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Promoting an emancipatory research paradigm in Design Education and Practice

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Abstract: Emancipatory research is a research perspective of producing knowledge that can be of benefit to disadvantaged people. It is an umbrella term that can include many streams of critical theory based research such as feminist, disability, race and gender theory. One of the key assumptions in emancipatory research is that there are multiple realities, and that research is not only created by the 'dominant or elite researcher'. Given the development of branches of design research such as inclusive design, participatory design and design for social innovation, where the designer interacts with and designs with and for people who may be marginalized for reasons of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic background etc., designers should be introduced to the concept of emancipatory research during their education, so that they will be able to recognise the impact of their own privilege on their practice and develop research interventions that are sensitive to this. This paper examines the aims and principles of emancipatory research, and uses guidelines on evaluating emancipatory research-based interventions, borrowing from disability studies, to analyse three interventions between designers from the 'centre' and artisans from the 'periphery', to assess whether these interventions can be considered emancipatory or not.

Keywords: Emancipatory Research, Participatory Design, Design for Development

1. Introduction

As a woman-designer, a 'designer of colour', a 'designer from somewhere that is not Europe, or North America, and a designer educated in South America, I am always surprised that being so many different types of 'Other', my perspective is so under-represented in Design research and at design conferences. My interest in the emancipatory research theoretical perspective in Design Research and practice stems from my own observation of both well-known and less famous interactions between designers and disadvantaged populations, which could be improved if designers understood the aims and principles of theoretical

perspective. Where positivist research is often distanced from its subjects, emancipatory research is a form of participatory action research that recognizes the power imbalance in research and seeks to empower the subjects of social inquiry. Design practice has expanded, and there has been significant development of design practice and research with a participatory mindset (Sanders 2008) where design researchers collaborate with people, and projects such as "Design for the Other 90%" which focussed on solutions for the basic needs of 90% of the world's populations (Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum 2012) and the increase in global educational experiences and opportunities for design students. In this context, it is useful for designers to understand concepts such as power and privilege and how these can potentially impact their design practice and research. Knowledge of conducting research by using an emancipatory focus would help designers to mitigate the impact of their own power or privilege on the work that they do. The broad research objective of emancipatory research is to create 'emancipation and social justice'. The power imbalance in research design is most obvious between 'privileged researchers' and their research subjects from traditionally marginalized or oppressed groups such as the economically disadvantaged. However a scan of the literature on emancipatory research reveals that this paradigm is also used in many fields and with groups that are marginalized for diverse reasons such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, mental ability etc.

Designing with, in or for the periphery?

The focus of this paper is design interventions between the 'centre' and 'the periphery'. These are terms used by Brazilian based designer and researcher, Gui Bonsiepe and American based designer and educator Victor Papanek, where 'centre' refers to the 'First World' and 'the periphery' is a synonym for 'developing countries' (Margolin 2007). Papenek's book 'Design for the Real World' and E.F. Schumacher's 'Small is Beautiful' are both often the starting points in a literature review related to design and development. The popularity of Papanek's book could attribute to the reason that design for development has become 'associated with low technology projects that address community survival more than they contribute to national development strategies'. (Margolin 2007). Popular design interventions between the centre and the periphery often focus on low-technology solutions by designers from the centre, and do not always recognize the possibility of other types of solutions created within the 'periphery'. Bonsiepe supports the idea of building local design capacity and criticized the 'remote design', which is design that is developed to meet the needs of a user in a remote location, recognizing unbalanced relationship between the expert designer from the 'centre' and the novice designer in the peripheral country (Donaldson 2009). Bonsiepe's work highlights the 'disparate relationship of power and privilege' between the developed and developing countries and demonstrates that design has an important role to play in the industrial development of peripheral countries (Margolin 2007).

In this paper three development-focussed product design projects will be examined. The first led by American designer Donna Karan, the second led by Canadian designer Patty Johnson with artisans in Haiti, and the third is the Tapiskwan project undertaken by a Canadian research team at Université de Montreal led by Dr. Anne Marchand with her colleagues Cedric Sportes and PhD Candidate Renata Leitão. These projects are typical of 'design for development' with the 'periphery' that seem to be aligned with Papanek's philosophy. These projects have also been selected because they all have a postcolonial sub-theme, and therefore an emancipatory framework could also be very useful when dealing with such sensitive issues that have developed as a result of colonialism. These projects are critiqued using guidelines for emancipatory research borrowed from the field of disability (Stone and Priestley 1996), which is a field where the emancipatory research paradigm is often utilized.

2. What is an Emancipatory research paradigm?

The emancipatory research paradigm emerged as a response to a 'growing discomfort with dominant research paradigms and procedures'. (Groat and Wang 2001). Emancipatory research is an umbrella term that includes several research streams including critical theory based, feminist, race-specific, participatory and transformative research (Groat and Wang 2001). It is seen as a process of producing knowledge that can be of benefit to disadvantaged people and its key aim is to empower its research subjects. Mertens describes what some authors call emancipatory research as transformative research, and says that 'emancipatory research actually came from the disability community, and was born out of the motto 'nothing about us, without us', a political action that aimed to move the control of the research into the hands of the community being researched. (Mertens 2015). Some of the key principles of this research paradigm are openness, participation, accountability, empowerment and reciprocity. (Danieli and Woodham 2007). This paradigm has been widely adopted in certain research areas such as feminism and disability. Other terms linked to emancipatory research are 'orientational qualitative inquiry', (Patton 2002) and critical inquiry. Critical inquiry focuses on how " injustice and subjugation shape people's experiences and understandings of the world" (Patton 2002). Critical theory seeks to critique and change society. Participatory action research also emerges from an emancipatory paradigm. Participatory research and emancipatory research were both born from awareness, inspired by a new pro-people political climate of connecting research with popular practice. (Reason 2008).

Regardless of its name, this research paradigm recognizes the historical imbalance in research and knowledge production that favours the 'elite' and disadvantages many others. Patton quotes from "Transforming Knowledge:

> The root problem in all fields is that the majority of humankind was 'excluded
> from education and the making of knowledge, and the dominant few not only

>defined themselves as the inclusive kind of human, but also as the norm and the ideal… Their notion of who was human was both exclusive and hierarchical. (Patton 1990).

Women, the non-Caucasian, the disabled, the non-heterosexual and the non-English speaking have all been excluded from knowledge production at some time and all of these reasons for exclusion can become lenses for emancipatory research. Patton writes primarily about feminist inquiry, but this can be expanded to other fields, since emancipatory research emphasizes participatory, collaborative, change oriented, empowering forms of inquiry (Patton 1990).

The key ontological assumptions of emancipatory research are: a) that there are multiple realities (Groat and Wang 2001), (Guba and Lincoln 2005) and b) that knowledge is not only created by the elite researcher or dominant group (Groat and Wang 2001). In design interventions between the centre and the periphery, in this context, people from the periphery would be allowed equal opportunity in playing an active role in creating knowledge, research and design and not just be placed in a more passive role of receiving in the form of help or aid, knowledge that they have not played a role in creating. For a design research intervention to be emancipatory, a designer / design researcher would need to recognize how he or she may form part of a dominant group – whether by educational background, race, country of origin, language, etc. and consider how to ensure that the voice of the research collaborator is heard despite the researcher's privilege.

The main epistemological assumption of the emancipatory research paradigm is that there is an interactive link between the researcher and the participants (Groat and Wang 2001), (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Design work typically requires this type of interaction and therefore even in a poorly designed intervention this is not likely to be a challenge. The second epistemological assumption is that knowledge is historically and socially situated (Groat and Wang 2001). This would require that designers be very aware of the social and historical contexts of the places in which they operate and develop interventions that are sensitive to issues, which may potentially arise within these contexts.

The methodological assumptions of the emancipatory research paradigm are that there is a participatory and political aspect in collaborative action research. Emancipatory research is dialogic, and it is dialectical meaning that it is related to the logical discussion of ideas (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Another methodological assumption of emancipatory research is that the use of language in this context will be grounded in a context of shared experiences.

3. Main critique, concerns and questions of Emancipatory Research

Emancipatory research is not without its criticisms and some areas of concern, as identified by Danieli and Woodhams in their critique of emancipatory research in disability are identified below:

- The power and privilege of the researcher

- The marginalized view may be anti-emancipatory

- Emancipatory research can only be selectively applied

These concerns are expanded in the following paragraphs.

The power and privilege of the researcher

One of the challenges of emancipatory research is that the mere act of doing research gives researchers a status that their 'subjects' may not have. (Danieli and Woodham 2007) Danieli and Woodham make this point in reference to the disabled. The Western researcher operating in a developing country context or the urban or metropolitan researcher working in a rural community will always be perceived to have some form of privilege due to education, race, economic background etc., and a conscious effort is made to mitigate this and to create greater equality in the research activity. Danieli and Woodham also note that researchers should be reflective about other types of social privileges that they might have, such as class, race, age, sexuality, able-bodiness etc., and how these affect their research. (Danieli and Woodham 2007).

Emancipatory research should seek to 'de-elitize' knowledge and research. In the field of design, Bonsiepe strongly supports the advancement of design and design thinking in developing countries (Margolin, 2007) as opposed to 'outsiders coming in for a stopover visit' (Donaldson 2009) going to a developing country to practice a more remote form of design practice. In his paper on design and development Margolin remarks that there is scant interest in cultivating local design professions by multinational corporations who operate in the developing world, since design can be done 'anywhere', again criticizing a remote form of design practice. For 'de-elitization to occur, researchers must

> 'leave the laboratory to work with an oppressed or exploited community to identify a problem. Then (2) they learn by listening to that community what solutions might be implemented, after which they help community members acquire the tools of analysis and action to pursue social change. (3) Disadvantaged persons thereby become more aware of their own abilities and resources, and persons with special expertise become more effective. (4) Rather than detachment and value neutrality, this joint process involves advocacy and structural transformation. (Woodward and Hetley 2007)

The interests of individuals are enhanced or exploited, marginalized, repressed and excluded by the choices made by a researcher (Schostak and Schostak 2010). The decisions that are made by researchers are strategically aligned with their worldviews (Schostak and Schostak 2010). Using an emancipatory research perspective would help designers to focus the development of research that is accountable to and gives voice to the communities that they are serving.

The 'marginalized' view may be anti-emancipatory

A second concern of emancipatory research is that the marginalized view may also be anti-emancipatory. In the case of disability studies, an anti-emancipatory perspective might be that a disabled person may also hold views that do not advance the cause of the disabled e.g. maintaining a stereotype of disability such as 'people with disabilities always need help'. In the field of design for development, an anti-emancipatory perspective from a marginalized person might be one that does not empower the group that he or she belongs to such as view that supports the idea that marginalized people cannot participate in a collaborative design process. In her critique of emancipatory research methodology in the field of disability, Danieli and Woodham ask how a researcher should respond to data that supports anti-emancipatory practices, acknowledging the conflict between the 'political imperatives of emancipatory research' and 'epistemological requirement to product accurate accounts of the data'. (Danieli and Woodham 2007). They ask, "what if the views of the 'marginalized' are also marginalizing?" leading to the key question: whether the aim of emancipatory research should be to provide 'accurate accounts' or to produce research which supports the social model but which may reflect the researchers' views rather than those of the researched. In the view of this author, in design for development interventions, designers should seek to empower their collaborators, even if the collaborators might not believe in their own power or strength.

Emancipatory research can only be selectively applied

Danieli and Woodham express concern that emancipatory research can only be applied selectively (Danieli and Woodham 2007), and therefore this in effect condones the objectification of specific groups within society by differentiating them in a negative way and assuming that this group is different or special and in need of special attention or care. This special attention can in fact prevent groups from being able to be identified as independent and equal, and therefore can also be a hindrance to their emancipation.

4. Three Design interventions between the centre and the periphery

Three projects are examined in this paper to assess their consistency with the principles and aims of emancipatory research, borrowing some of the criteria established in the field of disability studies. Two of the projects were developed, with a focus on more immediate economic gains for the participants via sales of products, and they are not research projects. These projects however represent the type of work that designers may actually be required to do, funded by aid agencies or corporations. The overarching aim of all three projects is similar – to provide some form of support to these communities through design, and therefore emancipatory research principles are relevant, to ensure that the projects do in fact empower the communities that they seek to support.

Urban Zen, Donna Karan in Haiti

Donna Karan has two projects in Haiti operated through her Urban Zen Foundation. She has developed several initiatives, which are described as part of the Soulful Economy movement (LeFrak 2013). One is a project for a vocational school in Haiti in collaboration with Parsons – the New School; and the other is a collection of products called the Naturally Haiti Collection. Karan insists that the projects are not 'vanity' projects, but rather that the impetus for the projects was actually her late husband's interest in connecting business, art and life. She was inspired by Diesel Canada's CEO Joey Adler, and hopes to also inspire others to do work in Haiti (Reed 2015). She hopes to take Parsons students to collaborate with Haitian artisans and hopes to open a vocational education / design school in Haiti in collaboration with Parsons – the New School of Design (Reed 2015).

Fig. 1. On left: Donna Karan with Haitian artisans in the background. Source: http://tinyurl.com/pmrs9us (accessed October 5th 2015). On right: Patty Johnson with a Haitian artisan and another unnamed individual. Source: http://tinyurl.com/qf7gq5a (accessed October 31, 2015)

Global Design Practice. Patty Johnson in Haiti

Canadian designer, Patty Johnson has developed a design practice working with collaborators in Africa, South America and the Caribbean on government funded design projects that bring research, design, commerce and culture together in the initiatives (Johnson n.d.) in what she describes as 'a new model of viable design and craft collaborations in the developing world' (Echavarria 2011). In her model of work, Johnson works with artisans to develop new products. In 2012, she developed a line of craft based objects based on Haitian culture called Vodunovo. Johnson then makes use of her international network to bring these products to market. These products are presented at international fairs such as the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York and the Interior Design Show (IDS) in Toronto. (Design Edge 2012)

Tapiskwan Project – Universite de Montreal

The Tapiskwan project is a project of the Design, Culture and Materials (DCM) Research Group, which is led by Dr. Anne Marchand, with the team members Cedric Sportes and

Renata Leitão. In this project, the DCM collaborates with a craft cooperative of the Atikamekw First Nation community in Quebec, who face two problems a) dependency on governmental aid and money transfers and b) a deep identity crisis caused by the break with their traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). The project is designed taking account that when Western designers work with indigenous communities they must recognize the design ability of these communities in order to 'avoid cultural imposition or disabling practices. (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). In their paper on constructing a collaborative project between designers and native artisans, Leitão, Marchand and Sportes (2015) acknowledge that design work within the social realm must be "collaborative, culturally relevant, socially applicable and empowering rather than imposing and removed". This long-term project started in 2010, and has continued till today. The project team revises the aims of the project periodically based on the results and feedback from stakeholders.

Fig 2. A composite image of Tapiskwan participants – researchers and team members. Source: http://tinyurl.com/gquvtoh

Since these interventions are developed with the aim of helping the artisans achieve goals such as higher income, economic development, sense of identity etc., or to empower or emancipate them from their dependence on aid, emancipatory research guidelines could apply in assessing the capacity of these projects to empower.

5. Critique of these projects – Using Emancipatory Research principles:

Stone and Priestley have developed six core questions that can be used for developing and critiquing emancipatory research interventions in the field of disability. These same questions could be applied to other types of emancipatory research, and here are used to comment on the three projects. The six questions are:

- Is the research agenda based on a social model of disability?

- Does the researcher have a commitment to disabled people's self-empowerment?

- Will the research contribute to self-empowerment, or to the removal of disabling barriers?

- Will the research be accountable to disabled people and their organisations?

- Will the research give voice to both the individual and shared experiences of disabled people?

- Will the choice of research methods be determined by the needs of the participants?

(Stone & Priestley 1996)

In the analysis that follows, the questions have been modified to remove the reference to disability.

Is the research agenda based on a social model?

In disability studies, a social model of disability is an internationally recognised way of viewing disability, which seeks to change society to accommodate the disabled, not change the disabled to accommodate the society. In this model, the disabled are not "objects" of charity, treatment or protection, but people with rights who are able to make decisions for themselves (PWD.org 2015). A social model of design intervention with artisans could focus more on promoting skills among the artisans that would empower them, such as allowing them to be more responsible for all parts of the business and design process from design, to marketing to sales etc. This type of activity would also be more sustainable, as they would be able to continue the design process independently after the departure of the celebrity designer or the research team. A social model of intervention could also aim to portray the artisans from the 'periphery' not as poor and suffering, or as people needing help or charity, but as manufacturers and entrepreneurs (albeit small) with a role to play in a globalised economy.

Emancipatory research aims to empower the underprivileged, and therefore designers developing an intervention using an emancipatory research paradigm should ask themselves questions such as 'Am I respecting the rights and dignity of my collaborators? Am I treating them as equals? Am I empowering them?' The intervention with the Atikamekw focused on developing new training strategies to enhance the artisans' capacity to innovate, and this was done by developing an eight week cycle of design workshops with the aim of finding alternatives to traditional materials and generating ideas for products linked to the contemporary identity of the Atikamekw. Participants played an active role in identifying gaps in the competitive landscapes and relevant market niches for new products that they could develop (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015).

Karan and Johnson both use a model that leverages their existing business acumen and network to promote the products that are designed for the artisans. In Johnson's project, she is hired as a consultant to design the products and manage all the business aspects of the project by international development / aid agencies with the aim of exporting these

products to more 'affluent' markets abroad (Johnson, 2013). Karan affirms her commitment to introducing the work of Haiti to designers around the world (Sullivan 2011). In a social model of disability, the target group cannot be seen as an object of charity, however in Karan's model, the need to 'help Haiti' seems to be an underlying theme. Karan's motives, seem to be driven by sympathy or pity for the plight of the Haitians, however pity alone does not empower. Brazilian based designer and educator, Gui Bonsiepe, advocates for design to be done 'in the periphery' not 'for the periphery' and has criticised 'short-term consultancies' by international consultants (Bonsiepe 2002). Bonsiepe envisions design practice 'in the periphery' that would include design education, design research and design publications in practice, history and theory (Margolin 2007).

Of the three projects, only the project with the Atikamekw is really based on a social model. The other two projects are not based on a social model since they rely too significantly on the 'celebrity' designers for their success.

Does the researcher have a commitment to the community's self-empowerment?

In her article on service, Rachel Naomi Remen (1999), notes that helping is based on inequality, saying "When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength". The person who has been 'helped' is then indebted to the person who has helped, and the person who has helped is now left with a sense of satisfaction. She also notes that serving is different from fixing, saying "When I fix a person I see them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act".

Exposure to and understanding of an emancipatory research paradigm, would help designers to take care in developing their interventions not to patronize their collaborators by offering to 'help them' or to 'fix their problems', but to design relevant interventions that empower them.

Both product designers operating in Haiti, Karan and Johnson, were well-meaning in their intentions to 'help the people of Haiti', however it is unclear how either project led to greater self-empowerment. It is this author's view that celebrity design projects are in fact inconsistent with emancipatory research principles as the celebrity status can overshadow the agenda of 'self-empowerment', and independence or autonomy. Projects with a true agenda that promotes self-reliance would require the celebrity designer or consultant to take a step back and allow the stakeholders to hold more responsibility in the success of the projects. The nature of short-term consultancies, as in the Johnson model, is generally not consistent with long-term results, since these projects often have to generate quick results to demonstrate their success to financial backers, including development agencies. These quick results often do not accommodate the time needed for the learning curve that will ultimately lead to greater long-term success and true empowerment among stakeholders.

The Karan model of project also seems inconsistent with self-empowerment since the artisans are so absent from all the promotional material, suggesting that they are also absent from the planning and implementation aspects of the project. True self-empowerment would require greater involvement by the artisans in design, marketing and other aspects of product development, and not just production.

In the Tapiskwan project with the Atikamekw, there are no celebrity designers or consultants, and the stakeholders are guided through a process that can continue after the research process has ended. The project is a long-term project that does not place short-term results as a priority over longer-term empowerment. This is consistent with emancipatory research principles.

Will the research contribute to self-empowerment, or to the removal of barriers to the success of the stakeholders?

Anthropologist Kathryn Mathers notes the difficulty of critiquing good intentions (Mathers 2014), but also acknowledges a growing critique of the aid and development industry, which includes a perception that activists can be driven by the desire to feel good about themselves. In her view it is impossible to avoid the legacy of colonialism (she writes about Africa, but this can be expanded to many postcolonial societies), and its impact and points out the 'on-going inequalities that determine who gets to be the saviour and who has to be saved'. One of the key ideas of her article is that the white saviour complex propagates the idea that 'Westerners are the solution to African problems, and 'this requires portraying the latter as helpless and endlessly recirculating images only of abandonment and violence, or innocence and primitivism' (Mathers 2014).

Even though Haiti is not in Africa, this is the challenge with both projects developed in Haiti. It is clear that both designers' motives are well intentioned, however while both designers highlight the beauty of Haitian work, they both make it clear that this work cannot be successful without their intervention. The documentation that supports both projects portray the Haitian artisan as an anonymous maker of work designed by the North American designers, and when the artisan is identified, he or she is portrayed as the 'gentle native' who has not yet been corrupted by the outside world. Both of these projects keep their key stakeholders in traditional roles of low-technology suppliers of goods to Western markets. This type of approach, as noted by Mathers with respect to Africans, undermines the work of local experts in the community, despite the fact that they may be developing their own high and low-tech solutions to many of their challenges.

Though approaches such as Karan's and Johnson's (and many projects of this type) are well-meaning, they are neo-colonial and anti-emancipatory since they maintain the stakeholders in negative stereotypes instead of promoting real social change through education, technical advancement and empowerment. The portrayal of the indigenous artisan as cases for charity is pejorative, hinders the self-empowerment process and propagates negative stereotypes. These types of projects are largely based on Western notions of what is needed

in these communities and often do not reflect the communities own desires for development. Johnson in her interview states that the artisan sector is the only creative industry where developing countries are the global leaders, as a justification for doing craft-based interventions with these communities (Johnson 2013). However a more emancipatory approach might also allow them the opportunity of participating more actively in other sectors or exploring their needs and desires, rather than maintain them at the bottom rung of the manufacturing ladder.

In the case of the Tapiskwan project there is evidence of attempts at promoting self-empowerment among the stakeholders. The participants of the workshop identified the niche markets for their products (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). Young Atikamekw were offered graphic design workshops to introduce new skills into the community (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). Finally, collaborations were encouraged between young and old Atikamekw to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of knowledge in the community (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). These actions are all consistent with self-empowerment and the removal of barriers to the success of members of this community.

Will the research be accountable to stakeholders and their organisations?

Professor of Disability Studies, Mike Oliver, writes of his work in the 1980s, that he came to the painful conclusion that the person who had benefited the most from his studies on the lives of the disabled, was undoubtedly himself (Oliver 1997). This painful reflection for him demonstrates a major challenge in development work in general: do the stakeholders benefit as much as the researchers (or designers) or consultants? An important factor in all of these types of interventions should be determining what are the needs and expectations of the community and what are the measures for success for members of the community.

In this type of intervention it is important that the community itself assess the success or failure of the project, since the absence of this type of post-project analysis can lead to apathy among stakeholders for future initiatives. It is not known from the available literature whether Karan or Johnson's projects were accountable to or evaluated by the communities in which they took place. In the Tapiskwan project, post-intervention analysis revealed where changes had to be made and the long-term nature of the project meant that these could be addressed in future interventions. Changes that were made were made to the project based on the feedback that was received included the introduction of intergenerational workshops, a change in scope of the project from a focus on materials to a focus on iconography, the development of graphic design workshops, and the inclusion of other non-artisan Atikamekw stakeholders in the project such as entrepreneurs, storytellers and educators (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015).

Will the research give voice to both the individual and shared experiences of people?

'Celebrity designer' interventions are generally inconsistent with emancipatory research since the fame of the celebrity designer often makes the other stakeholders seem invisible and compromises the long-term success of the interventions. Since the projects require the celebrity's fame, network of contacts or business infrastructure to operate, they are less sustainable after the celebrity is no longer involved. Both Karan and Johnson seem to appear to attempt to give voice to the individual and shared experiences of the artisans, however this would be more credible if they in fact spoke and were more apparent in the visual communication of the projects. In the Tapiskwan project, individual and collective perspectives of the Atikamekw are visible in the communication, including social media media, where it is almost impossible to tell the difference between the researchers and the Atikamekw stakeholders. The faces of the stakeholders are clearly seen throughout the communication and are represented with images of them at work and in more relaxed social circumstances and displaying finished products. In the Haitian interventions, the stakeholders are less visible, and when seen they are portrayed as labourers at work.

Will the choice of research methods be determined by the needs of the participants?

In the Atikamekw intervention, the stakeholder needs and issues have been 'collectively articulated' and analysed with the aim of creating a 'virtuous circle of socio-economic development, empowerment and self-determination' (Leitão, Marchand and Sportes 2015). This process resulted in a process that morphed as the need arose throughout the project implementation. In the Karan and Johnson approaches, there is no clear evidence that the choice of methods or intervention type were led by the participants needs, since the participant is not very visible in the project outcomes.

6. Conclusions

The apparent success or fame of design interventions and collaborations between 'celebrity' designers in the 'North' and impoverished communities in the 'South' leads to the their proliferation, and the perception that these are 'best practices' in the use of design for development. It is imperative upon the design community that acceptable principles of practice that are consistent with best practices of emancipatory participatory research are widely diffused within design education and practice, and that designers are able to accurately identify scenarios and projects that are anti-emancipatory.

As researchers, designers need to recognize their 'power' and privilege in conducting this research, in order to have the sensitivity needed for effective collaboration. An emancipatory research framework allows designers to be more cognizant of the impact of their power and privilege and to re-structure their research in a way that can transfer more

power to their collaborators. This type of research approach will hopefully lessen the frequency of 'top- down' approaches (even when disguised as participatory), and lead to an increase in design research and projects that really empower collaborators.

Out of the three interventions, the Tapiskwan project is the one that is most consistent with the emancipatory research paradigm, and it is evident that the project was designed with the intention to empower the community that it sought to support. Karan and Johnson are not researchers, and their projects were not designed around emancipatory research principles. The intention of the article, however, is not to vilify designers like Karan and Johnson who may unwittingly use anti-emancipatory approaches in their work, but rather to demonstrate the inconsistencies of that type of approach. There is the possibility for artisans to benefit from the celebrity 'brand' when well-known designers collaborate with them, but that benefit is even more significant if they are allowed to play a significant role in developing project objectives, strategies and solutions and if the collaborators are not empowered by the projects, then they cannot be considered successful.

This article advocates for the introduction of emancipatory research methods in design education to help designers become aware of their privilege - whatever kind - race, education, gender, sexual orientation and other privileges, and design their research cognizant of that privilege to allow the perspective and 'voice' of the 'other' to emerge on an even standing as their own.

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