DIG PhD scholarship

Title	Imagining Desirable Futures and Leading Transformations
Theme	The environment in which we operate is increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous – the so-called VUCA world – inevitably pushing organizations and individuals to focus on agility, or their ability to quickly respond to or anticipate any kind of change. In practice, this has led to several methods and approaches (e.g., Agile, Design Sprint, Lean Startup) that help individuals and organizations generate innovative solutions not only faster, but also more efficiently. As a consequence, in today's world characterized by accentuated dynamism, uncertainty, and complexity, humans and organizations frequently find themselves overwhelmed by the abundance of products and services available. Nevertheless, if there is anything these past two years have taught us it is that the world we live in is anything but predictable, and the ability to react and respond to problems with quick and efficient solutions may no longer be sufficient.
	It is the nature of human beings to think about the future. New approaches - ones that do not start linearly from today to design tomorrow - are needed to create better futures when the problems to be solved are "wicked" and the challenges are "grand". Dramatic transitions that are characterizing these years are questioning the inner nature of how we see problems, what is critical, what makes sense. Moreover the challenges we are facing are usually systemic because they involve several stakeholders. For these reasons new approaches that rely on the capability to make sense of a design problem among multiple stakeholders are needed. The good news is that transformational problems can be examined in terms of design; leadership is looking for new ways to lead transformation - and design has this power.
	The interest on the problem was recently renewed in the innovation community with the call from Posen et al. (2018) who invited scholars to investigate the way innovation problems are framed/reframed. Despite problem framing is recognized to be fundamental in fostering innovation, studies tackling the front-end of innovation have mainly focused on the generation of solutions or their evaluation, thus overlooking how the problem is framed., and not only the way they are solved.
	How can design-driven approaches allow to reframe grand challenges? How can design-driven approaches support the imagination of desirable futures? How can design-driven approaches lead transformations?
	Adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, this study wants to explore new design-driven approaches aimed at reframing grand challenges, imagining desirable futures and leading required transformations.

	Posen, H. E., Keil, T., Kim, S., & Meissner, F. D. (2018). Renewing research on problemistic search — A review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Annals*, *12*(1), 208–251.
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