

WHAT IS DESIGNERS' SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY? INVESTIGATING NEW ROLES OF DESIGNERS IN DESIGN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES.

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ABSTRACT:

The world of design is under a massive change: design becomes everyday activity rather than a professional study. What are the new roles of professional designers under this transformation? This paper investigates the re-writing of designers' roles as an important component in achieving Design Participation. It starts from the Papanek's ideology of social design and explained by the theoretical discourse from Lyotard's concept of narratives concept and then looks at the Populist Movement in design. Following by the introduction of the analysing tool of concrete and abstract space, which aims to understand the changes in the design of world. Real world examples of design participation are shown as the basis for more holistic approach of design. Finally, the discussion is concluded with a realignment of designers' roles (generator, facilitator and developer) from that of producing objects, environments and systems, to that of facilitating innovative collaboration and creating platforms for social inclusion in design practice.

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS DESIGN?

"It's not about the world of design. It's about the design of the world" (Mau et al, 2005). In other word, it is about how the people-centered era is finally replacing the market-driven era and the bigger phenomenon is that people without design education are designing (Sanders, 2006). With the help of technology, people are designing interactive websites, amazing photos, innovative videos and appealing music. This is specific related to what von Hippel (1988 and 2005) called the lead-users who develop and modify products to fit their needs. What is the reaction from the design community to this democratising innovation by people?

Already in 1971, social designer and educator Victor Papanek (1927-1999) who was a strong advocate of the socially and ecologically responsible design of products, tools, and community infrastructures, suggested that "[a]ll men are designers...Design is composing an epic poem, executing a mural, painting a masterpiece, writing a concerto. But design is also cleaning and reorganising a desk drawer, pulling an impacted tooth, baking an apple pie, choosing sides for a backlot basketball game, and educating a child" (Papernek, 1971,1992:3). Then what can professional designers do? "Be designers, we can pay by giving ten percent of our crop of ideas and talents to the seventy-five percent of mankind in need" (ibid.1971, 1992:68). This practice is called social self-tithing¹ of design. According to Papernek (1971, 1992:234-247), there are six areas that design has neglected:

1. *Design for the Third World*
2. *Design of Teaching and Training Devices for the Retarded, the Handicapped, and the Disabled*
3. *Design for Medicine, Surgery, Dentistry, and Hospital Equipment*
4. *Design for Experimental Research*
5. *Design for Breakthrough Concepts*

The more practical issue is how to design within these unfamiliar areas? Papernek (1971, 1992:85) suggested that designers should learn from people who are more capable in solving their own design problems. Avoiding behaving as "instant experts", designers should sympathise with people and design for them. From Papernek's experience and philosophy, it is clear that the changes in design is mainly about the changing relationship between designers and users or politically should be called people. This discussion of social aspects of design and its implication has arisen since the discourse between modernism and post-modernists.

First of all, what is Postmodernism? According to Lyotard's definition in his text, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1972), this question itself is already a postmodern one, as this report defined that

¹ A tithe is a word from the medieval church which means something one paid: the peasant would set aside ten percent of his crop for the poor, the rich man would give up ten percent of his income at the end of the year to feed those in need.

the condition of Postmodernism has to do with the production and legitimation of knowledge (McGuigan, 1999:11). In the appendix of his work on Postmodernism, entitled **Answering the Question: What is Post-modernism?**, Lyotard (1984: 81) defined the postmodern condition as a way to legitimise knowledge which happened with or even before modernism, indicating that the postmodern condition can be understood as pre-modern which could be interpreted as the re-capturing of the culture before modernism. Furthermore, Lyotard specified his preferred way to legitimate knowledge. He stated that science depends on narrative and there are two major narratives, which have legitimised modern science: narratives of speculation and of emancipation. Speculation can be defined as “*a conclusion, theory, or opinion, reasoning based on incomplete information or evidence*” (Microsoft® Word X for Mac® dictionary). Science produced under this narrative can be called ‘science for science’s sake’ which is closest to scientists holding the exclusive right and power to legitimise their own work. However, this type of science has never been the dominant one because its legitimisation process lacks justification according to social utility (McGuigan, 1999:11). Indeed, this type of narrative did not emerge with the history of western ideas development, which is all about the growth of (scientific) knowledge and its contribution to human improvement. On the other hand, the narratives of emancipation followed the European Renaissance of neo-classical thought and culture in 14th-16th centuries, the Age of Reason of 17th century, the Enlightenment of 18th century, the 19th and 20th century eras of Progress and Analysis or even Marxism in the beginning of this century (Lyotard, 1984). They are reflecting the meaning of emancipation, “*the act or process of setting somebody free or of freeing somebody from restrictions*” (Microsoft® Word X for Mac® dictionary). They also all stressed the social usefulness and purpose of science and modern knowledge. In this sense, this paper aims to study design as a narrative of emancipation by redefining the meaning of participation in design practice and developing new tactics for user participation in design.

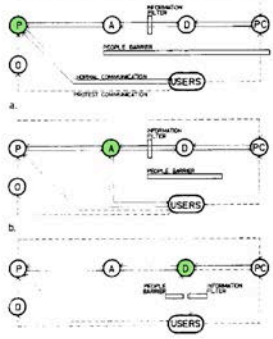
In a similar sense, a reference to distinguish between Modernists’ and Postmodernists’ design methods towards the general public interests refers to Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre’s 1972 paper, ***in the Name of the People; The Populist Movement in Architecture***, which examines the concept of populism in architecture and design (Shamiyeh, 2005:31). They based their thesis on the distinction between the Welfare State designers and the Populists: “*...The Welfare State approach to architecture reached its fullest expression with its twentieth century heirs; Le Corbusier, the designers associated with the CIAM-group during the 1920 and 1930’s, and the proponents of Functionalism and the International Style...The Welfare State designer, whether a planner or an architect, was an ‘elite’ prejudiced by his own private theories against the taste of the ‘user’...Populists saw designers as a class: a class of experts who, because of a total occupational involvement with pure design or because of their own middle-class origins, has developed a private way of looking at the manmade environment...*” (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1972). After three decades, Lefaivre (2002) published another paper to bring back the discussion of populism in architecture entitled ***What People Want: Populism in***

Architecture and Design. The main aim of this paper is to redefine the concept of 'populist architecture' and offer some insights following her 1972 paper with Tzonis, especially the difference between pop architecture and populist architecture. Taste Populism, Pop Architecture and Populist Architecture are Lefaivre's redefinitions of populism in architecture. They are well captured by M. Shamiyeh (2005:25), the organiser of the Design-Organisation-Media (DOM) Research Laboratory 2002 conference who defined three populist positions: "*Architecture for people ... which gets built reflects, so to speak, either the context the vernacular forms are supposed to have originated in or the taste in architectural forms and the general public's sensibility with respect to them.*" The second position is 'Architecture with people' which is about "*the exploration of possibilities to integrate the client or the public in the design process, and is thus one of an operative nature... the effort is made to develop concepts collaboratively with future users or residents.*" The last and most extreme position is called 'Anarchism', which means "*architecture without architects*". This paper is based on this populists' approach to design and define pluralists' roles of designers in relation to the changing designers-people relationship.

2. HOW DOES IT CHANGE?

The first concerted attempt by the design community to investigate the issues of people involvement in the design process was an international conference entitled 'Design Participation' in 1971, which was sponsored and organised by the Design Research Society (DRS), the multi-disciplinary learned society for the worldwide design research community. This conference was the first time to define 'Design Participation' as a specific field and bring 'everyman' from the design field. The common ground of the conference was the belief in the ideology of 'user participation in design'. Its aim was to discuss the importance of user participation in different forms of design applications and establish a community in the design field concerned with such issue. Among presenters, John Page, a British Design Scientist who was the first Chairman of the Design Research Society from 1967 to 1969, presented a paper titled, **Planning and Protest** in which he provided a comprehensive and scientific way to understand user participation in design processes by a series of diagrams demonstrating different design and planning organisational structures (Fig. 1). Page's system avoids a linear way to analyse different practices of Design Participation. Page started with a suggestion that the user participation discussion was about the separation of the world of designers and the world of users, "*The designer lives in the world of design isolation. There are effectively two worlds – the design world and the world of users – and while the real world contains real users, the designer works with abstract users, whose characteristics he invents... Eventually, when the product emerges from this 'design god', it exists in the real external world. It makes an impact on the external world but not necessarily a very good one...*" (Page, 1972).

Key to Figures
 A: Administration
 C: Client
 D: Designer
 O: Opposition party
 P: Political direction
 PC: Planning control
 PO: Hardware production organizer
 UE: External user of other systems in the environment
 UI: Internal user of the designed system
 sU: Specialist assisting external users
 sU: Specialist assisting internal users.



Conventional design organisational structure

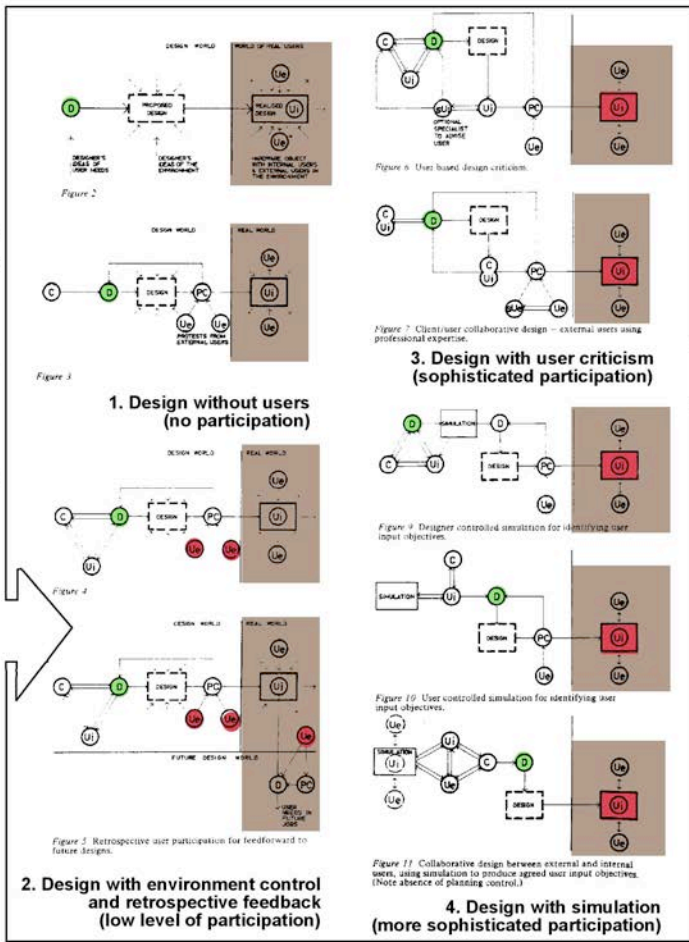
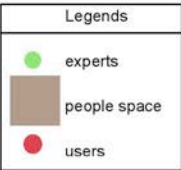


Fig.1 John Pages's design systems diagram to understand user participation in design (1972)

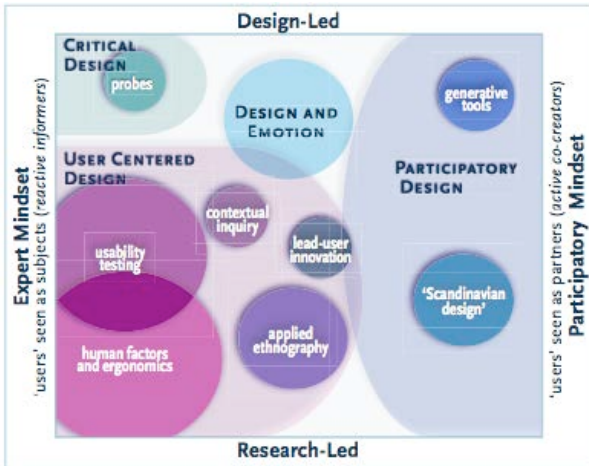


Fig.2 Topography of Design Research by Sanders, E.B.-N (2006)

Sanders E.B.-N, a social scientist and pioneer who introduces participatory research methods for the design, made a cognitive collage (fig.2) of design research space in order to discuss the state of design research in year 2006. There are two dimensions to define the space. The vertical dimension describes the impetus of the design research approaches. Design research methods and tools have been introduced into practice from a research or design perspective i.e. between the design-led to the research-led. Similarly, Sanders also implied the horizontal dimension by the two different mindsets of experts and people. In Lyotard's words, designers or researchers with the expert mindset are practicing designs as the narrative of speculation while those with participatory mindset are designing to emancipate people through design. This distinction also matches with the implication of populists'

approach to design, which is design with people but not for people like the welfare state designers.

Even these explanations or mappings can explain the practice of design participation but the main problem of them is that they are classifying practice into different types, which will lead to segregation. This paper aims to introduce a new analytical framework to understand design participation and encourage mutual understanding for more collaboration between designers, researchers and people. Inspired by Henri Lefebvre's social concept i.e. the mechanism of 'concrete space' and 'abstract space', the Design Participation (DP) analytical framework is a tool to understand the relationship between design experts and people related to the development of design process. Is there any common ground between these two spaces? Can experts open up the design process to let users move into the abstract space to co-design the built environment that they are going to live or work in? Can experts design in a more direct way, i.e. design *with* users in the concrete space, instead of *for* users from the abstract space?

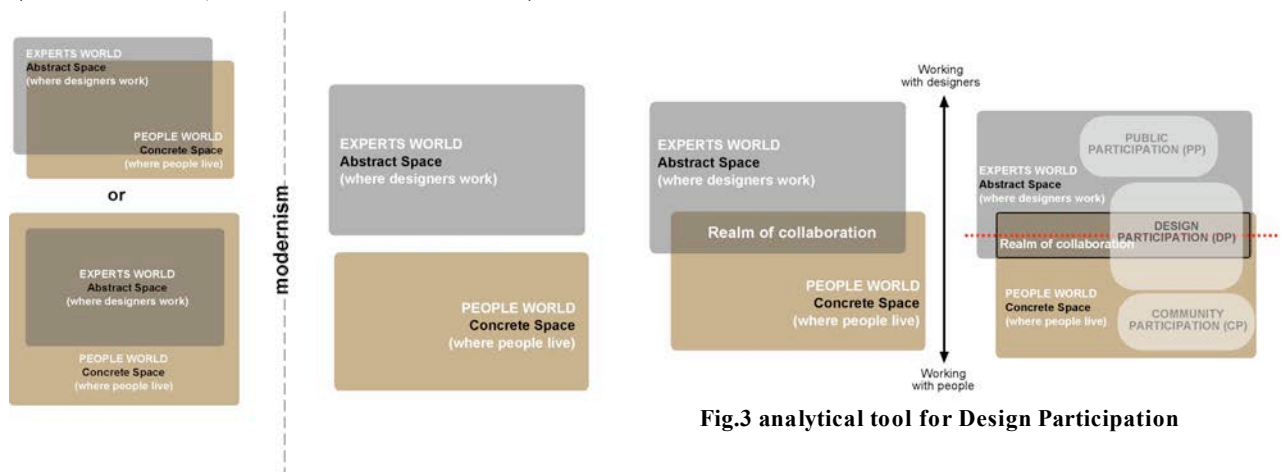


Fig.3 analytical tool for Design Participation

Fig. 3 demonstrates how this new DP analysing tool work: it was based on Lefebvre's social spatial concept that divided the world into two worlds or practices: abstract space for experts and concrete space for people. The worlds were separated from the era of modernism by implying professionalism and treating people as subjects for reactive information. Thus, the two worlds re-join again and a new form of in-between space called the realm of collaboration is formed. Applying this tool to design practice, 'designing with designers' and 'design close to user' are opposite poles of an axis that can be mapped parallel to this diagram of the new relationship between the three spaces. Three modes of participation are identified and distinguished including Public Participation (PP) in abstract space, Community Participation (CP) in concrete space and Design Participation (DP) across the overlap space of the realm of collaboration.

3. PROCESS DESIGN

This paper endeavours the practice of Design Participation to avoid mere 'tokenism' and aims at articulating tactics for a transformation of the traditionally conceived process of design. Through discussing two examples in this section, it aims to define the term 'participation' within the greater social context and how design participation methods change through time and types of collaboration.

EXAMPLE 1: SEGAL METHOD

Empowering people by allowing them to actually design, which worked better for small-scale projects in which designers work closely with their clients. Clients are not just brief givers but active partners in the design process. The 'users' had ideas about what they wanted and sought out designers as their 'master masons' to realise their dream but not to dominate the process as 'masters'. This type of Design Participation can be well



Fig.4 Self-build village, Walter Way, London

illustrated by the UK architect Walter Segal. Introduced in 1986, a special timber-frame construction system, the *Segal method*, was a simplified building method for laypeople to build their own homes (Fig.4). This flexible self-build system lets users make their own design and make changes to improve it over the years. After two decades of development, this method has provided professional help for people to participate in the process of designing their own environment and has been developed into the Walter Segal Self Build Trust (WSSBT). Its aim is to help people to build their own homes and community buildings through educational programmes and professional advice to different organisations. The *Segal Method* is an exemplar of architectural implementation of process-oriented design, which focuses on transforming the conventional way of architectural design and empowering passive users. Through transferring design knowledge, people are set free and are given control of the design process of their own built environment. Both enabling and empowering examples underwent a similar development in terms of technology.

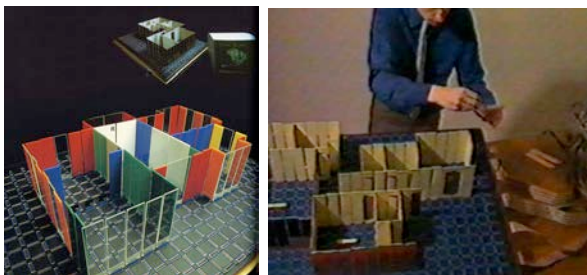


Fig.5 Self-builder design kit, working electronic system (left) and user demonstration (right), designed by John and Julia Frazer, consultants,

These innovative participatory design processes were developed with the invention of interactive device systems. Design/architectural academics, Professors John and Julia Frazer, worked with Walter Segal and designed electronic devices for users to visualise their design through interactive systems. Fig.5 is the 'self-

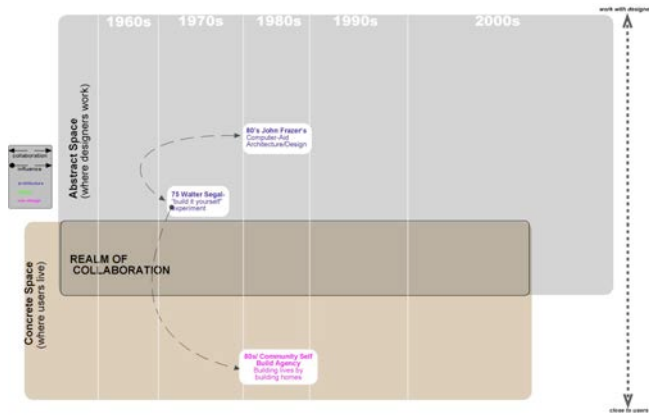


Fig.6 Development of Segal Methods between spaces

builder design kit' that is the result of a collaboration between Frazer and Segal which aimed to develop another way to transfer abstract design knowledge. This "build it yourself" experiment started as a design innovation in the abstract space, even though Segal developed this method by working with self-builders. Thus, the method moved from abstract space to people's space to develop a network of self-build community agencies including the Segal Trust (fig.6).



EXAMPLE 2: TRANS.FORMA DESIGN

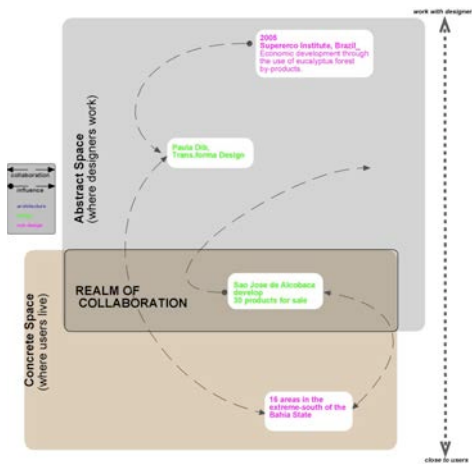


Fig.7 Paula Dib' market products designed with São José de Alcobaça local communities.
Fig.8 Its project flow between spaces.

Paula Dib, a young Brazilian product designer who won the British Council's International Young Design Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2006. The prestigious prize was for her intervention with communities throughout Brazil to create social product design. In December 2005, the Supereco Institute in Brazil invited her to develop a project about economic development through the use of eucalyptus forest by-products. Instead of designing in abstract space with her mates, Paula decided to adapt the participatory methods and she visited 16 different areas located in the extreme – south of the Bahia State of Brazil. Compared to the 'Emergent Brazil' in the urban areas, this area is the 'Regional Brazil' where is strongly under-developed and under-valued. Choosing São José de Alcobaça as a base for a pilot, Paula's design idea is based on an exchange model: she identified local materials and processes with local communities and created a range of 30 products including ceramics, textiles and weaving (fig.7) for sale in the main urban centres. The result was the traditional craftsmanship is sustained

and transformed and at the same time, economic income from urban areas came back to the areas to improve quality of life for Brazilian communities (fig.8).

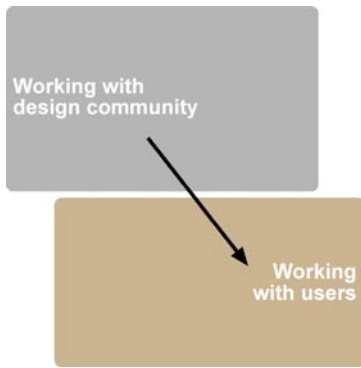
In these two examples across spaces, referring to those Design Participation activities initiated by designers in the abstract space and then developed through non-government organisations (NGO) working closely with people in the concrete space. Some designers start their Design Participation activities from the abstract space as a new way of design thinking and then move on to work in the people’s space. They prefer to work closely with users. After a period, they will often become organisers of non-governmental organisations to implement their ideas. It is clear that the designer-people relationships are changing throughout design processes i.e. designers working in different spaces in different situations.

4. DESIGN PARTICIPATION TYPOLOGY

In particular, Design Participation can be defined into four types (Lee, 2006), which brought about a rethinking of its relationship with the bigger social system. In design practices working in abstract mode with limited contact with users are called Design Participation for innovation. At the other pole, people are working as designers for their own projects and these practices are called Design Participation for motivation. More complicated Design Participation practices are happening in the realm of collaboration. The common ones are those Design Participation practices for collaboration, which aim to encourage co-design processes. Comparatively, Design Participation for emancipation requires more time and effort to conduct but their effects are longer-term. A comparison of these four types is shown in table 1.

Space of operation	What’s Design Participation for?	The relationship between the designers’ space and the users’ space	The role of ‘designers’	The role of ‘users’
1. Designers’ space	1.Innovation (designer only)	Two spaces are separated	Masters/ authorities	Imagined user/representatives
2. Realm of collaboration (between designers and people)	2a. Collaboration (designer-driven)	Overlapping at the corner and formed the realm of collaboration	Co-designers/ facilitators	Co-workers
	2b.Emancipation (User-driven)	People’s space taking over experts’ space	Stimulators	Creative people/advisers
3. Users/people’s space	3.Motivation (user only)	Overlapping as one entity	Craftsmen/builders	Active clients

Table 1.Four Types of Design Participation



4.1. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR INNOVATION

This first type of Design Participation is the result of the separation of the designers' space and users' space with the development of professionalism. The designers' power forced the abstract space (where designers work) to separate from the concrete space (where people live). When the two spaces separated, designers focused mainly on the design outputs. Many designers who seek for interesting design concepts develop various ways to understand their users and hope to get inspiration from the interaction. The main parameter of this model of Design Participation is the denial and the control of users by the designers, described by Hill (2003: 10) as the 'passive user' model. The autonomy of the design process is under the control of designers. Design Participation happens in an imaginary or remote way. People are pulled into the abstract space as passive subjects for analysis for new design concepts. Designers' aim in this designer-user relationship is challenging user perception and providing new design experience/concepts for users. For example, prototyping is also a common parameter for user/people/human centred design in order to involve users. It is a popular component of design processes within functionalism and it is important to test the product before it goes into mass production. Thus, people are pulled into the design process to 'give comment'. In the development of architecture, 'exemplar' is the term for prototyping. Since the famous housing experiment, the *Weissenhof Siedlung* in 1927, there are many similar projects especially addressing housing issues in different parts of the world to test new housing ideas with the inhabitants for further development. Designers create prototypes of their concepts and invite potential users to test them for further improvement.



4.2. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR COLLABORATION

This type of Design Participation is based on the spread of community action and social movements fighting for social democracy in the 1960s and early 1970s. These projects and proposals are reactions from the design community to critiques from the public, especially those against functionalism and form-oriented design practice. These groups react and work in an area where abstract and concrete space merge. They form platforms for designers and users to interact in order to get better design feedback. Some design community members have developed new methods to interact with users and are initiators of Design Participation for collaboration. Their aims are to encourage user involvement as an extension of design processes and an enhancement of user experience. These new methods can be divided into two main

applications: community based environmental design and product development, especially in IT system design. Design Participation in the built environment becomes more important with an increasing awareness of a sense of community in many societies. Since architectural design processes are longer in timeframe and influence more people, the practice of architecture can only involve a small group of representatives of the users. Design ideologies under this type of Design Participation include Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language* (1972), Newman's *Defensible Space* (1972), Sanoff's *Community Design and Social Architecture* (1977), Wates's *Community Architecture* (1972) and Day's *Consensus Design* (2003). All these architectural practices are process-oriented and try to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional consultation process, which limit the individual citizen's ability to participate in planning.



4.3. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR EMANCIPATION

The other type of Design Participation within the realm of collaboration is Design Participation for emancipation. Compared to other models, this type of is more towards users or even initiated by people. Diagrammatically, the design expert's space is surrounded by the people's space which indicates that designers are part of the public i.e. people and designers have different roles but a similar social status. It is about enabling, empowerment and evolving. In the field of architectural design, editor of *Non-Plan: Essays on freedom participation and change in modern architecture and urbanism*, Jonathan Hughes (2000:182) claimed that the involvement of the users of architecture in the design process had become a serious and realisable consideration, and such involvement was greatest in mass-housing projects supported by public funding, and in which the social difference between an overwhelmingly middle class architectural profession, who design the building, and the typically working class residents, who live or are going to live in the housing, proved to be one of the key reasons for the failure of public housing.



4.4 DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR MOTIVATION

The final model of Design Participation works in the situation in which that there is no separation between the designers' space and users' space. In other words, there is no distinction between the 'designers' and the 'users'. There is one space which means people are the designers. It is about the self –motivation from people in the design participation process that they create. The example of self-motivated design practice by non-professional people is the do-it-yourself culture. Do-it-yourself (DIY) has been called the only real Design Participation in which the people invent their own rules (Banham, 1972:7). This practice has developed since the publication

of early design magazines such as *Practical Householder* in the 50s. Its development is also like what Banham suggested as “an alternative design culture”, which is not manipulated by the design community. While more and more DIY superstores such as B&Q, are opening around the world and with the help of DIY television programmes, this ‘alternative’ culture is providing power to people and encouraging the transformation of Design Participation for motivation.

5. NEW ROLES OF DESIGNERS

Different types of Design Participation are developed and worked with the DP analytical tool. It represents a framework for everyone to understand Design Participation in relation with all social activities. The result suggests that designers or design researchers need to develop tactical techniques that are developed *with* people and not *for* users. This need was articulated by de Certeau (1984:37) who defined ‘tactics’ as “...the indexes of consumption and of the interplay of forces. They depend on a problematic of enunciation. In addition, although (or because) they are excluded in principle from scientific discourse, these ‘ways of speaking’ provide the analysis of ‘ways of operating’ with a repertory of models and hypotheses.” This paper describes an alternative approach to designing with people. Based on this viewpoint, this section answers the main research question of this paper: what are the new roles of designers in the social content?

In the case of Design Participation, ‘tactics’ can refer to designers working and developing quick and effective ways of designing to tackle the problems together with people in concrete space. Designing with the changing relationship, designers need to develop Design Participation tactics in different spaces to fit to different situations. In contrast to ‘strategies’, ‘tactics’ are based on time and opportunities. ‘Strategy’ is about the

“calculation of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power can be isolated” (de Certeau, 1984: 36). Therefore, ‘strategy’ is based on place. “... [A] tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and

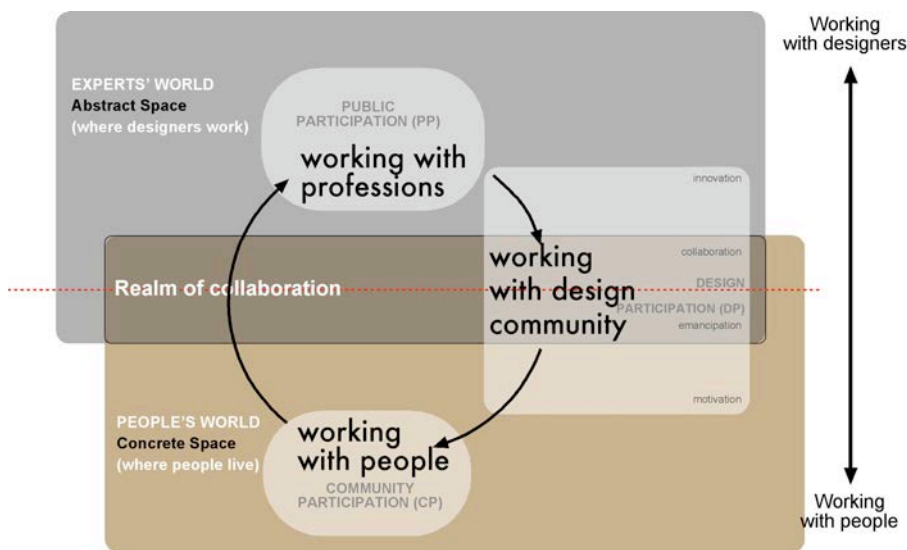


Fig.9 Design Participation typology and tactics diagram

with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver 'within the enemy's field of vision', as von Bulow put it, and within enemy territory." (de Certeau, 1984:37). After defining the three operation spaces, the three modes of participation and the four types of design participation, designers need to work between them in a tactical way (fig.9) in three new area of design implications:

5.1.TACTIC I: AS DESIGN DEVELOPERS (WORKING WITH THE DESIGN COMMUNITY)

The first level of Design Participation Tactics is about the practice of Design Participation from the viewpoint of the actual design process. It is the role of design developers who need to work with design community to address Design Participation issues directly from actual design processes and also start from the Design Participation domain and are based on existing practice of environmental design in order to develop tactics to design with participation. People respect designers and architects as a profession and those who can afford it will employ them to design their home, office or other spatial projects. The practice is that clients give designers design briefs explaining what they want. Then designers transform their ideas to spatial designs to apply to their properties. However, in the process, difficulties of communication and misunderstanding do happen all the time. Do people know what they want and can they explain their ideas clearly? Is there any misinterpretation during different parts of the process?

Beyond design researchers developing tools to help designers to understand people; the most important thing is how designers *respect* the people's knowledge in using design. This requires a realignment of roles. Designers are people with design knowledge and users are people with knowledge in using specific products, services or systems. Sometime other people may need to join in the team to deliver participatory design solutions that everyone can use. This situation can be managed when the relationship between stakeholders are simple. The tricky part is to encourage an exchanging of roles, which may contradict accustomed existing social practice. Their direct influence was a new experience of the design process for those involved. Judging from their feedback, most of the stakeholders appreciated the extra input by the designer who also worked as design facilitator. They questioned the feasibility of this new process because of the limited time and complicatedness of most design projects. It is important to develop flexibility in the actual process and derive various tools for different design situations.

5.2.TACTIC II: AS DESIGN FACILITATORS (DESIGNING WITH PEOPLE IN THE CONCRETE SPACE)

The primary aspiration of this new role is 'Design with Participation', which involved questions of how designers work with people and other professionals in order to influence them with creative design thinking and co-develop new ways of making things. The problem is that roles were not defined in the first place and it is difficult to define since the aim is to explore the practice across the three participation modes and develop new ways to insert design elements into these different practices. The result is that this exploration conflicted with the existing power structure. Social workers are the service providers in the Community Participation domain and they 'help' residents especially the disadvantaged ones to assert their rights in dealings with experts and governmental organisations in the abstract world. It is unusual to have designers' involvement in community development projects and these activities are mainly controlled by social service organisations, who set up the scenes and arrange the roles. To redefine and reinterpret the role of designers in different types of participation projects is to encourage collaboration. However, people from different domains work in different patterns. For example, there is a standard practice for Community Participation projects by which social workers empower passive residents. As a result, there were many conflicts happening during the process regarding pushing the limits of existing practice. The other tackle issue is the actual process. There seems to be a lack of mutual development between spaces. More collaboration between different professionals can improve the process and designers' roles can facilitate these collaborations. However, most people are not used to the language of designers. This explains why Design Participation required more time and special studies in order to break these barriers through design of user interacting interfaces, or so-called 'games' a community architects/designers named them, requires more consideration and empathy about the reactions of people.

5.3.TACTIC III: AS DESIGN GENERATORS (COLLABORATING WITH PROFESSIONALS IN THE ABSTRACT SPACE)

Since people have begun to 'have their say' and understanding and responding to customers has become a key element in expressing social responsibility by both governmental departments and big corporations, there have been many participation projects, especially those happening in the Public Participation domain. However, most of these projects can be classified as tokenisms according to Arnstein's (1969,1996) *Ladder of Citizen Participation*. The third and final level of Design Participation Tactics is to bring the lessons from the realms of Design and Community Participation back to the domain of Public Participation in order to transform the practice of professionals by inserting creative design thinking and empathy with people's creativity into different participation projects. Through participating in different Public Participation projects, which are mainly research-oriented, in which people's opinions are collected for the development of policy or strategies, different settings of these projects provided a comparative base to discern changes of roles for designers and the influence of these changes throughout the participation processes with involvement of

different professions. The common situation of these Public Participation projects is that the implications of design are just part of other bigger public political projects or campaigns. This also indicates that 'Public Participation' is a well-developed area within its own practice but its integration with other participation domains seems not yet explored, especially in terms of design implications.

These three Public Participation projects worked with different experts for participation. Because of the high level of experts' involvement in these projects, many issues regarding division of roles and the effects of the actions are raised. The actual design actions are relatively less important because these projects are part of bigger social discussions that involve many stakeholders and long-term development; design elements in these contexts are not as essential as other political, economic and social factors. The most important design factor affecting Public Participation is the agenda of each project. Since most Public Participation projects are usually process-oriented or part of research processes about understanding specific social issues, it is difficult to define their influence without referring to their original agenda. The results were unrelated or isolated activities that became part of the learning path of the researchers and did not bring any effect to the general public. It is also common that agendas of Public Participation are related to civic education and awareness-building exercises. In such cases, the projects may lead to an articulation and awareness of social concerns, but do not produce tangible results.

6. CONCLUSION: DESIGN IN THE NAME OF PEOPLE

The pursuit of increasing user participation in the design process implies a realignment of designers' roles (developer, facilitator and generator). The important point is about how designers should work in a flexible way and shift between different roles for different situations. Design is not about strategy but more about tactics. The essential job of designers is to develop new channels of communications with stakeholders and creative design processes. Positions on the agendas, methodologies and epistemologies involved in the Design Participation process are expressed in this paper. Its 'agenda' refers to how the Design Participation process addresses the social context, reflecting social changes and needs. Its 'methodology' applies to devising holistic Design Participation processes developed through working with users and matching appropriate tactics to each different situation. Finally, its 'epistemology' evokes the important question of how Design Participation tactics can be transferred to become a foundation and tool for future development.

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