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978-1-107-13060-9 - The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm

Matthias Schmelzer

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The Hegemony of Growth

In modern society, economic growth is considered to be the primary goal pursued through policy-making. But when and how did this perception become widely adopted among social scientists, politicians, and the general public? Focusing on the OECD, one of the least understood international organizations, Schmelzer offers the first transnational study to chart the history of growth discourses. He reveals how the pursuit of GDP growth emerged as a societal goal and the ways in which the methods employed to measure, model, and prescribe growth resulted in statistical standards, international policy frameworks, and widely accepted norms. Setting his analysis within the context of capitalist development, postwar reconstruction, the Cold War, decolonization, and industrial crisis, *The Hegemony of Growth* sheds new light on the continuous reshaping of the growth paradigm up to the neoliberal age and adds historical depth to current debates on climate change, inequality, and the limits to growth.

MATTHIAS SCHMELZER is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Zürich, Switzerland.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107130609

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First published 2016

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Schmelzer, Matthias, author.

The hegemony of growth : the OECD and the making of the economic growth paradigm / Matthias

Schmelzer.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-13060-9 (hbk: alk. paper) 1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2. Economic development – International cooperation. 3. International trade. I. Title.

HC241.S347 2016

338.9–dc23

2015032466

ISBN 978-1-107-13060-9 Hardback

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Acknowledgments

The writing of this book has been a long, challenging, and fulfilling journey, both professionally and personally. It would not have been possible without the support, thoughts, and critique of many colleagues, comrades, and friends. This book is based on a dissertation at the European University Viadrina, and I want to start by thanking the two supervisors Alexander Nützenadel and Hartmut Kaelble. Together with the team around the Chair for Social and Economic History at Humboldt-University, which could not have been more inspiring and deserves the warmest thanks, between 2009 and 2013 they provided a wonderful and stimulating research environment. Furthermore, I am grateful for the research environments enabled by long stays at the German Historical Institutes in Paris, London, and Washington, to the DFG-Kolleg “Post Growth Societies” at the University of Jena for inviting me as a fellow, to the Research Group “Transformations in Global Governance,” and to the doctoral program “Construire les différences: l’histoire comme objet et comme représentation” (Paris and Berlin). In the final stages of the book, the team of the OECD history project at the University of Geneva (and from August 2015 onward University of Zürich) directed by Matthieu Leimgruber has enabled the transformation of the dissertation into a book, discussed the entire manuscript, and has provided invaluable critiques and questions on the institution discussed in the book.

The book would not have become what it is without being rooted in and supported by many more informal settings outside of universities. I am grateful to everyone at the 026 in Kreuzberg for providing a critical, self-reflexive, and supportive office environment, to my *Capital* reading group in Berlin, and in particular to everyone involved in our collective activities with the altermondialista, the climate justice, the Occupy, and the degrowth movements.

For reading drafts, inspiring talks, and challenging questions and comments I would like to thank in particular Samuel Beroud, Iris Borowy, Christine Brulandt, Ute Daniel, Tine de Moor, Jana Flemming, Ludovic

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Fulleriger, Christian Grabas, Christian Gütgemann, Alix Heininger, Rachel Herp, Ruth Jacherts, Stephen Macekura, Martin Marcussen, Jochen Mayer, Erasmus Müller, Barbara Muraca, Mathias Mutz, Jürgen Neyer, Avner Offer, John O'Neill, Alexis Passadakis, Kiran Patel, Dominique Pestre, Steven Piguet, Dieter Plehwe, Kim Priemel, Claudia Prinz, Bob Reinalda, Martin Remppe, Laura Rischbieter, Julia Roßhart, Elke Seefried, Mitja Sienknecht, Daniel Speich, Adam Tooze, Andrea Vetter, Troy Vettese, Anna Voigt, in particular Heike Wieters, and finally the three anonymous reviewers of this book.

The book has also benefited from critical comments and fresh ideas from the participants of numerous conferences, workshops, and seminars, where I had the possibility to present and discuss most of its chapters. In particular, I would like to thank the organizers and participants of the workshop *Ein Europa der Experten* (Köln 2010), the *ESTER and GLOBALEURONET Research Design Course* (Vienna 2010), the conference *Shifting Visions of Development* (Bremen 2011), the *European Social Science History Conference* (Glasgow 2012), two international degrowth conferences (Venice 2012, Leipzig 2014), the *Winterschool Limits to Growth Revisited* (Hannover 2012), the *Japan Socio-Economic Society Annual Conference* (Tokyo 2013), the *8th Pan-European Conference on International Relations* (Warsaw 2013), the *Forschungskolloquium "Soziologie"* (Luzern 2013), the *SINERGIA* workshop (Basel 2014), the conference *The Concept of the World Economy* (Berlin 2014), the conference *Zur Soziologie ökonomischen Wissens* (Jena 2014), the congress of the *European Network in Universal and Global History* (Paris 2014), the *Historikertag* (Göttingen 2014), the conference *Wachstum ohne Alternativen?* (Berlin 2014), the *OECD New Approaches to Economic Challenges* seminar (Paris 2015), the *History of Recent Economics Conference* (Cergy-Pontoise 2015), and the *World Economic History Congress* (Kyoto, 2015). Furthermore, I want to thank the participants of the colloquia in Berlin, Frankfurt, Geneva, Halle, Konstanz, Leipzig, London, Munich, Paris, Washington, and Zürich.

Special thanks also go to the archivists, without whom this work would have been impossible, at the OECD Archive in Paris in particular: Jan-Anno Schuur, Patricia Fiore, Francis Pellerin, but also the archivists at the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, the King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge, The National Archive in Kew, the European Commission Historical Archives in Brussels, and the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. For background interviews with officials from the OECD and TUAC and economists who worked with the OECD, I would like to thank Herman Daly, Jean Paul Fitoussi, Pier Carlo Padoan, Roland Schneider, and Judit Vadasz. And I would like

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x Acknowledgments

to thank the editorial team of Cambridge University Press for the excellent work in editing this book.

This research was made possible by funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (Research Group “Transformations in Global Governance”), the Swiss National Science Foundation (grant PP00P1_139023/1), the doctoral program “Construire les différences: l’histoire comme objet et comme représentation” (Paris and Berlin), and the German Historical Institutes in Paris, London, and Washington, and the DAAD.

Last but not least, very special thanks go to Adele, Albert, Alexis, André, Andrea, Bärbel, Björn, Dalilah, Daniel, Doris, Erasmus, Fabian, Feli, Fritz, Heike, Jeroen, Johanna, Josie, Julia, Kathi, Katt, Lea, Leonel, Leonie, Manu, Mareile, Mark, Max, Martina, Mela, Nina, Pablo, Sarah, Susanne, and Tine – for being who they are and making life more beautiful.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| AEA | American Economic Association |
| BAK | Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Germany |
| CEA | Council of Economic Advisors |
| CERI | Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD) |
| CSP | Committee for Science Policy |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DAG | Development Assistance Group (OECD) |
| ECA | Economic Cooperation Administration |
| ECHA | European Commission Historical Archives, Brussels |
| ECSC | European Coal and Steel Community |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EPA | European Productivity Agency |
| EPC | Economic Policy Committee (OECD) |
| EPU | European Payments Union |
| FRUS | Foreign Relations of the United States |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| IARIW | International Association for Research in Income and Wealth |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| JRNS | King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge – The Papers of John Richard Nicholas Stone |
| MIT | Massachusetts Institute of Technology |
| MPS | Material Product System |
| NARA | National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, United States |
| NARU | National Accounts Research Unit (OECD) |

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| | |
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| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OECD-HA | OECD Historical Archives, Paris |
| OEEC | Organization for European Economic Co-operation |
| OTC | Overseas Territories Committee (OEEC) |
| TNA | The National Archives, Kew, Britain |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WP-2 | Working Party No. 2 of the EPC on Policies for the Promotion of Economic Growth (OECD) |
| WP-3 | Working Party No. 3 of the EPC on Policies for the Promotion of Better International Payments Equilibrium (OECD) |
| WP-5 | Working Party No. 5 of the Council on Selective Expansion (OEEC) |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |