

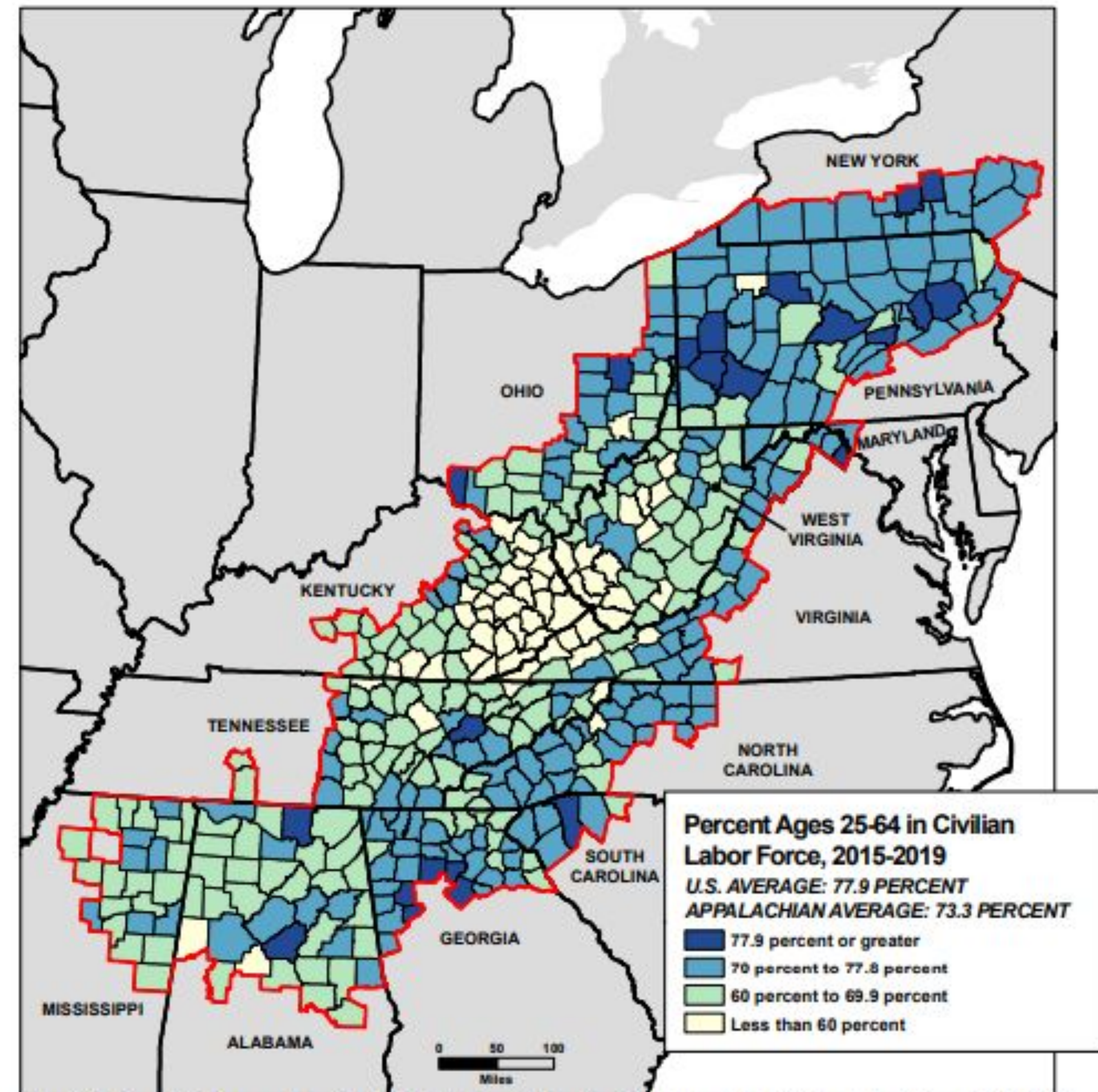
Designing for Shared Values: Exploring Ethical Dilemmas of Conducting Values Inclusive Design Research

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Background - Small town rural Appalachia

- Presently and historically disadvantaged
- Distrust of outsiders based on local cultural values and experiences, recent and historical
- Low levels of technology access and skills
- Few employment opportunities



Map Title: Percent of Persons Ages 25 to 64 in the Appalachian Region Who Are In the Civilian Labor Force, 2015-2019
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

Image source: Appalachian Regional Commission

Research setting and project goals

- Appalachian town with population <900
- Goals to create **publicly accessible digital literacy education** to upskill residents for better employment
- Running digital literacy workshops at local library



The conflict

- Matters of personal values come up. How do we handle that?
- How do our values and our participants' values influence our designs?
- How can we do right by our participants, stay true to ourselves, and accomplish our collective goals?

To whom are we as designers responsible?

Balance of responsibilities to our participants, outside stakeholders, ourselves

Should researchers conduct participatory research with participants with whom they have conflicting values?

We must engage with uncomfortable situations and conduct the research that we can to promote positive social change

Are there instances when researchers' values should filter participant values in design research?

Anything that may harm indirect stakeholders and marginalized communities outside the direct scope of this work should be filtered to minimize harm.

How does filtering participant values impact the balance of power between participants and researchers?

It must go both ways. Transparency of what is being excluded and included and equal control over those determinations on both sides is necessary.

Are we presuming values in a stereotypical way?

We know what our participants tell us. We do not make broad assumptions, but we should prepare ourselves for likely scenarios.

Is it necessary to worry about/prepare for conflict on topics that are peripheral to the research topic?

Systemic injustice impacts all sociotechnical systems and research in some way, overtly or not, so it is fair to consider it even if it is not directly or obviously relevant.

Is it ethical to engage in avoidance of further social oppression in place of more explicit social justice outcomes?

We owe it to our participants to prioritize our primary goal of developing stronger systems for digital literacy education.

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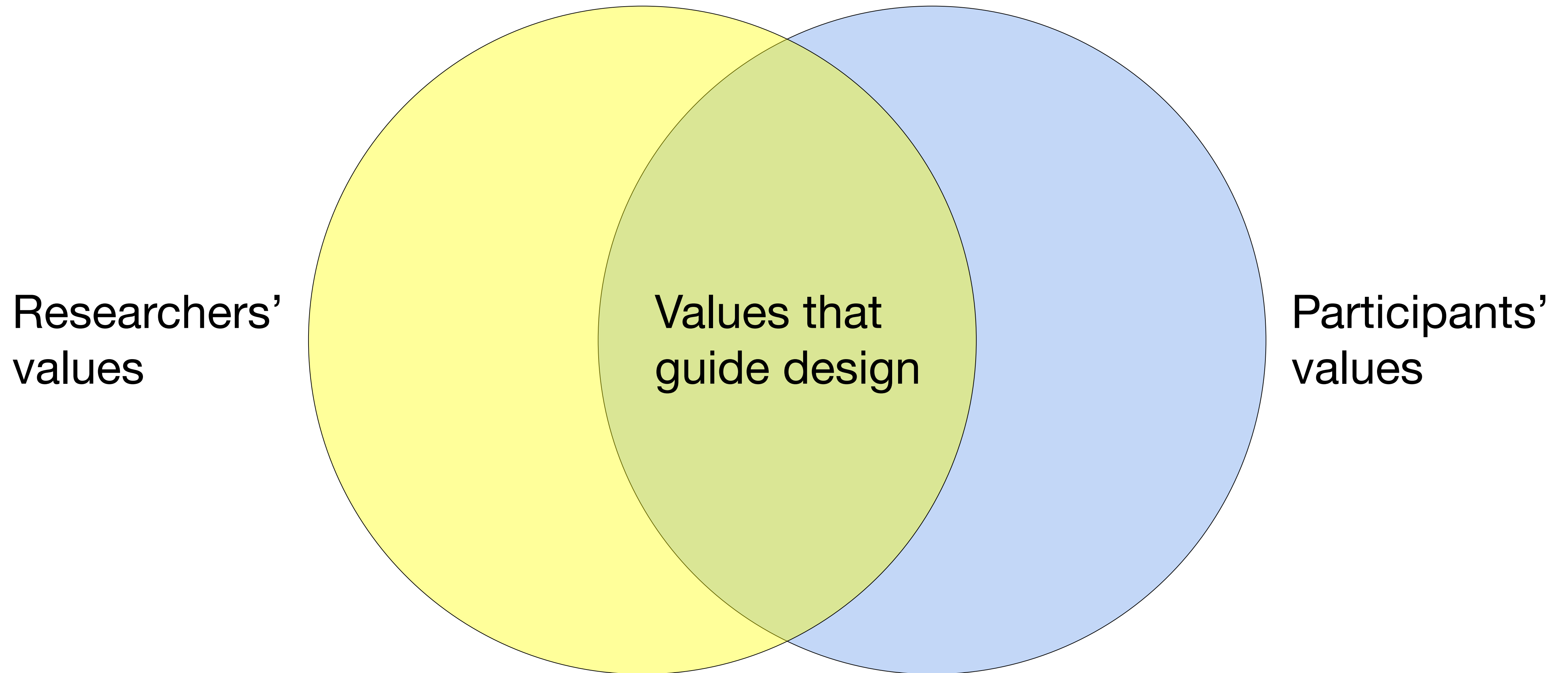
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The choice we made: Designing for Shared Values



Where do we go from here?

- Our goal is to open a dialogue with the wider community. How have others encountered and managed similar dilemmas?
- Entering research with a perspective of care and empathy
- Advocate for more openness around shades of gray we encounter in research ethics