

After the Anthropocene: A Degrowth Perspective on the Shortest Geological Period of All Times

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The narrative of the »anthropocene« is gaining traction. On the bandwagon we find classical environmentalists who are using the term as the starkest form of warning against human self-destruction, as well as technological optimists of a Kurzweilian kind eager to accelerate the path of human technological domination of nature. Regardless if there truly »is« something like the anthropocene unfolding, if it is perceived to be real from a growing number of followers, it is real in its consequences. Such a reality of the anthropocene leads to different kinds of proposals how to deal with it. In this talk we will take a degrowth-oriented perspective (French: *Décroissance*; German: *Postwachstumsökonomie*) on the anthropocene and deconstruct it together with the economic growth paradigm. If at all, the anthropocene can at best be connected to the availability of high energy sources in combination with the expansionist economic regime of late capitalism. As growth slows and turns this regime into some form of post-growth development, the human footprint will decelerate and the anthropocene will pass as a short-lived episode of human history. Finally it will be argued that Boulding's notion of »spaceship earth« does not equate with the coming of the anthropocene but with its hopefully civilized undoing.