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*Degrowth and Local Economic Alternatives
in the Czech Republic,
Valeč, 18. - 22. June 2014*

Teaching and studying materials

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Introduction

The course „Degrowth and Local Economic Alternatives in the Czech Republic“ was organised within the **GROWL (GROWing less, Learning more) project**. It is a pan-European partnership with 9 partners designed to form an education network for degrowth. Academics, practitioners at the grass-root level, researchers and political activists, among others, form a part of this network that aims at a plural and diverse skill and knowledge exchange, to support a major transition towards degrowth and a sustainable and fulfilling society. GROWL is supported by the Grundtvig fund for Learning Partnerships of the EU.

The course took place in Valeč, Czech Republic, 18. – 22. June 2014. Its aims were to provide both deeper understanding and practical experience of degrowth, to experience and reflect on participatory teaching methods applicable to degrowth, to create inspiring environment and facilitate meeting, sharing of ideas and discussion between people who seek an open-minded debate within a beautiful environment of the baroque village, castle and park of Valeč.

The course comprised of 4 main parts:

- Basics of degrowth (theory): Modules I & II
- Local economics alternatives (examples of practice) in the degrowth context: Modules III & IV
- Direct degrowth practice (work therapy): Module V
- Train-The-Trainer (TTT) module for future trainers of degrowth: Module VI

Most of the learning part made use of the so called **Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT)** approach. RWCT provides concrete, practical methods, techniques and strategies integrated into an open but compact system which aims at developing critical thinking and supporting active learning processes. It is based on constructivist pedagogy and builds on the principles of physiological functioning of the human brain which is reflected in the three-stage learning model of E-R-R: Evocation – Realization of meaning – Reflection; see more in the VI. Module (TTT) and **MATERIAL 9**.

This material brings **descriptions of the activities and methods** structured mostly (Module I – III) according to the E-R-R model, and also all the background **studying and teaching materials** used within the course. The activities are designed for a group of 20 people. These materials should be useful not only for the participants of the course but also for anybody else who wants to learn more, and possibly also discuss and teach about degrowth. It is a work in progress, and thus any feedback, comments and suggestions for improvements are very welcomed (please contact the authors).

As a supporting studying material, the text by Nadia Johanisova **Alternative Economic Systems in Context** is also available on the GROWL web.

Module 1: What is degrowth and where it comes from

AIMS:

- to map six intellectual sources of the concept of degrowth.
- to get to know some existing definitions of degrowth and to formulate an own one.

ODDS: 4 flipcharts, 4 markers, 4 questions, MATERIAL 1 (4 texts in 5 pieces each), MATERIAL 2 (20 pcs.)

Evocation: “Trunks & roots” (30 min)

Questions for flipcharts:

- 1) What degrowth means according to you?
- 2) What are the most convincing arguments against degrowth?
- 3) What is the best degrowth project you know? Why?
- 4) When and where did you feel most „alternative“ in your life?

Note: According to our experience we recommend to reformulate these questions to be more focused on the content of the first module only, not on the content of the whole course (as they are now).

- Divide the group in 4 small groups per 4-5 persons. Each group gets 1 flipchart, one marker and one question. The group chooses one of the members to be the trunk. The trunk stays with the flipchart, the rest of the people are roots.
- The roots move in the room asking other people their question and bringing different answers („nutrition“) back to their trunk who takes notes of the full answers. The roots have to remember both the question and the collected answers by memory. In case of being asked one question more times, one tries to develop or expand his/her answer.
- After 10 – 15 minutes, the group gathers around their flipcharts, sort the answers, and add their own ones if they miss something.
- Each group has 5 minutes to present the summarizations of the answers pointing out unclear or interesting answers. Other groups can clarify.

Realisation of Meaning: Pair Reading, Peer Teaching, definitions (60 min)

Texts for reading taken from: DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. *Environmental Values*. Vol. 22, pp. 191–215. MATERIAL 1

- Make **4 home groups** with 4-5 people. Each of them gets different part of the text (about different source(s) of degrowth). If there are more people than 4 in the group, some of them read the same part. Each group gets 1 color, members put it on their texts.
- People find their **expert group** according to the number of their text. Each expert group has different part of the text.

Pair reading and Peer teaching

- Make two pairs within your expert group, two people will read together (20 min)
 - Choose the role: summarizer, questioner
 - Divide the text into several parts (as long as you wish)
 - Read the parts, after finishing each part the summarizer summarizes it, and the questioner asks several related questions (you don't need to answer)
 - You can change the roles within the pair during the reading.
- Expert groups (same numbers of text) (10 min)
 - Share your learning and doubts. Decide what you want to teach your home groups about this intellectual source of degrowth (include the main authors)
 - Decide and plan how you want to teach, you can prepare some tools (picture, bullet points on flipchart etc.)
 - Decide how you check the understanding and learning of your „students“ (peers) in the home group
- Home groups (same color of texts) (30 min)
 - each person has 5 minutes for teaching others his/her part of the text, and checking if they understood it
 - take notes of possible doubts and questions
- All together – insights, clarifications

Reflection (15 min)

- Application of six sources of degrowth on degrowth definitions
 - Read individually several definitions of degrowth **MATERIAL 2**
 - In pairs discuss: which sources/aspects of degrowth each definition accents? Which are missing in the definitions?
 - All together – which sources did you find often, which rarely?
- Check the answers for the Q1 on the flipchart: *What degrowth means according to you?* What has been confirmed? What is not fitting? What is missing?
- Individually: Write you own definition or explanation what degrowth means (on Post-its) and put all on 1 flipchart. Sharing – everybody can read definitions of others, in silence – without comments.

Module II: Arguments about degrowth

AIMS:

- to learn and understand arguments for and against degrowth.
- to train argumentation about degrowth.

ODDS: flipchart papers, markers, MATERIAL 3 (20 pcs.), MATERIAL 4 (20 pcs.)

Evocation (20 min)

- Recall the answers from Trunk & roots (Module I) on Q2: *What are the most convincing arguments against degrowth?*
- Make a physical scale standing on a line according to how strong you feel in argumentation about degrowth. Get the ends of the extremes of the line together and make pairs combining less and more experienced people.
- In pairs: prepare arguments for and against the statement in **T-graph**: *Degrowth is the only possibility for sustainable and fair living.* MATERIAL 3

Realization of Meaning (30 min)

Text for reading: VICTOR, Peter. 2010. Questioning economic growth. *Nature*. Vol. 468, pp. 370-371. MATERIAL 4

- Divide the whole group into 2 parts: the 1st read the 1st part of the text, the 2nd read 2nd part
- Read the particular part of the text in existing pairs, and enrich your T-graph with new arguments from the reading.
- Divide your T-graph into two parts, each of the pair keeps just one part of arguments (for, or against).

Reflection (60 min)

Guided debate

- In two groups (one For and one Against) prepare together arguments for a debate on the question from the T-graph
- Change the positions and prepare yourselves for the opposite position (the ones who had been against are now supporting and otherwise)

- Rules of the guided debate
 - a person from one group says always only one argument
 - a person from the other group first summarizes the previous argument (of the contra part) and checks if it was understood and rephrased well, then the person says one argument of his group, this continues on
 - preferably people who haven't spoken yet are to introduce another argument
 - each group can take 1minute Time for developing its strategy once during the debate

Reflection of the debate (all together, in a circle):

- How was the debate?
- Which side did you consider more difficult to argue for? Did it change during the debate?
- Choose the most inspiring argument(s).
- What has this experience brought to you? Why it is important to have such discussions?

Module III: How degrowth looks like in practice

AIMS:

- to get to know some concrete practices of economic alternatives.
- to understand them through the perspective of degrowth.

ODDS: MATERIAL 5 (20 pcs.), possibly also MATERIAL 6 (20 pcs.)

Evocation (15 min)

- Recall the Trunk & roots Q3: *What is the best degrowth project you know? Why?*
- Formulate criteria of a good degrowth project.
 - Based on concrete projects or practices you know, in the groups of 3-4 formulate at least 4 criteria why you consider the concrete projects as examples of good degrowth practice.
 - Two joined groups share together their criteria and formulate one common list
 - Do one common list of criteria in plenary
 - Individually: choose from the list the criteria you consider important and fill them in your own table MATERIAL 5

Note: You can add a mini-module on Latouche's strategies for degrowth (so called 8 Rs): read the strategies MATERIAL 6 in small groups, look for overlaps with your own criteria, clarify unclear. Add those Latouche strategies you like to your criteria of a good degrowth project.

Realization of Meaning (90 min)

- Presentation on WWOOF (Vojta Veselý, Valeč)
- Presentation on 2 projects of Community Supported Agriculture (Jan Valeška, Praha)
- Fill in the table of criteria with examples of their practical application from presented local projects

Reflection (20 min)

Plenary or group discussion based on presentations: *Why would you consider these projects/practices as examples of degrowth? Which aspects/criteria of degrowth do you see in these concrete projects?*

Note: According to our experience we recommend to do the same reflection after each of the presentations.

Module IV: Space for participants' issues

- **Presentation on Open Localism** (Francois Schneider, Research & Degrowth France)
MATERIAL 7
- **Open Space**
- **Pro-action café** (more on both techniques in MATERIAL 8)

Module V: Degrowth practice

Work at organic farm of Vojta Veselý in Valeč, see <http://www.biostatek.cz/ENGLISH-SECTION/>

Module VI: Train the trainer (JJJ)

Chinese proverb: „Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, engage me and I will understand, step back and I will act.“

AIMS:

- to learn from experience of being a degrowth course participant for one's own future training practice.
- to understand the E-R-R model and to apply it by developing own teaching module.

ODDS: MATERIAL 9 (20 pcs.), MATERIAL 10 (20pcs.), various teaching/learning materials on degrowth available (see the list below)

1. Presentation of the structure of the course so far (60 min)

- presentation of the aims and structure of each module and reasons why concrete techniques were chosen
- group feedback to the program: 4 groups, each has one module (I-IV) of the program
 - discuss problematic moments, write down critical comments and/or suggestions for improvements on post-its (5 min)
 - each group presents shortly to all others, anybody can add sth.

2. Explanation of the E-R-R model and structure (20 min)

- Explanation of the E-R-R structure, using pictures from MATERIAL 9
- Demonstration of the E-R-R structure on the first module
- see E-R-R examples in other modules
- In 3 groups brainstorm other techniques/methods useful for particular phases (E or R or R, each group one)

3. Preparation of own lesson based on E-R-R (60min)

- 3 groups according to the degrowth knowledge level of the target group of the prepared module (basic – medium – academic)
- in each group, create your own learning module for a Degrowth course using the structure of E-R-R
- Product: flipchart with the aim(s) of the lesson and activities in the structure of E-R-R
- Process:

- Choose what you would like to focus on, formulate a draft of the aim
 - Go through available materials, choose what you want to use, or specify materials you'd use (if not present)
 - Discuss and create the plan for the module/lesson
 - Prepare flipchart with the module plan in the structure: aim, E-R-R.
- **Teaching/learning materials available**
 - overview of experienced course (incl. list of goals in the field of Degrowth, focus on the problematic parts of the techniques/modules)
 - list of possible methods for each phase of E-R-R
 - all texts and materials used within the course so far (see the Materials)
 - cartoons by Kuczynski, see <http://www.politicaysociedad.net/50-reveladoras-ilustraciones-de-pawel-kuczynski-sobre-el-ironico-mundo-en-el-que-vivimos/#>
 - cartoons by Polyp, see <http://www.polyp.org.uk/cartoons.html>
 - video: rat race, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4OPFI2Kxhs>
 - videos on degrowth, see <http://www.degrowth.org/video>
 - videos from the degrowth conference in Barcelona in 2012, see <http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/Video-interviews.111.0.html>
 - data on material extraction, trade and flows worldwide, see http://seri.at/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/green_economies_around_the_world.pdf
 - various ppt presentations on degrowth

4. Presentation and feedback (30 min)

- 3 minutes for presentation of the module, 7 minutes for feedback (10 min in total for each group)
- show the flipchart, show materials or describe them

5. Closing circle of the whole course (30 min)

- Everybody: *What you have experienced in this course? What are you taking from it?*

Studying and teaching materials

MATERIAL 1: Sources of degrowth 1-4	13-21
MATERIAL 2: Definitions of degrowth	22
MATERIAL 3: T-GRAPH on degrowth arguments	23
MATERIAL 4: Peter Victor: Questioning economic growth	24-27
MATERIAL 5: Criteria of a good degrowth project	28
MATERIAL 6: Serge Latouche: the “8 Rs” of degrowth	29
MATERIAL 7: François Schneider: Open-localism	30-33
MATERIAL 8: Open space and Pro-Action Café methodology	34-38
MATERIAL 9: Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking program	39-40

Sources of degrowth I

DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. *What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. Environmental Values*, 2013, vol. 22, pp. 191–215.

„Degrowth is rich in its meanings and does not embrace one single philosophical current. Its practitioners do not admire a single book or an author. Its thematic backbone derives from some streams of ecological and social thought. The identification of degrowth streams was first developed by Flipo (2007). Following him we refer to the streams as degrowth ‘sources’. Degrowth is placed at the junction of several such sources or streams of thought which cross each other without being in competition (Bayon et al. 2010). The sources bring methodologies and values together and constitute tracks for interpreting degrowth. Below we identify six sources (adding ‘justice’ to the five proposed by Fabrice Flipo). The attribution of authors to a specific source is somewhat artificial, as no author is related to only one. A more in-depth description of the first five degrowth sources can be found in Flipo (2007) and Bayon et al. (2010). (p. 195-196)

I. Ecology

Firstly, this source implies perceiving ecosystems as having value in themselves, and not only as providers of useful environmental resources or services. Secondly, it stresses the competition between ecosystems and the industrial production and consumption systems. An absolute decoupling between industrial expansion and ecological destruction has not been observed yet and it is very unlikely to take place. Degrowth is therefore a possible path to preserve ecosystems by the reduction of human pressure over ecosystems and nature, and a challenge to the idea that decoupling of ecological impacts from economic growth is possible. Degrowth leads to the *res communis* approach (Bayon et al. 2010) suggesting that environmental goods are commonly cared for and shared so that appropriation by a single individual is avoided (as opposed to a *res nullius* approach where resources belong to no one and can be freely destroyed and stolen). Strategy-wise, *res communis* implies an integration of humans in nature, while ‘rights of nature’ could be a rearguard strategy to preserve what remains, creating areas for ecosystems regeneration.

II. Critiques of development and praise for anti-utilitarianism

This degrowth source derives from anthropology. Authors within this current perceive degrowth as a ‘missile word’, which strikes down the hegemonic imaginary of both

development and utilitarianism. Latouche has been an important author in this stream of thought. Critics of development from the 1970s and 1980s include Arturo Escobar, Gilbert Rist, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Majid Rahnema, Wolfgang Sachs, Ashish Nandy, Shiv Visvanathan, Gustavo Esteva (Sachs 1992), François Partant, Bernard Charbonneau and Ivan Illich. The essence of this source is the critique of the uniformisation of cultures due to the widespread adoption of particular technologies and consumption and production models experienced in the global North. As Latouche (2009) puts it, the western development model is a mental construct adopted by the rest of the world. Degrowth considers 'sustainable development' an oxymoron and calls for disentangling from the social imaginary that it entails, and beyond this, it criticises the notion of 'development' itself.

The other face of this current in the degrowth movement is the critique of homo economicus, against utility-maximisation as the ultimate driving force of human behaviour. This critique was inspired by Marcel Mauss in the 1920s (Mauss 2007[1924]), and Serge Latouche, Alain Caillé and other members of the MAUSS (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales) (Caillé 1989). Other authors often quoted are social and economic historian Karl Polanyi (1944) and anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1972).

The conception of human beings as economic agents driven by self-interest and utility maximisation is one representation of the world, or one historic social construct which has been meticulously nested in the minds of many generations of economics students. Degrowth in that sense calls for more ample visions giving importance to economic relations based on sharing, gifts and reciprocity, where social relations and conviviality are central. The focus here is on the change in the structure of values and the change in value-articulating institutions. Degrowth is thus a way to bring forward a new imaginary which implies a change of culture and a rediscovery of human identity which is disentangled from economic representations (Bayon et al. 2010). (p. 196-197)

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Sources of degrowth II

DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. *What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. Environmental Values*, 2013, vol. 22, pp. 191–215.

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III. Meaning of life and well-being

The essence of this source is the emerging need for more meaning in life (and of life) in modern societies. It is a critique of life-styles based on the mantras of working more, earning more, selling more and buying more.

The ‘meaning of life’ source of degrowth also draws on findings in the literature on the economics of happiness. The disconnect between income increase and life satisfaction over time, a phenomenon known as the Easterlin Paradox (Easterlin 1974), as well as the association between the importance of material gains and emotional disorders (Kasser 2002), are two important references. The movement for voluntary simplicity, reducing individual consumption while seeing simple life as liberating and profound rather than restraining and limiting is an important vision within this source. Reference works here are *Walden or Life in the Woods* from Henry David Thoreau, *Happy Sobriety* by Pierre Rabhi, *Voluntary Simplicity* by Mongeau, Schumacher’s apology for enoughness and Kumarappa’s *Economy of Permanence*. (p. 197)

V. Democracy

The next source for the degrowth movement springs from the calls for deeper democracy (Deriu, 2008; Cattaneo et al. 2012; Asara et al., 2013). In particular, degrowth is a response

to the lack of democratic debates on economic development, growth, technological innovation and advancement. Within this source we find conflicting positions between those who defend present democratic institutions considering the risks of losing what we have achieved (a more reformist strand), and those who demand completely new institutions based on direct and participatory democracy (more alternative, or post-capitalist vision). Some of the key writers within this source for degrowth are Ivan Illich, Jacques Ellul and Cornelius Castoriadis. As Illich (1973) stated, past a given threshold, technology can no longer be controlled by people. For Illich, only when keeping the technological system below a given multidimensional threshold can we make democracy feasible. Ellul (1977), on the other hand, conducted profound studies on technology in which he described technology as a system that expands without democratic feedback and follows an independent path. In order to challenge techniques which Ellul perceived as autonomous and self-augmenting, we need democratic feedback that is external to the technical system. Castoriadis is another key author for degrowth. He defended the ideas of 'self-institutionalising society' and of autonomy, meant as an entity that governs itself with its own laws. He defended that democracy can only exist by (and with) self-limitation (Castoriadis 1988; Asara et al. 2013). (p. 199)

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Sources of degrowth III

DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. *What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. Environmental Values*, 2013, vol. 22, pp. 191–215.

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IV. Bioeconomics

Ecological economics and industrial ecology are also degrowth sources. Most ecological economists are followers of Georgescu-Roegen (1971) who introduced the term ‘bioeconomics’ and wrote in favour of *décroissance*. This school of thought stresses the importance of resources and sinks availability (Bonaiuti, 2011; Odum, 2001) and a factor X reduction of natural resources consumption (Schmidt-Bleek and Kluting, 1993). A classical reference here is the *Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972; 2004).

For Georgescu, human activity transforms energy and materials of low entropy or good quality into waste and pollution which are unusable and have high entropy. Even the inflow of low-entropy solar energy is limited in the sense that it falls in a dispersed fashion on the earth. Degrowth can thus slow down the process of material degradation. A steady-state economy (as proposed by Herman Daly) is not enough for rich countries.

The bioeconomic arguments for degrowth, including the decreasing energy return on investment and the imminent peak oil, are often cited in academic and political debate. Ecological economists have long appealed to the 1920s economic writings of Frederick Soddy (Soddy 1926; Daly 1980, Martinez-Alier 1987). The financial crisis of 2008 and the idea of ‘debtocracy’ have revived interest in this author, who stressed that the financial system confuses expansion of credit with the creation of real wealth, while the real economy of

energy and materials cannot grow at the interest rate necessary to pay off debts. As Georgescu and Odum explain, the available natural resources are actually decreasing. The increase of private or public debts is thus a perfect recipe for economic and fiscal crises.

Degrowth is a criticism of the belief in ecological modernisation which claims that new technologies and efficiency improvements are key solutions to the ecological crisis. While technological innovation is a source of debate in degrowth, all degrowth actors question the capacity of technological innovation to overcome biophysical limits and sustain infinite economic growth. The Jevons paradox provides an explanation: eco-efficiency may lead to increased consumption or production because technologies suppress limits (to production and consumption) (Polimeni et al. 2008, Schneider 2008). For example, savings in energy and materials may be reinvested in new material and energy acquisitions, offsetting the gains in reduction of material and energy use associated with efficiency measures. Degrowth dwells on many 'non-technical' proposals for reducing material and energy flows outside the modernisation approach which tends to discard the option of setting some limits to technologies. (p. 197-198)

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Sources of degrowth IV

DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. *What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. Environmental Values*, 2013, vol. 22, pp. 191–215.

„Degrowth is rich in its meanings and does not embrace one single philosophical current. Its practitioners do not admire a single book or an author. Its thematic backbone derives from some streams of ecological and social thought. The identification of degrowth streams was first developed by Flipo (2007). Following him we refer to the streams as degrowth ‘sources’. Degrowth is placed at the junction of several such sources or streams of thought which cross each other without being in competition (Bayon et al. 2010). The sources bring methodologies and values together and constitute tracks for interpreting degrowth. Below we identify six sources (adding ‘justice’ to the five proposed by Fabrice Flipo). The attribution of authors to a specific source is somewhat artificial, as no author is related to only one. A more in-depth description of the first five degrowth sources can be found in Flipo (2007) and Bayon et al. (2010). (p. 195-196)

VI. Justice

The last source we wish to mention is justice. For Paul Ariès (2005), the first type of degrowth is the degrowth of inequality. In line with Dobson (2003) degrowth does not take ‘just sustainability’ for granted. Instead it intentionally pursues and explores ways to make justice and sustainability compatible.

One common assumption among economists is that only economic growth can improve the living conditions of poor people on the planet. Given the perceived impossibility of voluntary income reduction and redistribution, the only strategy for dealing with poverty is having economic growth which will make sure that little drops of wealth eventually trickle down to the poor.

Facing the trickle down hypothesis (Snowdon 2006), degrowth opts for less competition, large scale redistribution, sharing and reduction of excessive incomes and wealth. If poverty is perceived in terms of relative consumption, it can never be ‘eradicated’ by economic growth as it only changes the scale but not the proportions of wealth which individuals possess. Needs, however, can be served by different satisfiers (Max-Neef and Kumar 1991). The degrowth popular literature, for example, has a large number of stories about ‘downshifTERS’, or people who opt for frugality fulfilling their needs with satisfiers which differ from those used by people with high incomes (Conill et al., 2012; Carlsson 2008).

As described by Ikeme (2003) we can identify two groups of philosophical trends here, one related to the consequentialist approach which focuses on the ultimate results over the means, and the deontological one which favours the means over the results. As an illustration, focusing only on well-being or inequality indicators, is a consequence of applying only the first approach while giving priority to a behaviour such as non-violence, is related to the second one. Hereafter we go through different visions within the justice source of degrowth, while exploring the consequentialist-deontological duality.

The first vision is related to social comparison and envy. According to Le Monde journalist Herve Kempf, influenced by Veblen (1899), social comparison based on the existence and promotion of rich-people lifestyles, has been responsible for social and environmental crises (Kempf, 2007). From a consequentialist point of view degrowth can make social comparison less problematic by reducing the reasons for envy and competition 'à la Darwin'. Setting a maximum income, or maximum wealth, to weaken envy as a motor of consumerism, and opening borders ("no-border") to reduce means to keep inequality between rich and poor countries, were some of the proposals discussed at the Second International Conference on degrowth. From a deontological perspective degrowth implies a change of culture making us insensitive to the attractions of high-consumption lifestyles, as suggested by the anti-utilitarian school. Justice requires a degrowth of the living standards of the rich classes of the North and South. This point is often misunderstood by those who see population growth as the central issue. They seem to ignore the difference between the lifestyle of an artisan fisher in India and a banker in New York or Mumbai.

The second vision implies repairing past injustice. A good illustration is the concept of ecological debt, or the demand that the Global North pays for past and present colonial exploitation in the Global South. The struggles for climate justice (such as the informal coalition of groups and organisations Climate Justice Now!) could easily become allies of degrowth, together with many other movements for environmental justice in the South (Martinez-Alier et al 2010, 2012), including post-extractivism and Buen Vivir in Latin America (Martinez-Alier 2010, 2012; Acosta and Martinez 2009; Gudynas 2011).

Thirdly, the equality approach to justice in the context of degrowth implies resource and wealth redistribution both within and between North and South economies. Justice here is understood as a concern for a fair distribution of economic, social and environmental goods and bads at all time-lines (i.e. intra-generational and inter-generational). It is opposed to Garrett Hardin's 'lifeboat ethics', in which environmental and population concerns lead easily to racism. Degrowth of resource exploitation to secure basic access to ecosystem services in the Global South and poorer fringes everywhere is consensual among authors. Having said this, we should mention that equality is often misunderstood as universalism or as a call for uniformisation of Western lifestyles.

Finally, some understand justice as preventing misery by establishing minimum standards

and a basic income for all (in the form of natural resources, public services and/or money). Others challenge the basic income approach and underline the importance of merit and contribution to society (Garcia, 2012). Feminism, caste and class division and non-violence are other key topics to discuss within the justice source of degrowth that would require extensive elaboration. (p. 199-200)

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What is degrowth?

“degrowth challenges the hegemony of growth and calls for a democratically led redistributive downscaling of production and consumption in industrialised countries as a means to achieve environmental sustainability, social justice and well-being”

(p. 209: DEMARIA, Federico, Francois SCHNEIDER, Filka SEKULOVA a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. 2013. *What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. Environmental Values*, 2013, vol. 22, pp. 191–215)

“sustainable degrowth is not only an inevitable hypothesis, but also a potent political vision that can be socially transformative”

(p. 873: KALLIS, Giorgos. *In defence of degrowth. Ecological Economics*, 2011, vol. 70, pp. 873-880)

“degrowth is not a concept, and in any case, not one that is symmetrical to growth. It is a political slogan with theoretical implications”

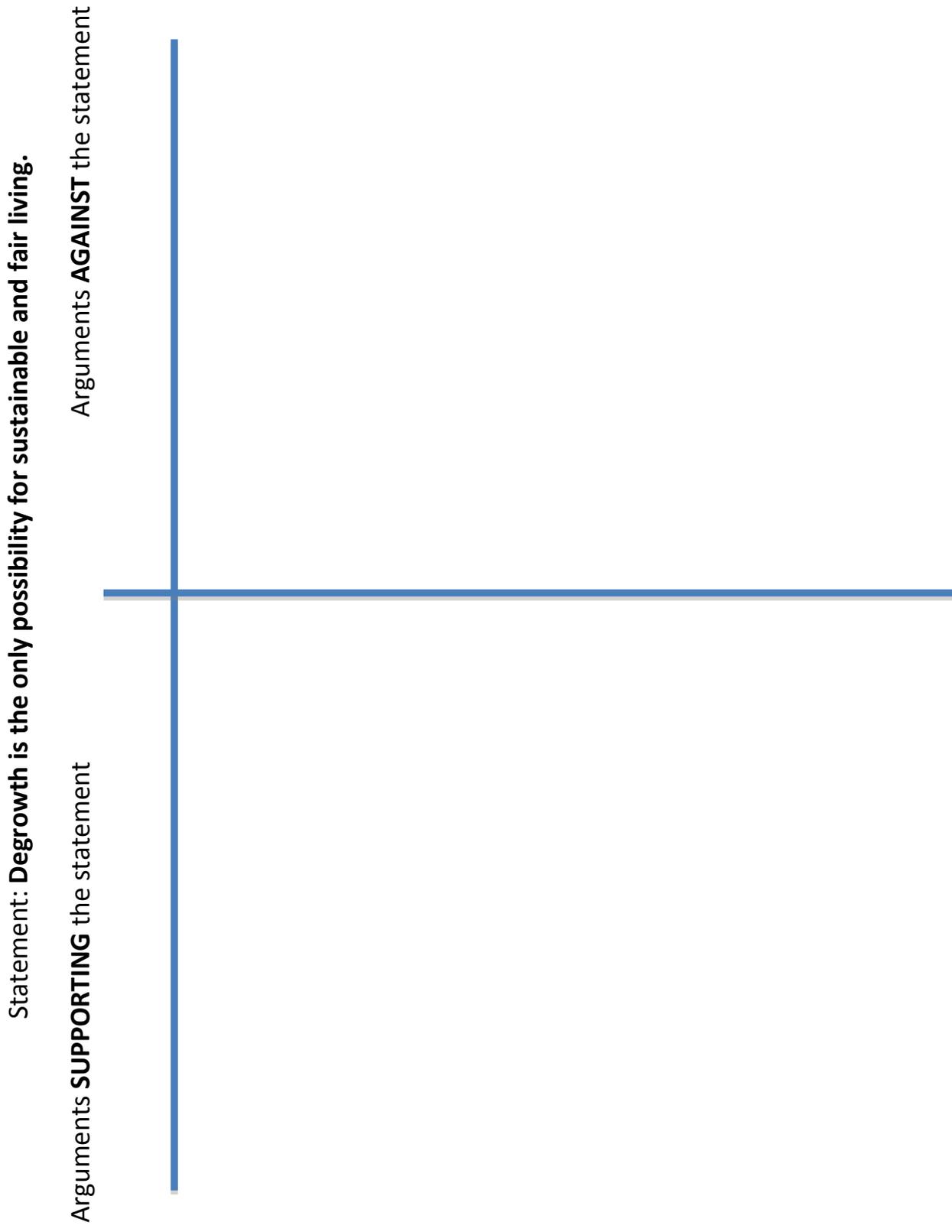
(p. 519: Latouche, S. 2010. *Degrowth. Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(6): 519-522)

“Sustainable degrowth may be defined as an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human wellbeing and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term.”

(p. 512: SCHNEIDER Francois, Giorgos KALLIS a Joan MARTINEZ-ALIER. *Crisis or opportunity? Economic degrowth for social equity and ecological sustainability. Introduction to this special issue. Journal of Cleaner Production*. 2010, vol. 18, pp. 511-518)

“[degrowth] does not imply the exact opposition to economic growths. It advocates instead a fundamental change of key references such as the collective imagination (changement d’imaginaire) and the array of analysis, propositions and principles guiding the economy [...] Degrowth is not negative growth, a concept that would be contradictory and absurd, meaning stepping forward while going backward.”

(p. 1742: MARTINEZ-ALIER, Joan, Unai PASCUAL, Franck-Dominique VIVIEN a Edwin ZACCAI. *Sustainable de-growth: Mapping the context, criticisms and future prospects of an emergent paradigm. Ecological Economic*, 2010, vol. 69, no. 9, pp. 1741–1747)



MATERIAL 4: Peter Victor: Questioning economic growth. *Nature* Vol. 468, pp. 370-371

Questioning economic growth

Our global economy must operate within planetary limits to promote stability, resilience and wellbeing, not rising GDP, argues **Peter Victor**.



The idea that governments of developed countries should no longer pursue economic growth as a primary policy objective is widely regarded as heresy. Yet a growing number of scholars, policy-makers and citizens are coming round to the idea that the planet cannot sustain continued global economic growth. Even economist Robert Solow, who won the 1987 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on economic growth, said in 2008 that the United States and Europe might soon find that “either continued growth will be too destructive to the environment and they are too dependent on scarce natural resources, or that they would rather

use increasing productivity in the form of leisure”¹. The idea of steady-state economies, or even economic ‘degrowth’, in developed countries is gaining traction.

The reasons for disenchantment with economic growth as a paramount policy objective are not hard to find. Humanity has gone beyond the ‘safe operating space’ of the planet with respect to climate change, nitrogen loadings and biodiversity loss, and threatens to do so with six other major global environmental issues². This excessive burden on Earth can be traced to the massive increase in the materials, fossil fuels and biomass used by the world’s economies. Mankind’s ‘throughput’ — the sheer weight of materials, including fuel, that feed the world’s economies — has increased 800% in the twentieth century³, with a correspondingly large increase in wastes returned to the environment. In the same time, the human population has risen from 1.6 billion to more than 6 billion, and our presence has been felt over an increasingly large part of Earth’s surface. All of this drove and was driven by unprecedented economic growth, the benefits and costs of which have been spread remarkably unevenly around the planet.

A key question now is whether and how economies can develop in a way that respects Earth’s biophysical boundaries and feeds the 9 billion people expected by mid-century.

One option is for developed countries to continue striving for economic growth, while attempting to reduce impacts on the planet. This means betting that economic growth can be successfully and rapidly decoupled from material and energy inputs. Such ‘green growth’ is currently favoured by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). But it can be confounded by the rebound effect: efficiency improvements often induce changes that reduce, nullify or outweigh environmental and resource benefits. This was first recognized in 1865 by economist W. S. Jevons, who noted that improvements in steam engines were accompanied by an increase in total coal consumption.

By 1910, the best steam engines in the

United Kingdom were about 6 times more efficient than those of 1760 (ref.4), but a 2,000-fold rise in steam-power use⁵ and increased coal consumption dramatically. A rebound of 50% is not unusual for many technologies.

What price happiness?

An alternative is to encourage growth in sectors of the economy that use fewer resources, such as the service sector. Such a strategy could buy some time, but not if it simply shifts the production of resource-intensive products and their related environmental burdens to other countries, as has been the pattern in recent years.

A third option is to limit growth itself. The battle against climate change illustrates the attractiveness of this strategy. To reduce greenhouse-gas emissions (GHG) by 80% over 50 years, an economy that increases its real gross domestic product (GDP) by 3% a year must reduce its emissions intensity — tonnes of GHG per unit of GDP — by an astonishing 6% a year. For an economy that does not grow, the annual cut would be a still very challenging 3.2%.

The view that we should curb planetary impacts by reducing growth in richer countries is reinforced by several considerations. First, there is mounting evidence that this growth is largely unrelated to measures of happiness. Second, in recent decades, increasing inequality has accompanied much of this growth, leading to problems ranging from poor public health to social unrest. Third, the prospects for real improvement in the developing world are likely to be diminished if developed countries continue to encroach on more ecological space.

Removing economic growth as a major policy priority runs counter to the views of governments and many international agencies. Many nations responded to the recent financial crisis with desperate measures to resume economic growth. Yet when we recognize how briefly economic growth has held such prominence in

policy circles, dethroning it seems less improbable. Regular estimates of GDP by governments date back only to the 1940s, and the measure was initially used in support of specific objectives, such as stimulating employment. Only in the 1950s did economic growth become policy priority in its own right⁶.

***** END OF PART 1 *****

Economists and other social scientists now need to map out functional economies in which growth is sidelined, and stability, resilience and wellbeing are the prime objectives, within environmental and resource constraints. Ecological economist Herman Daly, who has investigated and promoted a steady-state economic model for several decades, has formulated a useful set of principles for limiting material use, including: the harvest of renewable resources should not exceed their regeneration rate; the rate of extraction of non-renewable resources should not exceed the rate of creation of renewable substitutes; and waste emissions should not exceed the environment's capacity to assimilate them. To these we should add the protection of land and water to reduce competition among humans and other species. Among the many successful applications of these principles is the creation of protected areas and green belts.

Daly, with theologian John Cobb, also proposed an alternative measure of macroeconomic success: the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (SEW), incorporating environmental degradation, resource depletion and other factors. Estimates of this index show a major divergence from GDP per person for many countries. In one study by environmental charity Friends of the Earth⁷, the gap between US GDP and the 'Genuine Progress Indicator' (GPI), calculated similarly to the ISEW, was particularly marked: whereas GDP per person rose from the 1970s, GPI actually declined (see 'Genuine progress?').

Shorter work year

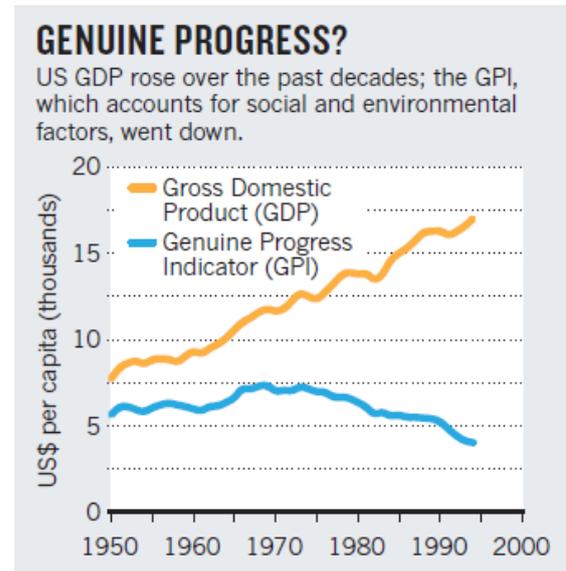
These results bear out an observation made in 1934 by Simon Kuznets, a Russian-American economist and one architect of the system of national accounts from which GDP is derived⁸: “The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measure of national income.” Work on more broadbased indicators to complement or replace GDP has been given a substantial boost by a 2009 report by Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen⁹ that caught the attention of many politicians.

Models have been built to explore what might realistically be accomplished in developed countries that forgo economic growth, and what the consequences might be. I constructed¹⁰ a fairly conventional model of the Canadian economy and found circumstances under which employment can be increased, poverty and greenhouse-gas emissions reduced, and government debt effectively managed without economic growth. A key ingredient is a shorter work year, which would help to spread employment among more of the labour force. The benefits of greater productivity would

thus be directed towards more leisure time, rather than increasing GDP. Scoping this out for Canada, assuming that labour productivity continues to rise modestly, a reduction in the average work year of around 15% by 2035, to 1,500 hours a year, would secure full employment. This work year would still be longer than in some European countries. In Germany, for example, the average paid employee worked 1,430 hours in 2008.

Other ingredients for an attractive low/nogrowth scenario include more focused and better-funded anti-poverty programmes, a stable population (already achieved in many developed countries and within the grasp of others), and stricter policies on environment and resources, based on Daly’s principles. My study has helped to stimulate similar investigations, under way or proposed, in countries including New Zealand,

Austria, the United Kingdom, Finland and the United States, with results expected over the next year or so.



Zero economic growth, however, may not be enough. Some researchers are looking seriously at ‘degrowth’: shrinking developer economies to bring them into balance with resource and environmental limits, while improving quality of life. The scope of changes in all aspects of the economy would be much more far-reaching, and the repercussions for society greater. Nevertheless, degrowth in materials use, fossil energy, land and water is clearly required, so degrowth of national economies may be unavoidable.

There is debate about whether capitalism is compatible with steady-state or degrowth economies. A shrinking economy brings a real risk that profit-seeking companies and their shareholders will be disappointed, credit ratings will suffer, the financial system will be in jeopardy, trade will shrink and the whole capitalist system could spiral to collapse. Whether this would happen remains an open question. Solow, for one, sees no reason why capitalism could not survive with slow or even no growth. Others are more sceptical — especially about the survival of capitalism in degrowth societies. It is worth noting that even in a shrinking economy, some sectors — such as renewable-energy development — will flourish.

As long as economic growth remains so important to global policymakers, humanity is hopelessly constrained: the environmental policies we need face the unreasonable political hurdle that they must also be shown to promote economic growth. This must change. At grass-roots level, many people in the developed world are already directing their energies towards enhanced wellbeing, in part by turning to local producers for their food, clothing and other needs. Institutions of all kinds — financial, political, legal, educational, religious and social — that have evolved to thrive in a fast-growing economy will have to adapt. This could be the greatest challenge of all; there are no good answers yet as to how they should change.

With the prospect of environmental calamity facing humanity, developed economies must chart a course towards living within a fair share, and no more, of the planet's safe operating space. Developing countries, in their turn and time, will also have to adjust. Done thoughtfully, this could lead to more satisfactory and fulfilling lives for all.

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MATERIAL 5: Criteria of a good degrowth project

CRITERIA OF A GOOD DEGROWTH PROJECT	Examples in local projects

MATERIAL 6: Serge Latouche: the “8 Rs” of degrowth

(From: Serge Latouche. 2009. *Farewell to growth*. Polity Press: Cambridge, p. 33 – 43.)

Latouche: the “8 Rs” of degrowth	Examples in local projects
Re-evaluate what matters	
Reconceptualize key notions such as wealth, poverty, value, scarcity and abundance	
Restructure the productive apparatus and social relations to fit these new values	
Redistribute wealth and access to natural resources between North and South and between classes, generations and individuals	
Relocalize savings, financing, production and consumption	
Reduce production and consumption, especially for goods and services with little use value but high environmental impact	
Re-use products	
Recycle waste	

Open-localism

François Schneider, Research & Degrowth

Short Abstract

The so-called “open-growth-society”, related to globalisation, has only been open for a few: the rich ones, and for the products from multinationals. Criticizing globalisation, worse promoting degrowth, leads very quickly to accusations of being reactionary. In practice now growth and globalisation in this finite world leads to increasing inequality and therefore – frustration, closure (the rise of extreme rights), and conflicts for resources. Localism, if it is about being in relation with our surrounding environment, does not need to be closed. Within degrowth we talk about the importance of supporting, practicing and theorizing the so-called “open-localism”, or “cosmopolitan localism”. Open-localism does not create frontiers, and cherishes diversity locally..It implies reducing the distance between consumer and producers (or be “consumers-producers”), being sensitive to what we can see and feel, while being cosmopolitan, in line with the antic citizen of the world Diogenes. Rather than building an identity it implies means acting in coherence, and it is certainly not obtained by consumer products, or exclusion.

Long Abstract

Gated communities, people closing doors, fear of foreigners, vote for extreme rights, tightening of borders, are few visible signs of closure that are happening with the advent of the crisis. The debate on closure is relevant: how can we secure commons, avoid anonymity that occurs when people do not involve locally on the long run?

The debate could be presented as a divide between ‘communitarian’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ models. On one hand the communitarian model stresses the importance of a given community as opposed to others. On the other hand, the cosmopolitan model tends to be associated with the vision of an open individual that would not be constrained by communities.

We defend the idea that we do not need to be restricted to these two options. On one hand communities can be open, individuals can be part of different communities, and communities can refer themselves to negotiable identities and have blurred frontiers. These key issues are for now largely disregarded by ecologists. A few prominent ecologists have had some stands in favour of closing borders and closed identities. Some mention even local patriotism. William Rees for example, prominent initiator of the ecological footprint, comes to the conclusion that the population of rich countries, that consume more, need to reduce their population, and reduce immigration in order to reduce their impacts.

On the other hand cosmopolitanism does not need to escape from attachment to the local. The idea of bioregionalism could lead to the creation of new closure, and the naturalization of borders that one shall not cross.

Degrowth gives a lot of importance to the idea of limits, and the idea of threshold (cf Illich). But we are not using these notions to restrict liberty, but on the contrary to restrict what would affect it. The idea of frontier (a relatively new idea in human history) on the contrary is often about securing a wealth for a few against others, about liberty sometimes but only for the ones on the right side. We would like to reduce distance between producers and consumers, not by setting a border, but rather by fighting large-scale and fast transport infrastructures, which at first sight seems contrary to common sense. As say Glissant borders are interesting if they can be crossed, they then become possibilities for metamorphosis. It is not what is happening when privileged areas and countries secure their wealth by closing themselves behind gates and walls (without talking of dramatic death toll that the present situation creates). The point is to develop how crossing of borders shall create changes in the right direction

A few misconceptions:

1 “The global (capitalist) growth has enabled to open borders”

Supposedly the advent of capitalism has come with a reduction of violence, with openness of borders. This is only a reality for the rich part of the world population which has the privilege of travelling where it wants unlike 80% of humanity as a consequence of laws favouring western travellers (visas) and wealthy individuals.

2 “The global (capitalist) growth has helped diversity”

This might have been true for some time, but the reverse process is occurring now. The globalised market led to the generalization of products from multinationals (coca cola, being the most well-known), as well as generalization of the western lifestyle. In general the idea of maximization of utility, the base of capitalism is reaching all corners of the world, reducing the space left for other types of relations, especially the gift & care relations which leave space for much wider diversity. Neo-liberalism and Keynesianism, two faces of the “growth coin” are two logics that create a strong dependence into the growth of production, consumption and exploitation. As resources are limited, both neo-liberalism and Keynesianism lead ultimately to closure.

3 “Criticizing growth is always reactionary”

Supposedly degrowth would be a call for going back to “identitarian” closed-communities against the liberal democracy and the “open-society” as defined by Popper. Although neo-liberals defend the idea of open-society through economic growth, economic growth in the real world, the one which has limits, leads to resources scarcity and ultimately exclusion, in contradiction with the supposed goal of

Popper. Growth in a finite world leads to a lack of resources and to economic difficulties for a large part of humanity. Reacting to those crises without challenging high consumption lifestyles (the western way of life that reached the global middle class) will lead to resource scarcity and intensify competition for good jobs positions. This will likely create a fear of those who might 'steal' resources (bread usually) and jobs, in all likelihood the immigrant or the 'other'. As a consequence, we expect, and experience already in this present crisis, the closing of doors and borders.

4 “Criticizing growth is always emancipatory”

Most of extreme right is fiercely pro-growth. However there are recently extreme right groups of the new right who adopted an anti-growth discourse, like the followers of Alain de Benoist. Their ideas lead directly to ethnic segregation and cultural separatism. Also several renowned personalities like Constanza, Rees and Daly have officially supported the Carrying Capacity Network, a USA lobby with a strong discourse against illegal immigrants (or against their legalization). Although Daly recently took out his name from the board, he is still an opponent of immigration in the US. Also the so-called growth-busters, with Dave Gartner, has been focalising on population reduction, closing of regional borders and immigration reduction. This leads to one question: where does the boundary between degrowth emancipatory responses and extreme right/reactionary idea stands ?

An alternative project: the cosmopolitan localism / cosmopolitan autonomy /open localism

Localism does not need to be closed. Within degrowth we talk about the importance of supporting, practicing and theorizing the so-called «open-localism», or "cosmopolitan localism". Open-localism has been mentioned several times since the development of degrowth as movement and political proposals. It means a type of localism which does not create frontiers, which cherishes diversity and multi-level thinking while promoting the creation of open and integrative local projects as well as slow travels. How is it that a country like Switzerland (we could mention other countries) closes its borders, while its wealth comes from questionable exploitation of international resources? Problems are multi-level and need adapt to its levels of relevance. One of the axes of open localism is the fight against large infrastructures of transport, understanding political backgrounds & promoting solidarity. We want to be in relation with our surrounding environment, to reduce the distance between consumer and producers (or be "consumers-producers"), be sensitive to what we can see and feel, while being cosmopolitan and recognize the multi-level character of many aspects of present life. This is line with our friend Diogenes (possibly the first degrowth philosopher, and inventor of cosmopolitanism). Our identity is about acting in coherence, and certainly not given by consumer products, or exclusion.

There are several reasons why degrowth is fundamentally a project of open localism challenging closed identities.

The change of lifestyles related to degrowth leads to giving up all sorts of strong identity attributes associated with consumption items such as cars or large houses. In this context changing consumption

patterns for degrowth means changing the constituents of our identity. Will it fall in a new dogma? It does not need to, because degrowth can be applied a thousand different ways. Each degrowth lifestyle could be generalized, but is unique in practice. We fundamentally acknowledge that the need for identity, one of the needs defined by Max-Neef, can be satisfied in many diverse ways. Degrowth actually implies a rethinking of personal satisfiers and a collective & deep democratic debate on collective satisfiers as the best way to fulfil given societal needs. The identities brought by degrowth are negotiable and are not cemented on given satisfiers. Within the degrowth movement, a very wide combination of concerns and approaches have been identified that makes degrowth very far from an ideology or any norm in thinking (Demaria et al. 2013). Proofs of this are the vibrant and rich debate and conflicts existing within the degrowth movement (Duverger 2011). As opposed to many movements who have a strong identity based on an artificial marker against an 'enemy', the degrowth movement is composed of a wide diversity of actors.

We argue that the discourse of the degrowth process and project, if taken into consideration with all its philosophical origins, dimensions and strategies can actually be a remedy for identity closure and exclusion. We conclude that the key difference between the degrowth movement and the reactionary elements of society (that can sometimes be against growth) is at the level of identity closure. Degrowth requires going out of closure by developing communities of projects, and in many cases question and possibly challenge the idea of non- negotiable identitarian communities (with the exception of those that are frugal, oppressed or endangered like a small tribe in Amazonia).

MATERIAL 8: Open space and Pro-Action Café methodology

Open Space methodology

Source: Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations (www.artofhosting.org)

The goal of an Open Space Technology meeting is to create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues of concern to them. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through. Typically, Open Space meetings result in transformative experiences for the individuals and groups involved. It is a simple and powerful way to catalyse effective working conversations and to truly invite organisations to thrive in times of swirling change.

Principles of Open Space

- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whenever it starts is the right time
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- When it's over it's over

The Law of Two Feet:

If you find yourself in a situation where you are not contributing or learning, move somewhere where you can.

Follow your PASSION & take your RESPONSIBILITY

The four principles and the law work to create a powerful event motivated by the passion and bounded by the responsibility of the participants.

Roles in Open Space

- Host—announce and host a workshop
- Participant—participate in a workshop
- Bumble bee—“shop” between workshops
- Butterfly—take time out to reflect

General flow of an Open Space meeting

The group convenes in a circle and is welcomed by the sponsor.

The facilitator provides an overview of the process and explains how it works. The facilitator invites people with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on a piece of paper and announces it to the group.

These people are "conveners." Each convener places their paper on the wall and chooses a time and a place to meet. This process continues until there are no more agenda items.

The group then breaks up and heads to the agenda wall, by now covered with a variety of sessions. Participants take note of the time and place for sessions they want to be involved in.

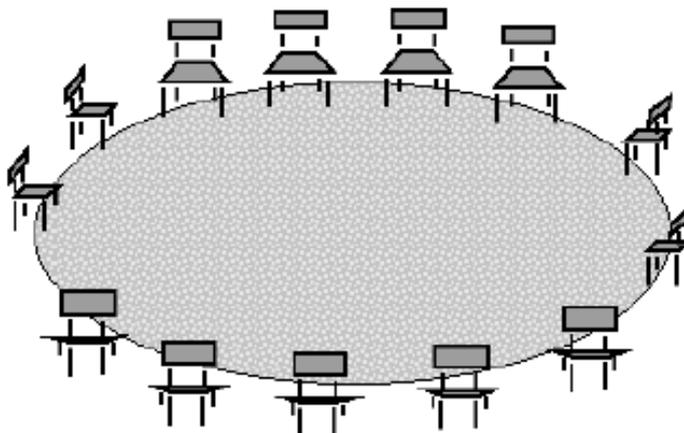
Dialogue sessions convene for the rest of the meeting. Recorders (determined by each group) capture the important points and post the reports on the news wall. All of these reports will be harvested in some way and returned to the larger group.

Following a closing or a break, the group might move into 'convergence', a process that takes the issues that have been discussed and attaches action plans to them to "get them out of the room."

The group then finishes the meeting with a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights and commitments arising from the process.



The Law of Two Feet



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The Four Principles

Whoever comes is the right people.
Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
Whenever it starts is the right time.
When it is over it is over.



What is Open Space good for?

Open Space Technology is useful in almost any context, including strategic direction setting, envisioning the future, conflict resolution, morale building, consultation with stakeholders, community planning, collaboration and deep learning about issues and perspectives.

Open Space Technology is an excellent meeting format for any situation in which there is:

- A real issue of concern
- Diversity of players
- Complexity of elements
- Presence of passion (including conflict)
- A need for a quick decision

Open space can be used in groups of 10 to 1,000 (and probably larger). It's important to give enough time and space for several sessions to occur. The outcomes can be dramatic when a group uses its passion and responsibility (and is given the time) to make something happen.

Materials needed

- Circle of chairs for participants
- Letters or numbers around the room to indicate meeting locations
- A blank wall that will become the agenda
- A news wall for recording and posting the results of the dialogue sessions
- Breakout spaces for meetings
- Paper on which to write session topics/questions
- Markers/Pencils/Pens
- Posters of the Principles, Law of Two Feet, and Roles (optional)
- Materials for harvest

Pro-Action Café methodology

The Pro Action Café is a space for creative and action oriented conversation where participants are invited to bring their call, project, ideas, questions or whatever they feel called by and need help to manifest in the world.

The concept of Pro Action Café is a blend of 'World Café' and 'Open Space' technologies. It was first conceived by Rainer von Leoprechting and Ria Baek in Brussels, Belgium.

What is Pro-Action Café good for?

As a conversational process, the Pro Action Café is a collective, innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about calls, questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These

conversations link and build on each other as people move between café tables, cross-pollinate ideas, and offer each other new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, organisation or community.

As a process, the Pro Action Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of good work. Pro Action Café can be used with a network of people and/or as a methodology for a specific group, organisation or community to engage in creative and inspirational conversation leading to wiser and more collectively informed actions.

Pro Action Café is also a growing global community of people, groups, organizations and networks that practice this conversational format.

General flow of a Pro Action Café

Start with a quick check-in circle to connect to the purpose of the session and with each other. If check-in has already taken place as part of a longer process, go straight to building the agenda.

You need 2 ½ to 3 hours for a good Pro Action Café. Invite participants step forward with their call and in that way ask the community for the help you need to move your project into action. People with a call stand up, speak it and write it on the agenda that corresponds to a numbered café table, other participants are invited to move around and engage around the themes proposed by others.

Dividing the number of participants by 4 gives the number of callers with projects that can be worked. For example, with 40 people you can have maximum 10 callers each with a project. **The principle is first come first served.** If you have fewer callers add chairs to café tables but no more than 5 at each table. During this process each contributing participant (those who do not step forward) gets to support 3 of the different projects.

When the agenda has been created, invite the callers to go to their numbered café tables. There will be 3 rounds of 20 to 30 minute conversations in café style, each guided by a few generic questions to help deepen and focus the conversations:

Round 1:

What is the quest behind the call /question/ project? - To deepen the need and purpose of the call. Digging under the surface of what we know already.

Round 2:

What is missing? – When the quest has been deepened, a discover question explores what could make the project more complete and possible.

Round 3:

What am I learning about myself? – What am I learning about my project? - What next steps will I take? - What help do I still need? – To help bring it all together for the caller and his/her project.

This 3rd round is in two steps:

First 20-25 minutes for the callers to reflect by themselves on the 4 questions above and harvest their key insights.

Then a last round where 3 new contributors visit the tables to listen to the harvest of the caller, their learning, their next steps, help needed, and then offer any insights and further support.

Between each round it is advisable to create short breaks for the contributors to have a drink, relax together and get ready to support another caller in their quest/ project. Last step is to meet in the circle and invite the callers from each table to share answers to these 2 questions:

- **What am I grateful for?**
- **What are my next steps?**

If there is time the whole group reflects shortly on: **What applications do we see for practising Pro Action Café in our contexts?**

End the Pro Action Café with a collective gesture to appreciate the work done and the gifts offered and received.

Materials and set-up

Ideally create a large circle in one part of the room and enough café tables with 4 chairs in another part (if the size of the room does not allow this, then participants will move the tables and chairs themselves as soon as the agenda is created). Dress the tables with flipchart paper, colour pens and markers as basic café set up. Prepare the matrix for the agenda setting of the session with the right amount of sessions according to the number of participants divided by 4. Have fun and do good work together.

MATERIAL 9: Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking program

"Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking" program

This internationally implemented educational program makes pedagogues acquainted with concrete, practical methods, techniques and strategies integrated into an open but compact system. It is based on constructivist pedagogy and the principles of the brain functioning. The program presents the three-stage learning model E-R-R.

Three-stage learning model E-R-R

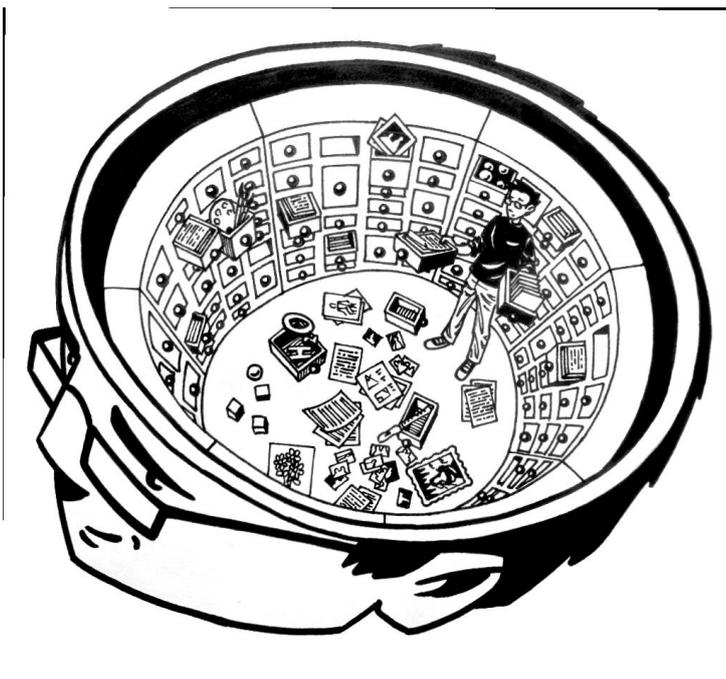
The E-R-R framework provides a model for understanding teaching processes and serves as a mechanism for organizing instruction that corresponds to what is known about how students learn best. A brief description of these phases of the learning process may provide a sense of the structure and its impact on the teaching process.

Evocation

Every learning process starts when students are able to realize and express verbally the things they already know about the chosen topic or what they think about it; at the same time they should also be able to formulate their questions and those areas of the topic they feel ambiguous about and which they would like to find answers to in the course of the following stage.

This initial stage helps students to:

- evoke prior knowledge, sentiment, or impressions;
- generate individual and/or collective understandings about the tasks to be studied



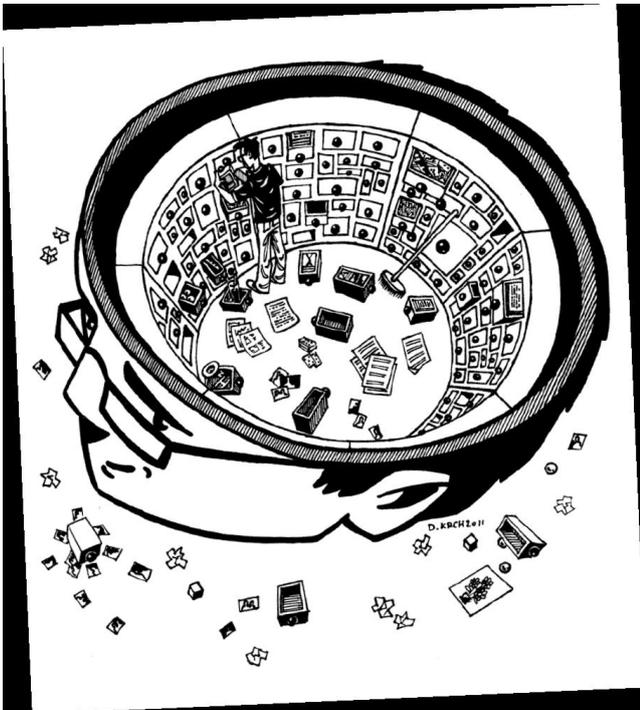
- create a context for new learning
- speculate, make predictions, and set purposes for exploring newly introduced topics or themes.

The Realization of Meaning

Students are exposed to new information or ideas, to new content, or to new deliberations. Their original concept of the topic is confronted with the source of new information: a discussion, guided lecture, textbook reading, videotape, artistic performance, or other event. The task of the student during this phase is to remain engaged with the content, actively managing the information.

Students

- make decisions about the relative importance of the information and ideas being presented by filtering out the incidental from the essential
- integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge
- considering the utility and applicability of the information to new settings and opportunities



Reflection

Students re-formulate their understanding of the topic with regard to the newly acquired information and the discussions with their colleagues, they begin to express new knowledge and understandings in their own words. This phase provides students the time, structure, and means to actively integrate information with previously held beliefs and ideas so that their learning will be contextualized and, consequently, real and more lasting. It is the time when learning becomes personal. The learner takes ownership of new knowledge.

This phase is characterized by:

- robust discussions, practical applications of knowledge
- the generation of new ideas and concepts
- open speculation about implications, or a call for further investigations

Examples of the methods used within the program

Trunk & roots, Pair reading, Peer teaching, Discussion web, T-graf, Guided discussion