

research proposal

In modern society, discipline is not only reflected in the direct control of the power system, but is also deeply embedded in the daily behaviour of individuals. It includes not only the management methods in the physical space, but also the social structure shaped by symbols, data, technology and other media. From public signs to algorithmic decisions, from social etiquette to behavioural norms, discipline is everywhere, both visible and invisible. As a graphic communication designer, my research goal is not to criticise discipline itself, but to explore how to intervene and reveal social discipline through design, so that it can be perceived, interpreted and experienced better in different contexts.

Foucault (1975) proposed the concept of ‘disciplined society’, which states that discipline not only imposes constraints through direct power relationships, but also standardises daily life, so that individuals unconsciously adjust themselves to conform to social expectations. In modern society, discipline has evolved from a centralised management system to a multi-level system embedded in technology, data and spatial design. Kimbell and Julier (2019) propose in social design research that design is not only a tool for information transmission, but also a way to intervene in social phenomena and shape public values. Social design is more concerned with how design functions in social practice, and designers need to respond carefully (Thorpe & Gamman, 2011). In other words, the purpose of design is not to solve social problems, but to construct a new way of experiencing, so that social mechanisms can be perceived and understood more easily. This study will draw on this line of thinking to explore how design can function in the disciplinary system, how to make social discipline more visible, and examine the impact of different ways of presentation on individuals’ understanding of discipline.

This study adopts the two-stage social design research framework proposed by Kimbell & Julier (2019), combined with the experimental methods of social science, and takes visible discipline (direct and visible discipline) and invisible discipline (invisible and implicit discipline) as the research objects.

First stage (Proto-Project): Exploring the Presentation of Social Discipline

The core objective of this phase is to explore existing systems of social discipline and examine how they influence individual behaviour in different media and spaces. The research will involve the research participants in identifying, interpreting and redefining disciplinary phenomena through the co-production of knowledge.

During this phase, the researcher and participants will organise a ‘protoproject’ to identify research questions, participants, stakeholders, research methods, data types and possible design outputs through continuous adjustment and discussion (Kimbell & Julier, 2019). The research will focus on the following aspects:

- Classification and Analysis of the Discipline System:

Through case studies, visual analysis, and spatial observation, the research will examine the forms of discipline in different environments, distinguishing between direct discipline (such as symbolic systems and urban spatial design) and invisible discipline (such as data algorithms and social credit systems).

- How the Public Perceives Discipline:

Through focus groups and interviews, the research will collect participants' experiences and interpretations of different discipline systems, analysing how they perceive the presence and impact of discipline.

- The Visual and Physical Characteristics of Discipline:

Research how discipline is represented in physical spaces and digital interfaces, and explore how its presentation can be altered through design to make it more perceptible.

Phase 2 (Iterative Refinement): Design Intervention and Experimental Testing

Building on the foundations established in the first phase, the goal of the second phase is to test how different design strategies affect individuals' experiences and interpretations of discipline. Participants will continue to deepen their research in this phase and adjust research questions, experimental methods, data collection, and design outputs with greater confidence, consistency, and consensus (Kimbell & Julier, 2019).

The research directions for this phase include:

- Redesigning the Visibility of Discipline:

Through information visualization experiments, explore how to adjust the presentation of regulations through visual design to make them more readable or more hidden.

- Test the Impact of Different Presentations:

Through interactive experiments, analyze individual behavioral responses to different ways of presenting regulatory information, such as studying how people adjust their actions under different types of behavior guidance signs.

- Speculative Design:

Envisages possible future mechanisms of discipline and constructs experimental scenarios to investigate how technology shapes individual understandings of discipline, such as how augmented reality (AR) changes individuals' experiences of discipline in public spaces.

Research Contributions

The academic contributions of this research are reflected in the following aspects:

1. Expanding Foucault's theory of discipline, not only focusing on the way discipline operates, but also on how discipline is experienced, perceived and interpreted, and studying its presentation through design methods.
2. To put into practice the social design framework of Kimbell & Julier (2019), explore how design can intervene in social phenomena, and provide empirical research on how design affects the experience of discipline.
3. To propose experimental strategies for design intervention in the discipline system, and provide new design methods for urban management, data governance, public space and

interactive systems, so that the discipline system is not only a symbol of power, but also a way for individuals to experience the social structure.

This research aims to explore the role and impact of design interventions in the system of discipline, and to test how different ways of presentation can enhance individuals' perception and understanding of social discipline. Through experimental methods, the research will explore how design can make the system of discipline more visible and improve its readability, in order to support social design practice. In this process, discipline is not only seen as a control tool of power, but can also be optimised and presented through design, which promotes a deeper understanding of the discipline process.

bibliography

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