MapPED: Mapping the Political Economy of Design

Keywords: design economies; sustainability; transition; political economy

1. Workshop Convener/s

Convener Name	Email	Affiliation
Dr. Joanna Boehnert	J.J.Boehnert@lboro.ac.uk	Loughborough University
Dr. Simon Downs	S.T.Downs@lboro.ac.uk	Loughborough University

2. Outline of Workshop

The intersection of economics and design has become a focus of attention for those seeking scalable social responses to global challenges. Design theorists (Julier 2017, Heckett 2017; Dilnot 2017) and economists (NEON *et al.* 2018; Raworth 2017) have both described how economic forces set the initial conditions and logic for design as well as determining whose interests are served by design (Downs 2011; Orr 2018; Boehnert 2018a, 2018b). The political economy of design (PED) refers to the ways economic drivers shape the design industry by addressing particular types of problems. Since economic systems influence priorities within the design industry, the political economy of design is of central importance for everyone concerned with both social justice and sustainability.

3. Workshop Research Aim

Workshop participants will explore the political economy of design by focusing attention on intersection of economic value and social values. The workshop is designed to encourage an exploration of the ways that economic value influences priorities in the design industry and the relationships between these priorities and social values. How are distinct priorities and the values of particular groups of people fortified by design? What are the social and environmental implications of these priorities?

The mapping will aim to externalise, visualise and contextualise structures, dynamics and relationships in design economies and the political economy of design. Exploring the intersection of economic value and social values provides a means for examining systemic obstacles and opportunities for sustainable and just transitions. The objective is to identify possible leverage points that might be available to designers. The MapPED workshop aims to build a stronger socio-economic theory of design as a basis for re-configured design economies and design for sustainable transitions.

4. Planned Activities, Length and Expected Outcomes

This is a two and a half hour workshop to be held online.

SESSION ONE – Externalising Assumptions (40 minutes)

The workshop will start with group introductions followed by an presentation with key concepts and an introduction to the method. We will start the mapping processes individuals mapping their own understanding how value is created by design practices (participants will do this individually, either digitally or on paper). We will reconvene to discuss the individual maps (probably in breakout groups).

BREAK – 10 minutes

SESSION TWO – Thinking Through Mapping (30 minutes)

The second session will involve breakout groups in an online structured mapping process using supplied templates. On completion, each group will then share their map. Clusters will be formed thematically in preparation for the last session.

BREAK – 10 minutes

SESSION THREE – Reflective & Critical Dialectics (30 minutes)

The thematic groups will form teams of three with each person taking a specific role. There will be a **'promoter'** of a proposition derived from the theme, a **'sceptic'** who will argue a counter-proposition, and a **'recorder'** who maps the flow, counter flow and final proposed visual synthesis of the teams' thinking.

SESSION FOUR – Debrief: Collective & Agonistic Perspectives (30 minutes)

The workshop will conclude with presentation of the synthesis maps or visualisation and a debrief reviewing commonalities and divergences in the group presentations. The outcomes will be the individual maps, the structured maps and the meta-map created by the reflective and critical dialectics process. Participants will leave with visual outcomes representing relationships between economic drivers of design practice and the consequences of current notions of economic value. These maps will serve as resources for emergent strategies for redirecting design economies.

5. Intended Audience

This workshop will be of interest those working to addressing social and environmental challenges by design. Please sign up for the workshop before the event.

6. References

Boehnert, J (2018a) *Design, Ecology, Politics: Toward the Ecocene*. London: Bloomsbury.

Boehnert, J (2018b) "Anthropocene Economics and Design: Heterodox Economics for Design Transitions" *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*. 4, 4, 355-374.

Dilnot, C (2017) "Introduction to John Heskett's Design and the Creation of Value." In John Heskett, Design and the Creation of Value, edited by Clive Dilnot and Susan Boztepe, 1-20. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Downs, S (2011) Saving the Soul of Graphic Design: How Technology can Help Designers Meet Their Social Obligations. In *Sustainability Research for Designers: An Anthology, e*d. L Graham. Illinois: Common Ground.

Heskett, J (2017) *Design and the Creation of Value*, ed. Clive Dilnot and Susan Boztepe. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Julier, G (2017) *Economies of Design*. London: Sage.

NEON, NEF, FrameWorks Institute, and PIRC (2018) *Framing the Economy: How to win the case for a better system.*

Orr, D (2018) "The Political Economy of Design in a Hotter Time." In *The Handbook of Sustainable Design,* edited by R B Egenhoefer, 3-10. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Raworth, K (2017) *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist* London: Random House.

About the Conveners:

Dr. Joanna Boehnert is author of *Design, Ecology, Politics: Towards the Ecocene* (2018) and can be found on Twitter @Ecocene.

Dr. Simon Downs has is editor of the journals TRACEY and The Poster and author of *The Graphic Communication Handbook*. He writes on visual communication systems, including drawing and visualisation.