

Call for Papers: *Good Life beyond Growth*, University of Jena, Germany, May 21-23, 2015

The Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, Germany, and the Max-Weber-Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies in Erfurt are jointly organizing a high-profile international conference on the *Good Life beyond Growth* from May 21-23, 2015 at the University of Jena. The conference seeks to connect current empirical research on the patterns of economic growth, social inequality, and the ecological crises, with normative questions of the good life raised by scholars from philosophy, sociology, economics and psychology. We bring together leading experts from different fields from all over the world to discuss the perspectives, requirements and contours of the „Good life beyond Growth“. Among the confirmed speakers are Eva Illouz and Tim Jackson. It is the summit-conference of the first four years of the Research-consortium on the prospects and outlines of a *Post-growth-society* (see www.kolleg-postwachstum.de). In this call for papers we wish to encourage both junior and senior researchers to contribute to our discussion. The following research fields are in the focus of our interest:

a) Conceptual Foundations

In this research field we explore where our various „concepts of the good“ are coming from. How are they legitimated, and in which way are they connected to ideas of economic growth or experiences of an ever-expanding lifestyle? Which alternative ideas or cultural traditions may contribute to a good life *beyond* economic growth, respectively? And how could these ideas be defended against charges of essentialism, paternalism, particularism or esotericism? Can we conceive of criteria for a good life that no longer measure it in the range of mere options and the availability of resources? How do these ideas fit together with ethical pluralism, especially from a global perspective?

b) Social Conditions

The end in view is more or less straightforward: we wish to diminish the consumption of resource-intensive consumer goods and our reliance on wasteful and destructive technologies; we want to live as equals in peaceful and solidary societies; we would like to reduce the stress of our working lives and have more time for a meaningful and fulfilling life with friends and family; and finally we hope to achieve a greater harmony with nature. It is much more contested, however, which are the right political measures to be taken in order to get there. Therefore, this section of the conference aims to explore which political, economic and social conditions may contribute to a good life for all – beyond growth. For example: How can we overcome global problems of poverty, disease and injustice without relying on a paradigm of economic growth and 'development'? Can we conceive of alternative indicators which could be used to head in a different direction? Does the growing body of research on happiness teach us anything about that, or where else can we turn to gain valuable knowledge about these thorny issues?

c) Subjective Dimensions

Finally, it needs to be asked which experiences and practices could be called upon in order to argue for a good life beyond growth. In which way do the increasing complaints about burnouts and depressions refer to pressures resulting from the growth-imperative? How deep does the specific 'subjectivation' reach that goes along with the current regime of growth? What dissenting experiences, for example of a 'resonance' with art, nature, or self, could be named in order to confront claims of a vanity of individual resistance? Which existing practices do already work in such a direction, and how do we escape the ideological trap of endorsing a merely adaptive shift towards anti-emancipatory coping strategies and compensatory imaginaries?

Researchers are invited to send an abstract (1 page/600 words max., as doc.file) per Email to Michael.Hofman@uni-jena.de and Christoph.Henning@uni-erfurt.de by Dezember 15th. Please specify your discipline and which research field (a, b, or c) you target.

Prof. Dr. Hartmut Rosa
Chair of Sociology and Social Theory
Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena
Director of the Max-Weber-Center,
University of Erfurt, Germany
www.kolleg-postwachstum.de
www.uni-erfurt.de/max-weber-kolleg