

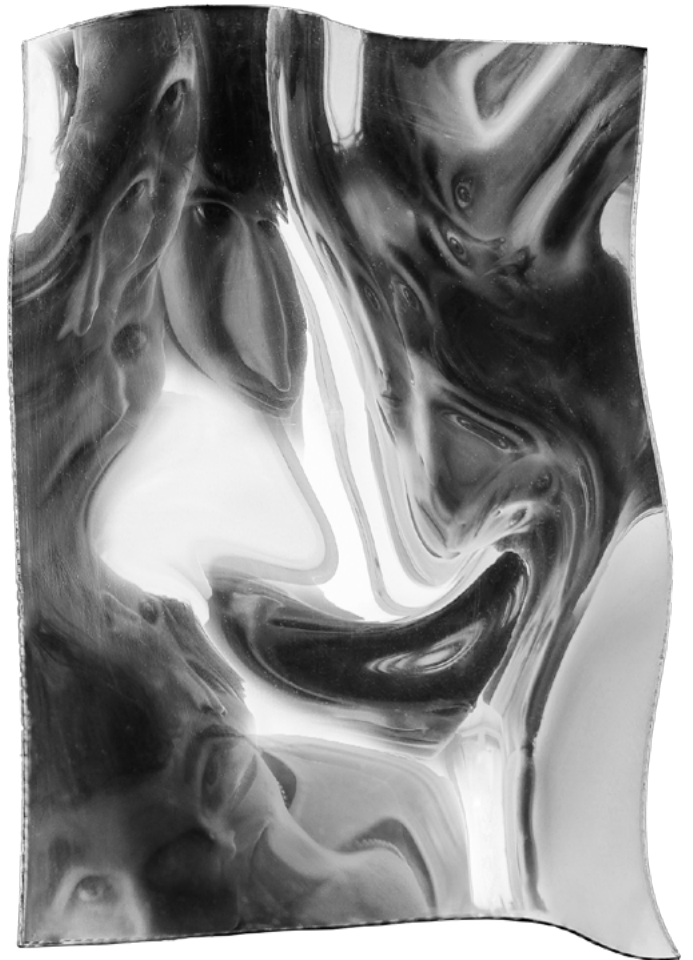
Temes de Disseny #40

The Role of Designers in Society: Ethical, Theoretical and Practical Perspectives.

EDITED by
BORI FEHÉR, JONATHAN VENTURA
and ARIEL GUERSENZVAIG

CONTRIBUTIONS by
VALENTINA AURICCHIO, FRANCESCO BURLANDO,
PETER BUWERT, FLAVIANO CELASCHI,
ERIK CIRAVEGNA, ALEXANDRA COUTSOUCOS,
ANNALINDA DE ROSA, MARCO ANDREA FINARDI,
ÁGNES JEKLI, OXANA JEOUNG-RAKOVA,
MASSIMO MENICHINELLI, SEVI MERTER,
VANESSA MONNA, VERONICA PASINI,
ALEJANDRO IVÁN PAZ ORTIZ, LLUÍS SALLÉS DIEGO,
MATT SINCLAIR, LAURA SUCCINI
and ANNAPAOLA VACANTI.

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B. Fehér, J. Ventura & A. Guersenzvaig

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Designing the In-Between: Outlining the Roles of the Designer in the Civic Arena

This article examines the emerging field of Civic Design, which aims to combine design principles with civic ideals in order to tackle the growing complexity of societal issues. Civic Design suggests a new role for designers in society by emphasising values such as care, sensitivity, empathy, openness, inclusion, diverse perspectives, fairness, justice, the value of experiences, trust and democracy. Civic designers assume numerous roles as connectors, aggregators, network builders, advocates, activists, facilitators, intermediaries and decentralised actors within the civic sphere. The paper examines these stances and analyses them in relation to power as civic designers must navigate intricate power dynamics in order to foster more equitable civic interactions and work towards the common good. In order to do so, civic designers exercise their power in a responsible manner, recognising their own position and actively empowering a diverse range of actors while also considering the influence of more dominant individuals. The paper recounts part of the results of a PhD highlighting the potential of Civic Design to tackle intricate societal issues and promote inclusive, participatory and equitable community results by reframing power relations within commoning infrastructures and procedures.

1

CIVIC DESIGN: AN EMERGING APPROACH

Social innovation and community engagement are becoming recognised approaches and common means to address today's complex social and environmental challenges. Participatory Design (Sanders and Stappers 2008; Björgvinsson et al. 2012; Hansen et al. 2019; Teli et al. 2020), Design for Social Innovation (Hillgren et al. 2011; Manzini 2015), Social Design (Julier and Kimbell 2019) and the more recent fields of action of Design for Democracy (Bonsiepe 2006; Margolin 2012; Manzini and Margolin 2017; Faraon 2018; DiSalvo 2022), Design for Politics and Political Design (DiSalvo, 2010), Design for Public Innovation (Junginger 2013; Bason 2017; Lewis et al. 2020) and Design Justice (Costanza-Chock 2020) show how design is a discipline that evolves in time while understanding and adapting to the contexts in which it operates (Auricchio and Göransdotter 2021). The increasing adoption of design in social realms is a result of the rising complexity of social issues (Grimm et al. 2013; Hillgren et al. 2011; Liedtka et al. 2017), as well as the inadequacy of prominent social systems in addressing current social demands (Banerjee et al. 2020; Barraket and Collyer 2010). Moreover, participative and creative approaches remain consistently appreciated for tackling these complex social issues (Spencer 2021; Unceta et al. 2020). The aforementioned fields may have shared objectives, approaches and/or spaces of action and there is some overlap between them. At times,

certain fields may be more specialised areas within others. However, it is challenging to establish distinct borders that definitively divide them in terms of values, characteristics, activities and objectives. Nevertheless, they do support the shift in perspective, allowing designers to analyse a context's complexities through different lenses.

Among these uptakes, some initiatives and scholars have also started to use the notion of "Civic Design" (Table 1), encompassing a collection of unsystematised and diverse elements that suggest the emergence of again another project view characterised by its specific philosophy, pedagogy and ontology, which demands further investigation.

Leveraging part of this research's results, this scientific contribution illustrates Civic Design's values and draws on them to suggest the emergence of new and more nuanced roles for designers. Specifically, the contribution illustrates these roles and positions them in a map defined by two dimensions – space of action and materials – to ultimately showcase their relationships with power to make a broader spectrum of opportunities for civic action and critical thinking available to design scholars and practitioners.

2

METHODOLOGY

The results reported in this paper focus on a specific part of a PhD thesis research project, whose primary objective

V. MONNA / V. AURICCHIO

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VANESSA MONNA
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Design,
POLIMI DESIS Lab

VALENTINA AURICCHIO
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Design,
POLIMI DESIS Lab

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was to lay down a theoretical foundation for Civic Design. The PhD research methodology included two methods: a literature review (Hart 1998) and a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The literature review's purpose was to systematise the limited scholarly knowledge currently existing on the topic. The scientific body sample was selected by searching the identifier "Civic Design" on several online scientific literature databases (WoS, Scopus, SemanticScholar, ResearchGate etc.). A total of 15 scientific contributions, including scientific articles and books, were found within the design field, representing a germinal yet rich data source of the argumentations around this concept within design research (Table 1).

These contributions were analysed and organised in an "article matrix" (Hart 1998; Popenoe et al. 2021). The resulting data were then analysed and synthesised into a "synthesis matrix" (Ingram et al. 2006), also known as a "summary-comparison matrix" (Sastry and Mohammed 2013). The matrix revealed recurring patterns of information and themes, identifying areas requiring more investigation and consolidation and laying the groundwork for the grounded theory, which is allowed in a constructivist approach (Sebastian 2019). This understanding determined the criteria for the sample selection and the grounded theory interview scope. The grounded theory was based on primary sources of information obtained by interviewing experts. Expert interviews (Bogner et al. 2009) focused on their

perspectives and experiences about Civic Design processes. The final sample included 30 experts distributed into four categories: scholars, university professors, practitioners and public officials (Table 2).

These experts were chosen in two different sampling moments using a variety of criteria, including cultural and geographical diversity and the type of organisation they work in.

Expert interviews were conducted via Zoom and Cisco Webex. While video systems provide synchronous communication, social cues from face-to-face interactions may be lost. Some interviews were in Italian while some in English. Italian interviews had to be translated because some research participants didn't know English. If the research is published in a language other than English, Suh et al. (2009) advocate translating the data during data analysis to ensure the integrity of the findings. These elements might have erased language-constructed details.

The first group of experts (including the 23 scholars, professors and practitioners) were interviewed in 21 online calls that took place from November 2021 to July 2022. The second group of experts (including the seven public officials) were interviewed in four calls that took place in November and December 2022. Each interview lasted an average of one hour, and was recorded and transcribed. The collected data were then analysed following the grounded theory approach (Mills et al. 2014).

1	Bason, Christian. 2017. <i>Leading Public Design: Discovering Human-Centred Governance</i> . Bristol: Policy Press.
2	Buchanan, Camilla, Mariana Amatullo, and Eduardo Staszowski. 2019. "Building the Civic Design field in New York City." <i>Diseña 14</i> : 158-183.
3	DiSalvo, Carl, and Christopher Le Dantec. 2017. "Civic Design." <i>Interactions 24</i> (6): 66-69.
4	Di Siena, Domenico, Tiziana Pontini, Ines Reig Alberola, and Ignacio Valero. 2018. <i>Civic Design</i> . Valencia: Impresum.
5	Di Siena, Domenico. 2019. <i>WhitePaper on the Civic Design Method, Version 0.2</i> .
6	Garvis, Nate, and Gene Rebeck. 2012. <i>Naked Civics: Strip away the politics to build a better world</i> . N.I.: Naked Civics.
7	Gordon, Eric, Catherine D'Ignazio, Greg Mugar, and Paul Mihailidis. 2017. "Civic media art and practice: Toward a pedagogy for civic design." <i>Interactions 24</i> (2): 66-69.
8	Herlo, Bianca, Paola Pierri, and Jennifer Schubert. 2019. "Civic Design through the lens of Social Living Labs." In <i>Proceedings of 17th CIRN Conference</i> .
9	Hodge, Lashanda, and Aaron Stienstra. 2022. "Embedding Equity in Civic Design to Transform Customer Experience." <i>Design Management Review 33</i> (2): 10-17.
10	Reynante, Brandon, Steven Dow, and Narges Mahyar. 2021. "A framework for open civic design: Integrating public participation, crowdsourcing, and design thinking." <i>Digital Government: Research and Practice 2</i> (4): 1-22.
11	Ross, Geoffrey. 2022. "Civic Design as Social Practice." <i>Design Management Review 33</i> (2): 40-46.
12	Srinivas, Nidhi, and Eduardo Staszowski. 2018. "Trickery in Civic Design: Co-optation, Subversion and Politics." In <i>Tricky Design: The Ethics of Things</i> , edited by Tom Fisher and Laura Gamman, 59-68. London: Bloomsbury.
13	STEC [Smart Technologies Empowering Citizens]. 2021. <i>Civic Design Education</i> . Amsterdam: Archis/VOLUME.
14	Vera, Kassim, and Sofia Delsordo. 2022. "Working from within Government to Support the Design Industry in Jalisco, Mexico." <i>Design Management Review 33</i> (2): 18-23.
15	We Who Engage MIT. 2021. <i>The Civic Design Framework Report</i> . Cambridge: MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

Table 1. Literature review sample.

	Interviewee	Affiliation(s)	Category/ies	Interviewee ID
1	Bianca Herlo	Universität der Künste Berlin	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_BH
2	Eric Gordon	MIT, Emerson College, Engagement Lab	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_EG
3	Christopher A. Le Dantec	Georgia Institute of Technology	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_CLD
4	XX	American University	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_XX
5	Ceasar L McDowell	MIT	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_CMD
6	Carl DiSalvo	Georgia Institute of Technology	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_CDS
7	Jennifer Schubert	Free University of Bolzano	Scholar and University course professor	SUP_JS
8	YY	EuropeanUniversity	University course professor	UP_YY
9	Anna Bernagozzi	ENSAD	University course professor	UP_AB
10	Pablo Sendra	UCL	University course professor	UP_PS
11	Denis Weil	Illinois Institute of Technology	University course professor	UP_DW
12	Carlos Teixeira	Illinois Institute of Technology	University course professor	UP_CT
13	Domenico Di Siena	UCL, Civicwise	Scholar, University professor and Practitioner	SUPP_DDS
14	Ruedi Baur	HEAD, Civic City	University professor and Practitioner	UPP_RVB
15	Vera Baur	HEAD, Civic City	University professor and Practitioner	UPP_RVB
16	Ariel Kennan	Georgetown University, Rosenfeld Media	University professor and Practitioner	UPP_AK
17	Emma Werowinski	Center for Civic Design	Practitioner	P_EW
18	Mari Nakano	NYC Office for Economic Opportunity	Practitioner	P_MN
19	Arya Arabshahi	51n4e collective	Practitioner	P_AA
20	Gabriella Gozzo	Progettiamo Trieste	Practitioner	P_GG
21	Simona Beolchi	Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	Practitioner	P_SB
22	Elena Taverna	Labsus	Practitioner	P_ETML
23	Michela Latino	Labsus	Practitioner	P_ETML
24	Yvonne Ramdin-Trip	Municipality of Rotterdam	Public Officer	PO_ROT
25	Francien van Westrenen	Municipality of Rotterdam	Public Officer	PO_ROT
26	Martijn van der Mark	Municipality of Rotterdam	Public Officer	PO_ROT
27	Gaia Romani	Municipality of Milan	Public Officer	PO_MI
28	Laura Peroncini	Municipality of Milan	Public Officer	PO_MI
29	Federico Bottelli	Municipality of Milan	Public Officer	PO_MI
30	Nubia Willman	Municipality of Chicago	Public Officer	PO_CHI

Table 2. Final list of the 30 experts interviewed to collect the data of the grounded theory. Each expert is identified by an interviewee ID. Some interviewed experts requested anonymity and their details are not listed here.

Before delving into the topics of the role and power of designers in Civic Design endeavours, a brief outline of Civic Design values identified in the research is necessary.

Stemming from the Arts&Crafts and the Bauhaus project traditions, which link the pursuit of a formal quality to the social role of a project (Fuad-Luke 2009), Civic Design emerges in the social and public realms with the aspiration of linking social practices to design practices (Srinivas and Staszowski 2018; Herlo et al. 2019; We Who Engage MIT 2021).

Suffusing design with a civic dimension entails grounding design in civic values, meaning that Civic Design is not only value-driven and value-laden by being a driver towards certain values, but it is also value-rational in that it provides procedural directions on what is ethically proper to accomplish and how to do so. Civic Design is not oriented towards any kind of value but towards specific ones, including care, sensitivity, empathy, openness, inclusion, pluriversal diversity (Escobar 2018), equity, justice, the beauty of experiences, trust and, above all, democracy.

3.1. Care, sensitivity and empathy

As one of the interviewed experts mentioned, “the primary goal of all Civic Design is care” (SUP_EG) (STEC 2021; Bason 2022). This means that both designers and the people involved in Civic Design initiatives hold ethical considerations and responsibilities towards each other. Care has a considerably greater relational connotation (SUP_EG) in the civic context, which implies that, rather than being the sole goal of civic initiatives, care informs the rationale of such initiatives and broadens the range of actors involved in them. In civic initiatives, taking care ensures that all community members’ voices and perspectives are heard and valued. In other words, care presupposes an openness toward the inclusion of a diverse group of actors.

3.2. Openness, inclusion and pluriversal diversity

Civic Design is also driven by openness, whether the outputs are open or the process itself is open (Srinivas and Staszowski 2018; Di Siena et al. 2018; Di Siena 2019; Reynante et al. 2021) (SUP_XX, UP_YY, UP_DW, P_EW, P_GG, SUPP_DDS, P_MN, UPP_RVB, SUP_CMD, SUP_BH). Positing that openness requires outputs and processes to be made public, operationalising this value makes it easier for people to participate in civic initiatives. Often, Civic Design promotes “radical inclusiveness” (SUPP_DDS), which means not necessarily having all the people involved in the process, but creating the most radical conditions possible that facilitate the involvement of all people willing to participate. Failure to satisfy such conditions discourages individuals from participating, which not only fails to lead to openness, but also results in civic outcomes that do not represent a common voice and, as a result, perpetuate and replicate the existing social fractures. Increasing participation enhances the process by bringing a variety of experiences, perspectives and interests to the table, which is highly valued in Civic Design processes.

Opening up and involving individuals at different levels and with varying degrees of understanding fosters people’s willingness to be open to new and often indigenous views and knowledge that are recognised as equally legitimate. These new and indigenous conceptions have the potential to reopen the way we conceive and think about our society from a pluriversal perspective (Escobar 2018) (as indirectly suggested by UPP_RVB). Finally, diversity underpins the idea that all of us, not just humans but all living things in general, are certainly different but equally valuable.

3.3. Equity and justice

Equity refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges within a society. Civic Design seeks equity by steering society towards equal access to the resources and opportunities that people require to lead fulfilling lives, regardless of their background or identity. Equity is a core value for Civic Design (We Who Engage MIT 2021; Gordon 2021; Hodge and Stienstra 2022; Ross 2022), because it is deeply intertwined with the meaning of “civicness”: the social dimension of civicness encompasses ideas such as the general degree to which a society or political group treats people as equals notwithstanding their differences (Brandsen et al. 2010). This aspect is not only reflected in our conception of others but also has an operational relevance that is foundational in Civic Design, which is well explained in the concept of horizontal subsidiarity (P_ETML). Horizontal subsidiarity refers to the principle that decisions should be made at the most local level possible, where those affected by the decision have the most knowledge and control. It is based on the idea that decisions made at a more centralised level may not take into account the unique needs and circumstances of a particular community or group. Horizontal subsidiarity refers to the distribution of power and responsibilities among different levels of government or organisations by building relationships on a more equal level so that decision-making is done at the most appropriate level, one that is closest to the citizens, to ensure that the needs and concerns of specific communities are taken into account in policy-making and decision-making.

Equity addresses issues of systemic discrimination, inequality and social injustice, which are intertwined in discussions about race, gender, economic class and ability. In other words, equity cannot be realised unless justice issues are addressed. Civic Design is infused with the value of justice in all of its manifestations (SUP_CLD), beginning with social justice and extending to environmental justice, depending on the focus of the work (We Who Engage MIT 2021; Gordon 2021; Hodge and Stienstra 2022).

3.4. Beauty of the experience and trust

Even if Civic Design is a declination of design, beauty is not valued as a formal quality such as in more traditional fields of design like product or interior design. In Civic Design discourses, aesthetics is intended to mean the beauty of the experience of doing and making something together (SUP_BH, SUP_EG, UP_PS). For people to enjoy time together, they have to be able to trust each other (SUP_EG). Lack of trust can have detrimental effects, lead-

ing to destruction, exploitation and manipulation. Trust is a fundamental idea in Civic Design: trust is not just placed in the project itself, but also in one another (SUP_EG). Trust in each other will eventually extend to the design project and process (Gordon et al. 2017; Di Siena et al. 2018). In Civic Design processes, engagement begins and is meant to earn trust in each other (Di Siena 2019; Ross 2022). When individuals feel that things are designed with their humanity in mind, they will believe in and trust the utility of the result (UPP_RVB).

3.5. Democracy

By fostering these values, Civic Design acquires political significance (P_AA, SUP_XX). Since these values open debates around how people wish to organise their communities to provide equal opportunities for everybody, Civic Design can play a role in shaping political and social change by promoting sustainable practices and technologies, shaping systems and framing how people interact with them and with each other. Care, openness, equity, justice and trust build the conditions for democracy to be experienced as opportunities for political equality and popular sovereignty. Civic Design embodies democracy in two ways, by promoting it in its contents and, ideally, by embracing it in its processes (DiSalvo and Le Dantec 2017; Gordon et al. 2017; Herlo et al. 2019; Reynante et al. 2021; STEC 2021; Hodge and Stienstra 2022). In other words, Civic Design reflects democratic values and spirit not only through the outputs of its projects, but it might ideally also express them in the design process itself. One of the interviewed experts argued: “Can you create democratic outcomes if the process itself is not democratic? I don’t have an answer, but I think it’s conceivable. If you look around, not every process has been created democratically, yet some of them have very important democratic aspirations” (UP_YY). This is possible but not desirable or ideal, given that democracy should permeate all aspects of life, including design processes.

The political role of design has been widely debated by design scholars, including Papanek (1972), Fry (2008; 2011), Fuad-Luke (2009), Rendell (2012) and Margolin (2012). Among the different interpretations of democracy, the doctoral thesis suggests that Civic Design is greatly informed by the concept of agonist democracy, developed by the political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2000) (as mentioned by UP_YY). Mouffe argues that democracy is not about achieving consensus, but rather about agonism, that is, managing and channelling the inevitable conflicts and differences that arise in any society. Agonist democracy emphasises pluralism, active participation, free debate and accommodating conflicts and differences to promote change and reform (Björgvinsson et al. 2012). By opening up to agonist pluralism, Civic Design challenges the idea of politics itself by asking “What even counts as politics”?

Involving more people in Civic Design initiatives might help them recognise that certain things they don’t believe to be political are in fact political, and that other things they do think to be political may in fact be issues of fundamental belief systems.

On a final note, cultural and political systems impact the definition of “civic” and, subsequently, the values

regarded as its representation (UP_CT, SUP_CMD, UP_YY). The political tradition and representation of a community influence both the roles of project participants and the objectives of Civic Design initiatives. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, “An anarchistic approach to Civic Design would look very different from a consensus-seeking liberal perspective on Civic Design” (UP_YY).

The aforementioned values, which are at the core of Civic Design, call for a reframing of the designer’s role in our society. Prior to delving into these roles, it is necessary to also clarify who we identify as a “civic designer.” Leveraging Manzini’s (2015) argument that everybody is a designer, civic designers may be professional designers working for the government, upskilled government officials, designers in training or design-savvy activists. Motivations for all of these types of designers to work on Civic Design projects may vary greatly, ranging from value-driven aims to professional goals. In general, civic designers guarantee, on the one hand, the participation of all actors and, on the other hand, the professional quality of the results because of their capability to tackle specific crafts and processes.

Actors who take part in Civic Design initiatives have a variety of roles in these projects. The roles shared by all actors in Civic Design projects are determined by the project’s framework and their own power. Among these, civic designers perform diverse and complex roles in Civic Design projects, as outlined below.

4.1. Civic designers as connectors, aggregators and network builders

Civic designers play the essential role of building strong networks of diverse actors. They recognise the power of collaboration and collective effort as the source for the pursuit of the common good. They work as tailors who, being able to leverage social capital, weave connections (P_EW) by diligently establishing trust among stakeholders and cultivating meaningful experiences between different groups of people. This requires a refined set of skills that entails analysing and synthesising material from an unbiased perspective (P_MN) and enabling a thorough comprehension of different viewpoints.

In some cases, civic designers take on the role of aggregators, especially in the context of grassroots associations operating on the ground, mediating between them and public institutions (P_GG). Civic designers extend their impact by engaging in these collaborations, leveraging a network of allies and experts to achieve widespread and sustainable valuable transformation.

4.2. Civic designers as advocates and activists

Civic designers are not just practitioners, but committed advocates of civic values, suffusing their work with a deep belief in the principles that promote a prosperous and

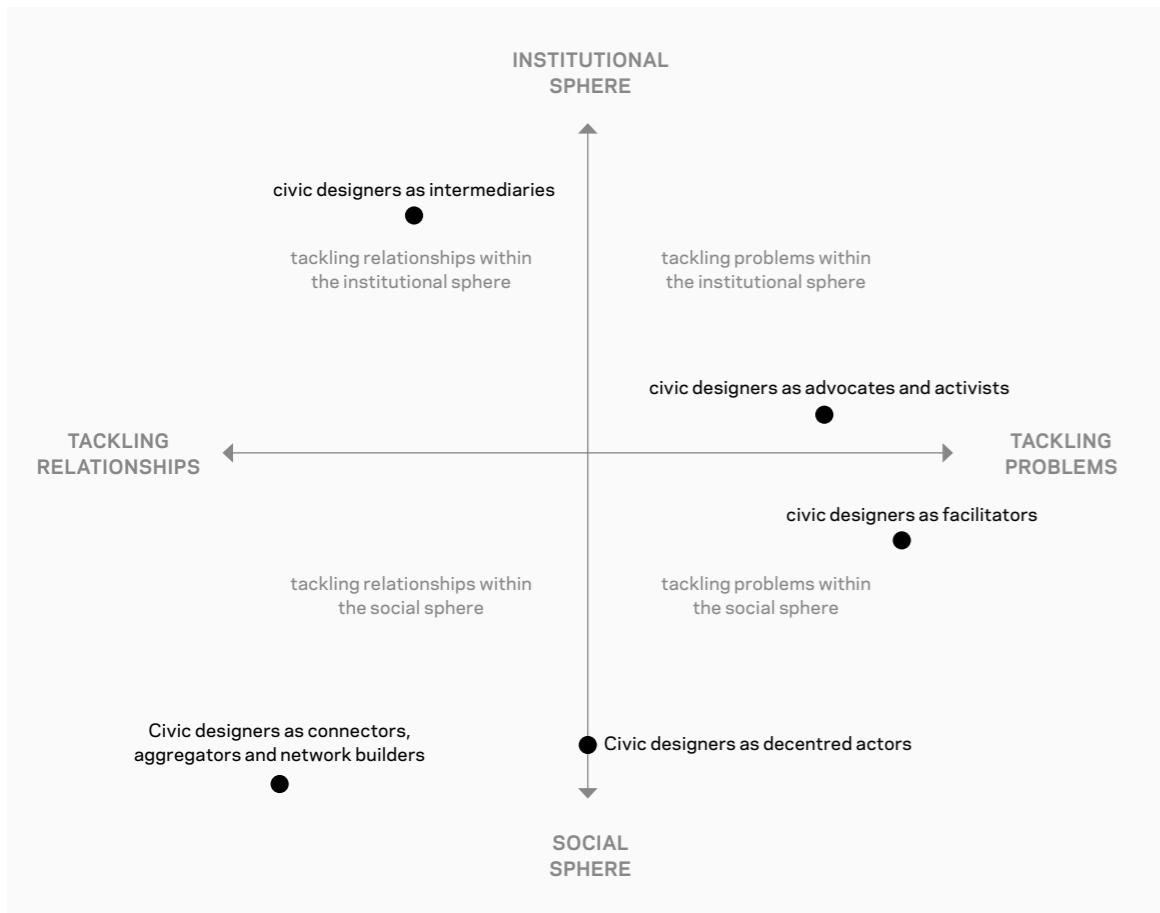


Fig. 1. Organising the roles of civic designers around the two dimensions of materials and spaces of actions.

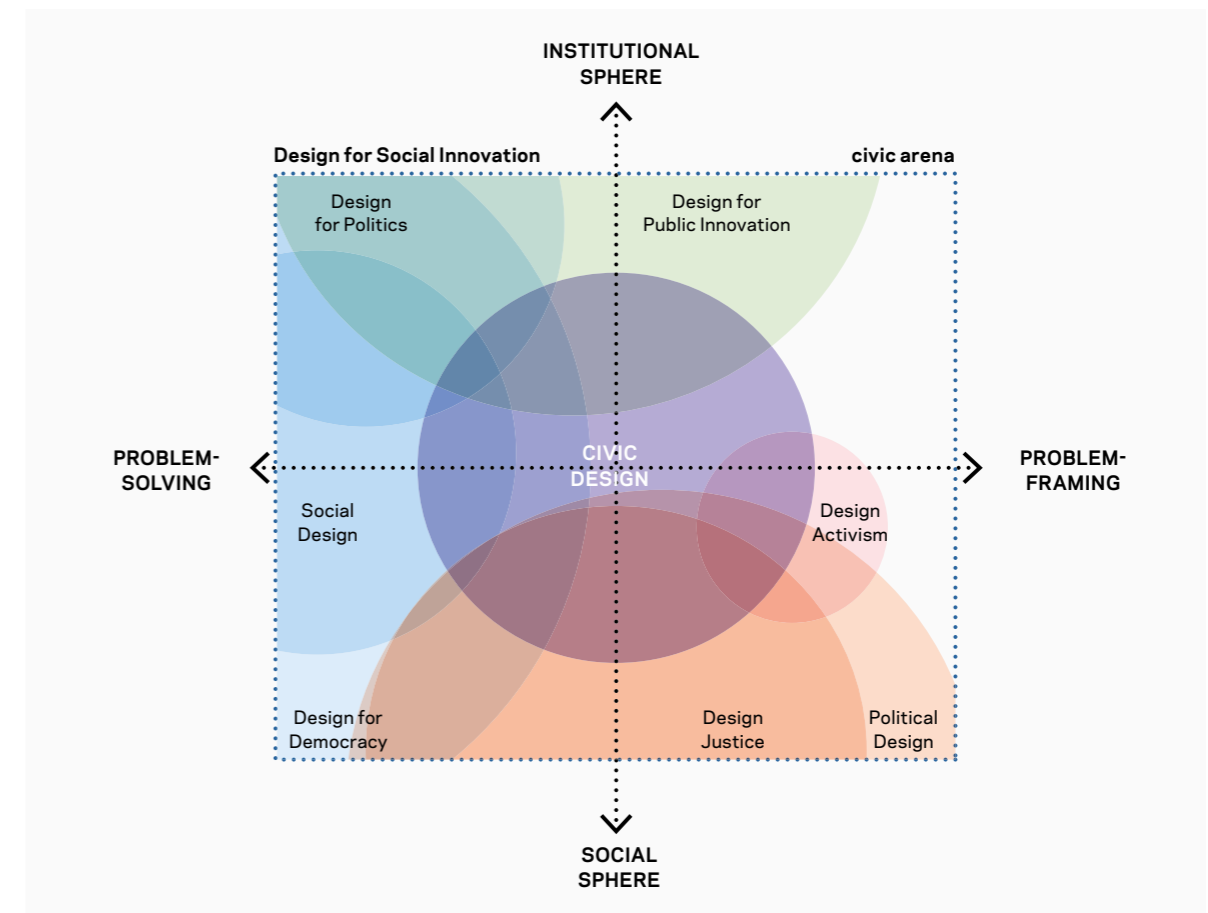


Fig. 2. Positioning Civic Design within the space of action and materials of the civic arena.

just society (SUP_XX, UP_CT, UP_PS). Their dedication goes beyond traditional design concerns since they actively believe in, support and promote civic values in and through their work. Designers advocate for these values by showing which alternatives or options are possible outside of the status quo. A large part of their advocacy concentrates on acute communities, which are groups that have been marginalised – often by design – or face particular difficulties. Civic designers actively support and advocate for them, striving for more just, equitable and inclusive outcomes. If not directly themselves, civic designers collaborate with people and organisations advocating for this kind of change in their processes. In some instances, this role manifests as a reframing of problems rather than providing a solution to them, giving shape to narratives capable of bringing to the fore the meta-problems underlying the issues produced and reproduced by the status quo.

4.3. Civic designers as facilitators

Civic designers as facilitators work within participation approaches (P_AA), most notably through co-designing (P_ETML) and planning processes (P_MN). The work of civic designers as facilitators is crucial in overcoming power disparities in design processes (SUPP_DDS). Civic designers may achieve this by fostering knowledge and skill exchanges. Providing spaces that enable the exchange of knowledge, perspectives and skills among a wide range of people ultimately serves as a means to enhance people’s awareness and empowerment (UP_AB).

4.4. Civic designers as intermediaries

Civic designers work at the interface between communities and institutions, acting as a “zipper” (P_SB) connecting the top and the bottom, the larger, established, long-term, stable institutions and ad hoc community groups or activist organisations. In this case, their role goes beyond simple connectivity to that of an intermediary between community-based organisations and formal public institutions. Civic designers serve as bridges for collaboration by enabling the exchange of ideas, needs and desired outcomes, mediating discussion and presenting diverse perspectives (P_MN). They cultivate a mutually beneficial connection that, by improving the efficacy of civic initiatives, generates public value (Moore 1995). What occurs occasionally is that civic designers take up numerous needs coming from the bottom and combine them into a common and clearly articulated proposition to present to public institutions (P_ETML). This inclusive approach not only increases the legitimacy of the process, but also guarantees that decisions better represent the community’s collective desires and needs.

4.5. Civic designers as decentred actors

The role of a civic designer must be decentred. On one side, civic designers must recognise their positionality with respect to an issue. Positionality, as defined by Plessner, is a living being’s point of view and perspective in relation to both themselves and the world. Civic designers must recognise and acknowledge their positionality with respect to an issue or an acute group. This awareness is especially

important when there are major cultural, ethnic or social diversities between the designer and the community they are collaborating with. For example, a white civic designer working with a community of people of colour should be aware of their position, which would determine that the civic designer will definitely not be front and centre.

On the other side, civic designers must guarantee the visible participation of other actors by decentring themselves from the scene (SUP_EG). Civic designers intentionally take a step back from the spotlight; they “stand in the wings” (UPP_AK), forging strong relationships behind the scenes, allowing the public (DiSalvo 2009) to take full ownership of the process and the project. They are willing to be almost unseen, transparent and disappearing. A civic designer may even disappear and take on the role of participant themselves, seamlessly merging into the group they worked with.

5 DISCUSSING POWER IN CIVIC DESIGN

These roles illustrate both the materials that civic designers focus on and the spaces of action in which they operate. These two dimensions – space of action and materials – can be employed to organise the roles of civic designers into a map, obtained by intersecting them (Fig. 1).

The space of action’s dimension reveals that civic designers operate within the civic arena, which we define

as the milieu in which one learns, expresses and practices their civicness, which is “people’s identities and roles as citizens and the respective public institutions which foster such behaviour” and provide a space for these actions (Evers 2010, 37). Even when Civic Design operates within the private sphere, comprising domestic and market dimensions, it is always an extension of these dimensions towards the public sphere, including institutional and social dimensions (Di Siena et al. 2018; Di Siena 2019). For example, civic designers might work as connectors between local businesses and people to tackle situated issues requiring their expertise and resources. Therefore, the civic arena also comprises spaces of action not intuitively regarded as “civic”.

Operating within such a complex context cannot focus solely on the problems but deem processes of relationship-building necessary, if not crucial, for the project’s sustainability and impact. This is embodied in the materials dimension of Civic Design, which suggests that civic designers must earn people’s trust and gain shared social legitimacy, while simultaneously receiving support from a legitimising environment and having the necessary operational capacity. The absence of any of these components would compromise the sustainability of Civic Design efforts.

While emphasising the necessity of relationship-building for the sustainability and impact of projects, it becomes clear that power dynamics are a fundamental aspect to take into consideration, as scholars argue that power is inherently intertwined with the existence and actions within relational contexts. Even though researchers

understand power as a complex and intricate bundle of concepts (Haugaard 2012; Allen 1999), the shared elements in these perspectives are that power is derived from the existence or possibility of relationship between actors (Dahl 1957; Haugaard 2012; Arendt 1958) and that power manifests as the capacity to take action within these relationships (Pitkin 1972; Haugaard 2012; Arendt 1958). Put differently, power can be defined as the presence of a relationship between actors who possess the ability to take action within that relationship. Thus, the essence of Civic Design lies in recognising the interconnectedness of power dynamics and relationship-building in shaping project outcomes and impacts and being able to leverage them. Indeed, civic designers build and give shape to the interactions and connections taking place in what Arendt (1958) defines the “in-between” space, “a world of things [...] between those who have it in common” (Arendt 1958, 52), where interaction becomes a fundamental component of the human experience. Since Civic Design aspires to achieve the common good (Gordon et al. 2017), by reframing issues as commons subjected to commoning, designers will inevitably encounter structures of power including complex organisations, infrastructures and systems that they must be able to navigate. Civic designers investigate the power relations and issues existing between them.

In the space of action of Civic Design, power is expressed at three levels: control over and access to information, decision-making power and execution power. In relation to these three levels, actors have uneven power relationships, asymmetrically distributed throughout a spectrum of agency and authority. For instance, public administrations have considerable control over information, particularly regarding resources and their allocation. This makes them very powerful, especially if the information is not easily accessible or is written in a technical language that not everyone can comprehend. Making this information more accessible in terms of both transparency and language could rebalance this power asymmetry.

It is precisely in a situation like the one just mentioned that the roles of the civic designers as advocates, activists and intermediaries are pivotal. Indeed, civic designers address such power imbalances, working to enable communities to have a greater influence on choices pertaining to their socio-material context. Civic designers need to take this into account largely because people are aware of the power that other participants in the process wield, such as governmental structures, and may be considerably affected by it. Designers themselves must be mindful that their role has the potential to affect communities as well. While this bias is insurmountable, designers must be aware of it and exercise their abilities and sensibility to avoid overly influencing citizens, taking steps to minimise their influence.

An actor’s power is also tied to their voice and representation. Actors’ voices might be listened to, ignored or given up and lost. In general, the more power and influence an actor has, the more their voice will be heard. On the other side, ignored voices belong to the actors facing systemic oppression and injustice. As advocates and intermediaries, civic designers bear the responsibility for all voices and perspectives being present, represented, acknowledged and taken into account around decision-making tables. If

they are unable to physically bring acute communities to the discussion table, then they take their place, ensuring that their voices are heard.

Civic designers empower community members by facilitating the exchange of information, resources and skills. This enables participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of and agency over commoning processes. Civic designers equip people with the necessary tools to actively participate in and take over the political life of their communities, resulting in a more equal distribution of power. When this process is particularly successful, Civic Design confronts us with a paradox: the most effective work of a designer is that which leads them to have less agency and power over the project, especially in the design-after-design phase (Ehn 2008).

Finally, aside from the intrinsic power associated with an actor’s role, actors wield varying degrees of power depending on how the project is framed. For instance, Civic Design is currently being employed in the domain of shared administration. In traditional projects, in terms of influence and authority, bureaucrats and elected officials are likely the most powerful players. In an ideal shared administration project, the power relationship between citizens and public administrations should be equal, with proposals coming from citizens. Some other initiatives, like participatory budgeting, bestow decision-making power on citizens and not the administration. The role of civic designers in these initiatives is that of guiding and safeguarding such dynamics, advocating for an alignment between the power and agencies of different civic actors.

In order to accomplish all of these endeavours, civic designers must be able to navigate complex structures of power, including complex organisations, organisational infrastructures and systems, wielding their power responsibly, acknowledging their positionality and actively fostering the power and agency of diverse acute actors while balancing the power of more influential actors. Civic designers must be able to cater to different needs and areas of expertise. This also means being able to ride their contextual intensity and persistent evolution by learning everything about them and constantly educating oneself on new policies, infrastructures, regulations and more. Civic designers don’t have to become experts in every facet of these structures; rather, it is necessary for them to understand the system in order to operate within it by knowing and understanding who they should talk to and connect with and comprehend the priorities set by the power structure. Otherwise, civic designers may waste a significant amount of time understanding the system and negotiating the legitimacy of a proposal with the system’s predetermined priorities.

6 FUTURE POSSIBLE EVOLUTIONS: EDUCATING FOR THE IN-BETWEEN

This contribution outlines the multifaceted roles of the designer in the civic arena, highlighting how they shape and are shaped by it. These roles are shared by many practi-

tioners in this area of design scholarship, also contributing and working within the civic arena in their specific ways. While from a pragmatic standpoint, distinguishing Civic Design from the aforementioned fields may not be necessary, it nevertheless occupies a distinct position within the civic arena (Fig. 2). While all fields tackle relationships as a design material, Civic Design does it in a politically-rational way, understanding and employing power dynamics to address issues while simultaneously bringing forth a critique through the proposed outcomes, having identified the meta-problems underlying an issue. Therefore, we can grasp the nuances in the perspective through which Civic Design addresses the civic arena compared to other approaches. This nuance is not primarily based on the networking aspect of these approaches but rather on how they serve to address specific challenges, solve a problem and/or reframe it.

The focus on relationships and the power connected to them raises a pressing issue: the current lack of educational programmes able to equip designers in training and practitioners with the skills and competencies relevant to Civic Design. Civic designers should be able to manipulate materials beyond the traditional boundary of design expertise, moving towards the materials making up for our “in-betweens”. Such materials include power dynamics, relationships, negotiation, narrative crafting for acute communities, language translation between different communities of practice and the processes and infrastructures of policy making.

Although these learning pathways will not unfold soon, they open up distinctive opportunities for designers and scholars of Civic Design. As educational institutions adjust to meet these requirements, they pave the way for a new generation of designers who are capable of navigating and critically understanding the complexities of the civic arena, thus fostering the common good in society.

BIOGRAPHIES

Vanessa Monna, PhD
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Design, POLIMI
DESIS Lab

PostDoc Fellow Researcher at the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, PhD from Politecnico di Milano in 2023. Her PhD focused on the emerging theme of Civic Design, which she explored to systematise existing knowledge and build a theoretical framework. She was a Visiting Scholar at the IIT Institute of Design in Chicago. Prior to her PhD, she collaborated with many national and international institutions as a Fellow Researcher, including the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, POLI.design and SIIES in Mérida, Mexico, IIT’s Institute of Design for the research project “Made in Milano/Made in Chicago” on diffuse creativity linked to social inclusion practices and Copernico on coworking spaces. She was a member of the research team for the project “Design Tools@POLIMI”, the operational team for the 2015 Cumulus Conference in Milan, and Design Now, an XXI Triennale international programme of events. As a researcher, she is currently involved in two European research projects: “ekip. European Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Policy Platform” and “SMOTIES. Creative works with small and remote places”. Since 2015, Vanessa has been tutoring classes at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano, both in Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees.

Valentina Auricchio, PhD
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Design, POLIMI
DESIS Lab

Assistant Professor at the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, PhD from Politecnico di Milano in 2008. Specialised in managing strategic design projects and in particular international projects for small and medium industries and Design methods and processes. After her PhD she worked as project manager for POLI.design dealing with projects in collaboration with institutions and companies such as the Italian Trade Commission, Promos and the Italian Ministry of development. From 2009 to 2011 she has been director of IED Research Centre where she has dealt with strategic projects with

several companies. From 2012 to 2014 she has been Co-editor of Ottogono, an international magazine on Design and Architecture. In 2016 she founded her own consulting firm called 6ZER05. In the field of disseminating design culture, she has participated in several conferences and seminars in Italy and internationally. She has international experience in projects developed in Brazil, Chile, Egypt and Europe and she has collaborated with companies in Europe and beyond. She has been teaching at Politecnico di Milano since 2008 in the Master’s Degree course in Product Service System and she has also taught as a visiting professor in other institutions in the field of strategic design and design methods.

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espacios que faciliten el intercambio de conocimientos, perspectivas y capacidades entre una amplia variedad de ciudadanos sirve en última instancia como medio para acrecentar la concienciación y empoderamiento de los ciudadanos (UP_AB).

4.4. Los diseñadores cívicos como intermediarios

Los diseñadores cívicos trabajan en el punto de contacto entre comunidades e instituciones, actuando como “cremallera” (P_SB) que conecta lo de arriba y lo de abajo, las mayores, respetadas, duraderas y estables instituciones con grupos comunitarios y organizaciones activistas *ad hoc*. En este caso, sus funciones van más allá de la simple puesta en contacto para pasar a ser la de un intermediario entre organizaciones basadas en la comunidad e instituciones públicas oficiales. Los diseñadores cívicos sirven como puente para la colaboración posibilitando el intercambio de ideas, necesidades y resultados deseados, mediando en el debate y presentando diversos puntos de vista (P_MN). Promueven una relación mutuamente beneficiosa que, con la mejora de la eficacia de las iniciativas cívicas, genera valor público (Moore 1995). Lo que sucede ocasionalmente es que los diseñadores cívicos asumen numerosas necesidades que vienen de la base y las combinan en una propuesta común y claramente articulada para presentarla a las instituciones públicas (P_ETML). Este enfoque inclusivo no solo incrementa la legitimidad del proceso, sino que además garantiza que las decisiones representan mejor los deseos y necesidades colectivas de la comunidad.

4.5. Los diseñadores cívicos como actores descentrados

El papel de un diseñador cívico debe ser descentrado. Por un lado, los diseñadores cívicos deben identificar su posicionalidad respecto a un asunto. Posicionalidad, como definió Plessner, es el punto de vista y perspectiva como seres vivos en relación con ellos mismos y el mundo. Los diseñadores cívicos deben identificar y reconocer su posicionalidad respecto a un asunto o a un grupo desfavorecido. Esta concienciación es especialmente importante cuando existen grandes diversidades culturales, étnicas y sociales entre el diseñador y la comunidad con la que colabora. Por ejemplo, un diseñador cívico blanco que trabaja en una comunidad de ciudadanos de color debe ser consciente de su posición, que podría determinar que el diseñador cívico no esté finalmente en primera fila.

Por otro lado, los diseñadores cívicos deben asegurar la participación visible de otros actores saliendo ellos mismos del centro de la escena (SUP_EG). Los diseñadores cívicos dan intencionadamente un paso atrás en su protagonismo; se mantienen “entre bastidores” (UPP_AK), forjando fuertes relaciones detrás de los escenarios, permitiendo que el público (DiSalvo 2009) asuma la propiedad plena del proceso y el proyecto. Están dispuestos a ser casi invisibles, transparentes y desaparecer. Un diseñador cívico puede incluso desvanecerse y adoptar el papel de un participante, mezclándose sin problemas en el grupo con que trabaja.

5
DEBATE SOBRE EL PODER EN EL DISEÑO CÍVICO

Estas funciones muestran los materiales en que se centran los diseñadores cívicos y los espacios de acción en que operan. Estas dos dimensiones —espacio de acción y materiales— pueden emplearse para organizar las funciones de los diseñadores cívicos en un esquema, obtenido por su intersección (Fig. 1).

La dimensión de espacio de acción revela que los diseñadores cívicos operan dentro del ámbito cívico, que definimos como el medio en el que uno aprende, expresa y practica su civilidad, que se entiende como “identidades y funciones de la gente como ciudadanos y las respectivas instituciones públicas que favorecen esta forma de actuar” y proporciona un espacio para estas acciones (Evers 2010, 37). Incluso cuando el diseño cívico opera en la esfera privada, que comprende las dimensiones doméstica y de mercado, siempre hay una extensión de estas dimensiones hacia la esfera pública, entre ellas, las dimensiones institucional y social (Di Siena et al. 2018; Di Siena 2019). Por ejemplo, los diseñadores cívicos podrían trabajar como elementos de conexión entre empresarios locales y ciudadanos para abordar asuntos localizados que requieren su experiencia y recursos. Por lo tanto, el ámbito cívico también comprende espacios de acción que no se consideran intuitivamente como “cívicos”.

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Operar en este complejo contexto no se puede centrar exclusivamente en los problemas, sino en considerar los procesos de creación de relaciones necesarios, cuando no cruciales, para la sostenibilidad e impacto del proyecto. Esto se plasma en la dimensión de materiales del diseño cívico, que indica que los diseñadores cívicos deben ganarse la confianza de los ciudadanos y lograr legitimidad social compartida, mientras reciben simultáneamente el respaldo de un entorno legitimador y cuentan con la capacidad operativa necesaria. La ausencia de cualquiera de estos componentes podría comprometer la sostenibilidad de iniciativas de diseño cívico.

Si bien enfatizamos la necesidad de crear relaciones para la sostenibilidad y el impacto de los proyectos, es evidente que las dinámicas de poder son un aspecto fundamental que debe tenerse en cuenta, ya que los académicos sostienen que el poder está inherentemente interrelacionado con la existencia y las acciones en contextos relacionales. Aunque los investigadores entienden el poder como un puñado complejo e intrincado de conceptos (Haugaard 2012; Allen 1999), los elementos compartidos en estas perspectivas son que el poder deriva de la existencia o posibilidad de relación entre actores (Dahl 1957; Haugaard 2012; Arendt 1958) y que ese poder se manifiesta como la capacidad para intervenir en estas relaciones (Pitkin 1972; Haugaard 2012; Arendt 1958). Dicho de otra manera, el poder puede definirse como la existencia de una relación entre actores que poseen la capacidad para intervenir en esa relación. Por lo tanto, la esencia del diseño cívico reside en el reconocimiento de la interrelación de dinámicas de poder y la creación de relaciones al estructurar resultados e impactos de proyecto y ser capaz de aprovecharlos. De hecho, los diseñadores cívicos crean y dan forma a las interacciones y conexiones que tienen lugar en lo que Arendt (1958) define “lo intermedio”, “un mundo de cosas […] entre aquellos que las tienen en común” (Arendt 1958, 52), donde la interacción se convierte en un componente fundamental de la experiencia humana. Como el diseño cívico aspira a conseguir el bien común (Gordon et al. 2017) mediante la reformulación de asuntos como los espacios comunes sujetos a comunalización, los diseñadores sin duda encontrarán estructuras de poder, entre ellas organizaciones complejas, infraestructuras y sistemas, donde deben ser capaces de desenvolverse. Los diseñadores cívicos estudian las relaciones de poder y las cuestiones existentes entre ellas.

En el espacio de acción del diseño cívico, el poder se expresa en tres niveles: control sobre la información y acceso a ella, poder para la toma de decisiones y poder de ejecución. Respecto a estos tres niveles, los actores tienen relaciones de poder desiguales, distribuidas asimétricamente por todo un espectro de agencia y autoridad. Por ejemplo, las administraciones públicas tienen un control considerable sobre la información, en particular la referente a recursos y su asignación. Esto las hace muy poderosas, especialmente si no se puede acceder fácilmente a la información o está redactada en un lenguaje técnico que no todo el mundo puede comprender. Hacer esta información más accesible en términos de transparencia y lenguaje puede reequilibrar esta asimetría de poder.

Precisamente en una situación como esta que acabamos de mencionar, las funciones de los diseñadores cívicos como defensores, activistas e intermediarios son fundamentales. De hecho, los diseñadores cívicos abordan estos desequilibrios de poder con su trabajo para lograr que las comunidades tengan una mayor influencia sobre las decisiones concernientes a su contexto sociomaterial. Los diseñadores cívicos deben tener esto muy presente porque los ciudadanos se dan cuenta del poder que ejercen otros participantes en el proceso, como las estructuras gubernamentales, y pueden verse considerablemente afectados por ello. Los propios diseñadores deben ser conscientes de que su función tiene el potencial para afectar también a comunidades. Aunque este sesgo es insuperable, los diseñadores deben conocer su existencia y desarrollar sus capacidades y sensibilidad para evitar influir excesivamente en los ciudadanos, tomando medidas para minimizar su influencia.

El poder de un actor también está ligado a su voz y representación. Las voces de los actores pueden ser escuchadas, ignoradas o sacrificadas y olvidadas. En general, cuanto más poder e influencia tiene un actor más se oirá su voz. Por otro lado, las voces ignoradas pertenecen a los actores que se enfrentan a la injusticia y la opresión sistemáticas. Como defensores e intermediarios, los diseñadores cívicos cargan con la responsabilidad de todas las voces y puntos de vista que presentan, representan, identifican y toman en consideración en torno a las mesas de toma de decisiones. Si no son capaces de llevar físicamente a las comunidades desfavorecidas a la mesa de debate, tomarán su lugar, asegurando que sus voces se escuchen.

Los diseñadores cívicos empoderan a los miembros de la comunidad facilitando el intercambio de información, recursos y capacidades. Esto

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permite a los participantes adquirir un amplio conocimiento y agencia sobre los procesos de comunalización. Los diseñadores cívicos dotan a los ciudadanos de las herramientas necesarias para participar activamente y hacerse cargo de la vida política de sus comunidades, lo que da como resultado una distribución más igualitaria del poder. Cuando este proceso es particularmente exitoso, el diseñador cívico nos enfrenta a una paradoja: el trabajo más efectivo de un diseñador es el que le lleva a tener menos agencia y poder sobre el proyecto, especialmente en la fase de diseño después del diseño (Ehn 2008).

Por último, aparte del poder intrínseco asociado a la función de un actor, estos actores ejercen diferentes grados de poder dependiendo de cómo esté estructurado el proyecto. Por ejemplo, el diseño cívico actualmente se emplea en el campo de la administración compartida. En proyectos tradicionales, en términos de influencia y autoridad, los burócratas y funcionarios elegidos son probablemente los actores más poderosos. En un proyecto de administración compartida ideal, la relación de poder entre administraciones públicas y ciudadanos debe ser igualitaria, con propuestas procedentes de los ciudadanos. Algunas otras iniciativas, como el presupuesto participativo, conceden el poder de decisión a los ciudadanos y no a la administración. El papel de los diseñadores cívicos en estas iniciativas es el de guiar y salvaguardar estas dinámicas, defendiendo una armonización entre el poder y agencias de diferentes actores cívicos.

Para realizar todas estas iniciativas, los diseñadores cívicos deben ser capaces de desenvolverse en complejas estructuras de poder, entre ellas, organizaciones, infraestructuras y sistemas organizativos complejos, ejerciendo su poder responsablemente, reconociendo su posicionalidad y alentando activamente el poder y agencia de diversos actores desfavorecidos mientras equilibran el poder de actores más influyentes. Los diseñadores cívicos deben ser capaces de combinar diferentes necesidades y áreas de conocimiento. Esto también significa ser capaces de manejar su intensidad contextual y evolución persistente aprendiendo todo sobre ellas y autoeducandose constantemente sobre nuevas políticas, infraestructuras, regulaciones y otros temas relacionados. Los diseñadores cívicos no tienen que convertirse en expertos en cada faceta de estos temas; en vez de ello, es necesario que comprendan el sistema para operar en él sabiendo y conociendo con quién deben hablar y ponerse en contacto y entender las prioridades fijadas por la estructura de poder. De otro modo, los diseñadores cívicos pueden desperdiciar una importante cantidad de tiempo conociendo el sistema y negociando la aprobación de una propuesta con las prioridades predeterminadas por el sistema.

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POSIBLES EVOLUCIONES FUTURAS: EDUCANDO PARA LO INTERMEDIO

Esta contribución destaca las funciones multifacéticas del diseñador en el ámbito cívico y subraya cómo lo modelan y son modelados por él. Estas funciones son compartidas por muchos profesionales en esta área de erudición del diseño que también contribuyen y trabajan en el ámbito cívico en sus formas concretas. Aunque desde un punto de vista pragmático puede que no sea necesario distinguir el diseño cívico de los ámbitos mencionados anteriormente, sin embargo, ocupa una posición diferente en el ámbito cívico (Fig. 2). Aunque todos los campos tratan las relaciones como material de diseño, el diseño cívico lo hace de un modo políticamente racional, conociendo y empleando dinámicas de poder para abordar asuntos mientras elabora simultáneamente una crítica a través de los resultados propuestos, habiendo identificado los metaproblemas que están detrás de un asunto. Por lo tanto, podemos entender los matices en la perspectiva con la que el diseño cívico aborda el ámbito cívico en comparación con otros enfoques. Estos matices no se basan principalmente en el aspecto complejo de estos enfoques, sino en cómo sirven para abordar desafíos específicos, resolver un problema y/o replantearlo.

El foco sobre las relaciones y el poder que les conecta suscita un tema urgente: la carencia actual de programas educativos capaces de dotar a los diseñadores en formación y profesionales de las habilidades y competencias esenciales del diseño cívico. Los diseñadores cívicos deben ser capaces de manipular materiales más allá de los límites tradicionales del diseño experto, avanzando hacia materiales preparados para nuestros “intermedios”. Estos materiales incluyen dinámicas de poder, relaciones, negociación, elaboración de narrativas para comunidades desfavorecidas,

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traducción de idiomas entre diferentes comunidades de práctica y los procesos y sistemas para la elaboración de políticas.

Aunque estas vías de formación no se desarrollarán rápidamente, abren oportunidades diferenciadas para diseñadores y estudiosos del diseño cívico. A medida que las instituciones educativas se adaptan para cumplir estos requisitos, allanan el camino para una nueva generación de diseñadores capaces de desenvolverse y comprender críticamente las complejidades del ámbito cívico, fomentando, por lo tanto, el bien común en la sociedad.

BIOGRAFÍAS
Vanessa Monna, PhD Politecnico di Milano, Departamento de Diseño, POLIMI DESIS Lab

Investigadora postdoctoral en el Departamento de Diseño del Politecnico di Milano. Se doctoró en el Politecnico di Milano en 2023. Su doctorado se centró en el tema emergente del Diseño Cívico, que investigó para sistematizar el conocimiento existente y crear un marco teórico. Ha sido investigadora visitante en el Institute of Design de Chicago. Antes de obtener su doctorado, colaboró con muchas instituciones nacionales e internacionales como investigadora, incluyendo la Cámara de Comercio de Milán, POLI.design y SILES en Mérida, México, el Institute of Design del IIT para el proyecto de investigación *Made in Milano/Made in Chicago* sobre la creatividad difusa vinculada a prácticas de inclusión social y Copernico sobre espacios de *coworking*. Ha sido miembro del equipo de investigación del proyecto *Design Tools@POLIMI*, el equipo operativo para la 2015 Cumulus Conference en Milán, y Design Now, un programa internacional de eventos de la XXI edición de la Trienal de Milán. Como investigadora, actualmente participa en dos proyectos de investigación europeos: *ekip. European Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Policy Platform* y *SMOTIES. Creative works with small and remote places*. Desde 2015, Vanessa ha impartido clases de tutoría en la School of Design del Politecnico di Milano, tanto en títulos de grado como de maestría.

Valentina Auricchio, PhD Politecnico di Milano, Departamento de Diseño, POLIMI DESIS Lab
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Profesora adjunta en el Departamento de Diseño del Politecnico di Milano. Se doctoró en el Politecnico di Milano en 2008. Especializada en la gestión de proyectos de diseño estratégico y, en particular, en proyectos internacionales para pequeñas y medianas industrias y métodos y procesos de diseño. Después de obtener su doctorado, trabajó como gestora de proyectos para POLI.design, gestionando proyectos en colaboración con instituciones y empresas como la Cámara de Comercio Italiana, Promos y el Ministerio de Desarrollo de Italia. De 2009 a 2011 fue directora del Centro de Investigación IED, donde gestionó proyectos estratégicos con varias empresas. De 2012 a 2014 fue coeditora de Ottagono, una revista internacional sobre diseño y arquitectura. En 2016 fundó su propia empresa de consultoría llamada 6ZERO5. En el ámbito de la difusión de la cultura del diseño ha participado en varias conferencias y seminarios en Italia e internacionalmente. Posee experiencia internacional en proyectos desarrollados en Brasil, Chile, Egipto y Europa y ha colaborado con empresas europeas y de otros países. Ha impartido clases en el Politecnico di Milano desde 2008 en el curso de Maestría en Sistema de Producto Servicio y también ha sido profesora visitante en otras instituciones en el campo de diseño estratégico y métodos de diseño.

FIGURAS Y TABLA
Tabla 1. Muestra de estudio bibliográfico. Tabla 2. Lista final de 30 expertos entrevistados para recopilar datos de la teoría fundamentada. Cada experto se identifica con una ID de entrevistado. Algunos de estos expertos solicitaron el anonimato y sus datos no aparecen aquí.

Fig. 1. Organización de las funciones de los diseñadores cívicos en torno a las dos dimensiones de espacio de acción y materiales.

Fig. 2. Posición del diseño cívico en el espacio de acción y materiales del ámbito cívico.

REFERENCIAS
Ver listado completo de referencias en la página 33.

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This special issue of *Temes de Disseny* explores the ethical, theoretical and practical roles of designers in the 21st century, focusing on design justice, community engagement, digitalization, AI, healthcare and social justice. In today's world, beset by multifaceted crises, these changes must trigger a reflection on the strategic direction of design practice to keep its social and economic importance in society relevant and productive.

Increasingly, designers are focusing on social and ethical considerations, ensuring their processes and outcomes align with sustainability, well-being, privacy and broader societal impact. This shift has sparked a growing interest in examining the complex role of designers through various lenses. This issue of *Temes de Disseny* delves into these topics through original research papers, case studies and a provocation.

Temes de Disseny #40

El Rol dels Dissenyadors a la Societat:
Perspectives Ètiques, Teòriques i Pràctiques.

Aquest número especial de *Temes de Disseny* analitza les funcions ètica, teòrica i pràctica dels dissenyadors el segle XXI, amb un interès especial en la justícia del disseny, la participació de la comunitat, la digitalització, la IA, l'atenció sanitària i la justícia social. Al món actual, sacsejat per crisis multidimensionals, aquests canvis han de donar lloc a una reflexió sobre la orientació estratègica de la pràctica del disseny per mantenir la seva importància social i econòmica en la societat d'una manera rellevant i productiva.

Els dissenyadors cada cop se centren més en consideracions ètiques i socials i s'asseguren que els seus processos i resultats estiguin en harmonia amb la sostenibilitat, el benestar i la privacitat i aconseguixin un ampli impacte social. Aquest gir ha despertat un creixent interès en la revisió de la complexa funció dels dissenyadors des de diferents perspectives. El número de *Temes de Disseny* que teniu a les mans aprofundeix en aquests temes per mitjà d'articles d'investigació originals, estudis de cas i una provocació.

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Los diseñadores se centran cada vez más en consideraciones éticas y sociales y se aseguran de que sus procesos y resultados estén en armonía con la sostenibilidad, el bienestar y la privacidad y consigan un amplio impacto social. Este giro ha despertado un creciente interés en la revisión de la compleja función de los diseñadores desde diferentes perspectivas. El presente número de *Temes de Disseny* profundiza en estos temas a través de artículos de investigación originales, estudios de caso y una provocación.