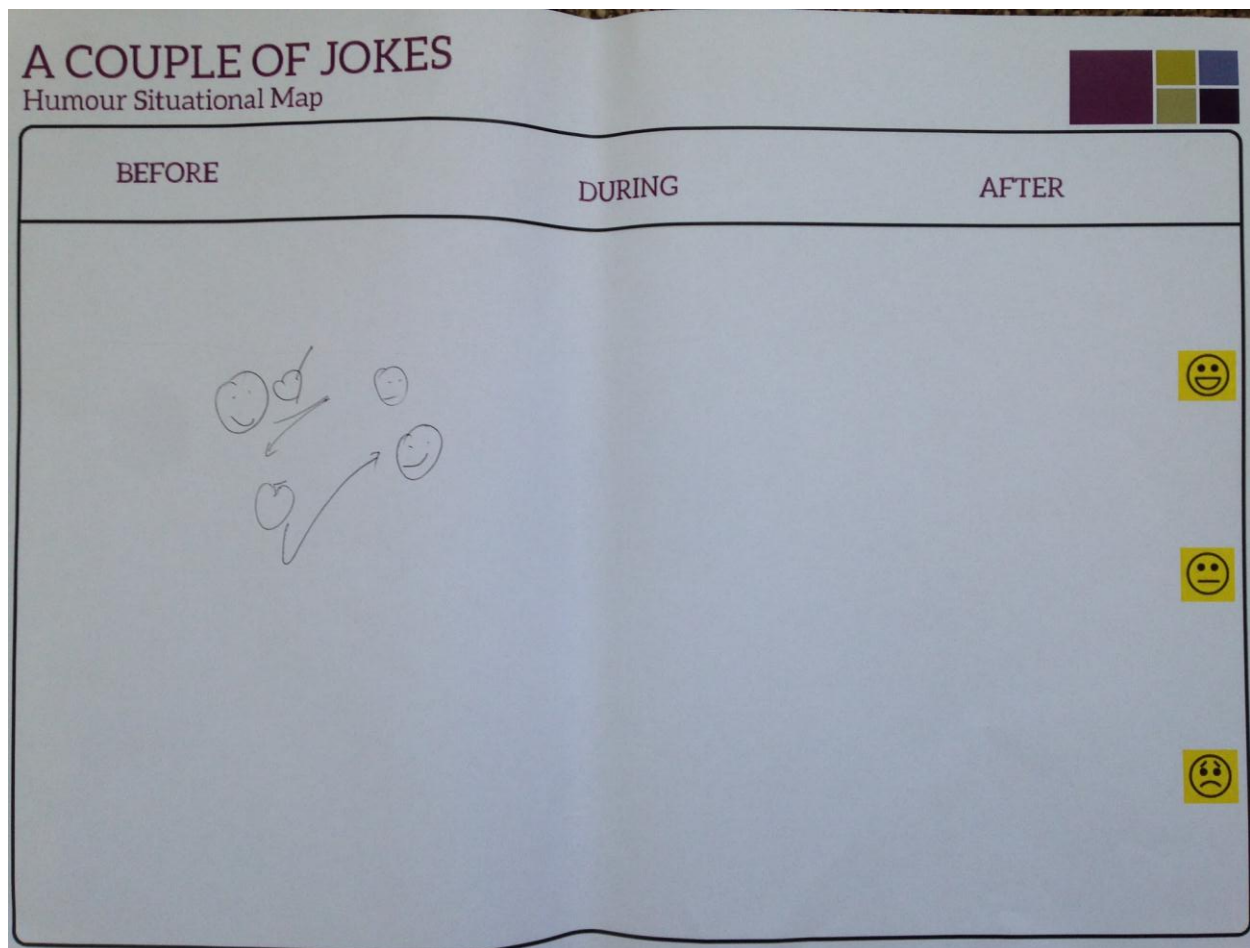
Figure 23. **The model of sharing humour drawn by Meegan. She used this to help her explain her idea of issues with sharing humour.**

> *Meegan: "So I [...] I start telling something and then I need to kinda come back and we fill in the missing information and then tell it again and then I get the reaction that I am expecting. So sometimes I kinda have to, (motions a circular process) so what I should be saying in one phrase takes three because I start, I realize he's not gonna have I require, fill him in and then I do it again [...]"*

This point about using more words to express something funny was in so far remarkable as it stood in contrast to the visual ways in which concepts, thoughts and feelings are expressed in Design Thinking and Co-Creation. It begged the question if visual ways of communication could overcome the need for more words, which might cut down the time and effort the multicultural couples needed to share humour. Before a conclusion could be drawn, however, it was important to follow up on this point in the subsequent home visits, to see if the other couples shared the experience of Meegan and Riccardo. For this purpose, the usefulness of the Emotional Experience Map in its initial form was reviewed. It had been developed with the intention to focus the couple's thinking on

particular experiences and situations, but when put to the test it stimulated a response that could just as well have been triggered by the representational activity. It was thus decided to drop the mapping exercise, as it did not support the overall aim of the research beyond what could already be achieved with the second generative method. As a reminder, this method was a revised version of the 'This is Us' exercise, which had been developed to stimulate the couples to create a visual representation of how the sharing of humour played out between them. Another learning was that the key to this second generative method was to encourage the couples to interpret the question for themselves and express their ideas around it in a visual way. It was predicted that this would make the 'This is Us' method just as useful as the Emotional Experience Map, inspiring similar responses to what Meegan and Riccardo had expressed during their 'misappropriation' of the mapping exercise. Figure 24 shows the newly revised structure and methods for the second home visit that resulted out of the analysis of the findings of session one.
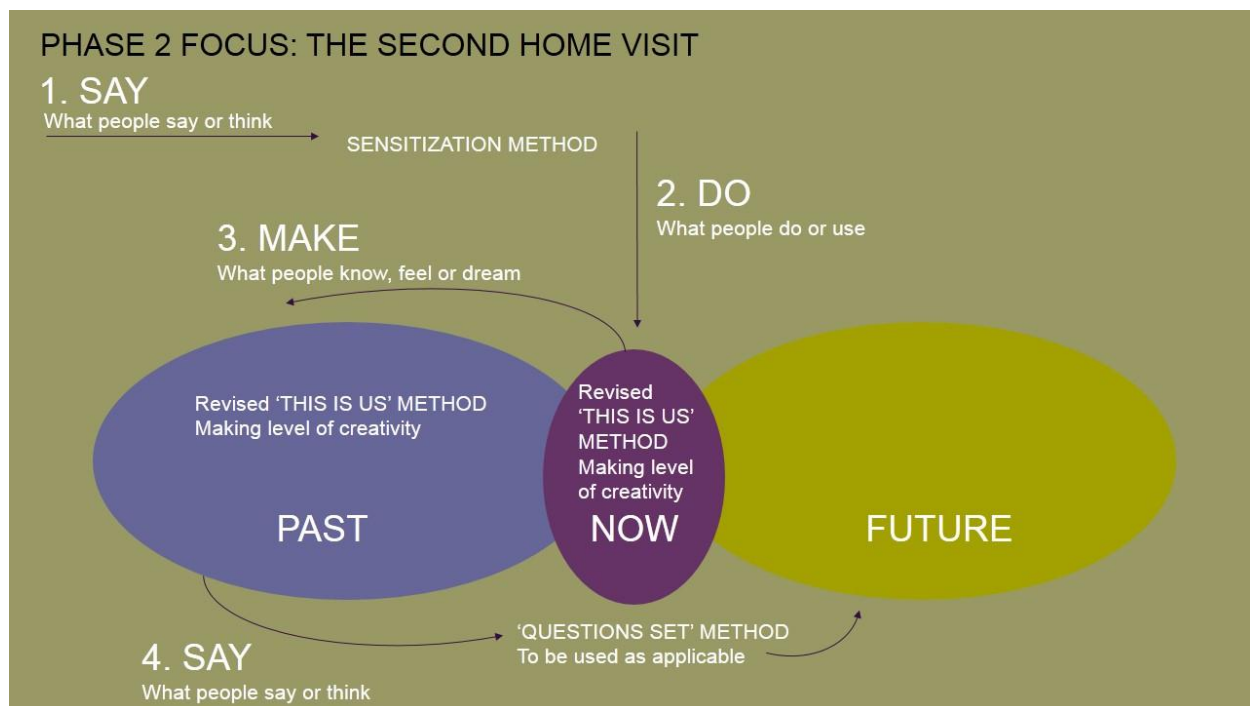
Figure 24. **The revised methods and structure of the second home visit.**

As shown in figure 24, the second home visit only consisted of three generative methods, and the sequence of the Make and Do-Tools was changed. The 'Shared Space' method was moved towards the front of the session, as it was concluded that this tool was better suited at the front end of the home visits. Even though it had initially been designed as a way to lead participants into their memories on the Path of Expression, it had been realised that this tool actually got the couples to talk about themselves in the here and now. Being a Do-Tool at the 'adapting level' of creativity, it was better suited to ease the couples into the session. The second Make-Tool then followed from that to deepen the exchange, and by making a representation of how humour plays out between them, the couples were prompted to remember and activate

memories about their past. Because it caused the participants to think deeply about the topic, this tool was also seen as a way to encourage them to think about possibilities, and as such lead them into the future. As in the first home session, together with the fourth Say-Tool it provided a way for the couples to express ideas and thought about things that may not yet exist. This combination of methods was seen as powerful enough to lead the couples all the way through the Path of Expression without including the Experience Map Tool.

4.4.2 Home Visit 2: Diana and Justin

Just like Meegan and Riccardo, Diana and Justin were also new to the study, and their session was structured in a similar way to that of the first home visit. An initial explanation of the overall aim of the research was followed by a short sensitization phase, after which they started on their first generative exercise. As discussed earlier, the difference to the first session was that Diana and Justin started with the 'Shared Space' exercise, and then moved from there to create a representation of how the humour in their relationship played out. As was the case in the previous iterations of these methods, Diana and Justin also had a lot of fun exchanging and discussing particular funny examples of their cultures, which lead to a number of serious considerations around the topic. Just like in the session with Meegan and Riccardo, the researcher did not need to facilitate a lot as the participants worked through these methods, so she could mainly concentrate on observing the developing dialogue.

The changes that had been made after the revision of the first home visit resulted in major improvements to the session with Diana and Justin, and might be one of the reasons why this couple generated so many interesting insights. They specifically took the discussion around the sharing of cultural humour a step further, and elaborated on a point that had already been mentioned by Meegan and Riccardo, but had not been explored in depth. Diana and Justin made clear that for them, sharing funny examples of each other's cultures was more of a nice to have, rather than critical to their overall shared sense of humour. Another astonishing finding was that despite the fact that the first two home visits had been independent sessions, and that the methods and their sequence had changed slightly for the second session, the similarities between the experiences of Meegan and Riccardo and Diana and Justin turned out to be almost uncanny.

It was interesting to find how early during this session Diana and Justin started to touch on similar points that Meegan and Riccardo had mentioned before. Whilst elaborating on specific examples of funny things from their cultures that they had come up with during the 'Shared Space' activity, Diana described that when she tries to explain to Justin what is so funny about something in her culture, she ends up using more words to do so, and in the process the joke gets lost:

> Diana: "But [uhm], unfortunately when you try to translate them the funny thing goes away (laughs). And [uhm] if it's funny because if you try to explain something, [uhm] we have some specific, specific words, specific terms that they normally don't exist in English, so you have to use more words to explain that and it's, it (laughs) becomes just a story and it's no longer funny."

Just as Meegan and Riccardo and the couples in the workshop, Diana and Justin found that one of them knew more about the other's culture:

> Justin: "[...] I mean I don't know as much about your culture to be honest [...]"

But like the session with Meegan and Riccardo had shown, this imbalance in knowledge was not perceived as an issue, and was mainly attributed to their location and living situation (they live in Auckland in a house that they share with Justin's mum, who is Fijian):

> Justin: "I think probably because we don't know, really live there there's nothing
> to [...] and, as, as Diana said the only reason she'd know more about my culture
> is because mum continuously keeps telling her about it."

As previously discussed, a review of the first workshop had found that the mapping exercise was redundant, as it was no longer seen as necessary to focus the couple's thoughts and discussion in a particular direction. The representational method would give the couple enough room to express themselves freely, especially if they were actively encouraged to go beyond words to explain their interpretation of the question of how humour plays out between them. This turned out to be a viable decision. Whilst working on this method, both Diana and Justin reconfirmed Meegan's point about needing more words to express something funny. This had been noted as particularly important for follow up, as it suggested that principles of Design Thinking and Co-Creation might be useful to help reduce the time and effort the multicultural couples needed to share humour. Now both partners elaborated on it by using generative methods. Diana mainly worked on the paper canvas, starting with the provided collage material. Prompted by a question from the Say-Tool, she then created a sketched model of how a typical joke between her and Justin develops, marked in Figure 25.

Figure 25. **Diana's model of sharing humour.**

As mentioned before, it was astounding how similar Diana's interpretation of her own model was to that of Meegan:

> *Diana:"If the joke starts here, right [...] that's my joke. If I have to explain it to*
> *Justin, it will go here and then do a circle and then go up and around and up and*
> *[...] then it's gonna come back to this [...] you know it's quite a lot of information".*

Justin chose to work more three-dimensionally, and in the process built two models that he used to explain how he sees that the sharing of humour between him and Diana plays out (Fig. 26)
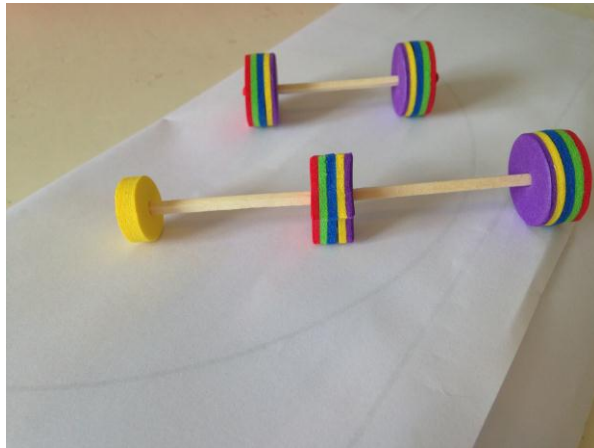
Figure 26. Justin's 3-dimensional model of issues around the sharing of humour.

> *Justin: "This is how I think, how we understand each other's like, [uhm] comedy,
> like so if she like says something in English whatever it's same to same (points to
> smaller model), but if she explains something in Bulgarian, she has to go like all
> the way around in different points of what makes it funny (points to larger model),
> and then I understand it but by the time I understand it it's not actually very
> funny".*

These results were important findings. They confirmed that the acts of making that had
been inspired by the generative methods of these sessions had stimulated the couples
to think deeply about their current and past experiences. They used the representations
of their thoughts and feelings so they could better explain them to others, which
corresponded to the principles of Co-Creation. In addition, by making their individual
models, Meegan, Diana, and Justin had all come up with similar versions of what could
be described as a prototype for overcoming the very issues they described with them.
They had all found it easier to get their point across by making a drawing or a physical
model of what it was they wanted to explain, which ironically was about the difficulty of
explaining something funny with words. This suggested that a specific generative
method could be developed after these prototypes that might reduce the time, effort,
and specifically words needed to share a funny example of a particular culture.

As already mentioned, as the discussion moved on Diana and Justin spent significantly
more time than the previous couple explaining why a lack of shared humour from their
respective cultures was not an issue for them. This helped to clarify a point that had
already been touched on at different times during the study: rather than being critical to
creating a shared sense of humour, sharing funny things from their own cultures was a
bonus. Diana and Justin explained that the main part of their shared humour is the
result of a phenomenon that may not be unique to multicultural couples: as the partners
grow together they create a new culture of their own, building on a collection of shared
experiences:

*Diana:" [...] I mean you're together so that's the main thing, you gotta learn how
to live together how to have fun together so you [...] if it's so different you just
ignore it and [uhm] create your own culture, moments and memories and
whatever it's funny [...]"*

In conclusion, it was found that the methods and their sequence from this home visit did
not require any more review, as they produced more than satisfactory results. However,
the final home visit was going to be with Augusto and Olga, who had already worked
with the Sensitization Toolkit and attended the first Co-Creation workshop, which meant
they had already completed their Path of Expression once. In that sense, they
represented what would have been the ideal group of participants for the focus phase of
the study. They did not need any further sensitization, and the home visits purely aimed
to deepen the understanding around certain points, rather than guiding the couples
through their Path of Expression. Because of this, and because they had already done it
once, the 'Shared Space' method was excluded from the session with Augusto and
Olga, leaving only one Make and one Say-Tool as the generative methods of this home
visit (Fig. 27).
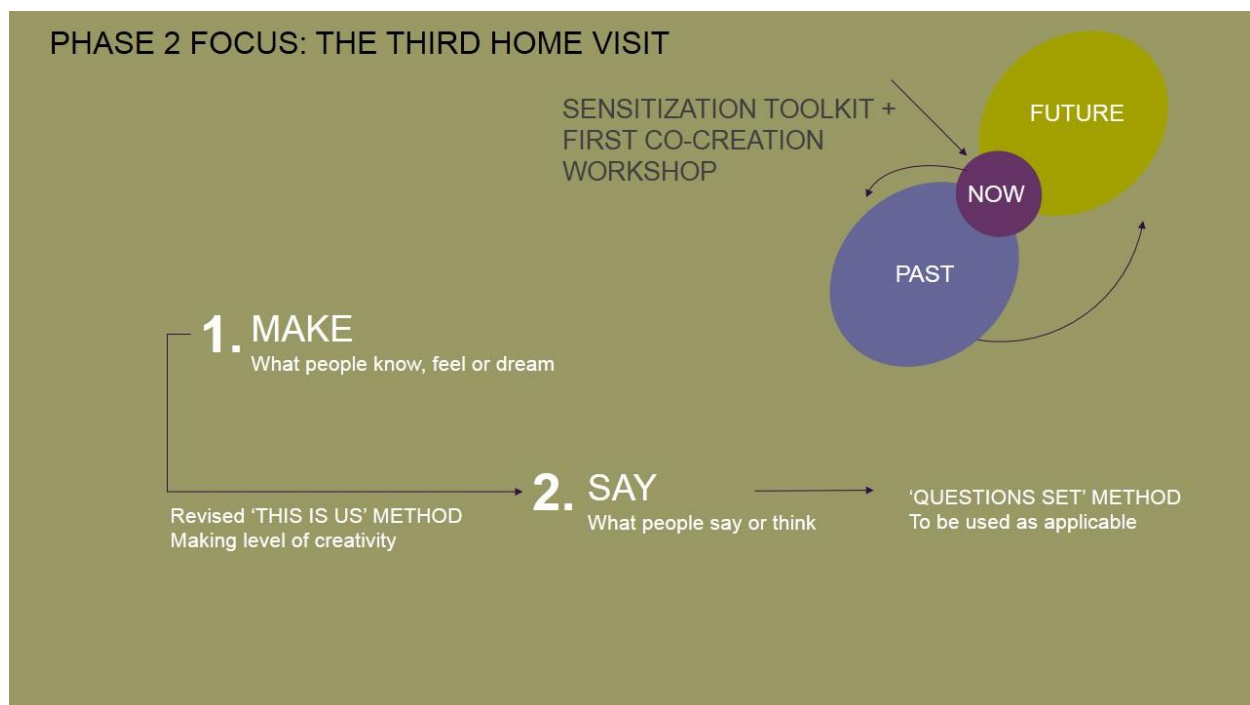
Figure 27. **The revised methods and structure of the third home visit. The couple of the last home
visit had already completed their Path of Expression during the first phase of the study. The two
methods for their session were a Make and a Say-Tool.**

4.4.3 Home Visit 3: Augusto and Olga

As Augusto and Olga had already attended the first workshop, they did not need to be
sensitized to the topic, nor was there a need for them to repeat the 'Shared Space'
activity again. Instead, some time was spent talking about their impressions from the
workshop and recapping on some of the funny examples they had shared with each
other during that session. Different to the other two couples, Augusto and Olga also did

not need an explanation for the representational activity, as they had already done it once before. However, unlike the couples of the first two sessions, this couple needed some more facilitation in order to find their way into the exercise. They were more hesitant to engage with the provided materials and instead of conversing mainly with each other, they initially referred a lot more to the researcher for inspiration. It took some reassurance from the researcher that the aim of the session was not to find an objective truth, but to motivate the couple to explore their own knowledge together. Once this had been clarified, the session took a similar turn to the previous two home visits, with Olga and Augusto working together on a representation of how humour plays out between them.

The third and final session of the focus phase of this study confirmed the main findings of the workshop and the previous two home visits. As they worked on a representation of how humour played out between them, Augusto and Olga agreed with the other multicultural couples in this study that one partner shared more about their culture than the other:

> Augusto:"[...] I share more stuff than her [...] because she speaks Portuguese
> quite good, and my Russian sucks, so she doesn't show me lot of stuff because I
> don't understand"

At this point of the study it was no longer surprising that Olga used a similar model to the other couples to explain that she and Augusto also find it difficult to share funny things from each other's culture (Fig. 28). She also cited the need for more words as the main reason for why they did not share more funny things from their respective cultures with each other:
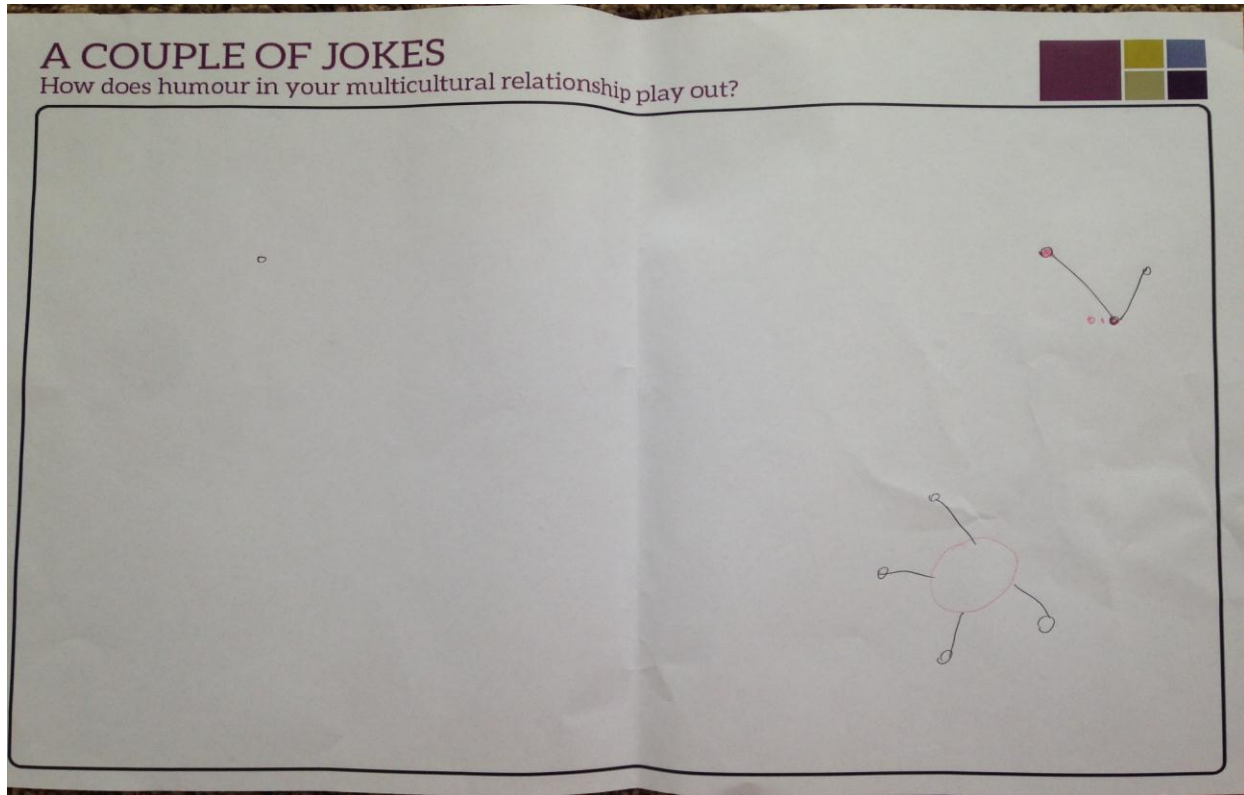
Figure 28. The model drawn by Olga to express her thoughts around the sharing humour.

> Olga:"[...] If I explain everything in context and he will feel it that's not that funny.
> [...] It will take too much time and effort to explain and he will not get it."

Just like the other two couples before them, Augusto and Olga also went on to explain that although the extra effort required meant they did not share a lot of funny examples from their cultures with each other, it did not pose an issue for them, and they confirmed that they created their own shared sense of humour:

> Augusto: "Between us what's funny for me is funny for her and sometimes yeah
> we just, throw out there and, and just, when I see she get a little bit down I wanna
> see her laughing and she does the same you know."

> Olga:"Yeah, make common things, just have to find them."

> Augusto:"[refers to their collage, where he had put down a snippet displaying the
> word "sharing"] That's why we put "sharing" together [...] so yeah sometimes we
> find that common [...] thing makes us happy"

Overall, the session with Augusto and Olga helped to confirm the findings of the workshop and the previous two home visits, but did not raise any new points. This might be because the couple felt they had already shared everything they wanted to share in the first phase of the study, or because the Say-Methods that were used to complement the Make-Tool tended to prompt certain responses. This was a noteworthy point about the Converging Perspectives Approach, as it highlighted that one needs to be careful in

combining Say and Make-Tools in such a way that the Say-Tool does not limit the Make-Tool.

4.4.4 Discussion of Phase 2

With the end of the third home visit, the focus phase of the research project was complete. Each individual session had contributed information that had been used to tune the generative methods developed for the next one, with the result that the flow and depth of the discussions and the knowledge the methods produced improved with each session. The combined knowledge that these three sessions generated greatly advanced the understanding of how these couples experience the sharing of humour between them, and in particular how generative methods might be used to help these multicultural couples share humour from their respective cultures. In that way the second phase had answered some more aspects of the initial research questions, which are stated again below:

1. Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?
2. What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?

In their core, the main findings from the second phase of the study suggested that principles such as collaboration, acts of creative making, and emphasis on visual communication which underlie Design Thinking, Co-Creation, and methods of Generative Design could be used to overcome some of the challenges around the sharing of humour that the multicultural couples of this study had described. Although the couples had made it clear that it was not a critical problem for them, they still consistently cited time, effort and words as the main reasons for why one partner shared fewer funny examples of his or her own culture. In addition, this phase had created enough interesting information about couples and cultures to fill another thesis, but much of it lay outside of the scope of this particular Co-Creation research project. What should be mentioned, however, are the many examples of funny things from different cultures that were mentioned during these sessions, and the researcher felt privileged that the couples had shared so much fascinating information with her. She learned about famous Fijian Comedians, entertaining Italian, Bulgarian, Brazilian and Russian TV shows as well as French political satire, and the list does not end there. Most importantly, it seemed that the couples had experienced the same effect, as had become evident from their conversations with one another. Particularly the 'Shared Space' method proved to be a successful way for all of them to learn new things about one another, and doing so in a positive and fun way. It stood out that all comments, thoughts and ideas that came up during the sessions were utterly positive in nature. This is likely due to the nature of the topic, but can also be attributed to the fact that the couples were clearly engaged with it, and enjoyed themselves during the exercises. This is a reflection on the evolution of the structure and methods from session to

session, as the design and sequence were revised and improved each time to a point where they can be considered effective.

4.5 Phase 3: Application

4.5.1 Considerations

Taken together, the data that had been collected throughout this study so far suggested that there was an opportunity to develop something that reduced the time, effort and words needed by multicultural couples to share humour from their particular cultures. The final phase of the fieldwork stage of this thesis would consist of another Co-Creation workshop, which would invite a group of multicultural couples to use generative methods to create an initial prototype that applied the principles of Design Thinking and Co-Creation. Ideally, this group would have consisted of the same participants that had attended the two previous phases, but as before this was not achieved completely. Still, of the three couples that attended the final Co-Creation workshop, two had been part of the study before. Diana and Hartmann had participated in the first workshop, and Augusto and Olga had volunteered for all three phases of the fieldwork stage. The new couple was Jono and Maiko, who had been referred by a couple from the first workshop.

The final Co-Creation workshop asked the participants to use their knowledge as 'experts of their own experience' to imagine possibilities and concepts that do not yet exist. This is a creative act that can be difficult for participants that are just 'normal people' and not trained designers, and thus a lot of scaffolding and facilitation was needed from the researcher. As has been discussed in depth before, sensitization plays a big part in helping participants access the deep-seated knowledge formed by their own experience. The initial plan for this last Co-Creation workshop had been to work with couples that had already participated in the first two phases of the fieldwork, which would have meant that had already been sensitized and completed their Path of Expression. The fact that Jono and Maiko were new to the project meant that they had not yet engaged to the same degree as the other two couples with the overall topic of culture and humour. Unfortunately, the timing of the workshop did not allow for a separate sensitization session for Jono and Maiko. To make up for this, the researcher prepared a short presentation that would be used at the beginning of the workshop to explain the overall aim of the research and to summarise the main findings of the first two fieldwork phases. Although it was recognised that this might not offer the same level of engagement as the other sensitization methods, in the absence of an alternative it was deemed the best possible solution.

It was hoped that Diana, Hartmann, Augusto, and Olga would share some of their impressions from the phases they had attended, which would hopefully support Jono and Maiko's engagement as well. Apart from serving as a type of Sensitization Tool, the presentation was also as a way to share some of the initial insights with the two couples that attended earlier parts of the study. After all, they were the owners of the knowledge they had created, and had stated that learning more about the findings of this research project had been a main motivation for them to participate.

Because two of the three couples had already completed their Path of Expression once, it was decided that the workshop would not be structured according to this theory. Instead, the structure of the final Co-Creation session centred around one single generative method that was divided into stages of creative activity. To kick off the workshop, an initial idea generation activity in the form of a Say-Tool would ask participants to generate words on the topic, to help start their thinking process. This would address the entire group, after which the couples would move into the 'make part' of the session and work on a first version of their prototype together. After this they would repeat the activity several times, moving slowly towards a collaborative approach (Fig. 29).

PHASE 3 APPLICATION: THE SECOND CO-CREATION WORKSHOP

1. SAY
What people say or think
'BRAINSTORM' METHOD

2. MAKE
What people say or think
'PROTOTYPE' METHOD
Making level of creativity

MAKE
FIRST PROTOTYPE ITERATION

MAKE
SECOND PROTOTYPE ITERATION

MAKE
THIRD PROTOTYPE ITERATION

MAKE
FOURTH PROTOTYPE ITERATION
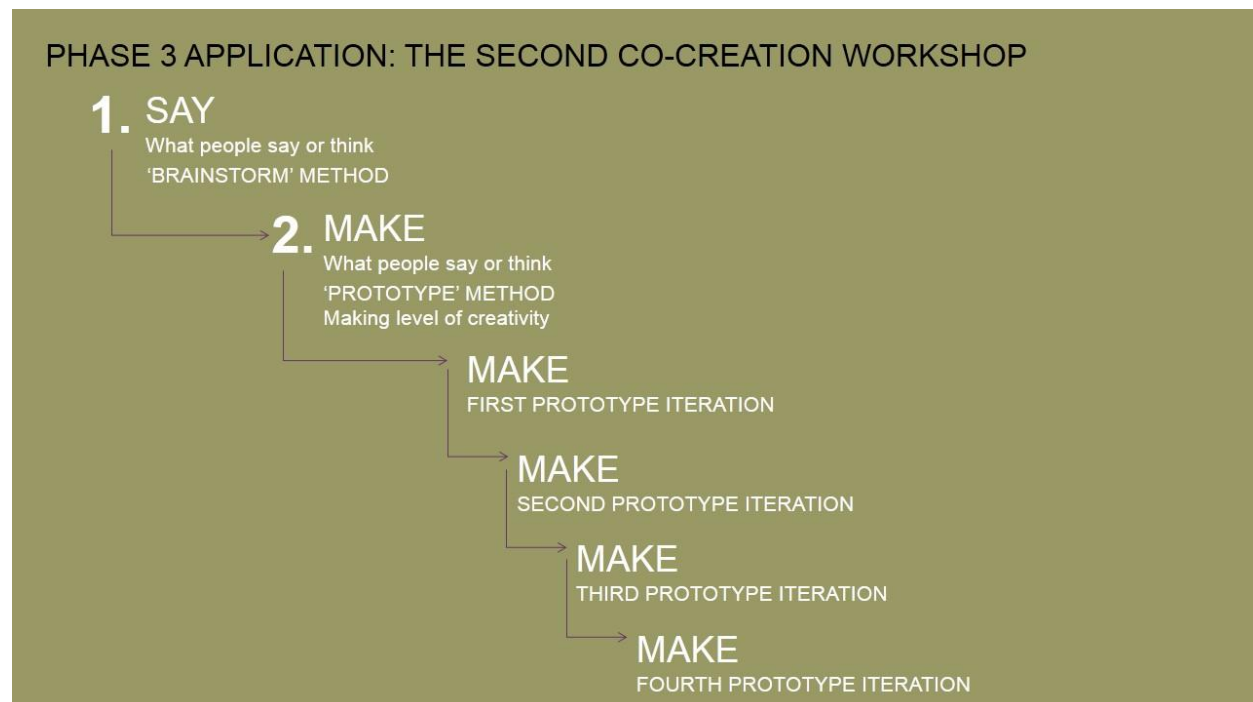
Figure 29. **The structure of the second Co-Creation workshop. A Say-Tool was followed by a Make tool that consisted of several iterations.**

Using only one generative method that was a Make-type tool kept the session loosely structured and as open as possible, as learnings from the previous fieldwork sessions suggested that flexibility was important for a Co-Creation workshop with couples. Because the workshop consisted purely of a number of couples that were not used to creative work, several iterations of the same activity were planned. This would maximise the amount of scaffolding that could be provided to participants as they worked through the versions of their prototype. In its core, the Make-type generative method was an adaptation of the last method used in the initial Co-Creation workshop of this study. As a reminder, in that participants had moved from an initial brainstorming session to group work, with the brief to make something funny for a multicultural couple. In its new form, the method asked the three couples to create a prototype that was based on the principles of Design Thinking and Co-Creation, which incorporated collaboration, acts of creative making and an emphasis on visual communication. For this, the brief of the method instructed couples to work as one group (collaboration), and to create a

physical prototype (make) of a device aimed to help multicultural couples to share humour. The main constraint was that the design of the prototype was not allowed to include more than 3 words (emphasis on visual communication). It was recognised that the session would require a lot of creative thinking from the participants, and also moved a lot more quickly towards group work than the previous workshop. Observations from the earlier Co-Creation workshop had confirmed the findings from the literature (Brok, 2004; Coché, 2011), which predict that collaboration within a group that consists purely of couples needs a longer lead-time to develop. Couples need more time to break out of their mini-teams and start cooperating with other group members. This was why the main generative activity was broken down into a collection of short iterations, each repeating a version of the initial brief, but adding more and more collaborative elements. This was designed to ease the couples into working as a group, but also to allow them to build several versions of their prototype, which meant they arrived at the final group work stage with a collection of findings from their individual work that they could combine and use together.

4.5.2 The Second Co-Creation Workshop

The Co-Creation workshop started with a presentation by the researcher, in which she described the aim of the study and shared the initial findings from the previous fieldwork phases with the participants. After this, the group moved into the brainstorming exercise, in which the participants listed alternative ways of sharing humour that did not require words. The researcher noted all those ideas on a whiteboard. As anticipated, asking the couples to brainstorm as a group so early in the workshop meant that a lot of facilitation was needed from the researcher to overcome the couples' hesitations. As discussed, couples have a tendency to withdraw into the safety of their duo, and the researcher needed to summon all her experience as a corporate trainer to work through this and help the participants get more comfortable with one another.

It had been expected that Maiko and Jono would need some extra help to find their way into the topic. Although the researcher did need to elaborate on certain occasions, overall they required less help than had been predicted. After the brainstorming session, the couples started on the first round of the generative activity. They were free to choose from a range of crafting materials, using the words on the whiteboard as inspiration to create their version of a prototype. It was confirmed that leading the couples slowly towards group work was a good idea, as they instantly fell into pairs. It became clear that it would have been too much to ask them to become creative as a group at this stage of the session. After the couples had worked separately for about ten minutes, during which there was no facilitation required, the researcher slowly introduced more materials, and finally produced three canvases that had been prepared to direct the participants' thinking in a new direction. Instead of perfecting their initial versions, the aim was to use what they had learned in those first ten minutes and use it in the next round for a different creation. Now the researcher started to facilitate towards a collaborative approach, addressing the group instead of talking to individual couples, and sitting down with the participants to create the feeling of a closed round around the table. This stage of the workshop was the most difficult to facilitate, as the couples were reluctant to break out of their teamwork and to move away from their initial versions

towards a new collective creation. Helping the participants find a way to start working as a group was difficult for the researcher. She needed to provide enough scaffolding to coach the couples through their hesitations and feelings of not knowing where to start or how to interact together, and encourage them to stop talking about the concepts and start making things. At the same time, she did not want to interfere with the creative work of the participants and influence the process with her own ideas by giving specific suggestions. For this she used a method that is often employed in training, in which the facilitator merely uses her own words to repeat back what the participants just said in the form of a question, without ever making any new suggestions herself. Hearing their own thoughts reflected back to them in the words of someone else offers people the chance to get a new perspective on their ideas and can help to advance their thinking.

In this situation, the participants were clearly uncomfortable and were looking for a leader to tell them what to do next. They were initially startled by the facilitator's seeming refusal to give clear instructions, but eventually started to accept that they would need to find the answers themselves. This was when individual participants started to share ideas with the entire group, which lead to a discussion around what a prototype might need to look like. Eventually, suggestions around creating a non-verbal game emerged, but it still took some facilitation from the researcher to move the group from simply talking about their ideas to making their first version of the prototype. In its initial form, it was a collection of paper props that had been cut out of magazines, such as different body parts and clothes, that were put in a plastic bag and could be mixed together to make a funny creature. Once a first iteration was made, the creative process sped up considerably and the prototype moved through several iterations. It eventually ended in a final version that was named 'Better Your Partner with Props' (Fig. 30). It consisted of a collection of paper props that came in a bag, as well as a paper canvas that featured a cut-out shape that was intended to be placed on top of a smartphone. The idea was that a multicultural couple would be able to take an instant photo of each other, and use the provided materials from the Toolkit to embellish it.
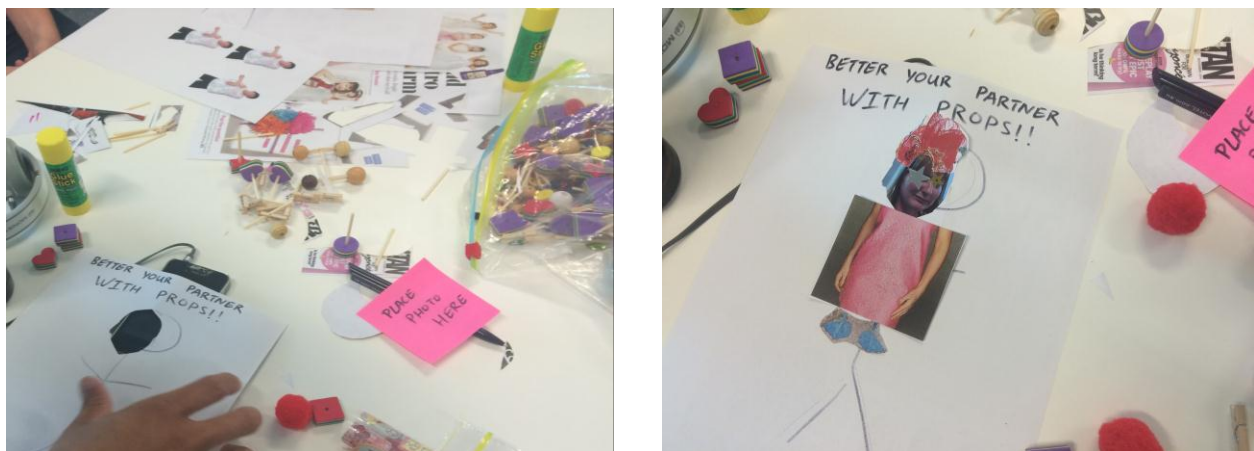
Figure 30. The final prototype of 'Better Your Partner with Props'.

4.5.3 Discussion of Phase 3

After the last Co-Creation workshop had ended, the fieldwork stage of the thesis was complete. Before the main analysis could begin, however, the results of the last session had to be reviewed. Just as in the previous phases, the video recordings were analysed together with the artefacts to create a coherent picture of the session. Although overall the final form of the prototype was not of key importance to the thesis, it was still fascinating to see how far the couples had been able to take their ideas over the course of just one session. Although it had taken them a lot longer than the couples in the previous workshop to start creating, once started, they had moved quickly through a series of iterations to a final version that everyone was impressed with. Diana and Hartmann even remarked that they would like to use it themselves at home. It was fascinating to see how the brief around the activity had resulted in a prototype that had all the features of a generative method, to the point where participants referred to it as a Toolkit. It was visual, and as such required little or no words to be used, combined craft materials with smartphone technology, and was fun to use. In that regard, the Co-Creation workshop had accomplished what it set out to do. It had taken the findings from the previous fieldwork phases, and based on those had successfully created a Co-Creation environment that allowed the participants to make the jump from their own experience into a possible future and create a generative method of their own.

The main takeaway point from the final Co-Creation workshop was the importance of easing couples into working as a group. Even though this had been considered during the planning phase of the workshop, which had been the reason to break up the generative method into several iterations of the same activity, it was still surprising how difficult the couples found it to work together. In comparison to the first Co-Creation workshop, the group was slower to take a collaborative approach to the generative task they had been given and needed a lot more facilitation throughout the creative part of the session. This finding suggests that note should be taken when trading structure and the number of individual generative methods for increased flexibility in a Co-Creation workshop with couples. The proceedings of the first workshop had led to the conclusion that flexibility in the methodology is key, and this prompted the researcher to use significantly fewer methods and a loose structure for the second workshop. This aim for flexibility turned out to be at the expense of sufficient support for the couples. Because the second Co-Creation workshop sought to take what had been found during the exploration and focus phases of the study and create something new from it, the couples were asked to operate on a high level of creativity. As previously discussed, this type of creative work requires a lot of engagement, something that can be difficult to achieve in just one Co-Creation session. Nevertheless, by providing a comparison to the first Co-Creation workshop, the second workshop helped to draw some important conclusions around the do's and don't's of Co-Creation with multicultural couples, which will be presented in the following and final chapter of this exegesis.
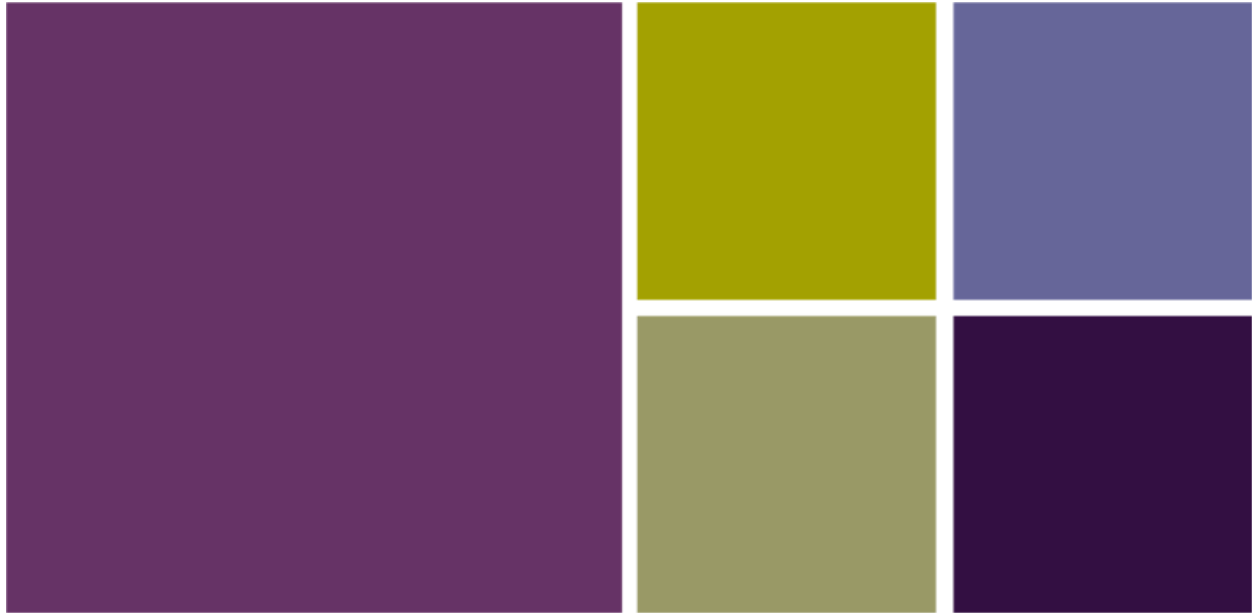
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

The final chapter presents the final conclusions of this research project and relates them back to the initial research questions. Future research opportunities are discussed, and the exegesis is ended with some final thoughts.

5.1 Overview

The literature review and rationale of this exegesis carved out that Co-Creation with multicultural couples is unchartered territory. This research project investigated what methods of Generative Design Research could be developed to support multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context. Specifically, the methods and their sequence for the different research phases were designed according to the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach as described by Sanders and Stappers (2012). Special consideration was given to how different levels of creative expression in the participants could be supported, how visual ways of communication could be promoted, and how findings from the literature on group work with couples (Brok, 2004; Coché, 2011) could be accommodated in the methodological design of this study. Overall, it was found that the methods developed for this project fulfilled the specifications set out in the research rationale: participants found them fun to complete, the methods were flexible and mostly produced the types of results that were expected. The particular sequence of methods in each Co-Creation session successfully led participants through their Path of Expression, and the options given for the Make-type tools successfully supported participants at different levels of creative expression. The methods encouraged participants that usually would not have chosen to express themselves visually to try this way of communicating their ideas. Through a process of development, application, review, adjustment, selection and re-application that spanned three distinct phases of fieldwork, the project produced a collection of tools for working with multicultural couples in a Co-Creation context to explore their experience of humour (Fig. 31).

PHASE 1
Ideation

Sensitization Toolkit
MAKE- THIS IS US
SAY - SHARE A JOKE
MAKE - NOT FUNNY

First Co-Creation WS
SAY - ICEBREAKER
DO - SHARED SPACE
SAY - DISCUSSION
MAKE - PROTOTYPE

PHASE 2
Focus

Home Visit One
SAY - SENSITIZATION
MAKE - THIS IS US - Revised
DO - SHARED SPACE - Revised
DO - EXPERIENCE MAP
SAY - QUESTION SET – optional

Home Visit Two
SAY - SENSITIZATION
DO - SHARED SPACE
MAKE - THIS IS US
SAY - QUESTION SET - optional

Home Visit Three
MAKE - THIS IS US
SAY - QUESTION SET - optional

PHASE 3
Application

Second Co-Creation WS
SAY - ICEBREAKER
MAKE - PROTOTYPE

Figure 31. **Summary. An overview of the generative methods produced for the three fieldwork phases exploration, focus and application.**

In the remainder of this chapter, the findings of this research project will be drawn together and brought in relation to the two research questions that this study set out to answer:

1. *Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?*
   - The study highlighted a number of findings that might be useful to future Co-Creation projects that seek to work with couples in a group setting.
   - A set of four generative methods was identified as specifically applicable to multicultural couples in a Co-Creation context.
   - The results of this study helped to develop a template for the structure of Co-Creation workshops with couples. It is based on a fusion of the theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach by Sanders and Stappers (2012) and uses the findings of this study around Co-Creation with couples.

2. *What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?*
   - The couples in this study cited the factors time, effort, and words as the main reasons for why inconsistencies in the sharing of humour from their respective cultures exist. The sharing of humour from the partner's respective cultures has been found to be less of an issue for the multicultural couples in this study as might have been initially assumed.
   - The findings suggest that there is an opportunity to help improve humorous communication between two people from different cultures.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss these main conclusions in more detail, touch on the limitations of this project and point to opportunities for future research.

5.2 Research Question One: Conclusions

1. *Based on recent theories of Co-Creation, what methods and tools of Generative Design Research can be developed, and how do they need to be designed and structured to effectively support the multicultural couples in this project to explore their experience of humour in a Co-Creation context?*

Co-Creation with couples in a group setting

One of the strengths of this study was that it was able to compare the different structures and dynamics of the first and second Co-Creation workshops. The result is a number of findings that apply specifically to Co-Creation with couples in a collaborative setting. Firstly, when facilitating the Co-Creation workshops it was helpful for the researcher to be aware of the literature (Brok, 2004; Coché, 2011) regarding the specific dynamics of couples in group work. Future researchers that seek to work in this area might also benefit from considering relevant sociological and psychological research before designing a Co-Creation setting for couples. It was found that if the researcher decides to split the couples into several groups for a Make-type tool, it is important to balance the gender mix. The male/female only groups in the first workshop developed contrasting dynamics, and the male-only group tended to work less collaboratively and be less open to creative work than the all-female group. The results also suggest that Co-Creation workshops with couples start off better if they do not ask the participants to work in groups straight away, but allow them to stay and work together with their partner until they have gotten used to the other participants.

It was found that during the Co-Creation workshops, the couples would tend to stick together and avoid leaving the comfort zone of their mini-teams, making collaboration slow to develop. Because of this, it was concluded that Co-Creation with couples in a collaborative setting might benefit from a structure that is built on a selection of methods of the Say or Do-type, which slowly lead the couples towards a final Make-type tool. It was found that if the icebreaker of a Co-Creation workshop with couples relates to a generative method, it supports the development of a sense of group spirit among the participants. It also gave the participants an artefact to 'hold on to' whilst introducing themselves to the group, both physically and mentally. Future studies that seek to work with multicultural couples in a Co-Creation context may want to consider this point. If they decide to use a Say-Tool for an icebreaker they might want to relate it to a previously used generative method. If that is not possible, the icebreaker could be based on a Make-type tool, but in this case the researcher might want to consider not to expect too much too soon from the couples in terms of collaboration and creative expression.

A Set of Four Generative Methods for Co-Creation with Couples

Whilst the previous discussion of the individual fieldwork phases of this study shows that all methods that were developed for this study were useful in their own rights, some methods contributed more to the overall project than others. Figure 32 highlights the four tools this study identified as the most successful methods for working with multicultural couples in a Co-Creation context. They were tried and tested against the

theory of the Path of Expression and the Converging Perspectives Approach (Sanders & Stappers, 2012) and found to be compatible with these frameworks in a variety of constellations and different versions. Although this project applied these tools to the question of how the multicultural couples of this study experience humour, they could be amended to suit any Co-Creation project seeking to work with partners of any kind, be they multicultural, in an intimate relationship or not.

Figure 32. **A set of four generative methods for couples. The four tools this research project found to be particularly useful for Co-Creation with multicultural couples.**

- The specific findings around the Icebreaker Tools of this Co-Creation project have already been discussed in the previous section, but overall it was found that they worked better if they related to a generative method.

- The representational Make-type tool was found to be best suited for an intimate setting, as it stimulates the couples to engage deeply with themselves as a unit, and addresses very personal knowledge that they may not want to share in a group setting. Future research could use it as the basis for an icebreaker or as a standalone method to visualise similarities and differences among participants.

- The Do-type tool called 'Shared Space' proved to be versatile and worked well in both the Co-Creation workshops and home settings. This study applied it to multicultural couples, but it could easily be adapted to support the aims of Co-Creation research with other types of partners. Its main strength lies in the visualisation of a 'Shared Space' among two people, and because of this it could prove a useful tool in other contexts such as business, education or even couple's therapy.

- The Make-type tool of prototyping is not a generative method that is new to Co-Creation, but applying it to Co-Creation research with couples in this study has demonstrated its usefulness for group work with couples. As discussed, certain points might need to be considered when using prototyping in a collaborative setting with couples.

When designing the different methods for this study, the researcher aimed to provide options for the different levels of creative expression among the participants. These options were mostly based on A3 paper canvases. This limited how participants approached the generative tasks, as they mainly kept within the dimensions of the paper. Future research could try to find alternative ways for scaffolding participant's creative expression.

A Template for Co-Creation Workshops with Couples

As discussed in the literature review, typical Co-Creation workshops are marked by a flexible structure and the fact that all generative methods are specifically developed for the purposes of a particular research project. The concept of a 'template' to be used to design a Co-Creation workshop seemingly contradicts its basic principles. However, the findings of this study suggest that there might be value in such an idea. Firstly, this study successfully combined two recent frameworks of Co-Design (Sanders & Stappers, 2012) and used this fusion as the guiding framework for its Co-Creation sessions. It also highlighted that a number of specific consideration apply to Co-Creation with couples. In combination, these findings suggest that future Co-Design research that seeks to work with couples may find value in the proposed template below (Fig. 33). It follows the principles of the Converging Perspectives Approach, and its structure can help the researcher to plan the sequence of the generative methods in such a way that they lead the participants along their Path of Expression.
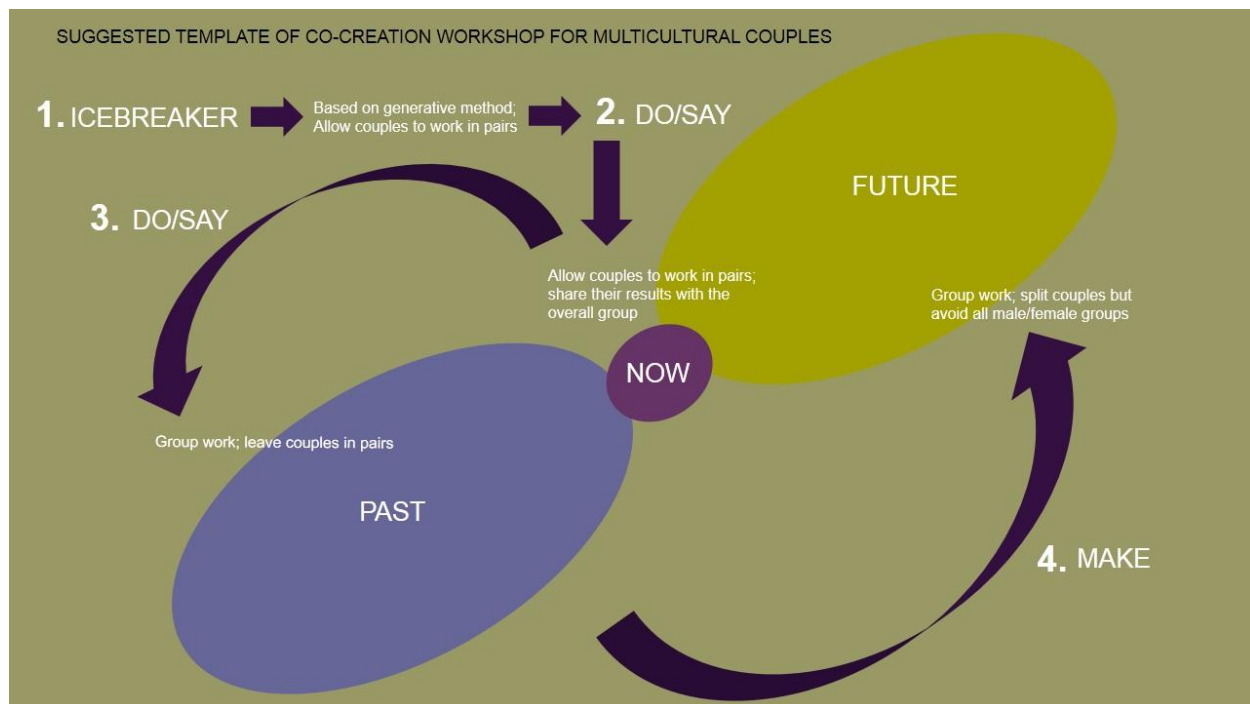
Figure 33. **A suggested template for Co-Creation workshops with couples.**

A future Co-Creation workshop working with couples could start off with an icebreaker that is based on a generative method, and allows the couples to work in pairs. It could employ a mix of Say and Do-Tools that stimulate the couples to think about the topic in question in the here and now, and also use these types of tools to lead the couples to think about past experiences. Throughout these parts of the Path of Expression, the levels of group work can be gradually increased. The template suggests refraining from using a Make-type tool that requires true collaboration until the end of the Path of Expression when the participants are required to make the jump into the future.

5.3 Research Question Two: Conclusions

2. *What can be learned about the experience of humour in the multicultural couples of this thesis by working with them in a Co-Creation context, using the specifically developed generative methods and tools?*

Time, Effort, and Words

The first Co-Creation workshop of this study suggested that an imbalance exists in terms of how much the partners in a multicultural relationship share of the humour from their respective cultures, but it was not determined if the couples saw this as an issue at all. The subsequent home visits provided a lot more insight around this, as all three couples confirmed that although imbalances do exist, they are not of particular concern to them as they create their own shared humour together. However, all three couples described that if they did want to share particular examples of their culture with their partner, they needed to use a lot more words to do so, and as a result the funny part would often get lost. Most couples mentioned that they rarely delve into particular examples of their non-shared cultures, and consistently cited the extra time, effort and words that are needed to do so as the main reason for this. Overall the couples reported that they share a lot more 'current' humour together, which is usually based on the culture in which they both live together.

Improving the Sharing of Cultural Humour

In this project it was speculated that the principles that underlie methods of Generative Design and Design Thinking might reduce the words, time and effort that are needed to communicate a particular funny example of a partner's culture. The final Co-Creation workshop provided an opportunity for the multicultural couples of this study to use generative methods of design research to produce a prototype of such a concept. The resulting prototype 'Better Your Partner with Props' is an example of a concept that uses technology, physical props and no words to allow multicultural couples to share some fun together. Future research in either Co-Design or another design discipline may want to further develop the concept of reducing the words, time and effort that are needed for the communication of cultural humour between two people, be they in an intimate relationship or not.

5.4 Future Research

The conclusion of this research project already makes a number of suggestions that future Co-Design research working with couples may find useful to consider. Beyond that, this chapter highlighted some points that future projects may be able to refine or advance on. The final section of this chapter discusses opportunities for future studies that the researcher considers to be of personal interest.

The researcher believes that there would be value in a future study that follows up on the home visits of this project. Although they proceeded differently from the workshops, all three sessions produced astonishingly similar results. This could be because the Say-type tool and its set of optional questions meant that the researcher always steered the direction of the session towards a similar outcome. A follow-up project could ask the

couples to record themselves as they work through a generative Toolkit. It would be interesting to see if those sessions would still produce very similar outcomes, or if the lack of facilitation would mean that the couples express themselves very differently. The similarities in how the three different couples of the home visits in this project described their experiences around the sharing of humour suggest that a certain model of communication of humour among multicultural couples could be developed. The researcher sees value in developing a separate research project that could fall either under Co-Design or the social sciences to investigate this idea further. Finally, the researcher sees great value in a future Co-Creation project that works both with multicultural couples and trained designers to develop a product that reduces the time, effort and words needed in the communication of cultural humour between two people. As we live in an ever increasing multicultural world, it would be hard to think of a place where such a product would not find a use.

5.5 Final Thoughts

Apart from producing the above-presented findings, this research project has been an incredible personal journey for the researcher. She has learned a tremendous amount about Co-Creation, humour, culture and herself as she met and laughed with an amazingly giving bunch of people from all over the world. She experienced what it means to 'jump into the deep end', and knows that she could not have done any of this without the support of the people around her. This project has opened the door for many other exciting Co-Design projects, as the journey of doing research with and for multicultural couples has just begun.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval Forms

28 October 2014

Gerbrand van Melle
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Gerbrand

Re Ethics Application: **14/289 Using methods of generative design research to explore humour in multicultural couples.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 20 October 2017.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 20 October 2017;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 20 October 2017 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Lina Pierson lina@pierson.org.nz

A u c k l a n d   U n i v e r s i t y   o f   T e c h n o l o g y   E t h i c s   C o m m i t t e e

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23 February 2015

Gerbrand van Melle
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Gerbrand

Re: Ethics Application: **14/289 Using methods of generative design research to explore humour in multicultural couples.**

Thank you for your request for approval of an amendment to your ethics application.

I have approved the minor amendment to your ethics application allowing interviews to be conducted at the participant's homes.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC):

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 20 October 2017;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 20 October 2017 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Lina Pierson lina@pierson.org.nz

A u c k l a n d   U n i v e r s i t y   o f   T e c h n o l o g y   E t h i c s   C o m m i t t e e

W A 5 0 5 F   L e v e l   5   W A   B u i l d i n g   C i t y   C a m p u s

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Signed Consent Forms

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

○ We have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23.09.2014.

○ We have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ Both of us agree to participate in this study. We understand that we participate based on the premise that we are currently in a relationship with each other, and that at least one of us uses their second language to communicate.

○ We understand that we may withdraw from this study at any time prior to completion of data collection, and that our image, or any other information that we have provided for this project, will be removed without us being disadvantaged in any way.

○ We understand that if one of us withdraws from this study, both of our information will be removed. It is not possible for one partner to participate on their own.

○ If we withdraw, we understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the workshop session/s of which we were part, the relevant information about ourselves including videos, photographs and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.

○ We understand that the identity of our fellow participants and our discussions in the workshop session/s is confidential to the group and we agree to keep this information confidential.

○ We understand that photographs will be taken during the workshop session/s, and that it will also be video-taped and transcribed.

○ We permit the researcher to use the outputs created during the workshops, and the photographs that are part of this project and/or any drawings from them and any other reproductions or adaptations

from them, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording and/or drawings solely and exclusively for educational display/exhibition and examination purposes and related research and design works. We assign any copyrights that may result out of this research to the researcher for the purposes stated above.

○   We understand that the photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without our written permission.

○   We agree to take part in this research.

○   We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): Yes○

Participant's signatures:

....

....

Participant's names:

Diana   Dolonsky

Hartman Reid

Participant's Contact Details (please provide at least an email address):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

○ We have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23.09.2014.

○ We have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

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○ We agree to take part in this research.

○ We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): Yes○

Participant's signatures:

....

....

Participant's names:

GABRIEL H.S FUNG...

JYOTI PATEL...

Participant's Contact Details (please provide at least an email address):

G.HS.FUNG@GMAIL.com...

000. jyotipatel@gmail.com....................................

....

....

Date: 18/11/14

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

○ We have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23.09.2014.

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O   We understand that the photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without our written permission.

O   We agree to take part in this research.

O   We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): YesO

Participant's signatures:

Augusto Grabner Miranda

O hern.

Participant's names:

Augusto Grabner Miranda

Olga Yampolskaya

Participant's Contact Details (please provide at least an email address):

inline_apt@hotmail.com

ol.yam@hotmail.com

....

....

Date: *10 Dec 2014*

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

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○ We understand that the photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without our written permission.

○ We agree to take part in this research.

○ We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): Yes○

Participant's signatures:

....

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Participant's names:

Vaughn Panley

Kristina Vasquez

Participant's Contact Details (please provide at least an email address):

021 0717 394 .VP

021 21 360 70 KV

....

....

Date: 10/12/14

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

○ We have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23.09.2014.

○ We have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ Both of us agree to participate in this study. We understand that we participate based on the premise that we are currently in a relationship with each other, and that at least one of us uses their second language to communicate.

○ We understand that we may withdraw from this study at any time prior to completion of data collection, and that our image, or any other information that we have provided for this project, will be removed without us being disadvantaged in any way.

○ We understand that if one of us withdraws from this study, both of our information will be removed. It is not possible for one partner to participate on their own.

○ If we withdraw, we understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the workshop session/s of which we were part, the relevant information about ourselves including videos, photographs and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.

○ We understand that the identity of our fellow participants and our discussions in the workshop session/s is confidential to the group and we agree to keep this information confidential.

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○ We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): Yes○

Participant's signatures:

....

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Participant's names:

.... EmmA HUNT ....

.... AMANDA YATES ....

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.... emma.hunt @ macro.co.nz ....

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Date: 10/ 12 / 2014

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

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O   We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): YesO

Participant's signatures:

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Participant's names:

Diana Motikarova

Justin Choy

Participant's Contact Details (please provide at least an email address):

021 066 1557

diana @ choy.nz

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Date: 24/01/2015

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

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Participant's signatures:

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Participant's names:

Maiko Lentin ....

Jonathan Lh ....

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Date: 11/02/15

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289

Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.

A COUPLE OF JOKES

Joint Consent and Release Form

Project Title: A COUPLE OF JOKES

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

Project Supervisor: **Gerbrand Van Melle**

Researcher: **Lina Pierson**

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Ø   We have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

Ø   Both of us agree to participate in this study. We understand that we participate based on the premise that we are currently in a relationship with each other, and that at least one of us uses their second language to communicate.

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✓ We **do not** wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please only tick if you do not want to receive a copy by default): Yes○

Participant's signatures:
....
....

Participant's names:
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rook@riccardorocchi.com
....
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Date: 21/1/2015

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th October 2014 AUTEC Reference number 14/289
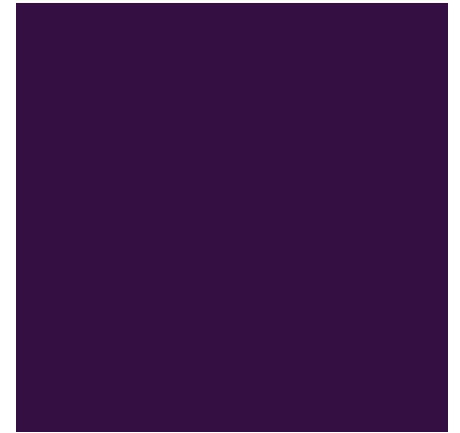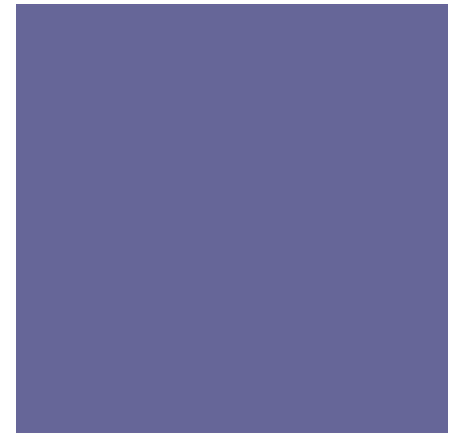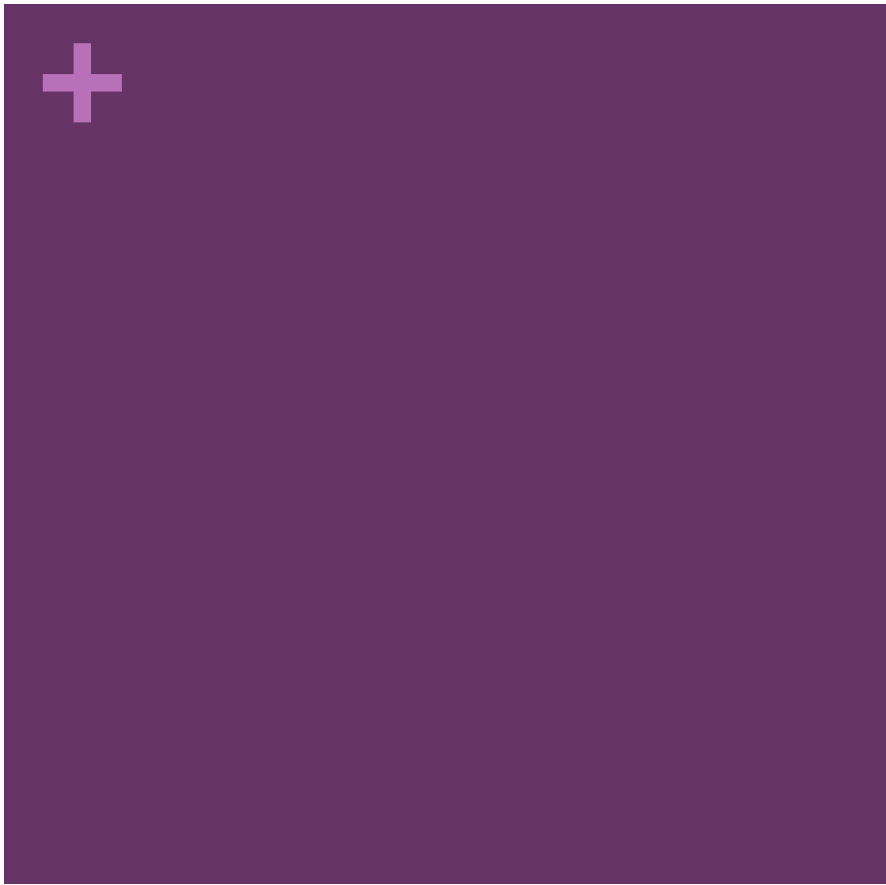
Note: The Participants should retain a copy of this form.
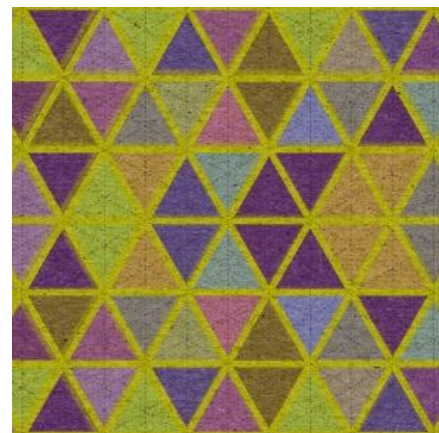
Appendix B

Sensitization Workbook

A Couple of Jokes
My Workbook

Generative Design Research: Working with multicultural couples to explore their experience of humour

+

This workbook belongs to:

_____

- I'm a ☐ she ☐ he

- I'm ………………years old

- Where I was born:

………

- The countries I lived in:

………

………

- The languages I speak:

………

………

Humour is universal

We all laugh

But we laugh at different things

■ **What does this mean for someone who is in a relationship with a partner from a different culture? As someone who is in such a situation you are an expert on your experience.**

■ Your thoughts, ideas and inputs are essential to this study. None of the questions asked in this creative inquiry have been looked at before, so whatever insights we can generate together will be invaluable. We hope that the exercises in this workbook and your participation in the workshop offer you a fun way to explore the topic together with your partner and your workshop group.

■ **Please remember to bring this workbook with you to the workshop!**

EXERCISE #1 WHO WE ARE

■ **This exercise will stimulate your creative side. But don't worry, no experience or particular talents are required.**

■ Unpack your toolkit for exercise #1 and read the instructions.

■ When you're done, pack your creation into the provided bag so you don't forget to bring it along to the workshop.

✓ **Time required: 20 minutes**

EXERCISE #2: JUST FOR JOKES

- **As the title suggests, this exercise is meant to be a bit of fun, but it could also be quite interesting. Just try it, and see what you think.**

- Use the space on the next two pages to write down your favourite joke in your first language. If that language is not English, also write down an English translation of it.

- Tell the English version to your partner (Yes, even if he or she has heard it before…).

- AFTER you have told each other your jokes, watch this video clip. http://gu.com/p/3ny2x/sbl

- You can also get to it by typing "guardian international jokes" into Google. Have fun!

- ✓ **Time required: 10 minutes**

6

■ **My favourite joke in my first language:**

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■ **My favourite joke in English:**

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EXERCISE #3: MIND MAP

- **Some things are just not funny. But what those things are varies from person to person.**

- **What things can you just not laugh about?**

- Unpack your toolkit for exercise #3 and work on your own mind maps to start with.

- When you're done, join your maps together and compare them. What similarities or differences are there? What do you think these have to do with your personal cultural backgrounds?

- ✓ **Time required: 10 minutes**

- **Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this workbook.** Your participation means a lot to me personally. I hope that these exercises have been a bit of fun for the two of you, and that they have opened up some interesting discussions. I am very excited to meet you in our workshop on the 10th of December at 6pm on level 10 of the Sir Paul Reeves Building at AUT . Don't forget to bring your workbook and creations along. Until then, have a wonderful time!

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Student ID No	13828704	**Name**	Lina Pierson
Faculty	COLAB	**School/Dept**	COLAB
Programme	Master of Creative Technologies	**Year of submission** (for examination)	2015

Research Output   Thesis ☒   Exegesis ☐   Dissertation ☐   **Points Value** 120

Thesis Title   A Couple of Jokes: Using Humour in Multicultural Couples to Study Co-Creation and Methods of Generative Design

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