Dialectic futures

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About
PhD Study on social innovation and ensign

My PhD study is about social innovation which takes the form of action research with local communities for socially progressive ends. Through my engagements with communities such as of a local creative incubator or the agricultural community etc i hope to explore and prototype proactive practices that not only study but also prompt the community towards (hopefully) a better future.

The following pages contains examples from past and ongoing projects that explore the various working constellations of the design-researcher (me!) with respect to the clients (or audience, public, stakeholders). Also, evident is the large set of interventionist tools that the design-researcher could bring into play in a context. These projects as yet cannot be called a complete body of work but can be considered as a repertoire of designedly practices aimed at intervention and impact.

The projects are broadly clustered in 3 categories - Critical, Persuasive and Collaborative, which chart the trajectory of my personal research interests.

If you would like to know more about any one of these projects or get updates on my PhD study, do get in touch!

Presentation cover image: Shot in Frankfurt by me during the project M lab (slide 5)
Motivations
Social innovation + design

…..I aim to ‘prototype’ not objects or services per say, but practices in order to experiment and explore the implications of social, cultural and technological changes and challenges to design…..

"Colin Burns, Hilary Cottam, Chris Vanstone
Jennie Winhall, RED PAPER 02, Transformation Design"
Dialectic futures

Design engagements in the lab, field & gallery

1. Critical futures
2. Persuasive futures
3. Collaborative futures

Design-research practice

PhD study
Design for critical public discourse [Project M Lab, Germany]

- Design/art residency in Frankfurt in support of the regional creative sector
- A powerful banking industry
- Socio-economic tensions between Frankfurt and its suburbs (Offenbach)

[Images: Street Labs, Frankfurt, Public arenas, Offenbach, Shipping container work space, Frankfurt]

Image source: https://www.flickr.com/groups/projectmfrankfurt/
Wishing wells of Frankfurt

Creating a pro-poor service through urban myths

Credits: http://www.getrichslow.org/
Collecting citizen stories
Dialogue through evocative media

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zm9yu7bOsBc
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/thehappinessgroup/info
Healthcare services foresight [Canon Oce, Netherlands]

- Design researcher working for a business primarily interested in technological futures
- Exploring future healthcare concepts
- Visualising business opportunities through foresight research

future scenarios as evaluative framework
Healthcare services foresight

Interventionist Speculation

Source: Adapted from Popper (2008)
Healthcare services foresight

Understanding the socio-ecological healthcare structures

What if, Scenarios

Service concept challenge

Service/ artefacts

Future scenarios as evaluative framework

Patient personas/ stories

Speculate here!

Negotiating the future with respect to the present

Persuasive futures
Imagineering the future of health services

Product service system based on key challenges

What if…

Patient as collaborator

Key trends:
Integrated care, patient centric data

Case of rehabilitation after an accident
i.e patient requires long term treatment.
Serious gaming for behavioural change [Siemens Energy, Germany]

- Design-researcher as part of a multi disciplinary team investigating low customer retention at Siemens Energy
- Departmentalisation resulting in slow & costly processes
- Low customer/user empathy
Siemens Energy Challenge

Serious game for behavioural change

- Gamification of the customer request process
- Role playing
- CRM guidelines through the game play
- Eliciting employee feedback and suggestions
Co-library project [DOK, Netherlands]

• Design-researcher working for a public library
• Aim: To develop a new citizen driven media-service
• Subgoal: To explore the idea of co-location
An assortment of research tools

- A range of research tools used with the stakeholders/participants
- Re-interrogating the role of the library and its relationship to local organisations, the city and citizens
Field building

Common concerns inform new service development

• Field work: creating boundary spanning collaborations
• Envisioning (future) service entanglements
Making-of an open-collaborative organisation [Sliperiet, Sweden]

• Design-researcher as a facilitator between the hub’s community & managers
• The recently opened hub consists of office spaces, meeting spaces and a maker-lab.
• Goal of creating a vibrant social collaborative community

![Diagram showing the relationship between Sliperiet and the Community. The diagram includes sections for Internal actors, Motivation/mission/values, Organisational culture, Core processes & rituals, Physical-technological infrastructure, Students, Researchers, Creative-cultural companies, and Entrepreneurs/Start-ups.]
Work in progress: Polarising the concerns

Thesis
Collaboration is good

Synthesis

Anti-thesis
Collaboration is bad

What are the drivers for an open-collaborative organisation?

- Rhythms
- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Inclusivity/Exclusivity
- Autonomy
- Surprise
- Low risk
- Spatial & material properties
- Technology

...
Work in progress: Building the scene

Lego serious play to envision collaboration at the hub

- Participants include potential community of Sliperiet
- Reflecting on motivations and barriers to collaborations
- Envisioning potential relationships between actors
- Envisioning their own roles and contributions to this space
Learnings and reflections
PROTOTYPING PRACTICES

- Recognising and accepting the agency of the ‘interventions’ & the design-researcher
- Design interventions as boundary spanning acts
- Design-research hand in hand with the ethical imperative
- The designer-researcher’s ‘interventions’ are ideological-intellectual middleware
- Un-learning an important part of this interventionist practice
- No size fits all: Each context requires a custom intervention set and new working relationships with the design-researcher and other partners