

CALL FOR PAPERS

Innovation and degrowth

Guest Editors: Steffen Roth^{ab}, Miguel Perez-Valls^c, and Jari Kaivo-oja^d

^aESC Rennes School of Business, Rennes, France ^bYerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia ^cUniversity of Almería, Almería, Spain ^dUniversity of Turku, Turku, Finland

Innovation is essential for economic growth. The dominant view therefore is that innovation and human development are inseparable. However, ecological economists have argued that an insatiable appetite for the creative destruction leads to the self-destruction of humankind. The key component of the growth engine (Jackson, 2011), innovation, constantly renovates the iron cage of consumerism that eventually consumes the planet to excess (Urry, 2010), while popular attempts to link innovation and sustainability constantly fail to green the economy as they do not challenge the overall functionality of the growth engine (Schneider et al., 2010; van Griethuysen, 2010). Innovation is therefore considered part of the problem rather than a solution for sustainable degrowth (Bonaiuti, 2012).

Solutions for degrowth, however, expressly draw on the concepts of innovation and growth, too. Defined as a form of downscaling (Latouche, 2006; Fotopoulos, 2007; Schneider et al., 2010), sustainable degrowth is consistently said to be achieved when “small to medium scale *innovations* such as shared mobility, shared housing systems or community currencies (...) can be *scaled up* and provide the building blocks of a future degrowth society” (Schneider et al., 2010, pp. 515, emphasis added). Not all forms of innovation and growth are thus considered destructive, with researchers in degrowth particularly advocating qualitative changes and social innovations (Jackson, 2011; Kallis, 2011). Sustainable degrowth may therefore be discussed as driver for change (Martínez-Alier et al., 2010), as large scale innovation challenge (Westley et al., 2011), or, as much as any emerging concept or movement, as an innovation in itself.

Innovation and degrowth are obviously not antagonists. Yet, the dissonance produced by the observation that alternatives to an innovation driven growth engine are assumed to be again in innovation and growth deserves more attention. This special issue of *Prometheus: Critical Studies in Innovation* therefore seeks to explore the interface of growth and innovation with a focus on paradoxes, ironies, and inconsistencies, the observation of which allows for an almost ludic attitude to this actually quite serious discourse. We expressly welcome contributions that challenge background assumptions behind claims for or against growth and innovation, thus refocusing images of non-economic forms of growth (Roth, 2014)

and innovation (Roth, 2015), rephrasing issues linked to de-linking (Kaivo-oja et al., 2014), or reconsidering social limits to growth (Hirsch, 2005).

These explorations may find inspiration rather than limitation in the following list of topics:

- Degrowth as innovation
- The diffusion of degrowth as research topic or social movement
- Degrowth and stratification¹
- Degrowth, innovation, and functional differentiation
- Innovations for degrowth
- Innovations triggered by degrowth
- Innovation in a post-growth society
- Social innovation and social de-/growth
- Innovation, Growth and Happiness
- Stakeholders based innovations for degrowth
- Open Innovation in a degrowth context

Deadlines and Submission

The deadline for submission is December 30, 2015. Revised manuscripts are due on June 30, 2016. The special issue is scheduled for publication in late 2016.

Manuscripts should be sent to the corresponding guest editor Steffen Roth at strot@me.com as well as to editor Josephine Maltby at j.maltby@sheffield.ac.uk. Papers that pass initial screening will be sent to single blind peer review. The guest editors select reviewers who are experts in each paper's research field and who are therefore likely to know the author(s), thus operating the journal's standard single blind review system: reviewers are anonymous, but not authors. All submissions will be acknowledged, and every effort will be made to ensure rapid processing. Authors should feel free to contact all guest editors at any time.

References

- Bonaiuti, M. (2012) 'Degrowth: Tools for a complex analysis of the multidimensional crisis', *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 23(1), 30-50.
- Fotopoulos, T. (2007) 'Is degrowth compatible with a market economy?', *The international journal of inclusive democracy*, 3(1), 1-16.
- Hirsch, F. (2005) *Social limits to growth*, Routledge.
- Jackson, T. (2011) *Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet*, Routledge.
- Kaivo-oja, J., Vehmas, J. and Luukkanen, J. (2014) 'A Note: De-Growth Debate and New Scientific Analysis of Economic Growth', *Journal of Environmental Protection*, 5(15), 1477.

¹ E.g., research on the early adapters, laggards, winners, and losers of degrowth.

- Kallis, G. (2011) 'In defence of degrowth', *Ecological Economics*, 70(5), 873-880.
- Latouche, S. (2006) *Le Monde Diplomatique (English Edition)*, available at: <http://mondediplo.com/2006/01/13degrowth>.
- Martínez-Alier, J., Pascual, U., Vivien, F.-D. and Zaccai, E. (2010) 'Sustainable degrowth: Mapping the context, criticisms and future prospects of an emergent paradigm', *Ecological Economics*, 69(9), 1741-1747.
- Roth, S. (2014) 'Fashionable functions. A Google ngram view of trends in functional differentiation (1800-2000)', *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*, 10(3), 88-102.
- Roth, S. (2015) 'Introduction. Towards a theory of robust innovation' in Roth, S., ed. *Non-technological and non-economic innovations: contributions to a theory of robust innovation*, München: Akademischer Verlag München, 9-27.
- Schneider, F., Kallis, G. and Martínez-Alier, J. (2010) 'Crisis or opportunity? Economic degrowth for social equity and ecological sustainability. Introduction to this special issue', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(6), 511-518.
- Urry, J. (2010) 'Consuming the Planet to Excess', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27(2-3), 191-212. 10.1177/0263276409355999.
- van Griethuysen, P. (2010) 'Why are we growth-addicted? The hard way towards degrowth in the involutory western development path', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(6), 590-595.
- Westley, F., Olsson, P., Folke, C., Homer-Dixon, T., Vredenburg, H., Loorbach, D., Thompson, J., Nilsson, M., Lambin, E. and Sendzimir, J. (2011) 'Tipping toward sustainability: emerging pathways of transformation', *Ambio*, 40(7), 762-780.