

Design Institutions and the Transition to Democracy: a Comparative Case Study of Spain and Hungary

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Studies of the historical development of design institutions which promote the cause of their trade inevitably have to consider the impact of political change on them. However, whilst the British Design Council has maintained a pivotal role in the establishment of role models for other countries' promotional institutions it has not undergone the same degree of radical shift of political background as many other countries. In particular, I refer to the political shifts which took place parts of the 'Latin' world during the late 1970s and earlier 1980s, and the Eastern Bloc during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In these countries we are not just looking at a shift from a state dictatorship to free liberal democracy, but also from a planned and protected economy to a market-driven and more widely international economy. And within this, the role of the individual, the group and their relationship to the state is redrawn.

The aim of this paper is to review and compare the relationship that respective design councils in Spain and Hungary had with the state before and during their transitions to democracy. They make comparable case studies for five reasons. Firstly, Spain and Hungary are both countries which underwent a marked degree of economic, political and social liberalisation starting at least 8 years before their final fall of regimes. Secondly, their transitions were relatively gradual and peaceful by comparison with such countries as Argentina (the Malvinas factor), the Phillipines (the Aquino factor), Poland (Marshall Law and Solidarity) or Rumania

(Ceauescu's Christmas). Thirdly, in design terms, each country was dominated culturally and institutionally by a major city-- Barcelona and Budapest. Fourthly, each of these cities established design centres long before the transition and which survived, largely with the same personalities intact these transitions. Fifthly, and finally, both of these countries conspire to re-draw the economic and cultural maps of Europe away from the dominance of the North-Western Europe of Germany, Benelux and the South-East of Britain to instate the Western Mediterranean and the Vienna-Budapest axis as important clusters of economic and cultural activity. This may be read in terms of the historiography of design as well.

Theoretical Framework

Fundamental differences between these countries begin to emerge as we get into more detail but I should like to begin my exploration with an overarching theory culled from the discipline of political science but which extends to sociology, social philosophy and many other areas which consider transition politics and society.

Civil society has been the subject of increasing discussion amongst social and political scientists since the early 80s and its interest has been given further impetus since the break up of the Soviet bloc (see for instance Hann, 1990). Emerging from this has been a liberal conception of civil society as essential to the maintenance of democratic governance. This interest has been more explicitly re-examined in the last two decades. This has been sparked off not only by the

Latin and East European, but also the transitions which include Thatcherism in the U.K. with its notions 'active citizenship'. In the party-state system of left- and right-wing dictatorships, the boundaries between civil society and the state are not recognised or do not exist-- depending on your own personal political perspective. However, once the state ceases to extend into all aspects of civil life, society and the state begin to separate, but also reproduce each other. This means that the individual becomes the point of reference for the state rather than the other way round. Formerly the party-state extended its influence to the individual via the machinations of national-syndicates in the workplace and the district party. Conversely, as this system is dismantled the growth of independent civil interest groups as interlocutor between the individual and the state is witnessed. The civil interest group becomes an important point of reference and information for the state whilst at the same time, they serve as funnel for the individual to direct his/her interests at the state. This is a very broad theory from which we may begin our examination of design institutions within transitional politics; but none the less, I think it is a useful one.

Hungarian political scientist László Vass has put this in more empirical terms (Vass 1992: 11). His study of special interest groups shows their rapid growth in numbers and membership during his country's transition. In 1988 the Hungarian socialist government made its last major reform prior to its cessation in the following year. This entailed the representation of autonomous interest bodies at the level of local government. Significantly, then, independent social groups preceded the formation of autonomous political parties.

In 1992 there existed 19,950 non-profit associations and 8,180 public foundations in Hungary. The former figure compares with 8,514 in 1989 and just 6,570 in 1982. Klaus Offe suggests that historically, and classically, the growth of interest groups may be seen to have three phases: firstly, in the 19c. we find

the growth of political movements associated with industrialisation and the establishment of capitalism; secondly, in the mid-20c. large-scale formally organised movements are formed to exact greater economic influence; thirdly, in the post-industrial late-20c. social movements emerge to represent specific concerns (Vass 1992: 19).

In Hungary, all of these three have happened at the same time. This in turn, I would suggest, allows for some interesting dynamics between different levels of interest groups, including design institutions, and the new democratic state. If they emerge at the same time, then political movements, economic interest groups and social associations may overlap and/or exist in tension. More central to this paper is the idea that since the interest groups pre-date and mature more quickly than the establishment of the democratic state, then they are seen as an important source of reference in terms ideas, perspectives and skills by the newly elected government.

In his article, Vass clearly identifies Spain as a precedent for such phenomena. Fellow countryman István Szilágyi puts this similarity as follows:

Despite the significant differences that exist between Hungary and Spain, the neo-corporatist approach to social agreements that prevailed in the Iberian peninsula can still be considered a fundamental pattern for the development of the governmental system in Hungary. The prime reason for this is that, over the past 15 years, Spain has become a successful laboratory for the various regional (autonomous communities) and functional (economic-social agreements) mediating institutions. (quoted in Vass 1992: 2)

To put this comparison into practice I would now like to look in more detail firstly at the specific historical development of the Barcelona Centre de Disseny and its relationship to the state and independent political and economic interest groups from its inception in 1973 to roughly 1983. I shall

then look at the pre-history and history of its parallel bodies in Budapest, the Hungarian Council for Industrial Design, founded in 1975 and the Hungarian Design Centre, founded in 1977. I consider the reasons for the creation of not just one governmentally related design bodies and subsequently review their destiny in democratic Hungary. I then go on to look slightly wider at other similar non-governmentally related bodies. The more complex picture reveals certain interesting similarities with Spain, and indeed other countries, but also stunning dissimilarities.

The Barcelona Centre of Design

Central to the Francoist political strategy of control and coercion was the notion of National Syndicates to replace independent trade unions. This was into the Falangist constitution in 1934 with the following words:

We conceive the economic organisation of Spain in terms of a gigantic union of producers. We shall organise Spanish society on a corporative basis by means of a system of vertical syndicates, arranged in accordance with the various branches of production in the service of the national economic integrity. (quoted in Anderson 1970: 30)

In this respect, Barcelona's designers consistently and deliberately avoided such incorporation. All independent interest groups and associations had to register themselves with the Civil Governor. When a group of designers in Barcelona attempted to form a professional society for themselves in 1957 their application for registration and thus official state recognition was met with the rebuffal that, 'to found an association for professional designers was the proper role of the [National] Syndical Organization' (quoted in Mir Pozo 1975: 195). There were ways and means, however. This group achieved legal status by attaching itself to a decorative arts group to form ADI-FAD (Asociación de Diseñadores Industriales del Fomento de Artes Decorativas) in 1959. Likewise, in 1961 an independent design school, called Elisava, was founded in Barcelona by attaching itself

to a women's Catholic cultural organisation CICF.

However, with the slow liberalisation of the Francoist regime through the 1960s, designers more daringly sought independence from state structures. Thus, Elisava's offshoot school, Eina was founded in 1965 in a manner to deliberate distance itself from any state regulation: it was financed entirely from contributions from its founders and its own fee system. Similarly, ADIFAD's hosting of the 1972 ICSID conference was deliberately sited 'offshore' on the island of Ibiza: it was felt by its organisers that there were distinct advantages in staging it away from the core of the peninsular state and in the more relaxed island atmosphere.

The institutionalisation of design within the framework of the Spanish state, as it then existed, was as undesirable as it was impossible. If initiatives for design promotion were met with indifference and obstructiveness on the part of the regime then independence also ensured a 'no strings attached' space to flex the internationalist, regionalist as well as technological and cultural avant-gardist aspirations of the middle-class, Catalan intelligentsia.

In this climate, therefore, the Barcelona Centre of Design was founded in 1973. Unlike ADI-FAD which represented the more culturalist motivations for designers, BCD's prime task was the promotion of design in industry. Its principal founders were the industrial designers Joan Antoni Blanc, Rafael Carreras, Ferran Freixa, Joan Prats, Josep Bertran and the industrialist Jordi Casablanca (Carol 1988: 18).

Casablanca estimated that such a centre would require 10m. pesetas in order to get itself off the ground. He approached the Banca Catalana, which was then Spain's only bank to be totally independent of any of the regime's economic networks. Here he found an important ally in Jordi Pujol its Vice-President. Pujol found the cash to finance a study visit to London and Copenhagen to

study their respective design centres. Furthermore, Pujol's support of the initiative facilitated a network of interested parties in the project.

On 27 July 1973 the Centro de Diseño Industrial de Barcelona, S.A. with the anagram of CDB (soon changed to BCD when a logotype was considered) was established as a limited company. Its underwriter was the Cámara de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de Barcelona. Its shareholders reads like a 'who's who' of Catalan banking with eleven main banks listed. Its initial corporate capital was .5m. pesetas, half of which came from the Chamber of Commerce, followed by an investment of 1.8m. pesetas from each of its supporting banks. Thus began the 'golden age' of the BCD. On 17 May 1974 its famous inflatable was opened on the Diagonal. By mid-1976 this exhibition hall had hosted nine exhibitions featuring products from 270 companies and visited by around 15,000 people. It had also published 21 documents with a total print-run of 209,640 (BCD 1978)

Such success did not go ignored by governmental parties. Indeed the Civil Governor of Barcelona, Tomás Pelayo Ros officially opened the Centre. On 18 February 1976, the then Minister of Industry, Carlos Pérez de Bricio oversaw the establishment of BCD as the 'Fundación BCD para la Promoción de Diseño Industrial'. In the same year the BCD extended its member-founders to the Instituto Nacional de Industria and the Diputación de Barcelona. But it also extended membership to the savings banks Caixa de Pensions and Caixa de la Sagrada Família as well as the Consejo de Empresarios de Barcelona. By June 1976, it had reached an investment capital of 33.7m pesetas. Furthermore, its 40 council members included representatives of the Asociación de Prensa, Amigos de la Ciudad, the Federación de Asociaciones de Vecinos and Amigos de la UNESCO (Carol 1988: 23)

The BCD's pedigree lay in a deliberate distancing from governmental participation. In order to promote itself and establish a

strong social base, the BCD networked across a wide constituency of organisations. In this early stage, there was an involvement of state-related interests but this is relatively insignificant compared with the energetic networking with other interest groups.

Undoubtedly the rapid development of the BCD was facilitated by strong financial backing. In 1977, however, the all the supporting banks were forced to reel in their support. The initial golden years of the BCD had taken place against a backdrop of deepening economic recession, precipitated by the oil crisis of 1973 but worsened by Spain's reliance on tourism and its émigré worker population. The withdrawal of two-thirds of its financial support meant the deflation of its exhibition centre and a loss of 80% of its personnel to a core of five (Felip 1995).

The activities of BCD were understandably limited in the ensuing four years. In 1978 Pere Aquirre, the then director of the BCD, approached Pedro Luengo the Minister of Industry and head of the Centro de Desarrollo Tecnológico Industrial in Madrid which promised ad hoc financial help. However, this promise was not sustained when his government was ousted in the 1979 elections (Aquirre 1995). Such political instability in Madrid and the fact that the regional government had yet to be established meant that in the shorter-term, major financial backing from either public or private bodies was unlikely. Clearly it would have to survive by its own wit, culling what financial backing it could mostly from its consultancy and management services. The BCD offered 'design auditing' services to some 80 manufacturing companies of varying type and size during this period. More importantly for its longer term survival were its collaborations with public bodies.

We generally associate the visual and material renovation of public life in Spain with, for instance, the heroic years of Oriol Bohigas directorship of urban planning for the socialist Barcelona City Council, 1980-4 or more

recently with the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games and Seville World Expo preparations. However, such impulses were prefigured on a smaller scale, in particular in the area of local transport design. In nearly all of these, the BCD was to act as the project manager. It was an obvious solution since on the one hand there was a client such as Transportes Municipales de Barcelona, the transport wing of the City Council, which had no experience of commissioning design and on the other, a pool of designers weathering a recession. The BCD could therefore act as commissioning agent and project coordinator.

The portfolio of such projects began in 1978 with an design audit of the city bus and metro system. carried out by Jordi Mañà and Yves Zimmermann. Four large projects followed in 1979, including the redesign of rural bus stations by Pere Riera, Daniel Freixes and Vicente Miranda and bus stops by Ramon Benedito and Josep Llusçà. In 1980, the now celebrated redesign of the Metro signage was carried out by Joan Antoni Blanc, Josep M. Trias and Miquel de Moragas.

However, these high profile activities were only able to maintain the BCD in its reduced circumstances. The Centre reached its lowest ebb on 28 December 1980 when it was unable to pay its personnel and the office electricity was cut off. However, eight months earlier, Catalonia's first elected regional autonomous government came to office, under the presidency of... Jordi Pujol.

The then president of BCD, Pere Aguirre solicited an immediate interview with Pujol. From this Pujol arranged for the personnel's salaries to be paid in the short-term. In the longer term, Pujol instigated a series of collaborations between his regional government, Generalitat and the BCD. In the first instance these consisted of a commitment to further design projects connected to the urban and rural renovation of democratic, autonomous Catalonia. More significantly for the future of the BCD, however, was the invitation to manage the

design and execution of a series of exhibitions for the Generalitat.

The first of these an exhibition entitled, 'Catalogne aujourd'hui' which took place in the UNESCO centre in Paris in March 1981. This exhibition was staged in order to promote Catalonia both culturally and economically in its new context of Europe. More politically precarious an act was its collaboration in two exhibitions staged in Barcelona, the first being 'Catalunya Endavant' of 1982, and the second being 'Catalunya Viva' of 1984. These two exhibitions were clearly set up to celebrate the advances of Pujol's centre-rightist Catalan-nationalist government in establishing a new cultural and economic infrastructure for the region. 'Catalunya Endavant', designed by Esteve Agullo and Mariano Pi, took place in a marquee in Barcelona's Plaça de Catalunya, attracting 400,000 visitors. 'Catalunya Viva' was designed by Santi Gir' and Ferran Freixa and was housed in the Generalitat's Palau Robert. It also toured to Lérida, Gerona and Tarragona to carry Pujol's message. The BCD had the know-how and the contacts. Pujol wanted some design (Aguirre 1995 and Felip 1995).

In these two exhibitions the BCD's political independence and autonomy came closest to being compromised. Here they would be seen to be designing popular exhibitions which carried, indirect, yet clearly propagandist intentions. Here also, the BCD emerges as an interlocutor between government and civil society in a most graphic form.

There was, though, a major payoff. The BCD's Memoria of 1983 reveals a major boost to its finances from three departments of the Generalitat, the Department of Industry and Energy, the Department of Commerce and Tourism and the Department of Public Works. By the following year, a budget for the BCD had been fixed within the budget of Generalitat's Department of Industry. Between 1981 and 1984, Pere Aguirre and associates at the BCD energetically pursued the support of individuals in the City Council,

the Regional Government and the Central Administration. However, it was this simple act of collaboration that provided a watershed for the support of Jordi Pujol's Generalitat. Henceforth, the Generalitat would be the mainstay of funding for the BCD.

To take the argument to the conclusion that the BCD became a stooge of regional or national governmental policy, however, would be an exaggeration. Certainly it provided a useful conduit for broader economic policies. Thus, for example, from 1986 the Generalitat's Centre de Investigació i Desenvolupament de la Empresa provided 60% of the funding for the BCD's design consultancy service. Thus the BCD was able to take part in the broad drive towards innovation in industry. However, the core idea for this initiative came from the BCD. Indeed, throughout the 1980s, funding from the Generalitat only came for specific activities such as, equally, the BCD's CAD/CAM centre, opened in 1985. Neither the central government nor the regional government sought to influence the overall strategy of the BCD. They would support it, however, when it was in their interests.

This case study seems to suggest the reverse of Vass's model of interest groups during the transition from the party-state to liberal democracy. Rather move from a position of being tied to governmental interests to independence and autonomy, the BCD has developed the other way round. In its beginnings it was self-consciously independent of the late-Francoist regime. During the transition it saw the new democratic structures as it meal-ticket. Clearly, then, these structures had to be courted. However, to partially vindicate Vass's model, it was advantageous for both parties, the governmental and the interest group, that the ties between the two were not too tight and but at the same time, there was a measure of mutual interdependence.

The Hungarian Situation

Unlike the Barcelonese example, where the establishment of a design centre began as a clear cross-current to government policy, design promotion in Budapest was firmly intertwined with government policy. None the less, the outcome of this, following the transition to democracy since 1989, has, I believe been more complex. At the same time, however, it clearly vindicates Vass's argument.

In line with the policy of total incorporation of civil and economic interests into the party-state system, a range of groupings identified with design promotion were founded following establishment of one-party socialist government in 1947. First off in 1949 was the Applied Artists' Company. Initially founded to represent designer's interests, by the 1970s it took on two important roles. One was in the establishment of a chain of 'craft boutiques' throughout Hungary to sell the products of craftsmen as well as the produce of some 30-50 small-scale craft-based manufacturing concerns it had established. This was a reflection of the economic liberalisation brought about by the New Economic Mechanism plan of 1968. The second role was in the regulation of freelance designers. Wherever a designer undertook consultancy work for a company, their design and fee proposals had to be presented to a committee of the Applied Artists' Company for approval. Unlike in Poland during Marshall Law, no clear policy regarding fees had to be developed and so approval was often on the whim of the committee chairman. Two clear rules were adopted, however. One was that designers were not allowed undertake consultancy where a close associate or relative was already employed; the other was that designers were not allowed to return to the same client within two years of undertaking a consultancy project with them. This policy was adopted to avoid the development of informal and possibly corrupt or nepotistic links between client and designer. Such a policy would appear obstructive and

damaging when judged in the context of free market enterprise.

To designers the origins of this system were and remain murky. The bodies which represented and controlled designers were embedded into the state-party system and reproduced its policies. Horváth and Szokolczai describe the party-state system as follows:

...activities and the web created by them were spread to all possible aspects of human existence, entrapping their subjects as well as the objects. The mechanisms that were set free by the system mobilised and created complicated networks of responsibility, obligation and fear. It was system that nobody living there could have completely escaped, where the slightest connection with the system led only to deeper and even more complex involvements, where the more one fought and acted, the more entangled one became. (Horváth and Szokolczai 1992: 199-200)

Other Hungarian design institutions were, perhaps, more benign, if not ineffectual in their aims. Als in 1949 the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts was formed in order to provide a skill base in design for the planned economy. In 1954 the Hungarian Council for Industrial Arts was formed. Modelled on its British namesake, it was in the words of Gyula Ernyey, '...as dedicated to its thankless task during the years of centralized productions quotas as it was low-key and non-dogmatic in the formulation of its goals.' (Ernyey 1993: 104) It came under the auspices of the Ministry of Light Industry, although its chairman was the Minister of Culture. Members were appointed by various members and heads of professional organisations. Its aim was to establish artistic standards for mass-produced goods, investigate shoddy products, recommend products for export and import, organize experimental design projects and competitions, set guidelines for improving product quality, establish contacts abroad and supervise education.

By the 1970s it had become clear for at least a decade that these aims were most probably too grandiose for an increasingly complex and developing economy. A detailed and protracted debate took place in the early 1970s to re-appraise the role of industrial design and the best structures by which it could be represented and enhanced. The outcome was twofold. Firstly, the Council for Industrial Design was founded to replace the Council for Industrial Arts. It was to work independently from but within the auspices of the Hungarian Office for Technical Advancement. As such its emphasis was to be in the promotion of industrial design within a wide range of Ministries encompassing defence, industry and trade, environment, transportation and post, education and labour. It was understood, however, that the wider promotional roles of a design institution could not be accommodated under the umbrella of the Hungarian Office for Technical Advancement. Thus in 1977 the Design Center was founded within the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce. The Design Center's primary concern was to organise exhibitions and provide information to the public.

The key political difference here is that the Design Center from the Council of Industrial Design was that it never actually received funding directly from the government. According to its managing director, Mihaly Poharnok, during its first ten years of existence, the Design Center's activities were largely conceptual, writing reports, carrying out research, establishing contacts: all of which needed little funding save for that coming from the Chamber of Commerce (Poharnok 1995).

Poharnok himself has something of an 'outsiders' history. Within Hungarian design history he is most noted for instigating a blue-sky design project in 1972 which inherently pointed to the paucity of the Hungarian economy and design methodology therein. Adopting a systems approach to design, his team used sociological, health and economic surveys to identify and/or design 400 kitchen objects for pre-fab housing. Without an

adequate manufacturing and marketing structure, little of the project could be made a reality, it being confined to exhibition at the 1975 Budapest International Fair. Many similar conceptual projects followed within the Design Center however. It would seem that the Design Center's relative economic independence from state systems did allow another strata of design activity to develop, that is, towards the more conceptual or even entrepreneurial approach to design.

One Hungarian designer who was able to see his product into fruition in the 1970s was, of course, Ernő Rubik, erstwhile inventor of the Rubik Cube. The Cube was first manufactured in Hungary from 1977 by a small cooperative called Politecnica; in 1979 manufacture was licenced to Ideal Toys in the USA. So far, over 100m. units of this product have been sold. Given the lack of incentive to actually carry out semi-entrepreneurial design projects-- at least within the 'official' economy --it seems unusual that a designer should actually carry through a design into production and marketing. In this case, however, the incentive was that the object itself was virtually a completely finished product in its prototype form. Significantly, Rubik knew that there was little leeway for a manufacturer to tamper with or subvert the designer's specifications: it held its own against an industry where alternations and compromises were the norm. What Rubik did not know at the time was the enormous success the product would achieve (Rubik 1995).

Despite the strict financial controls put on such entrepreneurial activities by the government-- particularly if this involved hard currency --Rubik's success with this product allowed him to create his own Foundation to support innovation and education in design and design engineering. From 1983 the Rubik Innovation Foundation has supported a scholarship system for Hungarian design students to study abroad and also to help entrepreneurs with patents and licensing. In 1990 the Foundation extended its activities to support design engineering innovation in conjunction with the Hungarian Academy of

Engineering. Rubik is unusual, firstly in the financial success he gained during the communist regime. But in its turn, this success allowed for the development of a design institution, albeit on a modest scale, outside governmental structures.

More strident, and perhaps more financially successful has been the V.A.M. Design Center. It owes its name to the initials of its principal founder, Miklós Vincze. In essence Vincze is an interior designer who has been enormously successful since Hungary's transition to a market economy. This success has come initially from carrying out design projects for the great wave of foreign investors into Budapest. In 1992, for instance, he undertook 150m. Florints worth of commissions including interior plans

such as for the Berlitz Language School and the IWG Dutch Bank in Budapest (Peredi 1994: 5). The bulk of the financial success, however, has been through specifying and importing contract furniture to fit these offices out with. The V.A.M. Design Center also acts as a showroom for the exhibit of 'name' designer furniture such as that by Ettore Sottsass, Ron Arad and Borek Sipek. Further financial gain has been made in the area of domestic furnishings for either ex-pat executives and their families or for the new, monied haute-bourgeoisie of neo-capitalist Hungary.

Design promotion directed at the consuming public, therefore, is seen as part of the longer-term strategy which directly and indirectly will benefit the entrepreneurial interests of V.A.M. as well as the design community it belongs to. Its activities include the production of a bi-monthly half-hour programme on design, emitted on the Hungarian TV cable network. It contributes a regular avant-garde design slot to the 'homes and gardens lifestyle magazine Lakaskultura. It also organises design exhibitions in its own showrooms. It has plans to buy a manufacturing company in order to bring the furniture designs of Hungarians into production and also for the foundation of a

Postgraduate design school. This school is intended to address what it sees as a lack of conceptual rigour and business formation perceived in recent pedagogical changes at the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts (Slezia 1995).

The V.A.M. Design Center has organisational connections with the Hungarian Office for Technological Advancement and its Council for Industrial Design and Ergonomics as it now is. However, the bulk of its funding comes from its own entrepreneurial activities. As such it has self-consciously distanced itself from any controlling agent whether it be the Hungarian government or another design institution such as the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts. Also notable is the way by which it has targetted consumption-- with an emphasis on 'high design' --as the principal scenario for design promotion. In both these elements the V.A.M. Design Center may, to varying degrees, be comparable in character to the activities of Domus in Milan, the Contran Foundation in London and the activities of Juli Capella and Quim Larrea of Ardi and Ferran Amat of Vinçon in Barcelona.

The examples of the Rubik Innovation Foundation and the V.A.M. Design Center illustrate a level of independent entrepreneurial philanthropy which carries over to the transition and vindicates Vass's argument about the creation of independent interest groups as a necessary and integral aspect of democratization. Interestingly, by comparison to the example of the Barcelona Centre of Design I have examined earlier, the other two design promotion institutions which were linked directly and indirectly in the state apparatus pre-1989 are undergoing a similar loosening of their roles. In 1991 the Design Center was reformed into a limited company financing itself mostly through its consultancy services. It is thus, now, an independent body. The Council for Industrial Design and Ergonomics is also undergoing limited privatization. This is largely part of the socialist Hungarian government's attempts to reduce the national budget deficit. It is also part of a wider attempt by the government to

be seen to dismantle itself and shed the historical connotations of state bureaucracy. The Council for Industrial Design and Ergonomics no longer has any control of the budget it receives from the Office for Technological Advancement. And this yearly budget is to drop by 10% from this coming to settle at 60% of its total budget. Its director, Jozsef Hegedüs views this optimistically, stating that by generating its own income-- again through various consultancy activities -- will allow for greater certainty than total reliance on the state. At the same time he sees a levelling out at 60% as important since much of its activities are connected closely with the government. These would include the administration of the national Industrial Design Award Competition and the coordination of re-design tasks connected to state-owned part of the infrastructure such as the railways (Hegedüs 1995).

Conclusion

From the data given it is clear that in general the same tendencies of sponsored design promotional institutions may be identified in both Spain and Hungary during their respective transitions to democracy. These are: their formation prior to democratization; their continuance with largely the same aims and personnel across the historical divide; their ambiguous relationship to the state; they all take part in the proliferation of interest groups prior to and during transition. However, when viewed in more detail, several differences emerge which, I hope, add subtly to my argument.

Whilst in Hungary both a Design Center and a Council of Industrial Design with separate financing and organisational structures were founded in the 1970s, they were none the less embedded into the aims and machinations of the state. During the transition these ties have been loosened. However in the meantime, independent largely self-financing design institutions have been formulated. These in some respects have duplicated the activities of the governmental institutions. On the other hand, they have skillfully 'filled the gaps'

which the state ideology has not considered. In the case of the Rubik Innovations Center this has been in fostering a distinctly entrepreneurial edge within design engineering during the liberalisation of the 1980s. In the case of the V.A.M. Design Center, the education of design consuming public has been the key platform for its activities. The proliferation of design centres is symptomatic of a realisation of, if not frustration with the state's limitations before and during its transitions. Clearly this proliferation reflects the general steps towards political, economic and social pluralism.

In the case of Spain, its oldest and most established design centre, the Barcelona Centre of Design began life deliberately distanced from the state. Conversely to the Hungarian examples, then, the BCD has progressively linked itself up with the state following its transition to democracy. The trajectories of the countries' design promotion in relation to the state have gone in opposite directions. Of course there has been a similar proliferation of institutions around the BCD which carry out overlapping but also distinct functions. Again this reflects a shift towards political, economic and social pluralism.

And finally, to leave aside the theoretical framework I have borrowed from the political sciences in order to analyse these dynamics, one last point needs to be made. Within this paper I have dwelled at length on the finance of design institutions in both Hungary and Spain. This has reminded us that design institutions are also guided by pragmatic financial choices. Design institutions are not just framed within the meta-political discourses, mediating production and consumption, object and subject. They are also about the careers and aspirations of individuals and social groups. As such they must be regarded not just as the reflectors or vehicles of ideology but also the producers of activity, framed by sometimes quite basic choices.

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