Rethinking economic growth in Regional Science: on new narratives and indicators

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Economic growth has been a dominant goal and narrative, basically since the development of GDP after the Second World War. The modern concept of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was first developed by Simon Kuznets for a 1934 U.S. Congress report, where he warned against its use as a measure of welfare. After the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, GDP became the main tool for measuring a country's economy. And it not only became the main measuring tool, economic growth (as measured by GDP) also became the 'main solution for everything': from poverty, unemployment, environmental destruction, climate change, financial instability, etc. (Daly, 2019).

Many scientists, including Noble prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, have shown that society in general and the economics discipline more specifically needs a different compass than GDP (Hoekstra, 2019). Alternative economic models have been proposed, such as Doughnut Economics, Sustainable Development Goals, Steady State Economics, De-growth and Green Growth (D'Alessandro et al., 2020). The fundamental value which these models have in common is that they make a distinction between *present* wellbeing, *future* wellbeing (sustainability) and also the distribution of wellbeing within and between countries (inclusion). But how to conceptualize and measure this in a way that is meaningful (i.e. measuring what matters) and clear (through a moderate number of indicators), as well as appropriate for the right spatial scale?

In this Special Session we want to bring together papers and presentations on the following topics:
- Rethinking Economic Growth: what did and what did it not bring?
- Insights for regional science from feminist and ecological economics.
- Post-growth and degrowth concepts in Regional Science thinking
- How to measure present and future wellbeing, as well as the distribution of wellbeing?

- Applications of new indicators sets like WISE (OECD) or broad prosperity (Dutch Statistics), SDGs, donut economics.
- Concepts and indicators at different spatial levels: from neighborhoods, to cities, regions and countries.

References

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Hoekstra, R. (2019). *Replacing GDP by 2030: Towards a common language for the well-being and sustainability community*. Cambridge University Press.