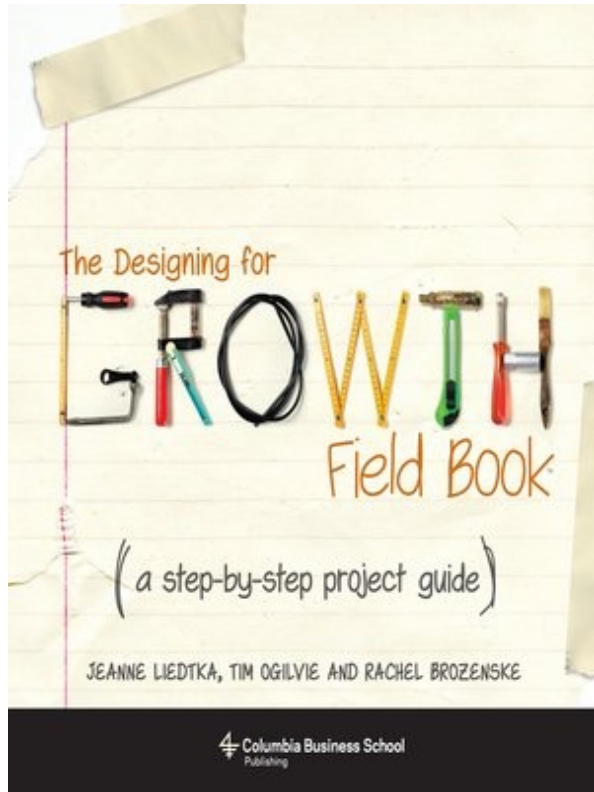
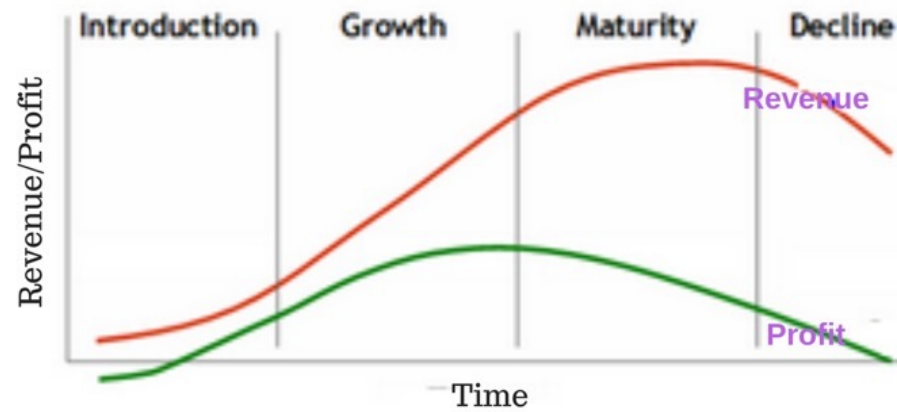


**Design for De-  
Growth:  
viable futures?**



designs  
for  
growth

### The Product Life Cycle Concept

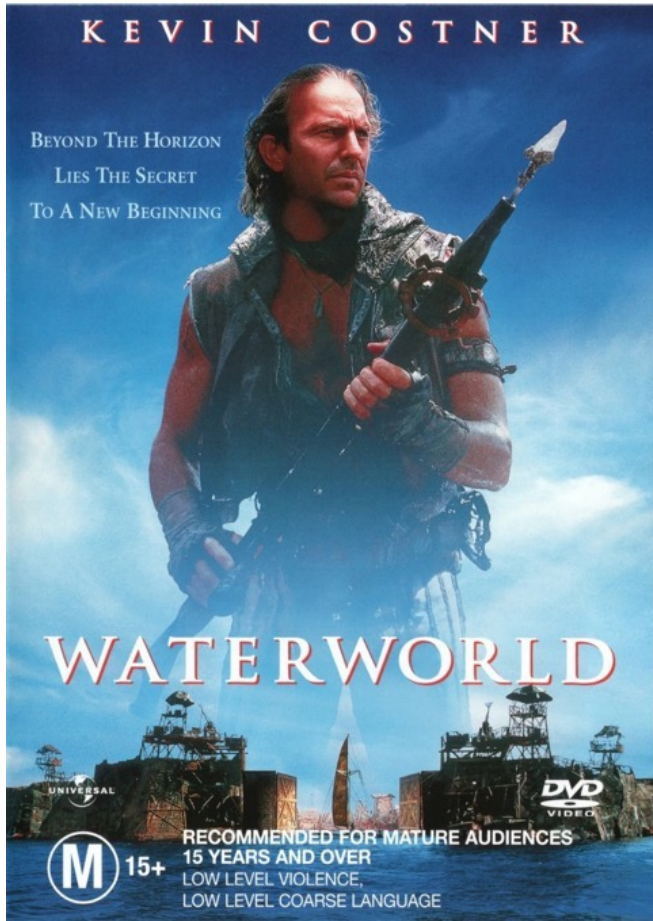


# triple crisis+

economic meltdown  
environmental collapse  
inequalities

Covid  
black lives matter  
populism  
racist attacks  
authoritarianism  
suprematicism  
fundamentalism  
information monopolies  
mental health  
space junk  
loss of commons  
lumpy geography  
species loss  
migration  
ageing  
etc. etc.





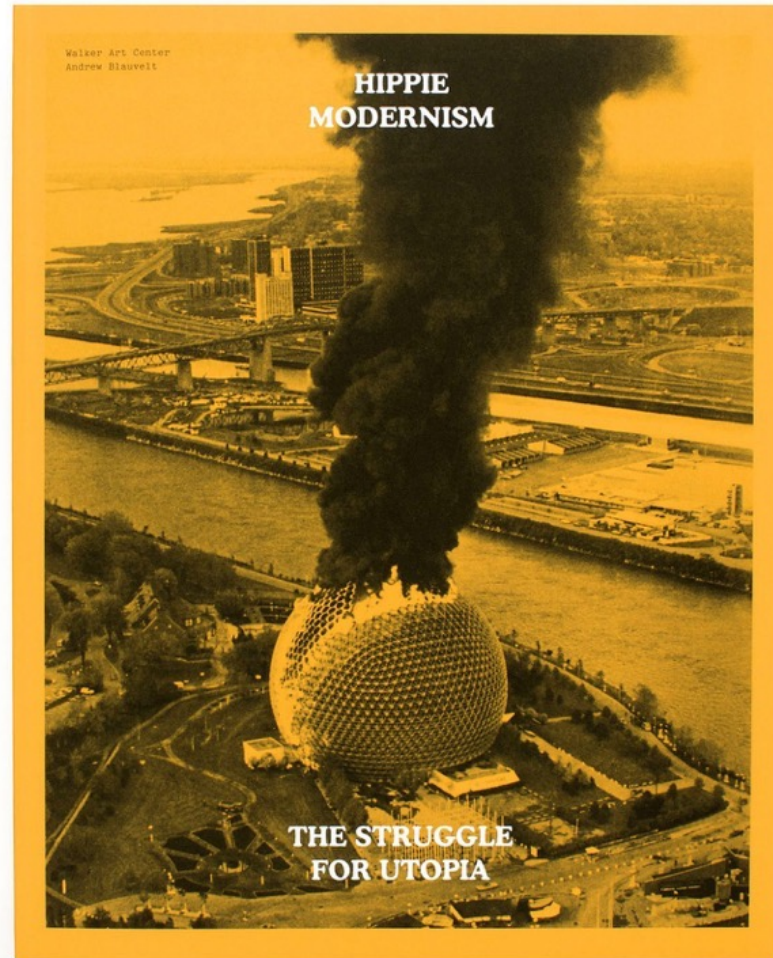




Fig. 2. Ken and Jo Isaacs with Living Cube, 1964

In architecture, living equipment, fabricating means and communications. The "buildings" and "furniture" of the old culture displayed a truly dazzling array of insufficiencies but the most arresting one was the fact that their value was predicated on their visible allegiance to value-saturated historical models. (1)

SS: So these new systems, whether architectural or informational, rejected (or "broke") the middle-class cultural values that defined the American postwar period, with its emphasis on individualism, capitalist expansion, and material consumption.

KI: Yes.

The changes indicated that the mythic significance of the status symbol might eventually give way to the conception of the object as a useful tool with which to achieve a personal experiential result. (2)

SS: I see the "matrix"—the concept of which you developed while a graduate student at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in the early 1950s—as both an architectural principle and a philosophical one, somewhat akin to Buckminster Fuller's Dywidion Principle.

KI: I chose this term ... because I strive in each case toward construction of a total environment—or matrix—that integrates all functions of the unit at hand. (3)

SS: How did you translate this concept of the matrix into your work? Your Living Structures, for example, are unitary, multifunctional living environments based on a network of grids that are easily assembled and embrace simplicity of form.

KI: You struck a friendly chord when you mentioned "simplicity," because most people never penetrated my own desire for simplicity, which is absolutely monumental in my work.

Easy to move and ship, Living Structures are ... simple and inexpensive to produce... The configuration was so simple and the principles so susceptible to variation that no great barriers existed to the fabrication of the units by the user. (4)

What this means in terms of today's crowded living is that you get more use from every cubic inch of space. A relatively large unit—such as Superchair—eats up less space in a small room than many smaller pieces scattered in a disorganized way. Since Living Structures combine the functions of a number of less-efficient pieces, you need fewer of them—eliminating clutter and simplifying housework. The openness of the space frame encourages healthier air circulation and increases heating and cooling efficiency. (5)

SS: The Knowledge Box (Fig. 1)—an alpha chamber or total-immersion learning environment originally created in 1962 with your students while a visiting lecturer at Chicago's Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology—is also built on your matrix principle. A twelve-foot-square Masonite cube, it deconstructed or challenged traditional ways of learning and remodeled information in new ways by immersing the viewer in a continuous stream of projected images, data, sound, and light.

**"The alpha chamber was a total environment or matrix designed to function as a culture-breaker."**

KI: Our aim here, partly, was to create a totally new, totally strange, even seemingly hostile environment... Here, all alone, a student is placed in an environment completely outside of his normal experience range and is exposed to rapidly presented information in an intense and exciting atmosphere. (6)

These new environments are fabricated of information, and structured so that the

student becomes the agent of synthesis rather than the hitchhiker the lecture system made of him. The amount of information input is increased many times beyond the capability of previous systems, and is made available in terms [that] allow the intellectual leverage which grows from opportunities for juxtaposition. It is by comparing that we learn. (7)

SS: When you discuss important influences on your work, you often talk about your childhood experiences growing up in the Midwest—your father working as a tenant farmer, your apprenticeship at a factory that produced earth-moving machinery.

KI: My father is the one who had the idea of making life simple. I doubt I would ever have had that idea of simplicity, if it weren't for him.

SS: So this idea of simplicity comes from a very personal place.

KI: Yes. I was about four or five when we lived in Kansas City. My father built this gigantic bird enclosure; it was about sixty feet long and twenty feet wide. He brought the idea of simplicity to it, which was so interesting to me.

SS: In connection to your father and your family roots, let's talk about the Groveland project. In 1962, you were awarded a fellowship from the Graham Foundation of Advanced Research in Chicago to build a series of Microhouses, which you realized in Groveland, Illinois, an expanse of family property where you worked for more than a decade. Returning to Groveland was a kind of return to simplicity, a retreat from the social upheaval that defined the 1960s and '70s. Yet, at the same time, you were constructing new podlike structures that integrated your ongoing interests in communalism and environmentalism.

KI: That's true. I thought how lovely it would be to go to Groveland and make work, which I saw as a continuation of earlier work, because I thought one's work should be continuous in some way.

With the elimination of furniture and the integration of living equipment, it was possible to design living shelters [Microhouses] using surprisingly small cubages... The small house, in the old culture a pathetic replica of the palace, could now offer the new satisfactions of high performance and appropriateness to the emergence of a shift in values. (8)

The application of the Living Structure principles and the Matrix idea to the problem of

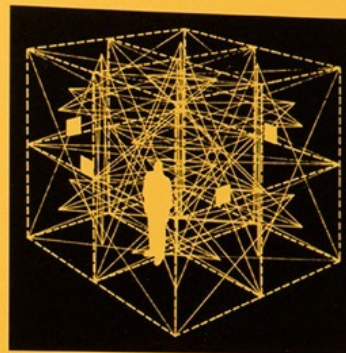


Fig. 1. Ken Isaacs, projection diagram for the Knowledge Box, c. 1962

"furniture" makes Microhouses possible. Put traditional, separate pieces of furniture in a tiny shelter and you have a shack, uncleanable, crowded and impossible to live in. The old ideas of furniture have always interfered with the development of truly compact, ecologically correct homes. (9)

SS: Here, you lived and worked with a community of people—friends, former students, artists, and other architects.

**"The only humane and effective way to break the negative grip of antique culture is with INFORMATION."** (10)

KI: Yes, people came from all over the world to look at what we were doing and to discuss. It was a very fruitful period. I didn't go down there to retire, I wasn't giving up at all. It was a time of real reflection and looking things over. Groveland was a wonderful period for me. It was like being a child again. We produced an enormous amount of work and it was very accessible. I could never have created work like that in New York. It was a dream.

SS: Did you perceive it as a utopian dream?

KI: No, because I think in very simple terms; to think in a utopian mode would be an enormous theoretical jump.

SS: The works selected for this exhibition,

been in 1981 in spite of increased per capita income. A similar result was reported over a longer period by Myers and Diener (1996). Oswald (1997) found that reported levels of 'satisfaction with life' in the 1990s were only marginally higher than they had been in the mid-1970s. In some countries, including Britain, they were actually lower. As more recent time-series studies of life satisfaction have shown (Figure 5.2), this divergence has continued unabated over the last decade or so (Donovan et al. 2002; Lane 2000; Frey and Stutzer 2000; Veenhoven 2003).

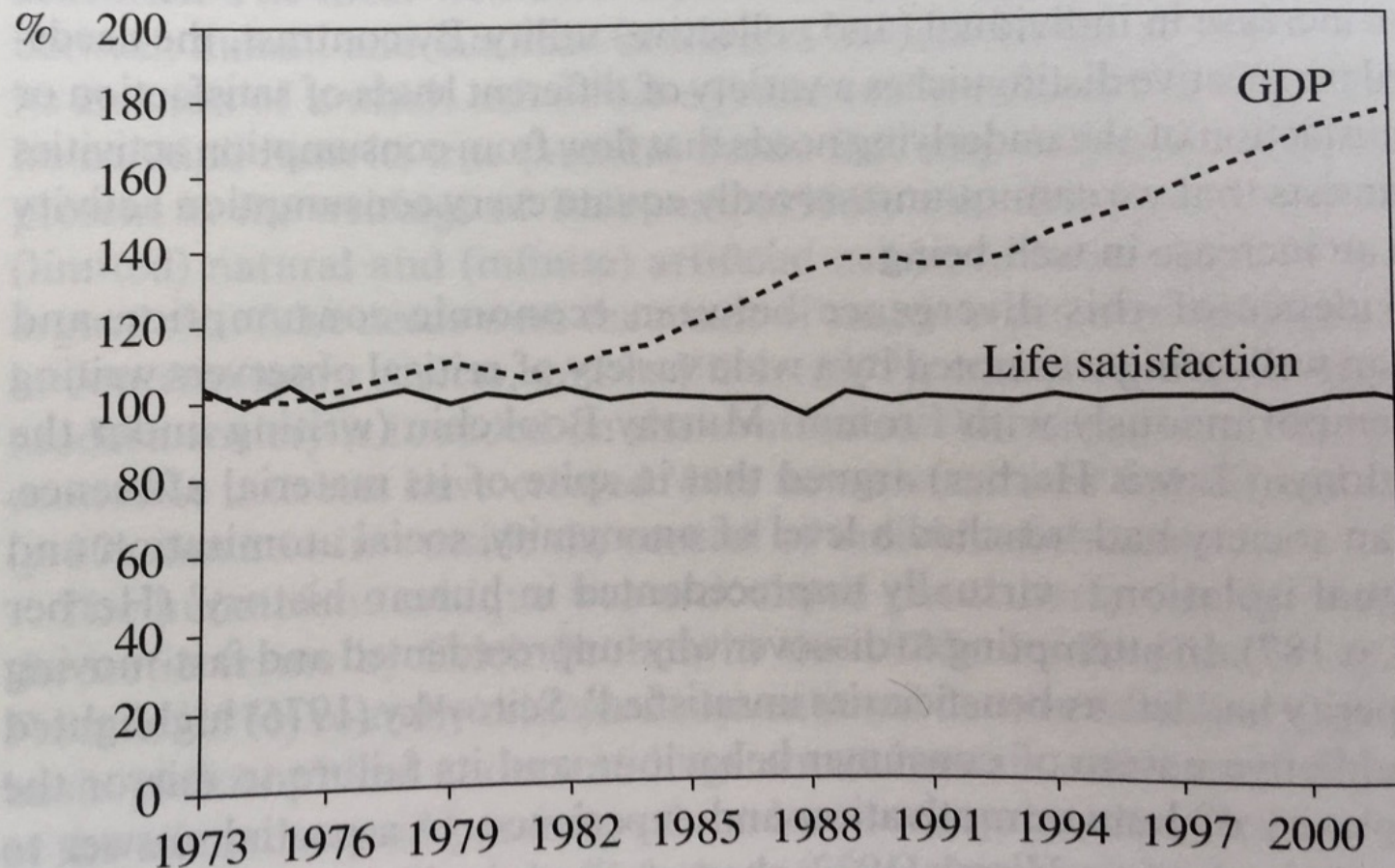
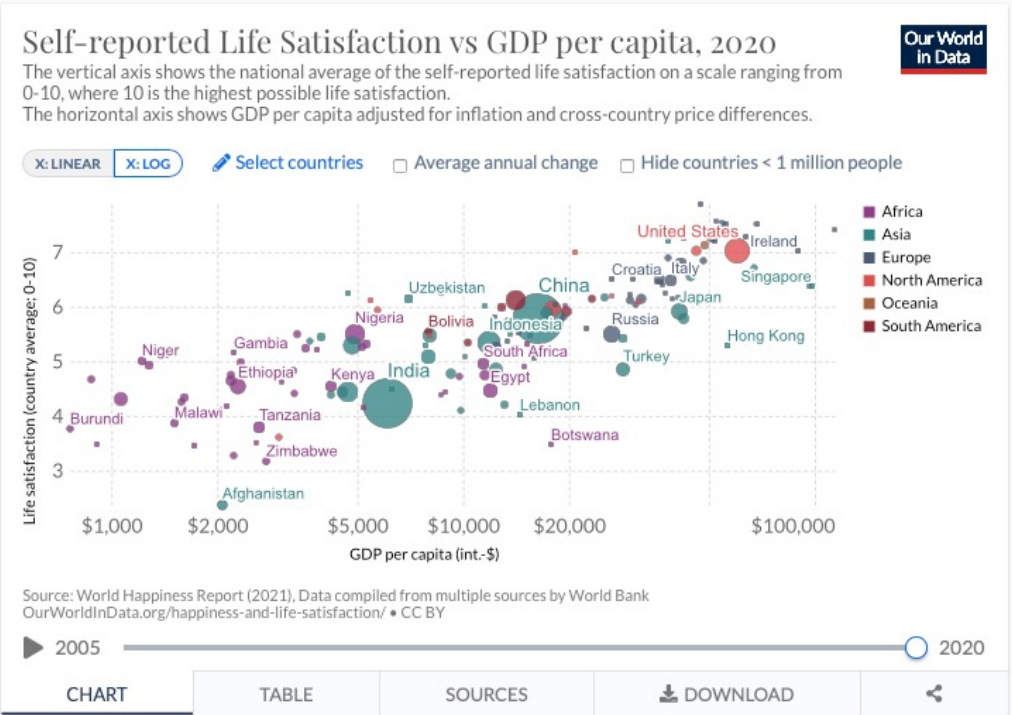
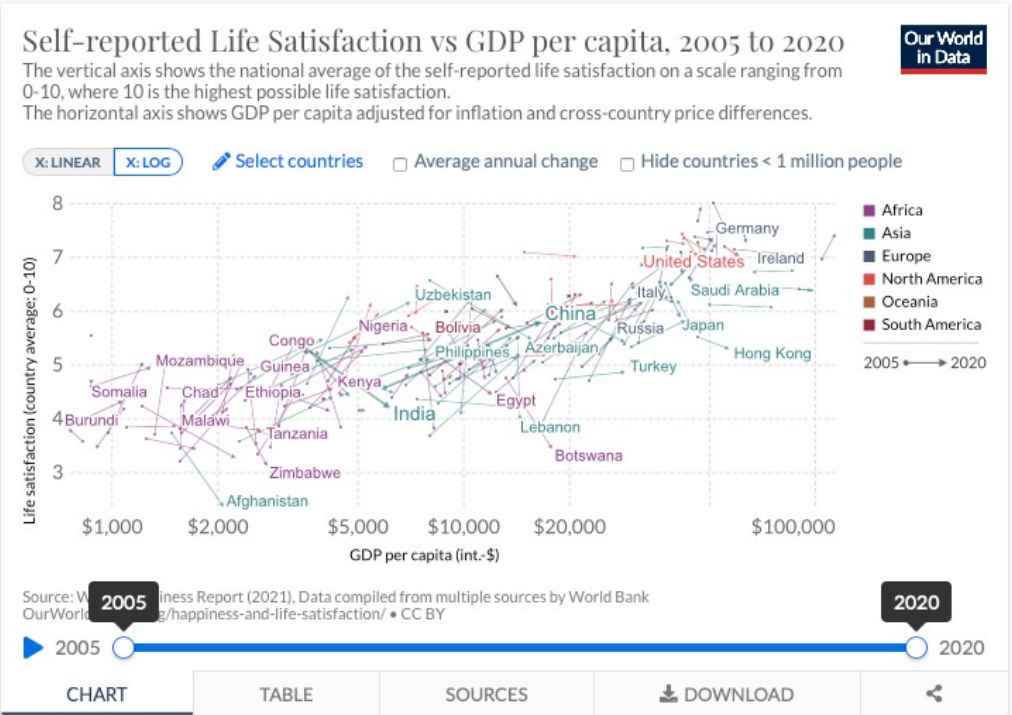


Figure 5.2 Economic growth versus life satisfaction in the UK: 1973–2001



Subscribe Feedback





Subscribe Feedback

# Design for Decline: some current examples

managed decline - shrinking cities

benign neglect - urban ecology

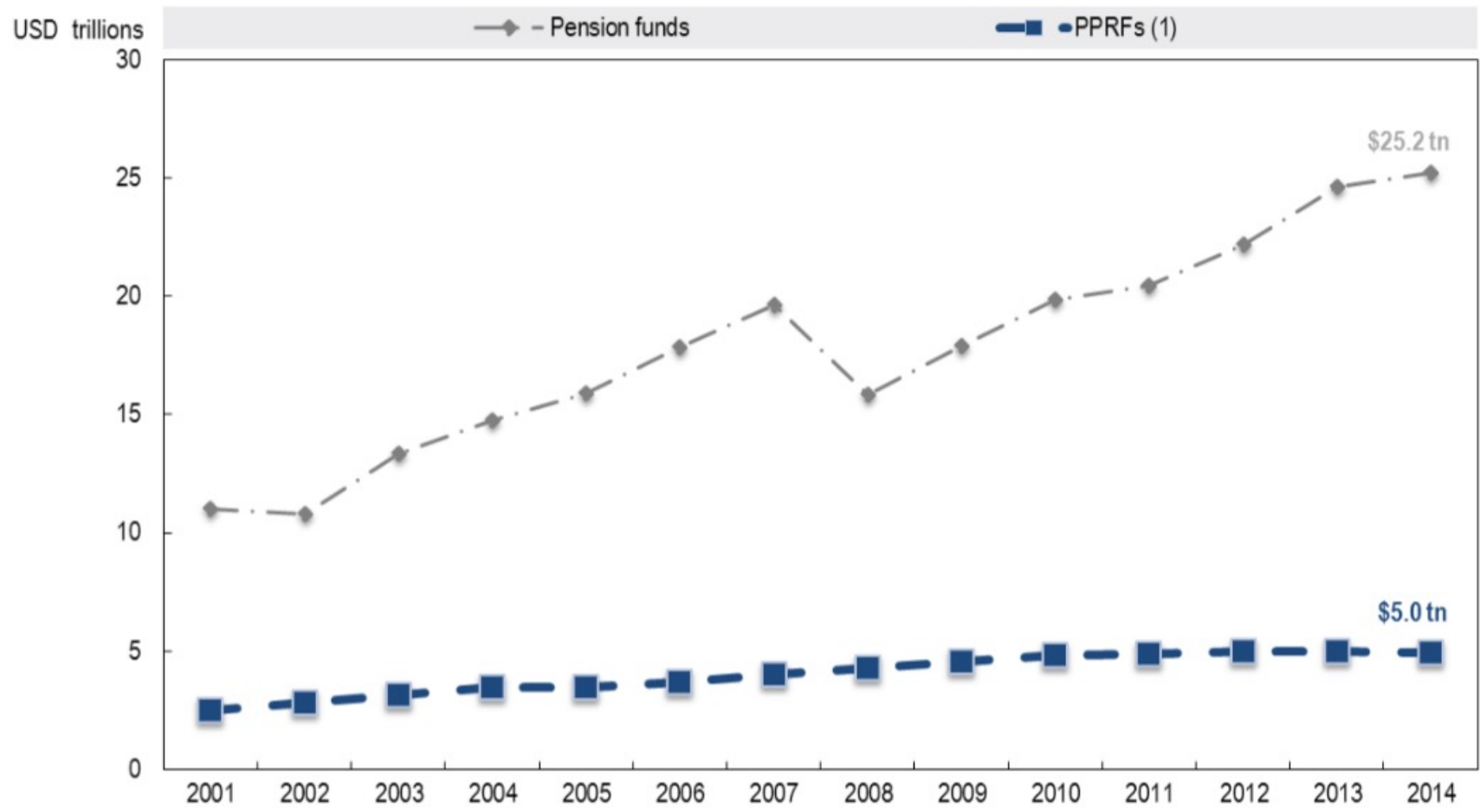
brand retirement - end-of-life products

energy descent - transition towns

steady state - de-growth economics

post-neoliberal objects - undoing path dependency

**Figure 1. Assets in pension funds and public pension reserve funds in the OECD, 2001-2014**  
In USD trillions

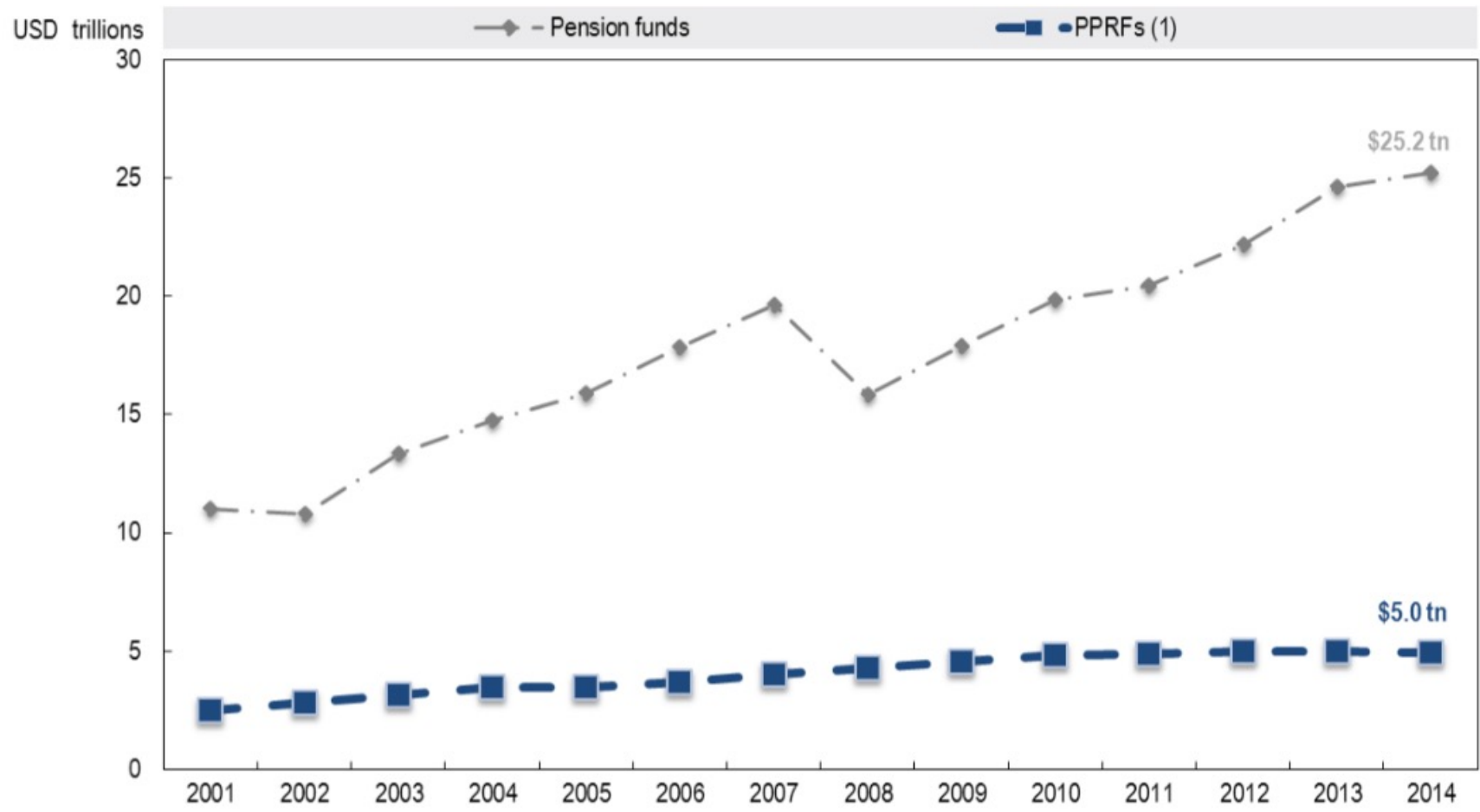


PPRFs = Public Pension Reserve Funds.

Note: Book reserves are not included in this chart.

<http://www.oecd.org/finance/private-pensions/survey-large-pension-funds.htm>

**Figure 1. Assets in pension funds and public pension reserve funds in the OECD, 2001-2014**  
In USD trillions



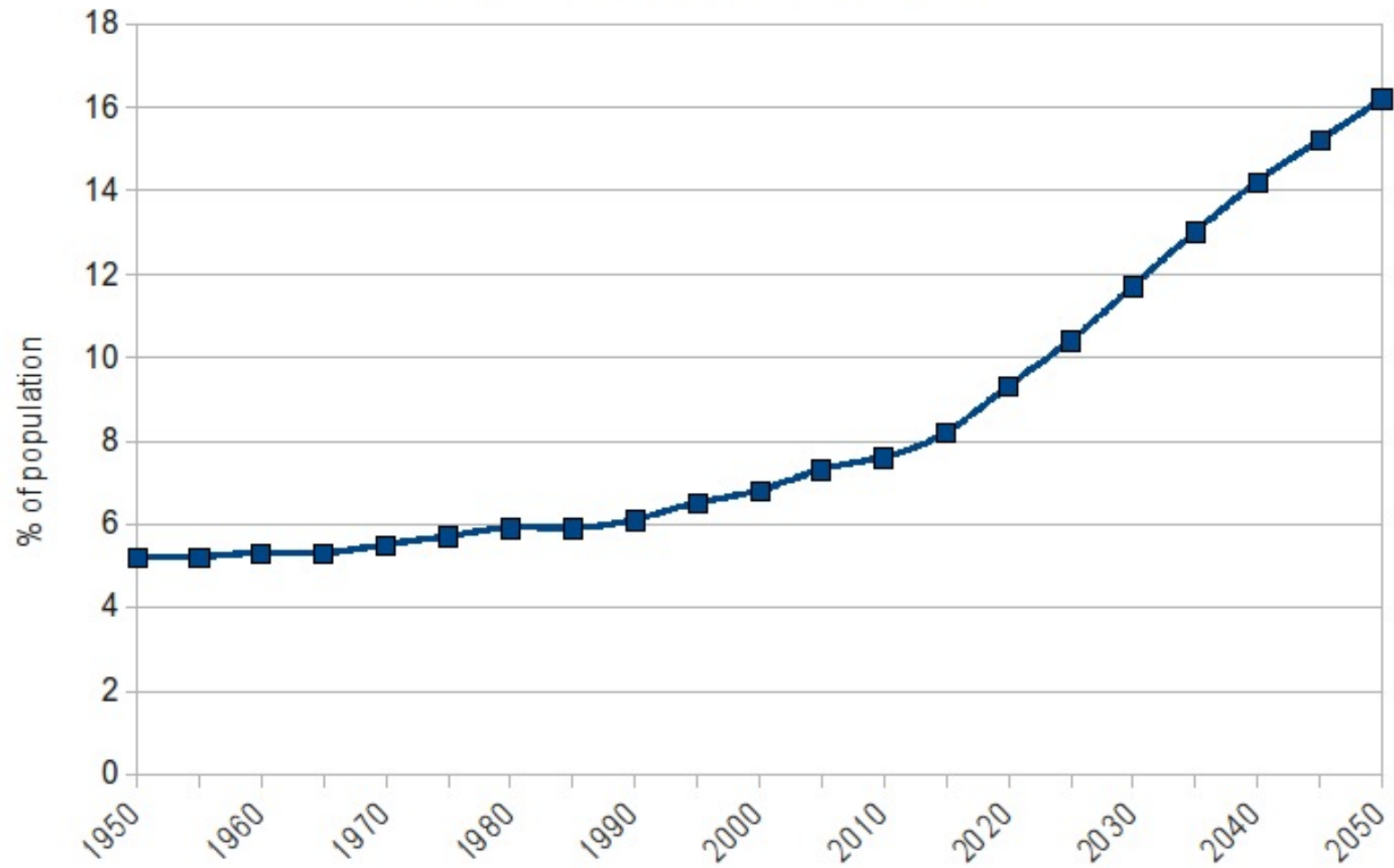
PPRFs = Public Pension Reserve Funds.

Note: Book reserves are not included in this chart.

<http://www.oecd.org/finance/private-pensions/survey-large-pension-funds.htm>

# Percentage of the World Population Over 65, 1950-2050

Source: UN World Population Prospect, 2008



**World debt: x2.5  
in 10 years!**

72%

**Advanced  
economies**  
Debt/GDP (worst case)

150%

**Emerging  
economies**  
Debt/GDP (worst case)

45%

18

23

26

30

35

45

2001

2003

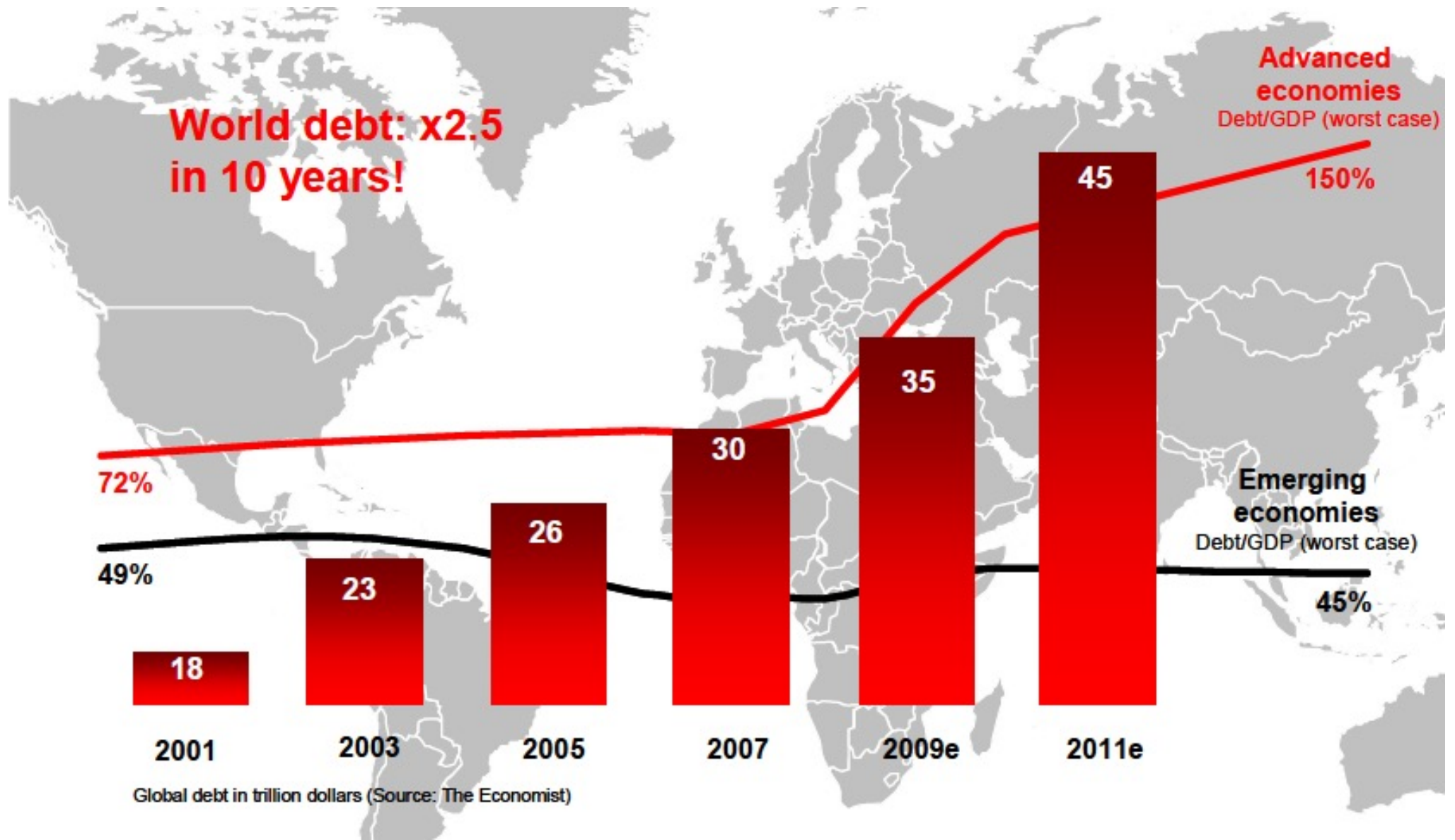
2005

2007

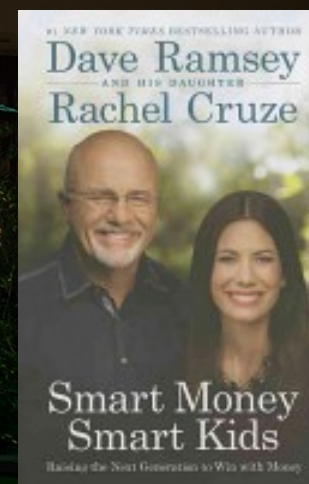
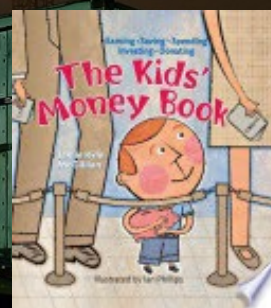
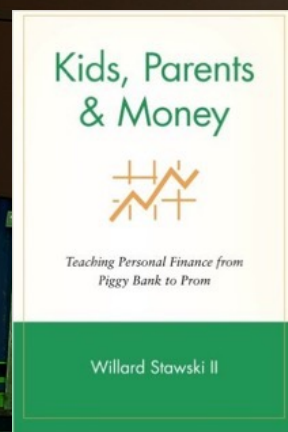
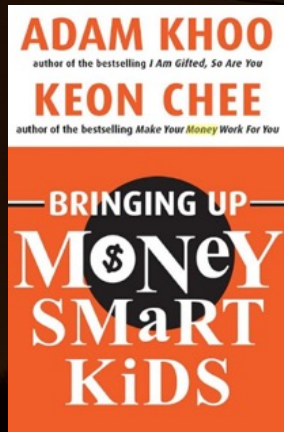
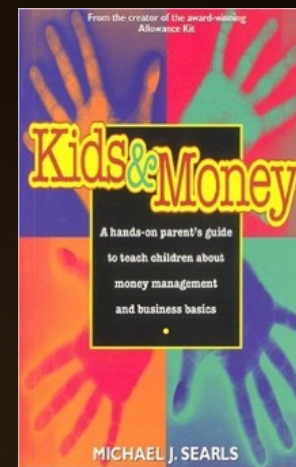
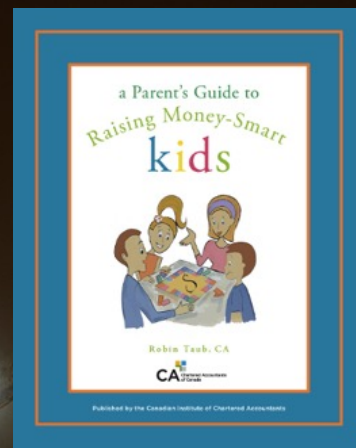
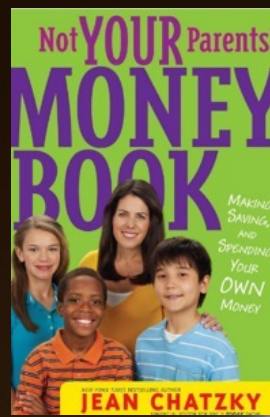
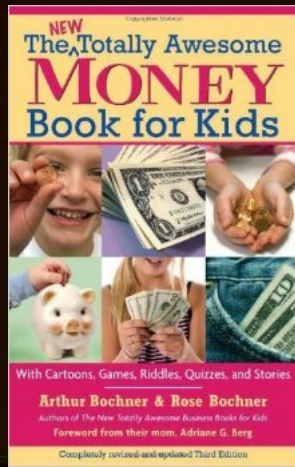
2009e

2011e

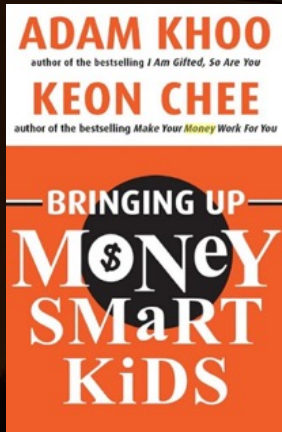
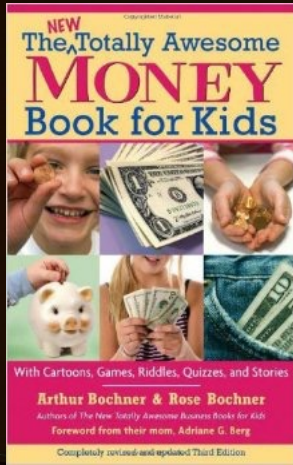
Global debt in trillion dollars (Source: The Economist)



**Chronically uneven spatial development, institutional polymorphism, and a landscape littered with policy failures, oppositional pushbacks, and stuttering forms of malregulation are all consequently par for neoliberalism's zigzagging course. (Peck 2013: 140)**







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FINANCIALIZATION  
OF  
DAILY LIFE

RANDY MARTIN

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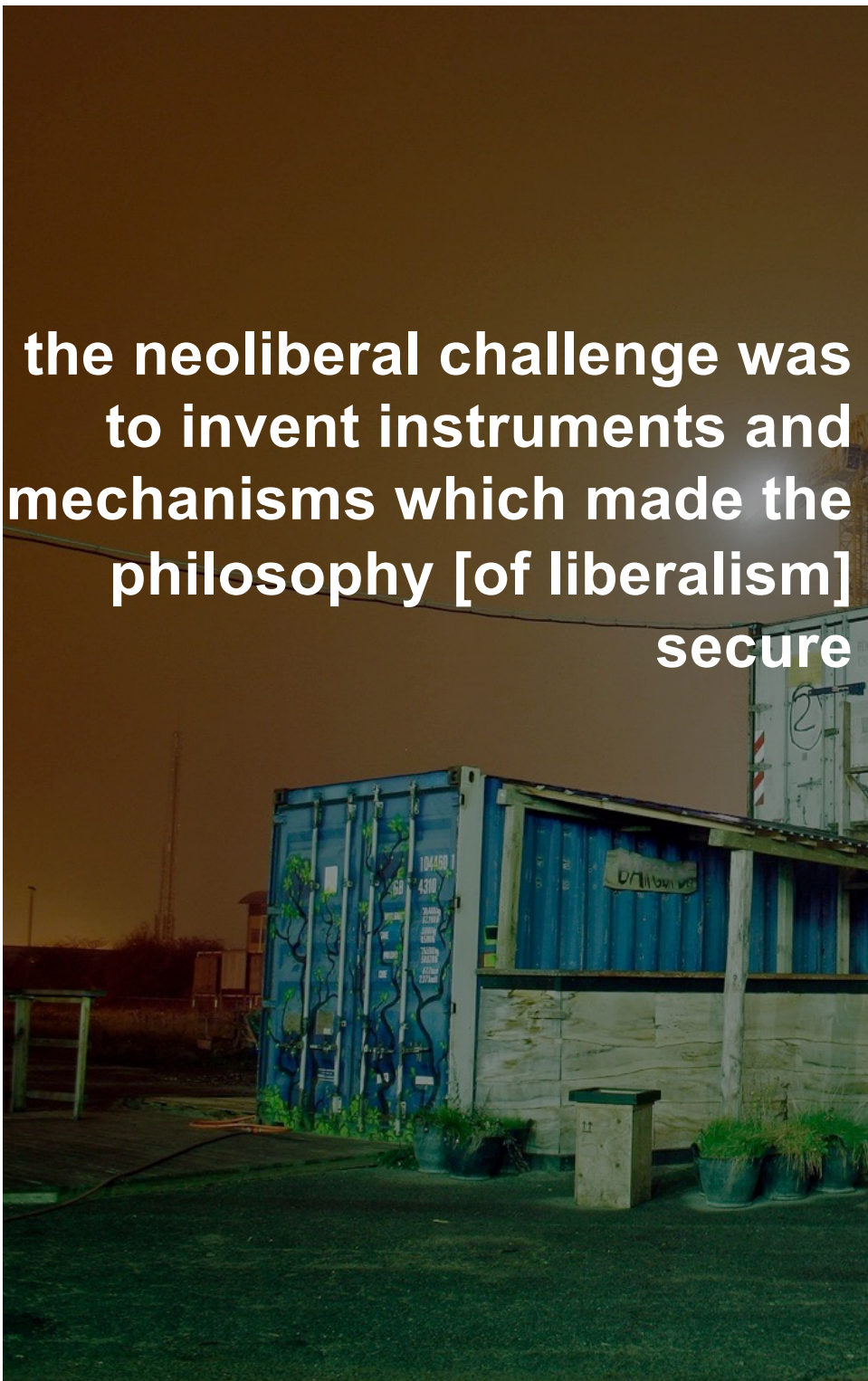


# neoliberalism

- **deregulation** of markets and privileging of market forces, free of state intervention;
- **privatisation** of state-owned enterprises;
- foregrounding of **financial** interests over others;
- emphasis on **competitiveness** and on individual, entrepreneurial practices.



the neoliberal challenge was  
to invent instruments and  
mechanisms which made the  
philosophy [of liberalism]  
secure



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William Davies

Foreword by Aditya Chakraborty

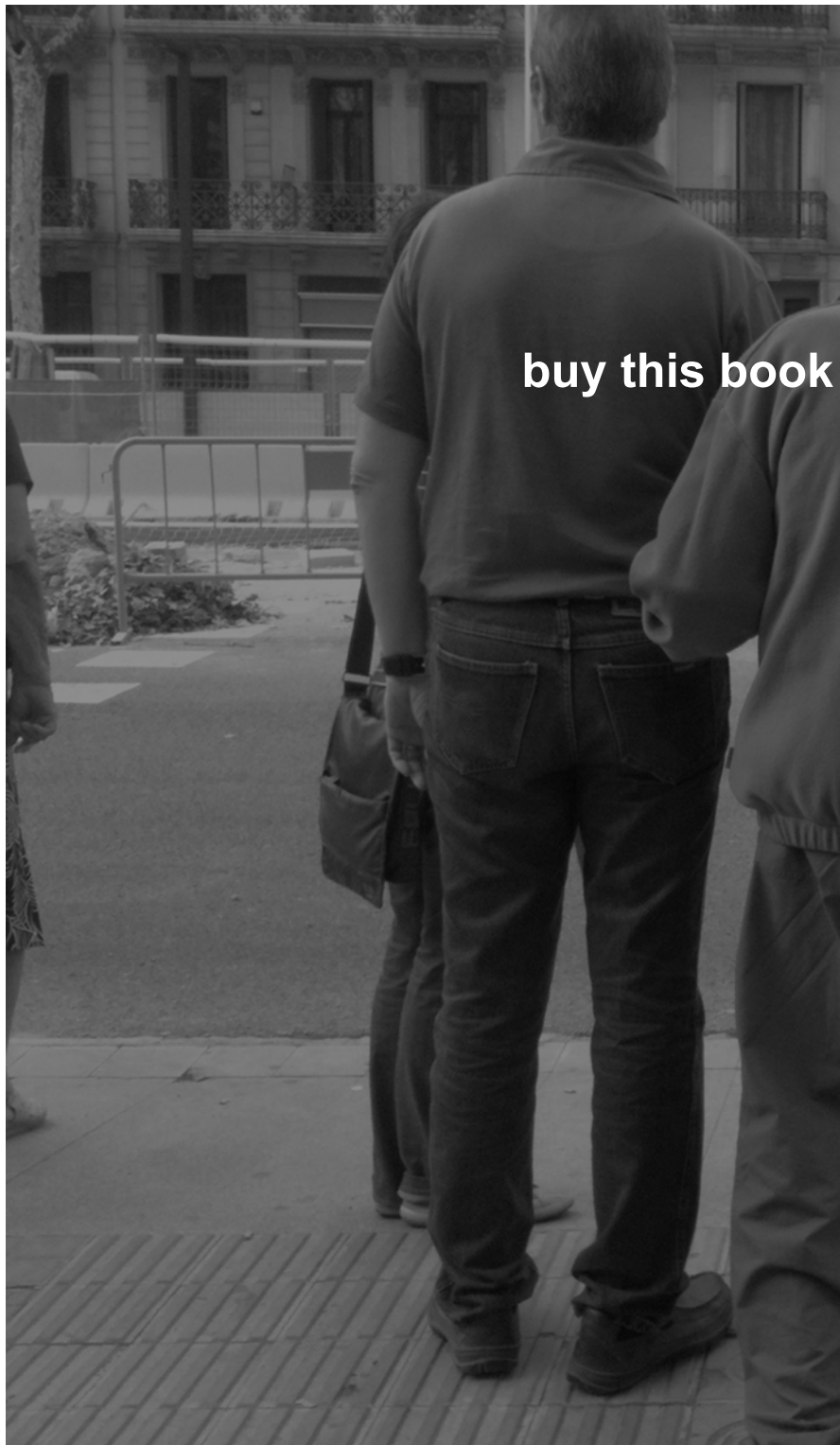
# The Limits of Neoliberalism

Authority, Sovereignty and  
the Logic of Competition

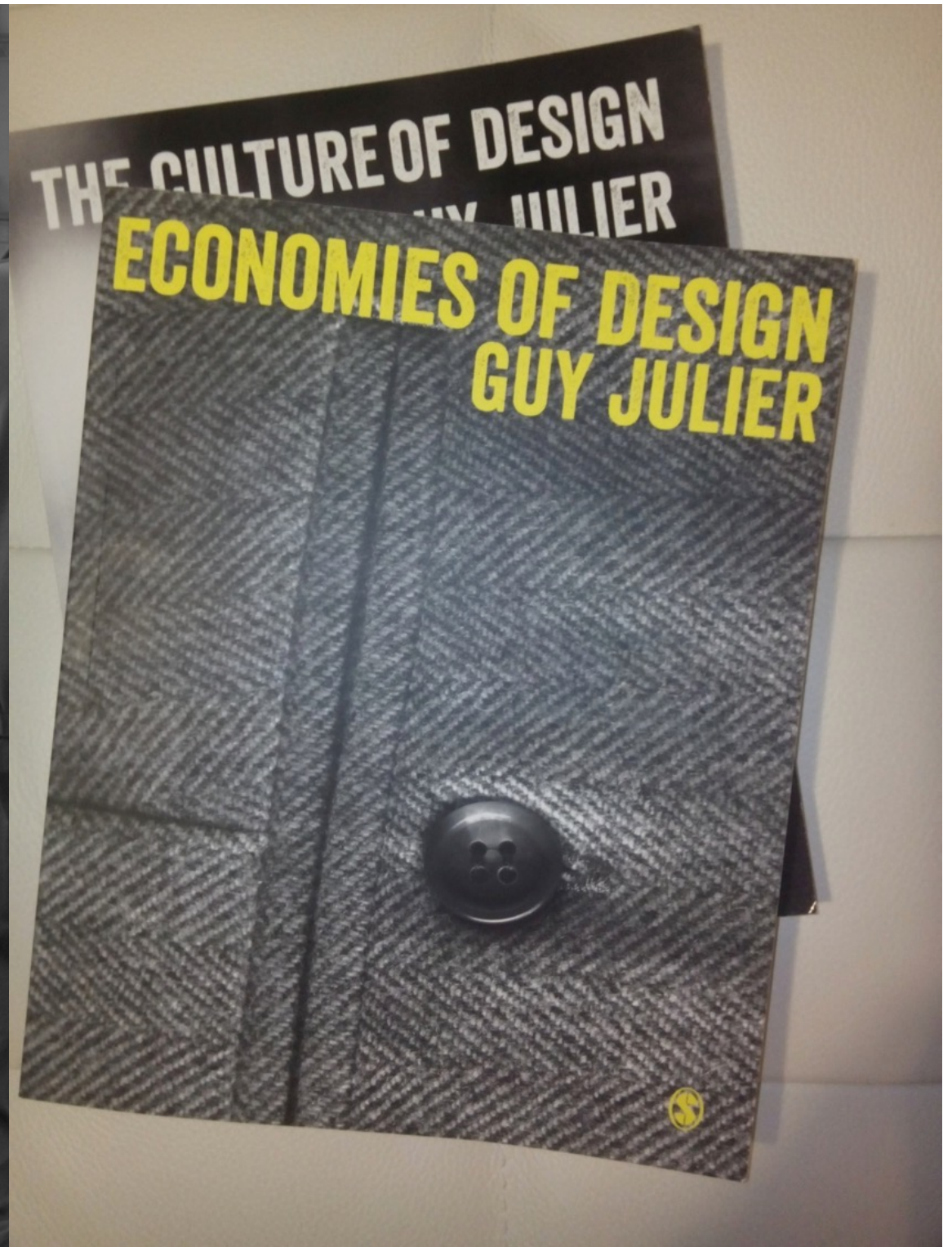
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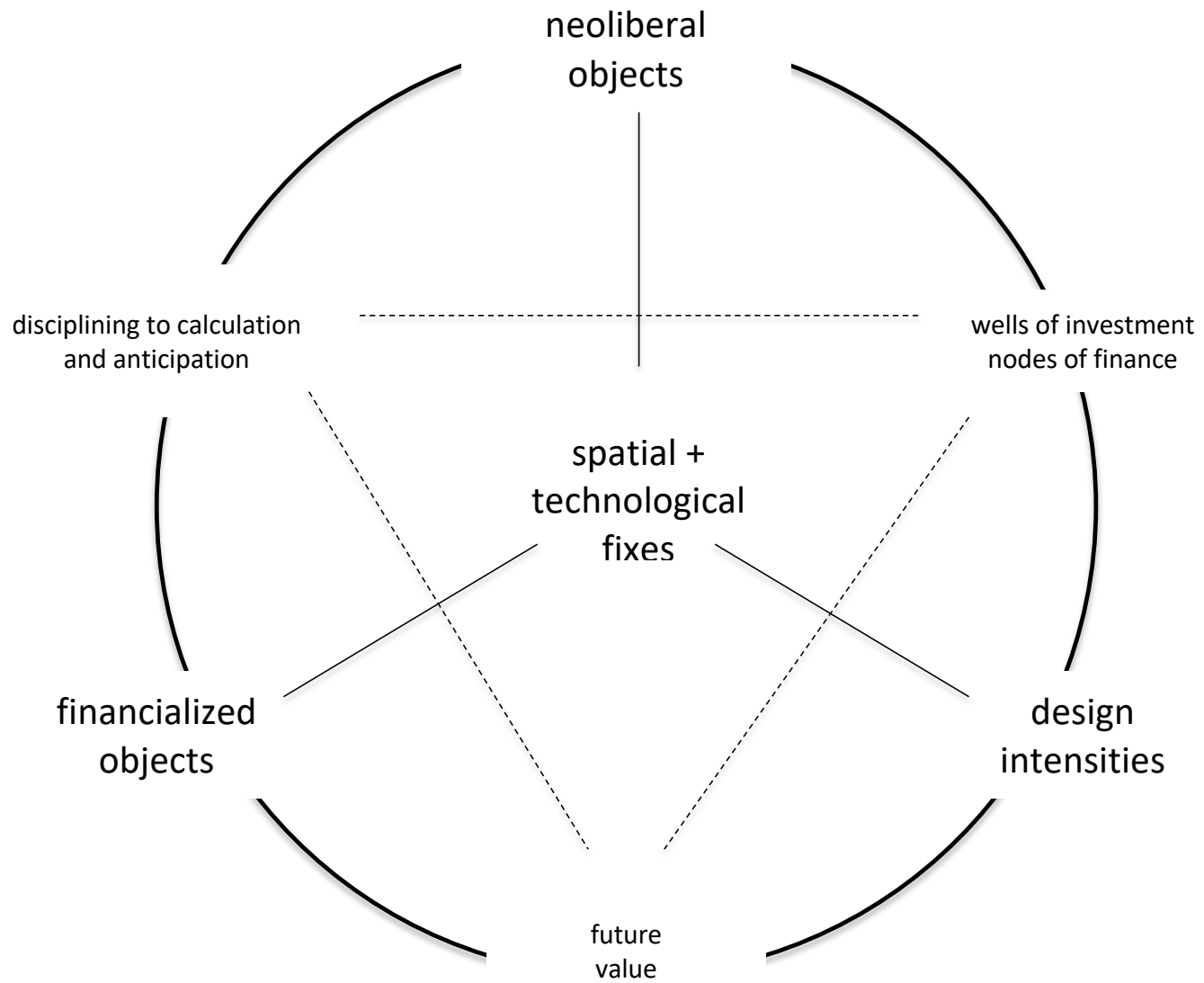


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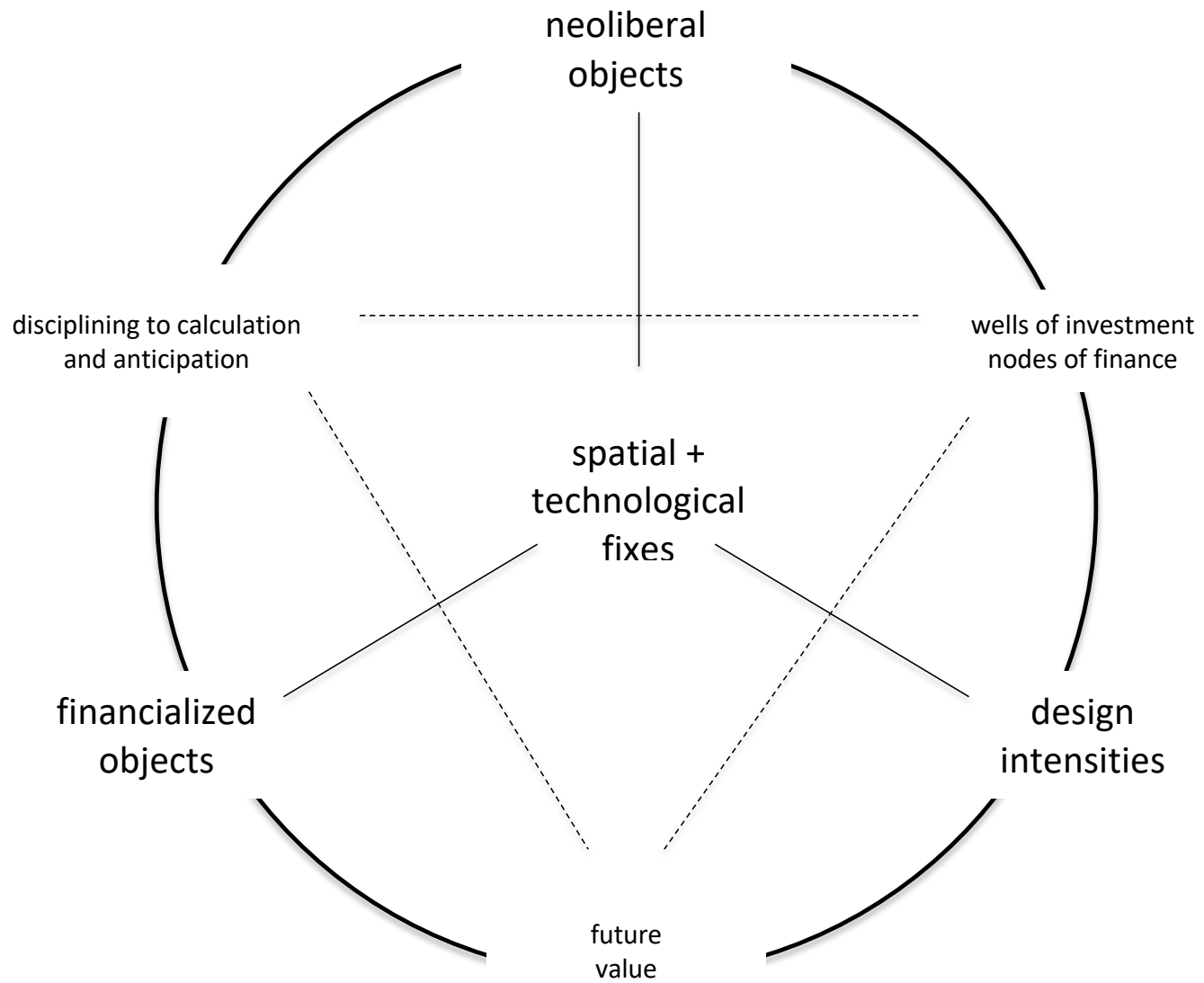


THE CULTURE OF DESIGN  
GUY JULIER

ECONOMIES OF DESIGN  
GUY JULIER



- 1. neoliberal objects**
- 2. financialisation**
- 3. intensities**



Climate Change : What Do We Need To Do To Address It, George Monbiot?

BC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wGscFxs6RY>

▶ ▶ 🔊 1:32 / 2:11

📺 ⚙️ 💬 🗉





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**31 OCT - 12 NOV 2021**

**GLASGOW**

# **COP26**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY**



**UNITING THE WORLD  
TO TACKLE  
CLIMATE CHANGE.**





sofa  
sun-days  
delivered

2 Clerkenwell Green

115



JCDecaux

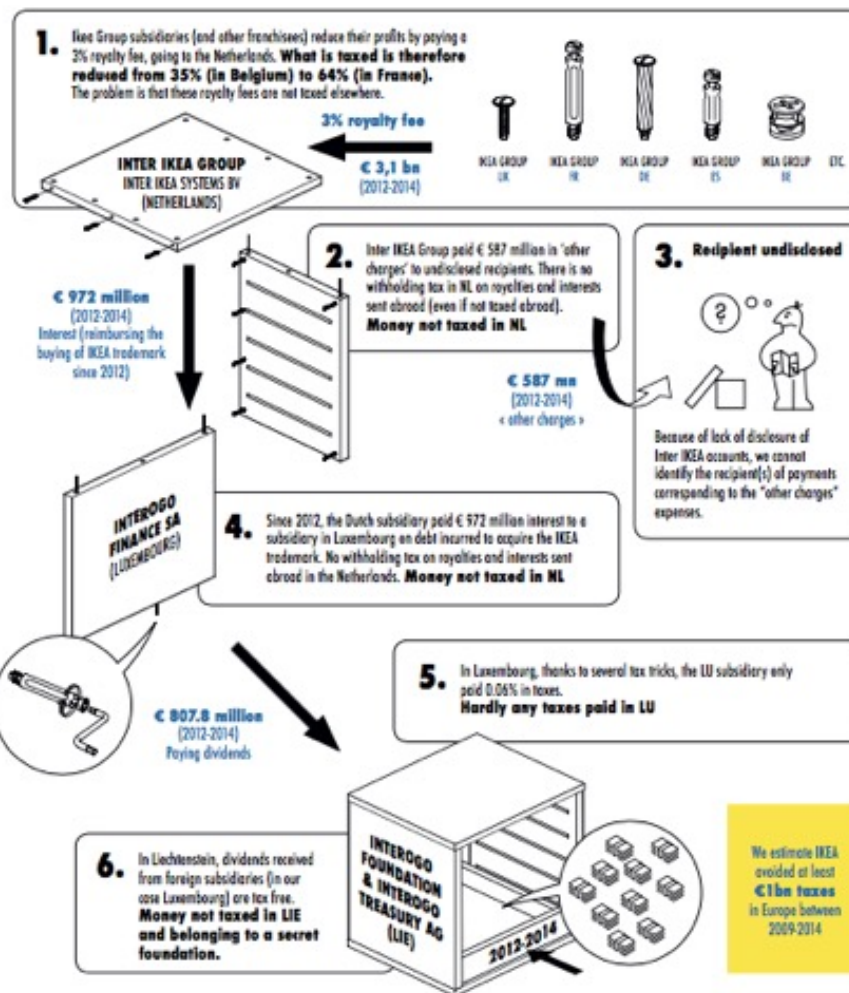
Data  
misuse  
is not  
our friend,  
it's our  
business  
model.

facebook



**BUY NOTHING DAY**

# IKEA TAX AVOIDANCE SCHEME



We estimate IKEA avoided at least €1bn taxes in Europe between 2009-2014



**other  
worlds**

resisting economic value

“spaces of the amateur” represent “hidden ‘zones’” of interaction outside the masculine systems of capitalist culture and enable new sources of value production; precisely in the “diminution as ‘only’ affective and sentimental is where new figures and possibilities arise” (2011: 234–5, 240, 252)

Bratich, Jack Z. and Heidi M. Brush. 2011. “Fabricating Activism: Craft-Work, Popular Culture, Gender.” *Utopian Studies*, 22(2): 233–60.

a new economics of small-scale  
collaborative craft endeavors

“new, net political, household practice of craft promotion and dialogue” that is an “updated approach to the traditional handicrafts”; “connective rather than collective,” it is the “networks, protocols, techniques and attitudes”

von Busch, Otto. 2010. “Exploring Net Political Craft: From Collective to Connective.” *Craft Research*, 1(1): 113–24.



*cittaslow*





## CITTASLOW INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2018, MIRANDE (FRANCE)

Map Satellite

30
252
20

countries and territorial areas
cities
networks

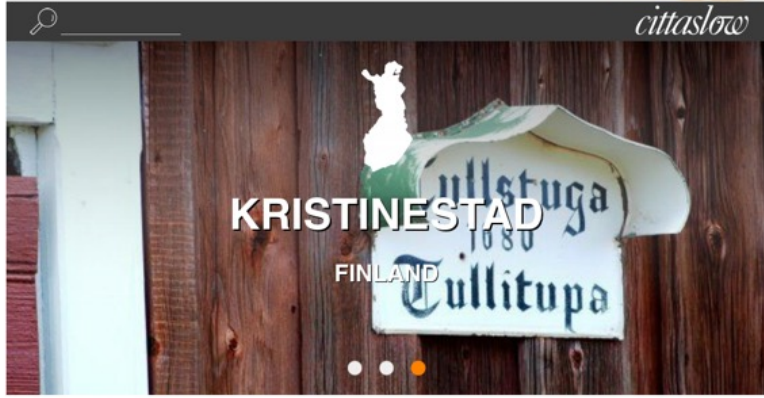
Next events:

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON SPRING 2019**

28/03/2019 to 31/03/2019

December 2018

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



Home / Network / Kristinestad

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Web: [www.kristinankaupunki.fi](http://www.kristinankaupunki.fi)

Mail: [grindgards@gmail.com](mailto:grindgards@gmail.com)  
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## KRISTINESTAD

Member of the [Nordik Cittaslow Network](#)

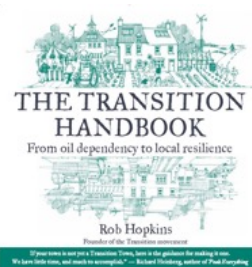
### The first Cittaslow-town in Finland

#### - A fascinating seaside discovery

Kristinestad was founded by the former general-governor Peter Brahe - after having noticed the excellent conditions for a port - on the island of Koppö in 1649. Kristinestad has centuries old traditions as a marketing and trading town and a distinguished shipping history with its ship- and boatbuilding traditions. The beautiful town hall was built in 1856. Today the centre of the little town has changed its face somewhat, but in the narrow alleys you can travel hundreds of years back in time. The authentic and picturesque wooden town with its wooden fences stems from the 18th and 19th centuries. Kristinestad is one of Scandinavia's best preserved wooden towns.

#### A safe holiday environment by the sea

Kristinestad. the town of the sea. the sailing boats and the lovinolv restored wooden



"If you want to see your Transition Town, here is the guidance for making it real. It's here with you, and much to accomplish." - Richard Branson, author of Paid Full Time

# Transition Towns





# Lilac, Leeds



The book cover for 'Low Impact Living' by Paul Chatterton. The top half of the cover features a smaller version of the aerial photograph of the Lilac housing development. Below the image, the title 'Low Impact Living' is written in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the title, the subtitle 'A Field Guide to Ecological, Affordable Community Building' is written in a smaller, black font. The author's name, 'Paul Chatterton', is positioned at the bottom left. The publisher's logo, 'earthscan from Routledge', is at the bottom right. A vertical purple bar on the left side of the cover contains the text 'Earthscan Tools for Community Planning' in white.

Earthscan  
Tools for Community Planning

## Low Impact Living

A Field Guide to Ecological,  
Affordable Community Building

Paul Chatterton

earthscan  
from Routledge

La Borda, Barcelona



La Borda, Barcelona



Sindicat: evading eviction in one of  
Europe's most densely populated cities

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA\\_vOEYnayM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA_vOEYnayM)

Elephants in the room: a community fights  
a mental health crisis

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oed\\_E-9YiUs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oed_E-9YiUs)



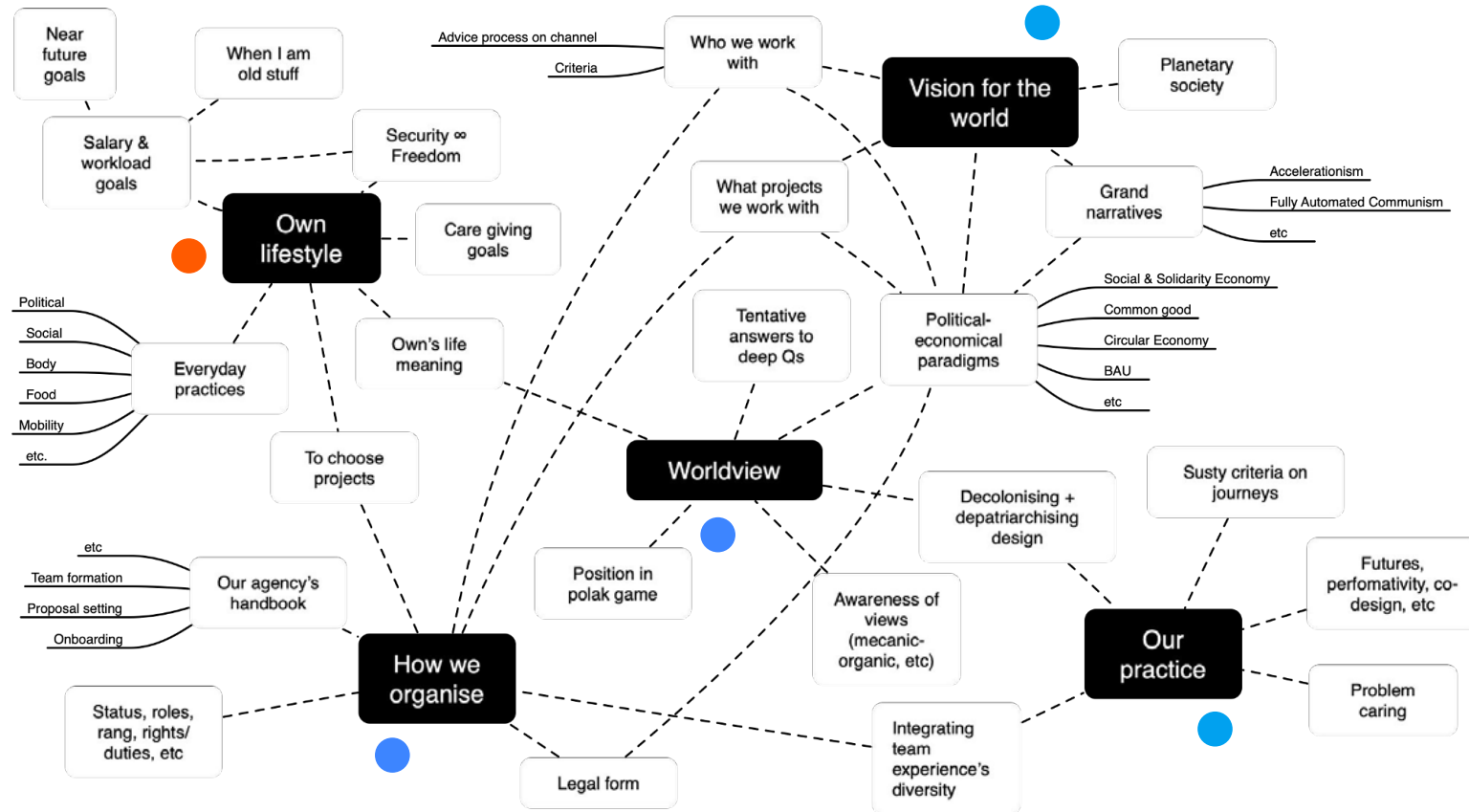
Johanne Arup,  
Copenhagen

## Another calculation:

- Design activism: 0 %
- Bi-products of my design activist practice (e.g. talks and workshops + artist grants): 10 %
- Activism (e.g. Flexwerker, Gode Penge): 0 %
- Design work (e.g. webpage design): 5 %
- Money jobs (e.g. board work in FAOD and RUC) 85 %

Adria Garcia,  
Copenhagen

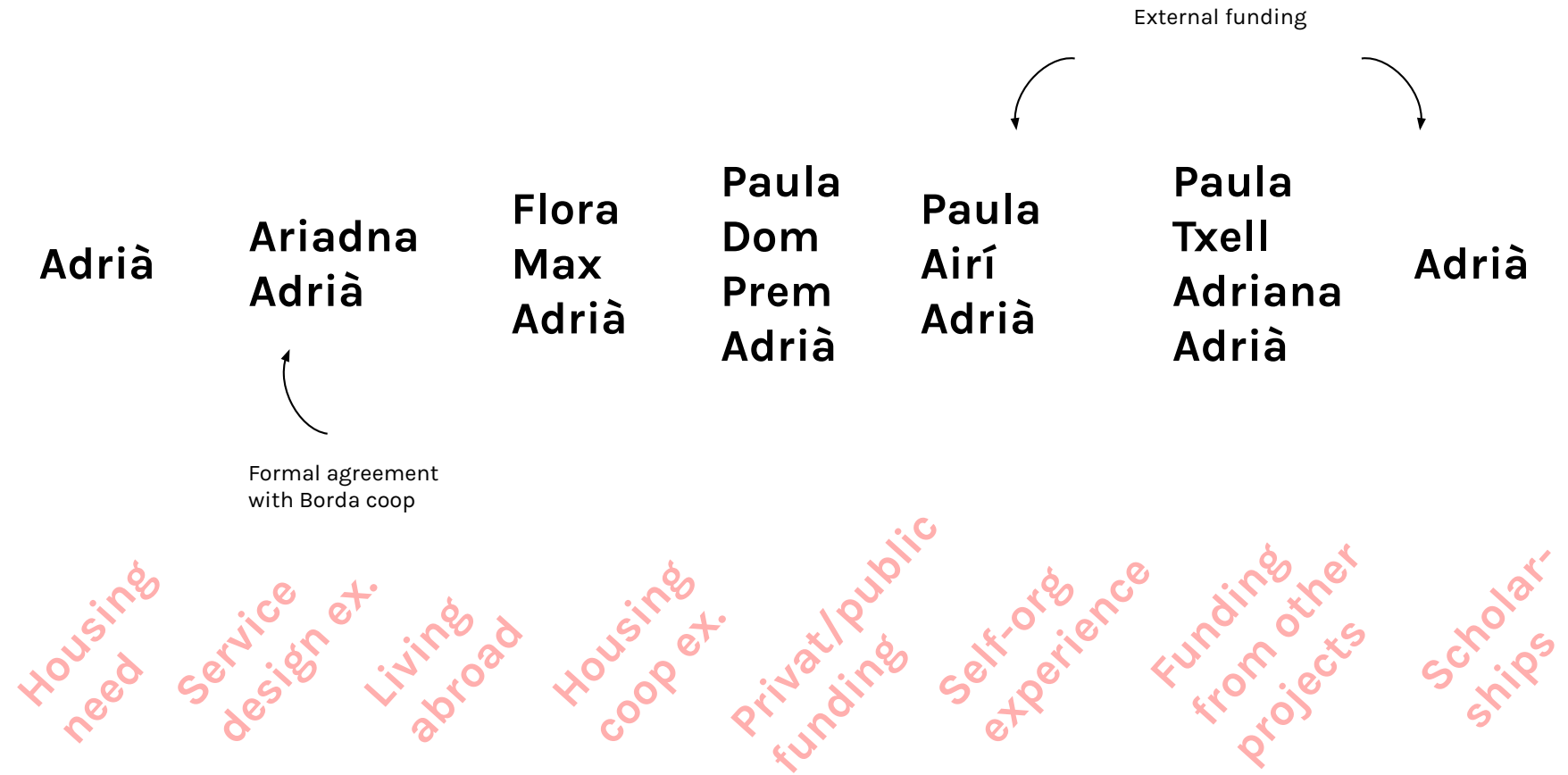
The worlds we make



Holon, 2018

# HOLON

## Team tides and sustaining dynamics



# HOLON

## Reflections on design and activism

- (Design) activism as ‘short lived’ moments of dissensus,
- \*as\* problem caring - sustained efforts necessary to fulfill the broadly assumed intention of design activism; altering the social order in which it operates.
- Diverse sustaining strategies of design activism
  - Be part of a sustaining collective/organisation, pooling resources and more
  - Volunteer and sustain yourself in a regular (design) job/others
  - **Volunteer and work in other projects that pay off time within the same organisation**
  - **Third party funded**
  - **Work within social & solidarity economy and other subversive ones**
  - Paid activist work?
  - Renewed meaning, healthy practices, sustaining closer and larger context..

**MANCHESTER  
CAPITALISM**

# The end of the experiment?

From competition to the  
foundational economy

ANDREW BOWMAN  
ISMAIL ERTÜRK  
JULIE FROUD  
SUKHDEV JOHAL  
JOHN LAW  
ADAM LEAVER  
MICHAEL MORAN  
KAREL WILLIAMS

**Fernand Braudel**

**The Structures  
of Everyday Life**

Civilization & Capitalism 15th-18th Century Volume 1

"Braudel deserves a Nobel Prize." —J. H. Plumb, *The Washington Post*



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"Confirms his rank as prince among living historians."  
—William H. McNeil, *The New Republic*



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of the World**

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"A great book by a great historian."  
—Eric R. Wolf, *New York Times Book Review*



**economy** **historical features**

material life – mundane,  
slow

**infra** immediate production and  
consumption rather than  
exchange

**market** commerce  
innovation  
exchange

**supra** long-distance trade and  
speculation  
exchange under aegis of the  
state

**economy** **historical features**

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**market** commerce  
innovation  
exchange

**supra** long-distance trade and  
speculation  
exchange under aegis of the  
state





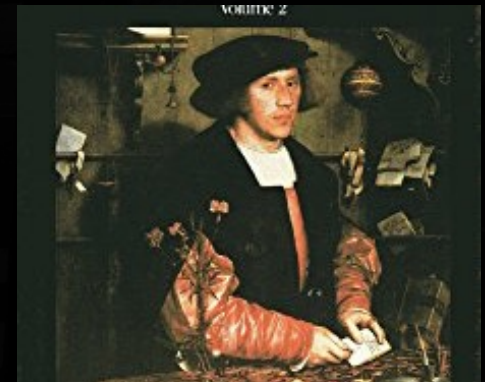
**economy** **historical features**

material life – mundane,  
slow

**infra** immediate production and  
consumption rather than  
exchange

**market** commerce  
innovation  
exchange

**supra** long-distance trade and  
speculation  
exchange under aegis of the  
state



**economy**

**historical features**

**contemporary features**

**design**

**infra**

material life – mundane,  
slow  
immediate production and  
consumption rather than  
exchange

non-monetary

**social**

social innovation  
leveraging non-us. assets  
social and cultural capital

# foundational economy

**market**

commerce  
innovation  
exchange

commerce  
innovation  
exchange

**commercial**

commerce  
innovation  
exchange

**supra**

long-distance trade and  
speculation  
exchange under aegis of the  
state

state guarantor of  
monopolies  
privileging of financialization  
low taxation/austerity

competition  
monopolies

point value

**MANCHESTER  
CAPITALISM**

# The end of the experiment?

From competition to the  
foundational economy

ANDREW BOWMAN  
ISMAIL ERTÜRK  
JULIE FROUD  
SUKHDEV JOHAL  
JOHN LAW  
ADAM LEAVER  
MICHAEL MORAN  
KAREL WILLIAMS

“While we blame others for the continuing failure of the thirty year experiment, the political responsibility for ending that experiment and starting another one is collectively ours.

Our hope is that we can work on new experiments together”

# The post-growth challenge

Secular stagnation, inequality and the limits to growth

Tim Jackson

May 2018



Image: CC0 - Michael Pöster / pixelio.com

**”There has never been a more opportune time to develop the design concepts for a resilient post-growth society.”**

# Design for Decline

**managed decline** - shrinking cities - what kind of specialists would manage these? what would they need to know?

**benign neglect** - urban ecology - what would it look like?

**brand retirement** - getting us gently off high carbon-impact practices or objects

**energy descent** - transition - designing COP27 - how else would it work?

**steady state** - de-growth economics - design a curriculum for this. What would be taught?

**post-neoliberal objects** - undoing 'growth', helping us have other values