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ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Sustainability in Challenging Stigma

"In sustainist world-making there is: no ecology without community, no development without equity, no design that is not co-designed, no value without shared meaning, no information that is not based on open source, no action without local consideration, no community without participantion, no sustainability without fairness."(Schwarz & Elffers, 2010).

Defining the challenge

What is likely to continue to challenge stigma and discrimination against the mentally ill in a sustainable fashion in the 21st century? Given the tenacity of societal discrimination against those with mental health problems the likelihood of sustained change may lie not just in the creation of a movement, but the alignment with cultural transitions already gathering apace. Matching this pace with anti-stigma campaigning could be viewed as resonant culturally.

With crisis defined not only as a time of difficulty or danger, but also a key turning point economic conditions and those of austerity can be opportune in guiding our social designs in challenging stigma. *Modernism* emphasises, amongst others, bigger as better, globalism as good, material capital over social capital, and faster as more efficient.

Keeping the concept of overarching approaches to mental health capital and social value as being key to solutions of stigma to the front of our minds, *Sustainism* as an emergent cultural shift in paradigm from *Modernist* approaches may offer, in turn, dividends if applied to social design of projects to challenge stigma and discrimination.

Sustainism **(Schwarz & Elffers, 2010)** as a new way of living which has been paraphrased as *"access is valued over ownership, experience is valued over material possessions, and 'mine' becomes 'ours' so everyone's needs are met without waste."* **(Buczynski, 2012)**. This reflects a recent trend in peer support, recovery and co-production literature which emphasises a new set of "valued resources", social as well as economic: attributes such as creativity, time, information and community. Such value based approaches are forging a new way of living "plenitude lifestyle."**(Schor, 2010).**

So if core values are emerging in "plenitude lifestyle" and this change in background cultural conditions is indeed productive towards the aims of ending discrimination, how can this inform our movement for change. Lets us examine the social design qualities which qualify this agenda on an individual basis **(Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013)**:

Sharing
Shareability centres around collaboration and exchange, bringing shareable assets such as "lived experience", will certainly be crucial to the design of new services and improvement of existing ones moving forward.

Localism
Sustainist design focuses on localist attributes, such as a sense of place, nearness, locally rooted experiences, and community building. This has the attractive elements of pinpointing solutions in their physical geography, but also seeing "local" as a quality itself. "Local" in this context as a quality rather than just a place-based term can enrich the lexicon with; concepts of asset based community mapping; willingness to embrace the global change at a local level, human rights based approaches, citizenship and capability approaches; most importantly the ability to make profound attachments as an adult.

<div align="center">**Connectedness**</div>

Relationships, communities and peer networks are becoming core attributes to designing for connectedness. This is a concept where everyone and everything is interconnected and the preceding creation of local "hubs" cannot be underestimated.

<div align="center">**Proportionality**</div>

Sustainist design shifts our focus onto questions of appropriateness : from scale to proportionality. It goes beyond modernist design approaches where bigger (and faster) is always better. Focussing on proportionality moves the design agenda towards questions of selective slowness (rather than speed) and to appropriate human dimensions (rather than unquestioned up-scaling). Indeed, co-production could be viewed as the brake, that slows and scales solutions to a Sustainist agenda, and a lens that focusses the view to a humanist scale.

Moderism versus Sustainism

Here we examine the language of the Sustainst designer, it is hard not to parallel the change of paradigm in medicalised approaches to those of recovery, where deficits are acknowledged, but strengths are recognised by "re-naming whats going on".

<div align="center">**Modernist versus Sustainist Style**</div>

MODERNIST	SUSTAINIST
LESS IS MORE	DO MORE WITH LESS
OBJECTS	CONNECTIONS
CENTRALISED	NETWORKED
STAND-ALONE DESIGNS	SYSTEM DESIGNS
AUTONOMOUS	INTERDEPENDENT
FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION	FORM FOLLOWS MEANING
PLANNING	CO-DESIGN
LINEAR	CYCLICAL
UNIVERSAL	CONTEXT-SPECIFIC
CLOSED	OPEN
EFFICIENT	EFFECTIVE
DISPOSABLE	CRADLE-TO-CRADLE
CONTROLLING NATURE	WORKING WITH NATURE
UNIFORM	DIVERSIFIED
GLOBALISED	PLACE-BASED
NATURE AS RESOURCE	NATURE AS SOURCE
	(Schwarz & Krabbendam, 2013)

Reflections around Sustainism as Design Tool

These four *Sustainist* design qualities make a great deal of sense in designing approaches towards challenging the culture of stigma and discrimination. Is the *Sustainist Manifesto* **(Schwarz and Elffers, 2010),** creating the conditions for change and are its design values the framework for breaking down the barriers for ending stigma and discrimination?

We are clear on our values, we are clear on our rights, in austerity the need to co-produce is the only feasible solution, is **Sustainism** a bridge to fidelity, where we have the same values, but value the same values differently. Localism viewed as a quality and proportionality especially in pace and the human dimension cry out as key future consideration for campaign design.

To address an oft-asked important questions: sustainist design goes well beyond "green". Although it may include eco-design, sustainist design is as much concerned with connectedness, local values,

and community as drivers of social innovation, and as such sits comfortably with arguments surrounding mental capital and social value in the context of stigma.

One defining feature of sustainist design then is that it forges a fundamental connection between "design for sustainability " and "design for social impact" . The domain of sustainist design sits at the crossover between sustainable and social design. In other words:

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION x SOCIAL DESIGN = SUSTAINIST DESIGN

In an attempt to tease out some of the underlying drivers of change, we are focussing on a set of four defining qualities that we believe span the new arena of sustainist design: sharing, localism, connected and proportionality. They are concerned, receptively, with the value of collaboration, the growing pace of networked relationships, a re-discovered sense of place, and an appreciation of human dimensions. In the Sustainism Manifesto these are captured in four aphorisms.

<u>SUSTAINISM MANIFESTO APHORISMS</u>
- **WE ARE WHAT WE <u>SHARE</u>**
- **<u>LOCAL</u> IS A QUALITY NOT A GEOGRAPHICAL MARKER**
- **IT'S ALL ABOUT <u>RELATIONSHIPS</u>**
- **<u>PROPORTIONALITY</u> RATHER THAN SCALE**

<u>Recovery Colleges as Sustainist Designs</u>

These four aphorisms could well be the motto of the 21st Century Recovery Colleges previously sketched in discussion. Where the participants share their recovery, local is a quality and its campuses not limited to an globalised internet tool or physical single location but spread through and rooted in community. Where the quality of relationships are paramount and the Recovery Colleges themselves are proportional to the needs of the community and indeed the curriculum co-produced with service users, rather than blindly up-scaled to a national curriculum.

We are not alone in this observation. Design thinker Ezio Manzini for example has drafted an agenda for social innovation and sustainability leading to designs that are "small, local, open and connected."**(Manzini, 2011).**

"Both cultural diversity and biological diversity are essential qualities of sustainity."
(Schwarz & Elffers, 2010)

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