



ESA 2013 - Call for Paper

Crisis, Critique and Change

11th Conference of the European Sociological Association

University of Turin, Italy, 28th to 31st August 2013

RS02: Capitalist Crises, Critique of Growth and the Perspectives for a Post-Growth Society

Coordinator: Barbara Muraca, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, Germany

Proponents: Department of Sociology, University of Jena (Stephan Lessenich, Stephan Lorenz, Barbara Muraca) & Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Giorgos Kallis, Viviana Asara).

Modern societies are growth societies: they stabilize and reproduce themselves dynamically. With the rise of modern capitalism, material growth and the prospects of welfare gains associated with it became a primordial societal goal – and came to be seen as effective means of overcoming economic crises. In recent years, this societal constellation is beginning to change, as the recourse to conventional growth patterns as a strategy for fighting economic crises now inevitably aggravates the ecological crisis. On the other hand, slowdowns in growth under current conditions inevitably result in unemployment, poverty and precariousness. Moreover, as many scholars convincingly point out, if the countries of the Global South are to have even the most basic prospects of economic growth, given the increasing ecological constraints in terms of resources (peak oil etc.) and sinks (climate change), the developed countries in the Global North will have to quickly renounce from conventional growth patterns. However, given the tight link between growth and institutional stability in modern societies, a path of economic decline automatically risks to erode the integrating powers of basic social institutions, such as commodified work, the market economy, the welfare state and parliamentary democracy.

Even if such a gloomy scenario may seem to be overly dramatic, it demonstrates the socially explosive potential inherent in growth and its crisis. Intellectual and scientific positions critical towards growth and the growth society are emerging in multiple and heterogeneous ways across disciplines, countries, political affiliations, and social movements: they stem from different backgrounds, such as environmentalism, alterglobalization, Marxism, political ecology, and ecofeminism. Their critique addresses not only economic or material growth as such, but also the logics of intensification, escalation and acceleration of cultural and social dynamics, which is held to be immanent in the more general and encompassing ‘social imaginary’ of growth.

Europe and the European societies are expected to play a key role in tackling the economic, social and ecological challenges of the future. For European sociology, this entails the need to pose anew the question of how forms of dynamic self-stabilisation of modern societies, on the one hand, and their basic legitimizing principles, on the other, are related to each other. In the process of struggling to find ways out of the current

dilemmas of capitalist growth societies, possible avenues of transition towards alternative social orders need to be explored as well as the factors that are obviously blocking them.

Papers are welcomed addressing one or more of the following topics in the following two sessions:

01RS02. Crisis & Critique of Growth:

- Cultural and social dynamics of the growth logic
- Social conflicts in growth societies (labour; global conflicts; poverty and exclusion...)
- Diagnosis and analysis of the multiple crises of growth societies
- Crisis of growth and endangered democracy
- Environmental risks and uncertain futures

02RS02. Critique of Growth & Change:

- Degrowth and social movements
- Degrowth/post-growth and the challenge to democracy
- The transition to a degrowth/post-growth society
- New ways of life, labour, social security and consumption after growth
- Distributional conflicts and Global Social Rights
- Post-growth and the role of technology

Instructions

Authors are invited to submit their abstract either to the general session (open) or any specific session. Please submit each abstract only to one session. After abstract evaluation, coordinators will have the chance to transfer papers between sessions where applicable.

Abstracts should not exceed 1750 characters (including spaces, approximately 250 words). Each paper session will have the duration of 1.5 hours. Normally sessions will include 4 papers. Abstracts can only be submitted online no later than 15 of February 2013 to the submission platform at: www.esa11thconference.eu. Abstracts sent by email cannot be accepted.

The information requested during abstract submission include: 1) name(s), affiliation(s) and email of all the author(s); 2) contact details of presenting author (postal address, and telephone in addition to email); 3) title of proposed presentation; 4) up to 4 keywords (optional).

Submitting authors will receive an email of acknowledgement of successful submission receipt. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed and selected for presentation by the relevant Research Network or Research Stream; the letter of notification will be sent by the conference software system in early April 2013.

Each author cannot submit more than two abstracts (as first author).

www.esa11thconference.eu