



May 2010 Newsletter

Dear SCORAI,

Welcome to the inaugural SCORAI eNewsletter!

I hope that you will enjoy this new way for our network of academics and practitioners to forge connections and work together to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfillment, lifestyle satisfaction, and macroeconomic and technological change.

On the top right of the eNewsletter, you will find a menu "In This Issue" that serves as a table of contents. The aim is to publish this eNewsletter on a monthly basis, and we are going to do our best to maintain that commitment. Please feel free to pass along any feedback and suggestions for improvement that you may have. I am grateful to the SCORAI participants that have contributed to this issue and hope that others will do so in the future. The deadline for items to be included in the June issue is May 28. Please send your newsworthy items to me at [LStanik@rutgers.edu](mailto:LStanik@rutgers.edu).

Warmly,  
Laura Stanik  
SCORAI Communications Coordinator

## **New Research Project on Complementary Currencies and Sustainability Transitions**

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Grassroots Innovations: Complementary Currencies (GICC) is a new two-year research project based within the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment (CSERGE) at the University of East Anglia. A range of complementary currencies have emerged in recent decades. Many of them have been associated with either green social movements or designed to meet environmental objectives. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the project will examine the role that such currencies could play in a wider sustainability transition.

The project conceptualizes community currencies as "grassroots innovations" and seeks to understand the factors that underpin or hinder their growth and diffusion. The

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### **Featured Article**



**Jeffrey Barber**  
Integrative Strategies Forum

**Halina Brown**  
Clark University

**Maurie Cohen**  
New Jersey Institute of  
Technology

**Michael Maniates**  
Allegheny College

**John Stutz**  
Tellus Institute

**Philip Vergragt**  
Tellus Institute and Clark  
University

**Richard Wilk**  
Indiana University

### **Quick Links**

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initiative builds on recent work by Gill Seyfang and Adrian Smith that argues that the "social economy" is a neglected site of innovation.

GICC will first attempt to develop a snapshot of current innovations within the field of complementary currencies. To this end, we are interested in collaborators who are interested in writing short (1500-2000 words) papers that capture the latest developments in their part of the world. It is intended that these contributions will form the basis of a special issue of the *International Journal of Community Currency Research* (IJCCR). We are interested in three types of papers:

- Regional overviews of trends/developments in different parts of the world.
- Case studies of schemes which can in some sense be regarded as exemplars.
- Case studies of schemes that can be seen as particularly innovative.

The project will then undertake in-depth research on a number of "exemplar" currencies to investigate the processes of innovation and diffusion. This empirical work will allow the development of a greater theoretical understanding of the factors that support the diffusion of grassroots innovations such as complementary currencies.

Further information about GICC is available on the [project website](#). For a copy of the call for papers, please visit the IJCCR website.

If you are unable to write a paper, but would like to recommend a case study please get in touch with us via the above links.

Submitted by Noel Longhurst, University of East Anglia

## **Sustainability Toolkit at Industry Canada**

[Industry Canada](#) has an extensive website on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and is in the process of building a Sustainability Tool Kit for business and an Sustainability Road Map for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These online resources will contain practical step-by-step guidance and resources for managers to help them become more sustainable in their practices across all functions of a company, including:

- [Governance for Sustainability](#)
- [Decision-Making for Sustainability](#)
- [Purchasing for Sustainability](#)
- [Marketing for Sustainability](#)
- [Human Resource Management for Sustainability](#)

The [SME Sustainability Road Map](#) is also intended to serve as a practical step-by-step guide on why and how small and

medium sized companies can become more sustainable across a range of practices. The first phase completed last year focuses on environmental practices, such as business planning and budgeting, product development, resource use, waste management, marketing, human resources, measurement, tracking, reporting and leadership. The second phase, which will be published soon, has added a social dimension to the road map as well as modules on buildings, transportation and the role of services. Later this year, Industry Canada will add another tool on cross-sectoral partnering for sustainability. You are invited to review website materials and to provide advice on what you think could be added to increase its value to business.

You can also find on the website [Canada's SCP national report](#) which was submitted to the United Nations for the Commission on Sustainable Development meetings taking place in May (CSD-18).



Submitted by [Georgina Wainwright Kemdirim](#),  
Manager, Policy Development,  
Sustainability and CSR  
Strategic Policy Branch  
Industry Canada

## **PolicyInteractive Seeks Collaborative Research on Consumption Attitudes**

PolicyInteractive, a public-opinion surveying group based in Oregon, is working to understand general attitudes about global climate change and how it may influence our future. We found unexpectedly strong public disposition to consume less. Research to date has taken place within Oregon with the aim of informing state policy toward global warming. We are now looking to expand or compare our findings to the national scale and are seeking collaboration with other researchers involved in studies of material consumption nationally or in a discrete region of North America.

We have thus far conducted five random sample surveys in Oregon over three years, as well as detailed sector interviews. We obtained insights about attitudes about consumption, waste, happiness and related topics. Survey results to date have found that general public dispositions to consume less range between 74 to 88 percent. Research extends to examining motivations and normative behaviors. For more information please [contact Tom Bowerman](#) or [visit the PolicyInteractive website](#).

## **Report from the Field**

Barcelona was the site of the Second Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity on March 26-29. I had the great pleasure to attend this event

which was billed as a scientific conference complete with a scientific committee. Its stated aim was to discuss "socially sustainable economic degrowth, linking economic, environmental and social perspectives with emphasis on practical policies and concrete proposals." The conference coincided with publication of a special issue of the *Journal of Cleaner Production* on degrowth that compiles revised papers from the first conference on this theme held two years ago.

Studying this special issue gives you a good idea about the conference. Some articles are great, such as those by Van den Berg, Spangenberg, and Van Griethuysen. Some are chaotic, such as those by Schneider and Kirschner. The conference was like that, too. Most plenaries were highly ideological, no surprise in the Catalan heartland of leftist movements. The working group that I attended on technologies was lamentable. But again, some of the scientific presentations were great, although I wonder if much progress has been made since the earlier Paris conference in 2008.

My main conclusion is that degrowth (*décroissance* in French) could be effective as a rallying cry against the dominant growth-oriented economic paradigm, but that it currently fails to do much beyond serving as a political slogan. The sustainability movement still faces all of the usual issues and contradictions and degrowth as an umbrella fails to deliver much in the way of new insights or direction toward solutions. In fact, it tends to deflect attention from the really important issues. The Dutch ecological economist Jeroen Van den Berg also asserts that growth or degrowth is not the main issue, but how to enhance wellbeing and equity while reducing environmental destruction. The primary challenges are the existing power relationships, the dominance of the global financial sector, and to the formulation of solutions and strategies that are theoretically and practically robust. Sure enough, the conference addressed these issues, but failed to show what added value the degrowth slogan is able to contribute to this effort.

Submitted by [Philip Vergragt](#), Tellus Institute and Clark University

## Hot Off the Presses: New Publications by SCORAI Members and Friends

### Books

Eugene A. Rosa, Andreas Diekmann, Thomas Dietz, and Carlo Jaeger (Eds). 2010. ***Human Footprints on the Global Environment: Threats to Sustainability***. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Princen, Thomas. 2010. ***Treading Softly: Paths to Ecological Order***. Cambridge: MIT Press.

## Book Chapters

Wilk, Richard. 2009. "Consuming Ourselves to Death." In Anthropology and **[Climate Change: From Encounters to Actions](#)**, edited by Susan Crate. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.

## Journal Articles

Wilk, Richard. 2009. "Consumo, Cultura e Sustentabilidade," **[Marketing](#)**, 43:440 (in Portuguese).

Cohen, Maurie. 2010. "The International Political Economy of (Un)sustainable Consumption and the Global Financial Collapse," **[Environmental Politics](#)**, 19(1):108-127.

Cohen, Maurie. 2010. "Is the UK Preparing for "War"? Military Metaphors, Personal Carbon Allowances, and Consumption Rationing in Historical Perspective," **[Climatic Change](#)** (available in SpringerLink Early View).

## Reports

Calwell, Chris. 2010. **[Is Efficient Sufficient? The Case for Shifting Our Emphasis in Energy Specifications to Progressive Efficiency and Sufficiency](#)**. Stockholm: European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

Marrakech Process Secretariat, United Nations Environment Programme, and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2010. **[Paving the Way to Sustainable Consumption and Production: Marrakech Process Progress Report](#)**. New York: UNDESA.

New Economics Foundation. 2010. **[Growth Isn't Possible: Why We Need a New Economic Direction](#)**. London: NEF.

New Economics Foundation. 2010. **[21 Hours: Why a Shorter Working Week Can Help Us All to Flourish in the 21st Century](#)**. London: NEF.

New Economics Foundation. 2010. **[The Great Transition: A Tale of How it Turned Out Right](#)**. London: NEF.

**[Bowerman, Tom and PolicyInteractive](#)**. 2010. **[How Much Is Enough? Evidencing Public Support for Consuming Less](#)**. Eugene, OR: PolicyInteractive.

## Special Journal Issues

**[Journal of Cleaner Production](#)** (Theme: Growth, Recession, or Degrowth for Sustainability and Equity?), Volume 18, Number 6 (2010) (edited by

**[Journal of Industrial Ecology](#)** (Theme: Sustainable

Consumption and Production), Volume 14, Number 1 (2010).

**Natural Resources Journal** (Theme: Sustainable Consumption and Production), Volume 34, Number 1 (2010).

## **Other New Publications of Interest**

Leonard, Annie. 2010. **The Story of Stuff: How Our Obsession with Stuff is Trashing the Planet, Our Communities, and Our Health--And a Vision for Change.** New York: Free Press.

Potter, Andrew. 2010. **The Authenticity Hoax: How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves.** New York: Harper.

Rogers, Heather. 2010. **Green Gone Wrong: How Our Economy is Undermining the Environmental Revolution.** New York: Scribner.

McKibben, Bill. 2010. **Eaarth.** New York: Times Books.

## **New Videos and Films**

"Life After Growth: Economy for Everyone," A Film by Claudia Medina and Leah Temper, Enmedia Productions (available at <http://enmedia.ca/index.php?/film/ongoing-projects>).

"What's the Economy for, Anyway?" A Film by John DeGraaf (available from Bullfrog Films at <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/print/wefa.html>).

"Big Ideas that Changed the World: Consumerism (with Jonathon Porritt) (available in four segments on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ29DQvopZo>).

## **Sustainable Consumption in the News**

Lovell, Jeremy. "Can You Have Prosperity Without Growth?" **The New York Times**, November 17, 2009.

Eisler, Riane. "Roadmap to a New Economics: Beyond Capitalism and Socialism." **Tikkun Magazine**, November/December, 2009.

Schwartz, Judith. "Is GDP an Obsolete Measure of Progress?" **Time**, January 30, 2010.

Fingleton, Eamonn. "Germany's Economic Engine," **The American Prospect**, February 24, 2010.

Theil, Stefan. "The No-Growth Fantasy: Europe's Attack on Capitalism," **Newsweek**, March 19, 2010 (see also response on DegrowthPedia).

Leonard, Devin. "Green Gone Wrong: Can Capitalism Save the Planet?" **The New York Times**, April 2, 2010.

Goleman, Daniel and Gregory Norris. "How Green is My iPad?" [\*\*The New York Times\*\*](#), April 4, 2010.

Krugman, Paul. "Green Economics: How We Can Afford to Tackle Climate Change," [\*\*The New York Times Magazine\*\*](#), April 11, 2010.

Marquardt, Katy. "How to Be a Savvy Cheapskate," [\*\*U.S. News and World Report\*\*](#), April 14, 2010.

Rastogi, Nina Shen. "Green Lantern: What Individuals Can Do to Save the Planet," [\*\*The Washington Post\*\*](#), April 20, 2010.

## **Upcoming Workshops and Conferences**

Degrowth Conference, Vancouver, Canada, April 29-May 2, 2010.

European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP), Delft, The Netherlands, October 25-29, 2010.

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