DRAFTS FROM SOCIOLOGY OF DESIGN. INTRODUCTION TO DISCUSSION

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Editors
PAULINA ROJEK-ADAMEK, GRZEGORZ GAWRON

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Reviewer:
Professor Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska

Cover design:
Jakub Adamek

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FOREWORD

The modern world is an ever more "designed". It is not only about everyday objects, packages or brand new car. It turns out that the design starts to be present also in the planning different areas of everyday life in modern societies. It is because in the speed of the modern world almost every area of human activity needs re-designing, re-defining, re-forming and adjusting it to the changing human needs.

When Charles Eams, American designer, was asked about the boundaries of design he answered shrewdly: *And what are the boundaries of problems?* Because good design is a verb and not only a noun. It is a series of steps which helps to define a challenge, look for solutions and render them possible. Design could start by saying that this is one of the most creative sectors which directly and indirectly contributes to improving the quality of life. Contemporary design and the roles of designers are increasingly associated with the search for solutions to meet public expectations. Such an approach can be successfully described as *socially responsible design*, for the turn of the century XX / XXI it became not only a time of great challenges, but also opportunities and social expectations. The mission of the modern designer, according to many researchers, includes in their work needs of the end user so we can observe the transfer of its mechanisms for the social area. Contemporary design proves that it does not avoid responsibility for the important challenges of the future (*sustainable design, social design, environmental design, universal design*), but it is also looking for innovative and creative solutions.

Therefore it is appropriate to take discussions on the social application of design, especially in the context of post-crisis realities and global processes of social and cultural change. Culture of design, what Daniel Koh called, is both what designers are doing and what is "around us". It is simultaneously a process, practice model and also the activity in the social environment.

The following publication is a collection of texts on the contemporary meaning of design, the changing in roles of designers and cultural and social expectations described in the broad cognitive perspective. Although this topic raised in the field of sociology quite recently, the complexity of the phenomenon, its

manifestations, forms and ways of preventing provoked the debate on the field. Hence, presented volume is prepared by the researchers, whose interests have been provoked by needs of sociological inclusion in the debate in the area dominated so far by theorists and practitioners from the field of art and related disciplines. Through the publication of this book we would like to explore the area associated with the use and perception of design in a broader social context and try to find the answers for few questions:

- *What is the role or roles for design in modern society?*
- *How design can be use in solving problems connected with social and cultural changes?*
- *What are the examples of the application of design in processes of social and cultural change?*
- *What are the boundaries of socially responsible design?*
- *How to involve society in the process of socially responsible design?*

The debate about defining the modern design process, the social roles of designers and their participation in engaging and listening the final recipients at individual and collective level were discussed during the *12th Conference of the European Sociological Association in Prague*, (Czech Republic, 25–28 August 2015), where editors of this book had the unique opportunity to chair the session *Design in use – the application of design in global processes of social and cultural change.* The discussion initiated during this meeting provoked us to make efforts to issue this volume in order to encourage sociological association to open for a wider interdisciplinary discussion in this area.

The publication opens with the article written by by Liubov Bronzino and Elena Kurmeleva *Design as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon: 'Epistemic' Analysis.* As they said, many aspects of human activity are now being interpreted through the prism of design as a conceptual framework. There is no general theoretical approach in the social sciences concerning the concept of design, which allows it to be unambiguously interpreted. Consequently, it seems logical that we should appeal to the concept proposed by B. Latour, who has suggested the idea of universalization of design and Michel Foucault who proposes that we can integrate the 'words and things' (material objects and methods of their narration) into the concept of discourse. However, on the other hand, he constructs a theory, which proposes a sequential change of 'epistemes', where the relationship of words and things becomes the ultimate determinant in shaping the character of discourse.

The second chapter *Dasein and Design. Life as a Project and Furnishing a House with Using Polish Design,* written by Jacek Mianowski concerns the application of democratic methods of the design (*user centered design, participato-*

ry design and metadesign) in the context of cooperation between two enterprises (design – research company and one operating on the building materials and home furnishings market). The case study shows results of their collaboration. Problems associated with the issue of the use of democratic methods of the design are presented from the perspective of phenomenological philosophy and sociology. The analysis of democratizing creative practices in the design takes into account its social consequences and what social actors think of it.

Another text, *Participatory Design and New Roles of Designers: Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy,* written by Paulina Rojek-Adamek has taken the issues of social participation and reflection on building a sense of local identity in the perspective of the opportunities offered by a modern approach to design. Contemporary design and the roles of designers increasingly are associated with the search for solutions to meet public expectations. Such an approach can be successfully described as socially responsible design. The turn of the century XX/XXI became a time of great challenges, but also opportunities and social expectations. The present text of assumptions is to achieve three objectives: first – to bring the idea of community by reference to the definition of the concept of social participation; secondly – to show new approach to design understood as a tool in solving social problems in cooperation with users; thirdly – to show Participatory Design as an approach to involve in design process.

A continuation of the subject matter is the text, written by Olga Glumac, *Lab of Collaborative Youth,* aims at answering how the concept of *Lab for Collaborative Youth* can be established through a sustainable *community of practice* (Wenger) to serve as a *safe environment* for individual and collective learning where young people actively participate in decision-making processes. Moreover, the inquiry is approached through a practice of co-design which investigates how to co-create more inclusive learning processes and services with, for and by youngsters in their local context. The first set of the ideas came from existing concepts of *living labs, design labs, co-labs, neighborhood labs* and also *enabling platforms* – networks of human and non human stakeholders who play a meaningful role in co-creation (Dolwick 2009) and in design-after-design (Ehn 2008) allowing to have a flexible system in which its users can always adjust, even if it was already formed and it is in use.

Author of the fifth chapter, Grzegorz Gawron presents the problem of ageing in the perspective of design. Seniors' social integration is a major challenge in societies which values solidarity and respects individual freedoms. Conditions and quality of daily life depend very much on the social and physical environment which we live in. It often plays a major role in facilitating our personal

independence. As a result, the demand for the creation of environments, products, technologies and services accessible and useful for "old" is growing. The article attempts to present the theoretical and practical objectives of possible use of design for determine accessibility and social participation of people who are getting old.

The next chapter is the text of Manuela De Vicenzi, *The Role of Shape: Experiences and Meanings in the Contemporary City.* As Manuela De Vicenzi wrote, the contemporary metropolis seems to be mostly affected by the phenomena of social disintegration and inequalities (Bauman, 2013; Magnaghi, 2010; Conde, Magalhães, 2001). The modernist utopia of progress, freedom and equality did not take place and there are many examples of urban peripheries around the world that remind us of that. Given this context, the focus of this paper will be put on *Tróia*'s urban project and the *Bairro do Condado*'s social housing project in Lisbon, where both cases present the same morphology and project, although with totally different results. On one hand, we have the Garden City of *Tróia*, built and designed for upper-middle class vacationers, while on the other we have the *Bairro do Condado*'s neighbourhood, representing one of the most stigmatised areas of Lisbon, particularly due to deviant behaviour, criminality and environmental degradation. The question that immediately comes to mind is: Why did a project based on the concept of "Garden City" like *Tróia*, thought to enhance and improve the inhabitants life quality, not work in a context like that of *Bairro do Condado*? The author will try to answer these questions in this article

The complement of this image is text *Approaching Vernacular Design in a Post-Socialist City. A Real Life Example*, which refers to concept of vernacular design. As the authors said, it exists in opposition to the established language of professional marketing, it disregards official regulation, and often, common sense. Vernacular design is characterised by tactical approach – it is created on the spot, as a response to the momentary needs and it freely uses the techniques available at hand. By many, it is seen as an "ugly problem" – it invades the public space and defies the rules of a well planned urban environment. In the same time it is an example of truly local aesthetics, a visual language developed outside of the ubiquitous discourse. In the modernist rhetoric, it is seen as something that needs to be eliminated, uprooted and repaired. The other position is taken by those who see it as a manifestation of a genuine local culture, as something that needs to be understood, and to some extent, protected. The question that arises, is how to practically approach the vernacular design in rapidly developing cities, which seek to reestablish their own visual identity.

The closure of the volume is the text *It's Our Version of Arabic – Connecting The Global and the Local Through Design*. Author – Kristiane Marie Lindland – takes the view that product design can influence, express and re-interpret the identity of both product-developers and users of the products. Likewise, brand-identity and company-identity can also influence the meaning of design. What then, when a customer requests custom-tailored products with very different design-preferences than the company itself? New product development is both crucial and risky for developing design identity. In this paper she addresses meaning making and meaning makers in customized NPD-processes that stretches the limits for not just what it is technically possible to make, but also for own design identity.

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We would like to make a cordially thanks to Mrs. Professor M. Boguniа-Borowska for review of this publication. All comments and professor' suggestions not only helped us to improve present volume, but have also become a contribution to undertake a deeper reflection on the issue. We are aware that the topic of Design in sociology seems to constantly enter into the new areas of knowledge and does not operate in isolation from the context of sociological discourse. Therefore it seems that would be a huge abandonment to treat this publication as the final voice in discussion. Encouraged by the professor' reviews authors woud like to declare that presented issue will have its continuation in subsequent hearings[1]. We allow ourselves at this point to put the fragment of review, which – in our – opinion – might be a reason to look into the content of presented book.

> (...) *It is a valuable compendium of theoretical and practical knowledge for students of architecture and applied arts, graphic designers, sociologists, and urban planners. Both theoreticians and practitioners will find a lot of inspiring information in it. Undoubtedly it is a publication that will aid professionals, when implementing their ideas, first and foremost helping them take on non-standard and non-stereotypical challenges. It should stimulate the readers to search for unique projects and solutions that are far from obvious as well as to involve other people and create social bonds along the way. All that would be conducive to the development of a better and friendlier world, securing everyone's wellbeing.*

[1] Eg in the publication of re-definition and description of professional role of designers in sociological perspective, currently being prepared by Paulina Rojek-Adamek (in the publishing plan for 2017).

It is book recommended to those who doubt that constructing a better world and a more beautiful space is even possible (...). It is also recommended to those who keep searching for ways of a more sustainable design of the different domains of our social life.

Professor Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska

Passing this book into the hands of readers we hope that it will encourage to look at the problem of contemporary meaning of design and its role in modern world as a phenomenon that is not limited to a single perspective. This discourse showed that design can successfully respond to demographic changes, social or cultural challenges. We therefore hope that the publication will be a noticed voice in a conversation about the dynamics and changes taking place in the area of social application of design.

Paulina Rojek-Adamek, Grzegorz Gawron

DESIGN AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENON: 'EPISTEMIC' ANALYSIS

Liubov Bronzino, Elena Kurmeleva

People's Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, Russia

Abstract: Increasingly, many aspects of human activity are now being interpreted through the prism of design as a conceptual framework. There is no general theoretical approach in the social sciences concerning the concept of design, which allows it to be unambiguously interpreted. Consequently, it seems logical that we should appeal to the concept proposed by B. Latour, who has suggested the idea of universalization of design and proposes that there are 'Five advantages of the concept of design'. Another promising approach for the study of the concept of design comes from the scholarship of Michel Foucault. On the one hand, Foucault proposes that we can integrate the 'words and things' (material objects and methods of their narration) into the concept of discourse. However, on the other hand, he constructs a theory, which proposes a sequential change of 'epistemes', where the relationship of words and things becomes the ultimate determinant in shaping the character of discourse.

Following on from these two concepts, some research was conducted to study design as a social practice, which possesses special communicative elements. We investigated the existence of design in each of the epistemes described by Foucault – these were the Renaissance, classical and modern. In addition we looked at the features of design as a sphere of co-existence, or constituting a space 'of words and things.' These are the backbone elements in helping to determine their relation between man and nature (i.e. material objects, terrain, *etc.*). Foucault's scheme was further supplemented by two more epistemes in order to have the opportunity to reflect on design in the pre-Renaissance period. This kind of prototype design stage and the operation of the concept of design in the contemporary postmodern epoch are core concepts that Foucault considered as being in the process of formation. For each of the epistemes, key components were identified. These were the specific cultural phenomena and conceptual schemes, which manifested the features of functioning design specific to that particular epoch. This approach allows us to identify the specificity of social interactions, as implemented and organized by the objects and related cultural practices prevalent in the episteme.

Key words: design, B. Latour, M. Foucault, epistemes, 'words and things', universalization of design

1. The universalization of the concept of design: establishing the problem

The concept of design carries a diverse and complex meaning. It is used in a number of different contexts, and is defined differently depending on the focus of the study and the researcher's paradigmatic preferences. It suggests an almost endless connotative interpretation. On the one hand, when we speak of design, we often refer to a particular sphere of professional activity associated with the transformation of human living space. However, such a transformation cannot be reduced to only the establishment of comfortable living conditions, or to the creation of aesthetically significant objects. Naturally, the question arises about what features comprise the 'extra' dimension that is brought about by design in the created environment.

Considering the consequences of the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences, which includes the perception of a variety of phenomena in their symbolic dimension, the accentuation of the symbolic aspect of design also becomes a necessity. The implications of this particular symbolic system may only appear and manifest themselves, in the process of communication. Design is also understood as a special form of communicative practice, which can be explored through the structure of displayed (or even generated by design) social interactions. This inevitably leads to an expansion of the concept of design, which becomes an almost universal concept in the end. The most notable theory which utilizes the concept of design in this context, is the one proposed by B. Latour (Latour 2009), who proclaimed the need to redesign everything, including aspects of modernist science (especially in the social sciences), and operated (and sometimes played) with the ambiguity of this term.

Latour's research began on the concept of design, and spoke of it as a way to transform the local social environment, but only in the sense of its total reconstruction. He wrote: 'I was aware that corporations had to be reengineered, natural ecosystems reclaimed, that cities had to be remodelled and wastelands redeveloped.' This 'remaking' in accordance with the specific – 'designer's' vision of individual objects in the environment and/ or the entire environment lets you use the *Five advantages of the concept of 'design'*, which Latour describes as follows:

1) *Modesty* – Is cause by design that does not create, but re-creates existing objects. Latour associates this with a 'post-Promethean' concept of the actor. This actor, unlike his mythical counterpart, does not consider the mere presence of innovation to be the justification for any catastrophic effects;

2) *An Attentiveness to Detail* – Latour writes: 'The modification is so deep that things are no longer 'made' or 'fabricated', but rather carefully 'designed', and, if I may use the term, precautionarily designed... it is as though we had to imagine Prometheus stealing fire from heaven in a cautious way!';
3) *The Symbolic Character of Design* – On the one hand, when analyzing the design of some artefact, the task is unquestionably about meaning, be it symbolic, commercial, or otherwise. It constructs design simultaneously, as the object in need of interpretation, and using it as a way of interpreting things. On the other hand, it reflects the symbolic character of modern culture and acts as its embodiment;
4) *To Design is Always to Redesign* – This is how Latour formulates the fourth advantage of the concept of design. Its essence is derived by 'adding' something to existing objects, which makes them better, and: 'more lively, more commercial, more usable, more user friendly, more acceptable, more sustainable, and so on.' Design does not look like the divine act of creating something 'from nothing,' it uses what is here, what exists already, and in this sense it never breaks with the past, but rather develops from it. This feature gives rise to its semantic ambivalence. It cannot be interpreted as an art form, which originally focused on the novelty, though it bears, among other things, an important aesthetic content. Design acts as the focus of contemporary postmodern culture, a pluralistic, fragmented one, based on citations and carrying an endless series of connotations;
5) The concept of design inevitably introduces itself into the realm of theoretical study with '*an ethical dimension,*' although, this can interpreted quite differently from the classical vision of this dimension. Latour's arguments can be associated with the logic of Dieter Rams, who is realizing in practice in what is produced by the company *Braun*. His functional design is well-known, in particular, for his *Ten Principles for Good Design*. Instead of the traditional ethical dichotomy of good and evil, Latour offers the opposition of 'good and bad design,' which involves criteria to be used for assessing the quality of the environment and its objects. These are based on the idea of improving the world as a place of existence for modern man.

The outcome of Latour's discussion becomes the infinite expansion of the 'coverage' of the concept of design. Design can be used to replace the concept of 'nature' and 'society' and 'culture', as Latour explains: 'if entire provinces can be redesigned then the term no longer has any limit'. This approach not only makes it impossible to reduce the concept of design to the professional activity as some kind of aesthetic reconstruction of a particular environment, but it also points to a unique place in the 'designer's' approach. This is now bound to acquire the

status of a particular style of thinking, endowed with the ability to convert all spheres of human life, including the communicative aspect. The latter can be interpreted as the ability to create interaction (the network type, in Latour's interpretation) in a particular social environment, transformed by thinking as a designer. Design is something that has the ability to establish communication, and as such, it requires special analysis, which clarifies the essence of relations, occurring at each historical stage of societal development.

2. Design as a methodological problem: the heuristic value of 'archeology of knowledge' by Foucault

Belonging to such a complex phenomena, which determines the nature of social relationships, the concept of design needs a special analytical tool. Latour wrote about the need for the re-design of social science more generally (based on the provisions of ANT (Latour 2006)), suggesting that the 'modernist style' is totally unacceptable for the study of the theory and practice of design. Design in his interpretation needs a different philosophy which was described by P. Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk 2014) for example.

The idea of interpreting design, in terms of sociology and its perception through the prism of design's communicative aspects – although it is not found in Latour's terminology – has been actively discussed after the problematization of history. In particular, this became more common after the work of Michael Foucault. By the 1970s, the discipline of history, the narrative, descriptive type, which tended to capture the causal relationships between objects of cultural heritage and historical events, has undergone a comprehensive critique by Marxism, feminism, and post-colonialism. Design, and the artifacts which were created by design as elements of culture, and / or its context, while becoming a subject of research, did not fit well into the classical notions of the field of study. The history of design (a discipline, which is still in relative infancy and searching for its methodological foundations) cannot be built on classical methodological models. Cultural history, which includes the history of art, technology and engineering, science, production and consumption, *etc.*, fixes itself in an interdisciplinary field, and from this standpoint focuses on a specific object, which needs to be interpreted. Today, it is impossible to think of the history except as in an interdisciplinary way, in particular when we consider the paradigm of cultural history. The proposal to use the term *Design Studies* (Margolin 1995: 4–15) became handy. It contains the intention to use the two most important

theoretical and methodological aspects of modern science, interdisciplinarity and multiparadigmality.

The current state of design studies can be described in terms of its contradictions and ambivalence. On the one hand, there are all the signs of its institutionalization as a discipline, as various aspects of design and its concrete manifestations are studied well enough and are reflected in numerous publications. You can also select a number of studies, the purpose of which is to explore design as a universal concept of a particular type (Carvalho, Dong, Maton 2009: 483–502) or presenting design as cognitive activities affecting the totality of social relationships (Visser 2009). On the other hand, when assessing modern design studies, researchers have discovered that it contains a significant number of anomalies, which determine the current moment as a revolution-waiting-to-happen and see a pressing need for re-conceptualising design research (Dorst 2008).

Without claiming to have found the ultimate solution to the problem of the formation of a methodological base of design as a universal concept, this article aims to explore the possibility of using the explanatory model, proposed by Foucault, as an option to study the concept of design. A second research task for this study is to clarify the design features of a particular historical period. This is based on Foucault's own approach, which involves a description of the functioning of social practices (mental and material), as discourses that appear within the context of one episteme.

The basic principle of Foucault's methodology and the obvious benefit of his proposed research model for understanding design can be described as, *Adaequatio rei et intellectus*. This can be understood, not just in the form of the thesis of a correspondence between the material world and its intellectual interpretation, but as a concrete unity between 'words and things'. In this sense, discursive practices, as an object of historical analysis, realize this unity, and discourse analysis in the form in which it is understood by Foucault (archaeological method), becomes a methodology for their studies.

The concept of an *episteme*, which is defined by Foucault as a set of rules of thought, form conditions for the existence of specific historical forms of culture, the variety of social practices related to them, and knowledge. These thought patterns are hidden in a continuous stream of emerging knowledge and the production of culture, including tangible and intelligible objects. They can be described as discursive practices, which convey importance for the study of design, and represent a unity of the material and intellectual. The study of design, using Foucault's archeology of knowledge, perceives design as a discursive practice, and aims at identifying the specific thinking – let's call it *designer's thinking*

– which is in itself the condition of the creation of cultural objects which are becoming part of the design. Foucault explains that: 'In every culture, between the use of what could be called collating codes and reflections on the order is clear practice of the order and its modes of being' (Foucault 1966 : 5). Here, Foucault aims to explore these orders in the three epistemes: Renaissance, Classical and Modern. The basic model of knowledge in the Renaissance is, in Foucault's terms, likeness or similarity. This was replaced by the classical episteme, associated with the rationalism of 17th and 18th centuries with its main dichotomy of identity-difference (for instance, tables and classifications which were built based on the rationally selected criteria), and the modern episteme. The emergence of which, Foucault establishes to be at the end of 19th and early 20th century, is characterized by interpretation and formalization.

As a starting point for his historical research, Foucault chooses the late 16th century. However, because the formation of the conditions and prerequisites for the *designer's thinking* begins, in our opinion, much earlier, there is a necessity for a preliminary stage. Before this, a kind of pre-design, emerged from the development of the primary cultural experience of mankind. Modernity in the historical classification, used by Foucault, precedes post-modernity. The current state of society is where the Modern period reached its climax and has transitioned into the Postmodern. This has involved the loss of the category of the subject as basic elements of modern culture. This is also the main signal for the appearance of the postmodern. The operation of design in the current era, where it acquires a universal character, represents the last stage of its dynamic development.

Thus, in the 'archeology of knowledge' there are important issues concerning the study of design ideas. First, those implemented in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (*Foucault 1961). This historical work concentrates on the study of a particular phenomenon, which manifests itself in two aspects of discourse; those which exists in the form of 'things' and historically happened events; and those, theoretical ones, presented in a variety of reflective practices. This is aimed at improving our understanding of the phenomenon and the 'pronunciation of it.' Another aspect of the study, is the idea of consistently carried out in the course of history (the ideas and events) the change of epistemes, in which in each new episteme another relationship is formed between 'words and things.' On the basis of this methodology, the study of design has been conducted where design is understood as a specific step for each stage along a path for the development of a culture's way of relating to the transformation of nature.

3. Design: Epistemological Analysis

3.1. 'Proto-design': Preconditions of 'Designer's Thinking'

Following the logic suggested by Foucault, the study of design is implemented in chronological order, running from ancient times, where there were enough artifacts, and more importantly, the possibility of science to know anything about them and describe them, to the modern period. Archaeological analysis reveals the structure of the order of language and expressions. It also reveals the order of discourse, in Foucault's terminology. This is similar to the structure of social interactions. As part of the study of design, at this stage it is necessary to solve two problems of the methodological plan; the theoretical, which involves identifying the order of discourse, which is described by Foucault for study of the epistemes, but has not been studied in the 'pre-episteme' times; and the empirical, which describes the source selection on the information about the episteme, including its cultural characteristics. These are sufficient to determine its basic properties and interpret them in terms of the formative process in the designer's thinking.

The process of the formation of a culture is described in the theoretical literature in terms of two opposite approaches. The Marxist tradition places work as the main determinant of the formation of culture. As elaborated in the works of Marx and Engels (Marx and Engels Marx 1844) and their followers, the concept of work determines that the cultural justification for the actual birth of human sociality is only possible resulting from the need to meet the essential needs of prehistoric humans. The moment, when the devices provided to humans by nature alone are no longer enough for the production of vital resources, intelligence gets 'turned on'. It is at this turning point that people begin to extract these resources with the help of artificial means. Ultimately, according to Marxism, this is how a person, a culture, and a society are formed.

Critics point to the one-sidedness of Marxist theory, as it associates with the reduction of all forms of human culture to the need to satisfy the basic material needs. Without disputing the importance of the phenomenon of work in regards to the formation of culture, Lewis Mumford (Mumford 1967), for example, indicates a high intellectual activity being inherent in man. In this regard, he argues that humankind is the source of not only some constructive discoveries, but dangerous and destructive ones, as well. In the initial stages of development, the world was perceived by the person at the same time as a material and supernatural place. In such circumstances, with the predominance of universalizing and syncretic consciousness, prehistoric man's basic goal was not the creation of material culture and learning about the environment, but rather the search for effective methods of development of his own consciousness. The pur-

pose of which, was to get rid of irrational moments, and to achieve 'victory over chimeras.'

Mumford's concept represents the second theoretical approach to developing our understanding of the genesis of culture, with an emphasis on intellectual activity of prehistoric man. Their sociality was the result of the harmonization of the relationship between natures. This relationship, surrounding the future Homo sapiens, was at the same time the essence of their own physicality, rationality and spirituality of man. In interpreting this intention as one of the determining factors of the genesis of culture, design can be seen as a kind of specific activity aimed at the creation of a material culture. In this sense, it can be concluded that the design is an implicit component in a person's being. As originally described by Mumford, the artifacts of various kinds are providing sufficient, in our view, research material. These allow us to discuss order in the *pre-epistemic era*, and thus solve both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the methodological problems. Mumford explains:

> *The irrational factors that have sometimes constructively prompted, yet too often distorted, man's further development became plain at the moment when the formative elements in Paleolithic and Neolithic cultures united in the great cultural implosion that took place around Fourth Millenium B.C.: what is usually called 'the rise of civilization.' The remarkable fact his transformation technically is that it was a result, not of mechanical inventions, but of radically new type of social organization: a product of myth, magic religion, and the nascent science of astronomy* (Mumford 1967: 11).

The specificity of the designer's thinking, which in this case acts as a special order of discourse that determines the cultural formation and named by analogy with pre-epistemic era pre-design, represents, in its versatility, the need for harmonization implemented in myth, magic religion, and the nascent science of astronomy.

3.2. Renaissance Episteme: Design as the Imitation of Nature

Foucauldian archeology describes the Renaissance as a time of the dominance of discourse, when the category of similarity was the dominant one, and the source of inspiration for imitation was the nature in which the world has been already encrypted and coded. The main task of man at this time – a man, who was already cultural, but not yet alienated from the nature – was the reading and the disclosure of this transcendental code. This category of similarity up to the 18th century, was largely determined by the approach to the development of reality. Foucault notes that the principle of similarity manifests itself in the prin-

ciples of competiveness, analogy, dichotomy, liking and disliking of elements in the man-made environment. Thus, water mills can be seen as a continuation of the flow of rivers, and would be an ideal example of matching the man-made artifact to its environment. Thus, nature completely shapes the technological form itself, but at the same time the technological design harnesses the power of nature into an energy source for humanity.

The Renaissance episteme forms the field of the organic unity of all aspects of human life with nature, combining it with anthropocentrism. This is the principle which explains when a person becomes a central element of what is happening, the creator/ designer of the world which they inhabit. Design in this period, therefore, is characterized, on the one hand, by its ability to create objects similar in their perfection to the natural world; and, on the other hand, in the realization of the idea of the greatness of humankind, who is now capable of creating a 'second nature'. The unity of these objects made by human hands, and the reflection, relative to nature, as well as the search for principles and laws for the further ordering of society and nature, are manifested in many well-known discoveries of the Renaissance. The most significant discoveries which can be defined as being representative of the material embodiment of the entire Renaissance era are the great geographical discoveries. These also include the fundamental discoveries in physics, mechanics, mathematics, natural science, the invention of the printing press, the advances in astronomy (heliocentric system of Copernicus), and the great works of art by the masters who founded the basic principles of European art we know today.

3.3. Design in the Classical Episteme

When describing the Classical episteme, Foucault explains that the specifics of classical rationality emerge from within the framework of the classical episteme. In fact this type of rationality would later become perceived as the only foundation for a reasonable development path of practical life in the world. The basis of it, in terms of the design approach to society, represents a break with nature. The latter ceases to be regarded as an absolute value and begins to be thought of in more abstract terms. This specifically involves a form of scientific thinking, but is associated with a particular subject in the cognitive process. By the 16th century there was a whole world of artificial norms and material culture at people's disposal, but there were also no concrete ideas about how to evaluate its quality, or efficiency. This was essential due to the implications for one's ability to anticipate future developments. The formation of this particular ability marks the first appearance of design in the truly modern sense, because it adds to its interpretation an essential aspect. Specifically, being able to predict how ef-

fective a project will be before starting it, is essential to understanding the practical aspects of rationality.

Procedural rationality and its relationship to the achievements formed relatively independent from the forces of nature, in particular, with regards to the 'new' integrated environment, and the human being as the most 'fitting' element in this system. Implementation of this new way of thinking is reflected, for example, in the developments of engineer John Smeaton who designed the waterwheel (Smeaton 1759). The essence of his approach lay in the idea of achieving maximum effectiveness of the mechanism, which later would become a typical solution for all such design projects. Smeaton considered the waterwheel abstractly; his numerous experiments and trials from the beginning were focused on a predetermined result. Rationalism and the association of it, with the designer's style of thinking made the interaction between the environment and the accumulation of new knowledge, a deterministic one in this case. Clear objectives were formed at the initial stages of the projects, anticipating the appearance of the product, taking into account all its features and limitations, before a single step had been taken in its construction. Another example, which illustrates the nature of the design at this stage of development, can be found with the textile factory founded by Richard Arkwright. He integrated the spinning ring machine and the water wheel to form not just a factory, but an entire living space for workers. In this example the production process was, for the first time, in history carried out in continuous shifts. Thereby, he had helped to destroy the natural cycle of day and night that previous generations had always known and the natural order of things (Fitton 1989). Arkwright's project required new forms of organization for the life of the workers. The factory became not only a place of production, but also a place of life, the first modern industrial city. Rationalism and the cognitive ability to project the objects, and anticipate the results, along with the growing emancipation from the natural conditioning, became the basic components of design, understood here as a new type of practice directed towards the integrated management of the environment and human beings.

3.4. Design in the Modern Episteme

As we have mentioned, the Classical episteme formed in the intellectual and ideological field, and became the basis of rapid change, affecting all aspects of society. The essential principles of rationalization eventually penetrated all branches of knowledge to form a 'new' and 'better' world. It transformed not only the material world, but also the practices of anticipating penetration into man himself, with the structuring and shaping of typical patterns of human behavior and perception. An integrated approach to the organization of these new and

highly complex processes begins to separate into an area of special knowledge, and social practices design. The first specialized educational institutions were opened, which trained specialists of a new type because the institutionalization of design became a reality. Historically, this later period refers to the time of the highest development of the Modern episteme, which also created the preconditions for its own internal crisis and subsequent transformation.

The apotheosis of this rationalization in Europe manifested itself during the 20th century, with the creation of supersystems, represented by the totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. Control, was erected at a total level, never before seen. In this regard totalitarian regimes used design as a rational thinking and integrative model for penetration into, and control over all spheres of human life. In this sense, design became a mechanism of coercion and propaganda. The most striking examples here are ideologically dominating images of the 'Soviet person' and 'true Aryan'. At the same time design practices become widespread in the democracies of the western world, including the US, although the evolution there developed differently. The focus centered on complex conviction and latent suggestion, or the formation of ideas about the proper way of life (the formation of public opinion on various aspects of social and individual life) through advertising. The entire process of using goods, from creating a demand, and the structural and consumer qualities of the product to its utilization and repetition of this cycle, was the product of the design industry.

In the US, where the rise of a society specifically based on consumerism and mass consumption was formed and became widely spread, the rise of a kind of monopoly of design practice was established. This kind of social organization affects not only the interests of business, but also creates an economic opportunity for the total control of society. The labor market, wages, social insurance, trade unions, infrastructure, development of territories, education and science, all of these are controlled, not only the resources, production and prices. Arguably, the American approach to the design of new products has forever changed the very nature of the production process and the principles of a functioning society. Throughout the 20th century the concept of design was based on the optimization of production costs and stimulating consumer demand through advertising. Now, however, control penetrates even deeper into the essence of things affecting their basic qualities. The introduction of the principles of *planned obsolescence* (Adamson, Gordon 2003) has resulted in the most radical way of designing, subordinating the 'nature' of things to man's will and thus marking the final break with the determinism of the natural world. Design does not create a 'second nature', or culture, now it will become the 'first' and only one. In fact, one could say that design replaces it.

On the one hand, the practical success of the implementation of the principles of design has become the key to its expansion, a symbol for a new kind of thinking. Design, acting as a synonym for rationality, becomes its only visible symbol. Following this, real world design actually penetrates the person, dissecting the person into functional elements, and his ability to live gets closely integrated into things, or the material world. It is doing it by organizing and teaching a person to desire the marketer's promise of a 'new', or 'better' way of life. On the other hand, design organizes the social world according to the principles of mass consumption society, and creates a 'mass' that is made up of 'one-dimensional', identical people.

Thus, by the mid-twentieth century, the era of 'high modernism', the relationship between society and nature acquired the character of alienation (for example, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno (Marcuse 2013; Adorno, Horkheimer 2002)), and, rationality, which in the classical episteme determined the progressive development of humanity, showed its negative aspects. This created a culture, becoming at this stage more like a total design, gets rid of nature as its reference point and source. Pragmatic efficiency is no longer important because the meaning of the products and artefacts is actually now being generated by themselves. According to Foucault, this organizing principle marks the transition towards the modern episteme. In the framework of this new episteme, design ultimately acquires some universal features by setting principles for integrating, perception and interaction of mass society with a material environment.

3.5. Designed in Postmodernity

Foucault does not omit the postmodern episteme, but he only outlines it in general, speaking of its difference from the modern. Postulating on the 'death of the subject', Foucault describes the disappearance of modernity and the end of the rationality of the classical type. This was built on the opposition between subject and object, the source and object of knowledge (Foucault 2014). The transformation of the principles of classical science, which were designed on the basis of rationality, changes the image of the world, and the foundations of social organization. Here we can talk about the appearance of postmodern.

It is the very specificity of postmodern that represents the final rupture between the natural and social. Its self-description (for example, in the works of Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1983) and Gilles Deleuze and F. Guattari (Deleuze, Guattari 2010)) is conducted through the concept of the simulacrum. This concept explains that the simulacrum is what performs the replacement of reality, without a reference or the need for one. Baudrillard notes: 'The simulacrum is

never that which conceals the truth – it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true' (Baudrillard 1983: 3), referring to the absolute nature of the simulacrum and its independence and self-sufficiency. This classical type of rationality, which determines many of the problems of social organization, exists in the mode of interaction, often conflicting with nature, gets replaced by paradoxical thinking. Baudrillard represents this phenomenon in the form of a *Mobius strip* (Baudrillard *2000),* Foucault refers to the famous library of Borges, whilst Umberto Eco is looking for a 'new rationality'. This is built on paradoxes and can take into account the uncertainty of reality which science tries to study: the natural and social (Eco 1989).

Simulative and paradoxical principles embedded in the foundation of the social organization, allow us to define it in terms of design, as reflected on by Latour. On the one hand, postmodernity exists in the conditions defined by a final break with the order of nature. This 'end of nature' was proclaimed together with, and related to, the 'end of the social' (Baudrillard *1978*). On the other hand, today the individual is faced with extreme complexities of self-identity and communication, outlined as the 'liquid modernity' of Bauman (Bauman 2001) and the 'society of individuals' by N. Elias (Elias 2010). As a result the communicative function of design activates and its significance increases again. Design itself uses universal and easily readable signs, forming a simplified model of communication. Design products are the most homogenous and well furnished, and as such, they become part of the public discourse. Design becomes the language of the masses, and by natural extension, the language of the consumer society.

In this context, design's interpretation as a universal mode of interaction between the individual and the world around him becomes understandable. Design is total and pervasive, as it is predicated on the formation of complex systems to generate artifacts. It defines not only the physical, formal qualities of the products, but also social representations and patterns of interaction with the products. Playing originally the purely functional role for the development of the environment, design gradually takes the dominant position over the individual, functioning in a closed circle. That is a cycle of design in a mass society, which returns in a circle to even more design.

Ultimately, design itself becomes more and more indifferent to objective standards of living. Design creates simulacra that are comfortable, elegant and impeccable, in terms of taste and style. They are so attractive and easy to use, that the real question of the usefulness and necessity of these artifacts does not even arise. The rationality of the artifacts is taken out of their brackets, and the result is the reduction of the things themselves. They have meaning in and of themselves.

4. Conclusions

The solution to the problem concerning the interpretation of design in modern society poses a number of difficulties. The most significant of these is the emergence of ideas related to design's universality: its interpretation, on the one hand, as a concept, in the light of which it is possible to study various social phenomena, and on the other, as a phenomenon that determines the various aspects of society itself. This universality makes it problematic. Latour's original idea has a number of advantages in this regard. There is a valid explanation of the term and the ubiquitous presence with the 'footprints' of design in various spheres of public life.

However, adopting Latour's concept also has some complex consequences too, as it leads to the need to develop a non-standard methodology, which would be bear a similar universal character, with reflection reaching a fairly high level of abstraction, but at the same time taking into account the specific manifestations of design artifacts. Without which, theoretical research ultimately loses its meaning. As a solution, we would suggest that the methodological approach proposed by Michel Foucault be adopted. The presented study proves its heuristic value for the study of design. That is the first conclusion we can draw from the study, the results of which are shown here.

Further findings would be related to a specific analysis of the design, implemented on these proposed methodological grounds. The process of universalization which was noted by Latour, appears to be a result of multiple transformation of the designer's thinking. Specifically, a special type of relationship between man and the things he created, unique to each aspect of the episteme proposed by Foucault. The time of 'pre-episteme' interactions, that is during the period of existence of mankind, which is called 'prehistoric', is a place of harmony in the relationship of nature and society. The rudiments of design thinking can be seen in the creation of myth, magic religion, and nascent astronomy.

In the Renaissance episteme the interaction between man and the outside world were formed on the basis of similarity and analogy which permeated the designer's thinking. This integrated a holistic overall world view, supplemented with anthropocentrism. The Classical episteme was constructed on the basis of classical rationality, which is based on the requirement of adequate and accurate reflection of what is available in the natural world, with identification of patterns and determination. Rationality is embodied in the designer's thinking, which makes it possible not only to predict the integrative effect of creating new artifacts, but also brings into the design pragmatism as a criterion for its effectiveness. The resulting Modern period carried the basis of the Modern

episteme. This produced the 'one-dimensional' man of mass society and contributed to humanities alienation from nature. In this, design becomes total, involving a break away from nature; procedural rationality is closed in on itself and loses its external points of reference. This process culminates in postmodernity, where design takes on the properties of the simulacrum.

The evolution of design, taken through the prism of the theory of the episteme, as explained by Foucault, leads to important conclusions about the attributive nature of design thinking. As design appeared in the earliest stages of human development, the latter condition can be noted as reason for the subsequent universalization of design. This simultaneously allows us to predict its further manifestation in different spheres of society, and how it becomes one of the most important of our social determinants.

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DASEIN AND DESIGN. LIFE AS A PROJECT AND FURNISHING A HOUSE WITH USING POLISH DESIGN

Jacek Mianowski
Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Gdansk, Poland

That which exists may be transformed
What is non-existent has boundless uses
LAO-TSE

Abstract: The article concerns the application of democratic methods of the design (*user centered design, participatory design and metadesign*) in the context of cooperation between two enterprises (design – research company and one operating on the building materials and home furnishings market). The case study shows results of their collaboration. Problems associated with the issue of the use of democratic methods of the design are presented from the perspective of phenomenological philosophy and sociology. The analysis of democratizing creative practices in the design takes into account its social consequences and what social actors think of it. The example of two enterprises cooperation shows that the use of design methodologies focused on the user, interactive design and the use democratic practices of improvisation, modification and evolution allowed to create furniture customized to the end – users.

Key words: Heidegger, Dasein, design, creative practices of design

1. Introduction

According to John Dewey thinking and thought we can consider in some typical ways in which they are employed. First, in the broader context, thinking signifies everything that is *in our head.* Second, thinking refers to matters which we can not see, smell, hear or touch. Third, thought is a kind of belief that is resting on *some basis, that is, real or supposed knowledge going beyond what is directly present* (1910: 4). Forth and in their best sense, thought and thinking imply seeking and considering the ground for a belief. In this sense thinking is

called reflective thought (1910: 1). In turn Martin Heidegger analyzed such of sort thinking in his works *Being and Time* (2010) and *What is called thinking ?* (1999). He places thinking before the tribunal and he tries to understand what is happening and what changes occur in man's structures when he begins to think. In his work *What is called thinking ?* M. Heidegger compares thinking to a form of handicrafts. You can learn it like, for example, cabinetmaker' apprentice learned to build cabinets. *His learning is* (...) *practice, to gain facility in the use of tools,* (...) *he* (...) *gather knowledge about the customary forms of the things and he makes himself answer and respond above all to the different kinds of wood and the shapes slumbering within wood – to wood as it enters into man's dwelling with all the hidden riches of its nature* (1968: 14; 1999: 59–60). One can say that thinking as a man's handicraft becomes an attribute *Dasein* – being, which is self – constructing. *Dasein* is therefore a man thrown into the world, who does not acquire any attributes only under the influence of existence. He gives them himself through the conscious being in the world. Therefore Heidegger proposes to look at the thinking as a kind of being[1]. He distinguishes:

- involuntary, intuitive thinking – it does not require learning;
- and thinking, which provokes reflection on what happens when a man thinks.

This latter kind of thinking is coming to a man from outside. *Dasein* has therefore to reference to the world of things and other beings which they are present in the world.

In this article I hope to demonstrate that the designer and the end-users of material objects can create a reflective community and practice creative thinking. They can also form a network of social actors as a kind of *consumption of junction* which the center of can be a user of the object (Cowan 1987: 254–255; Dant 1999: 81). The designer's activity can therefore be plane on which the designer and the users may jointly seek solutions to problems related to the design. From the epistemological point of view, the framework of such research will determine more or less intuitive answers the questions about what it is thinking, what is the meaning of being, what is the technology. From the methodological point of view – the designer, other specialists and the users can cooperate on the selected stages of designing in a narrower scope (e. g. the analysis phase, implementation of the idea, finalization of the idea – as it is practiced in the user – oriented methodology) or comprehensively – that is promoted in the paradigm metadesign (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 1–2; 2009: 90–92). The assumptions from both perspectives can determine the possibility of the use of design in the social dimension. Project team members who cooperate with each other can cre-

[1] R. Piłat, utterance in the program *Z objęć Hannah Arendt w kleszcze narodowego socjalizmu*, http://www.polskieradio.pl/8/402/Artykul/1030193/ (14.08.2015).

ate a reflective community (Fisher 2005: 1 nn.), in which they can learn together thinking and talking about the materials design situation (Schon 1992: 3 nn.).

The article concerns application of a design concept as a process of creation and experimentation, that helps the professionals to cooperate with the users, to look for common ground to solve problems related to the design of material objects and to allow them to experience the world in greater and wider range (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 2). This is the kind of design that the assumptions call for democratizing the practices of creative (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 2: Giaccardi, Fisher 2009: 91). The designer and the users in this type of the design are the active entities, and on this basis they form a reflective community (Fisher 2005: 1–9).

2. Relationships between the main concepts

Life and design are categories that can be seen as complementary categories. Life can be understood as:

1. a project in itself (*Dasein*, being-in-the world);
2. an existential structure inscribed in the unit's biography – life project that we can analyze as the designed or seeking biography (Palska 2002: 99–100) in which a man *builds his world, his horizon 'objects' and his view of his own of being* (Cassirer 2001: 262).

The essence of being-in-the-world is learning about inhabiting beings in the world, because it is the result of being already in-the-world-next-to-things. If a man recognizes a thing, he recognizes it as an element of reference system, whose center is the *Dasein* with his strivings and actions. In light of this, knowledge is a form of being-in-the-world established on everyday being-in-the-world-of-things (Rosner 2003: 19–20).

The implications of the relationship of things and people can be seen as relatively feed back dependent because individuals' adaptation to reality requires that they has entered into active relationships with material goods, things and objects. The relative nature of these relationships it follows that are initiated by humans because humans are the creators and have the possibility of exceeding the range of choices 'offered' by material objects (Krajewski 2008: 131–132).

3. *Dasein* and design in light of questions about the meaning of being and technology

Martin Heidegger in his book *Being and Time* (2010) seeks answers to the fundamental *question of the meaning of being* (Heidegger 2010a: XXIX). In search of answers to this question he tries to get to the original meanings of the individual components of this question and he introduces the category of *Dasein* by means of which he described the difference between a man's existence and other beings that a man encounters in the world.

A Man, *Da-sein* as being *which is related understandingly in its toward that being* – refers to his being (Heidegger 2010a: 53) and it is the basis of his understanding of himself and other beings. However, understanding is the ontological category, a way of being in the world (Rosner 2003: 18) and as a part of Heidegger's fundamental ontology is prior in relation to being. This means that he proposes to examine the first being (*Sein*), with particular emphasis on *Dasein* (human, understanding the entity), then an entity (*Seiende*). He thereby tries to sort logically out aftermath implication which is contained in questions like: "who is the man?", "what is the thing ?". The word 'is' precedes in them place of being and implies processual nature of the human being in the world (Mizera 1983: 208; Barański 2008: 24). By emphasizing word 'is', Heidegger *moves center of gravity from the essence to existence* (Giddens 2009: 28).

The constitutive feature of *Dasein* is understanding of self, which Heidegger calls the design. *Dasein 'is' in such a way that it understands (...) – and – transcend himself in the world* (Rosner 2003: 19). *Understanding in itself has the existential structure* – that the philosopher called – *the project* (Heidegger 2010: 198).

The project is not the kind of life plan, but the inherent and inalienable feature of being in the world. It is potency, that *Dasein* based on understanding may utilize because it is part of his nature. Heidegger understands designing not as a set of design work strictly planned or project-oriented activities to achieve in the future or some kind of long-term intention (Giddens, 2009: 29, 64), but as a natural feature 'of life-in-world'. From this perspective, life is a project, because *Dasein, it has always already projecting itself and is, as long as it is, projecting* (Heidegger, 2010a: 141). Understanding and designing are therefore complementary perspectives existence of *Dasein.* With such features – 'self-in-world' enters into relations to persons and property, as *ontological structure – Dasein includes being of entities, to which he refers to* (Rosner 2003: 19).

The world of people and the world of things interpenetrate each other. However, at the same time the order of the world of things is a whole. *Every single ob-*

ject is therefore only part of the equipment, only a screw and a piece of the system. On the one hand, it's a piece of which satisfies the needs of other objects, on the other hand, in turn, by its being imposed on other needs directed to new objects. (...) *The system of objects is our «world»* (Anders 2001: 414).

The order of being-in-the-world – the – next – to – and-among-the-things includes also the production of things. In this context, Heidegger points out that the role of *Dasein*, Deadly – is taken into the care of being and its triggering, building, 'ascending things', revealing (the word stems from the Greek '*techne*') (Heidegger 1977: 13–14). Heidegger bethinks, like in the case of the fundamental question about the meaning of being, what is the essence of technology. According to the philosopher, Greek *techne* means *to let something to manifest itself as this or that, one way or another, in something what is the present* (Heidegger 2002: 141).

The essence of technology is revealing. So you can not just reduce it to what is instrumental *because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it* (Heidegger 2002: 37). The question concerning technology forces the exploration and production of non-technical, such as cultural and social aspects of tangible goods. Designing things is also the design world, as the creation of a new object can be a form of socio – cultural *interventions in the existing ways of life* (Krajewski 2010: 10).

4. Dimensions of the definition of design and paradigm metadesign

It is difficult to define design because it is very capacious concept and *the subject matter of design is not given* (Buchanan 1995: 24). We can say that the word design is the cause of conceptual confusion (Giaccardi 2005: 343). In broad sense of design it concerns all human activity. According to Victor Papanek *all men are designers.* (...) *The planning and patterning of any act towards a desired, foreseeable end constitutes the design process* (Papanek 1977: 17). Design thus is *the conscious and intuitive effort to impose meaningful order* (Papanek 1984: 5). We can describe design as *harmony in form,* as well. In this context the most important aspect of design is harmony between the aesthetic aspect of design and the utility of the object which man has created (Jaitly 1989: 169). 'Harmony in form' reflects striving to achieve 'functional equivalence' and this is the resultant of the dynamic actions and relationships that make up the function complex cover-

ing the six parts function: method, association, aesthetics, need, telesis and use. Method – implies coherent interactions between tools, processes and materials. Association – is a kind of psychological conditioning that predisposes us to chose a given value. Aesthetics – it is what we know that we like or dislike and let it go at that. Needs – we are referring to a collection genuine needs that they included intellectual, psycho-social, economic, technical and spiritual needs. The telesic content – must fit it with human socioeconomic order in which it is operate. Use – dealing with positive answer if it does work. At each of the six aspects the features such as: the soft-hard, feeling-thinking, intuitive-intellectual interpenetrate in the complex of functions (Papanek 1984: 7–22).

Design is also understood as a form of reflective–in–action which is the reflective form of knowing-in-action, that is the components of reflection and action are complementary. In Schon's opinion *practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the midst of action and sometimes use this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice* (Schon 1983: 8–9). Anyway, design is a kind of activity that requires effort in constructing of meaning and if we accept it, we can also assume it implies some of form *intellectualization, cerebration, research and analysis* (Papanek 1984: 4). However, creating process and define its terms with respect to the design lies in the searching for a solution, but *the 'rightness' of any design solution will depend on the meanings* (Papanek 1984: 5–6).

In the 1960s to 1980s it was taken reflection on the limits and scope of design and during this time it was starting to develop the notion of metadesign. *Semantically, the principal meaning of the Greek word meta when used as prefix is 'change of place, order, or nature'* (Giaccardi 2005: 343). It was began to think how to deal with *the complexity of natural human interaction made tangible by technology. Metadesign seeks to transform this complexity into an opportunity for new forms of creativity and sociability* (Giaccardi 2005: 343). Contemporary design stands in front of a new complex problems and must take into account a broader range of stakeholders, new frameworks, new media and it needs to be embedded in a reflective community (Fisher 2005: 1) that to support its the development. It seems that nowadays more and more important to rethink the use of designed object and consequences of its uses.

Paradigm metadesign is trying to respond to these challenges. It is based on the assumption that situations, behaviors and users' needs and tasks, *cannot be fully anticipated at design time because* (…) *they are change over time. Therefore, users need to be engaged in the problem-framing/problem-solving process, both when the system is designed and when the system is used* (Giaccardi 2005: 346). Metadesign can be characterized as follows:

- a focus on the design general structures and processes;
- the need for methods and techniques that are fluid;
- the call for environments that can evolve;
- to join social and technical systems and to let new conditions, interactions and relationships emerge (Giaccardi 2005: 346).

Monika Rosinska was conducting among Polish designers. One of the participator of these research said that design is a type of activity which has to take into account consequences of their actions. In his opinion designers *are for this purpose that consequences of the objects were the best; that the object was not to poison the environment in the production process; that after the end of the life cycle the object was not disruptive; that whole life of product was re-thinking, administering and designed. The designer has to think about everything, what this product can be useful; so we must also keep in mind that consequences were positive and not burdensome* (Rosińska 2010: 144).

The material object need to be thought over from different angels, because in this way it can assume what are possibilities of application this material object in the customers' life. Designer and user think about the material object from their points of view, but just thinking can serve them as a platform to meet. As well, design thought out by the designer and the user can help them better to order the material culture of everyday life, which it reflects the *totality of the world of things* (Attfield 2000: 12). Widely understood design originally was intended to construct the things and the world. Accordingly, creative arts and design practice material are intended to help establish the framework for everyday life and inventing objects in conjunction with the creation of the social world, consciousness, behavior and social relationships (Krajewski 2010: 9).

In the broad sense of design is therefore the making of meanings, unique products, but also the materialization of the physical world as a human project creation. From an anthropological point of view, it is a process of objectification (Attfiled 2000: 20) social relations in material culture. The actors of these relationships may be people and objects. However, the level of causative objectives depends on how it is viewed the material objects. This means if they are treated as the actors of social life. In this context Bruno Latour promotes the broadest conception of the actor in the collective existence. He treats material objects as full actors (Latour 2010: 97). Such an approach undermines the traditional distinction between subjective and objective entities objects, so the prospect of ANT (Actor – Network Theory) can foster demonstrating design as *a dynamic and relational field* (Rosińska 2010: 34).

5. Dominant and alternative design trends

At present self-definition designers indicate that the currently dominant role in the design process are technical and aesthetic dimension (Rosińska 2010). First, designers focus on a specific task, problem to solve and as a secondary task they treated creating a new object as a form of socio – cultural intervention in existing ways of life. They look at objects primarily in terms of form and function but they do not appreciate the consequences that may have production of objects for the functioning in social relations, *reproduction relationships and social structures* (Krajewski 2010: 10). On the other hand, the dominant trend of the technical and aesthetic (functional) design is broken by those, who they practice holistic and balanced (also in the sense of symmetry in the relations subject – object) type of design objects. We will be able to see it through the case study company's cooperation Cogision and VOX. This is an example of cooperation, taking into account the consequences of design features and the social dimension.

5.1. The framework for cooperation between the company VOX and Cogision

History of *Cogision* (this name will be adopted four years later) begins in 2005, when at the University A. Mickiewicz in Poznan has established course of cognitive science where, among others, David Wiener was a lecturer. He also worked as a strategist for an advertising agency. Using his experience of two social worlds he sought to undertake research in the field, so-called usability, accessibility and interaction design, which it focuses on the use of the product or technical solution by the person for whom it is intended (design type: user centered design). Simultaneously, David Wiener engages also in design and he tries to apply knowledge of psychology and cognitive science in design and the preparation of the product. David Wiener has applied this type of knowledge in cooperation with the brand of VOX (furniture industry) (Kubat 2013: 48–51). This approach is favored by the president of VOX, who claims that the Polish furniture market needs a redefinition of the concept of furniture design and Polish design should take into account *what modern man needs. We must – therefore – recognize his needs and on this basis to construct furniture. The designer must acquire knowledge about people and learn to use the tools available to the psychologist, anthropologist, sociologist – to gain more knowledge about the person. The designer should design based on what the individual us-*

er have needs or what his generation have needs, or what women need in specific their life situation[2].

As a result of the cooperation company Cogision and VOX was created a collection of furniture for children. The furniture design was based on qualitative research (interviews, visits to the homes of potential users, recording and analyzing movies) (Kubat 2013: 51). Children were taking part in creative workshops (eg. „(No) inhabited island"), during which they went on a journey to a mysterious island, where everyone would create their own world and its inhabitants using prototype collection of furniture Smart by VOX. Each child could create his inhabitant, could talk about it and could show how it moves. The idea was to persuade parents and children that the furniture does not have to be boring and does not have to be difficult to consist them and may integrate entire family. By the way, they have been identified aspects of the furniture in accordance with the emotional and developmental needs of children and young people and furniture selection criteria essential for parents – easy to maintain order in the room of a child or the safety and durability of the furniture[3].

Internet community was created. A group of people was hired to three months to share their experiences in relation to lifestyle, the space in which they operates and in relation to their needs. On the basis of this material has been prepared recommendations for designers that they have helped define the requirements which should be met such a collection. Since that time, in the preparation and production of VOX furniture company uses humanistic knowledge and examine their the usefulness (Kubat 2013: 56–57).

Successful design team of David Wiener led in 2009 to the foundation of the company Cogision (cognition + vision) (Kubat 2013: 54). In the new organizational framework were implemented more projects, also in cooperation with VOX and therefore the project Young User was continued. This time the project deal with users at 7 to 18 years (Kubat 2013: 56), and over 18 years, as well. Collection Young Users by VOX is a proposal arranging rooms for children at 6 to 12 years. It is shown in the following photo.

[2] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-wywiad-z-tworca-marki-meble-vox-949.html, (14.08.2015).
[3] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-kreatywne-warsztaty-i-zabawy-dla-dzieci-na-targach-edukacyjnych-982.html, (14.08.2015).

Photo 1. The arrangement child's room. The use of Young Users' furniture collection

Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-meble--ktore-rosna-z-wiekiem-922.html, (14.08.2015).

It is also a proposal to arrange for teens at 12 to 17 years and for young people above 18 years, as well. Youth furniture Young Users by VOX are in the form of modular blocks that can be freely combined. You can connect with them, eg metal overlays on the fronts. They allow to change the look of the furniture according to children's interests or fashion. The collection is therefore an open system, which the owner can reconstruct according to how leisure and / or work at home. A bed and a desk represent a coherent set. The mattress can be adjusted to a comfortable sitting position. The desk you can move over the bed and work. Furniture's platform have mobile drawers what makes it easy to clean the room. Overlays on the fronts of furniture are variable (e.g. in educational version), and so the user can change the look of his furniture. Wide possibilities of changes in the appearance of the collection will help to change the colored children's room in the closed realm of teenagers and functional apartment for single or couple[4]. The following photographs show furnishings for teenagers.

[4] http://www.meble.vox.pl/kolekcje-mebli-vox-young-users#o-kolekcji, (14.08.15).

Photo 2. The arrangement teen's room. The use of Young Users' furniture collection

Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-meble--ktore-rosna-z-wiekiem-922.html, (14.08.2015).

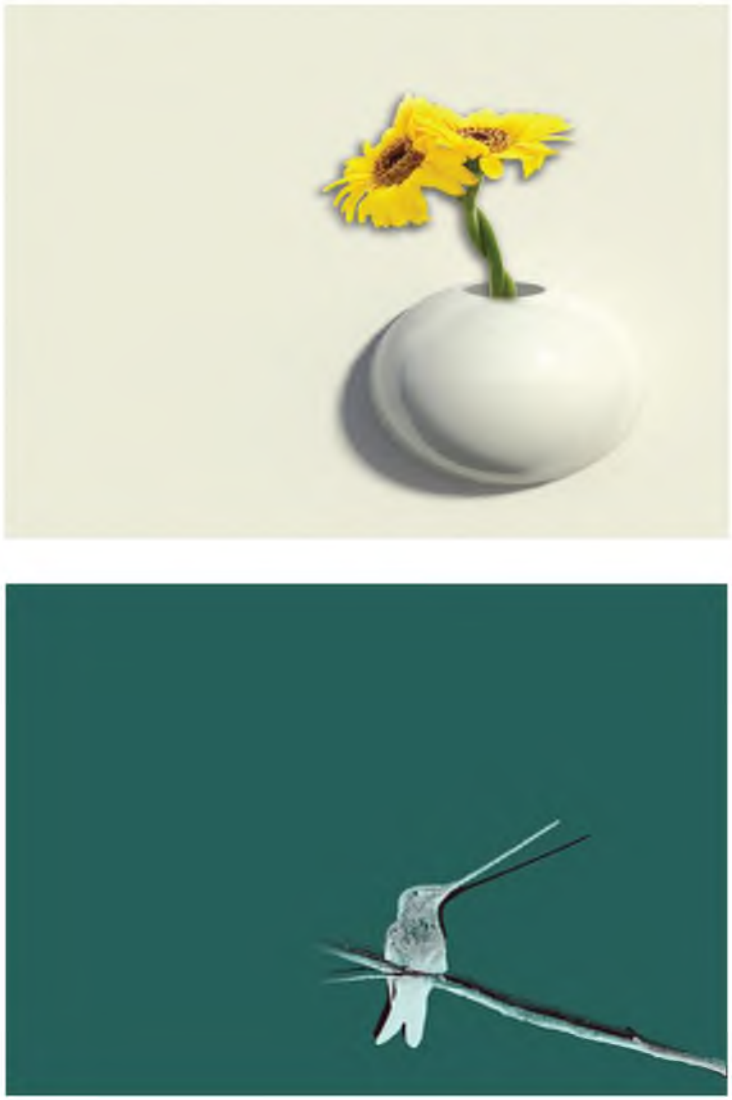
Photo 3. The arrangement teen's room. The use of Young Users' furniture collection

Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-meble-ktore-rosna-z-wiekiem-922.html, (14.08.2015).

The arrangement Young Users' furniture collection enables to create projects appearances of the furniture fronts, so it was announced the competition „Your project Young Users". Competition participants had to design inscription on the

overlay on the fronts of furniture to the collection in the form of graphics, photos, drawings, or other theme – that they would be matched to one of the three categories: children's room, teen's room or living room. It was so innovative and creative task, the type of co-creation. Young users to be able in this way to design the space in which they would like to be. Selected winning solution for this task were presented in the following photographs[5].

Photo 4. The arrangement teen's room. User's ideas



Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-twoj-projekt-young-users-912.html, (14.08.2015).

[5] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-twoj-projekt-young-users-912.html, (14.08.51).

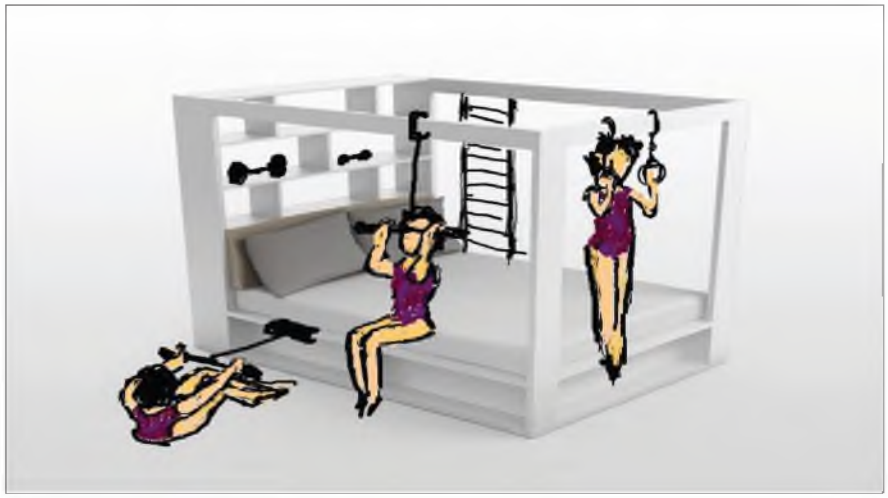
6. Polish design in the interior arrangement at home. A four – poster bed

Young Users and 4 You by VOX furniture's collection were created as a result of research and joint work of researchers, designers and users. Collection 4 You by VOX contains the three basic blocks that combine multiple functions and allow to arrange at home: bedroom, living room and dining room. A simple form of furniture, interchangeable modules and accessories allow you to easily customize and arrange the interior. There is a table in the collection furniture 4 You by VOX. It can be used not only to eat. The design of the table allows you to keep essential items handy, put herbarium or change its appearance depending on the need.

However, the main piece of furniture in this collection is a four-poster bed. This is a proposal of furniture not only for the bedroom. It is also an example of Polish design in the interior arrangement at a small home. The innovative design of four-poster beds allows you to do simple exercises, watching movies on a special screen and extra bed provides close contact with the child[6]. The four-poster bed you can insert into the living room, because you can rest on it, read, eat breakfast and watch movies. The modern form is combined here with the old idea of a comfortable and safe furniture. Four-poster bed can be an alternative for pulled out couches. Block of bed can separate private and shared zone. Bookcase added to the bedside can be a divider. The dressing table added to the four – poster bed can help to change it in a place to work. The bedding (2.5 ft) and chest at the headboard have a big storage space. The bed has a bookcase and boxes for storage in the frame. For this reason: books, newspapers, favorite trinkets, children's toys are at your fingertips. On the canopy and ladders can hang reading lamps, a hammock for the baby, textile containers for toys and accessories or pots of flowers. The elderly and the sick are able to pick themselves up and doing simple exercises on ladders hung on the rack[7]. In 2012 was performed National Test Beds, to check the current and to discovery new functionalities of four – poster bed of furniture's collection 4 You by VOX. Initially, every willing person was able to participate in the test bed. In the second stage was announced casting for testers bed among VOX fans on Facebook. Five candidates – family took part in the tests. Test's participants has been receiving fully equipped beds of 4 You by VOX for themselves and they could thoroughly them test for 2 months. Each tester tested the bed privately and then share his opinions on Facebook[8]. The following photos show the bed functional tests.

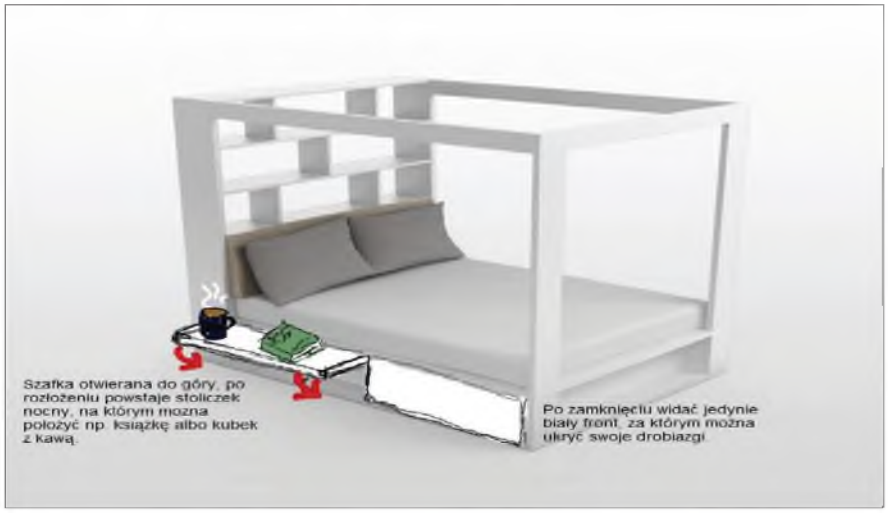
[6] http://www.meble.vox.pl/kolekcje-mebli-vox-4-you-by-vox#o-kolekcji, (14.08.15).
[7] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-lozko-w-roli-glownej-930.html, (14.08.15).
[8] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-narodowy-test-lozka-960.html, (14.08.15).

Picture 5. Example of functionality of the four-poster bed. The idea users



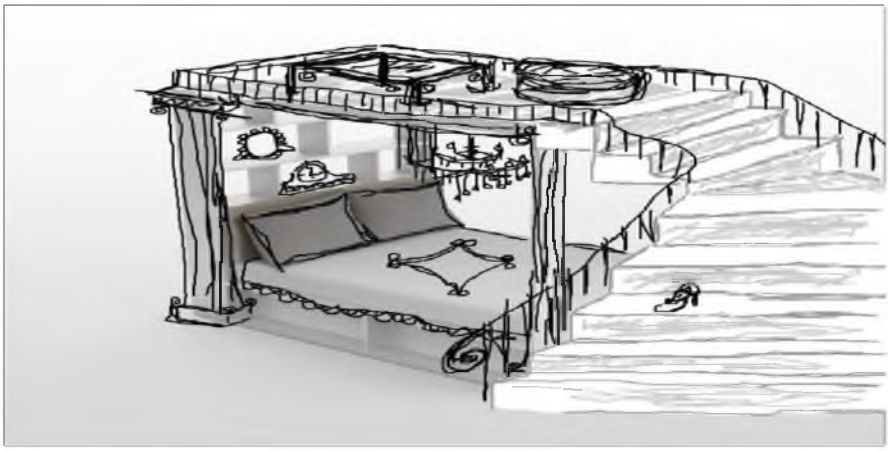
Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-kreatywni-w-lozku---kolejne-wyzwanie-958.html, (14.02.2015).

Picture 6. Example of functionality of the four-poster bed. The idea users



Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-kreatywni-w-lozku-kolejne-wyzwanie-958.html, (14.08.2015).

Picture 7. Example of functionality of the four-poster bed. The idea users



Source: www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-kreatywni-w-lozku-kolejne-wyzwanie-958.html, (14.08.2015).

Collections Young Users and 4 You by VOX are an expression of the mental leap in design, which aims to change the thinking in furniture design. The impetus for such a change of thinking gave the President of VOX, who decided to create the concept of Polish design. The essence of this concept is to move away from thinking imitative, inspired by Italian (Milan) and German (Cologne) furniture project ideas and the desire to create original, Polish solutions in this field. At present, designers learn design at art schools (ASP), where the predominant artists or at technical schools, which dominates the technical approach. This requires a redefinition of the design. For this reason, the owner of the VOX founded in Poznan School of Form, which educates designers based on four pillars: humanism as a source of knowledge about man, design competencies, knowledge of various technologies and knowledge of the business. According to the founder of the School of Form *designers should deepen knowledge about a man, his changing habits, new behaviors, sometimes hidden needs. Tools in the area of applied anthropology, field research, observations of potential users-all-allows you to gather extremely valuable material that inspires the design of products, which often have no one thought*[9]. It is a kind of conscious design, or create objects that are practical, aesthetic, environmentally safe and suited to the lifestyle of users such as a small interior space and create room for a child or a teenager[10]. Conscious design is based on the identification of needs and expectations the users of furniture. This is achieved by working with them in workshops, psychological and ethnographic research in their home, daily contact with them such as on

[9] P. Voelkel, Projektowanie to nie „sztuka", Forbes, 09.05.2013, http://www.forbes.pl/projektowanie-to-nie-sztuka-,artykuly,154977,1,1.html, (14.08.2015).
[10] http://www.meble.vox.pl/artykul-meble-dobrze-zaprojektowane--916.html, (14.08.2015).

a social network like Facebook and contests with prizes. The activities of VOX reflects a move toward implement of the user-oriented design and opening of space of solutions, which is close to the paradigm metadesign (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 2; Giaccardi, Fisher 2009: 91). The essence of metadesign is the redistribution of practice at time and at different levels of interaction with the environment (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 2; Giaccardi, Fisher 2009: 91).

7. Conclusion

In the metatheoretical analysis of the relationship of entity and of being Heidegger argues that being-in-the world-among-the-things and the-next-to--things is a key experience which may determine the method of making things. The rules democratizing of creative practices relate to this experience. Primarily because this type of furniture design takes into account needs of the end-users.

The cooperation between Cogision and VOX is the example of the positive potential of creative practices, that are based on improvisation, modification and evolution. Creative practices are used in the user-centered, participatory design, and metadesign methodologies. They are interested in activities taken through projecting and its aftermaths. Especially, it refers to metadesign. The field of design becomes thus a dynamic, relational and open to new solutions. Metadesign concept, which aims to create socio-technological infrastructure, allows users to deal with the emerging dimensions of reality and allows them to *do what the designers and be creative*. For this reason, we can treat design as a collaborative process (Giaccardi, Fisher 2008: 1–2; Giaccardi, Fisher 2009: 91–92).

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PARTICIPATORY DESIGN AND NEW ROLES OF DESIGNERS: MY CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE. PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Paulina Rojek-Adamek

Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Krakow, Poland

Abstract: The subject of the considerations contained in this text is to take issues of social participation and reflection on building a sense of local identity in the perspective of the opportunities offered by a modern approach to design. Contemporary design and the roles of designers are increasingly associated with the search for solutions to meet public expectations. Such an approach can be successfully described as socially responsible design, for the turn of the century XX / XXI it became not only a time of great challenges, but also opportunities and social expectations. The mission of the modern designer, according to many researchers, includes in their work needs of the end user. Therefore, a trend in design called participatory design has recently become so popular. This involves the cooperation of designers with users at all stages of the design process. The present text of assumptions is to achieve three objectives: first - to bring the idea of community by reference to the definition of the concept of social participation; secondly - to show new approach to design understood as a tool in solving social problems in cooperation with users; thirdly – to show Participatory Design as an approach to involve in design process. The example, which became the inspiration for this reflection was realized for the town of Czechowice Dziedzice (one of the rural municipalities in Silesia Voivodship, Poland), where the young designers through the project *Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy* (*My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community*) worked together with residents and during meetings and workshops they developed proposals for changes in the public space of Czechowice-Dziedzice, due to improve the quality of its residents' life.

Key words: social participation, design, participatory design

1. Introduction

For a long time we can observe significant changes in the way of defining and characterizing the role of professional designers. Their participation is also increasingly apparent in the actions that will undoubtedly have a social char-

acter and are often associated with responding through some type of public intervention on the problems of the modern world. One of the manifestations of such activity is the designers' participation among specialists taking topics related to shaping living spaces within the broadly defined communities. This is not just about the objective features of the environment - architecture, objects and the aesthetics of the landscape - but also, and perhaps above all, designers' participation in the intervention relating to the psycho-social order of the community. An important problem that accompanies assessment of the quality of life in the community is a sense of identification with the place of residence. Forming this sense is complex and long-term, it is a characteristic identity of the place and the community. The role of the designers is not about building the basic relation to their environment, but rather to provoke through specific project activities to reflect on its value and potential. Effective challenge to such understood reflections are movements in the field of Participatory Design, aiming to create solutions / products under the joint work of designers and representatives of local communities. By showing the possible scenarios of good practice of civic activities, designers implement the value and the need for social mobilization due to build a sense of community.

2. Social participation

One of the problems of modern society, that is confirmed by the results of surveys, is the low level of citizens' involvement in their community's affairs. Indicators of this kind of activity are highly unsatisfactory. According to the report *Dyktat czy uczestnictwo? Diagnoza partycypacji publicznej*, 2/3 of Poles declare interest in public affairs and what representatives of the municipalities are doing, however, only slightly more than 14% of the citizens actively participate in public decision making in their communities. Most often we take part in public consultations and it is the most often chosen form of active inclusion of residents that local governments use (80% of municipalities conducted them on at least one solution in the adopted resolutions). To cooperate with local authorities in working out any decision agrees 2,5% of Poles, and for self-command them to the authorities - less than 2% (Olech, 2014:4). The results of the other surveys many times recorded similar trends, which is certainly not conducive to the vision of civil society. One of its pillars is the sense of responsibility for the community matters and active participation of citizens in decision concerns development of the community. Regardless the fact what structural level of the society we are talking about, the key point will be always social participation.

Participation is a conviction that citizens' involvement means an opportunity to express own views and take advantage of the inherent rights such as (Probosz, Sadura 2011:6):

- contacting local and state officials;
- membership in political parties and social organizations,
- discussing politics with neighbours;
- participation in public meetings, rural gatherings and assuming a role in decision-making process concerning the issues significant to the community;
- involvement in political and social campaigns;
- presenting opinions in local and other types of the media.

Social participation is not only about encouraging citizens to take part in meetings with the authorities of their city but also about making them active in workshops whose goal is to work out basic assumptions and prioritize the areas of activity. A contemporary citizen is no longer only a voter, but also a person responsible for the environment in which he/she lives. Researchers emphasize that 'citizens' participation helps, complements and sometimes substitutes the activities of public administration thus increasing the effectiveness of its functioning. Yet at the same time it requires encouragement and support from the authorities and administration' (Probosz, Sadura 2011:6). The practice of grassroots activities shows that the stages of work are cyclical and refer to the following areas (Harris 2010:26):

- getting to know the local community, their interests, a sense of identity, area (location);
- pooling information on the needs and issues important to the inhabitants;
- organizing meetings aimed at formulating goals and making plans for their implementation;
- encouraging the participants to effective, collective work in a group as well as work with other groups and local communities;
- supporting groups in decision-making concerning organization and acquisition of necessary resources;
- encouraging people to learn from one another and evaluate their activities.

The first step which enables any actions for the local community is getting to know it. 'Making a reliable diagnosis requires taking advantage of the knowledge and experiences of the people who are a part of a given community, key informants, organizations and institutions which operate in the area. We also use the

findings of the researchers who worked earlier (...). The ability to conduct a local diagnosis should not be solely the authorities' domain but of all those who want to work for the benefit of the community. Otherwise they will risk taking action which will prove to be irrelevant or duplicate already-existing initiatives and will fail to respond to the actual social needs' (Urbanik 2011:5). Regardless of whether the purpose of participation is the activity of citizens in the design process or simply more significant partnership with local government in community affairs, an important step before is always a social diagnosis. As a collected result it is an essential for further steps (workshops, consultations, *etc.*), knowledge of local communities. A participatory approach assumes that gathering research material allows to know the community and the residents should be involved at this stage. Therefore, increasingly we can observe the role of participatory studies that are characterized by (Urbanik 2011:11–12):

- The participants know and understand the purpose of the study, they participate in the whole process (eg. in the mapping of the local environment, which recognize the main actors and the relationships between them).
- Participants are invited to co-create research tools and implementation studies (eg. Youth in high school creates scenarios meetings with students).
- The partial and final results are presented to the community and to the participants of the study and it is consulted with them.
- Participants have space to provide feedback about the survey and its results.
- The study is noticed by the community - information about the research process is distributed locally with the help of the media, advertisements, the Internet and other effective channels of communication.
- The study should give the possibility of speaking by the groups that are usually marginalized.
- The study should use participatory research methods (art workshop) or traditional research methods supplemented with participatory elements, which open on the local community (creation of open working groups, joint development of tools, implementation of the study also forces members of the community). A key role in this process plays a new technique - various kinds of workshops in which participants and host are colleagues, partners, and work together on a given topic.

A good knowledge in the area of community activating tools, including participatory research, is the first major step in mobilizing social resources. Usual-

ly, their use is evident in situations that put community against essential affairs for its development. Participatory research take place when new strategic documents are adopted or assumptions concerning the budget and important issues are formulated ad hoc. The consultation with the community is rather sporadic, so that is why it is so difficult to convince the community to such methods. An additional element arresting citizens enthusiasm is the belief that the government, which is usually the initiator of such actions, will realize their ambitions without much taking into account the voice of inhabitants. It is worth noting, that when we mean development of a local community it is important to transpose local potential to a field of broader spectrum of activities. If that sometimes does not happen, it does not mean that under the influence of some stimulating actions, the members of the collectivity will not take up the challenge on a larger scale. For that reasons it seems that any project that offers opportunities to involve members of the community in specific actions and at the same time incite them to participation should be promoted and treated as good practices. The experience of work with the community also shows that many times it is the person not connected in any way with local order that play a role of such stimulants. It is valuable because the evaluation of available resources and potential is conducted independently and bearing resemblance to looking-glass self it can help to draw attention to the issues which have so far been ignored.

One of the professional groups which more and more willingly is getting involved in socially-oriented activities which are aimed at improving the quality of life of local communities are designers. Searching for connections between the work of designers and local development we should refer to some condition for design action at local level formulated by. According to Maffei & Villari, the conditions that influence the design action are noted as (Maffei, Villari 2006: 31–32):

- *Design action dependence on the specific context.* The local context is considered as a mix of tangible and intangible resources that continuously change because of their connections with the local values, social and cultural environmental. Designers should create a strong relationship with the local context to develop a concrete project, so they often follow a bottom up approach involving the active participation in a context made by social relationship and physical inter-actions.
- *The dependency of design action from the design process history.* The path dependency concept is related to the perspective that consider the innovation can not be separated from the previous development process (the present conditions are the results of the past and the future ones).

- *The collective dimension of the design action.* The goals achievement depends on a community that has different kind of shape during the time project. The design action needs to be developed crossing different communities of actors, acting on different levels, sharing goals and praxis.
- *Different scales of design activities.* Design is integrated with different project scale: starting from people activities, small urban areas, dynamics of cities, region areas and the connections with the global scale. Then the design action is related to the human activities level and the organizational, the productive, the relational, the physic ones.

3. The core of Participatory Design

According to the formerly existing definition a designer's job encompassed giving aesthetic quality to objects while nowadays more often the job involves participation in undertakings whose purpose is to influence comfort of life. Until recently designers were perceived as creators of form. Designers' contemporary work goes beyond such understanding of designing and they themselves can do much more for the surroundings than their predecessors. They left long time ago their studios and went beyond the existing definitions of profession where their work was identified mainly with broadcasting objects of aesthetic shape. It should not therefore surprised their participation in projects that aim to influence on the quality of life through well-designed services, public space and communication systems. Many of these activities can be noted as mainstream of inclusive users in the process of design. Users can help to make the final definition of the needs, objectives and priorities of the designers' activities. "After discussing the internal transformation of the design process and pulling the process into the Design Participation domain, this section deals with the second area, where designers are encouraged to shift their work mode from abstract space to concrete space, where they can use their knowledge to emancipate people and help them to understand design. Defining who will be the users of the design is always a difficult task for designers, especially in public projects. An even more difficult task is to empathize with the users/ people. This requires transferring design knowledge to help people to understand new design ideas and comment on them. A real-life test of the feasibility of this redefined role of designers as design facilitators was created in the realm of environmental design in the concrete space" (Lee, 2008:39). The importance of user involvement in the design process has been the object of designers' interest for a long time. Interac-

tion with the final customer of the project often has shown that the efforts made by the designers to create more useful and acceptable project / product has not always found the right recognition of the end user. Therefore, already in the 70s., there were voices that in design process an important role should play involvement of those for whom designers work. In this case, it was not just about the stage of evaluation or testing solutions with users, but it was about their participation in the whole procedure. This new approach has been called a co-design or participatory design. The idea of participatory design is based on incorporation into the design process final users and their active cooperation with designers, researchers and developers. Potential of users are involved at various stages of the process of finding the best solution: they participate in the initial discovery of the problem, help to define the problem, participate in development the idea and they help to assess the proposed solutions.

Participatory Design was born in the 1970s and has its roots in the movements toward democratization of work places in the Scandinavian countries. Early Participatory Design projects were addressed to new production tools, changes in production planning, management control, work organization, and division of labor from users' shop floor perspective. Participatory Design started from the simple standpoint that who are affected by design should have a say in the design process (...) [This perspective reflects] two types of values strategically guided Participatory Design. One is the social and rational idea of democracy as a value that leads to considerations of conditions that enable proper and legitimate user participation—what we refer to here as "staging" and "infrastructuring" design Things. The other value might be described as the idea affirming the importance of making participants' tacit knowledge come into play in the design process – not just their formal and explicit competencies, but those practical and diverse skills that are fundamental to the making of things as objects or artifacts. The main point of Participatory Design is the direct involvement of people in the co-design of tools, products, environments, businesses, and social institutions. Many of the design tools and techniques generated to further this process have become standard practice for the design and development of information and communications technologies and increasingly other kinds of products and services. "These design tools and techniques include various kinds of design workshops in which participants collaboratively envision future practices and products; scenarios, personas and related tools that enable people to represent their own activities to others (rather than having others do this for them); various forms of mock-ups, prototypes and enactment of current and future activities used to coordinate the design process; and iterative prototyping so that participants can interrogate developing designs and ground their design conver-

sations in the desired outcomes of the design process and the context in which these will be used (Bjögvinsson, Ehn, Hillgren 2012:103). The level of user involvement can take various forms, but there is no doubt that the interaction with the final customer often reveals that skipping its role in the design process can affect the lack of acceptance of proposed solutions. "This shift led to recommendations and practices for a design process based on the (work) practices of legitimate but resource-weak stakeholders (i.e., actual or potential "end-users"). Work ethnographies and other ways to focus on the users' understanding became central. So did engaging in participative design activities, such as participative future works hops." (Bjögvinsson, Ehn, Hillgren 2012:103).

Participatory design undoubtedly brings many benefits. It helps to define better targets and needs, develop a shared vision for change, often combining business and social expectations, initiating partnerships with various stakeholders. Participatory design is also a process of mutual learning designers and users which begins on the time of acceptance a different perspective and understand that so conceived participation requires good preparation and knowledge, which in general is social participation. "Taken as a whole, pd (participatory design) has been instrumental in opening up design work to new types of knowledge, by proposing the role of radically extended design teams, sometimes acknowledging the social consequences of this move. In doing so, the movement has revealed both processes by which different types of design knowledge can be productively linked to change processes and how it is possible to de-centre design authorship without losing expertise" (Bjögvinsson, Ehn, Hillgren 2012:105).

4. Czechowice-Dziedzice Project

One of the examples, that shows how important is the cooperation of designers with the local community in the field of Design was the project *My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community* (Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy) carried out by the graduates students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. For young designers it was the first serious confrontation of their skills acquired during studies with the contemporary challenges and opportunities of design in the process of social intervention, in which the key role plays the final user. The aim of this project was to create a comprehensive solution, which uses an original way to study the problem of identification with the place and also serves an educational function. The project in its assumptions refers to the issue of broadly defined quality of life of the urban community. The role of the designer in this

case refers not only how to develop a solution, but also how to involve end users in all phases of the design process, from diagnosis of problems to test the solution.

The first – the flagship of the projects that was proposed by the designer was to create a meeting place for residents through designing a special bench, dedicated to the commune Czechowice-Dziedzice. The aim of this project was to strengthen the sense of identity with the city, as well as to create a space for discussion and conversation. *Meeting Place – bench* (picture 1, 2) is a place in the public space, which, apart from utilitarian function (resting place), social (place of interaction inhabitants) also plays an educational role by educating users about selected objects and places valuable and important for the commune Czechowice-Dziedzice. As designers say "The main idea of the project *Meeting Place* was to create a space that will become a pretext to stop. To open itself for conversation. To spend time together. Increasingly awareness of better understanding their place of residence and to share their knowledge and reflections with others. *Meeting Place* is a place for discussions about the city, its past, present and future. A place that allows you to get to know each other, unites residents and supports the construction of their identity. It is a showcase and attraction of the city and demonstrates its history, culture and nature. Project *Meeting Place* refers to the geographical map of the city. Bench arrangement corresponds with the shape of the boundary of the city and height of terrain. In addition the graphics, which are milled on the bench – shows the valuable place in the city." (*Moje Czechowice*... 2015:39).

Picture 1. Meeting Place – bench

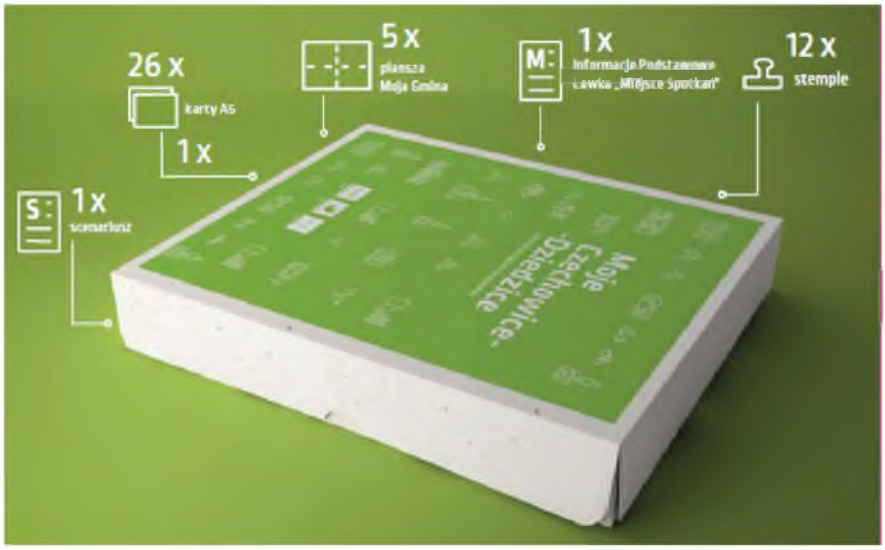
Source: *My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community* authors: Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka, written work, p. 53.

Picture 2. Meeting Place – bench

Source: *My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community*, authors: Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka, written work, p. 58.

Before the designers began to implement the idea, they had to identify recipients of the project and their expectations. Together with people interested in the project (including city officials) they identified the location of the bench and chose the important information (valuable objects and places for residents) that should be perpetuated by milling a piece of furniture. One of the functions of the project Meeting Place – bench was to create a space that will be conducive to initiating educational and entertaining events and which fits in the subject of regional education program implemented in schools and kindergartens. Therefore, designers decided to test certain functions of benches and enriched the diploma with additional elements. Therefore the important part of the project *My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community* became the lesson scenarios, consisting of two packages lesson plans (for the preschool years, and for primary school), supplied for teachers in a box along with additional tools (teaching gear box with maps, cards, stamps) (picture 3). The aim of this project is to diversify activities in the field of regional education in two dimensions, by encouraging children and adolescents to explore the commune Czechowice-Dziedzice and by supporting teachers, animators in the preparation of studies on regional education.

Picture 3. Box for lessons' scenarios



Source: *Moje Czechowice-Dziedzice. Projekt działań zachęcających do poznawania gminy*, authors: Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka, written work, p. 92.

In order to determine the target audience, designers conducted workshops for children and young people at different levels of education - for kindergartens, primary and middle schools. At the same time, they tested and verified implemented earlier project *Meeting Place – Bench*. The conclusions inferred from the workshop showed that the proposed form of getting information about commune Czechowice-Dziedzice met with positive reception from residents (Picture 4).

Picture 4. Workshops

Source: *My Czechowice-Dziedzice. Project activities to encourage learning community*, authors: Aleksandra Harazin, Anna Kącka, written work, p. 113.

5. Conclusion

A skillful use of local resources has a positive influence on the activities in the community but at the same time it stresses the importance of designers' work in this area and their new social role. The activities presented in this paper carried out activities involving design in building local identity and interest of local problems. Through their work the designer showed a modern multi-dimensionality of the professional role of the designer. Using a broad spectrum of methods and techniques of social research they have proven that this type of analysis in the stages prior to the development design solution are important cognitive material which determines not only the action of the designer, but also contributes to the social acceptance of proposed solutions (added value of research stage). It is worth noting that each of the used methods corresponds with theoretical analysis of the sociology of the city and refers to such concepts as identity, public space, its perception and learning. The broad spectrum of works by young designers shows the direction in which we can observe the changes in the way of defining the work of designers. Contemporary designer can not be separate from the consideration of users' voice for whom they create a solution. Projects that involve public participation must take into account the wider interdisciplinary cooperation with a team of professionals whose professional orientations blend well with the activities of designers. We are talking about professionals from management, spatial planning and the multitude of humanists - ethnographers, sociologists, psychologists. „Working with the participation of other professions, designers need to illustrate concretely the participatory design processes and make them understandable to other professions. Most Public Participation projects are research-oriented and people's opinions are collected for the development of policy or strategies. Compared to the projects in the Design and Community participation domains, these projects are shorter and quicker or even ad hoc and the role of the designer/design researcher is more like that of a service provider. By working as design generators, designers are working in the realm of collaboration to facilitate the mixing of 'abstract' experts and 'concrete' people." (Lee 2008:45).

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LAB OF COLLABORATIVE YOUTH

Olga Glumac

PhDDesign International Doctoral Program at the University of Porto,

Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture (ID+)

Abstract: This paper aims at answering how the concept of *Lab for Collaborative Youth* can be established through a sustainable *community of practice* (Wenger 1998) to serve as a *safe environment* for individual and collective learning where young people actively participate in decision-making processes. Moreover, the inquiry is approached through a practice of co-design which investigates how to co-create more inclusive learning processes and services with, for and by youngsters in their local context. The first set of the ideas came from existing concepts of *living labs, design labs, co-labs, neighborhood labs* and also *enabling platforms* – networks of human and non-human stakeholders who play a meaningful role in co-creation (Dolwick 2009) and in design-after-design (Ehn 2008) allowing to have a flexible system in which its users can always adjust, even if it was already formed and it is in use.
Further on, this paper also presents and discuss the origin of an idea to construct a lab model that actually derives from a participatory action research, the experience and outcomes of a collaborative learning project between two schools from the same location in Porto, Portugal: the *Artistic* and *Vocational School Árvore (Árvore)* and the public *Elementary School of the Second and Third cycle of Miragaia* (*EB Miragaia*).

Key words: youth, lab, mutual empowerment, co-design, meaningful participation

1. Introduction

This paper explains a significant enhancement of the case study being developed for the last two years in one of Porto's neighborhoods - Miragaia, as part of the PhD design project. The main focus is set on how young people can be empowered in their active citizenship through co-design. By empowerment it is meant that young people are aware of their rights and duties as students within the educational system, but also as citizens, being incorporated into society through their school and knowing how to organize themselves into meaningful participation and lifelong learning. For young people to learn how to manage an ongoing learning process during and after graduation (Könings et al. 2005)

by perfecting their strategic maneuvers, has been recognized as one of the objectives of the contemporary education (Van Hout-Wolters et al. 2000). Thus, each student might develop into an *expert learner* (Ralabate 2011), the one who can recognize what her learning need is and be able to strategically develop her learning plan.

2. (Non)Formal Education

Traditional education doesn't correspond any longer to the needs and challenges young individuals are facing in the 21st century. Council of Europe (1999) recognized a demand for the creation of non-formal educational practices beside formal educational systems to encourage lifelong learning processes and make education accessible to all, aiming at supporting economic growth and promoting active citizenship (Roger 2004). Non-formal education (NFE) is perceived as an organized set of activities outside of the formal education context, based on principles of: non-hierarchic, voluntary, collaborative, learner-oriented, transparent, flexible approach to learning in which the activity program is designed on the foundations of learning needs/expectations of each participant.

Today, the teachers and other practitioners of formal education try to bring some of these good NFE practices to their classrooms. For an example, there is a democratic school in Portugal with a participatory approach towards learning called *Escola de Ponte,* founded by *José Pacheco*, Portuguese educator and pedagogue who believed that democracy can be part of everyday practice in school and has students actively participate in decision-making through weekly general assemblies, where they would have a practice to write their own learning plans and do regular auto-evaluation of each subject. This kind of practice would encourage young people to learn through experience and allow themselves also to learn from unsuccessful trials, by having time to reflect on and in the action made and produce new knowledge that could be applied next time in same or different situation. And there is a challenge for design in this action research on how co-design processes can encourage young people to take responsibility and co-create new learning tools based on their needs and interests that can be applied in self-organized learning, peer to peer or transversal learning (teacher-student).

3. Co-Design Lab Concepts

Before going deeper in analysis and development of the specific model for the *Lab for Collaborative Youth*, it was interesting and necessary to observe the already existing concepts and various types of labs, and how they function and address real life situations. Through literature reviews devoted to design and implementation of the labs, it was concluded that labs indeed encourage participation, sharing and learning from and about each other members of community where designers also have their role. Thankfully to participatory design approach and principles, the concept of *living labs* was created through acknowledgment that occurred innovative environments were too closed and would not include in early stage the interaction with market, so applying *living labs* concept would prevent this gap to appear by simply enabling end-users engagement as something very pertinent to happen since the beginning until the end of design process (Bannon & Ehn, 2012). One of such example is *living lab* in *Fischerkiez* – Berlin (Germany), where the research atmosphere has been integrated into local club setting, so that researchers could interact and encounter local inhabitants while cultivating everyday living setting (Unteidig et al. 2012). The same research team believed that inter-generational knowledge transfer is not being represented in great matter than one community could have. Therefore, understanding better the motivation and the needs of all stakeholders within specific community would enhance the design process that leads towards sustainability of self-driven learning processes among different actors.

Also, the concept of *design labs* (Binder 2007) particularly draws an attention to be observed and discussed, especially when knowing that is being focused on the value of practicing active user participation. In one of many examples mentioned by Binder et al. (2011), *design lab* was prototyped as a *network laboratory* in cultural administration units within Municipality of Copenhagen (Denmark) which aimed at the co-creation of "cultural work *with* local networks, rather than only providing services *for* local groups" and such evaluated as an innovative framework of citizenship practice and democratization processes.

In the case of *Lab for Collaborative Youth* it can be stated that users are simply the stakeholders of a local community (including youth, teachers, parents, NGO representatives, youth policy makers), together united with different expertise and motivated to work together and allow young people to 'have their say' (Goździk-Ormel 2008), to have their co-ownership and co-decision-making in order to design and implement bottom-up projects and initiatives based on their needs and interests. This, of course, can happen if a network and a platform of *mutual empowerment* in meaningful participation is established. The

recognition arrives from the examples of good practices in which set value is on the process rather than on the outcome and therefore, before starting with any implementation it is important to develop strategically the mechanisms that will allow monitoring of these processes to be evaluated and validated along the way.

4. With, For, By Young People

Even if it was already stressed that the lab concept is to encounter a mechanism to empower young people, it is more than that. In the process of empowering youth through co-creation activities, it is expected that they will empower other community stakeholders likewise, the ones taking part in their education reforms or being in charge to develop and implement different kinds of extracurricular youth programs or even local youth policies related to the active life of youth. Working for *mutual empowerment* can be the answer towards more inclusive democratic processes where young people are equal partners within the system, such as the lab. Furthermore, the lab aims to foresee whether through these experiences the highest degree of youth involvement presented in the *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (Hart 1992) can be achieved: youth initiated activities and co-owned with adults. Before reaching this level seems initiatives are mostly adult initiated and youth co-owned which support sensitization towards the civic rights youth should be aware of. The sustainability of collaborative processes depends on the challenges to be addressed in enabling those learning environments, and even with the provided resources and support, youth needs to be encouraged, to feel capable of such action and motivated to embrace the challenge. In the lab, there is no division of youth and others, there is only a core coordination team consisted of partners that works its best in developing new learning strategies for development of the youth and the environment in which they are situated (Glumac 2015). The concept of *mutual learning* in that sense is very important to be mentioned. Each person is "an expert of her own experience" (Sanders & Stappers 2008) and applying his expertise among the group can lead to mutual understanding and recognition. The actors within the system are dependent and supportive on each other to achieve their common aim, but they also have different needs and benefits to gain from the experience of collaboration. Therefore, it is more than necessary to establish transparent and assertive communication where everybody can share and inform each other about ideas and make decisions together for the common objective having in mind the individual expectations.

5. Work in Progress

Lab for Collaborative Youth is a concept that has been designed and implemented through a project with the specific objectives aspired to create an opportunity of facilitation in co-development of co-design processes between the students in design and the elementary school students that coexist in the same local context. This project aimed at raising an awareness towards an inter-generational communication and an acceptance of the pluralism and at building a network of young people interested in civic engagement and socially responsible design.

This experience served to collect data and explore possible approaches of creating a *community of practice* (Wenger 1998) among youngsters from the same local, as it was to learn better about the local stakeholders' point of view regarding the existing learning environments, its methodology and practices, as to discuss and receive more insights for the future interventions. Thus, it was to tackle at which extent it is feasible to establish such a network and what are the obstacles to its sustainability (Glumac 2015). In the following text, it will be explained the first intervention that catalyzed the formation of the *Lab for Collaborative Youth*.

6. Visual Dictionary *Illustracionary, My Way*

The first year of participatory action research was dedicated to an exploration of the local context of Miragaia, the ecosystem of a public elementary school *EB Miragaia* – the relationships between its stakeholders especially between the students and the learning setting; their local needs and wants; motivation to learn and to improve the environment in the school area and its surroundings; the existing learning opportunities and practices of *civic engagement* provided by an education system.

This fieldwork experience gave a chance to invite students between 12 and 15 years old to voluntarily join the project in case they are motivated to take action in improving their school environment. Firstly, they have been invited to assess their emotions and feelings towards the physical space by reflecting in which areas they feel good, less good or even indiferent. Secondly, individual reflections gave a collective perspective for the certain areas of the school environment. Finally, these reflections also served to assess how much sense and practice of conviviality is actually important to construct good emotions and feelings. The collected data was an indispensable source of guidelines to support the construction of an action plan and implementation of the following experiential and experimental work.

Along the process, it was observed that the terminology related to youth policies and citizenship that has been used in communication being conveyed by facilitation of researcher with the participants was *politically correct* and founded on the concepts widely adopted by the government, the third sector, the institutions and as such transmitted through media; but it seemed to be inappropriate for the participants. They had difficulties to understand what was the discussed topic and the reason behind it, maybe because it was either too abstract or/and too distant from their realities and their individual comprehension of the world.

Therefore, the priority was to focus further research on developing mechanisms in overcoming this challenge in the communication between the researcher – facilitator and participants by choosing one of the options:

- to inform participants about the existing terminology and concepts so they could be able touse a 'common' *language* in communicating with other stakeholders;
- when discussing with the participants to apply more general explanations, filtered from an abstraction;
- to enable participants to explore existing terms and concepts, but also establish their own understanding and by this, together acknowledge *pluralism* and accept different levels of comprehension.

First two listed options implied negligence of either the participants' learning needs or the absence of carrying to understand the world through the participant's eyes. The last option advocates accepting the existing terms and definitions adopted by society, but also aims to empower young people in discovering their own definitions to specific terms and sharing those particular outcomes with other stakeholders.

7. Methodology

After an observation made from the first exploratory phase of the study, it was developed an action plan strategy for the upcoming academic year 2014/2015. Beforehand, students-participants expressed in different moments of the weekly sessions that they would like to collaborate with another school. This was an invitation to organize such an experience. While things became clearer towards the scope of possible interventions in which youngsters show an interest, but also having in mind the difficulties to use the appropriated *language*, co-design project has been proposed to two different groups: participants-volunteers from *EB Miragaia* and students of graphic design from *Árvore*. They have been invited to work in pairs and construct their own written definitions for the given terms,

as to co-create illustration that would represent the meanings of both definitions and participant's levels of the comprehension for the particular key concept.

At the moment of implementation, the ones coming from *EB Miragaia* were a group of 8 students that voluntarily joined the project, from 12 to 15 years of age. The ones from *Árvore* were a class of 23 and older by age, from 15 to 20 years, conducting their second year of studying. Because of geographical proximity, both groups of students had the chance to share their realities and the environment. The co-design project was to take part within a discipline of graphic design, where students needed to develop illustrations as a final result. The duration of the intervention was one month and a half, from the end of February 2015 until the beginning of April 2015, including the Easter holidays in which schools weren't working for ten days.

There was an obvious difference between these two groups, more than just age: participants from *EB Miragaia* were studying and living in Miragaia and its surrounding, their participation was based on personal motivation that varies from curiosity about other cultures, from the sense of belonging until doing something different and for the first time. On the other side, *Árvore* students were living outside of Porto so they were traveling daily to their school, and being invited to engage in this project meant participating from their design classroom where they already knew the procedure getting a project assignment from a teacher and pursuing the deadline to deliver results.

However young professionals were challenged to create empathy and learn about shared values, interests and needs of other participants with and for whom they co-design, practicing collaboration and design for social impact in the same local context.

This co-design intervention took part in the ongoing project in EB Miragaia that was conducted each Tuesday, but in Árvore there were 2 sessions per week, one on Tuesdays for an hour that was overlapping the hour of the session in EB Miragaia and another one on Thursdays that was a whole morning session. In total we had an hour per week with EB Miragaia participants and five hours per week with Árvore participants. In total there were 6 working weeks.

For the whole duration, each session had its aim and specific objectives that were designed and implemented using non-formal education methodology and principles through perspective of design practice. Data was collected through written testimonies (e.g. handouts); image and sound; field notes; questionnaires; self-assessment in the beginning and in the end of the collaboration.

8. Validation

The outcomes of the collaboration were presented through a public event in *House of Youth Associations* where it was demonstrated the printed version of a visual dictionary (figure 1.) and the exhibition of illustrations (figure 2.), and was implemented the project presentation with the round table entitled *Inclusive learning through co-design.* Its discussion was oriented towards methodologies of co-designing inclusive learning and education of children and young people, having in mind three levels of discussion:

- *Learner* – How a young individual relates to the identity of a learner? How to conduct assessment of youngsters' learning needs, interests and learning styles inside and outside of the classroom?
- *Environment and methodology for learning* – How environment (school, local community) accepts individuals and adapts learning processes and services?
- How their representatives/stakeholders are trained to be good facilitators in supporting and coaching the learning of youngsters? What kind of training opportunities exists or should exist to empower teachers as facilitators? How to co-design learning processes and services with the youngsters?
- How can designers support this facilitation and co-design?
- *Recommendations* – What each participant, present in the round table discussion, can bring to support this processes and what they take from this experience? What are the outcomes of the round table discussion that should be taken in consideration?

During the discussion whose outcomes are presented in *table I,* it was clear that co-design was associated with a high level of learning and collaboration experience, as it was a good tool for organizing learning processes. The question of recommendations when it comes to *gamification* was also raised. It was argued that this project tends to nurture collaboration and positive youth development principles, meaning that each person has its own pace and preferences in learning and it is never a competitive matter. On the other hand, *gamification* can be fun to work with, if designed and implemented through a collaborative and qualitative rewarding system, rather than competitive and quantitative. In addition to recommendations, it was equally mentioned that space for collaboration not necessarily needs to be within school or schools whose students are participating in the project, but rather more neutral space like the *House of Youth Associations* where different group of students can more easily work together.

In addition, within the discourse was recognized the importance of having implemented such a type of project that could unite all actors that would empower the voice of youth, but at the same time there was a lack of more specific advice when it comes to certain ways of doing things – methods, tools, techniques and how they correspond to the learner's styles, preferences, ages, or cultural backgrounds. As for the young people, they stayed until the end and some of them shared their thoughts about the project, while others participated as observers. The representative of the Municipal Youth Department was curious about the project and she recognized its potential and message we wanted to pass – a pluralistic approach to understanding the concepts. After the event, both her and the representatives of Federation of the Youth Associations of Porto – FAJDP and Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth - IPDJ expressed the wish for future collaboration.

9. Evaluation and discussion

- *Context*

Along the project, there was an opportunity to hear about *Árvore* students being unease with the local youth from the Miragaia neighborhood. Having in mind that *Árvore* students are usually traveling to Porto to study so they might be perceived as the 'outsiders' and knowing that local youth, including the students from *EB Miragaia* can be more easily connected to illegal activities, it is always important to work on prejudices and stereotypes. The stereotype in this case is having *EB Miragaia* with not such a good reputation and also if there was a doubt about its students being directly connected to any organized group of delinquents, this was the perfect occasion to tackle that. In this opportunity for collaboration these things were perceived as an added value to the working model. *Árvore* students had a chance to visit *EB Miragaia* and *EB Miragaia* students have visited *Árvore* which helped to deconstruct the sense of the unknown and give participants a moment of observation the similarities and dissimilarities of both places.

- *Participatory processes*

This project aimed at creating the space of exploration - trial and fail where young people would work with as less constraints as possible. In addition, the concept and promoted values were based within a higher level of meaningful participation and shared ownership, including the final outcomes illustrations.

Unfortunately, to work with a group of students in design, there was only an option to work with them within the discipline, because they would usually be

emerged in school tasks the whole day and they would travel home straight after school. Therefore, due to the fact of time constraints, bureaucratic processes and incompatible schedules, occurred maneuvers appeared quite rigid and not supportive enough to create exactly what was imagined. Of course, the human factor played its role as well. The group of *EB Miragaia* students was shy and not feeling comfortable in going to *Árvore* at first, but later we managed to visit it together. On the other hand, *Árvore* students were feeling the need to stay in their comfort zone and work with all the tools accessible to them in their classroom. General impression was that they felt pressure to finish everything in time and maybe perceived this project as a same assignment as before, except they had a chance to have a personal contact, being in the same local as their 'users' (other students for whom they were developing dictionary).

With in our co-design processes wasn't stressed and applied enough. By the end of the project initiative, *Árvore* students had more ownership over illustrations, since decision-making process of which information, an idea and detail they want to incorporate in their final artwork was theirs. Co-design with *EB Miragaia* students was not realized on the highest level as planned.

- *Group reflections*

Upon receiving visual dictionaries in their hands, *EB Miragaia* students felt proud and happy with an outcome. They showed it to their social worker with whom they study in *TEIP* (Program for Educative Territories of Prioritized Intervention) after the classes. From their perspective, they improved their team work skills and listening to each other, and that learning about and doing new things is very important, especially the ones that let us keep our mind open. One of them mentioned he learned a lot about the society.

Árvore students also seemed satisfied in the sense they had made a first public exhibition and this felt rewarding for them. They also mentioned as advantages the collaboration with another school and team work; learning about their term and its definition; to think creatively and be more innovative; to work manually without too much use of technology.

One participant shared that themes (terms) were too complex and that they should be more simple, while other student thought that they should be more specific. In both cases, the one can argue that terms were the ones that already exist and are being used widely, and it is up to each individual to interpret them. All of the participants considered that this type of initiatives is important and they expressed the wish to continue with its further development, giving ideas that are presented in *table II.* We agreed that the program and public event could have been more organized and interesting for young people if them (as organiz-

ers) could have contributed more in planning and managing the sessions, not only in contributing with the ideas and managing logistic tasks.

The students of design have been also asked to reflect in the beginning of the project and now, in the end, about their stand towards designer's role and competences he can contribute with in the society. It was observed that their perspective slightly shifted from a technical/commercial point of view towards a more holistic point of view.

10. Future work

Lab of Collaborative Youth is a work in progress and it asks for further recruitment and orientation of young people that are interested to participate. Being contextualized in Porto, the concept idea with all its phases is already being disseminated to different stakeholders. In the future, the moment of gathering and drawing things together is necessary so that the core coordination body can start working together on new initiatives.

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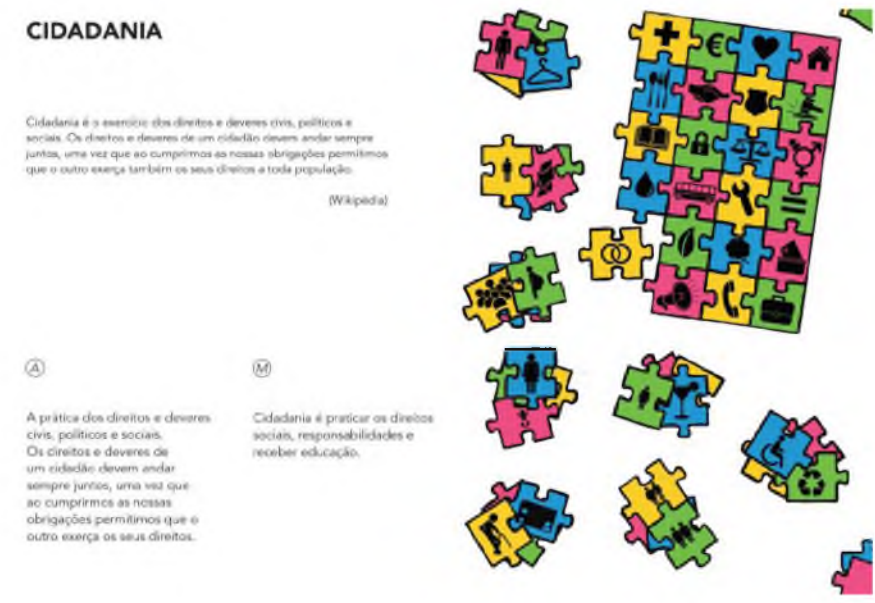
Figure 1. Cover page of visual dictionary (a);
One of the pages that represents the content of visual dictionary (b).

Source: own resources.



Source: own resources.

Figure 2. Participants of co-design project prepare their first exhibition

Source: own resources.

Table 1. Roundtable discussion outcomes

Learner	Environment and methodology	Recommendations	New paradigms
Co-designer = Learner;	Challenge the formalities of traditional teaching;	Apply *gamification* in learning use the game logic for other contexts to solve problems;	Mimicking the professions University of Porto showcase;
	Reflection in action; School = potential of the new things;	More participation, more knowledge;	
	Education equals co-design (mutual motivation);	More cooperation, less competition;	
		Reward > inspiration;	
		Take them out from the school area (collaboration); New ambient of co-design equal education;	
		Teachers promote informality;	

Source: own resources.

Table 2. Outcomes from brainstorming exercise about follow-up activities

Lab of Collaborative youth (future ideas)	Visual dictionary (application)
Make initiatives and projects	During the learning
Art & Exhibitions	In education
Opportunities & Challenges	To explain word in another way
Union & Exchange of ideas	More interaction between schools
Creativity & Novelty / innovation	Practice to express a word through an image
Group work and cooperation	Dissemination tool to demonstrate work already being made
Terms and words; contents; dictionary	Continue to work on word – image relation
Learning & Achievement	It shows that different people have different opinions about words/terms
Contribution	To give our opinion to help fundament opinion of others as well as our work
New beginning – restart	Personal usage
Continuity & Dynamics	
Design for cooperation	

Source: own resources.

AGEING BETTER BY DESIGN– SUPPORTING ELDERLY PEOPLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Grzegorz Gawron
Institute of Sociology, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

Abstract: The present rapid ageing of humanity is perhaps the most salient and dynamic aspect of modern demography. But being old doesn't always mean the same thing. The older age group is very heterogeneous. This means the need to meet the needs of the growing group of people with specific requirements but with full rights and legitimate aspirations for decent quality of life and be involved in society. Their social integration is, therefore, a major challenge in societies which value solidarity and openness and which respect individual freedoms. Conditions and quality of daily life depend very much on the social and physical environment in which we live. It often play a major role in facilitating our personal independence. As a result, the demand for the creation of environments, products, technologies and services accessible and useful for „old" is growing.
The article attempts to present the theoretical and practical objectives of possible use of design for determine accessibility and social participation of people who are getting old.

Key words: ageing, social inclusion, design, inclusive design

1. The meaning of Design – never ending story

Design has no commonly agreed definition and the word is given different meanings in different contexts. Very often, design is associated with the aesthetic aspect of objects only, whereas in reality, its application is much broader (Commission Of The European Communities, 2009:9). In one of the most commonsensical notions of design, the term describes the aesthetic embellishments or nonfunctional aspects of a product or application. The design of a "thing" is, according to this view, separate from the purpose of the object. This notion of design is typically associated with consumer behavior where the quality of design is a matter of taste, of appeal, of fashion, and of fad. The goal of understanding design as a category of "aesthetics" is to learn how to recognize and appreciate the value of elements that constitute the design of the thing (Balsamo, 2010:2).

A second sense of design – as a solution to a problem – is most closely associated with the fields of engineering where the design process is often initiated by the formation of a problem, and the design task is to develop solutions to the puzzle. This notion of design foregrounds practices of problem specification, problem solving, and rationalization. The quality of a design is often determined by appeals to an argument for the fitness of the design solution in terms of how well the proposed design addresses the constraints of the original problem. Design solutions are evaluated, for example, in terms of the efficient use of resources, the conservation of energy, or the economics of materials (Balsamo, 2010:3).

In the fields of applied arts, which include disciplines as diverse as typography and architecture, the term *design* names a domain of creative expression. In these disciplines, design is integral to the manifestation of the art form. Design is the term used to describe the methods of creative practice that define the art form as (and within) a distinct discipline. The shift here is to a focus on the materials of the art form and the practices whereby the materials are shaped, formed, reformed, invented, or remixed (Balsamo, 2010: 4).

A review of definitions by design professionals and policy makers highlights the broad nature of design and its potential to integrate aesthetic and functional as well as for example environmental, safety, cost and intangible considerations into products, services, systems and society (Commission Of The European Communities, 2009:11). There is also agreement that design is ubiquitous and ambiguous. As a quality of the material world, it is everywhere implicated in the construction of everyday objects and experiences. As a term, it is used as both a noun and a verb. As a noun it might refer to (1) aesthetic embellishments, (2) a solution to a problem, or (3) an expressive domain of creative practice. As a verb, it refers to a set of actions that result in the production of an end product: (1) imagining, (2) creating, (3) representing, (4) negotiating, (5) prototyping, (6) fabricating, (7) building, (8) evaluating, and (9) iterating (Davis at al., 1997).

There has been a shift in understanding during the last 10-15 years towards a more *strategic view* of design in business, and towards design as an essential activity for *user-centred innovation* in business, academia and (although to a lesser extent) in policy making. This has resulted in a number of schools of thought about the contribution of design, and new terminology including labels such as '*strategic design*', '*design management*', '*concept design*' and '*design thinking*'. The schools of thought may all have their own particularities, but they also have a number of points in common, namely:

- *Design is a process, an activity, and not only the results of that activity:* it is an activity that follows a certain methodology and a number of steps – such as research, conceptualizing, modelling, testing and re-design – and

not only the results of that activity. It may involve thinking from a number of disciplines, as highlighted by the Flemish definition. As such, it is considered as the bridge between for example creativity and innovation, technology and the user, scientific and commercial disciplines.

- *Design allows a broad range of considerations to be taken into account:* is a approach which allows a range of considerations beyond aesthetics to be taken into account, including functionality, ergonomics, usability, accessibility, product safety, sustainability, cost and intangibles such as brand and culture. The aim of design could be competitiveness and differentiation on international or it could be sustainability and quality of life. User considerations are at the core of design activities, and balanced against other considerations such as cost and environmental impact.
- *Design as a holistic and strategic activity*: Design considerations — i.e. putting the user at the centre – permeate the innovation process, from product development, customer service and management up to the highest levels of hierarchy. Rather than 'design as styling' added on towards the end of the product development process, the user is the Focus in earlier (more strategic) phases. Design is a core element of company strategy and helps visualize possible scenarios to support strategic decision making
- *Focus on user-centred problem solving*: Design is seen as a way of identifying and solving user problems by for example studying users and/or by involving them through visualization and participatory design techniques such as co-creation. User-centred design innovation stresses human needs, aspirations and abilities, and strives for holistic and visionary solutions.
- *Design as a multidisciplinary and cross-functional innovation activity*: The designer facilitates cross-disciplinary innovation processes and interactions by bringing together individuals from different corporate functions within a company, such as management, engineering and marketing, but may also bring in expertise from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and arts.
- *Design is about products, services, systems, environments and communication*: Many designers work in manufacturing firms, dealing with products and packaging, but design can also be applied to services — private and public – as well as to systems, as in the case of urban planning, and even to experiences. A service designer may for example look at how a patient experiences being taken to emergency or a bank customer visiting their bank. Urban designers look, for example, at how elderly or disabled people experience a visit to the town centre from an accessi-

bility point of view. Business model design is an activity linked to organizational innovation (Commission Of The European Communities, 2009:11–18; Thenint, 2008; Nordic Innovation Centre, 2008).

An increasingly relevant development is design as a tool for sustainable innovation, i.e. innovation that takes social, environmental and economic considerations into account. In the 1960s, designers began actively to consider design's wider implications for society. Several approaches emerged, including 'green design', 'responsible design', 'ethical consuming', 'eco-design' and 'feminist design'. Accessibility and inclusiveness also received a great deal of design interest (Cooper, 2005).

We all want to live in a livable community. Each of us has his or her own image of what such a community should look like. That image is shaped, in part, by our reaction to the communities in which we now live or used to live. The physical characteristics of a community often play a major role in facilitating our personal independence. A safe pedestrian environment, easy access to grocery stores and other shops, a mix of housing types, and nearby health centers and recreational facilities are all important elements that can positively affect our daily lives. However, poor community design can make it difficult for us to remain independent and involved in the community around us (AARP Public Policy Institute, 2005:2) Design for general needs usually assumed that the client or end-user of the building or product was a young, physically fit, educated, middle class (usually) male adult who embodied the anthropometric stereotype. Design for special needs then addressed the requirements of all those groups who did not fit the previous definition of the client, such as children, older people, those with mental health problems and women. According to this viewpoint, people with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments are, by definition, people with special needs (Hanson, 2004:12).

So, it seems to be obvious that design can help companies better meet the needs of consumers and users, as it allows for increased usability and user-friendliness. User-friendly and safe products and services benefit all users, but particularly the atypical, underprivileged, vulnerable or minority users, such as disabled and elderly individuals, children and individuals from cultural or linguistic minorities. The movement towards socially responsible design has resulted in a number of schools of thought, including '*accessible design*', '*inclusive design*', '*universal design*' and '*design for all*' ('design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality') (EIDD Stockholm Declaration 2004). These schools have their distinctive features, but have in common the emphasis on the social aspect of design and – often – on the removal of barriers of access to products, services and infrastructures for persons with disabilities (Commission Of The European Communities, 2009:20). Today, the approach has changed from

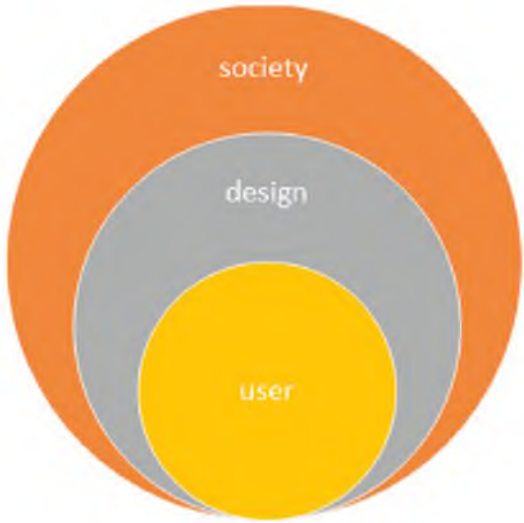
one of tailoring buildings and products for fragmented constituencies of people with special needs. Therefore '*inclusive design*' means creating environments and products that are usable by all, without the need for specialist adaptation or design (Hanson, 2004:14) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. From 'special needs' to 'inclusive design'

Source: own prepared based on Hanson, 2004:13.

In this perspective '*good*' design is by nature user-centred. Design-driven innovation can be graphically represented as a system that places the user at the centre but is open to societal influences. Design acts a bridge between the product development process and user requirements, and between the product development process and societal requirements (Figure 2). As the concept of design has developed, the role of the designer has evolved too. Design as a strategic, cross-functional and multidisciplinary innovation activity implies a broader role for the designer, linking other functions and ensuring that the customer is always in focus. It requires a new and broader set of skills in the designer, including better understanding of social-related matters. It also requires that the designer sees him/herself as part of a collective effort towards user-centred innovation, rather than an independent form giver (Departure, 2008).

Figure 2. The user-centred model of design



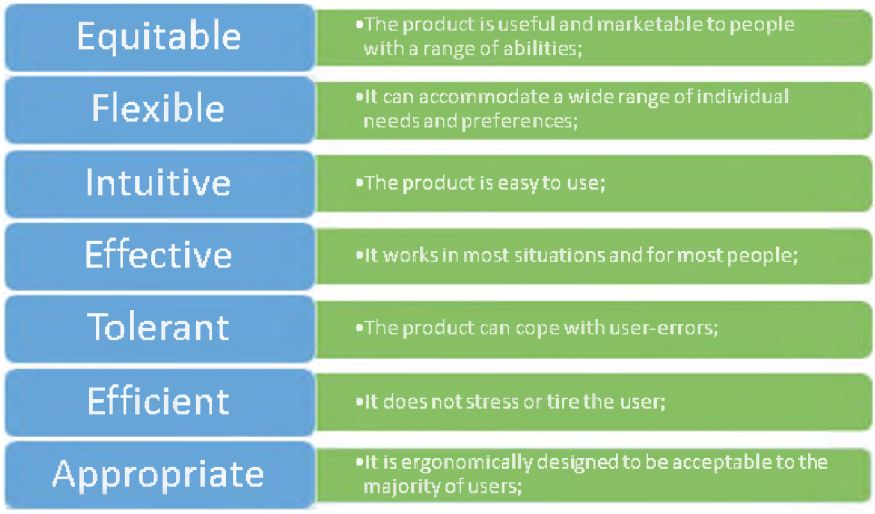
Source: own prepared based on Commission Of The European Communities, 2009:19.

An inclusive environment is one in which all users, whatever their abilities, are able to carry out their day to day activities comfortably, effectively and safely without being restricted by the poor design, maintenance or management of the built environment. The principles of inclusive design aim to accommodate the broadest range of bodily shapes, dimensions and movements, in the belief that designers and manufacturers should ensure that buildings, products and services address the needs of the widest possible audience. A key outcome for inclusive design should therefore be to both alleviate environmental pressure and architectural disability, and also to achieve a greater measure of social equity and justice (Hanson, 2004:13–14). This universal model of design should be a strategic approach to planning and design of products and environments in a fashion that promotes an inclusive society that ensures full equality and participation for all. Usually it is defined as *design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.* The universal design strategy is normative, providing a framework for specifying the qualities of products and environments such that these may be used by all members of society on an equal footing. The merit of individual universal design solutions is to be assessed in an overall context. The universal design strategy is intended to be applied in conjunction with other societal objectives, and is to be incorporated as an integral part of cohesive design activity. One of the primary aims of the universal design strategy is to promote equality

for and ensure the full participation in society of individuals with reduced functionality, by removing existing disabling barriers and preventing new ones from emerging. The concept of universal design represents a new line of thinking; it incorporates a stronger focus on equality than is implied in the concept of accessibility for persons with reduced functionality. While it is possible to obtain accessibility for persons with disabilities by means of specially-targeted solutions, the universal design principle stipulates that the primary solution must be designed to anticipate the needs of all users. In this context, design is understood to be a common term for all work processes involved in the shaping of the physical environment. This encompasses community planning, land use, architecture, construction activity, product development and more (The Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, 2007).

In other words, Universal Design is a strategy for making environments, products, communication, information technology and services accessible to and usable by everyone – particularly people with disabilities – to the greatest extent possible. In helping to avoid an Barriers to participation in social life the Universal Design has it's seven principles which are applied to mainstream policies and solutions right from the early stages of planning (Council of Europe, 2007:5).

Figure 3. Principles of inclusive design



Source: own prepared based on Hanson, 2004:13.

Nowadays many Europeans, especially people with disabilities, are unable to take part in important activities and aspects of society in an equal manner, sim-

ply because policies, societies and environments are not designed to meet their requirements. Additionally, with the number of elderly people increasing rapidly, future European societies face the challenge of adequately addressing the particular requirements of a growing number of people with disabilities. Therefore all European societies should recognize the necessity to promote full participation in community life by ensuring access to and usability of all aspects of society, including the built environment, transport, products and goods, information, public services, education, employment and care. They can do it by implement Universal Design as a strategy to ensure equal and democratic rights in society for all individuals, regardless of age, abilities or cultural background, including persons with disabilities. (Council of Europe, 2007:7).

2. Silver Revolution – The Demography of Change

Ageing is something that happens to us all, every second of our lives. Each day, every one of the hundred thousand billion cells in our bodies experiences around 10,000 damaging hits by free radicals17. Luckily we have a whole armory of mechanisms to repair that damage, but the repairs are not 100% effective. This, and other aspects of the way our bodies function, constitute a dynamic process of change. Ageing is not a disease, but part of the natural life-course, and the longevity we are now experiencing is a gift – the legacy of astonishing developments in science, medicine, technology and design that have taken place over the past 100 years and more. At the beginning of the 21st century we live not in hope, but in certainty of a long life stretching into our 80s, 90s and 100s even. This is a great opportunity and we must treat it as such (Coleman, 2008:15).

In 2015, there are 901 million people aged 60 or over, comprising 12 per cent of the global population. The population aged 60 or above is growing at a rate of 3.26 per cent per year. Currently, Europe has the greatest percentage of its population aged 60 or over (24 per cent), but rapid ageing will occur in other parts of the world as well, so that, by 2050, all major areas of the world except Africa will have nearly a quarter or more of their populations aged 60 or over. The number of older persons in the world is projected to be 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, and could rise to 3.2 billion in 2100. In the short-to-medium term, higher numbers of older population are inevitable, given that the relevant cohorts are already alive (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015:7).

But old age is still often considered from the economic perspective, with assumptions of what the ageing population will cost. Yet wellbeing in later life is

an accumulation of experiences throughout life. Countries that support human development throughout life are more likely to have higher rates of participation of older people in volunteering, working and engaging in their communities.5 Every person should be able to live the best life that they can at every stage, with dignity and freedom of choice. As countries age, they need to invest in supporting the contributions, experience and expertise of their growing number of older citizens (Greengross, 2008:2).

The older population will become progressively more active and independent. Tomorrow's older generations will demand more control over their lives and choice in their lifestyles. An ageing population will resist ageist design approaches that shoehorn older people into age-based categories. They will want to participate fully in society on their own terms, not those set by crude age definitions. The ageing population is likely to be segmented by income, health, and participation in the economy, with a growing number of poorer, less healthy and technologically disadvantaged individuals (The Age Shift 2002:28).

At the social and political level the challenge is to ensure that older people remain active, integrated and contributing members of society for as long as possible. If that can be achieved in ways that older people welcome, then we stand to reap the benefits of longevity while minimizing the costs. At a personal level, the aim is to maintain autonomy through an active, independent lifestyle supported by an adequate income, personal interests and a social network of friends and family. If we can approach later life with confidence, as something to look forward to and a period of opportunity, then we are likely to invest in it, surround ourselves with the things that will make it enjoyable, plan to maintain a comfortable income, and spend our money on goods and services which add quality. Achieving this will require changes in attitudes towards older people that ensure they are included in planning, decision making and product development. It will require communication systems that keep older people connected with a rapidly changing world (Greengross, 2008:4).

The challenge is not just for businesses but for everyone else with responsibility for the environments in which we live, work and search for fulfilment. The solution lies a long way beyond adapting products into ungainly, unappealing and stigmatized versions of their former selves so that they meet a 'niche' requirement. It lies in setting out, from the beginning of the creative process, to produce things which, as far as possible, address everyone's needs. This is the essence of inclusive design. The challenge for us (business, industry and society as a whole) is to create a world that is age-friendly, accessible and affordable, without being boring, stigmatizing or over-protective (Summers, 2008:4). In this situation, designers should also adopt approaches that are generally applicable but also respond for the requirements of older people (The Age Shift 2002:17).

3. Design for Senior's Inclusion

Ageing in itself is not a policy problem to be solved, but is in fact a unique experience for each individual, which varies according to personal characteristics, experience and outlook. Each individual's experience of ageing, including their health, well-being and financial security, will be determined by their life-course in its entirety, rather than by the events of their later life in isolation. Activities to support positive experiences of ageing must aim to build people's resilience throughout their lives, to present problems such as poor health or social isolation from arising (Bazalgette, Holden, Tew, Hubble, Morrison, 2010:10)

We receive social support constantly in everyday life, during interactions and relationships with other people. Constantly we play the role of the recipient or donor support. It protects against the feeling of alienation and thus strengthens us mentally. Social support is help given to an individual or a group in difficult situations, which without the support of others we cannot overcome. Therefore social support should cover not only action against the exclusion of individuals or groups, but also activation and animation as a way of helping people in life on their own account, in being independent and self-directed, building personal relationships (Chabior, Fabiś, Wawrzyniak, 2014:126).

On the other hand, anyone can become socially isolated but seniors are especially at risk of social isolation. As part of normal aging, seniors experience physical changes such as illness or disability, along with changes in personal lives (e.g., loss of a spouse), that can shrink social contacts and limit activities. Social and environmental factors such as poverty or infrastructure barriers may also increase their chances of becoming socially isolated (F/P/T Committee of Officials, 2007:4). And we have to remember that social exclusion is a social determinant of health (Marmot, 1999). For decades, it has been known that social networks are health protective (Berkman, Syme, 1979). Thus, reducing social exclusion can lead to greater social cohesiveness and better standards of health and reduce premature mortality (WHO Europe, 2003). Community design has the potential to create social inclusiveness. Designing facilities that encourage meeting, gathering and social interaction in communities could improve mental health and increase social networks.

Design for social inclusion is about tapping into the richness of communities and the use of local resources in conjunction with entrepreneurial activity and industry to develop products and services that are intrinsically related to social and cultural contexts while also viable and relevant in national and international arenas. Designed artifacts that reflect how people have shaped them also offer tangible possibilities of independence and a sustainable future (Manzini, 2007:243).

There are many models describing the process of aging and its consequences. Although it was not labeled as such, a very early model of design for older adults seems match to universal design. Lawton and Nahemow (1973) argued that a transactional model was needed that provided insights into the ecology of aging and the situations that older adults encountered, the environments in which they were interacting, and their adaptive behaviors and concomitant states of well-being. This model is referred to as the *Environmental Press Model of Aging*. The basic premise of the Environmental Press Model is that there are forces in the environment that impose certain demands on an individual. At the same time, the individual has only a certain level of competence with which to deal with those demands. If the press does not exceed the person's competence then the individual is in the "zone of maximum performance potential," the individual engages in adaptive behaviors and has positive affect. However, there may be situations wherein the environmental press is strong and exceeds the individual's competence, leading to maladaptive behavior and negative affect. For example, if a person has had an injury and his or her physical competence is reduced, the demands imposed by the home environment may exceed the person's current capabilities. Likewise there may be situations of under stimulation wherein the press of the environment is less than the competence of the person, which can also lead to maladaptive behavior and negative affect. If a person is in an environment that provides very little intellectual stimulation, for example, competence may exceed the press of the environment and the person may become very bored and discontented (Rogers, et al., 2013).

In this perspective if people are excluded from the mainstream because of age, capability, location or income, then their lives can become problematized, they become a burden, a drain on resources, and a source of social division and conflict. Not because of who or what they are, but by virtue of being excluded. At this level the political project of social inclusion becomes a design issue, because the very fabric of our historic and culture-rich Europe – its cities, monuments, dwellings and public spaces, museums, galleries, and transport systems – was not conceived or constructed to accommodate large numbers of older people. We need to recognize that people are excluded by design when they could be included by it. The emphasis here is shifted away from age and capability and on to design and its social consequences. From this perspective it becomes possible to flesh out the concept of inclusive design as a process whereby designers address the needs of the widest possible audience by including the needs of groups who are currently excluded from or marginalized by mainstream design practices, due to age or disability or rapidly changing technologies and work patterns.

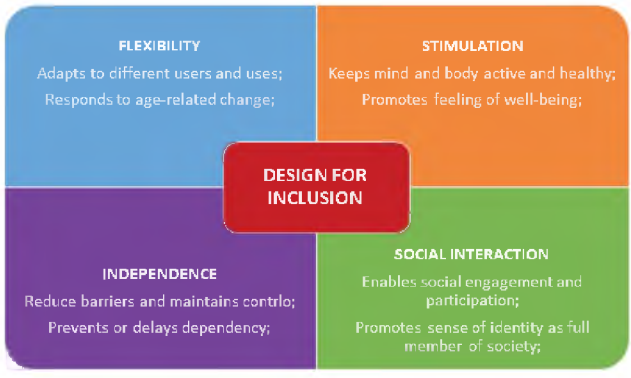
Inclusive design is increasingly being recognized, by governments as a focus for social equality, and by business and industry as a tool for commercial

growth – a strategy that can be employed to improve the quality and usability of products, services, buildings and communications. Emphasis is placed on working with specific groups facing design exclusion in order to better understand how to overcome it, and on acknowledging and accommodating difference with user-aware and customizable solutions. Attractive, desirable and life affirming designs which allow for a broad spectrum of user capability in a single product, have built in adaptability, or a range of variants and add-ons that extend usability and so meet the needs of the largest possible number of people. This means ensuring that the environment is supportive of people in all their activities - products for daily living in the home, local transport to shops, offices and other workplaces, leisure and learning environments, fitness centers, long-term care environments, retail environments and long-distance travel. For example, a journey can be seen as a chain of individual products and services whose accessibility is only as strong as its weakest link (Coleman, 2008:25-28).

Design is often defined as the realization of an idea. It is also the means by which consumers can realize their quality of life aspirations. Therefore there can be identified an inter-related set of factors that it believes are fundamental in maintaining and improving the quality of life for an Ageing Population:

- *Stimulation*, both physical and cognitive.
- *Flexibility* to accommodate changes brought about by the ageing process.
- *Independence*, through choice and control.
- *Social interaction*, through family, friends, neighborhood, and the wider communities.
- The rationale for these factors includes the following (The Age Shift 2002:7):

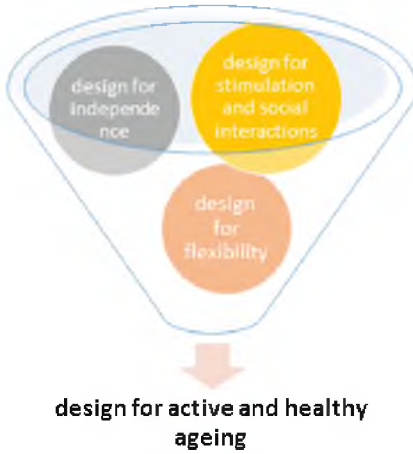
Figure 3. Design for inclusion: The four cornerstones.



Source: Own prepared based on The Age Shift 2002:7.

It must be underlined that these factors are not confined to the "Older Person", but intrinsic to designing for all people irrespective of individual characteristics. They are the cornerstones for designing for inclusion, and fostering *Active Healthy Ageing* (The Age Shift 2002:7). These observations all relate to the individual, but will also require significant changes to the cultural and organizational perceptions of "Older People" and their place in society.

Figure 4. Aspects of design for active ageing



Source: Own prepared based on The Age Shift 2002:7.

The key to tackling the social consequences of living longer lies in identifying and promoting ways in which the built and designed environment, in particular transport services, work places and homes, can be made accessible, welcoming and supportive of people of all ages and abilities. It also lies in identifying and promoting ways in which, as individuals, we can feel more independent and in control of our own health and well being, while collectively being more supportive of each other. Get this right and it means:

- discovering, through inclusive design, that what works better for older people works better for all of us, promotes social integration, reduces disability and enhances independence;
- discovering that changes in lifestyle and, importantly, extended working lives, can promote active independent ageing and increase the income of older people;
- discovering that better design of homes, transport and communications improves life quality for everyone, and reduces disability and dependency (Coleman, 2008:40).

4. Design for Senior's Inclusion – Good Practices

A socially inclusive society can be defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity (Cappo, 2002). In a socially inclusive community, residents have opportunities to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of their community. Social inclusion policies facilitate access to employment, education, health, housing and democratic processes. These socially inclusive policies create health and wellbeing for individuals by creating a supportive community (Ferrie, 2008).

The factors that make communities cohesive are complex. They include a mixture of social, cultural and economic relationships between communities of faith, class and race, between affluence and poverty and between generations. Good design and place management can contribute to a more widespread sense of belonging and can Foster good relations between, and within, communities. Our sense of being at ease and belonging are strengthened by positive contact with neighbors and by being involved together in decisions about the spaces and places we share (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2008:11)

When taking into account the principles for livable communities we can observe that healthy, safe and socially connected communities have strong networks and provide good access to the services and facilities required for daily living. A combination of physical and social elements creates a sense of place and belonging in a community. Physical attributes include design styles, street layout, scale of buildings, landmarks, vistas, meeting places, open space, designing for community safety.

In the face of demographic changes, taking place in the western societies, an increased interest in the needs of senior citizens is of paramount importance. Poland is still at the beginning of the road which our western neighbors paved a long time ago. Officials, investors and urban planners can thus follow their lead and transform Polish cities in such a way as to meet the needs of all generations (Zamek Cieszyn 2012:7). But it has to be admit, that last few years wasn't lost. In many polish cities we can find a number of activities, projects and initiatives which are undertaken for seniors and with seniors. So it is worth to present some of them, even just for show the diversity of local answers to polish aging.

As we all know the quality of buildings and spaces has a strong influence on the quality of people's lives. Decisions about the design, planning and management of places can enhance or restrict a sense of belonging. They can increase or reduce feelings of security, stretch or limit boundaries, promote or reduce mo-

bility, and improve or damage health. They can remove real and imagined barriers between communities and foster understanding and generosity of spirit (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2008:3). People experience the built environment differently according to who they are – their social, cultural and economic background. The full diversity of this experience needs to be considered if all users are to be comfortable and feel that a particular space or place belongs to them. The built environment can contribute to a more equal, inclusive and cohesive society if the places where we live, the facilities we use and our neighborhoods and meeting places are designed to be accessible and inclusive (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2008:4). The good example here can be *City Sports Square in Bemowo* – one of the Warsaw districts.An open-air cinema, dance platforms, a multipurpose playing field, a café, a board games zone, a skate park and a climbing wall are all located in one place. The entire square will be embraced by a wooden footbridge spread between the trees. It can have the function of a roof providing shelter from rain or of a walking platform. It is the first city development action on such a wide scale. It was designed to serve not only the city sports lovers, but also other residents of the neighboring area – there is sports equipment for the elderly, a fitness trail, etc. Thanks to that, both the young and the elderly will be able to spend their free time together outdoors and the senior citizens will not feel excluded. The main assumption behind the design was to create a functional, visually attractive and open (accessible to the public) area which would bridge the generation gap without entailing high expenses both in terms of construction and its use. The idea may also be adapted to other city spaces upon its adjustment to the target place (Zakem Cieszyn 2012:15).

Picture 1. City Sports Square in Bemowo

Source: http://www.bryla.pl/bryla/51,85301,12731585.html?i=3 (access: 17.09.2015).

Cycling, walking and all different kind of physical activity can stimulate casual social interaction on the streets as well as have health benefits for residents (Wood et al., 2008). So another good example are new *Playgrounds... for adults*, appearing in every bigger city. Regardless of whether it is on a health resort area or on a housing estate square, senior citizens do their best to keep fit. One of the pioneers in implementing this type of solutions was a silesian city of Żory. The outdoor gym attracts not only the lovers of active lifestyles and beautifully shaped bodies, but also health-conscious senior citizens, as it is for them that the city authorities decided to implement the investment. Seniors can do sports free of charge in a pleasant company. The playful exercises designed for the elderly improve their capacity to cope with everyday tasks. The simple routines are intended to maintain mobility and coordination. Moreover outdoor pursuits together with other people improve mental wellbeing. Senior citizens with good mobility and fitness hurt themselves less often, saving on medical costs, and they can function better in their everyday live. All they (residents) have to do is to go out for a walk and use the outdoor fitness equipment, which apart from motivating the residents to exercise their bodies, also integrates them. Parents with children and pensioners may now spend quality time together in the open air. It is one of the few places in Poland which activate senior citizens through the contact with other society members, with no financial obstacles in the way (Zakem Cieszyn 2012:12).

Picture 2. Playgrounds... for adults in Żory

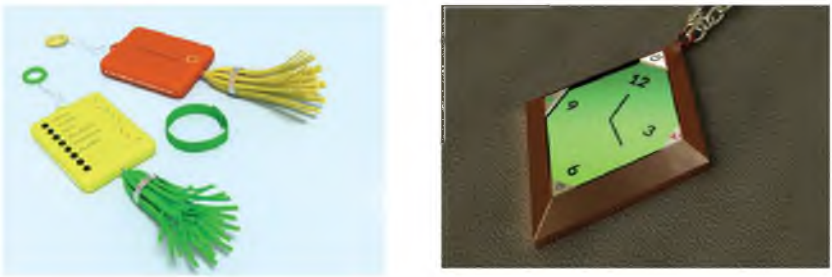
Source: http://www.zory24.pl/artykul/zaglosuj-na-silownie,4395.html (access: 17.09.2015).

In addition to public space in our lives private space is equally important. Because not only architecture can help in keeping independence. The designers have conceived of a range of solutions that make everyday tasks more manageable. Activity in the house, which is understood as perform various tasks related to running the household and immediate family life takes a lot of time. Howev-

er, seniors often live as singles (lead single households) so the entire responsibility for the daily duties falls on their shoulders. On the one hand, the quality of private space is very important - equipment and home adaptation to the needs of seniors, on the other - the seniors ability and capacity for efficient use of this space. One of the pioneering projects, taking place in Poland, is a series of design workshops for people 55+, organized by the *Culture Shock Foundation* (Zakem Cieszyn 2012:25). Participants of the workshop go behind the scenes of a designer's and manufacturer's work: starting from concept of a product based on a diagnosis of needs, through its design, to producing a realistic model of an object corresponding to those needs (Fundacja Culturesock, 2012:2).

The best examples of that cooperation between designers and seniors can be: *A unique case for keys* and *ES- electronic secretary– a memory assistant.* The idea of the first one is to solve the problem of finding your keys in one bag. Consists of two elements: the case for the keys and a plastic or gel bracelet that is powered by kinetic energy. The case has a sewn-in magnet which means we can "stick" the keys at home in a specific place or to pick them up from the floor with a metal object, without having to bend down (Fundacja Culturesock, 2012:7). The essence of the second project is an electronic system, working similar to an alarm clock on a mobile phone, with the possibility of changes in the program, adjustments in preset functions – all according to the customer's needs. At specific hours ES notifies the user (voice message, light, vibration or all together) of preprogrammed activities, such as taking medication, visit to the doctor or the necessity of making a phone call to your son, taking the keys etc. (Fundacja Culturesock, 2012:6-).

Picture 3–4. A unique case for keys and ES- electronic secretary– a memory assistant



Source: http://www.cultureshock.pl/rzeczoznawcy_3/ (access: 17.09.2015).

5. Conclusions

Even though accessibility has improved over the last decade, and planning policy has shifted, with investment providing new facilities to once-excluded communities, the fact remains that poor and disadvantaged people are far more likely to live in poor quality environments. Social, cultural and economic inequalities are still being literally built into new places, and planners and designers need to examine more closely the impact of their decisions (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2008:3).

So it comes as no surprise that designing senior care environments presents unique and formidable challenges. However, there are also significant rewards. In addition to the rapidly growing need for these

facilities and the potential benefits for business, design professionals have the unique opportunity to make an invaluable contribution by creating settings that encourage exploration, movement and social interaction, which are vital for maintaining a good quality of life and health in an elderly population (Brawley, Taylor, 2003).

An ageing population calls for a fresh approach to design. The goal should be to design a built environment, products and services that both cater for the specific requirements of older people and also appeal to other age groups. The objective must be design for inclusion, not stigmatization. This approach will emerge naturally from an emphasis on design for active, healthy living. This redesign of design should take on board the diversity of people in all age brackets and apply the principles of ergonomics (The Age Shift 2002:17). And inclusive environments should be: *responsive* to people's needs; *flexible* in use; offer choice *when a single design solution* cannot meet all users' needs; *convenient* so they can be used without undue effort or 'special separation'; *welcoming* to a wide variety of people, making them feel they belong; and last but not least - *accommodate* without fuss or exception those who have specific requirements (CABE, 2006:12).

Therefore the planners of new homes and communities must accommodate the wide ranging needs and desires of individuals, who will vary from the healthy active to the disabled people. Manufacturers and marketers should avoid stereotyping the older population in product design, advertising campaigns and general media coverage(The Age Shift 2002:17). The more successfully this can be done the closer we approach a circle of confidence where older people will be able to find the products and services that match and support their changing lifestyles and provide a rationale for them to spend rather than save. To complete the circle we need a shift in our understanding of what ageing means, away from

the stereotypes of the past towards something that better reflects the dynamics of the social changes we are living with (Coleman, 2008:12).

In the face of demographic changes, taking place in the western societies, an increased interest in the needs of senior citizens is of paramount importance. Poland is still at the beginning of the road which our western neighbors paved a long time ago. Officials, investors and urban planners can thus follow their lead and transform Polish cities in such a way as to meet the needs of all generations (Council of Europe, 2007).

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THE ROLE OF SHAPE: EXPERIENCES AND MEANINGS IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY. THE CASES OF "TRÓIA, CIDADE JARDIM" AND "BAIRRO DO CONDADO" IN THE LISBON NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Manuela De Vincenzi

CICS.NOVA, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences,

New University of Lisbon, Av. De Berna 26C, 1069-061 Lisbon, Portugal.

Abstract: The contemporary metropolis seems to be mostly affected by the phenomena of social disintegration and inequalities (Bauman, 2013; Magnaghi, 2010; Conde, Magalhães, 2001). The modernist utopia of progress, freedom and equality did not take place and there are many examples of urban peripheries around the world that remind us of that. Despite the initial intentions, these areas continue to increase, experiencing situations of isolation from the rest of the city and showing disturbing situations of degradation.

Given this context, the focus of this paper will be put on *Tróia*'s urban project and the *Bairro do Condado*'s social housing project in Lisbon, where both cases present the same morphology and project, although with totally different results.

On one hand, we have the Garden City of *Tróia*, built and designed for upper-middle class vacationers, while on the other we have the *Bairro do Condado*'s neighbourhood, representing one of the most stigmatised areas of Lisbon, particularly due to deviant behaviour, criminality and environmental degradation.

The first question that immediately comes to mind is: Why did a project based on the concept of „Garden City" like *Tróia*, thought to enhance and improve the inhabitants life quality, not work in a context like that of *Bairro do Condado*? Some people, such as the author Heitor regarding the Bairro do Condado's case, attribute the cause of deviant behaviours mainly to the urban design and "wrong" shapes of the place and some others, on the contrary, think that the architecture assumes a neutral position and see the inhabitants of these places solely responsible for their own degradation and marginalisation.

In this regard, can the urban design influence the behaviour and degradation verified in these places? To what extent must the needs of the inhabitants be interpreted and registered? And to what extent it is possible to present suggestions for improvement without falling into ideological impositions?

Key words: Modernity; urban design; neighbourhood; democracy

1. Introduction and contextualisation

The industrialisation processes and the consequent transformation of the cities have long been considered as inherent to the growth of individual liberties and subordinate social classes (Magnaghi, 2010). But, in more recent times, as town planner Alberto Magnaghi also reminds us, these changes are starting to produce perverse effects in territorial terms, as well as in cultural transformation and lifestyles. In other words, they are leading to new types of poverty, characterised by further restrictions on individual freedoms, reductions on the value of social benefits, social disintegration, economic impoverishment, lack of identity, lower quality of life on the peripheral areas and crises in the environmental systems (Magnaghi, 2010).

In Magnaghi's point of view, these new types of poverty are related to the quality of the urban life, the environment, territory and identity traits, which are triggered by quantitative growth systems. The author draws particular attention to two types of poverty: the poverty of housing quality and of the identity, claiming that, in the next years, the main objective of town planning will be to develop of plans of urban and environmental requalification for a matter of survival (Magnaghi, 2010).

Based on this reflection, the subject developed in these pages tries to raise, even if transversely, a discussion on the paper of urban design[1] in the contemporary city.

In this regard, it is worth recalling that, after the Industrial Revolution, we witness the propagation of new ideas and concepts in the artistic and cultural scope throughout Europe that would form the Modernist movement and try to break with the previous schemes: the freedom and independence of the arts, progress and a better quality of life for all are some of the principles behind that movement, as well as the new urban aesthetics.

In this respect, we can say that the research of this new generation of architects (taking for instance the garden cities of Le Corbusier or Alvar Aalto, Wright's rural settlements or even Adriano Olivetti's "La città dell'uomo", among others) does not aim to be a mere issue of shape, but it also tries to find an alternative that can give "*a concrete dimension to individual and collective welfare*" (Secchi, 2011:85).

[1] The term design here is used in the strict sense, that is, as a synonym of "project". Therefore, it does not relate to a mere question of shape or technique related to industrial production (product design). We can say that, according to Nuno Portas or Enzo Mari's point of view, it represents a process based on these stages: conception – morphology – use (Mari, 2008; Portas, 2005)

However, despite initial good intentions, we only need to walk through the streets of our cities to perceive the serious democratic deficit that invades our cities. Along with the proliferation of shopping centres, private condominiums and highly protected residential quarters, comes simultaneously the growth and segregation of the urban outskirts to the level that the geographer Ash Amin, in an inaugural speech in the University of Cambridge (March 2012), stated that up to 2030 «*almost half of the world's population will live in precarious and degraded conditions in forgotten urban interstices*» (Sampò, 2012:3).

In respect to this contradiction, one of the most frequent examples are the public residential quarters (or social housing): from Les Hauts de Rouen in France to Zen in Palermo, passing through Scampia in Naples or Chelas in Lisbon. These neighbourhoods may be considered as the result of ideas and representations of the 21st century's society (Secchi, 2011), as a response from institutions to the housing problem and, in general, they represent the will to create the concept of a more equitable city, even though it was from these same examples that surfaced the cliché relatively to the concept of modern city as "fallen" cities (Peretti, 2010), which are often associated to the utopias of designers and blamed for generating new ghettos.

This work aims to investigate the dynamics of this contradiction and to understand why the so desired social progress envisioned by the Modernist movement did not came to fruition. From the initial conception of the projects at hand to the effective use of the built environment, there has been an attempt to understand this diversity which reminds us that, like sociologist Alfredo Mela stated:

> "*The capabilities of spatial orientation and the resulting images of the space* (...) *vary in a non-marginal way among the various individuals when they also belong to the same cultural universe. Besides, these differences become deeper when there is a confrontation between the perception and the use of the space by individuals that belong to different cultural universes*" (Mela, 2006:293).

In this regard, is it possible that, in some cases, the lifestyle and needs of the inhabitants had actually been idealised?

The case study presented here is the urban project of *Tróia*, based on the concepts of Garden City from 1970, and the Bairro do Condado (Lisbon), which was subject to the reproduction of the same morphological project employed in *Tróia*, in 1980.

From a methodological point of view, besides the bibliographic research on the subject, the resources used on the first phase of this paper include descriptive memories, maps and original materials from *Tróia*'s and the *Bairro do Condado* neighbourhood's projects. This phase also comprises previous interviews

with the *Bairro do Condado* project's managers (former *Zona J*), in particular with its author, architect Tomás Taveira, and a complementary field work to document the current situation (by direct observation throughout the year and photographic documentation).

1.1. The Garden City

Among the several modernist experiences that try to give an answer to the problems of the industrial city we also find the Garden City model, certainly being one of the strongest ideas of the 19th century, which is opposed to the continuous development of the 18th century metropolis, as well as to the "linear city" model (Calabi, 2008).

This model of the ideal city was designed particularly by Ebenezer Howard in the late 19th century and had as objective to create a city attuned to man, comprising the services and comforts of urban life with the benefits of life in the countryside. This type of design had to take into account all the aspects of human life, proposing a more sustainable approach. In this regard, a plan to create small-scale inhabited sites instead of great buildings, surrounded by gardens and common areas with services, commerce, recreational activities, industrial sites etc., with the purpose to turn these areas self-sufficient, like any urban center.

It is due to city concepts such as this that a later attempt would be made to confer greater life quality to some of the new public neighbourhoods.

The Garden City is presented as a socially valid solution because, on one hand, it would eliminate the uninhabitable slums of the industrial outskirts using low cost lands at the expense of the distance from the great urban centres. Moreover, the targeted public could take advantage of the benefits from the countryside without having to abdicate from urban life and their work at the factory (Calabi, 2008).

2. Case Studies

2.1. "Tróia, Garden City"

This project is part of a development plan in the Peninsula of Tróia for tourism purposes, conceived by architect Francisco da Conceição Silva around 1970, even though it represents only a small part of the initial project. The enterprise occupies an area of 40 hectares in the north of the peninsula of Tróia, located to the south of Lisbon between the River Sado's estuary and it was intended to be the first leisure city in Portugal (Leite, 2007).

The intention was to build a true city designed to accommodate the upper-middle class employed in industrial activities between Setúbal and Sines, but, due to the events of the Revolution of 25th April of 1974, it never came to develop the city life environment as it was originally planned.

The plan intended to build a place on a territorial scale, integrated in the landscape and that would only use local materials, including itself within the modern proposals that were flowing since the beginning of the 20th century throughout Europe, although it presented some new adaptations based on Portuguese tradition (Leite, 2007).

The project had as underlying concepts those of a civic centre, multi-functionality and, above all, to facilitate an intense community life through many public spaces (photo 1).

Therefore, not only services related to tourism, but also sports, shopping and cultural infrastructures spread throughout the several areas. From a morphological point of view, the proposal intended to reconsider the idea of building a block consisting of series of buildings (max. 4 storeys) around semi-closed gardened squares on both sides (photo 2–3), but only one of these blocks' construction was completed (Leite, 2008).

From an aesthetic point of view, the chosen morphology tries to break with the old standards used until then, promoting a new image and concept of housing that could reach people through the communicative capabilities of architecture.

Although it was never completed, *Tróia*'s experience will be the only built example of an utopian leisure megacity in Portugal (Leite, 2008).

2.2. Bairro do Condado – Lisbon.

The Bairro do Condado, known as "*Zona J*" (photo 4), occupies an area of 36,76 hectares in the district of Marvila (eastern zone of Lisbon) and it is part of a public promotion housing plan approved in 1964, whose main objective was to develop a multifunctional and socially diversified urban structure, integrated within the rest of the city (City Council of Lisbon, descriptive memories 1962).

The targeted groups were mainly labourers and public officers, but, after the turmoil and occupations that occurred after the Revolution of 1974, it was necessary to re-accommodate the returnees from former Portuguese colonies and other citizens due to the beginning of the eradication of slums.

There was at least the will to integrate and develop this zone through interventions and modern projects that could rescue and give more dignity to the most "fragile" part of society, and therefore to limit situations of disorder and contrast as well.

The winning project for *Zona J* belonged to architect Tomás Taveira, a former employee of architect Conceição Silva, and it was constructed in three phases: the two first constitute the central part (with 1306 dwellings) composed of nine towers with 13 floors, 15 rows of three storey buildings and 20 rows of eight storey buildings undertaken between 1979–1980. The third part was comprised of secondary buildings undertaken in 1981 (photo 5).

From a morphologic conception point of view, according to architect Taveira, the project was based on *Tróia*'s example. The idea was to reproduce an environment built for upper-middle class people with an innovative architecture (as in the case of *Tróia*) through common areas such as the courtyards between the buildings, galleries that intertwine the apartments and single and geometric lines that give continuity to the neighbourhood in order to improve the inhabitants' quality of life, many of whom used to live in precarious conditions or shacks.

At the project level, the model chosen presents a new version based on modernist principles, which tried to create a separate neighbourhood in regard to services and infrastructures and to promote a community life through common squares between buildings and a system of galleries (photo 6).

The expected achievement was interrupted and fragmented in its development, deviating itself considerably from the original proposals.

3. A comparison between the two realities

Despite the attempt to enhance and improve people's quality of life through an innovative project, *Zona J* finds itself in a state of physical and living degradation that stigmatises its inhabitants even more.

The outside spaces, such as the squares between buildings and especially the inner streets and galleries, are the main targets of vandalism or illegal activities favoured by poor visibility. For this reason, many residents began to occupy and delimit portions of community space among themselves in order to control it (Madeira da Silva, 2013). It is easy to find closed parts of galleries or witness the misappropriation of parts of public space like small courtyards or gardens.

These types of behaviours do not occur in the case of *Tróia* — the outside spaces are well maintained, as well as the buildings, green spaces and galleries.

There are no signs of vandalism. It is also worth noting that, unlike Tróia, *Zona J* has a permanent population (about 7000 people) with a large proportion of unemployed people. In addition, the neighbourhood finds itself isolated from the rest of the city – in fact, the fast roads do not help to establish the networks

and this results in a single class "island" formed almost exclusively by population sectors with low economic resources.

In the architect Teresa Valsassina Heitor's point of view, the life quality degradation found in this neighbourhood is mainly due to the project's morphology. In her study titled *„A vulnerabilidade do espaço em Chelas"* (The vulnerability of space in Chelas, 1999), the author uses a syntactic approach, i.e. based on the assumption that the morphological language used has a direct impact on the residents' behaviour, rendering the space more vulnerable. The author highlights a number of variables like the size of the buildings, the repetitiveness of the forms, etc. as the cause for the deviant behaviour shown by the population, referring in particular to the acts of vandalism and lack of care towards the surrounding environment. In in accordance with the prospect of

Coleman (1985), the author considers that «*the aggressions against the built spaces reflect the dissatisfaction towards the housing quality and the habitat model produced and, particularly, towards the exaggerated size of the habitation complexes, the lifelessness and uniformity of the architecture, the inadequacy of the solutions applied to the habits and needs of families and the lack of surveillance conditions*» (Heitor, 1999:14–15).

On the other hand, there are those who, like the author of the *„Zona J"* project Tomás Taveira, advocate the project as an innovative, well thought-out and built idea (based on *Tróia*'s project and presenting a modern touch but also a critical interpretation)[2]. They claimed in particular that the people were satisfied with the solution found (Taveira, 2015) and that the condition of degradation is the result of a community of people (especially in the beginning) who did not know how to care for the environment and reproduced the pre-existing dynamics.

With the generational change, in the words of the architect, we don't have that situation anymore. The fact that the project was able to reproduce a model used in another context proves it worked, responding to the needs of those people and performing their „dream" of living in the same conditions as the wealthier classes, from an environmental point of view and of the apartments' characteristics (many of which are duplexes). Nevertheless, the problem of (physical and cultural) distance between social classes still persists; the current situation does not appear to have had significant changes, at least in terms of the inhab-

[2] The Zona J project may be considered as a turning point work between the architect's modernist period and the subsequent development of his works towards a post-modernist like movement.

[3] Once again, it must be said that the morphological project used here is the same as in Tróia, although it presents some modifications regarding the density of the construction, the number of floors and, above all, the chromatic choice: the buildings were painted with "lively" and contrasting colours (in a second stage, due to economic reasons), expressing one of the typical features in the architect's style.

itants' marginalisation, degradation and concentration of transgressive behaviours.

Another example that further highlights this problem is the case of the construction of Scampia's social housing project (photo 7) in Naples, which, in turn, is based on the residential-touristic project (photo 8) of Villeneuve-Loubet (Cote d'Azur – Nice).

3.2. Naples – Villeneuve Loubet

As mentioned earlier, the similar examples in Europe and throughout the world are many, especially between the decades of 50–60.

An emblematic case that shows this kind of contrast is the social housing project of Scampia in Naples, particularly the residential area known as „*Zone 167*" (This term refers to the Decree-Law n.º 167 of April 18th 1962, which states provisions to facilitate the acquisition of constructible areas for building economic houses) or "Le *Vele*" (1963–1975). It corresponds to a complex of seven large buildings (3 of them being demolished between 1997 and 2003) in the form of sails, which would serve as economic houses for poor people. The project takes us back to a previous experience in Villeneuve Loubet (1960), a project created with the purpose of promoting luxury tourism, composed of large buildings in the form of sails around a bay equipped with a tourist port (Marine des Anges) and tourism related services.

This example makes the ideological dimension of the projects more evident. It is not just a matter of simple civil architecture; there is a desire for transcendence: the magnificence of the buildings and the symbolism of the sails (as if opened towards the future) promote the new modern society through the architectural masterpiece.

Despite the fact that the context is totally different (not only in terms of social composition, but also from a geographical point of view: in the French case, the sails were built around a port, while in the Italian case they were built on the city's hinterland), as well as the purpose of the buildings, both cases represent a project and therefore a common concept of „dwelling" (Peretti, 2010).

For instance, back then architects believed that the shape of the buildings, namely larger buildings, would have favoured feelings of share and community and therefore the development of a better society (Peretti, 2010).

In the case of Scampia, besides the shape of the construction, another life model similar to that of Villenouve-Loubet was proposed once more, establishing the commercial activities on the ground floor and leisure services (that actually remained incomplete) and residential buildings on the upper floors. The difference is that, on the former case, the buildings were intended for touristic

purposes and on the later, they were intended for people with low economic resources and, moreover, that were permanent residents within the area.

Therefore, in this perspective, the proposed inhabiting "model" seems to be mostly related to a touristic concept, based on the ideal of a consumerist society.

There was an attempt to interpret those typical modernist movement concepts such as social progress, although, as in the case of „Le Vele" in Scampia, it ended up being the most emblematic example of degradation, turning itself into an isolated ghetto and a centre for criminal activities like drug trafficking.

The residents from this neighbourhood are strongly stigmatised because of the negative image associated to the area with the course of time. It is common to listen to comparisons between the „Paradise of Angels" (Marine des Anges – Villenouve Loubet) and the „Paradise of the Junkies" (Le Vele, Scampia).

The strong presence of criminal activities in this area, in particular within this building complex, led outsiders to move away from that part of the city, which made it harder for the inhabitants of Scampia to be integrated into the social dynamics of other parts of the city.

4. Considerations about diagnostic

It is clear that, despite the willingness to improve the situation in these places, even today a devalued and deeply stigmatised environment remains, often presenting the typical characteristics of a ghetto. In the cases described before, the idea is to deploy architectures with a strong ideological connotation, in the hope that it will have an impact on people's behaviour so that they try to create a „better" society – the so much desired developed society with a superior quality of life, etc. – but the results obtained were not exactly close to the results expected.

However, this does not imply the failure or the end of a movement, on the contrary. According to Roland Barthes, modernity has not yet been concluded; «*architects and town planners can give a fundamental contribution. In order for that to happen, not only they have to become the representatives of a society's values, but also the tool of its transformation, progress, freedom and equality*» (Secchi, 2011:65, translation by author). However, the problem that arises is: how to present suggestions for improvement without falling into ideological impositions?

Those projects, readapted for different contexts like that of *Bairro do Condado*, seem to take the form of an ideology. They were based on an ideal concept of

"dwelling" designed to be applied in poor and degraded areas with the intention to re-qualify the environment and the inhabitants' lives.

As Heitor stated, the big roads (in a neighbourhood with a large percentage of unemployed), the common galleries between buildings and the neighbourhood's physical separation from the rest of the city are some of the controversial urban choices that, considering the social context of reference, didn't help to integrate this marginalised group with the rest of the city and that have somehow reflected in the dynamics and social behaviours that take place there. If, on one hand, it is true that the appropriation of a space and an individual's definition of his own purposes form the basis of the possibilities that the environment provides, as well as their ongoing redefinition relatively to the available means, personal capacities and real possibilities, it is also true that an individual does not simply act as an observation device, as there is always a person and feelings behind that act of observation (Mela, 2006).

Having said that, can one say that these two positions tend to idealise the design and image?

On one hand, it seems excessive to consider the shapes as „wrong" or responsible for the existing degradation, but, on the other, to think that the people are entirely responsible for their own marginalisation, stating this way that the project which worked in other contexts (apart from *Tróia* and Chelas, as reported by the author, the same project was also applied in Vila Nova de Santo André and in Algeria)[3] did not work because people did not understand the project nor how to care for the environment.

Given this context, and in order to try to understand what are indeed the differences between the two contexts, this research proposal is to inquire the everyday use of the built spaces, starting from project's design (idea and proposal) to the concrete use in both cases, to establish a comparison between them and to investigate the possibilities of involving directly the people interested in area development proposals or in future projects.

4.1. About democracy and participation

Democracy means participation, but the issue that still generates debates is choosing the best course of action to take.

A very interesting example was the experience of the „*Favela-Bairro*" project (1999–2001), born as an alternative to the demolition of slums in Rio de Janeiro and the consequent construction of social housing projects, proposing the transformation of these areas into real neighbourhoods based on the existing infrastructures and developments. The most innovative part of this plan consisted

[3] Interview with Tomás Taveira performed by the author in April 2015.

on the close collaboration between an interdisciplinary group of professionals (namely architects, engineers, sociologists, social workers, media professionals, *etc.*) and the residents' associations. The solutions proposed by the professionals were always discussed between them and the residents, which would lead the first ones to modify the initial project several times until they could find the solutions that were most compatible with everyone's needs.

Despite the project's brief „life" period (which lasted about two years), there was an enthusiastic participation on the part of the people and, after the verified local successes, it became an international experience. Is it possible that, as the author of the „*Favela-Bairro*" project states (the architect and former president of the Municipal Chamber of Rio de Janeiro, L. P. Conde), the environment is more valued by the people when their participation is recognised (Conde, Magalhares, 2001).

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Photo 1. Partial view of the buildings in "Tróia's Garden City"

Source: photo taken by the author in 2014.

Photo 2. Original project of "Tróia's Garden City" (1970)

Source: photo taken by the author in 2015, at the Municipality of Grândola.

Photo 3. Map of the final project of "Tróia's Garden City"

Source: photo taken by the author in 2015, at the Municipality of Grândola.

Photo 4. Partial view of the buildings in Bairro do Condado

Source: photo taken by the author in 2014.

Photo 5. Map of "Bairro do Condado"

Source: granted by Studio Taveira in 2015.

Photo 6. Partial view of a gallery in Bairro do Condado

Source: photo granted by Studio Taveira in 2015.

Photo 7. Partial view of the building „Vela" in Scampia

Source: Face Magazine, 2013.

Photo 8. Partial view of a building in Marine des Anges (Villenouve–Loubet)

Source: photo: Federico Jardini (www.federicojardini.com).

APPROACHING VERNACULAR DESIGN IN A POST-SOCIALIST CITY. A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

Jan Franciszek Cieślak
Culture-making Association Miastodwa

Ewa Zielińska
Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw;
Culture-making Association Miastodwa

Abstract: Vernacular design is practiced by non professionals. It exists in opposition to the established language of professional marketing, it disregards official regulation, and often, common sense. Vernacular design is characterised by tactical approach – it is created on the spot, as a response to the momentary needs and it freely uses the techniques available at hand. By many, it is seen as an ugly problem – it invades the public space and defies the rules of a well planned urban environment. In the same time it is an example of truly local aesthetics, a visual language developed outside of the ubiquitous discourse. In the modernist rhetoric, it is seen as something that needs to be eliminated, uprooted and repaired. The other position is taken by those who see it as a manifestation of a genuine local culture, as something that needs to be understood, and to some extent, protected. The question that arises, is how to practically approach the vernacular design in rapidly developing cities, which seek to reestablish their own visual identity. We will explore this topic on the example of a real life project – a revitalisation of a an old, post communist shop pavilion in Warsaw.

Key words: vernacular design, hermeneutic approach, positivist approach, case study

1. What is vernacular design?

The term "vernacular design" is somewhat ambiguous. In general, it refers to all sorts of design practice that occurs in a specific cultural context[1]. It is design that is "indigenous". When graphic designers hear the word "vernacular", they usually think of packaging, posters or hand painted signs from the "pre-design" age, the time when graphic output was, by and large, created by skilled lo-

[1] See The Oxford English Dictionary.1989. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

cal amateurs or craftsmen, rather than designers – a profession not yet defined. The vernacular styles of the past are often a source of inspiration, citation, and idealised nostalgia.

But in fact, most communication design today is still created by non-professionals. Amateurish shop signs, ad hoc announcement boards, shabby advertising, and hand made way finding systems are profusely scattered in all cities and suburban areas. This is especially true in places that are poorly regulated, that are low brow, and are generally not consider elegant, rigid or representational. This is where you can find the "common design by common people" (Bjørnard 2015:5).

Obviously Asian and Eastern European cities form a natural habitat for vernacular design, due to their largely informal character, lax regulation, and a strong presence of small businesses, which often rely on (semi-) amateur advertising and hand-made signage. "After the fall of Communism – as Karl Schlogel wrote - that which had been preparing itself for a long time behind the scene came to the surface. The borders that could have prevented the flow of goods no longer existed; the controlling authorities that could have forbidden it had abdicated. The allocation apparatus, that previously determined the allocation of goods had dissolved. The population had to help itself. It did what anyone would do in a hopeless situation. It help itself and thus became, for a historical moment at least, a people of travelling merchants and traders"(Schlögel 2013:30). The groups of merchants created the spaces paradigmatical for post-socialist cities – 'bazaars' denoted by narrow, a few hundred metres long alleys and by shopping containers placed side by side or even on top of each other. In the end, when people were not able to fit in more stalls, all the city became a market place. In Warsaw, the relics of transformation are still present in the landscape. Vernacular design is one of them.

2. Characteristics

If there is a one word to best characterise vernacular communication design, it must be "paradox". It's the realm of inconsistencies and conflicting approaches. The following observations were made in Polish cities, but these traits will most likely be found more universally.

As vernacular design is practiced by amateurs, it is mostly agnostic to the language of professional design. It does not know of the marketing terminology – that of effectiveness, appropriateness, ambiance, brand awareness. It is usually very uninformed, not only in regard to the techniques and strategies, but also to the current visual fashions, rules of thumb, design classics and generally, all de-

signer dos and don'ts. The products of vernacular design often seem to be reinvented from scratch every time they are created, and even the simplest of mistakes are never learned from. This is not to say however, that amateur designers are not observant. They are simply more likely to look for inspiration in their very immediate surrounding, than to look up to professionals, their experience, and incomprehensible rules. Especially certain technologies can quickly gain influence, and be picked up by others. If large format printing becomes available, and colourful plastic banners pop up in few places, one can be certain that soon enough the whole neighbourhood will be covered in them. This way, many cities and towns in Poland have been invaded by LED light panels, DIY billboards, bizarre car-on-a-poll totems, and other curious inventions.

Picture 1.

Source: Konrad Pustoła, http://typografia.info/typopolo.

Vernacular design is brutal. It has little regard for context, other than a need to dominate it. It is often described as eye poking. The subtlety is seldom a mean of expression. The sense of humour is often crude and sexist. Apart from the fact, that its practitioners would shrug off any aesthetic rules if they would even be aware of such, vernacular design is also completely disconnected from, and insensitive to its own past and traditions. The traditional technique of brush painted lettering, dominated amateur sign-making up to the early nineties, and it already has a cult following among younger professional designers. But this craft has been discontinued instantly, when cheap printing and vinyl letters entered the market. Yet underneath the layer of insensitive ugliness, there is something kind and deeply human about the amateurish design, even in its most taste offending forms. It may be perceived as an antidote to the ubiquitous cleanliness of the corporate visual language. It can tame the otherwise intimidating surrounding. The hand build sign of a local mom-and-pop grocery store, despite of its appalling quality, may be actually comforting and inviting. According to Michał Podgórski, one of the explorers of the so called "invisible city", "handmade economy is a form of reassurance to specific segments of society. It sanctions the local, common, anachronistic language, and to be inside of one's own language, is to feel safe, familiar, casual" (Podgórski 2012:134–135). Hence, in certain circumstances, 'bar' rings a bell, seems familiar, whereas 'pub' sounds a little distant. 'Hairdresser' means what it means, 'hairdresser's salon', on the contrary, evokes something new, expensive and excessively modern. The use of specific language together with informal, unfashionable style has the power to salvage some spaces from the conquest of modernity.

The main purpose of the vernacular design is to be visible. "Visibility" is probably the only principle that was fully adopted from the mainstream language of branding, and then driven to the extreme. Visibility is treated with highest priority, as if the sign creators were convinced that their businesses will only be successful, when visible from outer space. Yet tragically, vernacular design is entirely invisible. This is because it is treated by a majority of population as a form of visual pollution, as something prevalent, invasive, persistent, but not worthy, devoid of individual value, something that must exist around us, but makes us turn our heads the other way. These rather desperate and uncoordinated attempts to get noticed lead to ever more visual chaos, where the individual messages drown, and are even more ignored.

Photos 2–3.

Source: Jan Franciszek Cieślak.

Photo 4.

Source: Ewa Zielińska.

Vernacular design is fiercely economical. The used materials are hardly ever considered for their quality or original purpose, but rather, for how they can be refitted for use in a current "project". Everything in vernacular sign making is recyclable, all elements can be repurposed, and it often seems that the nearby junk yard is the prime resource of components. It is not uncommon to find signs repainted on older ones, totemic structures made out of defunct car parts, or indeed, entire car bodies used as signs. A very common practice is to misuse the letters of vinyl alphabets once the one needed are missing. Hence you will likely find rotated "N" posing as "Z" or "O" made of parenthesis ("()"). Nothing goes to waste. Except that… vernacular design is very wasteful. Minimalism was never a big thing among its practitioners. If your shop has a place for four signs, why not try to fit in six? Vernacular signs proliferate frantically. This abundance is most likely connected to the "visibility principle" described earlier.

Photo 5.

Source: Jan Franciszek Cieślak.

Perhaps above all, vernacular design is tactical. It does not know of strategic planning. It does not care about the broader context, or the past, or what will come after. It is an instant communication tool for here and now, using all means available at hand. And only those. If one message becomes dated, it will be roughly covered up by another message, but one should not expect that the space will be cleaned up at some point. There is simply no time for that – there is no stopping and evaluating, there is no looking back.

3. Designers approach

In the context of urban planning, vernacular design at the current state is highly problematic. This is especially true in the rapidly, and often, chaotically developing cities, such as Warsaw. The capital of Poland chronically suffers from the lack of proper zoning plans and sensible, realistic regulations on outdoor advertising, and more generally, on "visual pollution" of public space. As was shown above, the very concepts of aesthetic quality and harmony, are rather exotic to most of the small-time entrepreneurs. Their messy signs and boards invade the public space, defying the rules of a well planned urban environment. This creates an increasing tension, as the city inhabitants begin to see this situation as an ugly problem, as a plague that needs to be countered.

As it currently becomes a hot topic, graphic design professionals are approaching this phenomenon in two opposing ways. Some of them look at it with a mix of curiosity and perverse fascination. After all, vernacular design is a field of wild experimentation, an endless source of clumsy humour, visual adventure, risky solutions, reckless fun. It breaks the rules. It offends the burgher taste. For designers bored with the neat, proper, and increasingly ubiquitous design scene, vernacular is simply refreshing. This hermeneutic, or postmodernist approach is, in a way, a voice of defence of amateur design, emphasising its democratic character, celebrating its locality. It often results in appropriation of the trashy, vernacular aesthetics. The techniques of brutal mutilation of typography, happy-go-lucky use of materials and styles are incorporated in the savvy, tongue in cheek works of graphic art and design. One can find the traits of vernacular in posters, books or identity design created by established professionals. Many of those works have been shown in the "Typopolo" exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, hanging side by side with documented examples of real amateur signs from around the city.

Photos 6–7–8.

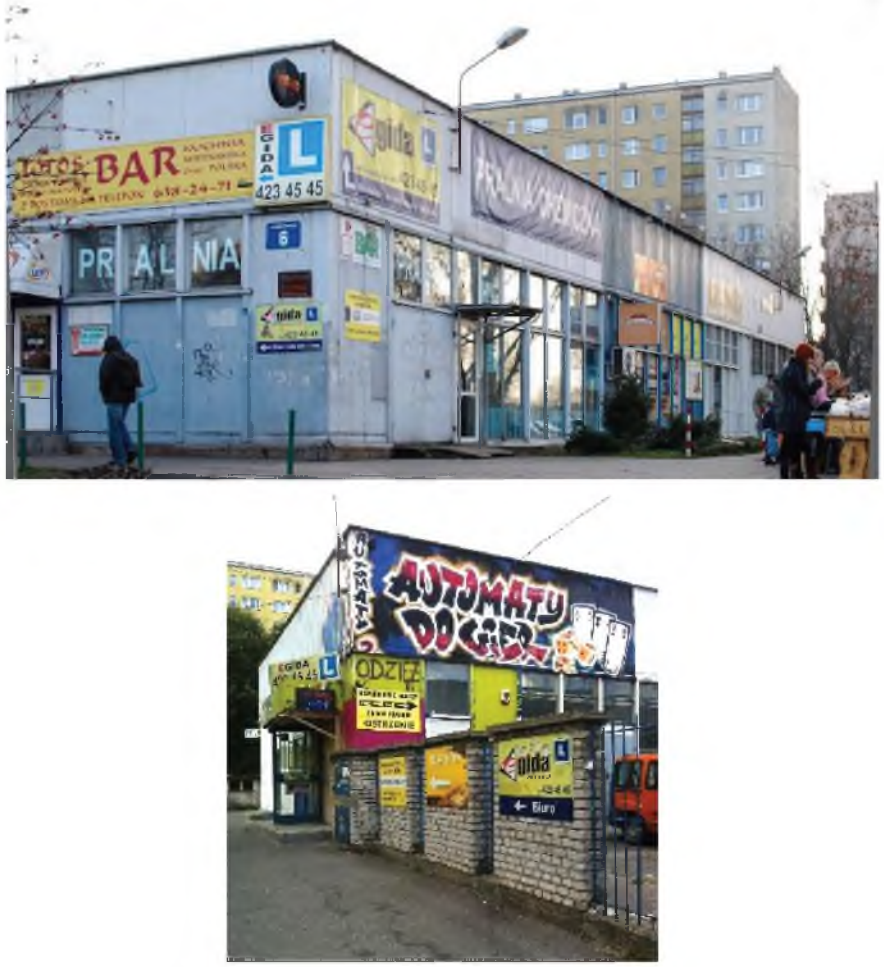
Source: "Typopolo" exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw.

On the polar opposite, there is the modernist, or positivist approach. Those professionals who are faithful to the idea that it is the role of design to better the human conditions, to introduce order and practicality to public space, find no excuse for tolerating such chaos and aesthetic abominations. Many of them seek opportunities to work, even if voluntarily, for the cause of improving the visual quality of Polish cities and towns. Especially the younger designers seem to be quite proactive. They eagerly engage in various projects aimed to aesthetically educate the local entrepreneurs, or offer their services free of charge. A good example would be the initiative of Strzemiński Academy of Art in Łódź students, who embarked on the task of redesigning the shop windows on their city's central boulevard – Piotrkowska Street. This did not happen at the request of the actual shop owners, and even though they surely benefitted from such restyling, it was the visual improvement of the entire street, that was a main goal here. Recently, there were also new attempts to create a set of stricter regulations and "look books" for Polish cities, in the hope of eradicating the visual pollution that vernacular design has created. The Culture-making Association Miastodwa, which we have founded, started to work on such guidelines for the city of Warsaw in July 2015. This involvement was preceded by a series of experimental projects, in which we had an opportunity to approach vernacular design in practice, get to know its creators and test some solutions.

4. The pavilion

In 2013, as a group of sociologists, designers and architects, we were put at the task of designing a revitalisation of a rundown merchant pavilion, located at the outer district of Warsaw. This building, constructed in the early eighties, was scheduled for renovation by its owner – a large housing cooperative. It was a home to eighteen small establishments such as a bakery, a laundry, two bars, convenience store, etc. In other words, a usual mix of local businesses to be found in any area dominated by residential flats. Our job consisted of two stages. First, we had to plan the actual renovation of the building's facade, and precede the process with consultations with the pavilion tenants and the local inhabitants. The second task turned out to be trickier. As the building was about to undergo a thorough cleansing before it was repainted, all current signs were about to be removed. Our task was to propose a new system of signage that would replace the existing chaos. Our team was backed by a group of young, ambitious graphic designers, who would voluntarily design new signs for each store. The whole process was overseen and aided by the district mayor's office.

Photos 9–10.



Source: Jan Franciszek Cieślak.

When we arrived at the scene, we were faced with a monstrosity. The building was head to toes covered with a crusty layer of banners, spray paint, plywood boards, LED lights, and current and dated signs constructed with all sorts of materials and homegrown techniques. The result, at least at a first glance, was an utter communication failure. From the very beginning, we knew that it would not be easy to talk "design" to the authors of this creative madness. Nevertheless, we saw the situation as a unique opportunity to conduct research through experimentation. For starters, we needed some answers. We wanted to find out what was in the heads of the people who laboriously turned the building into its current state.

- Who exactly designed and executed their signs up until now?
- Who was the target audience?
- Why did they need the signage in the first place? What was the motivation behind adding particular signs?
- How did they perceive the current state of the pavilion? Was it a problem, or were they pleased with it?
- What were their thoughts on the idea of drastically reducing the number of signs, and standardizing their placement and formats?

5. Communication guerilla

Apparently there was no standard go-to place for the sign making. There was a nearby print shop, from which most of the banners came from. Many of the signs were made by the shop owners themselves. Someone hired local kids to cover the wall of the pavilion with rather cryptic graffiti signs. The laundry used a sign that was left over by the previous tenant (also a laundry) and they added a few of their own. The little shop that was offering key copying, knife sharpening and other small services alike, had a plywood board illustrated with crayon drawings made by the owners friend. The most bombastic addition was an entire shop facade covered with wooden planks that imitated a country hut. That was to be found on the convenience store, and the owner himself was the proud author. The remaining space was complemented by a myriad of stickers, posters, old adverts and such, which accumulated over the years. A question of who designed all of that seemed rather irrelevant, and the pavilion tenants had trouble understanding what do we actually meant by that. It sort of designed itself.

When asked about the target audience of all this amassed effort, the shop owners almost unanimously claimed that they are after the passing-by car drivers, hoping to turn them into prospect customers, as the pavilion was located near a high traffic lane. Yet as they were interviewed further, they all admitted that in fact it was actually the neighbor residents who were their only patrons. This lack of correlation seemed to be a first time discovery to many of them.

Photos 11–12–13.

Source: Jan Franciszek Cieślak.

The pavilion tenants were giving various reasons as of to why they have made particular decisions about placing their signs. Some of them claimed that they had used a banner or a board to actually cover up the otherwise unremovable leftover signs from the previous businesses. The gentleman who has turned his storefront into a wooden chalet, said that he just wanted to use up leftover build-

ing material from his actual summer house at the lakeside (clearly the case for the recycle economy). Overall however, it seemed that adding up new signs to the pavilion's facade was a matter of spontaneous action and reaction cycles. If someone was "too visible" his neighbors felt obliged to counter it by increasing the number and size of their own ads, or perhaps repainting their storefront in a brighter color. Everyone was vigilant, constantly on the lookout, trying to maintain the intricate game of communication checks and balances. No one seemed interested in pursuing some long term, consistent strategy, or considered how this chaotic additions affected their brand. As a matter of fact, the term "brand" never even appeared in their vocabulary. Instead, they were all fully engaged in an ongoing visual guerilla. This created a strange communication ecosystem, which seemed completely chaotic to the outsider, but for the parties involved, it actually made perfect sense, had a traceable history.

Our intrusion into their world, posing questions that they never considered otherwise, gave the pavilion tenants an opportunity to step back, and reflect on the current state of affairs, probably for the first time. Admittedly, they were not pleased with what they saw. Most of them agreed that it has gone too far, and they were ready to accept a change. Also a fresh start seemed like a fair way to solve the underlying conflicts. It was time for the designers to step in.

Photo 14.

Source: Katarzyna Zasacka.

6. Working together

As said before, our team of graphic designers was put at the task of only designing the new signs, which would fit in already predefined spots. Each premise was given an equal, standardized, modular space for placing the signboards.

In our minds, this would improve the overall readability and solve the problem of competing in sizes and formats, all in one sweep. The less ambiguity the better. We started with a series of group meetings, so that the people would have a chance to get to know each other, and the pavilion tenants could introduce the designers to their workplace. In the same time, the designers had an opportunity to explain the nature of their profession, and introduced the shop owners to some key concepts and strategies of branding and visual identity. After these common get togethers, each designer was paired with one or more businesses, based on mutual preferences. From then on, they were about to establish a regular client - designer relationship.

Photo 15.

Source: Igor Białorucki.

Right from the start it became clear, that the main obstacle was the communication issue. It was almost impossible to find a common language for these two groups. The designers were used to work with clients who understood them, and who were ready to discuss issues of taste, appropriateness and other such subtleties. They also tried very hard to treat their new, somewhat exotic customers with all seriousness and attention. They expected the situation to be challenging, and for many of them this challenge was one of the reasons why they wanted to get involved in the first place. But when their creative efforts were met with lack of understanding and indifference, it often resulted in frustration, and some relationships started to go sour.

In the same time, the shop owners saw the project differently. For them, this was a change orchestrated from above. They saw the potential and welcomed the whole idea, but they assumed a largely passive attitude. They hardly ever used their right to object something they did not like, even though the designers have actually often encouraged them to do so. With their tactical approach, they just wanted to adapt to what was coming. Adapt and survive.

Nevertheless, after some time, the results started to surface. Many designers have based their new sign proposals on the idea that they should retain some sensitivity for their clients existing handmade identities. They often conducted a thorough research of the pavilion's graphic milieu, taking photographs of hand drawn symbols, abstracting clumsy typography, combining color pallets, and looking up possible references. They opted for evolutionary solutions. To be fair, we have actually encouraged them to look in this direction. We assumed that this sensitive approach will be more digestible for their clients, that the pavilion tenants must have had formed some attachment to their existing visual identity, chaotic as it was, and that it will be hard for them to part with it if the changes were too drastic. So many designers tried to extract some value from the existing elements. This actually resulted in some very interesting works. In our opinion, many of the designers had succeeded in creating unpretentious and fresh visual language for the unlikely businesses such as a shoe repair, a thrift store or a laundry. At least in Poland, such clientele was an uncharted territory for the established professional design studios. We were very pleased with the results. But were the business owners?

Photos 16–17–18–19–20–21.

Source: Poważne studio.

Source: Poważne studio.

Source: Poważne studio.

Source: Poważne studio.

Source: Rzeczy Obrazkowe.

Source: Rzeczy Obrazkowe.

To a degree. As we later learned, we were wrong about some things after all. The shop owners accepted and approved the final designs, but the evolutionary approach proposed by designers and backed by us, was largely received with indifference. As it turned out, they held absolutely no bond to their former graphic appearances, and they did not see the need to relate to it in any way. They have created an elaborate and chaotic visual system of signs and symbols, because it made sense for them at the time. But as the changes came about, they were ready to discard it and never look back. None of the elements of their identity was pertinent. They perceived every solution as momentary, and what was needed back then, did not apply in the new circumstances. In fact, they felt little to no connection to their newly acquired identities as well. Instead of sending the sign projects to production, many of the shop owners have recycled their old banners, and trimmed them to fit in the newly prepared frames, but not because they liked them better. It was just cheaper and less hassle.

Photo 22.

Source: Ewa Zielińska.

In the modern realm of pedigree brands, public relations and carefully tended corporate identities, the strange world of vernacular communication design seems to be irrational and anachronistic. Yet it also seems to be quite pleased with itself. If nothing else, it continues to be a world of unrestricted creativity, guilty pleasures, rapid changes, and most of all, unexpected outcomes. The question of how to approach vernacular design remains open.

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"IT´S OUR VERSION OF ARABIC" – CONNECTING THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL THROUGH DESIGN

Kristiane Marie Fjær Lindland
International Research Institute of Stavanger, Norway

Abstract: Product design can influence, express and re-interpret the identity of both product developers and users of the products. Likewise, brand-identity and company-identity can also influence the meaning of design. What then, when a customer requests custom-tailored products with very different design-preferences than the company itself? New product development is both crucial and risky for developing design identity.
In this article I address meaning making and meaning makers in customized NPD-processes that stretches the limits for not just what it is technically possible to make, but also for own design identity. Through a qualitative fieldwork conducted over four years, the product development work in a Norwegian company was followed. Despite the fact that customers wanted the products for their characteristic design expression, they could also have design-requests that often challenged this expression. This often meant translating the company´s local design-expression into another local context. Consequently, the products also developed global aspects to them; integrating very different local expressions, values and preferences in a shared understanding of "good design".
Research on design as a relational process of meaning making challenges the idea of design as individual work. Hence, this article brings the development of meaning and Selves to the forefront of understanding the enabling and constraining boundaries for developing design products.

Key words: design identity, meaning making, pragmatism

1. Introduction

Product design can be a strong tool for expressing identity, both as brand identity of the company making the products and for the customers "staging" their self-presentation with design products. Developing a design identity that appeals to the market is thus of significant value. However, this also puts pressure on designers and product developers in the New Product Development work, to follow up with new products in line with the design identity whilst still being innovative. Thus, a new product design will always exist in the tension be-

tween being recognized as the brand product it is, and still being a new interpretation of this brand and design identity. Developing new products is always a bit risky in terms of failure, not just for the design reputation of the company, but also for the designer. Hence, as design in terms of décor is closely connected to taste and conventions of taste, rather than on strictly measurable characteristics, the guidelines for what to do are mainly embedded in previous experiences and shared understanding of what a "good company product" will be like. However, what a "good company product" would be like, will probably also depend on who you ask; employees in various departments in the company, or various customers from various market segments. Stretching the limits for what new products can be like, can thus also be about stretching the limits for whom one can become in relation to others.

A strong design identity can have global appeal, although it will always be embedded in a local context. Customers that find the design appealing can buy into these local references and/or re-contextualize the design into their own local context. In other words, customers can prefer a specific design product just because it has a specific ethnic expression or represents a certain geographic lifestyle, such as for example the New England style or various ethnic styles. Or they can interpret the product design as a confirmation of their own local design expression. Either way, the design products functions as artefacts expressing the identity of the customer.

Customized design products are a special form of expressing identity through artefacts, where the designers and product developers can tailor-make products on the request of a specific customer. The customer requests can be more or less specific and have more or less customer involvement in the process. Customized design products differ from "standard" design products that are free for all to buy in the sense that customized products are made with a very specific customer or project in mind. Standard products, on the other hand, are developed with a more abstract customer group in mind; those who like the design expression of the company as such. Hence, customized products are about bridging the customer requests with the design identity of the company.

This article addresses the challenge of developing design products for specific customers in a global market where local design preferences differ significantly and where the requests of the customer in many ways challenge the core of the design identity of the developing company.

Design is defined as both being a noun; an arrangement, drawing/plan/model a pattern or an intention. It can also be a verb; to plan something (Hornby, 1948). In daily speech, we often talk about technical design, functional design, aesthetic design and product design as an outcome. As a verb we can talk about design as a process where we try to organize various elements in order to achieve

a specific purpose. In this article I address design products as aesthetic physical objects that carry meaning and express identity, and on how participants explore, navigate and negotiate meaning and identity in these processes.

2. Existing research on design and physical objects as identity constructing tool

Researchers have focused on design, physical objects and identity construction from many angles and perspectives. One main perspective is how artefacts can be used for visualizing organizational identity (Schein, 1985) and furthermore; how these artefacts can be re-interpreted as a tool for expressing strategic change (Schultz, 1991; Schultz, Hatch, Ciccolella, Rafaeli, & Pratt, 2006; Schultz & Hernes, 2013). Artefacts have also been used more individually as requisites for "staging" oneself (Goffman, 1959), and also as an expression for collective identities for example in collective movements (Flesher Fominaya, 2010) or subgroups (Molnár & Lamont, 2002). Another interesting dimension is how physical objects can be used for re-defining identities over time (Schultz & Hernes, 2013), space (Mehta & Belk, 1991) and roles (Schouten, 1991; Silver, 1996). Physical objects can also be used for expressing and visualizing meaning and knowledge in development processes (Ewenstein & Whyte, 2007, 2009; Whyte, Ewenstein, Hales, & Tidd, 2008). As such, they can be used both as boundary objects, carrying meaning, as epistemic objects; giving ideas of what might be (yet to be realized) and as technical objects; supporting the realization of other objects.

As demonstrated here, the literature on design, physical objects and identity is fragmented in terms of angles and perspectives-and by far-also when it comes to whether one focuses on the individual, group, corporate or societal level. Cornelissen et al (2007) point out how the division between social, organizational and corporate identity has led to differences in methodologies and call for a methodologically pluralistic, but integrated approach to the studies of identity where the different levels of identity can be studied. Although I fully agree that the differences between these forms of identities are by far artificial or even meaningless, Cornelissen et al (2007) does not really address the most difficult point; the division between individual identities and social identities. Where can we draw the line between individual identity and social identity? As, for example, corporate employees we can have several understandings of who we can be, depending on who we relate to (Cutcher, 2009). Our corporate identity is thus neither one unanimous identity, nor an identity that can be fully separated from our individual identity.

In this article I aim to overcome the ontological challenge of seeing the individual and social as separate aspects of identity. The process of developing customized décor products used for expressing design identity raises the question of how to design something that expresses the identity of the customer while simultaneously also expressing the design identity of the company. This needs not be a challenge if the design requests or guidelines of the customer is by far in alignment with the design identity of the designer and company developing the customized products. However, if the design preferences between the designer and company and the customer appears to be incompatible, the exploration of what the design should look like becomes more ambiguous. This does not just concern what the product design should look like, but also who one becomes through this design. As such, the design process is both a process of exploring who the customer is and become, but also an exploration of who the designer and the company become in relation to the customer, in relation to other customers and in relation to one another within the company.

By taking a pragmatist approach, understanding identity and meaning as the social, self-reflective and temporal process of becoming, I will explore the dilemma of developing customized design products for expressing identity where this appears to break with one´s own design identity. I describe two theoretical aspects central to this perspective: temporality and the understanding of meaning and identity processes as co-constituting one another. Before moving over to the empirical descriptions of the design work and what is seen as "good design" in one company, I will address the methodological implications of taking this pragmatist approach, and then describe the fieldwork the empirical material is taken from and the methods used. After describing the design work more generally, I will describe two examples of development processes for customized design where the requests of the customers were challenging for the designers to align with how and what they normally would design the products. By the help of the pragmatist approach I will point out the social understandings guiding the design work and how the design process as such also leads to developments in who the involved participants become, and thus also for what it is possible to imagine "good design" in the company to be. Next, I discuss what this can mean for our understanding of design work as a social process where all involved participants are in the process of becoming, and what implications this gives for our theoretical, methodical and practical understanding design used as a tool for expressing identity. The conclusion to the study is that the designers have limited ability to define the design expression they develop, as they are both guided and constrained by the more or less shared understanding of what good design is within the communities that are part of. Consequently, accommodating customized design requests from customers means negotiating the limits for who

they see themselves as possibly becoming. Finally, some suggestions for further research is indicated.

3. A temporal and transactional understanding of meaning and identity

The theoretical basis for this article is embedded in Pragmatism, where focus revolves around understanding practice. I will specifically focus on the process of developing meaning and identities, and how these two aspects co-constitute one another through continuous processes of becoming. In these processes, both re-production and change can be possible outcomes. I will now describe two central aspects of this theoretical basis. The first aspect is the understanding of time; where both past and expectations for the future is defined in the present moment. The second aspect is about how both meaning and meaning makers are constructed through social processes where both subjectivity and objectivity are aspects of Selves.

Temporality has in modern sciences usually been defined in line with that has been called Newtonian time. In this understanding, time is seen as a linear continuum of moments, where the foregoing moments of any moment makes up the past, while the following moments makes up the future. In this Newtonian understanding, the past is known, while the future is un-known.

In contrast to this Newtonian understanding of time, Mead (1932) understood reality as only existing in the present, while our understanding of the past and the expectations towards the future both are defined in the present. In other words, the meaning that evolves in the present moment will also influence on our understanding of the past, and also the expectations towards the future. This is not to say that past events have not happened, but rather that the meaning these past events come to have for us is continuously re-constructed through the emerging present. Mead (1932, p. 36) expressed this as follows: "The pasts that we are involved in are both irrevocable and revocable. It is idle, at least for the purposes of experience, to have recourse to a "real" past within which we are making constant discoveries; for that past must be set over against a present in which the emergent appears, and the past, which must then be looked at from the standpoint of the emergent, becomes a different past."

And just as the past is constantly re-constructed in the emerging present, so are also our perceptions of the future. The passage of events has a direction, from the past towards the present and further; towards the future. However, reality will always exist only in the present, as we cannot move in time. Agency emerges in the present, as we cannot operate in the past, neither in the future. Never-

theless, our emerging understandings of the past and expectations towards the future will inform our prospective acts.

The meaning of reality emerges through what we can call Gestural conversations where both meaning and Selves are under continuous construction (Simpson, 2014). By Gestural conversations we mean the process of developing meaning by holding the gesture together with the response it evokes in others. Any gesture, whether it is an event, an utterance or body-language, will evoke response. And this response will again be a gesture for others to respond to.

Mead (1934) saw the Social Self as consisting of both the constructed Me´s and the performative I, and where these are not separate aspects but rather phases in the continuous process of becoming. What he called our constructed "Me" is our socially constructed understanding of who we are in relation to specific others and also more general others. Depending on the situation, we activate our relevant Me in the situation, helping us to act in relevant ways, and to have relevant expectations of what others would expect of us in the situation. This is also aided by our ability to take the attitude of the generalized other or more specific others towards ourselves. In other words, taking the attitude of others towards ourselves means imagining prospective responses to our prospective actions. Hence, our prospective actions are guided by our expectations for how others will respond to these acts. and who we then possibly become in the situation. As such, this understanding of meaning-making as a social, future-directed process, differs from the sense-making perspective, represented by Weick (1995), that emphasizes the past more strongly.

Through the reflexive Gestural conversations, we will over time develop what Mead (1934) called Significant Symbols; (more or less) shared understanding of certain situations, tasks or functions. Significant Symbols enables us to very efficiently understand what we are dealing with in the present situation and what expectations this can be for the further development of events. Our constructed understanding of Generalized Others and Significant Symbols enable us to quickly adjust to emerging events in a habitual way. Nevertheless, our gestures are not determined, neither are the responses from others to our gestures. We also have the ability to act spontaneously to situations. Such situations are characterized by Inquiries (Dewey, 1925; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2006; Simpson, 2009).

Inquiries emerge in situations where we get other responses to our gestures than we had anticipated. It is the performative "I" that has the spontaneous agency, and thus overrules the socially constructed "Me"s in the situation. Situations such as these forces us to re-consider our previous understandings of reality, and also who we become in this emerging reality. Consequently, our Me´s will also be re-constructed, as well as our understanding of the Significant Symbols and the attitude of the Generalized Others in the situation. Situations of Inquiries are

thus also possibilities for innovation and change. Any situation has the potential for more or less re-production of both meaning and Selves, but also the potential for change. There is thus nothing ontologically different between situations of stability and situations of change.

This social understanding of meaning making and meaning makers as the co-constituting process of becoming implies that we are not just influencing the situation, but situations also influence us. This is what Dewey and Bentley (1960) called transactions. If we take this transactional and temporal understanding of meaning and meaning makers over to exploring the development of new products we can imagine that product developers and designers do not just influence the products, but the development of the products also influences on them.

4. Methodology and methods

In this article I explore how designers and product developers develop customized products in situations where the requests of the customers are very far from what the designers see as their design expression. I explore this theme with an understanding of the design process as a meaning making process where both meaning and meaning makers co-constitute one another in the continuous process of becoming. The theoretical approach I take in this paper is based on an ontology that can be understood as dialectical rather than focused on dichotomies (Hegel, 1807). Hence, subjectivity and objectivity is not seen as separate entities, but rather as dimensions of understandings and Selves (Mead, 1932). This ontological position has epistemological consequences in terms of what we can have knowledge of. One consequence is that we cannot find an understanding of meaning and identity that can be seen as an objective truth. On the other hand, this understanding is neither solely subjective, as we also take the attitude of the Others when interpreting the observed gestures. This methodological approach resonates with abductive reasoning.

Martela (2011) described five virtues of abductive modes of inquiry connected to how research is conducted. The first virtue is the need to maintain an attitude of holding theories lightly. This implies the will to abandon previous understandings and theories if at a later stage they are seen as less interesting. The second virtue is to have a consciousness in relation to one's own pre-understanding and make this clear for others. The third virtue is that researchers need to "constantly increase their reflective self-awareness about the attitudes and values underlying their research" (Martela, 2011, p. 1). As the researcher from my ontological position is seen as influencing and influenced by the research process, it is of vital importance that the researcher seeks to understand his or her own

blind spots and become increasingly aware of his or her own attitudes and values through encounters with the attitudes and values of others. The fourth virtue concerns conducting the study iteratively, meaning that rather than following a pre-planned research design, the researcher assesses and reflects upon what is experienced in the research and adjusts the research to what emerges as meaningful and important. To conduct the study iteratively, the researcher needs to constantly reflect upon what happens, understanding the Self in relation to others' expectations of the future, to make sound judgments about how to proceed with the research. The fifth involves reporting the research as transparently as possible. This reporting will enable readers to better judge the trustworthiness of the conducted research and how it should be interpreted.

The empirical material presented in this article is taken from a qualitative fieldwork I conducted in relation to my PhD project (Lindland, 2014). The initial aim of the fieldwork was to study how participants in New Product Development work (hereafter NPD-work) figured out what to design, taking into account that they did not know more about the future than anyone else. In other words; how did the participants develop expectations to what was possible to do, and what role did relational aspects play in this development? As the fieldwork developed the focus became more on how meaning and identities co-constituted one another through transactions. Furthermore, the role of physical objects in meaning making, and the emergence and handling of paradoxical expectations also came to be central themes.

The case host in this case study is a Norwegian company both developing and producing porcelain tableware for professional kitchens. Both production and development are located on the same site, meaning that the product development department and the production areas are just separated by a staircase, making direct communication between developers and production employees easy. At the time of the field work the company had approximately 140 employees, with approximately 8 of these employed in the NPD department. The NPD work was directed by a Product Council, making joint decisions on what to develop, take forward and take out of the product range. This product council was cross-departmental in the sense that both marketing, sales, production and product development were represented. As an implication of this, the participants had much insight into the development work across departments and across markets.

I followed the NPD-work over a period of four years (approx. 900 hours), mainly through more or less participative observation, field conversations, semi structured interviews and written material. Observations were partially made through following meetings related to NPD-work, strategy-meetings and various work meetings related to organizing work-tasks, but also through following

participants in their various work tasks outside meetings and in informal situations as coffee breaks. The field conversations were typically conducted as ongoing conversations about what we were doing, what the meaning of for example decisions made in meetings could be, and what certain gestures should be interpreted as. As such, these field conversations were of imperative importance for developing an understanding of what was going on in the transactions I participated in. Many of the themes we discussed through these conversations were recurring themes in the sense that their meaning developed and changed over time. These reflective conversations were just as well initiated by my core informants as initiated by me. Hence, my informants took active part in not just "providing data", but also through reflecting upon its meaning, thus analyzing data.

My role in the fieldwork was as a social scientist wanting to learn more about relational aspects of NPD-work. As such, I was not fully participating in the NPD-work. However, as part of the social situations, I was full participant, having to develop and adjust proper ways of taking part in the various situations as a researcher. In practice this meant that I developed various roles and relations to the other participants, and they were also active co-constructers in forming what I could do and who I could become in the research project. As such, both the informants and my-self were in the continuous process of becoming. Here lies much of the accountability and trustworthiness of the meaning making in the study; namely the ongoing reflection over emerging realities, and how the past can be interpreted in light of these emerging realities, and who we then possibly become. This has several implications. First, it is not possible to define a "final" meaning of situations, as they are under continuous re-interpretation through what happens. Second, there will never be a fully shared understanding of what happens as all interpreters will have more or less different experiences and expectations towards the future, shaping the interpretations. The two episodes described later on in this chapter is not something that has been "collected" for the purpose of this chapter. It is rather two of many NPD-work tasks that I happened during the fieldwork I did as part of my PhD. The described episodes alone do not give much information, as the designers often do not put so many words to what they do; they just do it. I have therefore chosen to describe both the design work more generally, customized design more specially and the shared understanding of good design that was often expressed, although not in so many words. The reason for these descriptions is to provide transparency in relation to the following analysis. It is this developed understanding of how my informants understood their work and their understanding of standards for "good design" that is the core basis for the analysis. The empirical episodes serve as illustrations of what kind of challenges customized design can entail. First, I start with the more contextual understanding of NPD-work in the company,

moving over to the shared understanding of "good design", before describing the two episodes of challenging customized design influence the products, but the development of the products also influences on them.

5. Dimensions of product development in a porcelain company

The New product development in the porcelain company I followed has at least two main dimensions to it, influencing what the NPD-work in the specific situation actually entails. The first dimension is that of product design as form and product design as décor. The second dimension is that of standardized product design and customized product design.

Product design as form is about developing three-dimensional products in porcelain. The process of developing form products from ideas via sketches and models and into mass production is both time consuming and demands considerable investments. In comparison, décor design is a relatively simpler process where the start-up investments are considerably lower. Consequently, form products will usually need to have an expected sales volume high enough to cover initial tool investments, while décor designs can be made in much smaller volumes. Following this, form products developed for a special customer or for a special occasion will rarely be made solely for the one customer/occasion alone. This also means that product developers of form products also will develop products that can have a sales potential beyond the specific customer. In contrast, customized décor design products can be produced in as few as 98 items of each product, and these products will be made exclusively for the customer. Hence, the decors can be much more tailored for the specific customer. Consequently, there is no reason for why customized décor design products could not be made to the specifications of customers without much interference from designers, aside from technical adjustments. Nevertheless, as I will describe later on, also tailored décor designs are developed both with consideration to what the customer wants to have and what the designer together with colleagues wants to offer. But first, I will describe how the design identity of the company is understood in different markets.

6. Bridging different design preferences and exploring new design identities

Product design and company identities

A characteristic product design is both a tool for brand building and for product recognition. Design characteristic often have a more or less unified expression, but it can also have different expressions. The design identity and company identity can for example differ between regions and market segments. In the case of the porcelain company, the design identity is by far two-fold. The main division in different understandings of who the company is, goes between the Scandinavian market and "the rest of the world". In Scandinavia the company is typically understood as a porcelain producer of high quality, but also relatively traditional tableware. In most school-kitchens, hospitals, hotels and cafés you will find company products from different epochs. In the rest of the world, the company is much more a niche producer, offering special design products for the high-end market within professional kitchens that wants something out of the ordinary. In addition to this main division between the Scandinavian and the global market, there are also numerous differences in preferences between countries and market categories, in what type of products they request and what designs they prefer. Hence, we cannot talk about one united design identity nor of a united brand identity. However, despite the variations in the understanding of design identity with different market niches and regions, there is still a more or less shared understanding within the company about what "good design" is and what "good company design" is.

A shared understanding of good design

The company has customers from most parts of the world, and although there can be regional market differences, customers choose their products because they like the design. Just what it means to like the design, is probably multi-facetted. For some customers it is important that both the design and the production is Norwegian. Others focus on the design expression as such and draw parallels to Scandinavian design, to Finnish design and even to Japanese design. What designers and product developers in the company themselves describes as characterizing their design expression is first-and-foremost simplicity. Beyond this characteristic, they find it difficult to define the design more specifically. Nevertheless, they mean they have a relatively clear understanding of what they understand as "the right company design". One of the informants expressed this as: "You know what it is when you see it. But you can´t say that it should be like this or that. But when you see it, you see it right away if it is right or not." The product development strategy says something about what proper-

ties the products should have, such as for example the demand for being "functional", although "functionality" can be a very flexible term.

Despite the lack of a clearly defined design expression, simplicity appears to be a characteristic with what they saw as good design. This understanding came to light from time to time in various comments in the fieldwork. One example of this was a comment one of the product developers had to a product I had decorated in order to try out a technique. I asked him what he thought of it, and he replied; "You know, the clue is to know when to stop". I asked him what he meant by that, and he added that: "Often, less is more". In other words, simplicity was rated higher than the richer decors. Another way this striving for simplicity was expressed was through a saying that was repeated from time to time in differing versions: "It is much more challenging to make something simple, than to make something seemingly complicated." I understood this expression as both an underlining of the practical challenges of making simplistic designs, but also a way of emphasizing simplistic design as being better craftsmanship than to make less simplified design.

Although product models and designs were presented and discussed monthly in the Product Council as well as the numerous informal ad-hoc meetings with colleagues for discussing details, it was hard for an outside observer to see when and how the design decisions and suggestions were made. When a product model was presented, others would typically nod and make some comments, but in a detached way (see Lindland, 2014 for further elaboration). Decisions about what to do further was hardly expressed. After one of the first Product councils I attended, I asked one of the product developers about this seemingly lack of responses and decisions made in the meeting. Were there any decisions made? "Oh, yes. Many decisions were made, but we don´t need to say it in so many words. Usually there is some nodding and some comments. Then everyone knows what that means." In time, I also to some extent internalized this understanding of what was seen as good design, and through this, a more gut feeling for how others would probably respond to specific products and decors.

So, despite the lack of a more detailed description of what the design-identity of the company was, it is quite clear that there was a more or less shared understanding of what "good design" was and what they would see as a "right product" coming from the company. In NPD projects where the designers and product developers in cooperation with others in the company have full control of the product design process, the "right design" is usually achieved through conversations around adjustments. The challenges around making "the right design" is much more challenging when including someone with other design preferences than those developed in the company. This can typically be customized design requests.

Challenging design requests

The company had customers from many parts of the world that preferred their simple design expression, and thereby sold their products globally. Some of the customers wanted to tailor the products to their own business concept by having added customized décor to the chosen products. Hence, the function of these customized products was typically to support and express the design identity of the customer, usually together with other artefacts. Due to this, the customers would usually have more or less specific requests for how the design should look like. The requests could be expressed through mood boards, pictures of other artefacts it would be used together with, or more specific patterns, color codes and logos. These requests could be used more or less strict by the designers in their effort to transform the ideas of the customer into something that would function physically on the products and also be a design that the designer and the company would see as being of good design quality.

There were basically two types of challenging design requests in terms of customized décor. The first type was requests that were physically challenging to make, either because the products the customer had chosen did not have adequate surfaces for placing a certain décor, or because the production techniques or colors demanded for making the requested décor was not available in the production of the company. The second type of challenges was where the design requests radically broke with what the designers would have preferred as "their design". In both these types of challenges the designers needed to do some form of translation from what the customers initially requested to what would function as a good design product. I will give two examples that illustrate these two different challenges could look like.

In the first example, a Chefs´ champion team wanted to have some products decorated very specifically to an international Chefs´ Championship. The chefs had developed a design program tailored for the food they would prepare in the Championship. The porcelain tableware was to be decorated by photographs of a pop group from the 70´ies. The problem was that the production technique used in the company could not print the pictures directly as they were. The printing technique in the company was to that each color was separated as a separate frame, where the different colors could not overlap. This meant that the number of colors could not be high. There the designer needed to translate ordinary photographs to simplified abstractions where contours became more visible, the colors where fewer and feeling of photograph disappeared. This transformation both solved the production challenges and gave the products its own very specific expression. At the same time; there was also products that had the design

expression of both the designer and of what could be understood as a company product.

In the second example, a new Arabic hotel concept wanted to have specific Arabic patterns designed into to some selected plates. The customer specified the colors in addition to gold and platina décor. This was by far not the first time the designers made customized designs for Arabic customers. The challenge in this example was that the design preferences of the customer felt almost incompatible with the design expression of the company. The patterns and the colors were in themselves fine, it was just "too much". Through various trials and variations, a solution was chosen and accepted as good of both the customer and the designer. The Arabic ornaments were used together with the rich color combinations, comprising a broad pattern on the rim of a place plate. The expression was thus rich and simultaneously relatively strict and simplistic. This was clearly not a design the designer would have initiated by herself. However, she found a way of solving the request that both took the wishes of the customer and the designer´s understanding of what she saw as "good design". When talking to the designer about these plates at one time, the designer commented that "it is our version of Arabic". The designer made a product on the request of the customer, but it was not an Arabic product as such. It was a product she and the company saw as their own, although a more special version of what a company product could be. Hence, this comment also indicates what the core of this second challenge actually is; to make something that is both a representation of the customer´s design identity and the design identity of the company developing and producing the design. And just as it was the company´s version of Arabic, we could just as well say that it was the Arabic hotel´s version of Scandinavian design. In the next part I use the theoretical perspective of Mead (1932, 1934) and Dewey (1934, 1938) to explore plausible understandings of why this is challenging and how this involves the emergence of Selves.

7. Analysis and discussion

There are basically two main groups of challenges that guide the process of developing décor designs, such as the two examples described above. This is the technological and practical limitations, typically connected to printing methods, range of colors to choose from and the size and form of surface to decorate. The second group might be both guiding and constraining understandings of what a good product looks like, what the market prefers and understanding of Selves in relation to others. This second group can be called social challenges.

These two main groups of challenges influence on how the product design in the company has developed and why it has come to be as it is.

What is special with customized décor designs in comparison with ordinary décor design for the ordinary product range, is that the input from the customers do not take the technical and social constrains into considerations. The task of the designers is thus to find ways to realize the requests of the customer, by developing designs they might never have considered to make on their own initiative. However, that often implies trying to stretch the boundaries for what it is possible to do.

The design process as an ongoing Gestural conversation

The design process can be understood as a long line of transactions where numerous gestures and responses are made, and where both significant symbols and the attitude of both Generalized Others and Specific Others are drawn into the transactions. I have presented two episodes illustrating how it can be challenging to develop good solutions for customized décor where the customer has very specific requests of what they want to have. In the first example, the challenge is about transforming the requests of the customer into something that is actually technically possible to make. For the purpose of analysis and discussion in this article, I will focus on the second example; the Arabic hotel plates.

In the customized request from the Arabic hotel concept, the customer makes two meaningful gestures that can inform the designer of what he would like the products to be. The most obvious one might be the décor elements following the décor request. The ornaments, the color schemes, the mood boards and the choice of product to be decorated, all give indications of what the customer wants. The second gesture is the request itself. Why does the customer want this Norwegian company to make these decors? Why does he want these very typical Nordic design products for his hotel project? There is something which the customer probably sees as compatible in these two gestures, and that he expects the designer to unite through the décor design. Hence, the customer buys into the Nordic design expression to the extent that the Norwegian products are used as part of the artefacts that make out the design identity the new hotel will have. Nevertheless, there are also other restrictions to what it is possible or desirable to do. Take for example the product the customer has chosen for decoration. The form of the product gives directions for how the décor can be placed, and the printing technology gives the limits for how the décor can be made.

In addition to these technical and practical limitations, there are also guidelines socially developed through transactions within and outside the company. These guidelines are various Significant symbols such as shared understandings within the product council of what "a good product" is. Another related Signifi-

cant symbol is what the printing department or the decorators sees as "good design", maybe more focused on the practical and technical possibilities for making decors of high quality. A third Significant symbol here can be what design preferences the designers have experienced the Arabian market to have in previous design-assignments. When the designer develops the décor suggestions, she takes both in consideration what she imagines the customer would like to have, and what the other colleagues would consider a good product, or other customers for that matter. Taking the attitude of others towards oneself when conducting the work is not about removing oneself from the situation, but rather to see oneself and one´s work through the eyes of others. It is not possible to imagine oneself and one´s work outside relations. As such, when the designer makes the sketches for the customized décor designs, these are made as a response to the décor request from the customer, but it is also a gesture for the colleagues to respond to. Challenging customized designs will usually stretch the boundaries of what it is possible and acceptable or even preferable to make. The imagination of how others will respond to the suggested décor designs will guide how the understanding of good company design is stretched. Nevertheless, it is through the actual presentation of the design suggestions for the other colleagues that the designer gets to test these expectations in practice.

In the discussions around how the customized design could be interpreted, the others can also refer to other Generalized Others than the designer has thought about, for example by referring to other designs that can be compared to this, or to the usability for the decors in relation to for example dishwashing. If the décor is vulnerable for rough use, as is often the case in professional kitchens, the hotel economist might be negative to the design. Hence, the designer must, together with the colleagues also imagine how the products will be used, whether they will be used frequently or just for special occasions. Would they be washed by hand or in machine? They must also imagine the challenges there can be for producing the products, and thereby taking the attitude of for example the decorators when imagining whether this will be a challenging product to decorate, and what adjustments that possibly could be made to the decor to make it easier to apply to the product.

The gestural conversations around the customized products will also be woven into other conversations about products later on. They will be a new reference point as their interpretation of Arabic design. Nevertheless, how it will be used, when and why it will be referred to, is impossible to say. Anyway, the result is that it leaves the participants a bit different than they were before, as their experiences can make them imagine other solutions than they did before, and make them re-interpret the understanding of who they are a bit differently.

The process of distilling and expanding design identity

The process of trying to unite the company´s design identity with specific décor elements provided by the customer can be understood as a process where one distills both the input and the own design identity as such. Through the process one tries to remove the elements that are not compatible for technical or practical reasons, or just because it is not in line with what is seen as good design. In this task of finding common ground in elements one would not have chosen to combine given the choice, one really needs to explore what it is that makes the product a typical company product, despite its un-typical design. The same must be done with the input; finding out what the key elements are, making the product resonate with both the identity of the company and the designer, but also with the Arabic hotel project.

While challenging customized design projects can enhance the task of refining the core of design expression, it also gives way for expanding the understanding of what the company design is characterized by. If one earlier meant that it was not good to have too much gold and bright colors and too rich ornamentation in the designs, the products, if accepted as good design by the others in the company, will demonstrate how this is done to the taste of the company. Customers wanting to have the company products combined with a very different décor expression than the products express, give indications of other ways of understanding the product design. Hence, input from customers that has to be integrated in the design forces the designers to reconsider the boundaries of what is seen as good design. The customers define the room the designers have for solving the task, but it is the designers that has to develop the design solution. The customer requests often also challenge the boundaries for what it is seen as technically possible to make or not, suggesting things that no-one within the company would attempt to do, just because they know it is "impossible". Design requests can thus stretch the understandings of what it is possible to do. However, this does not imply that all technical and practical hurdles can be eliminated, but rather that the one finds other ways of handling the challenges. Furthermore, these handling strategies will often influence on the visual characteristics of the products.

The global and the local as aspects of Selves, and of the Generalized Other

Although the Arabic designs for these plates are made especially for one specific hotel project, the products are also representations of what the company design is and can be. Hence, it represents a special aspect of the company´s product identity; it is their version of Arabic. In parallel, the decorated plates represent the Arabic hotel´s version of Nordic design. As such, the plates are not

just Nordic or Scandinavian design, they are the Arabic customer´s Nordic design. Any customized design request is embedded in a local context and situational context, making it a special version of the design identity, but it is not just the company´s identity alone; it is the crossing of the local customer´s expectations towards the designer and company, and vice versa. For a company developing and selling design products globally, we could say that there is something about the design that has a global appeal. However, this global appeal is also related to something more local, as people use the products into their own local situation. As such, there is much for designers to learn about the meaning of design products by looking at how customers and other use the products in their own settings.

If we follow this line of thought, it is reasonable to say that no tangible product design or physical object as such, can ever be only global or local. The reason for this is that if it was only local, it would not be possible to understand in another context. It is thus the global aspects of the product that makes it possible to interpret the product in other contexts. It can neither be only global, as there will always be a local context in which it is used. The Arabic plates can be interpreted as the Arabic version of the Norwegian company´s design language. However, it is also the Nordic version of the Arabic hotel´s design identity. Both the partners in the process have numerous identities related to the transactions they are part of, and these aspects of Selves are under continuous development, making not just the design identity in movement, but also the understanding of who the participants in the work processes become in relation to one another.

8. Conclusion, implications and suggestions for further studies

Conclusion

The sub-title of this article is "Connecting the global and local through design". What I have tried to express by this is not that there is a global understanding of reality in contrast to local understandings. I rather see global and local understandings as representations of various generalized Others. Take for example the Arabian customer requesting the customized products done to his specifications on a specific product. The form product is a Norwegian local design; the décor suggestions are Arabic elements. As such, both form and décor elements are local, but embedded in different locations. An understanding of the decorated product could then be that the product becomes global through uniting these two local expressions. Through this paper I have aimed at nuancing this understanding through taking a pragmatist approach to the understanding of meaning making and identity. From this pragmatist approach we can see the

global understanding as taking the attitude of the global design community, in the sense of what would be recognized as good design more generally. Simultaneously there are local design elements that can appear as difficult to combine. The work of the designer is thus not to interpret what the customer likes of Arabic design, but to try to imagine how the customer interprets the Nordic design. In this sense we could say that the decorated product it truly the Norwegian Company´s version of Arabic design, but is also the Arabic customer´s version of Nordic design. As such, customized design processes can be understood as processes where both the attitudes of very specific Others and more generalized Others are drawn into the transactions. When the gap between design preferences appear to be considerable, the imagination of what a good design solution could be, becomes more challenging. On the other hand, it also widens the understanding of who one possibly can become in relation to others. In other words, the design process is an exploration of who we become in relation to others, and who others become in relation to us. Hence, the development processes leave us a little bit different than who we were before.

Theoretical implications

Seeing the design process as a social process where both meaning and meaning-makers co-constitute one another continuously, challenges the idea of the designer as "in charge" of both the design and of one´s own and the company´s design identity. The designers and others involved in the processes need the responses of others both to learn the limits of what it is possible to do, technically and socially, in order to figure out how to stretch these limits. This also implies that the limits for possible design solutions are not static, but under continuous re-interpretation under the passage of events. However, this does not imply that the limits are constantly widening; a negative response to a product (as a gesture to the market) can also lead to a narrowing of what is understood as good design. And just as the limits for possible design solutions develop through transactional situations, so do also the understanding of what the limits of who one can become.

Methodical implications

If we are to grasp the essence of how design processes develop as development of meaning, we need to pay attention to what "is there" in the transactions, but what might for "us, outsiders" be very difficult to get a grasp on. In order to develop plausible understandings of what the meaning behind the words of the designers are, we need to take the attitude of the designers towards the situation. If we only had the description of the designers of what for example the customized design request was about, we would have the words, but not the tools for

understanding what it meant. Or rather, in lack of ability to understand the reality of the designers, we would interpret the understandings in accordance with our own references. In other words, we need to transact with the designers and others involved to the extent that we are able to imagine who the Generalized Others are in the specific situation and what their attitude towards the situation might be. We need to develop an understanding of the limits for what it is possible to make, both socially and technically, and through this develop an understanding of what good design is and can be. Such research calls for qualitative research conducted over time, where we as researchers learn through transactions where we also are in the continuous process of becoming.

Practical implications

In our professional life, we all produce something; whether it is services, products, support, guidance, knowledge or entertainment, and what and how we produce these outcomes also co-constitute who we understand ourselves to be, professionally. For some vocations the standards for good work is relatively measurable. For others, the standards are vague, disputable and abstract. The work of designers, artists, writers and social researchers can be examples of vocations with vague, disputable and abstract standards. For this reason, people in these vocations are dependent on transacting with others around the work to develop the significant symbols and the attitudes of the generalized and specified others in order to imagine what others would approve of as good work. And as these vocations usually imply the creation of something novel, the risk of failure to live up to the standards become more obvious. Thus, in these vocations it becomes even more important to handle the transactions where meaning and identities are co-constructed in order to imagine what possibilities there could be for ideas stretching the boundaries of what has been done before.

Future research

Much attention has been drawn to studying designers as gifted individuals working in dynamic, creative environments. Less attention has been directed towards the social possibilities and constrains of design work, where norms and expectations for what good design can be, is continuously negotiated in the space between making something new and at the same time making something that resonates with the customers´ expectations for what a "right" product could be. An interesting dimension to this is the understanding of how the expectations of customers and designers mirror each other in the process of developing customized design. More research is needed here.

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