MOVING HUMAN-CENTEREDNESS – BROADENING THE CONTEXT

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Abstract

Nowadays, human-centred design (HCD) is everywhere. Derived from software and applications, it has become commonplace in public services, accompanied by increased interest in social innovation and the demand to improve user-experiences. However, in public and social innovation, over-inflated claims that design can solve everyone's problems have attracted criticism with a demand for hard evidence on what works and human-centredness has been considered as potentially "harmful" because of over-emphasis on the individual to the detriment of the wider population. This paper analyses HCD's elevation alongside user-centred design and design thinking. Countervailing tendencies are examined: the move to design effective engagement strategies; the "deep craft" needed for successful public innovation; wider stakeholder involvement; broader skills and better methods; and new developments like the Civic Economy that fuse social innovation and co-design. It indicates the need for a new multi-lingual conversation and offers some pointers.

INTRODUCTION

Design history and the need for a reshape

Describing how he first discovered design through Reynar Banham, Sudjic (2014:138-139) describes shifts in design's history to its current form as an academic hybrid of cultural studies and social anthropology. Recognising that design keeps changing shape, despite deficiencies in the approach, Sudjic believes that design is best defined through its relationship with mass-production. That interpretation is able to chart the advent of industrialisation and the fracture of the intimate relationship between the maker of an object and its user, to post-industrialisation and the rise of user-centredness. Its shortcoming is that it remains in thrall to the manufacture of objects and artefacts and fails to grapple with the impact

of a new form of design that is non-material and strategic. This demonstrates the pervasiveness of the language and metaphors of industrial design particularly where design is being reshaped to meet contemporary problems with social targets and weightless solutions. When design history and criticism does pay serious attention to new developments, as in Rawsthorn's (2013:41-42) exposition of the work of social design practice Participle, it falls short of offering a new narrative. As a result design is now a complicated field, one part of which is still centred on making and targeted on the ego-centricity of the user, and the other is focused on co-creating for an improved society. The former has developed a compelling narrative around human nature, whilst the latter is still trying to define itself as an aggregator of processes and systems. This is important because HCD has had a good run, assuming a near monopoly, but the metaphors and operating principles that have privileged it and the individual consumer are insufficient to drive the most dramatic reshaping in design since the industrial revolution.

HCD; solution becomes problem

After fifty years of HCD, its universal expansion and outreach of its methodologies into every aspect of design, there is now evidence of growing dissatisfaction with its capacity to address the complexity of contemporary problems (Norman 2005, Wood 2012). This is predicated on what has become an established role for designers, namely, evolving solutions that fit the needs of the individual. Socially, the rise of wicked problems and unpredictable challenges, in parallel with a growing demand to improve public services, especially in a time of economic and ecological constraint, has thrown HCD's limits into sharp focus. The design profession's response to this altered terrain is as yet underdeveloped. The growth in new genres - stakeholder-centred strategies like service design, social design, strategic design, and design and public policy - whilst the terminology appears redolent of contemporary concerns, is often found wanting. The cause appears to be that these neologisms mask unreconstructed HCD methods wrapped up in a new guise. For example, in the recent context of design in public and social innovation, Mulgan (2014) indicates that over-inflated claims have attracted criticism with a demand for hard evidence about what works. Similarly, design thinking, seen by Bason as a driver of public sector innovation (2010:102), has been described by Nussbaum (2013) as a "failed experiment". Human-centeredness itself has been considered as potentially "harmful" because of its over-emphasis on the individual to the detriment of the wider population (Norman 2005). HCD is also seen as "not enough", pointing to the cynicism of customer-satisfaction and pampering users in a world of ever-diminishing resources (Wood 2012). Not least, there is the element of risk associated with HCD in the public sector. This occurs when the designer has departed the scene and where little thought has been given to

implementation and follow through, even when proposed solutions have been the result of co-creation (Segelström 2013).

The topicality of co-creation has been boosted by the internet and the boom in what Leadbeater (2009) calls "mass creativity", moving from consumption to prosumption. In pursuit of his argument Leadbeater refers to Illich's earlier solution – for people to spend less time as consumers and more as creators of their own wellbeing – as supporting his own theories on the value of co-creativity and collective self-help. The confluence of human-centredness, design and thinking focussed on community has its roots in the early twentieth century and the efforts of the Pragmatist philosopher Dewey in Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude (1917), to regenerate philosophy and modern thought. As a precursor of modern-day design thinking, Dewey sought to do this by reconstructing thinking and urging attention onto solving contemporary problems. Dewey has been rehabilitated by Nussbaum (2013) who draws upon his experience in design and innovation to chart a new literacy, Creative Intelligence, which he has abbreviated to CQ. Central to this is Nussbaum's rethinking of engagement; how we engage with services, with products, how we engage in a social way; seeing the design of engagement as potentially powerful. Dewey's prescient interest in community capacity-building and Nussbaum's focus on the design of engagement also links with the idea of the Civic Economy (Ahrensbach T. *et al* 2011). This combination of entrepreneurship, community regeneration and civic renewal is interwoven with the shift to co-design. One of the principal drivers of this shift is the need for a fundamental transformation in how people and organisations communicate and collaborate. Consistent with a widespread public trend to be involved in the co-creation and co-production of cultural and other products and services, this has led to an interest in the tools of strategic design and design thinking in order to achieve meaningful participation.

Moving Human-centredness

This paper therefore proceeds by examining five interconnecting issues. As well as new, more effective ways of talking about design in the altered context affecting HCD, efforts to meet today's pernicious issues require novel approaches that are based on research and an analysis of HCD's shortcomings. These deficiencies, this paper argues, are: 1) the over-emphasis on the primacy of the user; 2) the need to re-evaluate the role of the designer; 3) the demand for a fresh look at the capabilities of stakeholders and wider societal factors; 4) the rise of co-creative strategies; and interconnected to this; and 5) the issue of community. The paper charts and analyses the elevation of HCD and its near relatives - user-centred design and design thinking - from its origins in utopian debates (Fuller 1969) and "Design

for Society" (Whiteley 1993) to the flood of initiatives using HCD methods around the world. Issues relating to users, designers, stakeholders, co-design and co-creativity and community are examined in turn, before focussing attention on the broader context of countervailing tendencies, amongst which are variously: the move to design effective engagement strategies; the focus on the "deep craft" needed for successful public innovation; wider stakeholder involvement; the need for a breadth of skills and better methods; and new social developments like the civic economy that fuse social innovation and co-design methodologies. Examples and a case-study are offered for illumination. Drawing on this expanded context the conclusion indicates the need for a new kind of multi-lingual conversation and offering some pointers.

USER-CENTRED DESIGN, A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

Bason, Director of Denmark's Mindlab, provides a contemporary analysis of the heightened interest in "Design, innovation and the public sector" (2010 pp.136-137). Referencing key actors like, Verganti (2009), Brown (2009) and Martin (2009), Bason charts the shift from traditional design disciplines to emerging genres such as experience design and service design that range on design in terms of the human capacity to create meaningful lives. For Bason this is largely exemplified by "citizen-centred innovation" representing a significant move that, although it involves end-users, also systematically includes citizens and businesses as co-creators of new solutions. The journey to this altered situation, however, stretches back beyond 2009. It is commonly held that 1986 is when the term "user-centred" first appeared in the context of human computer interactions (Norman and Draper). Some, like Wood (2012) say the debate about HCD goes back to 1969 and "Utopia or Oblivion?", the question Buckminster Fuller framed in his book of the same name, warning that mankind's prospects would go decisively one way or the other. Another ecological human-centred approach to design was expounded by Papanek in Design for the Real World (1974) as an antidote to the prevailing dystopia. Others, like McEnery (2011), nominate 1993, the year Nigel Whiteley published Design for Society, which put the case for ensuring that design should have a net beneficial outcome for the community at large. Whiteley placed himself in a thinking-about-design tradition that goes back to the 19th century and Pugin and Ruskin. More recently, Nussbaum has dug into history to plunder Dewey's idea of Creative Intelligence. Dewey's promulgation of open democracy, pluralism, an enhanced public realm and a focus on community finds a resonance with present day concerns. According to Dewey and the pragmatic maxim, an object or conception can only be fully understood through its practical consequences. A pragmatic approach is relevant to design and social issues because it requires a process that resolves problems as it continuously assesses the practical

consequences of a project. This secures the interest of the stakeholders and raises the idea of "cognitive pluralism", which indicates that all kinds of knowledge relevant to a problem should be considered. That should be the underpinning methodology of today's design thinking as it is applied to societal challenges and has been highlighted by Bason (2010: 8-9) who, echoing Dewey, has found that linking end-users and other stakeholders can push and enhance social innovation.

What Nussbaum, Bason and others are searching for are new processes and tools to respond to novel challenges. Whilst Nussbaum has been led by Dewey to Creative Intelligence, Leadbeater, on the other hand, has rehabilitated Illich and his notion of "Convivial Tools" (1973). For Illich a tool meant processes and systems, envisioning a convivial society that guaranteed each person access to the tools of the community, central to which was the concept of the "vernacular domain", the realm of everyday life in which people create and negotiate their own sense of things, in other words, the commons. The concept of the latter, including public goods, has assumed a new importance, especially in the context of the civic economy (Ahrensbach et al 2011) and the issue of citizen co-production. The civic economy puts public engagement at its core going beyond consultation to cast citizens in the role of co-designers or co-producers, for example, in providing peer to peer services, commissioning new housing or developing the public realm. At the same time Rifkin (2014 pp.17-19), echoing both Illich and Leadbeater, has delineated the passage from the feudal commons to the social commons in which consumers are now producers, and accelerated by, for example, the Internet of Things, 3D printing and MOOCs. In the absence of a derivable design narrative this cross-crossing of modes of thinking from the past and present represents a potentially useful archaeology of ideas. It puts a searchlight on how norms have been challenged and how to move towards a constructive redefinition of the relationship between design, users and community.

BROADENING THE CONTEXT
Users

From its origins in industrial design HCD now permeates every aspect of design. Despite HCD having demonstrated clear benefits, for instance, improved usability, less errors in usage and safer products, there are concerns. One issue is that the focus on individual users or groups, might improve things for them at the expense of others. The more that something is customised for the individualised needs and interests of a particular user or target group, the less likely it will be appropriate for others. As Norman (op cit) indicates designing for the individual is unsustainable because as the user develops proficiency the successful product often leads to unanticipated new uses that are unlikely to be supported

by the original design. Wood likewise has criticised HCD from the point of view of unsustainability. For him user-centered logic implies that the user is right, the tacit assumption being that what individual consumers want will benefit the whole system. The colloquialism that the customer is either 'king,' 'queen,' 'emperor' or even, 'God.' is testimony to this - a feudal idea that no longer holds sway. In Wood's analysis UCD is synonymous with conspicuous consumption and, mirroring Papanek's earlier warnings, far from being neutral, is actually damaging, environmentally and socially.

Mulgan (2014) moves this debate to design in public and social innovation, citing the universal inundation of design methods to improve services and address social issues, and referencing the ubiquity of the language of user-led design and design thinking as applied to public services (NESTA 2010). Mulgan also indicates that there is very little empirical evidence on what works and that design and its advocates are often unclear as to the provenance and applicability of UCD methods. Echoing the chronology above, Mulgan also feels the need to delineate the continuity between 19th century designers like Morris and today's promoters of HCD. User-led design methods, largely derived from product design, Mulgan observes, have been widely used in service design. Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on serious engagement with end-users being welcomed within the public sector, complaints exist. Amongst a number of perceived weaknesses Mulgan pinpoints the mismatch in designer's skills in creativity and implementation. Designers work in the context of the contemporary project economy. The project economy according to MBO Partners is characterised by non-traditional work engagements usually on a freelance basis forming and re-forming work teams depending on the commission or project being undertaken, in any number of configurations. However in a scenario with so much emphasis on user-centredness, when designers disappear at the end of the project not only is the impression of being committed dissipated but it becomes difficult to demonstrate impact. And, the focus on the user to the exclusion of the wider organisational culture or economic environment can be inimical to success and longer term impact. As well as identifying the weaknesses Mulgan also offers some solutions; namely, that designers have to be better at learning if design's potential is to be realised. In that sense, studying the role of the user, the activities that involve them, the wider social or economic context, and moving beyond the singular focus on the user, emerge as crucial.

Stakeholders

As recognised by Mulgan, the new genre of service design is the progeny of product design and has continued the tradition of user-centredness; this has not been without its problems. Complementing the work by NESTA in the UK, Scandinavian research suggests that service design should become

"stakeholder-centred" (Segelström 2013). This reflects Nussbaum's demand for engagement to be centre stage, believing that it is how we design the engagement with services which is the crucial element in design today. Transecting the above is the realisation that contemporary problem-solving in the public sector and social innovation needs to consider, as well as users, everyone involved in the process - users, employees, indeed, the whole organisation. In respect of stakeholders this is critical because, as service design is a synthesis of various design activities as well as a borrowing from systems thinking, the effectiveness of engagement strategies can vary greatly. These three commentators all concede that it is incremental improvements that are required as well as an emphasis on the education and life-long learning of designers.

Designers

Coming from their respective UK and Swedish perspectives Mulgan and Segelström agree that designers should take greater responsibility for their own learning. For Mulgan this is because designers, whilst eloquent in terms of advancing why they are important to other disciplines, are less successful at seeing what they may learn from other disciplines. Design teams need to be multilingual in terms of expertise whilst designers should develop broader competencies, combining design skills with other key skills, for example, from economics and social science. Segelström on the other hand puts the focus firmly on education, seeing the requirement for life-long learning in the design sector being due to a range of instrumental factors such as the need for improved visualisation techniques or skills of analysis. Reflecting Illich, Segelström also points to the use of tools and the pressure for pedagogy not merely to introduce service design tools to students but to develop understanding in both the rationale behind the tools as well as their impactful application. This is seen as central to the quality of stakeholder engagement and interactions.

Co-creative Strategies

According to Bason (2010: pp.27 - 28) co-creation connects design thinking and citizen involvement. The interconnecting of design, design thinking, citizen involvement and social issues was promoted by the UK Design Council Red Team led by Cottam, which put the focus on "Transformation Design" (Design Council 2006). The Red team was one of the first initiatives to highlight the need to reach out beyond the organisational confines of the public sector to citizens and their experiences, and to go beyond design as mere problem solving. Although the Red Team developed co-design case-studies from the

health, energy and transport sectors, they still retained the language of user-centredness. The Red Team's pioneering work continues to be developed through Participle, of which Cottam is principal partner. Participle's vision knits together the economic, social and emotional with the emphasis on moving from a system focused on needs to one more concerned with capabilities, and relative to this debate on user-centredness, relaxing the absolute focus on the individual to a greater focus on social networks. The shift contextualising co-design as part of a widespread public trend to be involved in the co-creation of services or culture is now also seen as part of the Civic Economy, which links the creativity of Web 2.0 with social purpose and connects to Leadbeater's thinking on prosumption and collaborative creativity.

Community

In a chapter on Citizen Involvement, Bason (2010 pp. 151-172) contours new approaches placing citizens at the heart of government and public innovation. Most importantly, Bason signals that citizen involvement can be instrumental in identifying where and how citizens have the assets - skills, resources, motivation - to take on elements of the tasks that are currently the responsibility of national or local governments. Emphasising Nussbaum's plea for a greater focus on the design of engagement, there is evidence of innovative approaches in Scotland - what has been termed "The New Wave: The Community Consultant" (Architecture and Design Scotland 2011) and new "community-centred methodologies", in other words, further sophistication of co-creative strategies. These are illustrated in the following two examples.

Example 1 - Architecture

Scotland has seen the emergence of several young design consultancies whose work is focussed entirely on developing forms of community participation that go beyond mere consultation. One such practice, Pidgin Perfect, works with communities to make changes in their environments, putting the community at the heart of place-making projects. What's different about their approach is that they use fun ways to get everyone involved, like tea parties, jam making sessions and pop-up cinema. In addition, they combine ludic aspects with processes and methodologies from art, design and architecture to open up opportunities for engagement. Behind this is also a serious service design proposal that at once demystifies the design process whilst offering a clear seven stage means of engagement that is also being used increasingly by local authorities to help consultation. Pidgin Perfect, whose practice has been described as "primarily concerned with conversation and engagement" (Gillespie 2012), participated in

the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale. Every other year the world's architecture elite descend on Venice for the Biennale, concentrated between two hubs, the Arsenale and Giardini. But what of the communities existing within its midst? Pidgin Perfect's project in Venice took the form of 'A Play in Three Acts', engaging with the inhabitants of this 'Common Ground', taking them on a tour of the Giardini as a prelude to the principal event, Banchetto, a communal open air theatrical evening of dinner and discussion. The final act provided one last celebration with local residents and the Scotland + Venice team in a collective exhibition.

Example 2 - Transformation Design

As part of this new wave, as well as in architecture, new design practices have also emerged in line with Bason's analysis and with evidence of the efficacy of co-design strategies. Young transformation design practice Snook (2012) define their work as involving "a community centred methodology" that includes service users designing solutions to the challenges they experience when using the service. For Snook prototyping involves working with people and communities to turn these service improvements and new services ideas to reality. Snook's motto is "transforming people" this means giving them responsibility and empowering people in new ways. They see co-design and co-production as the ultimate relationship between designers and the public. This form of design involves every single stakeholder in the design process. Snook illustrate that in this way: "If you asked us to design a local bakery to strengthen neighbourhood relationships, we would involve the bakers, the cake eaters, the delivery boy, the shop owner… everybody joins in".

Public Sector Innovation and the Risk Factor

These examples might be seen as part of what has been termed the "experience ecologies" (Heath et al 2002). The idea of Heath et al in "crafting ecologies and configuring experience" would appear to precurse Nussbaum's push for designing engagement. The interest of the former arises from the context or art and curatorship, nonetheless it is part of an increasing trend in higher education for courses dedicated to participation that encompass new or customised methodologies. The emphasis on "crafting" is salient and anticipates Mulgan's reference to Arthur and his identification of "deep craft" (Arthur 2000). Although this derives from technological innovation the need for this to be intuitive, built up from a feel for the all the elements in a service and experience of what does and does not work, transfers to other contexts. Here deep craft implies a broader notion of design and innovation that expands to other

disciplines and raises the need for the broader skillset that can straddle the different domains of knowledge demanded by design in the public sphere. In contrast, new service design courses in which students learn to map and analyse existing services, and to design and evaluate new ones, rely on project-based learning. And although students are exposed to hands-on group projects tackling challenges in the local community, the issue is that project-based learning, whilst enjoying many benefits over traditional passive, lecture-based formats, may nonetheless be incubating the risk factors inherent in the project economy and lack of attention on implementation and impact due to short term work commitments. Segelström's suggestions for future research on the challenges facing service design, including giving student designers a better understanding of the rationale behind the tools they will be using, and Mulgan's identification of the need for designers to expand their skills-sets represent different ways of minimising risk. They go beyond user-centredness and respond to the need for a multilingual conversation.

CASE-STUDY

Input+Ideas: Rethinking Scotland's Policy on Architecture

This case-study is one attempt to illustrate innovation in the public sector and highlight some of the ideas discussed earlier in this paper. The focus was public consultation on a new architecture policy for Scotland, leading to a three month long exhibition at the Lighthouse, Scotland's National Architecture and Design Centre, titled Input+Ideas: Rethinking Scotland's Policy on Architecture and Space (Architecture and Design Scotland 2013a) co-curated by the author and Architecture and Design Scotland, the national advisory body. In fact "rethinking" became the project's *leitmotif*. Public consultations on the introduction of new policies are not new - governments around the world are deploying a range of design and innovation strategies to engage citizens in tackling policy challenges. In this particular initiative the aim was to go beyond consultation, encouraging meaningful participation within a clearly designed engagement framework. The over-arching strategy was to use design thinking to rethink the approach to Scotland's architecture policy by interweaving co-curation, co-design and peer learning. It particularly targeted the over-emphasis on the primacy of the user. Rather than garner public opinion through focus groups, workshops, cultural probes or other limited mechanisms the approach was to scale up, to develop an exhibition whose content would be co-created using the lived experiences of a very broad spectrum of people from around Scotland - planners, developers, architects, academics, users, schoolchildren and citizens. They were asked to nominate buildings or projects that they thought pointed the way forward and from which key lessons could be learned in terms of things like functionality,

sustainability or place-making. They were also asked to contribute substantiating statements about why they chose the buildings. The nominated projects were then selected to provide a range in terms of geography, typology, scale, cost which could then be analysed and presented visually, demonstrating how the development or procurement process worked. All of this would be harvested to provide the content for the exhibition and other related materials.

This approach also put the designer more in the role of consultant, advising on possible solutions as the material flowed in sometimes unpredictably, requiring close liaison with the curators and with much to-ing and fro-ing with the diverse group of people nominating the examples. So, the methodology demanded a fresh look at the capabilities of stakeholders and wider societal factors by, for example, adding more information to explain or contextualise particular choices. It occasioned new co-creative strategies between curators, designers and the people nominating the buildings and projects. Not least, it was an example of forming another kind of community beyond the often exclusive, specialist group concerned with architecture and place. Thus, user-centredness or "user-inspiration" to use the exhibition's terminology, was linked with an emphasis on learning to gain greater impact and several different methods were devised inviting people to engage. A service design approach, that is, visualising ideas as much as possible, was adopted in the production of the exhibition to make user-engagement easer. For example, the process of procurement or commissioning a building was represented in storyboard fashion and key access points - lessons learned - were highlighted graphically. Likewise videos of some of the nominators explaining their choices were incorporated into the exhibition. The approach extended to the design of a range of five postcards on which visitors could record their responses to the issues in the exhibition. The exhibition was then designed in such a way as to set out not what policy-makers deemed important but what stakeholders around the country thought should be the major concerns for future policy.

With its emphasis in design and rethinking and going beyond consultation, the exhibition coincidentally took a fresh look at user-centredness. As well as being an interactive exhibition that pulled out strategic priorities, policy-makers saw the opportunity to highlight key issues like "user-inspired design" and as a result the exhibition material relating to this was extrapolated and put on to the Scottish Government website as a good practice case-study (Architecture and Design Scotland 2014b). This is a learning resource, which along with the exhibition archive (Architecture and Design Scotland 2013c), gives the project longevity and sustainability whilst providing continuing support to an expanded community of stakeholders after the exhibition has finished. This example also embodies ways of mitigating the issue of risk that is attendant upon public and social innovation initiatives as identified by

both Mulgan and Segelström above. For Bason (2010: p.154) co-design is the solution in the sense that public sector organisation (and by extension, governmental departments), according to him, "desperately need citizens' participation to *better understand what they experience, how their experience could be improved and how their behaviour might be changed*" (his emphasis). The exhibition drew on people's experience of buildings, requiring evidence-based choices which were enhanced through further contextualisation and illuminative examples.

POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE

This paper ranged on a number of issues; these have been formed into a contingent index.

▪ Users - the evolution in terminology away from user-centred to citizen-centred (Bason), stakeholder-centred (Segelström), Snook's usage of "community-centred methodology" or in Scotland, the rise of the "community consultant", marks an important milestone in design's development, significantly differentiating design in public and social innovation in a post-industrial context. It is the beginning of the new multi-lingual conversation that commentators like Mulgan see as prime.

▪ Designers - broadening the education of designers to encompass not only a deeper understanding of the rationale behind the tools they will later deploy in social contexts but also to consider impact, have appeared as important concerns, as well as developing the knowledge and skills to operate in cross-disciplinary contexts. Likewise the issue of life-long learning for designers. This is difficult in a situation where designers often work at the smaller end of the SME sector. MOOCs may offer an answer. Whether offered via MOOCs, full or part-time courses, strengthening designers' research skills is also key. Importantly, designers need to find cost-effective, risk-managed ways of deeper engagement to obviate the shortcomings of the project economy and short-termism.

▪ Stakeholders - in the public sphere stakeholders and, indeed, recognition of citizens and community, represent a very broad spectrum. Despite the complexity of this range the key strategy is engagement, how engagement is designed and how it draws upon the experiences of all the actors.

▪ Co-creative strategies - the new awareness of stakeholders extended to citizens and community and the need for considered forms of engagement leads to co-design and social innovation. This requires a broader range of capabilities than just design.

▪ Community - it follows from the points above that the shift to community necessitates fresh thinking about engagement and a move to the deep craft indicated by Mulgan, knowing more about what

works and what does not. In this context it also insinuates a broader notion of design, embracing education, psychology and sociology.

- In the absence of a servicable design narrative, cross-crossing modes of thinking from the past and present offers a potentially useful set of ideas. It puts a searchlight on how norms have been challenged and how to move towards a constructive redefinition of the relationship between design, users and community.

CONCLUSION

This paper drew upon a range of references, including a line of continuity in design back to the mid twentieth century, to demonstrate that recent moves in design to target social challenges isn't just another change in shape but a significant ground shift away from design's mass-industrial history. As well as giving rise to new strategic approaches that meet contemporary challenges in public and social innovation this also requires a new conversation, one that is multilingual, capable of engaging with complex issues, particularly those that involve the experience of the citizen, their social networks and communities, as well connecting to wider ecological concerns. User-centred design and the language associated with it needs regeneration and pointers exist to help make this happen and for design to realise its full potential.

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