



Call for Papers

Nordia Geographical Publications Yearbook 2020

Political ecologies of inertia: Legacies, limits and transitions

Ville Kellokumpu & Aapo Lunden (eds.)

The Geographical Society of Northern Finland and the Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu are inviting contributions to the 2020 Nordia Geographical Publications (NGP) Yearbook.

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.

– Karl Marx (1852), The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

Today, as in 1852, humanity faces its past as systemic inertia. To deal with the ecological crisis and the ‘warming condition’ (Malm 2018) is to deal with history in the present. The carbon legacy of dead generations weighs heavy on the minds as well as the bodies of the living. There is an undeniably material quality to a storm, a rising sea and a burning forest as the repercussions of compounding CO₂ jump from the surface of paper to the surface of one’s skin. A return to stable and subjectless socioecological settings of the Holocene is presumably lost for good (Latour 2014) and degrading environmental conditions have tangibly repoliticized the intersections of nature and society (Purdy 2015). To act politically in this situation is to face different modalities of inertia and seek to transform them towards life-affirming and socioecologically resilient alternatives.

The 2020 NGP Yearbook’s theme ‘political ecologies of inertia’ invites contributors to reflect what explanatory value the concept of ‘inertia’ might have in analyzing the contemporary conditions of environmental degradation. Inertia refers to an object’s ability to resist changes to its velocity and trajectory. Within the yearbook’s theme, inertia can be applied as a wider framework for understanding societal change as not only a myriad of struggles against and adaptations to legacies of objects (e.g. the combustion engine and carbon intensive infrastructures), but also political subjects (the fossil bourgeoisie) and popular ideologies (the depoliticized dead-end of consumer choice politics).

Understanding political inertia as a condition of the Anthropocene, we encourage authors to uncover new openings in the interstices of fossil inheritance, path dependencies and sociotechnological lock-ins (Winner 2010, Blühdorn 2007). We seek scholarly work that aims to go beyond the largely impotent and exhausted paradigm of “sustainable development”, originally aimed to tackle conditions that are already unavoidable in our current societies (Benson and Craig 2014, Foster 2017). The

chasm between the political inability to enact ecologically meaningful policies and the growing popular desire for climate actions calls for going beyond techno-managerial solutions and institutional arrangements that have been entangled to fossil fuels and growth imperatives (Mitchell 2011).

In addition to thinking of inertia as compulsions and legacies, it also contains radical potential to reorient political action by connecting the analysis of historical forces to a transformational understanding of the future. Thus, the goal of ‘inertic’ thought should not be to, yet again, confirm the imminent doom, but to help untangle the historical mess of the fossil economy and carbon epistemics (Boyer 2016).

This year’s call invites authors to develop and redefine socioecological politics built on natural limits witnessed in the Anthropocene in the fields of human geography, political ecology, environmental social sciences, cultural and political theory, and related subdisciplines. Ideas and topics pertaining to this year’s theme include, but are not limited to, for example:

- Political inertia of the ecological reconstruction and the Green New Deal(s) (e.g. BIOS 2019, Klein 2019)
- Critical analyses of popular decarbonization and transition discourses (e.g. circular economy, bioeconomy, habitat banking and other ecological compensation schemes) (Ahlqvist and Sirviö 2019, Hobson and Lynch 2016, Hornborg et al. 2019)
- Politics of growth and (natural) limits (Kallis 2019) and limitlessness (Asafu-Adjaye et al. 2015, Bastani 2019, Buck 2013) in the Anthropocene
- Novel conceptualizations and experiences of coping with petrocultures, inertia and resistance (Salminen and Vaden 2015)
- Limits and/or possibilities of polity and citizenship in socioecological transitions (Barry 2006, Castree 2016, Dobson 2006)
- Inertia of political mobilization, governance and institutional decision-making in the face of accelerating environmental demands
- Analyses of situated knowledges and struggles related to environmental transitions

The contributions can take the form of:

- *Peer reviewed* research articles (ca. 6000–9000 words), academic essays or review articles (ca. 3000–6000 words)
- *Editorially reviewed* short interventions, discussion sections or debates that seek to clarify and outline relevant contemporary issues (ca. 2000–4000 words)

Please note the following when submitting your manuscript:

- Submit your *preliminary title* and *abstract* of maximum 300 words to the editors (ville.kellokumpu@oulu.fi and aapo.lunden@oulu.fi) by 1.3.2020
- Submit your final *manuscript* through the nordia.journal.fi system by 31.8.2020
- Writing language is English and the author is responsible for proof-reading the manuscript
- Please follow the instructions on formatting the text, tables, figures and bibliography from the [Author Guidelines](#) -page of the journal website
- In case of problems and questions do not hesitate to contact the editors

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