



Teachers' upskilling aiming at a holistic inclusivity in learning

Introduction to Inclusive Education Course

Intersectionality and multiple identities

Unit 4.1 What is intersectionality?

Wheel of Power and Privilege: Trainers Guide to Activities

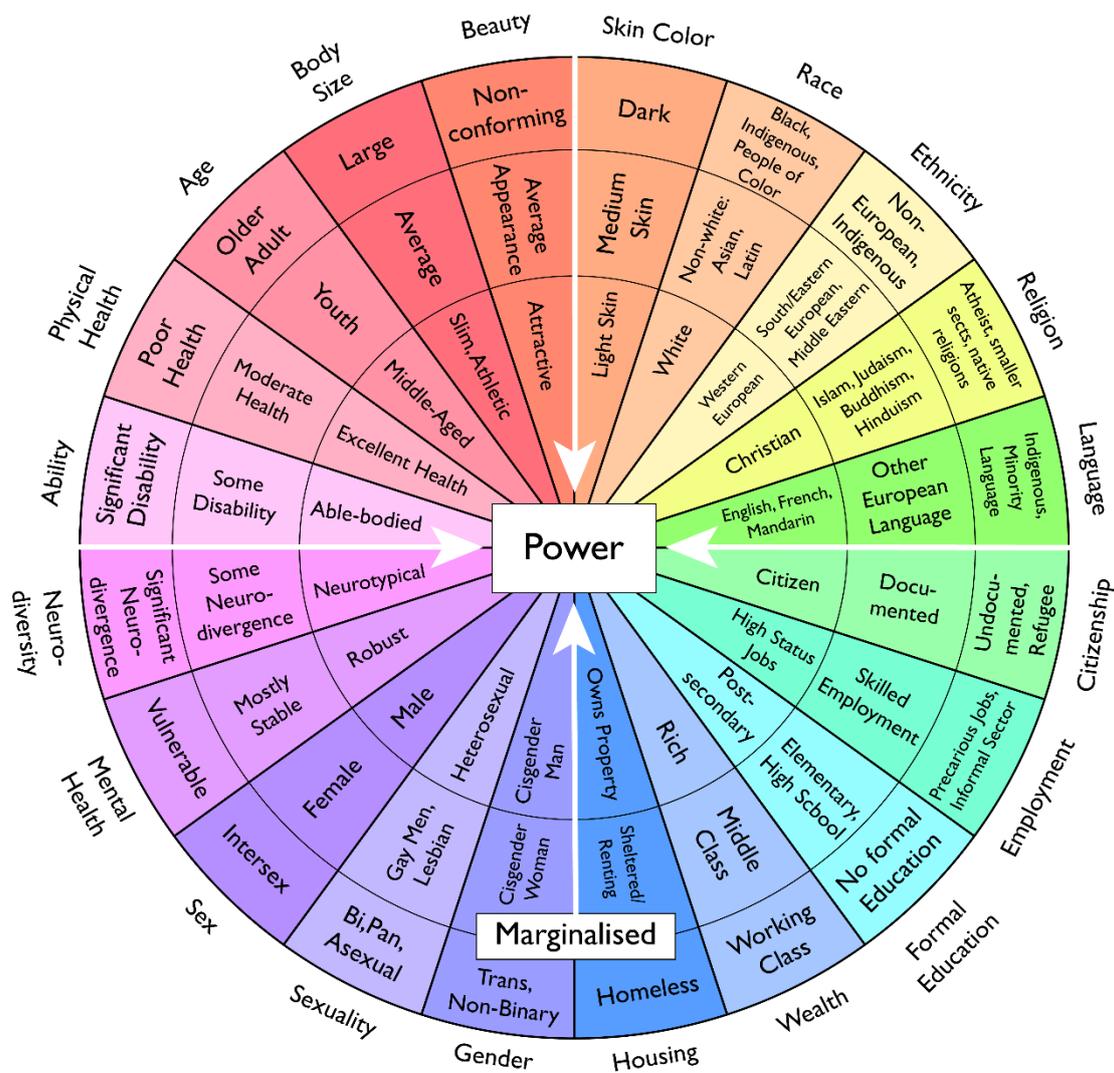


**Graphic and Interactive Tool Guide
(Second Draft)**

Project Number: 101056515

Agreement Number: 101056515 — TUTOR — ERASMUS-EDU-2021-PEX-TEACH-ACA

The TUTOR Project Wheel of Power and Privilege



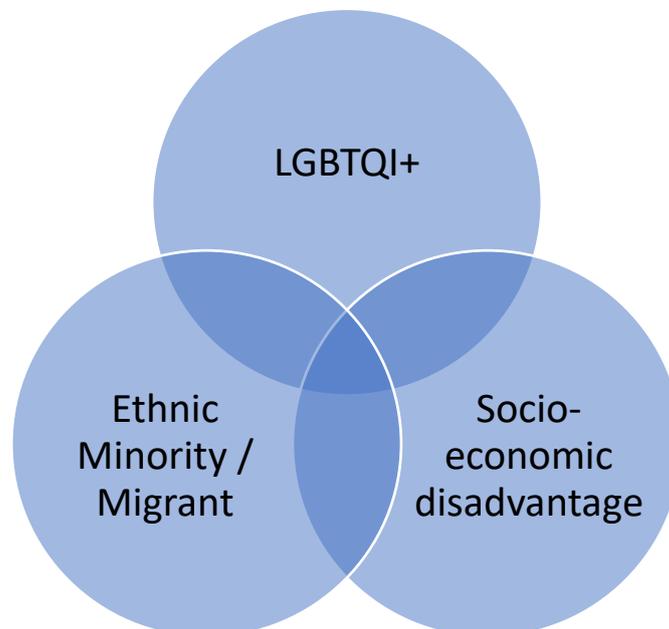
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The TUTOR Project Wheel of Power and Privilege (2024) is an adaptation of Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege (2020) which was an illustration of Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality (1989). It is designed as a teaching tool that is used in a classroom to introduce the concept of intersectionality to educators who may not have taken any education courses since their own training many years (or decades) ago. Intersectionality can be a difficult concept to grasp because of the messiness and fluidity of identity/identities, how a person can change over time, in different contexts, and how they are positioned within the systems and structures of privilege and oppression. Often intersectionality can be reduced to a Venn diagram (below), particularly in a programme of learning like ours that looks at three distinctive target groups.



The above is too simplified a graphic to use to explain intersectionality. It does not explain the ways in which certain facets of someone's identity brings them closer to, or further away from a position of power. The relationship between a person's identity and their position in relation to power is directly associated with the systems and structures of society which uphold what bell hooks calls a "classist, sexist, racist social structure" (1984/2015, p.16). hooks describes the systems and structures that oppress certain types of people as **imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy** (1994). It is in this light, as articulated by hooks, that we adapted Duckworth's wheel.

The Wheel of Privilege is a conceptual and pedagogical teaching tool designed to inform and educate on the complexity of socially constructed human identities and their relationship to power dynamics. It illustrates the general idea that certain identities—such as white,

heterosexual, cisgender men from upper-class backgrounds—are closer to societal power, while others—like Black, queer, or intersex individuals—are often positioned further from power. Ideally, this wheel would be more expansive, incorporating additional tiers of identities and levels of proximity to power to capture more nuance. However, this version remains a simplified model for pedagogical use and does not reflect the full spectrum of intersections and complexities that exist between identities. Power and privilege are shaped by numerous factors, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, and cultural background.

It is important to understand that this wheel offers a generalized concept and cannot account for all the subtleties present in different social, cultural, or geopolitical contexts. While it draws on post-colonial theory, intersectional feminist theories, and broader global trends, its application may differ significantly depending on location. For instance, knowing English might not grant someone immediate power in an isolated region like Ifugao in the Philippines, where local languages and traditions dominate. Yet, globally, the English language is a significant marker of privilege and could eventually provide the speaker with influence as external forces, like foreign interests, grow in those areas. This reminds us of hooks' call to dismantle imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. English is the language of capitalism and imperialism, and as such will always be closest to the centre of power and privilege even within a non-English speaking country.

Similarly, a white European may not be the numerical majority in a city like Jakarta, Indonesia, which could give them the appearance of a minority status. However, post-colonial legacies (imperialism), along with globalized perceptions of Western features, ideologies, and languages (racism, capitalism, and patriarchy), often confer a higher status compared to local norms. In this case, the individual's perceived lack of privilege or distance from power stems from being a numerical minority. However, symbolic power associated with Western culture still puts this person closer to power despite their numerical minority status.

This wheel is intended to spark reflection and dialogue on power dynamics, language, identity/identities, oppression, and privilege. We advise using it within a **pedagogy of discomfort** (Boler, 1999). Pedagogy of discomfort is a pedagogical theory created by Megan Boler in 1999. Boler is a critical education, cultural, and feminist scholar whose work focused on emotions in the classroom. She argued that liberating one's emotions and acknowledging them in the classroom was one way to push back against the ways in which racist, misogynist, and capitalist hierarchical ways of knowing in

schools have maintained various forms of injustice and left the emotions of these with individuals (1999). . *A pedagogy of discomfort begins by inviting educators and students to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs, and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others. Within this culture of inquiry and flexibility, a central focus is to recognize how emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see. This inquiry is a collective, not an individualized, process”* (p.176-177)

A pedagogy of discomfort is not just an invitation to inquire, it is also a call to action (Boler, 1999). It is used in social justice education to challenge students to interrogate themselves, their values and belief systems and reflect on their instinctive emotional responses and resistance to new ideas or concepts – particularly those of a different or opposing world view or experience. Boler argues that emotional responses (such as defensiveness, anger etc.) can prevent critical inquiry if not recognized and understood.

Educators undertaking this programme of learning will be invited by you to sit with the discomfort of their emotions when they encounter concepts and alternative beliefs to their beliefs and/or experiences about how the world works, and for whom. It asks them to distance themselves from their emotions and simply notice them. Then, with a gentle and generous curiousness, unpack where those emotions are coming from, what they are reacting to, and to consider why that might be.

It is with this purpose that the TUTOR Project wheel of power and privilege is presented to them. It asks them to contemplate it and then to begin the difficult and uncomfortable task of untangling their own identities and their relationship to positions or power and privilege. This is a particularly uncomfortable task, and a lot of students push back and some may feel angry because of their lived experiences of growing up and experiencing what they consider to be unprivileged childhoods. Do not be surprised if you are met with exclamations about how hard they worked to get where they are. These feelings should be acknowledged and explored. The purpose of this exercise is not to invalidate their feelings or experiences, but to show them that yes, they did indeed work hard – but they may have worked without the negative consequences of social or systemic discrimination (Eddo-lodge, 2018).

Encourage students to then discuss the wheel using the persona cards in small groups (and perhaps in a big group). The wheel is designed in a way which will provoke conversations about the following:

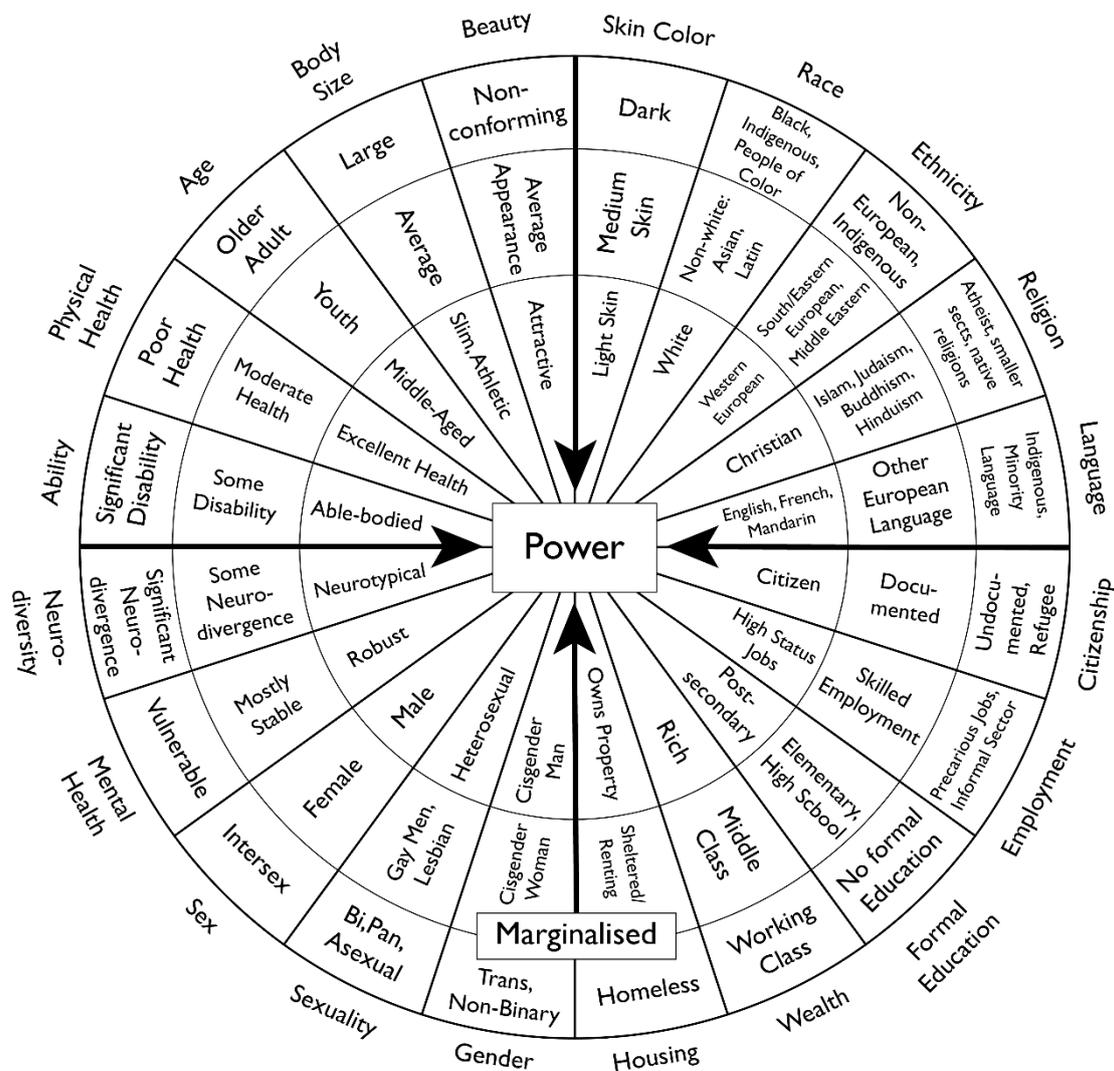
1. naming facets of a person's identity (language),
2. what should be included in the conversation when discussing a person's identity (sections or identity markers),
3. what position or tier along the wheel should certain facets of a person's identity sit – closer to power or closer to the margins and oppression,
4. whether there are more or less tiers needed within the wheel.

These questions, conversations, and dialogue should be encouraged and facilitated by you as the trainer. Remember to set boundaries and ground rules for this type of interaction and class work, and encourage constructive, kind, and curious dialogue. With conversations such as these, students can get enthusiastic and personal. Remind them at every stage to argue the point, not the person.

The TUTOR Project wheel of power and privilege is first a foremost a graphic and pedagogical tool. It is not a diagram or framework to explain intersectionality theory. When using it in a teacher training and educator continuous professional setting, it should be approached with an understanding of its purpose, and its limitations, as power is context-dependent and constantly shifting.

Activity One:

Colour in each of the sections as they apply to you and your identity. Consider, overall, how you sit on the wheel. Are you closer to the position of power and privilege than you thought? Are you further away from the position of power than you thought? Do you experience 'double discrimination'?



Activity Two:

Using the templates at the back, colour in each of the sections as they apply to you and your identity at different points in your life. Does your overall position to privilege and power change as your life changed over time?

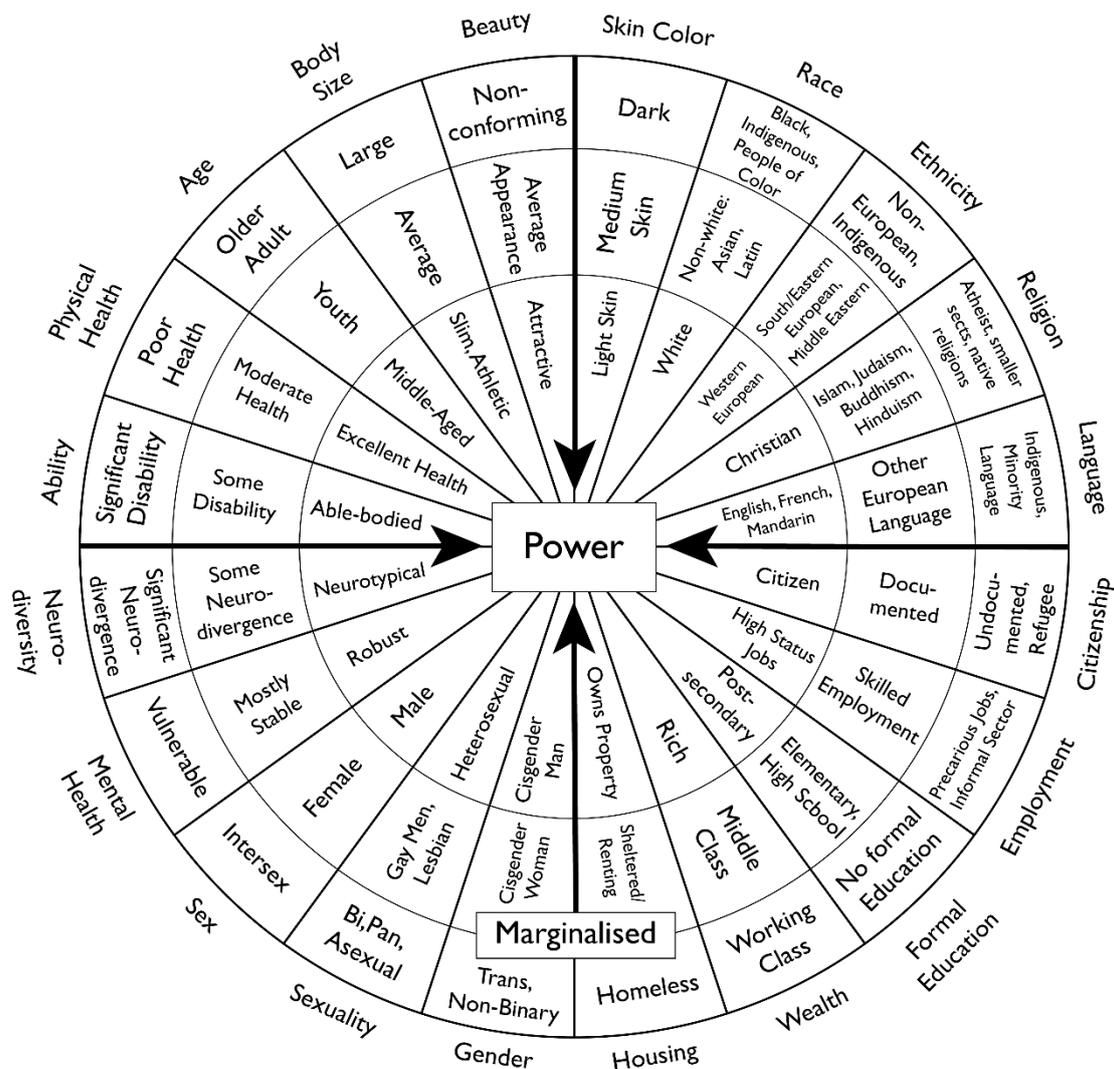
Activity Three:

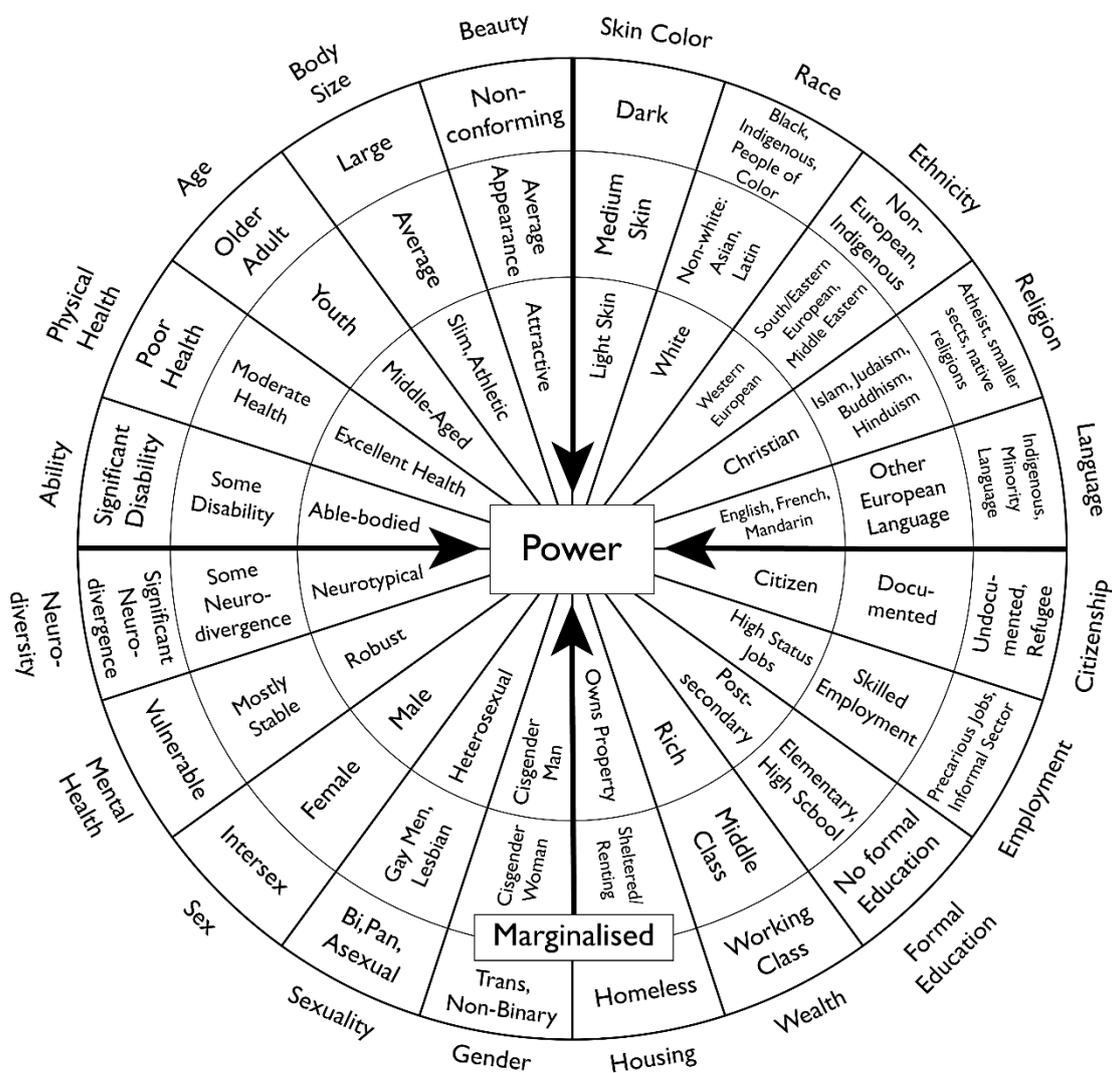
Using the template at the back, colour in each of the sections according to the scenarios below. What do you notice?

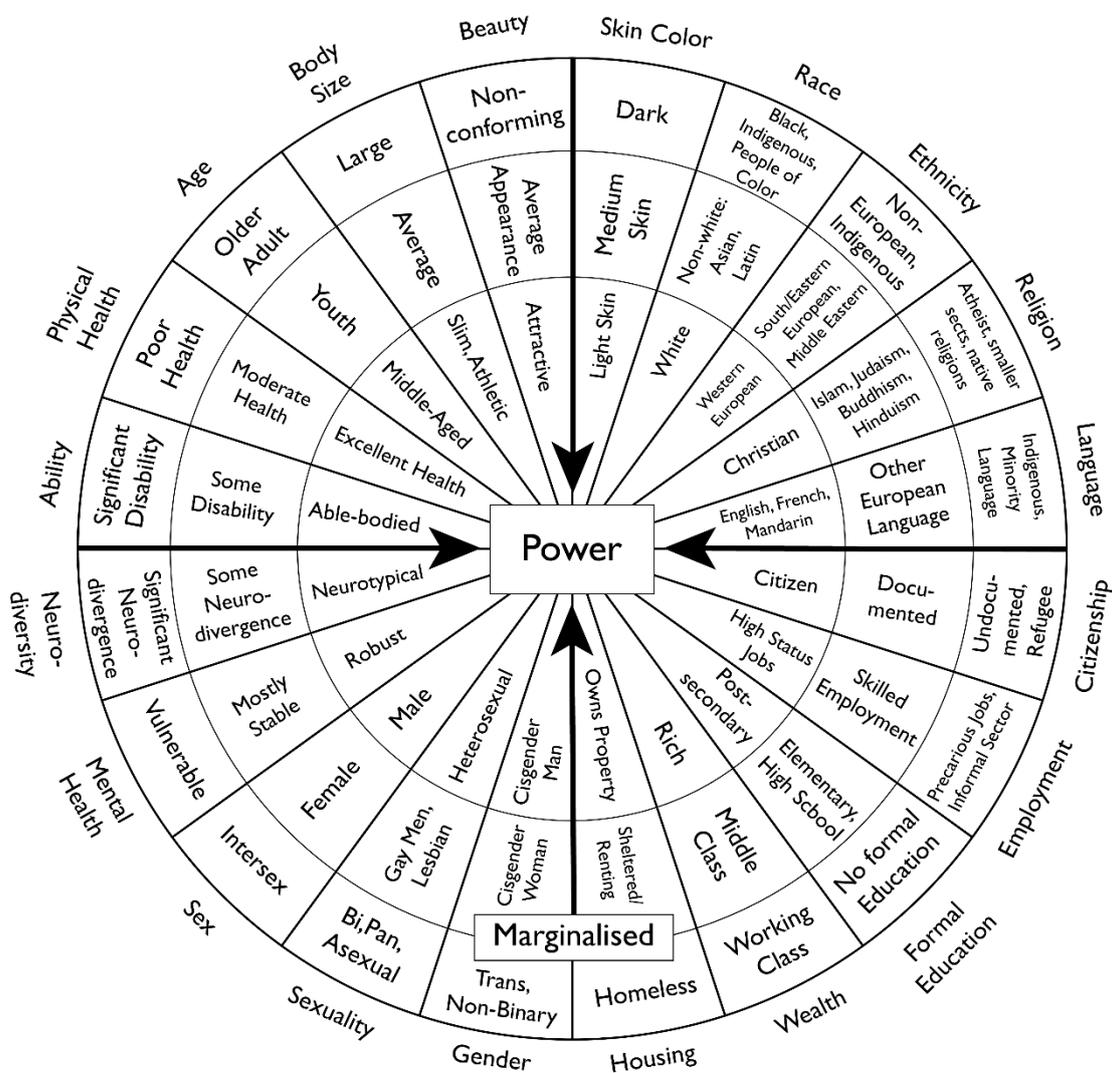
Scenarios:

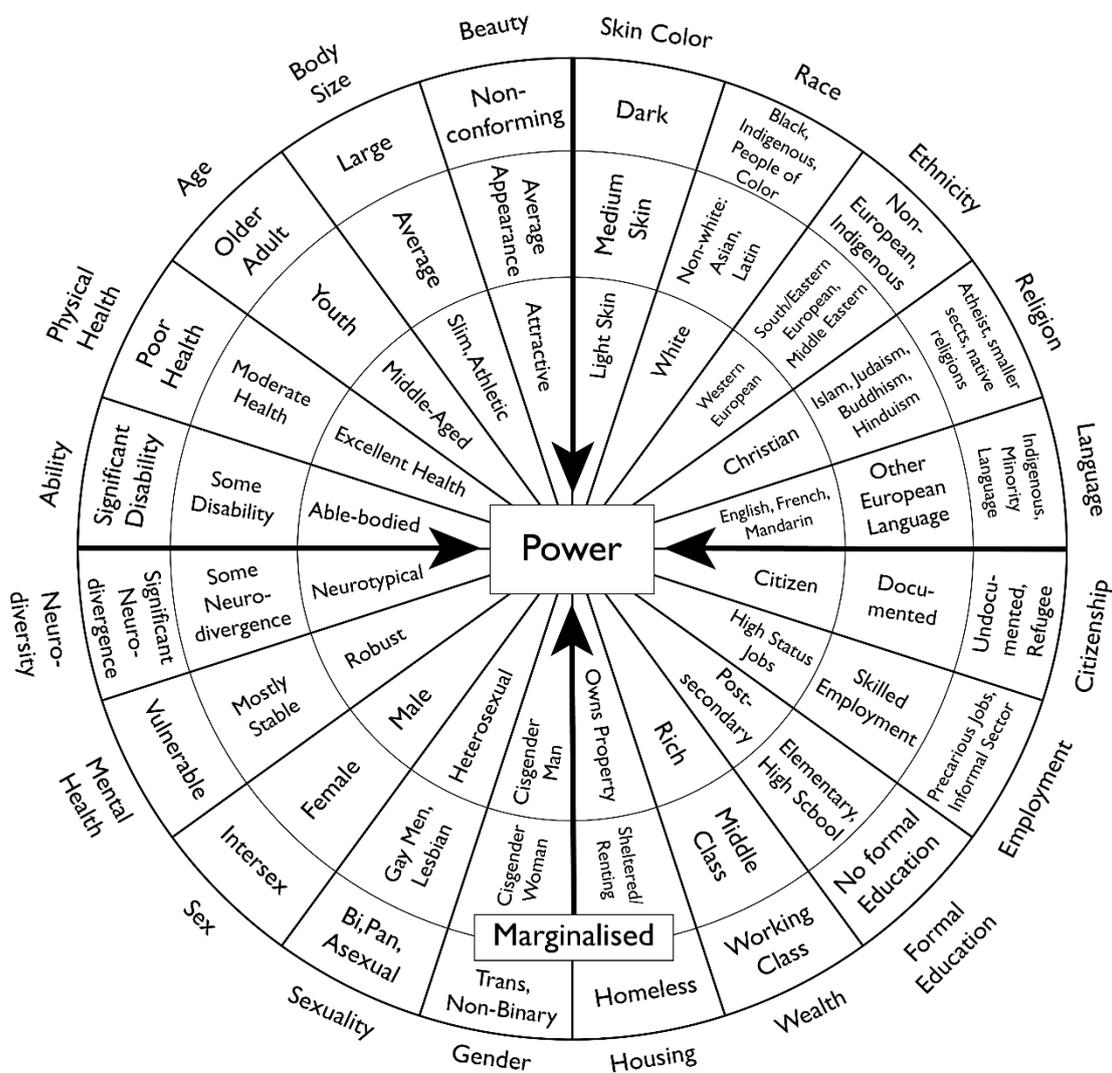
1. You become a CEO or top-level manager.
2. You have moved to a country where the colour of your skin is no longer the dominant skin colour.
3. You inherit 100,000 euros.
4. You are involved in an accident and now have life altering injuries which affect your ability to be independent.
5. Your mental health declines drastically.
6. You win 2.5 million euros in the lotto.
7. Your house is flooded in a freak flood and is beyond repair. You are now homeless.
8. You are diagnosed as Neurodivergent.
9. You marry a person who is a social class above you.
10. They have made heterosexual marriage illegal where you live.
11. You find out that you are expecting triplets.
12. You are old. Your partner, who was your carer, dies unexpectedly.
13. Your religion becomes illegal where you live.
14. You are no longer allowed to make your own medical decisions.

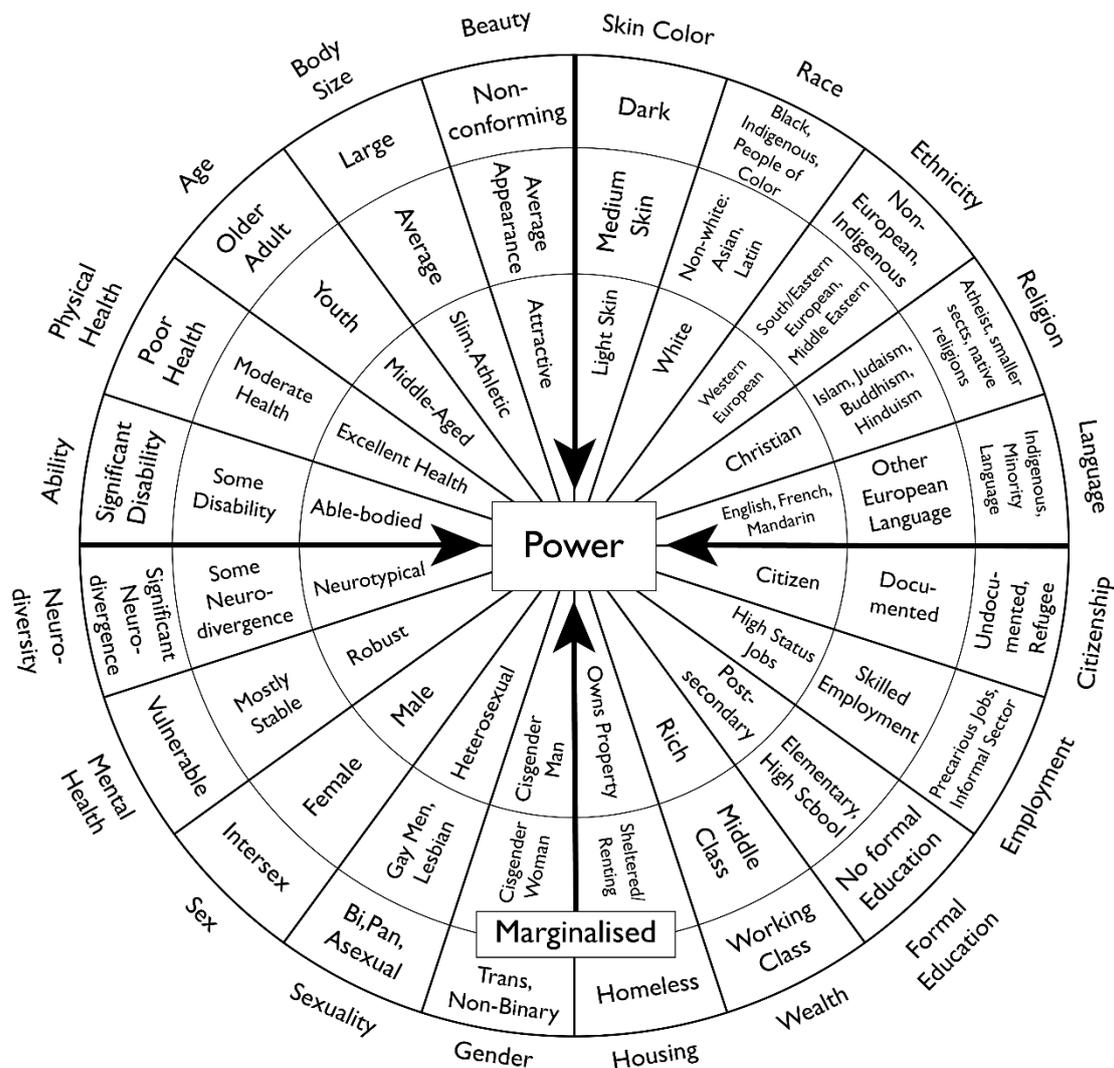
Templates:











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