COLLABORATION AND SELF-EXPLOITATION IN THE SHARED DISCOURSE OF PROFESSION AMONG INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The article explores 91 senior industrial design students' expectations and dreams regarding collaborative work relations and environments in design offices. The shared discourse among students reveals the anticipation of an unconventional work culture based on working collectively, which is depicted as egalitarian, informal, relaxed and pleasurable as opposed to the formal, hierarchical and therefore unfavourable environments and relations perceived to be prevalent in traditional organisations. Drawing on the implications of this anticipation, the article shows how the enthusiasm for collaboration can lead to a blurring of the boundaries between work and social life, by inviting pleasurable work, yet normalising poor work/life balance of designers simultaneously.

Key Words: *Collaboration, Teamwork, İndustrial Design, Work Culture, Self-Exploitation*

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ENDÜSTRİYEL TASARIM ÖĞRENCİLERİ ARASINDA PAYLAŞILAN MESLEK SÖYLEMİNDE BİRLİKTE ÇALIŞMA VE ÖZSÖMÜRÜ

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ÖZET

Bu makale, 91 üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıf endüstriyel tasarım öğrencisinin tasarım ofislerindeki işbirlikçi çalışma ilişkilerine ve ortamına dair beklentileri ve hayallerini incelemektedir. Öğrenciler arasında paylaşılan söylemde, geleneksel kurumlarda yaygın olduğu düşünülen resmi, hiyerarşik ve sonuç olarak olumsuz olarak nitelendirilen ortam ve ilişkilere kıyasla; birlikte çalışmaya dayalı eşitlikçi, gayrı resmi, rahat ve keyif veren diye betimlenen geleneksel olmayan bir çalışma kültürü beklentisi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu beklentiyi derinlemesine analiz ederek bu makale, işbirliğine yönelik hevesin nasıl iş ve sosyal yaşam arasındaki sınırların belirsizleşmesine yol açabileceğini, keyif veren çalışma koşulları sunarken, aynı anda iş ve özel yaşam dengesinin zayıflamasını normalleştirdiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İşbirliği, Takım Çalışması, Endüstriyel Tasarım, Çalışma Kültürü, Özsömürü*

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1. INTRODUCTION

> Student 20: In our office there are no set working hours, but we're all already here before 9 am. That's because we like being here together. In the office we can read books, watch films and take a nap whenever we like. We combine our books just as we do our power. We have a huge library here. Anyone who would like can stay here overnight. I mean, life is pretty beautiful.

The above quote belongs to a final year undergraduate industrial design student. Speculating on her dream job, she describes the environment and the conditions she would like to work in. Her account foregrounds working as a team of 'friends' who do not distinguish between work hours and social life, since work and the workplace themselves are considered to be their primary sources of sociability. She is not alone in her emphasis on blurring the boundaries between working and socialising as a team. Indeed, similar depictions were shared by a large percentage of the students whom were asked to describe their dream jobs.

This article explores the relationship between this voluntary erosion of the line between work and leisure and team-based design work within the discourse shared among design students. This is a timely question considering both the rapidly increasing shift from individual to collaborative design processes in both design education and practice (Dykes, Rodgers & Smyth, 2009; Kleinsmann, Valkenburg & Buijs, 2007), and the precarisation of especially young designer's work through the increasing work hours despite smaller design project budgets (Julier, 2017). Doing this, the paper is particularly interested in pulling together the recent arguments for the potentials of teamwork and collaboration in setting egalitarian and informal work relations, and the critique of the notion of 'pleasure in work' which leads to self-exploitation of especially younger workers in creative and cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Ross, 2003; McRobbie, 2004), examining their mutual relationship in the context of industrial design.

The article starts with an exploration of the existing literature on collaboration and teamwork in design. Next, the methodological considerations that guide the research design are presented. This is followed by the discussion of the findings. The paper ends with a consideration of how the enthusiasm for collaboration can lead to a blurring of the boundaries between work and social life, and the potentials as well as drawbacks of this for the designer's work conditions and experiences.

2. COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK IN DESIGN

Collaboration can be defined as working collectively to produce something that a single person could not have produced on her own. Despite the individual (male) artist myth borrowed from the field of fine arts in the early years of professionalization, which has shaped the image of the 'genius designer hero', recently design is defined as a team-based activity that requires collaboration (Julier, 2010).couraged by the fact that the increasingly competitive business climate requires companies to deal with complex and multi-layered design problems that are often beyond the professional skills and competences of a single person (Björklund, 2010; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Yim, Lee, Brezing & Löwer, 2014). In dealing with such problems, it is suggested that, design activity carried out by teams in a systematic way would result in

more realistic, sophisticated and satisfactory products, and may simultaneously decrease the time needed to place new products on the market (Kleinsmann, Valkenburg & Buijs, 2007). Overall, as Feast (2012, p. 227) indicates, collaboration in professional design work serves as 'a means to bring together different stakeholders' perspectives, skills, approaches and knowledge, to uncover hidden opportunities and deliver designs with greater depth and broader innovative power.' tt

Since collaboration is a social process, social interactions and relationships between team members is an important dimension of collaborative design work (Cross, 1995). Research within the field of organisation studies has placed much emphasis on the comparison between the power relations in traditional hierarchical bureaucracies and in horizontal organisations with team structures (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011; Edwards & Wajcman, 2005). According to this comparison, teamwork is usually associated with consensus-based decision making, less hierarchical peer relations and self-autonomy (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford & Melner, 1999; Thompson & McHugh, 2002). In addition, teamwork is claimed to encourage supportive and participative interpersonal relations within the team as well as with the management (Buchanan, 2000). However, there are also organisation scholars sceptical about the championing of teamwork. Particularly, feminist research on work and organisations has questioned the apparent optimism regarding the benefits of teamwork, and underlined the need for generating empirical evidence regarding the effects of collaborative work on workers' status and career paths, since teamwork is often studied by the 'masculinist discourses of performance, management and organization' (Metcalfe & Linstead, 2003, p. 94; see also Acker, 2006; Hamilton, 2011).

In parallel with the mainstream organisation and management studies, the main tendency in the literature on design and collaboration is to aim for developing techniques, tools and managerial strategies for effective design teams (Busseri & Palmer, 2000; Chung & Wang, 2004; Dykes, Rodgers & Smyth, 2009; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Kilker, 1999; West, Davey, Norris, Myerson, Anderson & Brodie, 2014; Parjanen, 2012; Goldschmidt, 1995). In the same vein, another relevant body of work that explores group creativity, is primarily concerned with how interpersonal relations in teams influence the team's creativity, prioritising the issues of team productivity and performance (see for example Goncalo, Neale & Mannix, 2009; Paulus & Nijstad, 2003).

In the face of this tendency to adopt the managerial point of view, we know less about how collaboration is perceived by the future design workers. This is an important gap to be redressed, particularly considering that recent literature that underlines the precarious and poor employment conditions of creative industries mainly problematises the individualisation of young workers within these industries (Banks & Milestone, 2011; Gill & Pratt, 2008; Kaygan and Demir, 2017; McGuigan, 2010; McRobbie, 2002). This paper aims to drop fresh light on the impact of the recent rise of collaboration on the conception of the designer's work from a non-managerial and critical standpoint, by exploringsenior industrial design students' expectations and dreams regarding collaborative work relations and environments in design offices.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The empirical data comes from a class assignment written on an individual basis by 91 industrial design students within the scope of design management courses at three universities in Turkey during the 2014-2015 spring semester. The assignment that consists of a single question, "Could you describe one working day of an industrial designer in a narrative format, presenting your understanding of the industrial designer's work, including the daily activities in which the designer is involved, as well as the work environment and relations with other workers?", was given to students during the class to be responded with an at least 300-word piece of writing. The duration of the assignment was 45 minutes.

The author, who teaches design management at one of these three universities gave the assignment to her students herself, and contacted her two colleagues at two different universities to ask whether they could give the same assignment during their courses as well. At all three universities it was a mixture of the third and fourth year students who were enrolled in these courses, and all of these students were asked to answer the question during the class. The two tutors, then, posted the assignments to the author. Overall, 36 students from the first university where the author works, 12 students from the second, and 43 students from the third university submitted the assignment.

In the selection of the three universities, the author prioritised ensuring diversity in order to see to what extent the accounts of the students who study industrial design would differ from each other. One of the selected universities was a foundation university, while the other two were state universities. Among the latter, one university locates the Department of Industrial Design under the Faculty of Fine Arts, while the other, under the Faculty of Architecture. Moreover, the selected universities are in three different cities in Turkey.

The experience of the third and fourth year students in organisations had been brief. All of them had completed at least one of the two summer practices in design offices and/or manufacturing companies before attending the course. However, in the assignment they were not encouraged to reflect on their past experiences. Instead, introducing the assignment, it was highlighted that the aim was to understand their expectations from their future career lives. Addressing this aim, the students were encouraged to follow a narrative format to reflect in writing what they wish to experience in professional life as an industrial designer. They were assured that there was no one specific correct answer that could be given, and the diversity was valuable.

The selection of third and fourth year undergraduate students as participants was in order to maintain the focus on the ideal and imaginary work lives and dreams while excluding any specific sector- or organisation-based factors that might have influenced the participants' narratives if they were selected from among working professionals. The conditions of 'employability' and the 'ideal' work images are typically prefigured and constructed during the undergraduate years (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth & Rose, 2013). Since the research question of this paper requires an interest in the shared discourse on what is seen as the ideal within industrial design rather

than contextualised experiences of designers, the students' descriptions provide better instances of the former.

In discourse analysis, which is the research method of this study, discourse is understood as 'groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking' (Rose, 2007, p. 142). It is the particular construction and organisation of these statements that help form and maintain social meanings and shape social identities. In this, discourse links language to knowledge and power in the form of an expert language, e.g. medical discourse (Tonkiss, 2004). Expert languages are important as they establish a distinct field of expertise and work models, provide members with internal conventions and rules, and bestow authority, which are all invested in that occupation's culture. Going through undergraduate education, students learn to take on the identity of their occupation by internalising the discourse, as well as the values, norms and symbolisms that are shared within its culture (Dryburg, p. 1999).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The written accounts of the students were coded using QDA, a qualitative analysis software. Central to discourse analysis, an interpretative repertoire was defined during the line-by-line thematic coding of the accounts, considering the repeating constructions used by participants to create meaning (Edley, 2001; Potter, 1996). As a result, the commonalities and differences across the accounts of the 91 students were identified to highlight what is shared and to focus on the collective discourse.

In the first round of the analysis, the accounts went through a formalistic reading to identify the forms of employment that students mention, the characteristics of the work environment they describe, and the scope of work including practices, relationships and processes. It was found that among the 91 participants, 71 identified the designer's work as collaborative, whilst only six as individual. 14 participants did not provide information in this regard. 57 participants described an office as the work environment, and 15 indicated that the designer works in a type of company where s/he can also be involved in the prototyping processes. There were no salient university-based differences encountered in the responses of students.

In the second round of the analysis, a closer reading was carried out to understand the relations between the themes that emerged, which are "collaborative work", "significance of (the design of) the physical workspace" and "sociability among workers". Drawing on the relations identified, the findings are presented at two stages demonstrating, first, how collaboration in design is understood; and second, in what ways it relates to the physical office environment and the shared time. In order to illustrate the findings and to provide evidence for them, quotes from the students' accounts are included in the following analysis sections. The selected quotes are the author's own translations from Turkish.

5. WORKING AND SOCIALISING AS A TEAM

In line with the current trends in the work organisation, collaboration – both disciplinary and interdisciplinary – emerges as an essential aspect of the designer's work in students' descriptions. The accounts seem to foreground a particular form of collaboration that is characterised by informal relationships, similar to 'friendship', among team members. One student underlines the significance of working with friends as follows:

> Student 4: I'd like to work in an office that I set up with my friends. All I want is that my friends and I live by designing the products that we'd like to, that our company takes root and we live the passion for design.

Like her, some students dream of starting their own businesses in the partnership of their existing friends, whilst for some others friendships are developed in time with the co-workers they encounter in the design offices where they previously worked. In both types of narrative, there was a shared tendency among participants to identify their co-workers as 'friends' rather than 'colleagues'. This identification was closely linked to the idea that they will socialise, in addition to work together, within and outside the office: 'I would like to have colleagues [rather than working alone], and I would like them to be fun, to be the kind of people with whom I would like to be friends out of the work life as well.'

In a similar way, another student expresses his enthusiasm for informal and close relationships among team members, which would keep them together for social activities after work:

> Student 52: In my dream work environment I work with a team of talented people with whom I'm on good terms and able to cooperate when necessary. I'd also like to engage in social activities out of work with the people I work with all day. Leaving the workload behind [in the evening], I'd like to be in fun environments with [them].

Furthermore, identifying the relationship between team members as friendship also has implications for distribution of power. In the students' accounts, informality and closeness of work relations go hand in hand with power symmetry within the team. As the following quote illustrates, working and socialising with friends require and support egalitarian and flat relations:

> Student 34: I wouldn't like to feel hierarchy in the office. Everyone should be equal and respectful to one another. [Design] ideas should be evaluated together and decisions should be made that way. When we are bored, we should be able to go out together and have a discussion [about the project], and be real friends.

The next two sections will present the findings regarding working and socialising as team within and outside the office separately. This is because the former invites a close exploration of the work environment, since the physical features of the office are often highlighted in the descriptions of the students as playing an essential role in sustaining a workplace culture that fosters informal, close and flat relationships among co-workers. The latter, on the other hand, focuses on the shared time spent out of the office, which has a direct influence on where the team activities fall into on the work and leisure continuum.

6. THE WORK ENVIRONMENT: WORKING AND SOCIALISING WITHIN THE OFFICE

As recently illustrated by various innovative companies (e.g. Google), workspaces of creative workers are changing. They are no longer traditional offices, but are designed on the premise that creative thinking, innovation and productivity are enhanced by relaxing spaces, colourful and comfortable furniture, natural light as well as playful equipment and games (Warren, 2008; Dong & Mougenot, 2013). In parallel with these recent trends, in the findings a typical component of the dreams of the designers appears as 'unconventional' office interiors. One student indicates, for example,

> Student 16: If I'm going to work as a member of a design team, I'd like my work environment to be an enjoyable and comfortable hobby room rather than a conventional office, so that I can be more creative, in the mood of social activity rather than work.

As exemplified by this quote, contrasting their ideal work environments with 'conventional offices' was a shared way of describing what a creative design office should offer and how it should look. The following quote by Student 8 presents a similar comparison: 'Unlike other offices, [the designer's] office doesn't have a stressful and boring environment. The atmosphere is colourful and enjoyable, like an advertisement agency.'

Industrial design profession offers a broad range of career paths to its members. In addition to the diversity in industrial sectors (a broad range from furniture to transportation), the questions of where (design offices or manufacturing establishments) and with whom (working with designers, experts from engineering, marketing, manufacturing etc.) an industrial designer works have many answers. Among the participants of this study, however, there were only seven students who described their ideal work environment as a manufacturing company where the designer is in collaboration with engineers, marketing people and shop floor workers. Considering their emphasis on the 'relaxed, informal and pleasurable' unconventional office, which is typically associated with creative industries (Nixon & Crewe, 2004), and also as the reference to an advertisement agency above illustrates, students situate industrial designers together with creative workers. Doing this, they concurrently distinguish industrial designers from conventional professional workers who work in conventional workplaces, i.e. engineers in manufacturing companies.

In the analysis, a trifold connection between being a team, creative work and the need for a relaxed, informal and pleasurable work environment was identified. Among these three aspects, there is a mutual relationship which makes each aspect dependent on the others. According to this connection, designers, being creative workers, need open and collaborative workspaces which facilitate close and flat relationships among co-workers. Student 17, for instance, says, '[The designer's] workspace is an environment that is large that doesn't create hierarchies.' Another student suggests that the office should offer different workspaces to teams to help them feel relaxed and be more creative:

> Student 7: Designers generally want a relaxed and inspiring environment. They build many alternative workspaces for their teams. The more relaxed they feel and work without pressure, the better can they see all possible solutions to the design problem, and more importantly, see the problem from various perspectives.

However, the unconventional office is not considered for collaborative creative production only. Students stress that their dream work environment facilitates working and socialising as a team simultaneously, as illustrated in the below two quotes:

> Student 35: A design office that is social, open to working in teams, offers flexible and comfortable work environments would be the ideal work environment for me. I'd like to have some people around with whom I could have tea or coffee when I got bored.

> Student 56: Rather than working according to strict rules, I'd prefer an informal environment. There should be chitchat and fun, too.

Therefore, the unconventional work environment is, first and foremost, expected to host the informal, close and flat relationships among co-workers through the layout, design and atmosphere it offers. Through this, it is assigned an important role in combining work and sociability, and contributes to the sense of belongingness and community by encouraging co-workers to cope with boredom and stress together.

In terms of the discourse on the work environment, these findings intersect with the current research that underlines the myth of 'cool' creative workers who are 'privileged' to work in relaxed, informal and egalitarian environments (Gill, 2002). This image has been problematised on the grounds that, while being attractive to many young creative workers, it leads to disillusion and disappointment since the notion of 'pleasure in work' attached to it obscures and conceals the low pay and long working hours waiting for these people in real workplaces (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010). Bringing into the role of collaboration, my findings complicate this critique, which has been mainly concerned so far with the individualisation of project-based untraditional creative work. The following section will show how constant overtime work is normalised through the strong socialisation among co-workers.

7. SHARED TIME: WORKING AND SOCIALISING OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

If one dimension of working and socialising as a team is the work environment, shared time is the second one that appears in the analysis of the students' accounts. Being able to extend good relations among co-workers to out-of-office hours is presented as an important concern and an evidence of individuals' satisfaction with and dedication to their jobs, so that they would not rush to leave the office alone once the work day or the week was over.

> Student 65: My dream is to create our own brand with a proactive, social, educative community who can build among themselves relationships beyond work. A community that doesn't curse the sound of the alarm clock that beeps every morning, that doesn't look forward to the weekend, that can combine their work and life…

In the data, leaving the office to eat together emerged as the most commonly indicated practice of socialisation among team members outside the office. Whilst here 'eating together' corresponds to both lunch, coffee breaks and dinner, the place of the eating activity on the work and leisure continuum changes depending on this distinction. Having lunch or coffee together appears as an activity that accompanies team discussions regarding the current stage of the design project, in a way that extends the work hours over the lunch break. Rather than being a 'break' between two half work days, lunch is considered almost as a time slot when the team goes out of the office to work in a different environment. One participant makes a comparison between a usual formal meeting room and a café or restaurant, subtly asserting that the latter can be a more inspiring environment for creative team activity.

> Student 82: If the team'll work on the design of an existing product, probably they'll gather for brainstorming. It doesn't have to be done around a 'long meeting table' in the office. Workers can do brainstorming when they go out to drink coffee or have lunch.

In a similar vein, the below quotes demonstrate three different pieces of narrative regarding how a specific task within the project is assigned to be completed during the lunch time collaboratively.

> Student 76: In lunch time [the designer] and her crew goes to lunch. During the meal, they review the project, progress and the time plans of other projects. They decide on who should work on the product alternatives for another project.

> Student 47: [The game design team] brainstorms to come up with original ideas. After deciding on the platform of the game (pc, mobile phones, etc.), they all share their ideas on themes, stories and game mechanics. Then they have a quick meal while discussing these issues.

> Student 13: At 13:30, they have lunch break together. After lunch, they drink coffee or tea and at the same time they talk about the project. They plan the project and the management of design.

The designers who work in the unconventional offices with their 'good friends', then, have a 'passionate attachment' for not only design, but also their co-workers. This attachment, which serves as a disciplinary mechanism as suggested by McRobbie (2002), keeps all team members together and working during the lunch time, the period that is supposed to be a break off work. Doing this, it obscures the fact that being willing to use their lunch break for work, they support constant exploitation of both themselves and other team members.

In the students' accounts, the reason behind leaving the office in the evening together is stated as ending the day through a leisure, rather than a work, activity. The evening activity usually corresponds to dinner. Issues related to work, office or staff may be brought into the conversations in dinner. These issues, however, are not about the tasks that need to be carried out within the design project, as is the case in lunch breaks. Instead, social activities in the evening aim at strengthening friendship among team members and spending good and relaxing

time by sharing and discussing the daily issues and troubles. Exploring creative workers, in the publishing industry, Dellinger (2002) shows that the integration of 'the personal' to one's work through the discussion of private life is considered to be an important aspect of flattened hierarchical relationships among workers. In a similar vein, below one student narrates how the designer he imagines finalises the work day:

> Student 33: After spending an interactive work day with other designers she attends a meeting for the evaluation of the day. At the end of the day, she leaves the office with her friends. They go to dinner together, gossip about the news of the day, and then head off to go home.

Above it was showed that setting close, informal, flat and pleasurable relationships among co-workers is highly valued and underlined by the participants as an indication of satisfaction with the job. Spending the evening as a social team goes hand in hand with the workplace culture that is characterised by the sense of belongingness and community.

> Student 1: When I go to the office in the morning, I wouldn't like to find a monotonous work style, but people who work in cooperation and sharing. In the evenings, after leaving the office I'd like the team to keep spending time together, and the next day, I want them to come to the office not merely out of obligation. I expect [our] workplace not to be like what you'd usually call a workplace, but to consist of the spaces and activities that we define ourselves.

This final quote demonstrates how the two dimensions of working and socialising as a team, which are work environment and shared time are interwoven. The close relations among co-workers, facilitated by the unconventional office environment, are strengthened through the social activities outside the office. Compared to lunch time activities, during when team keeps working, evening activities, which are dedicated to socialisation, may seem more innocent in terms of using one's free time for work relations. Still, when the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred as the individuals consider working within that particular team itself as a source of pleasure and satisfaction, it leaves little room for a social life beyond the office relations. In the discourse of creative work that idealises collaboration, then, the source of willingness for poor work/life balance conditions goes beyond 'pleasure in work', in a way that can be defined as 'pleasure in teamwork'.

8. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The shared discourse among the industrial design students reveals the anticipation of a work culture, which is depicted as egalitarian, informal, relaxed and pleasurable. This culture has two main aspects, work environments and social relations, both of which are identified through their contrast to the formal, hierarchical and therefore unfavourable environments and relations perceived to be prevalent in traditional organisations. Collaboration, through its particular description in the data, which corresponds to 'working and socialising as a team within and outside the office', plays a central role in the construction of this culture. Its results confirm that

parallel with the literature on working conditions of creative industries, industrial design students' expectations from their future work life place emphasis on pleasurable work, which is 'often compared favourably with the predominantly "uncreative" and alienating employment of the industrial era' (Banks and Hesmondhalgh 2009, p. 417), but also offer new insights.

In the existing studies, out-of-work sociability is usually discussed over its benefits for workers as individuals. It is suggested that attending social activities outside the office is an essential condition of developing informal relations with colleagues (Barrett, 2002; Miller, 2004). Informal relations are underlined as the primary sources of support and insider information regarding ways of 'fitting in' the culture, handling job pressure and learning the unwritten rules as well as when and how to bend the written ones (Bird, 2003; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Martin, 2006). In the findings of this research, on the other hand, through the involvement of collaboration, the emphasis shifts to the mutual relationship between spending out-of-work time together and being a team (of 'friends'). According to this relationship, as a result of the close relations developed in the workplace, team members are willing to extend their relationships to out-of-work activities. In turn, sharing good and relaxing time in the out-of-work activities can strengthen the personal relationships between the team members. In light of the existing studies, we can suggest that connecting out-of-work socialising to job satisfaction and pleasure seems to be promising to create a chance for developing solidarity among workers. On the other hand, this formulation also offers a strong tendency for self-exploitation. Matching 'socialising together' with 'working together' carries the risk of prescribing that workers are the genuine members of the team to the extent that they regularly attend these activities. When they become inseparable, the voluntary and the pleasurable character of the former may disappear, and it can quickly be transformed into a requirement of and pressure for the latter. The blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure also obscures the line between pleasure and obligation.

In the students' accounts, the replacement of the informal and flattened networks with formal and hierarchical organisation structures looks promising for the empowerment of the groups who experience subordination in traditional organisations. To a certain extent, this can be achieved, too, especially for the newcomers who would feel the impact of hierarchical relations strongly in the early years of their careers (Kaygan & Demir, 2017). Considering that the participants of this research will enter professional life in the next couple of years, we can understand their shared preference of an unconventional creative office shaped by hierarchy-free relations over a manufacturing company where they would collaborate with engineers and managers who do not have a design background. As the author of this article discussed somewhere else, since in manufacturing companies the organisational culture usually privileges the ideal images of engineering, which is characterised by technical competence as well as objective and evidence-based decision-making, industrial designers may find it challenging to compete for managerial positions (Kaygan, 2014, see also Molotch, 2005).

Still, in the creative offices idealised by the students where informal relations among team members are more readily associated with non-hierarchical and egalitarian work cultures, throughout long-term collaborations redistribution of power may occur. As Diefenbach and Sillince (2011, p. 1523) warn us, when the members of a profession initiate social networks and informal collaborations to overcome the formal hierarchical relations within the organisation, 'very often the principle of seniority kicks in and transforms informal professional relationships into informal hierarchical order.' Thus, as teams get older, the varying degrees of being 'real friends' may lead to subtle hierarchies within the team, leaving newcomers in a distanced and disadvantaged position.

Furthermore, spending both work and leisure time with the team leaves little room for a social life beyond work relations. Without rushing into taking the egalitarian nature of the culture depicted by the students for granted, we should highlight the fact that the way of socialising outside the office described in the findings is based on an individualistic lifestyle. This lifestyle would not fit the team members with dependents, family responsibilities or other interests that require social relations with different people and groups. Age and gender, which are remarkably missing in the students' accounts, then, appear as two important dimensions of collaborative work which open the extent of this egalitarian unconventional culture to questioning.

In order to expand our understanding of the future designers' anticipation from professional life, it would be also important to question to what extent their answers are shaped by the lifestyle they experience as being students and their relationship with new technologies with which they grew up. Further research that focuses on the educational culture of industrial design students as well as the effect of ICT technologies and social media on the shift from formal and traditional offices to flexible working environments (Edwards & Wajcman, 2005) is needed to see the whole picture. Likewise, comparing the accounts of industrial design students with students from other disciplines (e.g. engineering, ICT, business administration) would provide us with a more accurate understanding of to what extent these findings can be extended to other professions. Moreover, considering that these students will graduate from university and enter or set up various design companies in the following years, the professional discourse shared among them is highly significant to capture and understand. Further research following this generation's work experiences in organisations would be useful to see how their concerns and anticipations change in time, and what kind of complex layers are added to work experiences of creative professionals within organisational realities.

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