

# “WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNERS? INVESTIGATING NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR DESIGN PARTICIPATION

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## ABSTRACT:

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

## I. WHAT IS DESIGN?

*"It's not about the world of design. It's about the design of the world"* (Mau et al, 2004). In other words, it is about how the people-centered era is finally replacing the market-driven era and the bigger phenomenon is that people without design education are designing (Sanders, 2006). With the help of technology, people are designing interactive websites, amazing photos, innovative videos and appealing music. This is related to what von Hippel (1988 and 2005) called the lead-users who develop and modify products to fit their needs. What is the reaction from the design community to this democratising innovation by people?

Design methods aimed towards general public interests are referred to in Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre's 1972 paper, *in the Name of the People; The Populist Movement in Architecture*, which examines the concept of populism in architecture and design (Shamiyeh, 2005:31). They based their thesis on the distinction between the Welfare State designers and the Populists: *"...The Welfare State approach to architecture reached its fullest expression with its twentieth century heirs; Le Corbusier, the designers associated with the CIAM-group during the 1920 and 1930's, and the proponents of Functionalism and the International Style...The Welfare State designer, whether a planner or an architect, was an 'elite' prejudiced by his own private theories against the taste of the 'user'...Populists saw designers as a class: a class of experts who, because of a total occupational involvement with pure design or because of their own middle-class origins, has developed a private way of looking at the manmade environment..."* (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1972). After three decades, Lefaivre (2002) published another paper to bring back the discussion of populism in architecture entitled **What People Want: Populism in Architecture and Design**. The main aim of this paper was to redefine the concept of 'populist architecture' and offer some insights following her 1972 paper with Tzonis, especially the difference between pop architecture and populist architecture. Taste Populism, Pop Architecture and Populist Architecture are Lefaivre's redefinitions of populism in architecture. They are well captured by M. Shamiyeh (2005:25), the organiser of the Design-Organisation-Media (DOM) Research Laboratory 2002 conference, who defined three populist positions: *"Architecture for people ... which gets built reflects, so to speak, either the context the vernacular forms are supposed to have originated in or the taste in architectural forms and the general public's sensibility with respect to them."* The second position is 'Architecture with people' which is about *"the exploration of possibilities to integrate the client or the public in the design process, and is thus one of an operative nature... the effort is made to develop concepts collaboratively with future users or residents."* The last and most extreme position is called 'Anarchism', which means *"architecture without architects"*. This paper is based on this populists' approach to design and defines the pluralists' roles of designers in relation to the changing designers-people relationship.

Already in 1971, social designer and educator Victor Papanek (1927-1999) who was a strong advocate of the socially and ecologically responsible design of products, tools, and community infrastructures, suggested that “[a]ll men are designers...Design is composing an epic poem, executing a mural, painting a masterpiece, writing a concerto. But design is also cleaning and reorganising a desk drawer, pulling an impacted tooth, baking an apple pie, choosing sides for a backlot basketball game, and educating a child” (Papernek, 1971,1992:3). Then what can professional designers do? “Be designers, we can pay by giving ten percent of our crop of ideas and talents to the seventy-five percent of mankind in need” (ibid.1971, 1992:68). This practice is called social self-tithing<sup>1</sup> of design. According to Papernek (1971, 1992:234-247), there were six areas that design had been neglected:

1. *Design for the Third World*
2. *Design of Teaching and Training Devices for the Retarded, the Handicapped, and the Disabled*
3. *Design for Medicine, Surgery, Dentistry, and Hospital Equipment*
4. *Design for Experimental Research*
5. *Systems Design for Sustaining Human Life Under Marginal Condition*
6. *Design for Breakthrough Concepts*

The more practical issue is how to design within these unfamiliar areas? Papernek (1971, 1992:85) suggested that designers should learn from people who are more capable in solving their own design problems. Avoiding behaving as “instant experts”, designers should empathise and design with people. From Papernek’s experience and philosophy, it is clear that the changes in design are mainly about the changing relationship between designers and users/people.

## 2. DESIGN PARTICIPATION AND DESIGN RESEARCH

How are the interactions between designers and users to be achieved? The first attempt by the design community to answer this question, i.e. the issue of people involvement in the design process, was an international conference entitled ‘Design Participation’ in 1971, which was sponsored and organised by the Design Research Society (DRS), the multi-disciplinary learned society for the worldwide design research community. This conference was the first to define ‘Design Participation’ as a specific field and bring ‘everyman’ in that field (Banham,1972). The common ground of the conference was the belief in the ideology of ‘user participation in design’. Its aim was to discuss the importance of user participation in different forms of

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

design applications and establish a community in the design field concerned with such issues. Among all the presenters, John Page, a British Design Scientist who was the first DRS Chairman from 1967 to 1969, presented a paper titled, *Planning and Protest* in which he provided a comprehensive and scientific way to understand user participation in design processes by a series of diagrams demonstrating different design and planning organisational structures (Fig. 1). Page's system uses a non-linear way to analyse different practices of Design Participation. Page starts with a suggestion that the user based participation discussion was about the separation of the world of designers and the world of users, "The designer lives in the world of design isolation. There are effectively two worlds – the design world and the world of users – and while the real world contains real users, the designer works with abstract users, whose characteristics he invents... Eventually, when the product emerges from this 'design god', it exists in the real external world. It makes an impact on the external world but not necessarily a very good one..." (Page, 1972).

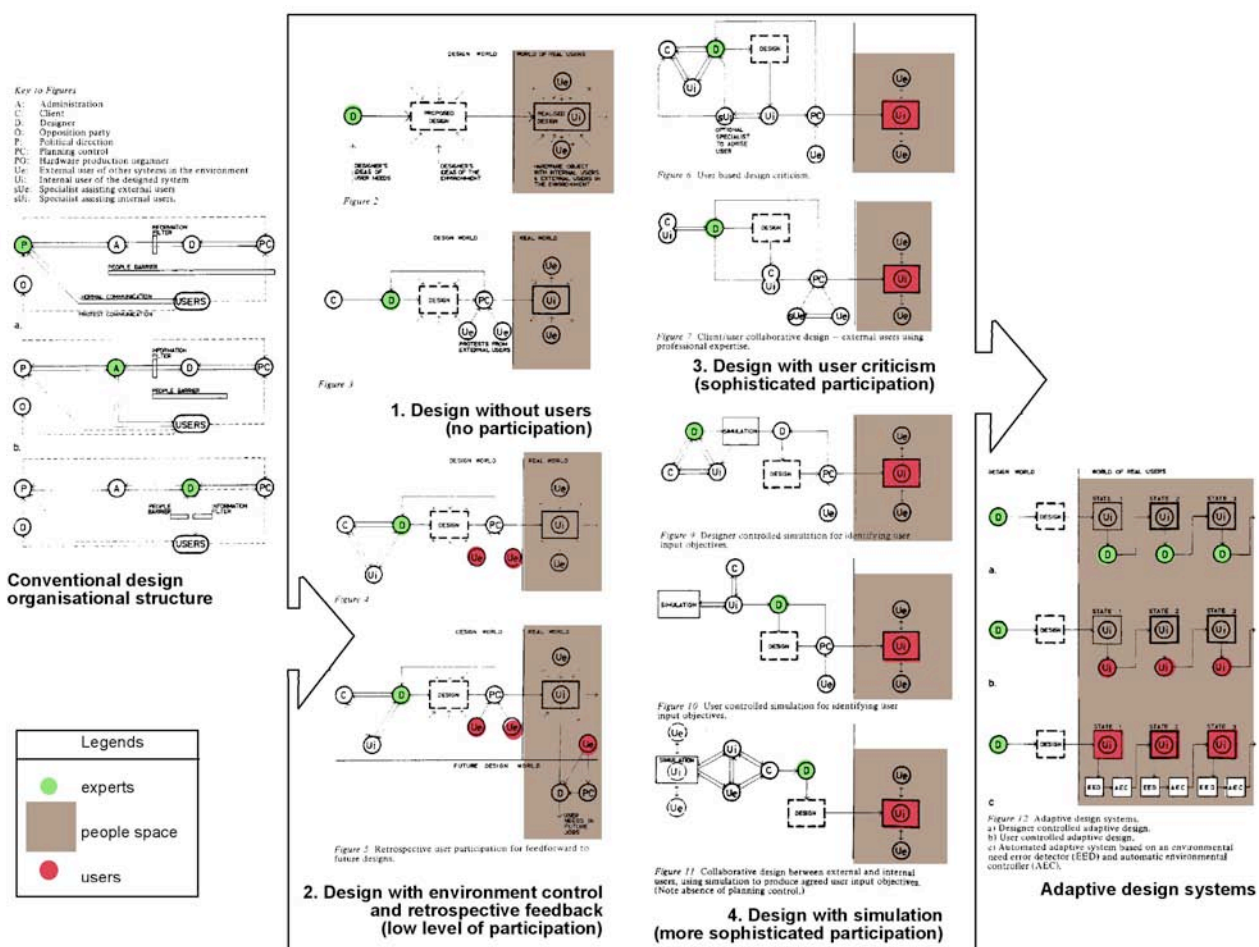
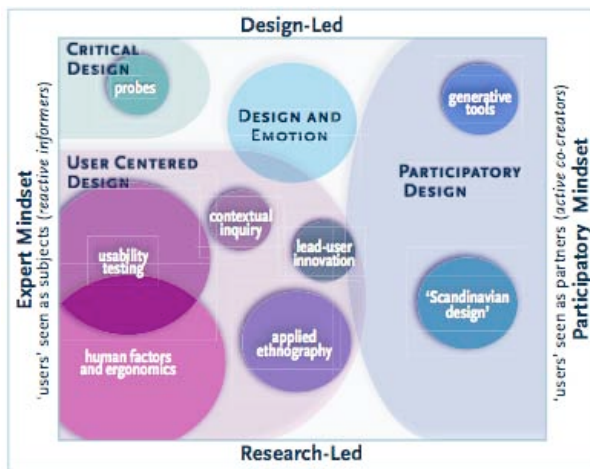


Fig.1 John Page's design systems diagram to understand user participation in design (1972)



**Fig.2 Topography of Design Research by Sanders (2006)**

After over thirty-years, user participation has become an essential part in design research development. The concept of 'people' in the design process exists in most design research activities but there are different levels of user involvement. Just like E.B.-N Sanders, a social scientist and pioneer who introduced participatory research methods for design and mapped the cognitive collage (fig.2) of design research space in order to discuss the state of design research in 2006. Sanders (2006) uses two dimensions to define the space of design research.

The vertical dimension describes the impetus of the design research approaches. Design research methods

and tools have been introduced into practice from a research or design perspective i.e. between the design-led to the research-led. Similar to Page's, Sanders also includes the horizontal dimension, which is between the mindsets of experts and people. Four main groups of design research are mapped in the collage and indicated in different positions. For example, 'User-Centred Design' is still a practice based on the experts' mindset, which is not reflected in its name. At the other end, there is 'Participatory Design' with strong co-design mindset.

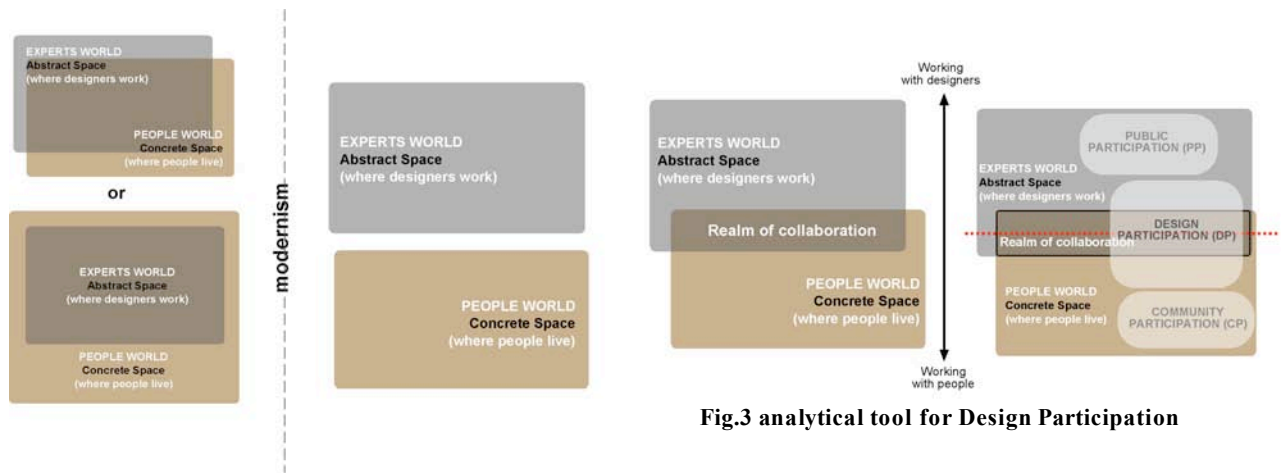
It might be useful at this point to define the difference between Design Participation (DP) and Participatory Design (PD). 'Design Participation' (DP) is not yet an everyday term and even members of the design community will associate it with 'Participatory Design' (PD). Participatory Design can be interpreted as a type of innovation while Design Participation can be understood as a 'paralogy'. As Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984:61) explained, "*Paralogy must be distinguished from innovation: the latter is under the command of the system, or at least used by it to improve its efficiency; the former is a move (the importance of which is not recognized until later) played in the pragmatics of knowledge... The stronger the 'move', the more likely it is to be denied the minimum consensus, precisely because it changes the rules of the game upon which the consensus has been based.*" This is because PD is one of many problem-solving design techniques whereas DP is a way of thinking about design. In other words, Participatory Design is one of the rules to control the design game and Design Participation is a new attitude towards playing the game that will try to change the nature of the game.

Since people involvement is a key part of design research, Design Participation should be part of all current design research practice. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case. While Page's and Sander's mappings can explain the practice of Design Participation/design research, the main problem is still that they are classifying practices into different types, which leads to segregation. On the other hand, these analyses are reference-only and do not relate to practical issues and applications to different situations. This paper introduces a new

analytical framework to understand Design Participation and encourage mutual understanding for more collaboration between designers, researchers and users/people.

### 3. DESIGN PARTICIPATION TYPOLOGY

How does this new Design Participation tool works and what does it introduce? Inspired by Henri Lefebvre's social concept, i.e. the mechanism of 'concrete space' and 'abstract space', similar to Page's and Sanders', this DP analytical framework is a tool to understand the relationship between design experts and people related to the development of design process. Is there any common ground between these two spaces? Can experts open up the design process to let users move into the abstract space to co-design the built environment that they are going to live or work in? Can experts design in a tactical way, i.e. design *for* users from the abstract space for a complicated brief or design *with* users in the concrete space where people occupy.



**Fig.3 analytical tool for Design Participation**

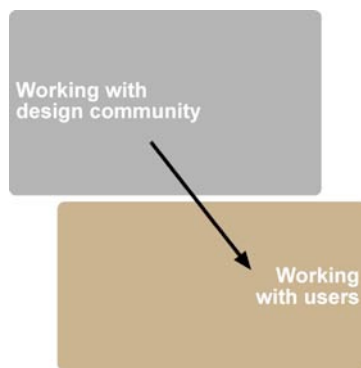
Fig. 3 shows how this new tool works: it is based on Lefebvre's social spatial concept that divides the world into two world worlds or practices: abstract space for experts and concrete space for people. Dating from the era of modernism these two worlds were separated, professionalism being held to be a world apart and above, while people were treated as subjects for reactive information. When the two worlds re-join, a new form of in-between space called the 'realm of collaboration' is formed. Applying this tool to design practice, '*designing with designers*' and '*design with people*' are opposite poles of an axis that can be mapped parallel to this diagram of the new relationship within the three spaces. Three modes of participation are identified, including Public Participation (PP) in abstract space, Community Participation (CP) in concrete space and Design Participation (DP) across the overlap space of the realm of collaboration.

This paper focuses on new perspectives of Design Participation or design research and four particular types of Design Participation are defined (Lee, 2006). This leads to a rethinking of DP's relationship with the bigger social system in relation to the other participations. When designers work in abstract mode with limited

contact with users, it is called Design Participation for innovation. At the other pole, people are working as designers for their own projects and this is called Design Participation for motivation. More complicated Design Participation happens when practices overlap in the realm of collaboration. The most common ones are those Design Participation practices for collaboration, which aim to encourage co-design processes. Comparatively, Design Participation for emancipation, which is user-driven, requires more time and effort to conduct but the effects are longer-term. A comparison of these four types is shown in table 1.

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

**Table 1. Four Types of Design Participation**



### 3.1. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR INNOVATION

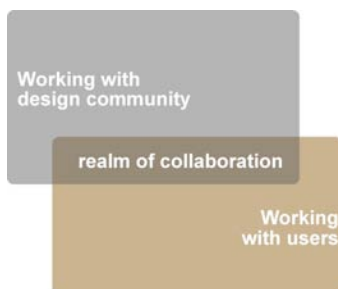
This first type of Design Participation is the result of the separation of the designers' space and users' space with the development of professionalism. The designers' power forced the abstract space (where designers work) to separate from the concrete space (where people live). When the two spaces separated, designers focused mainly on the design outputs. Many designers who seek for interesting design concepts develop various ways to understand their users and hope to get inspiration from the interaction. The main drawback of this model of Design Participation is the control of users by the designers, described by Jonathan Hill (2003: 10) as the 'passive user' model. The autonomy of the design process is under the sole control of designers. Design Participation happens in an imaginary or remote way. People are pulled into the abstract space as passive

subjects for analysis for new design concepts. The designers' aim in this designer-user relationship is challenging user perception and providing new design experience/concepts for users. For example, prototyping is a common parameter for user/people/human centred design in order to involve users. It is a popular component of design processes within functionalism when it is important to test the product before it goes into mass production. Thus, people are pulled into the design process to 'give comment'. In architecture, 'exemplar' is the term for prototyping. Since the famous housing experiment, the **Weissenhof Siedlung** in 1927, there have been many similar projects specifically addressing housing issues in different parts of the world to test new housing ideas with the inhabitants for further development. Designers create prototypes of their concepts and invite potential users to test them for further improvement.



### 3.2 DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR MOTIVATION

The alternative model works in the situation in which there is no separation between the designers' space and users' one. In other words, there is no distinction between 'designers' and 'users'. There is only one space which means people are the designers. It is about self-motivation from people in the design participation process that they create. The clearest example of self-motivated design practice by non-professional people is the do-it-yourself culture. Do-it-yourself (DIY) has been called the only real Design Participation in which the people invent their own rules (Banham, 1972:7). This practice has developed since the publication of early design magazines such as **Practical Householder** in the 50s. Its development is what Banham suggested as "an alternative design culture" (ibid), i.e., one which is not manipulated by the design community. While more and more DIY superstores such as B&Q, are opening around the world, and with the help of DIY television programmes, this 'alternative' culture is providing power to the people and encouraging the transformation of Design Participation for motivation.



### 3.3. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR COLLABORATION

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



Design Participation for collaboration. Their aims are to encourage user involvement as an extension of the design process and an enhancement of user experience. Design Participation in community based environmental design is becoming more important in many societies with an increasing awareness of a sense of community. Since architectural design processes are longer in timeframe, and influence more people, the practice of architecture can only involve a small group of representatives of the users. Design ideologies under this type of Design Participation include Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language* (1972), Newman's *Defensible Space* (1972), Sanoff's *Community Design* and *Social Architecture* (1977), Wates's *Community Architecture* (1972) and Day's *Consensus Design* (2003). All these architectural practices are process-oriented and try to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional consultation process, which limit the individual citizen's ability to participate in planning.



### 3.4. DESIGN PARTICIPATION FOR EMANCIPATION

Compared to other models, this final type leans more towards users/people. Diagrammatically, the design expert's space is surrounded by the people's space which indicates that designers are part of the public i.e. people and designers have different roles but a similar social status. It is about enabling, empowerment and evolving. In the field of architectural design, Jonathan Hughes (2000:182), editor of *Non-Plan: Essays on freedom participation and change in modern architecture and urbanism*, claimed that the involvement of the users of architecture in the design process had become a serious and realisable consideration, and such involvement was greatest in mass-housing projects supported by public funding, in which the social difference between an overwhelmingly middle class architectural profession which designs the building, and the typically working class residents, who live or are going to live in the housing. This proved to be one of the key reasons for the failure of public housing. In Lyotard's and Sanders' words, designers or researchers with the expert mindset are practicing designs in the narrative of speculation while those with participatory mindsets are designing to emancipate people through design. This distinction ties in with the populists' approach to design, which is design *with* people but *not* for people, contrary to that of welfare state designers.

## 4. FROM PROCESSES TO OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS

This paper shows how the practice of Design Participation can avoid mere 'tokenism' and articulates tactics for a transformation of the traditionally conceived process of design. Through discussing two examples in this section, which demonstrate this 'process design' idea and how they interweave different practices, it also aims

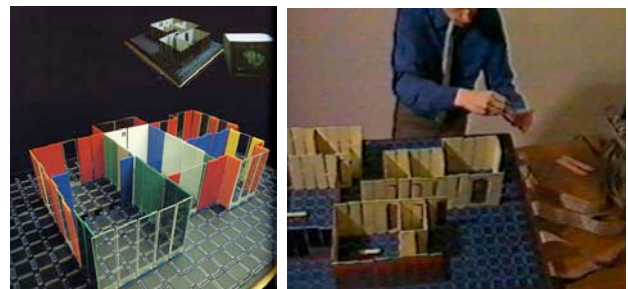
to define the term 'participation' within the greater social context. Design practices can work in different modes of participation and types of Design Participation can change through time and situations.

#### 4.1 EXAMPLE I: SEGAL METHOD FOR COLLABORATION

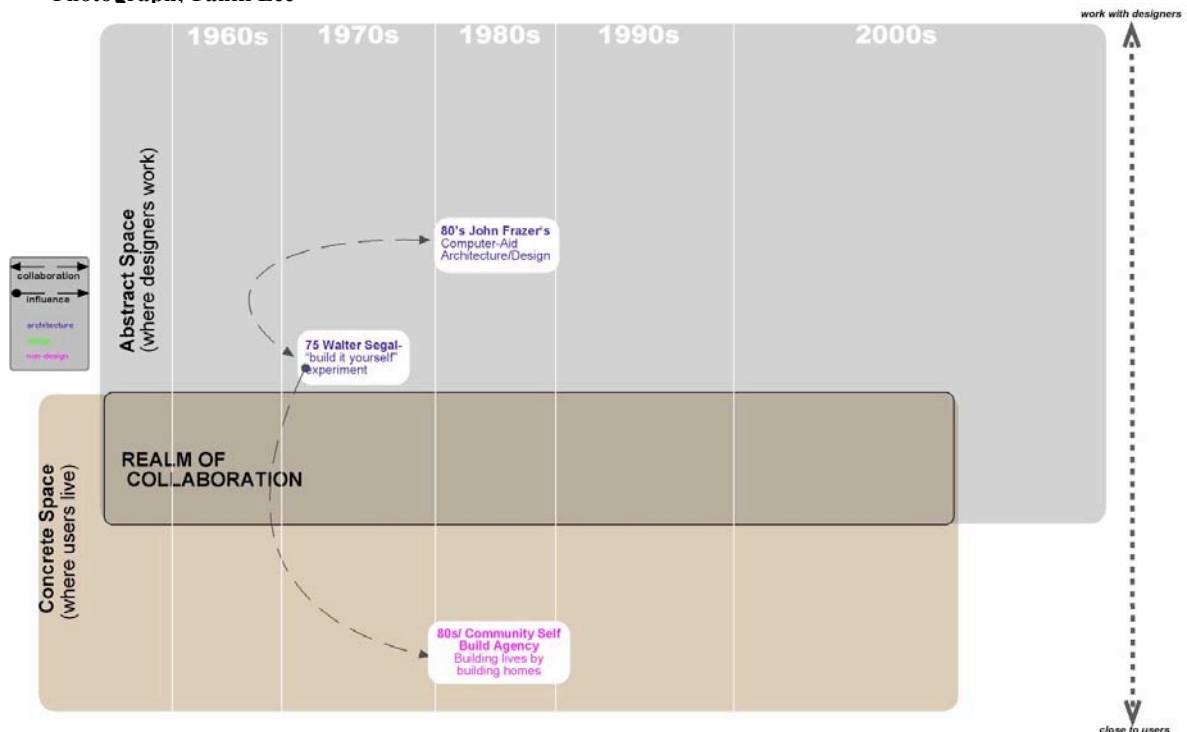
Empowering people by allowing them to actually design works better in small-scale projects in which designers work closely with their clients. Clients are not just brief givers but active partners in the design process. The 'users' have ideas about what they want and seek out designers as their 'master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



**Fig.4 Self-build village, Walter Way, London**  
Photograph, Yanki Lee



**Fig.5 Self-builder design kit, working electronic system (left) and user demonstration (right), designed by John and Julia Frazer, consultants, with John Potter, research assistant, for architect Walter Segal, 1982.**



**Fig.6 Development of Segal Methods between spaces**

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

Both enabling and empowering examples underwent a similar development in terms of technology. These innovative participatory design processes were developed with the invention of interactive device systems. Design/architectural academics, Professors John and Julia Frazer, worked with Walter Segal and designed electronic devices for users to visualise their design through interactive systems. Fig.5 is the 'self-builder design kit' that is the result of a collaboration between Frazer and Segal which aimed to develop another way to transfer abstract design knowledge. This "*build it yourself*" experiment started as a design innovation in the abstract space, even though Segal developed this method by working with self-builders. Thus, the method moved from abstract space to people's space to develop a network of self-build community agencies including the Segal Trust (fig.6) through different collaborations.

## 4.2 EXAMPLE 2: TRANS.FORMA DESIGN FOR EMANICIPATION

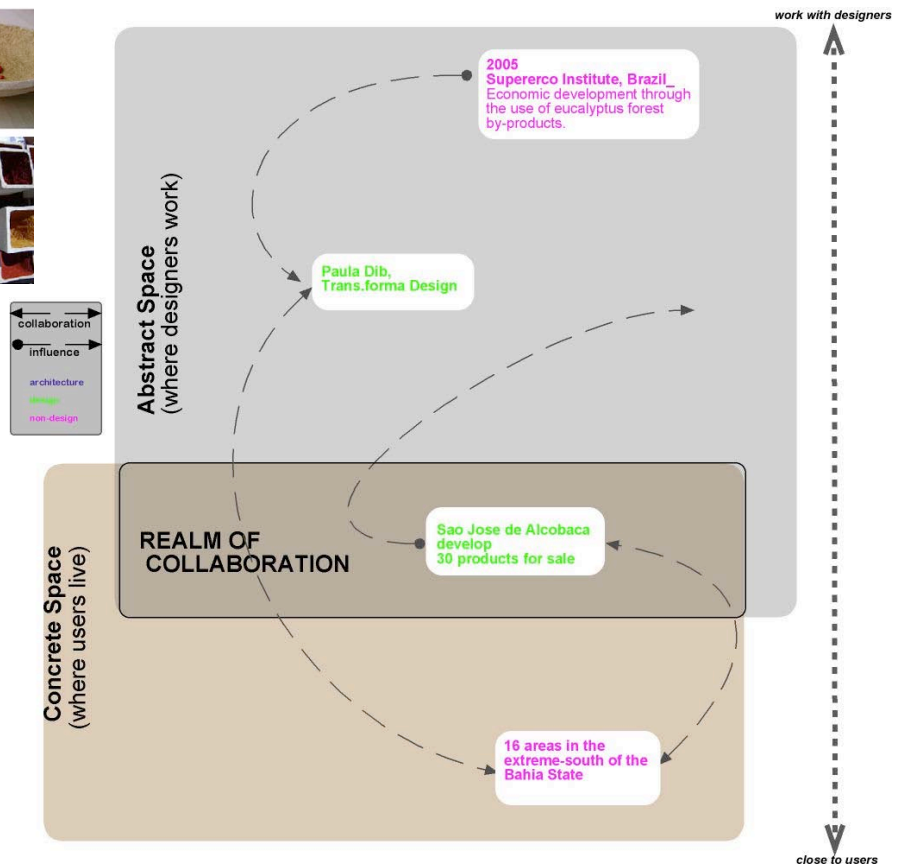
Paula Dib is a young Brazilian product designer who won the British Council's International Young Design Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2006. This prestigious prize was for her intervention with communities throughout Brazil to create social product design. In December 2005, the Supereco Institute in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

from urban areas comes back to the areas to improve quality of life for poor Brazilian communities (fig.8). In Dib's case, design became living knowledge to inspire people and improve their lives.



**Fig.7 Paula Dib' market products designed with São José de Alcobaça local communities.**

**Fig.8 Its project flow between spaces.**

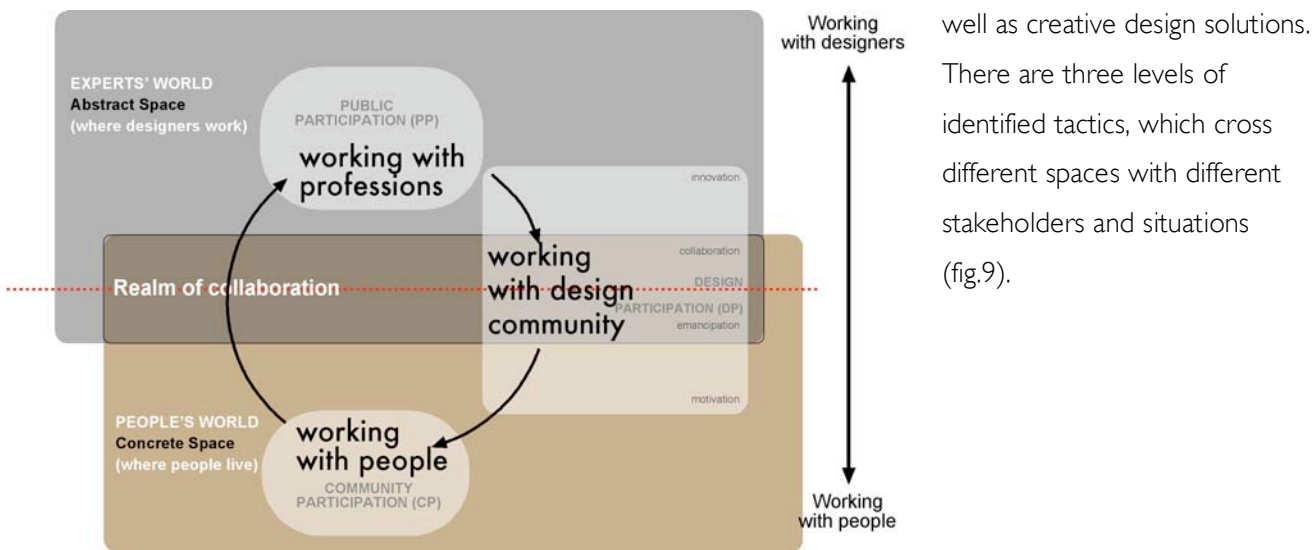


## 5. NEW SOCIAL ROLES OF DESIGNERS

In these two examples of overlapping spaces, with Design Participation activities initiated in the abstract space and then developed through non-government organisations (NGO), designers are working closely with people in the concrete space. They start their Design Participation activities from the abstract space as a new way of design thinking and then move on to work in the people's space. They prefer to work closely with users. After a period, they will often become organisers of non-governmental organisations to implement their ideas. It is clear that the designer-people relationships are changing throughout design processes i.e. designers are working in different spaces in different situations. Apart from the desirable and tangible design outputs, the participatory and creative design processes 'designed' by designers shows a new area of design which focuses on the holistic idea of design: design processes, outputs and impacts.

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

In the case of Design Participation, 'tactics' can refer to designers working and developing quick and effective ways of designing to tackle the problems together with people in concrete space. Designing in cooperation with people, designers need to develop *Design Participation Tactics* in different spaces to fit to different situations. In contrast to 'strategies', 'tactics' are based on time and opportunities. 'Strategy' is about the "calculation of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power can be isolated" (de Certeau, 1984: 36). Therefore, 'strategy' is based on place. "... [A] tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver 'within the enemy's field of vision', as von Bulow put it, and within enemy territory." (de Certeau, 1984:37). After defining the three operation spaces, the three modes of participation and the four types of Design Participation, the DP analytical tool encourages a tactical way of designing that leads towards design user participation process as



**Fig.9 Design Participation typology and tactics diagram**

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

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

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

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

The primary aspiration of this new role is 'Design with Participation', which involves questions of how designers work with people and other professionals in order to influence them with creative design thinking and co-develop new ways of designing. The problems come when roles are not clearly defined in the first place. It is difficult to define them since the aim is to blur the edges of the three participation modes and develop new ways to insert design elements into these different practices. This type of exploration can conflict with the existing power structures. Social workers or NGOs are the service providers in the Community

Participation domain and they 'help' people, especially the disadvantaged ones, to assert their rights in dealings with experts and governmental organisations in the abstract world. It is unusual to have designers' involvement in community development projects and these activities are mainly controlled by social service organisations, who set up the scenes and arrange the roles. To redefine and reinterpret the role of designers in different types of participation projects is to encourage collaboration. However, people from different domains work in different patterns. For example, there is a standard practice for Community Participation projects by which social workers empower passive residents. As a result, there are many conflicts during the process regarding pushing the limits of existing practice. The other issue to tackle is the actual process. There seems to be a lack of mutual development between spaces. More collaboration between different professionals can improve the process and designers' roles can facilitate these collaborations. However, most people are not used to the language of designers. This explains why Design Participation requires more time and special studies in order to break through these barriers between designer-user interacting interfaces.

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

Since people have begun to 'have their say' and understanding and responding to customers has become a key element in expressing social responsibility by both governmental departments and big corporations, there have been many participation projects, especially those happening in the Public Participation domain. However, most of these projects can be classified as tokenism according to Arnstein's (1969,1996) *Ladder of Citizen Participation*. The third and final level of Design Participation Tactics is to bring the lessons from the realms of Design and Community Participation back to the domain of Public Participation in order to transform the practice of professionals by inserting creative design thinking and empathy with people's creativity into different participation projects. Through participating in different Public Participation projects, which are mainly research-oriented rather than hand-on, people's opinions are collected for the development of policy or strategies and different settings of these projects provide a comparative base to discern changes of roles for designers and the influence of these changes throughout the participation processes, including the involvement of different professions. The common situation of these Public Participation projects is that the implications of design are just part of other bigger public political projects or campaigns. This indicates that 'Public Participation' is a well-developed area within its own practice but its integration with other participation domains seems not yet explored, especially in terms of design implications. Most of Public Participation projects work with different experts for participation. Because of the high level of experts' involvement in these projects, many issues regarding division of roles and the effects of the actions are raised. The actual design actions are considered to be relatively less important because these projects are part of bigger social

discussions that involve many stakeholders and long-term development. Design elements in these contexts are not thought to be as essential as other political, economic and social factors.

The most important design factor affecting Public Participation is the agenda for each project. Since most Public Participation projects are usually process-oriented or part of research processes about understanding specific social issues, it is difficult to define their influence without referring to their original agendas. The results are unrelated or isolated activities that became part of the learning path of the researchers but do not bring any effect to the general public. It is also common that agendas of Public Participation are related to civic education and awareness-building exercises. In such cases, the projects may lead to an articulation and awareness of social concerns, but do not produce tangible results. Therefore, if there is more and better communication between designers and the public policy makers, more Public Participation projects can be generated from design domains, which can make governmental or political campaigns more accessible for Public Participation. Moving out from the black-box practice of design and using design knowledge to engage people for social development should be the first action for all socially responsible designers.

## 6. CONCLUSION: DESIGN IN THE NAME OF PEOPLE

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

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