Manifesto for the M(B)A in Designing Better Futures

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In a world of conflict, crisis, and challenges ranging from the ecological to questions to equity, what is the role of design management? This essay offers a manifesto for a new post-graduate course, and possibly a new type of education. Messily interdisciplinary, it draws on design and management but also traditions in the social sciences, the humanities and the arts that are attentive to situated knowledge, experiences and aesthetics. As a manifesto, it is not rooted in any one educational institution's legacy of what counts as a discipline, what it teaches or how to teach it. Nor does it have to offer an argument that bends to any one institution's strategic goals or that juggles with limited resources. Like other manifestos, it aims to be imaginative and provocative. It proposes what should be, without being overly shaped by what is.

This manifesto is not about trying to improve management education (eg Boland and Collopy 2004; Adler 2006; Dunne and Martin 2006; Gosling and Mintzberg 2006; Starkey and Tiratsoo 2007; CCA 2009; Starkey and Tempest 2009; Datar et al 2010), but rather about creating better futures. Attentive readers will quickly note that the curriculum discussed here does not organize itself along the established lines of the conventional MBA such as finance, economics, accounting, organizational behaviour, operations management, marketing or strategy, though aspects of these disciplines are present. Nor does it rely solely on established ways of teaching design in art schools. Neither an MBA, but concerned with organising for the future, nor an MA, but concerned with the imaginative practices of art and design, this fictional course in some ways resembles programmes that already exist, but with important differences. The first is the approach to knowledge and its limits. The second is concerned with the boundaries between disciplines.

The course is underpinned by the idea that in contexts in which uncertainty and ambiguity are high, then knowledge is of relatively little value. Concepts, theories, methods and tools derived from the past and its certainties are not necessarily helpful for the future. Funtowicz and Ravetz (1993) distinguish between "post-normal" and "normal" science. For Funtowicz and Ravetz, when systems uncertainties and decision stakes are high, knowledge and expertise are contested, making it difficult for policy-makers and managers to make decisions since the knowledge which shapes them is open to challenge from other disciplines and from diverse stakeholders (see Figure 1). Existing problem-solving strategies rest on normal science in which human values are not acknowledged, high degrees of certainty are required, and quality assurance is managed relatively informally by peer review. Funtowicz and

Ravetz argue that when there are high levels of uncertainty around ethics and epistemology (what counts as valid and reliable knowledge), and when decision stakes reflect conflicting purposes among stakeholders, the methodologies of normal science are ineffective. In such contexts, decision-making processes should acknowledge uncertainty and include in dialogue all those with a stake in the issue. "New methods must be made to make our ignorance usable" (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993: 743) and new ways to determine legitimacy and competence will extend peer communities to broader social and cultural institutions. Post-normal science requires uncomfortable knowledge and clumsy solutions (Rayner 2006), rather than selecting between well-defined alternatives based on knowledge, the certainty and quality of which have been assured. What this means for this M(B)A is that it rests on a *lack* of knowledge that stimulates conversation, humility and question-making about purposes and values, a space in which design theory and practice play an important role in moving from research to action.

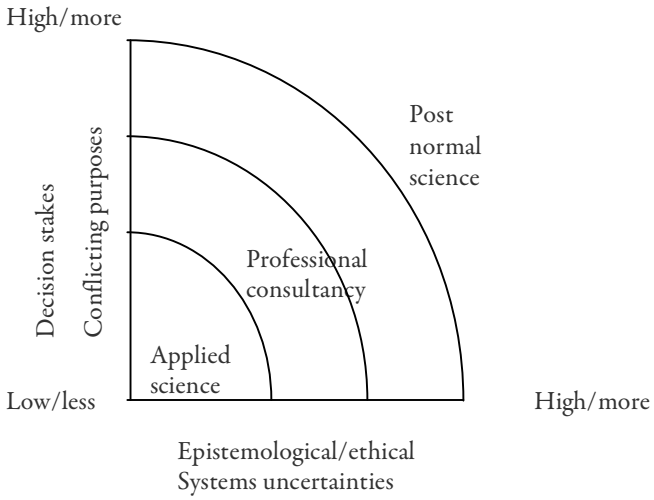

Figure 1 Post-normal science (adapted from Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993)

A second foundational idea is the attention paid by scholars within Science and Technology Studies (STS) to the ways scientific knowledge and technologies are produced, legitimised and institutionalised (cf: Foucault 1972; Bijker et al 1987; Callon 1987; Law 1987; Latour and Woolgar 1986; Latour 1987; Latour 2005; Sismondo 2009). Space does not allow even a modest attempt to characterise what is a large and interdisciplinary field, but two ideas are drawn out relevant to the project in this manifesto. The first is the attention within STS to understanding science and technology as thoroughly social processes, in which scientists, engineers, managers, designers and others are engaged in struggles for resources and in which conflicts are not to be ignored but rather are sites that illuminate what is of concern. The

second idea is the favoured methodology of scholars working in this tradition. Through detailed, local ethnographies of scientists and engineers and their working practices, this research has presented evidence of the messy, contingent, worlds in which knowledge is constructed and action takes place. Science, technology and the knowledge involved in constituting them are not neutral, nor are they unproblematically human-centred. What this means for this manifesto is that truth claims about design or management are not just accepted or presented without qualification.

Thus far we have considered the limitations on the knowledge base for this imaginary M(B)A. We now turn to the second important difference between this M(B)A and existing programmes, which is the approach to disciplines and their boundaries.

Claims about interdisciplinarity and new kinds of knowledge fused between disciplines are rooted in expectations of accountability and the relevance of research to stakeholders (Nowotny et al 2001). But the abstract notion of interdisciplinarity promoted by policy-makers and funders can turn out to be more complicated in practice, which raises questions for the project to combine design and management. In an empirical study of several projects crossing design and IT, social science and design, and art and science, Barry et al (2008) found that an idealised interdisciplinarity was more complicated than its advocates suggest. Barry et al identified three modes of interdisciplinarity. One, the *service mode*, involves one discipline being in service to another, for example design being in the service of management, an idea central to earlier work in design management (cf: Borja de Mozota 2003), or management in the service of design. The second, the *intregrative-synthesis mode,* involves disciplines integrating, for example efforts to fuse design and management into a new holistic educational programme in which design is a kind of management and management a kind of design. A key example here is the project that conceives of managing as designing and aims to complement the well-established decision attitude in management education and practice with a "design attitude" (Boland and Collopy 2004). The third, the *agonistic-antagonistic mode*, is forged as those advocating change question disciplinary commitments to ideas of what constitutes reality and what constitutes knowledge. In this mode, the encounter between design and management may be destabilising, but may also be illuminating and productive.

Barry et al's findings raise questions about what might happen at the boundaries of design fields and management disciplines. The service mode and the intregrative-synthesis mode may be the aspiration for project or organizational teams, but the agonistic-antagonistic mode may also produce important new questions and new knowledge. What this means for our imaginary M(B)A is that it will not rely on simple attempts to fuse design and management, or consider the management of design, or the (re)design of management. This M(B)A will

privilege design as the activity of conceiving of, creating and organising for better futures realised in the shifts between knowledge and action, but it will also acknowledge the agonistic-antagonistic mode that will, at times, produce irreconcilable differences between disciplines.

To summarise, in contrast to conventional presentations of new post-graduate programmes, this M(B)A manifesto attends to both knowledge and its limits. Established bodies of knowledge are not sufficient when stakes are high and purposes are contested; and disciplines, while they can serve one another and integrate fruitfully, can also present one another with important and impossible differences. The resulting uncomfortable fluidity and hybridity means this M(B)A may not ever be able to come into existence since, as conceived of here, it is unlikely to meet the requirements for awarding degrees at either a design school or a management school because of the ways disciplines are governed. But let us move on nonetheless to explore it further. This is, after all, a manifesto.

Enquiries into future practices

Better futures require new ideas and new ways of doing things but novelty cannot be easily assessed based on current knowledge. This is why this manifesto conceives of working towards better futures as a kind of design, which is centrally concerned with exploring, proposing and testing new kinds of arrangement. However while it continues to change and adapt, design education is rooted in creating determinate objects within craft traditions shaped by industrialisation and underlying narratives of economic production and consumption (Fry 1999). Contemporary design has seen an important shift away from designing objects towards interactions, experiences, services and changed behaviours, but theory and practice have so far failed to engage deeply with theories of the social (cf: Shove et al 2007; Ingram et al 2007; Julier 2007; Fry 2009). There are some post-graduate programmes in design schools specifically concerned with futures, placing a particular emphasis on sustainability and environmental concerns (eg Goldsmiths 2009; Griffith 2009), but they are not well connected to management theory and practice. In contrast, this M(B)A is concerned with designing better *futures*, rather than any specific kind of object, instantiated through practices which are understood as arrangements of bodies, minds, things, structures, processes, knowledge and agency (Schatzki et al 2001; Reckwitz 2002)[1].

Theories of practice are ways of analysing action in the world that work not at the level of individuals, explained by a person's individual purposes, intentions and interests, nor at the level of collective order, explained by social norms and values. Practice theories "highlight the significance of shared or collective symbolic structures of knowledge in order to grasp both

action and social order" (Reckwitz 2002: 246). They describe how practices are carried by individuals in their routinized or mundane ways of understanding and moving through the world, knowing how to do things, the objects they desire and do things with, how it feels, and the structures that are (re)produced in day-to-day action. The important idea here is not simply that graduates of this M(B)A will go out into the world to design and undertake activities that shape futures, but rather that this involves changing the symbolic ordering of things, minds and bodies. Arguably, design practitioners are already adept at creating new kinds of symbolic ordering (eg Ravasi and Rindova 2008), but this M(B)A goes further than contemporary design education and most management education and argues that designers and managers are designing (future) practices.

Three problematic concepts underpin this M(B)A and are explicit in its title.

Designing

Aimed at many kinds of professional working in different kinds of organization, this course draws on Simon (1996)'s argument that design is the core activity of the professions: "Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Simon 1996: 111). Simon made a distinction between the sciences, concerned with studying what is, and design, concerned with what could be. Although it rests on a simplistic definition of the sciences that ignores how are they are produced by a variety of social actors, Simon's work has been influential among scholars working in management and organization studies. His work can be read as a reduction of design to problem-solving (Hatchuel 2001) which is often contrasted with a constructivist approach advocated by Schön (1983). Building on Simon but departing from his bounded rationality, Hatchuel and Weil (2009) argue that new concepts and new knowledge result from a process of expansion during design. During a design process, concepts are generated that cannot yet be evaluated as true or not. This expansion of concepts and knowledge is for Hatchuel and Weil – and for this M(B)A – why design is important for innovation by generating new practices creating value in new sets of relations.

The decision to use the verb form "designing" in the title of the M(B)A course echoes Weick's (1979) exhortation to attend to organising (the verb) rather than to organisations (the noun). What matters in this curriculum is helping students understand and learn how to do design. An important influence is the notion that designers (should) design for change over time (Tonkinwise 2003) rather than designing objects that are then seen as complete once designing is over, but which nonetheless persist when they break or are discarded. Further, it is not only designers who are involved in designing. From the perspective of anthropology and

sociology, many people play important roles in (re)constituting the meanings and effects of designs through their practices (eg Suchman 1987; Shove et al 2007; Julier 2007; Ravasi and Rindova 2008). Designs – the final form of products and services, for example – remain incomplete (Garud et al 2008). Thus designing never ends and many people are involved in doing it.

Better

The second term, *better*, is just as problematic. The aim to make things better in the future is fundamental to design. "Science raises the question 'is this proposition valid or true?', while design asks 'will it work better?'" (Jelinek et al 2008: 317–18). But design fields have been slow to take up the challenges and insights from sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and other fields that have emphasized how difficult it is to determine what better might mean, for who, and why. If we think of a service, for example, to determine what is meant by designing a better service could involve the organisation delivering the service describing its goals and resources; identifying the market it is operating within, and any legislation or cultural and social practices that might constrain the service and the organization's resources; articulating what constitutes the service; identifying its customers and end users; and agreeing a point in time at which to gather data in order to determine whether there are improvements. Questions to be considered might include determining the boundaries of the service and of the organisation. Should the organisation only think about "better" from the point of view of its existing customers – the people who write the cheque (who for a business-to-business service might be colleagues in Finance, rather than the team who use a service)? What about potential or past customers? Or employees who co-create the service encounter? For a business-to-consumer service, to what extent should the organization consider what "better" means for members of the customer's family who might also have knowledge and practices that shape the way the customer co-creates a service? Or communities whose habitats and well-being are implicated in the resources involved in constituting and experiencing the service? If we take an organisation that is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, how far does the organization go to create a better service if this increases the work that end user has to invest in it? Thus "better" may be an aspiration, but whose aspiration is it, for who, judged by what criteria, determined by who? The tension between a design approach – the desire to change existing situations into preferred ones – and approaches in the humanities and social sciences, that query assumptions drawing on extensive studies of power relations, difference, identity, governance and accountability, is evident here. Ways of making judgments about what is, and what could be will rely, whether explicitly or not, on ethics and aesthetics, the study of which must be part of the curriculum. This M(B)A sets out to encourage students to design better futures but it will

remove any certainty about what that means.

Futures

The third term, *futures*, is also not so simple. The future is understood here as unknown and unknowable. But as Fry (1999) points out, "The future is never empty, never a blank space to be filled with the output of human activity. It is already colonised by what the past and present have sent to it." (Fry 1999: 11-12). We cannot know what will happen although we may speculate, imagine, model, propose, or hope and fear. Ideas about the future are necessarily connected to individual desires, which in turn relate to group, organization or community hopes and fears. Ways of thinking about the future range from theories rooted in religion (overcoming uncertainty through belief), philosophical traditions (limiting uncertainty through reasoning), science (dominating uncertainty by modelling what is known), economics (bounding uncertainty through calculating probability) and the arts (mocking uncertainty by imagining alternatives).

The management field that sees its role as thinking about the future from an organization's point of view is strategy. As in other management fields, theories about what constitutes a good strategy and how to create one have shifted over the years. This M(B)A will enable students to explore some of the important contributions, but it will also learn from the practitioner field known as futures, in particular the approach that involves creating scenarios. The contribution of this methodology – developed and tested in organizations that plan in long timeframes – is its assumption of irreducible indeterminacy and ambiguity (van de Heijden 2005). Instead of forecasting and simulations, which involve projecting the past into the future, the scenarios approach asks strategists to construct futures based in different underlying structures. Conversations then take place around these scenarios and their structures, turning planning into an ongoing learning proposition. In the approaches used by contemporary futures practitioners, however, the role that design and art practices can play in generating futures is relatively unexplored. This M(B)A will also attend to explorations of futures in the wider sphere such as films and literature (eg Atwood 2003; Ballard 2006; McCarthy 2006) and in critical design (eg Dunne 1999) in which designers speculate about the future through making prototypes, sculpture, films and other provocations. Creating fictions in a material or literary form is one way that designs for better futures have been proposed, from which students can learn and which they will be asked to construct during the course. Finally, following Fry (1999) and Tonkinwise (2000), this M(B)A will foreground questions of what should be sustained, rather than making overly simple claims about designing for sustainability. Thinking about what Tonkinwise calls "sustainments" enables

designers and managers to reframe their practices as designing organisations, systems and environments with the ability to sustain.

Designing Better Futures

Described in this way, this imaginary M(B)A programme may not look promising. So far the course is underpinned by concepts that are troubling and promise to generate yet more problems, not obviously the best way to create a new educational programme. But this is exactly what this manifesto claims. The course pushes students (and in their teaching, teachers too) to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. The goal is to think and act in ways that acknowledge and engage with the grave challenges facing the world and its human and non-human communities and habitats while avoiding simplistic accounts of what individual actors can achieve. The course draws in students with a bold, even ridiculous, claim: "We will help you learn how to learn how to design better futures!" but at the very same time it says "Designing never ends, it's practically impossible to agree what constitutes better, and the future is, by definition, unknown." And yet it is essential to try.

A curriculum for designing better futures

In terms of pedagogy, the M(B)A looks rather more like a course in a design school than one in a management school, even when it is teaching organisation and management theory. The tradition of case-based teaching at leading business schools gives students a sense that with the right concepts and tools, they can go out and refashion the world, or at least bits of it, although their conclusions are never tested during their education. Cases offer a constrained view of the world in which much of the messiness is taken away. Further, they privilege the student as knowledgeable actor. Students are asked to consider "What would I do in this situation?", reinforcing an identity of the manager as rational being, somewhat at odds with theoretical traditions in organisation studies that emphasize deterministic ecological and institutional factors (eg Astley and Van de Ven 1983) and without committing students to action or seeing the consequences of their decisions.

In contrast, influenced by calls for changes to management education to enable students to try out what they are learning away from the lecture theatre (eg Gosling and Mintzberg 2006; Datar et al 2010), this course will force students over two years to research, develop, test and iterate ideas by designing interventions into projects and organizations at different scales, from international policy to cities to the home, resulting in designs for future practices in the form of new policies, processes, organizations or other kinds of arrangement. Combing both studio work and desk-based learning with research and practice outside of the academy, the

course will create opportunities for students to learn by engaging with people, artefacts and structures in formal and informal projects and organizations. Conceiving of this as a design practice, students will come to think of their activities as enquiries into futures that serve to shape them, emphasizing social, cultural, political and ethical matters played out in the world. Depending on the learning goal of a particular part of the course, students will produce presentations, written and illustrated reports, sketches or prototypes and supporting research materials, but also fiction, performance, film or animation and web resources. Their work will be assessed by stakeholders of the organizations with whom they engage as well as their peers and teachers. Part of the assessment will be deferred, since the impact of the students' activities may not be clear until some time after their designs have been introduced, adopted, adapted or ignored.

This course combines elements that are not typically found together. While there exist MBA courses that teach art and design approaches, and design schools that teach aspects of management, and a few that try to fuse the two, this course draws in addition on theories and practices in the social sciences, arts and humanities.

Design theory and practice

A foundation in the course is introducing students to important theories and concepts of design in particular Simon's (1996) problem-solving, Rittel and Webber's (1973) wicked problems, Buchanan's (1992) design thinking, Fry's (1999; 2009) defuturing, Krippendorff's (2006) human-centred design and Hatchuel and Weil's (2009) analysis of the expansion of concepts and knowledge through design. Students will develop skills, knowledge and understanding of the practices of both design professionals, managers and artists. They will develop their own tacit and explicit knowledge as they engage in analysis and synthesis through iterative design processes applying design methods, techniques and tools. The curriculum will include researching experiences (eg Bate and Robert 2007); synthesizing and interpreting data to generate design concepts (eg Squires and Byrne 2002); visualising, modelling and prototyping (eg Buxton 2008); developing principles (eg Lawson 2006), design rules and modularity (eg Baldwin and Clark 1999); and using participatory and co-design approaches (eg Kensing and Blomberg 1998).

However this curriculum will not overly privilege the doings of designers. Students will also attend to the practices of stakeholders who co-constitute the meanings and outcomes of design as they engage with designed artefacts, and learn from cultural anthropology and other social sciences how to research and analyse. What happens with objects once they are in homes, work places, schools, public spaces, and other contexts may serve to augment or

undermine the intentions of designers: designers' plans become displaced through stakeholders' situated, embodied practices. This way of conceiving of design moves it away from the territory just of professional designers, or professional managers, towards a situated, emergent set of practices (Schatzki et al 2001; Reckwitz 2002).

Institutions and markets

Much design activity happens in the context of what we currently call markets, knowledge about which has until recently been dominated by the field of economics and underpinned by Positivism. Accounts of management and organisational life rooted in social and cultural approaches over the past 40 years have reframed how scholars see markets and organizations (cf Astley and Van de Ven 1983). While organizations are centrally concerned with value and value creation, how one should go about assessing what value means remains an area of scholarly enquiry researching concepts such as commodities, gifts, costs and prices and the boundaries of the firm. This M(B)A course will be informed by the shift in contemporary organisation and management studies away from thinking about exchange value towards value-in-use (Ramírez 1999; Vargo and Lusch 2004; 2008) and from value chains (Porter 1985) to systems (Ackoff 1973), value constellations (Norman and Ramírez 1993), networks and ecologies (Aldrich 1999) and hybrid arrangements (Ong and Collier 2005). In addition, the M(B)A will draw on socio-cultural approaches to understanding how markets work and consumers consume (eg Schor and Holt 2000) and how institutions form and change in response to innovation (eg Hargadon and Douglas 2001). The implication for designers and managers concerned with designing better futures is to think not (only) at the level of products, services or experiences, or customers, end users and stakeholders, but to consider how to act at the level of markets, systems and institutions and attend to their underlying symbolic structures.

Aesthetic play

Management and organization studies founded on a desire to create a scientific body of knowledge have neglected the role of aesthetics in understanding what goes on in organizing (Strati 1999; Barry and Rerup 2006). In contrast, art and design practices hold a privileged place for discussions of aesthetics. But within art and design education, aesthetics is built into the iterative, studio-based mode of teaching in which students learn through handling and experiencing materials relevant to their discipline or field. The studio enables a more sensuous, embodied set of learning practices than the lecture theatre. Like other post-graduate courses linking design and management, this M(B)A will give students opportunities to develop their practices of material thinking (Carter 2004) by attending to both visual and non-visual

aesthetic practices such as performance and choreography. Bringing to professional education opportunities for exploring the poetic and the beautiful, this course will be unusual in making a serious commitment to aesthetics in organizational life. Embracing the importance of play and its potential (Kane 2004; Guillet de Monthoux 2004; Guillet de Monthoux and Statler 2006), this M(B)A will help managers and entrepreneurs see the connections between ethics and aesthetics and learn how to create new playful practices in their teams, projects, organizations and policies.

Publics and engagement

Managers and designers have to find ways to persuade people of their ideas and attend how to they know and how they might act. They must create or engage with regimes of accountability and governance which shape what is possible and how action is understood. Whether this is conceived of as rhetoric (eg Buchanan 1995) or enrolment (eg Callon 1987), the important challenge for managers and entrepreneurs designing better futures is to find ways to represent and to involve stakeholders in conversations and design activities. The course explores different ways in which matters of concern are made public, drawing in part on work by artists and others whose projects assemble or draw things and people together in novel ways (eg Latour and Weibel 2005). What in design is conceived of as co-design or participatory design, is also present in contemporary arts practices in which artists convene new sets of relations between people and objects as part of their work. Bourriaud's (2002) concept of "relational aesthetics" foregrounds art production and the aesthetic experience as located in new ways of producing and consuming art, although it raises questions about the politics of participation (Bishop 2006). Work by artists and designers who create new kinds of temporary institutional arrangements within which publics engage will serve as resources, including artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie (Somewhere 2009), architects ZeroZero (ZeroZero 2009) and artist-activists The Yes Men (The Yes Men 2009).

Designing socio-material arrangements

Within management and organization research, one important intellectual tradition on which this M(B)A draws sees organising and organisations as constituted by both social and material arrangements (eg Orlikowski and Scott 2008; March 2007). The course will introduce students to work by leading researchers across management fields such as accounting, marketing, strategy, organisation design, organisational behaviour and operations. Instead of seeing organizations as static or stable, the course will attend to ideas of improvisation and change (eg Orlikowski 1996; Weick 1998), practices (eg Whittington 2006), narrative (eg Czarniawska 1997), communication as language games (Boland and Tenkasi 1995), boundary

objects (Carlile 2002) and sensemaking (Weick 1995). Students will be encouraged to see their professional work as the designing of new kinds of socio-material arrangements in which new practices will emerge.

Scaling and scale

People, teams and organizations have to find where they want to operate, but as geographers well know, scale is not a simple matter. Within the social sciences, scholars from opposing traditions still question the validity and worth of doing research at different scales, resulting in a serious division within scholarly communities between those who want to take a bird's eye view, and those who attend to local, situated specific activities (Saïd Business School 2009). As Yaneva (2005) showed in her ethnography of architects, practitioners design buildings through scaling up and scaling down, but not in a linear or orderly way. Within management, how organisations scale has been a consistent concern from Taylor (1911) to lean production (Womack et al 1990). For designers and managers working at project, team, departmental, organizational, city or policy levels, conceptualising at different scales and being adept at moving between them is part of the work. On this M(B)A students will learn to inhabit both the bird's eye view – the supposed place of strategic thinkers – and the detailed, local perspective of ethnographers, designers and operational doers.

New arrangements and their impacts

Where might the graduating students end up? They will work at different scales, ranging from international policy addressing global challenges such as climate change and conflict resolution, to national and regional discussions about equity and equality, through to local projects in communities or in their own personal networks. They will bring to these contexts knowledge and skills that reconceive of these activities as enquiries into futures by imagining, creating and testing new kinds of practice and arrangement. They will lead a shift away from instrumentalist discussions of policy and technologies towards a new understanding of how things come to be and how they can be changed, in which minds, bodies, things, structures, processes, knowledge and agency are entangled.

They will bring to the well-established structures and practices of public and commercial institutions a willingness not just to "take risks", as in the discourse of contemporary management, but to create new ways of exploring and representing the public good through aesthetic play. Several will become entrepreneurs creating ventures working across social and public sectors. Some will test the limits of organizational boundaries, and find that they have to invent new kinds of institution. Scaling up and down as they research, imagine, play and create new kinds of entity, these students will find that their ability to be

comfortable with being uncomfortable will make them valued members and leaders of teams and projects.

They will use knowledge from art, design, the social sciences and management but they will also encounter the limits of knowledge and engage with design-based practices to work through these. They will be willing and able to discuss the limits of defining what constitutes "better". They will be able to tolerate and work through challenging encounters with and as stakeholders and other kinds of professional who have different stakes in the past, present and future. They will design new institutions, practices and arrangements, and along the way create new methods and tools. The graduates from this M(B)A will try to design better futures. Some of them will succeed. This will be something that matters.

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Notes

[1] There is not space here for a full discussion of practice theories. Reckwitz (2002) presents an ideal type of practice theory in his discussion of Bourdieu (1977), late Foucault, Giddens (1979), Latour, Schatzki and others, showing how their ideas of practices contrast with other accounts of the social which emphasize symbolic structures of meaning.

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