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Virajita Singh
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

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Erratum

Issued March 15, 2016. On page 20, the first Eisler reference should read:

Eisler, R. (2013). Human Possibilities: An Integrated Systems Approach. World Futures, The Journal of Global Education, 69:4-6 (pp. 269-289) Pacific Grove, CA: Center for Partnership Studies. Retrieved from: http://www.partnershipway.org/learn-more/articles-by-riane-eisler

DESIGNING TO PARTNER/PARTNERING TO DESIGN: EXPLORING SYNERGIES BETWEEN CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND DESIGN TOWARD A PARTNERSHIP SOCIETY

Virajita Singh, **M.Arch, LEED AP**

Abstract

What is Cultural Transformation Theory? What is design, and design thinking? How do these topics connect with concepts of culture and material culture? How are domination and partnership as paradigms of cultural transformation expressed in design? How can design and partnership work together to achieve a partnership society, and what actions does this suggest for the future? This article addresses these questions, identifies key elements of Cultural Transformation Theory, and introduces the concepts of design and design thinking and the aspects of design as *product* and *process*. Definitions of culture and material culture that reveal a disconnect with design are discussed. This article makes the case that design and culture are reciprocally connected, and uses specific cross-cultural examples of domination and partnership as manifested in design disciplines of architecture. Current ways in which the emerging field of design thinking incorporates a partnership approach are also discussed. Finally, the article suggests ways in which cultural transformation and design can work synergistically, evolving cultures toward a partnership future while creating design expressions of such a culture.

Keywords: Cultural transformation, domination, partnership, design, design thinking, architecture, product, process, future practice

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Transformation Theory

Proposed by scholar, futurist, and activist Riane Eisler, Cultural Transformation Theory identifies two patterns of social organization in human societies: domination and partnership. Eisler uses systems thinking and a macro-historical approach in her ground-breaking 1987 work, *The Chalice and the Blade,* to describe the partnership

and domination models. Eisler depicts the practical experience of the two models on a personal level this way.

> We are all familiar with these two models from our own lives. We know the pain, fear, and tension of relations based on domination and submission, on coercion and accommodation, of jockeying for control, of trying to manipulate and cajole when we are unable to express our real feelings and needs, of the miserable, awkward, tug of war for that illusory moment of power rather than powerlessness, of our unfulfilled yearning for caring and mutuality, of all the misery, suffering, and lost lives and potentials that come from these kinds of relations. Most of us have also, at least intermittently, experienced another way of being, one where we feel safe and seen for who we truly are, where our essential humanity and that of others shines through, perhaps only for a little while, lifting our hearts and spirits, enfolding us in a sense that the world can after all be right, that we are valued and valuable (Eisler, 1987, p. xiv).

Eisler's 2013 article, *Human Possibilities: An Integrated Systems Approach*, identifies the characteristics of the two models: "One type is based on rigid rankings of domination ultimately backed up by fear and force. The other type is based on mutual respect, mutual accountability, and mutual benefit" (Eisler, 2013, p. 272). With respect to systems thinking, the two models can be seen as being "self-organizing and nonlinear," with interactions that establish and maintain very different types of relations from the "intimate to international" (Eisler, 2013, p. 272).

Eisler states that that while no society orients or adheres completely to either domination or partnership on the domination/partnership continuum, the degree to which a society or time period orients to either end of the continuum profoundly affects which human traits and behaviors are culturally reinforced or inhibited. She refers to examples of domination in societies:

We see this if we look at some of the most brutally violent, repressive societies of the twentieth century: Hitler's Germany (a technologically advanced, Western, rightist society), Stalin's USSR (a secular leftist society), Khomeini's Iran (an Eastern religious society), and Idi Amin's Uganda (a tribalist society). There are obvious differences between these cultures. But they all share the core configuration of the domination model. (Eisler, 2013, p. 272)

The basic template of both models consist of four interactive, mutually supporting components (Eisler, 2013, p. 272-273). The four core components of domination are:

1. A structure of rigid top-down rankings: hierarchies of domination maintained through physical, psychological, and economic control. This structure is the template for all social institutions and is found in both the family and the state or tribe, for example.
2. The rigid ranking of one half of humanity over the other half, for example by gender.
3. Culturally accepted abuse and violence, from child and wife beating to chronic warfare.
4. Beliefs that relations of domination and submission (beginning with the domination of male over female) are inevitable, normal, and even moral. (Eisler, 2013, p. 272-273)

The four core components of partnership are:
1. A democratic and egalitarian structure.
2. Equal partnership between women and men.
3. Abuse and violence is not culturally accepted.
4. Beliefs about human nature that support empathic and mutually respectful relations. (Eisler, 2013, p. 272-273)

Eisler elaborates further that the interaction of the core elements of the domination and the partnership models can be best understood in terms of systems self-

organization theory. This interaction is not a matter of linear causes and effects, but of continual interactions between the core elements of the system (Eisler, 2013, p. 272).

What does Cultural Transformation Theory and the domination/partnership continuum have to do with design and design thinking?

What is Design?

Design has many meanings. From dictionary definitions, the word 'design' suggests the intention to do something for a specific purpose, a specific plan or blueprint for that intention to be executed, the process of design itself, and the way something has been made or formed. Design has two aspects: *product* (the physical reality of the designed object) and *process* (how it is/was created and under what conditions). For this article, both product and process aspects of design are relevant and will be referred to often.

Design contains many disciplines within it. Some of these disciplines have a long history, such as architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, and graphic design. Others, such as web design, service design, and interactive design, are relatively recent. In this article, I will use specific examples from the field of architecture, in which I was trained and practiced, as well as from the field of my recent practice, design thinking.

What is Design Thinking?

Design thinking is an emerging field that applies tools and processes from the design disciplines (architecture, landscape architecture, product design, interactive design, and others) to complex, system-wide problem solving. While design thinking as a practice within the design disciplines is not new, design thinking as a field has emerged in the last decade in response to two societal phenomena: the increasing demand for innovation in a variety of sectors, including business and health care, that are early adopters of design thinking processes, and the increasing awareness of

designers that the process they use for generating products also applies to designing or redesigning systems (Weerts, Rasmussen, & Singh, 2015). It should be remembered that design and design thinking are creative endeavors concerned with creating future possibilities. Also inherent in the field of design is the desire to create something that is completely new or that has not existed before in that particular form. For example, notice the excitement related to the unveiling of the recent Apple watch design. A plethora of watches have existed down the ages, but the eager public anticipation for the Apple watch was due to the expectation, fueled by Apple's previous products, that it would be a watch like no other, serving the wearers' modern needs in a way uniquely relevant to their times (Wolke, 2015).

Culture, Material Culture, and Design

Design, as I see it, is an expression of culture. Yet the definitions of culture don't make that direct connection. Culture is popularly defined as "the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts" (Zimmerman, 2015, paragraph 1). A more formal, historical definition of culture in the words of E.B. Tylor, founder of social anthropology, is: "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Design, here, is not mentioned directly but rather is implied in the mention of "everything," the "complex whole" and also the "arts" (Tylor, 1920, p.1). Further, within the definition of culture, some social scientists point out that culture itself is not only the artifacts of a culture but also the intangible, interpretive, or meaning-making aspects of culture. "People in a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or in similar ways" (Banks & McGee, 1989, p. 8). These aspects are critical to defining culture. This is helpful from the perspective of design, as design has a presence as artifact, a symbolic presence, and a role as a catalyst and setting for behavior and interpretation.

On a related note, I expected to find in the field of material culture a very significant focus on design. Here too, I discovered that design is not specifically mentioned. Note that the description of the University of Delaware's Center for Material Culture Studies included below makes no mention of design in the disciplines listed. Yet it mentions many designed objects in the very next sentence.

> Material culture studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between people and their things, the making, history, preservation, and interpretation of objects. It draws on theory and practice from such disciplines as art history, archaeology, anthropology, history, historic preservation, folklore, and museum studies, among others. Anything from buildings and architectural elements to books, jewelry, toothbrushes, or bubbles can be considered material culture. (Center for Material Culture Studies, n.d, paragraph 1)

Although there is a gap in the connections between the terms culture, material culture, and design as defined above, I propose that design is a key element of culture. It reflects culture by being an expression of people in built form - from products to interiors, buildings and cities. It includes symbolic aspects of design, and is a setting or catalyst for human activities and people's interpretations as well. The fields of material culture and design history include examining the record of cultural expression through design. Attfield's (1999) review of material culture literature from the late 1990s, for example, traces the interdisciplinary implications of a material culture approach to the study of the history of design.

Material culture and designed objects can obviously be 'read' or analyzed to indicate how a particular culture lives or lived, and their beliefs and values. I propose that if we can 'read' the design from a past or present culture, it must hold true that we can possibly 'read' to identify aspects of the two models of social organization - domination and partnership - from the material culture of specific societies that were

mainly organized in either of those ways. Design reflects culture and also shapes culture.

Culture and Design are Reciprocal

Winston Churchill's famous words, "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us", delivered in Britain's House of Commons on 28 October 1943 (Ratcliffe, 2010, p. 21), speak to the reciprocal relationship between design and culture - in this case, between our built environment and ourselves. While Churchill refers to the collective role in creating buildings and in turn the collective impact of buildings on us, author Claire Cooper Marcus takes this notion to a smaller, specific scale - that of a single house - and studies it as a mirror of self-identity (Cooper Marcus, 1995). This author elaborates on the strong bonds we have with our homes; examines our relationship to where we live; explores how our self-image is reflected in our homes, including the power struggles involved in making a home together with a partner; and finally, explains how the home may respond to the call of the soul.

Viewed on a scale larger than individual houses or buildings, our designed and built environment reflects us, not only as individuals and family units, but also as a collective culture. Take the case of our cities. American cities and suburbs are designed with the car in mind - this is reflected in the zoning and land use of urban planning and in the necessity of driving everywhere for the needs and activities of daily life. Such design, in turn, has led to a lack of walkable communities. The current constraints related to infrastructure that was put in place in the past are not conducive to health; many suburbs don't have sidewalks, deterring healthy exercise habits and contributing to obesity. In recent times, things are taking a turn for the better with the emergence of livable community projects, transit-oriented development, and programs that promote health in communities (Carmody & Singh, 2007). These rectifying efforts are often uphill battles, unsupported by the built environment.

I propose that design - what we choose to create and build - is a reflection of our culture, and acts at both the individual and the collective levels. Our material culture is also influenced and shaped by design. Design is a reflection of culture, and design shapes culture.

Now, let's take a look at how the specific social organization of domination is reflected in design.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND DESIGN

Domination in Design

If a culture operates largely on domination as its social organization, there is strong physical evidence of that in terms of design expression in that culture's physical environment. An extreme example is Hitler's Germany. Here, architectural design was intentionally used to express a culture of domination and to reinforce that culture for the German people. "Hitler saw the buildings of the past as direct representations of the culture that created them and how they were created. He believed they could be used by man to transmit his time and its spirit to posterity and that in his time, ultimately, all that remained to remind men of the great epochs of history was their monumental architecture" (Wikipedia, *Nazi Architecture,* n.d.). Nazi architecture was intended to embody the conscience of a future Germany centuries from now. As Hitler said in a speech, "The purpose of Nazi architecture and technology should be to create ruins that would last a thousand years and thereby overcome the transience of the market" (Speer, 1970, p. 93-4). Albert Speer, one of main architects of the Third Reich, wrote in 1978, "My architecture represented an intimidating display of power" (Scobie, 1990, p. 40).

Not only was the intention of conveying power and domination deliberate, there is also evidence that the Third Reich was quite effective in doing so.

Symbolism, graphic art and hortatory inscriptions were prominent in all forms of Nazi-approved architecture. The eagle with the wreathed swastika, heroic friezes and free-standing sculpture were common. Often mottoes or quotations from *Mein Kampf* or Hitler's speeches were placed over doorways or carved into walls. The Nazi message was conveyed in friezes, which extolled labor, motherhood, the agrarian life and other values. Muscular nudes, symbolic of military and political strength, guarded the entrance to the Berlin Chancellery. (Taylor, 1974, p. 13)

"Nazi architecture was also both in appearance and symbolically intimidating—an instrument of conquest; total architecture was an extension of total war" (Scobie, 1990, p. 40).

Domination, and its physical manifestation through design, can be seen across cultures. For, example, the tomb of the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, a grand work implemented for the Emperor's afterlife, was not only impressive in its expression of domination, but its construction included sending people from the kingdom - craftsmen, and the emperor's concubines and servants - to their deaths as the tomb was being completed, perhaps an ultimate act of domination. Craftsmen were ordered to make crossbows and arrows rigged [so] they would immediately shoot down anyone attempting to break in (Barbieri-Low, n.d.).

The Second Emperor said: "It would be inappropriate for the concubines of the late emperor who have no sons to be out free", ordered that they should accompany the dead, and a great many died. After the burial, it was suggested that it would be a serious breach if the craftsmen who constructed the mechanical devices and knew of its treasures were to divulge those secrets. Therefore after the funeral ceremonies had completed and the treasures hidden away, the inner passageway was blocked, and the outer gate lowered, immediately trapping all the workers and craftsmen inside. None could escape. (Wikipedia, *Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor,* n.d)

Many such examples of domination architecture abound across cultures and time periods as expressions and evidence of the domination paradigm for posterity. All repressive societies have examples of architectural and other design that reinforce the goals of that society to dominate and to express their power as a means of fear and force. Yet, as Eisler points out, no society follows the domination or the partnership model completely, so not all examples of design in a domination society reinforce the domination goal.

Partnership in Design

If a culture operates largely on a partnership model, that too is evident in terms of the design of that culture's physical environment. Here, architectural design is intentionally used to express a culture of partnership. Herman Hertzberger, an influential architect in the Dutch structuralist movement of the 1960s, believed that the architect's role was not to provide a complete solution, but to provide a spatial framework to be eventually filled in by the users. Among Hertzberger's best known buildings are the Montessori school in Delft (1966–70) and the administration building for the Centraal Beheer Insurance Company in Apeldoorn (1970–72). The Centraal Beheer Insurance Company building is a good example of architectural design that flexibly accommodates the needs of building users. Influenced by the ethnic anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, Herzberger's Centraal Beheer Insurance Company project was a worker's village designed so that the occupants would have a feeling of community. The administration building was a matrix of concrete and blockwork arranged on a grid with platforms separated by light wells that enabled light to filter down into the heart of the plan. The materials used had an unfinished quality, and the small platforms were usable by small groups of 8 to 10 people. Occupants were encouraged to personalize and decorate the space and the company actively encouraged worker families to enter the office. Many workers brought pieces of furniture and invited family members from home into work (Caruso St John Architects, n.d.). In Hertzberger's words: "It was important to bear in mind that in this case it was only because the responsibility for the arrangement and finishing of the spaces had been so explicitly left to the users that such an exceptional

commitment to invest love and care on their working environment could come about" (Hertzberger, 2005, p. 24).

Another example of partnership in design is the Byker Wall project in the Byker district of Newcastle upon Tyne, England (1969-1982), designed by architect Ralph Erskine with Vernon Gracie. It is a long, unbroken block of 620 maisonettes that covers an area of approximately 200 acres and is home to around 9,500 people. Existing housing was demolished to make way for the new development, although some old buildings including pubs, churches, and swimming baths were retained in the new design. Construction of the new development was phased, to keep a sense of community alive. The layout was designed to encourage residents to leave their cars at the edges of the estate, and public spaces were included to encourage social interaction. The area was landscaped with trees and gardens. The outer wall was designed to protect the rest of the development from wind and traffic pollution (at the time a proposed motorway was to be built alongside it). There is a huge variety of housing. The Byker Wall, which varies from three to 12 stories high, is the most well-known part of the development, but there are also many low-rise buildings and individual houses. Its innovative and visionary design has earned it many awards, notably the Civic Trust Award, the Ambrose Congreve Award for Housing, and the Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Urban Design from Harvard University. The Byker Wall has also been placed on UNESCO's list of outstanding 20th Century buildings.

Two examples of partnership-based design projects from India from the 1990s are the Mirambika School in New Delhi and the Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan. The Mirambika Research Center for Integral Education and Human Values of the Sri Aurobindo Education Society was created with the specific aim of a 'free progress' education based on Sri Aurobindo's vision of an ongoing evolution of consciousness. The school practices the concept of learning by participation in a competition-free environment. The design and construction of the project embodied partnership and participation both in process and product aspects of the design. Cornelissen, Prakash and others were strong partners as clients and professional designers of the project.

In addition, the concept of participation was extended to the process, with the professionals acting as guides, and users actively involved in the design. The design focused on user flexibility in terms of spaces and their multiple uses, as well as on implementation, in which ongoing input from users was incorporated and the modular construction proceeded even as users were able to inhabit parts of the building. Inspired by architectural examples from northern and southern India, the building project started with a temporary prototype building built with the teachers' and children's involvement. This prototype later informed the design process for the permanent building with professionals involved. The permanent building was developed on a master grid of squares and equilateral triangles in which 12 connected hexagons form a combination of rooms with courtyards (Cornelissen & Prakash, 1991).

The second project, Lok Jumbish (literally meaning 'people's movement'), had a unique vision. Started by visionary retired government officials from the Government of Rajasthan, it had an ambitious goal of educating every child in the State of Rajasthan, which had some of the lowest literacy levels in India. The pilot phase hired three architectural teams, and I was on was one the teams led by the architectural firm, Design, Architecture and Associated Technologies (DAAT). There were two unique aspects of the project. First, the project approached development in an organic way by setting up a prototype and allowing for the learning that came from the pilot phase to shape future development. Second, the project focused on participation from the beginning not only in meeting the educational planning goals but also in the design and construction of buildings.

The participatory design process on the project started with a workshop for the villagers that explained the steps ahead. We had drawn up site maps before the workshop and they were used during the discussion. The teams from each village were very familiar with the sites under consideration. In some cases, a completely new school was being planned. In other cases, the school was being developed as an addition to an existing room or two that would be repaired and updated. The modules for room sizes and layouts were introduced in the workshop's morning session. We

started the afternoon session with a conversation about the needs and program of the proposed school. To make it easy to create a design in three dimensions, we used Styrofoam sheets pre-marked with grids of 1′ by 1′ to a 1/2″ scale, that could be quickly cut to proportionately sized lengths and widths of walls, floors, and ceilings by the participants using cutting blades. Doors and windows were easily cut out from the walls at appropriate locations. Tack pins were used to 'pin' the walls, floors and ceilings together to create a building with courtyard and site. Trees made of the same Styrofoam material could be quickly inserted as well.

The Styrofoam modeling technique was good for tribal villagers otherwise not accustomed to communicating verbally in an unfamiliar language (formal Hindi) to express themselves. Especially for the women, it was easier to express their ideas through building modeling what cultural norms might prevent them from articulating verbally otherwise.

The teams developed the layout in conversation with each other about their village needs and site issues, with input from the facilitators. Often, another breakout group would discuss the construction, management, and costs. Once the workshop was over the models and designs were photographed and documented. The designs were then translated into a set of drawings and estimates to be submitted to the Lok Jumbish Project Office in Jaipur for funds to be sanctioned to be transferred to the village building committee for construction (Singh & Prakash, 2014). The notion of architect/designer as facilitator partnering with the clients and participants emerged strongly in this process.

Design Thinking and Partnership

Design thinking as a process can be articulated as discrete steps in the design process. For example, members of Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, also known as the d.school, and their partners at the leading design firm, IDEO, use the terms 'Empathize', 'Define', 'Ideate', 'Prototype', and 'Test' to describe the steps of design thinking (d.school, 2010). These steps are used to clearly explain the design

thinking process to non-designers and invite their engagement in problem solving using design principles.

Underlying mindsets of the design thinking process that often include aspects of partnership are made explicit to participants of design thinking workshops. For example, the eight mindsets listed below are used by Design Thinking @ College of Design, an initiative at the University of Minnesota, in its work:

1. Embracing diversity in all its forms
2. Radical collaboration
3. Making things visible
4. Working with empathy for the user
5. Having creative confidence
6. Having a bias for action
7. Being open to failing forward
8. Committing to iterative action

Of these the mindsets, #1, #2, and #4 explicitly suggest partnership attitudes of inclusivity and empathic relations, particularly from the core components of the partnership model as identified by Eisler: democratic and egalitarian structure and beliefs about human nature that support empathic and mutually respectful relations (Eisler, 2013).

There is a strong connection between design thinking and the field of partnership studies: both emphasize innovation, a new way of thinking, and solving complex challenges. Design thinking aims to think in creative and inclusive ways and foster participation, as does the field of partnership studies: "Many of us today recognize that holistic thinking and inclusive participation are required to generate effective solutions for our complex and critical challenges. We believe that the partnership paradigm can help us fashion these innovative solutions by fostering new ways of thinking" (Potter, Eisler & Lewis-Hunstiger, 2014, p. 1-2)

Evolving methods for incorporating partnership in design

Design is a creative act that depends on the context of its culture, and manifests the context and actions of that culture. Design is always in dialogue and reciprocity with, and in reaction to, the culture it is in. It is an expression of the individuals and groups that are from the culture. A group's intentions, values, and actions are reflected in their design decisions. Because design is both a product and a process, partnership in design can be manifested in both these aspects.

The history of design contains many examples of design approaches that emphasize participation and partnership. Typically called participatory design (although the terms 'empathic design', 'user-centered design', 'human-centered design', and 'design thinking' are used as well), its processes and movements have emerged over time to engage users in participating in the design and delivery processes. This is the case in a variety of design disciplines, from urban design and architecture to graphic design and software design.

One example from the built environment, from the 1970s at the University of California, Berkeley, was a project and a ground-breaking book, *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander and colleagues. It was influenced by the emerging language of that time used to describe computer programming and design. "A pattern language has the structure of a network" the authors wrote (Alexander, Ishikawa, & Silverstein, 1977, p. xvii). Almost every pattern had a statement that referred to another pattern. According to Alexander and his team, the book project originated from an intention to acknowledge people's ability to design, and to empower people to design themselves: "At the core ... is the idea that people should design for themselves their own houses, streets and communities. This idea ... comes simply from the observation that most of the wonderful places of the world were not made by architects but by the people" (Alexander et al., front bookflap).

All these examples of participatory design, while significant in themselves, indicate a larger trend of partnership approaches within design.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A Case for Connection between Design and the Partnership Model

While there are many contemporary manifestations of domination, from the intimate to the international, the societal trend is toward a partnership model. The Arab Uprising, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter are recent examples of movements in human society looking for new ways to be and act, both as individuals and as a collective. The partnership model of social organization has promise for humanity to live well on earth. To achieve a partnership society, continued work in many disciplines is needed. The *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* in which this article is published holds promise because it showcases emerging work from these diverse disciplines, including voices from academia and communities.

I propose that both design and partnership will benefit tremendously from a stronger connection to each other. As shown throughout this article, design is a reflection of culture and shapes culture. Design is about creating new futures; if our goal is cultural transformation toward the partnership model, the field of design is a strong ally in achieving this goal. Because design is a part of our lives in visible and invisible ways, aligning the forces of partnership and design will accelerate momentum toward a partnership society. Perhaps many design practitioners are interested in partnership but have not yet recognized or used the potential that the application of design offers in service of creating a partnership society.

At that same time, collaborating with partnership scholars and practitioners will help the design field to better meet its goals. Many designers have the implicit intention of

supporting partnership, perhaps without fully understanding Cultural Transformation Theory or its implications. For example, public interest design, a sub-discipline of design, declares, "Everybody Deserves Good Design"; partnership and inclusion are its explicit goals (Cary, 2013). Public interest design practitioners would do well to understand cultural transformation theory and the partnership model more thoroughly to inform their work

Designing to Partner

Design could accelerate movement toward a partnership society. Any design project is a platform and a setting for social organization and its workings. In every design project many factors are at play. Each project involves meeting needs of people who will use the design, leadership and resources, a design process, and a final outcome in the designed product or series of products. Design can help with all four components of the partnership model:

Creating a democratic and egalitarian structure. Taking an example from architecture, a project at the scale of a building could involve many users, with the design process structured to allow for maximum and cohesive input. Design thinking methodologies, with their significant emphasis on users and inclusion of diverse participants, could be used to get feedback and creative input from users, intentionally inviting creativity to generate ideas from as many users as possible and engaging them in selecting final ideas to be acted on. My experience on recent design thinking projects shows that these projects can engage leaders in planning that models partnership, with a deliberate structure that promotes inclusivity across ranks, silos, and user groups.

Supporting an equal partnership between genders. A design project can foster equal partnership by including diverse stakeholders across gender and other differences, by paying close attention to who is included and how they are engaged. In a building, for example, care could be taken so that the needs of users of both genders are taken into account in the design process and in the use of spaces. In the Lok Jumbish project mentioned earlier, providing restrooms in the school, contrary to

usual practice in rural India, made it easier for girls to attend school. The same project also included women in the village building committees and created a training program in which women, who typically perform manual labor, could choose to be trained as masons.

Overcoming culturally accepted abuse and violence. A design project or process should not accept or inadvertently reinforce violence and abuse. For example, a 2013 online news article about an Apple's supplier factory in China needing to install suicide nets to prevent worker suicides from the building is a stark reminder (Cooper, 2013). It shows the needs in the realm of design for highly popular products manufactured in industrial environments that are detrimental to workers. Computers and technology allow people in the workforce and those who can afford these items to be mobile, to work from anywhere and have a better quality of life, but at the same time, if in the making of these very objects there is abuse and inequity, it indicates that there is much work to be done to create a true partnership society.

Supporting beliefs about human nature that support empathic and mutually respectful relations. A design project or process can inspire the highest human creativity and potential in learning and work, by meeting the needs of the many in addition to the needs of the few who are responsible for the project.

Partnering to Design

The design process itself will benefit from applying cultural transformation theory. Most designers intend their designs to benefit the community and the users they are serving. A deeper understanding of this theory and of the partnership/domination continuum would aid designers and users. This work is already begun in sectors of the design profession such as public interest design focusing on the needs of the 'other 90%' of people who can't afford design services (Smith, 2007).

The following questions might be asked as part of any design process:
Does the process support a structure in which partnership is possible?

Does it genuinely engage participants in an inclusive way?

Who is included?

Does this design inadvertently accept or reinforce violence and abuse? If so, how can that be changed?

How does the design and its process specifically support empathic and mutually respectful relations?

How can the fields of design and design thinking play an intentional role in evolving cultures towards the partnership model?

Of course, asking the questions will need to be followed by action to advance the potential for partnership in each project. This will be more readily possible if there is a strong team whose members hold partnership as a value, work with authenticity and integrity to serve the larger good, and are empowered to make decisions.

CONCLUSION

This article connects concepts of cultural transformation theory and establishes how the partnership model and design are mutually reinforcing and can benefit from the synergy. Future directions for this work include:

- Building on this paper by connecting to examples from the past across cultures in which domination has influenced design (for lessons about what ought not to be done) and in which partnership has influenced design (for lessons on what should be done and possibly improved upon).

- Connecting the principles and body of work of participatory design as a repository from which lessons can be learned about how participatory design can be done well.

- Creating an agenda for action on partnership and design. Calling all designers and supporters of partnership to collaborate - all suggestions and forms of partnership are welcome!

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Virajita Singh, M.Arch, LEED AP, is Assistant Vice Provost in the Office of Equity and Diversity at the University of Minnesota, where she brings her expertise in design thinking, public interest design, and partnership studies to catalyze and support equity and diversity work of colleges and academic units across the University. She is also a Senior Research Fellow and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the College of Design where she leads the Design for Community Resilience program she founded at the Center for Sustainable Building Research, which provides sustainable design assistance to greater Minnesota communities. From 2011 to 2015 she began and led *Design Thinking @ College of Design* at the University of Minnesota, a collaborative group that unleashes the creative potential of individuals and organizations across sectors to innovate in fulfilling their mission using the emerging field of design thinking. She also co-led the Public Interest Design Initiative from 2014 to 2015. Her current academic work is focused on exploring the intersections of Cultural Transformation Theory, partnership models, and design thinking as a strategy to get to where we aspire to be as a human society. When not immersed in work or family, Virajita finds joy in creating art, volunteering at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts as a guide in the Arts of China, Korea, and Japan, and serving with her spiritual community at a local homeless shelter.

Correspondence about this article should be directed to Virajita Singh at singh023@umn.edu