

Growth infrastructures: The materialisation of doom?

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Workshop convenors

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Description of proposed workshop topic and its relevance

Doom confronts the planet in myriad ways. One especially critical challenge in this respect is the mounting pressure on ecosystems, which, if not reduced comprehensively and swiftly, threatens progress on countless social and economic goals. Thus, issues of socio-ecological transformation feature prominently in contemporary public and scholarly debates that have thrown the contrast between economic growth and post-growth approaches into sharp relief. Yet despite this intense engagement, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the material groundings of (post-)growth politics. In other words, we know very little about how infrastructures – understood as ‘hard’ physical objects interlinked with ‘softer’ social relations – affect the politics of growth and the countervailing politics of post-growth. At the same time, we also do not know much about how the pursuit of growth or post-growth (re)shapes different kinds of (post-)growth infrastructures.

This workshop begins to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of *growth infrastructures*. In charting this new agenda, it brings together scholars researching (post-)growth, transformations and/or infrastructures in a variety of fields, including: human geography, ecological economics, International Relations (IR), political economy, Science and Technology Studies (STS), and sustainability studies. Such bridge-building is urgently needed because scholars who study infrastructures rarely account for (post-)growth while those who investigate the pursuit of (post-)growth tend to ignore infrastructural relations. The workshop welcomes empirical and theoretical-conceptual contributions speaking to the following and related questions:

- What are examples of growth infrastructures in both a narrow and a wider sense (physical infrastructures and/or wider socio-material manifestations, respectively)? What types of growth infrastructures can be delineated?
- At what scales are growth infrastructures located? How are growth infrastructures interlinked at the same scale and across different scales?
- How do infrastructures shape, are shaped by, the pursuit of growth? How do they affect social and ecological sustainability?
- When and how did growth infrastructures arise and consolidate?
- How do growth infrastructures unravel? Under what conditions are they transformed into post-growth infrastructures?

The workshop is intended as a starting point for long-term dialogue and collaboration on the theme of growth infrastructures. Depending on the fit of the contributions, we may consider a collective publication, such as a special issue and/or an edited volume.