



Redefining Prosperity (Routledge Studies in Ecological Economics)

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Society today faces a difficult contradiction: we know exactly how the physical limits of our planet are being reached and exactly why we cannot go on as we have before – and yet, collectively, we seem unable to reach crucial decisions for our future in a timely way. This book argues that our definition of prosperity, which we have long assimilated with the idea of material wealth, may be preventing us from imagining a future that meets essential human aspirations without straining our planet to the breaking point. In other words, redefining prosperity is a necessary and urgent task.

This book is the fruit of a long debate among 15 scholars from diverse fields who worked together to bring the depth and nuance of their respective fields to questions that affect us all. The result is a rich, transdisciplinary work that illuminates the philosophical and historical origins of our current definition of prosperity; identifies the complex processes that gave rise to the problems we face today; elucidates the ways in which our contemporary environmental, social, nutritional, economic, political, and cultural crises are interconnected; and explores why a half-century of economic growth has neither increased life satisfaction in the West nor vanquished world poverty. Approaching these broad-ranging questions from the specific standpoints of their disciplines, each of the authors offers thoughts for the future, considering possible escape routes and proposing changes to the way we live, behave, and organise society and public action – changes that actually respond, in an equitable way, to our deepest aspirations.

Ultimately, in laying the groundwork for a public debate on this subject, this book poses a question to its readers: what is your definition of prosperity, and what can be done to promote it?

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