

ESJP 2019 Workshop Materials Introduction

Thank you to everyone who organized and took part in ESJP 2019. It was a wonderful experience, and I am grateful to have been able to participate. In an effort to share some of the ideas generated from the conference with the broader ESJP network, we are sharing the materials from our workshop, “Politicizing engineering pasts, envisioning engineering futures” here. The purpose of this workshop was to playfully explore examples of the political terrain of engineering and to envision various means through which engineers can respond to injustice and promote social justice and peace. During the workshop, ESJP 2019 participants generated some interesting and complex ideas about how engineers can engage in social justice. We hope that the materials shared here may assist in continuing creative conversations about the ways that engineers can positively contribute to the world, as well as the challenges involved in determining ethical and just actions.

Engineering educators and practitioners may wish to use these workshop materials with students or colleagues in order to foster dialogue around complexities of ethics and activism in engineering. The materials are designed to be interactive, so that people can write in their own ideas into speech bubbles and scenarios, as well as draw in new characters and commentary. These graphics may serve as a template for playful explorations, and we hope that people will also adapt these images, expand on these themes, and create their own scenarios. There are many different arenas and methods of cultivating social justice and peace, and it would be wonderful if others expanded upon the few examples that are included here.

While the format of the materials is aimed to facilitate creative and playful engagement with social justice, we recognize that the issues presented have serious consequences for the well-being of people and our planet. Militarism, incarceration, police brutality, labor displacement, pollution, and violence against Native Americans and other systemically oppressed people have devastating effects. We also believe that part of the resistance to violence and injustice can involve fostering connection between people through creative expression and dialogue. We hope that those using these materials can find their own ways of navigating these complexities of addressing injustice and envisioning a more peaceful and equitable world.

This workshop was inspired by the [core commitments of the ESJP network](#), including “envisioning and practicing engineering in ways that extend social justice and peace in the world” and also that “we do not adhere to a singular definition of social justice or a static notion of what it entails.” What social justice is and how to extend it in the world are questions that can be continually revisited. In addition, the format of the workshop was influenced by the work of the urban planner [James Rojas](#), who uses art and play in community engagement. We also drew upon insights from our interdisciplinary research project, which is focused on learning more about how the boundaries of engineering are contested, what kinds of ethical questions different engineers confront in their work, and how engineering and activism converge. The scenarios were inspired by this research and our many conversations with engineers and the kinds of ethical dilemmas and challenges that they encounter when working towards social justice goals. The graphic design was done by an undergraduate member of our project, Jesus Banuelos-Rivera.

Thank you to the conference organizers and ESJP participants again for making ESJP 2019 an inspiring and memorable experience. If you use these materials in your classroom, we would love it if you would like to share about your experience with our project team and the ESJP network.

Sincerely,

Skye Niles

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