



Introduction to Degrowth

François Schneider

Plan

- A- Why degrowth? The diversity of “sources”
- B- How degrowth? The diversity of ways
 - The scales
 - The limits to growth
 - The strategies
- C- Who degrowth? The diversity of actors
- D- “Diversity” of degrowth
- E- “Diversel”: the dialogues to build “degrowth stories”

A- Question 1: why degrowth???

- Let us identify different reasons for calling for degrowth.

Lack of resources



Bioeconomy

Georgescu-Roegen

**Availability of resources
decreases (peak-all) and we have
to adapt**

*Degrowth represents a slower increase of entropy
(the decline of resources availability)*

Destruction of life conditions



Odum, Naess, Charbonneau

Ecology

**Respect to ecosystems
and life in general and
critics of industrial society**

**Degrowth is less ecosystem exploitation to allow
for their regeneration**

Dehumanisation

Critics of development and anti-utilitarianism

Latouche, Rist, Escobar, etc.

For human relations and
conviviality

There is another life
outside market relations

Degrowth is about decolonizing the imaginary: challenge to commodification, challenge to maximization of individual utility and to the western model of development



Loss of meaning

Meaning of life

Degrowth is
about
enjoying
simplicity

*Thoreau,
Gandhi,
Rabhi etc.*



For “coherence and
unity”
Instead of spending
our lives in
contradicting social
roles

Oligarchy

For real democracy



Degrowth implies making real democracy possible
less manipulation from advertisements,
deliberation on the ideas of progress, development
It shall also be possible to challenge Growth in de

Closure & Feodalism



Welcome to our global open-society!

- **Gated** communities
- Tightening of **borders**
- **Walls** in Melilla, Greece, Bulgaria
- **Death** toll at borders
- People **closing doors**, Loss of hospitality
- **Fear**, especially fear of foreigners
- Vote for **anti-immigrants**
- **Xenophobia**



Justice

Veblen, Kempf, Sachs...

Less competition, large scale redistribution, sharing and reduction of excessive incomes and wealth instead of « trickle down philosophy »

Degrowth is about making justice possible

B- Question 2: How degrowth???

- Let us identify different ways to act for degrowth:
 - Diversity of scales
 - Diversity of limits to growth
 - Diversity of strategies

Diversity of Scales







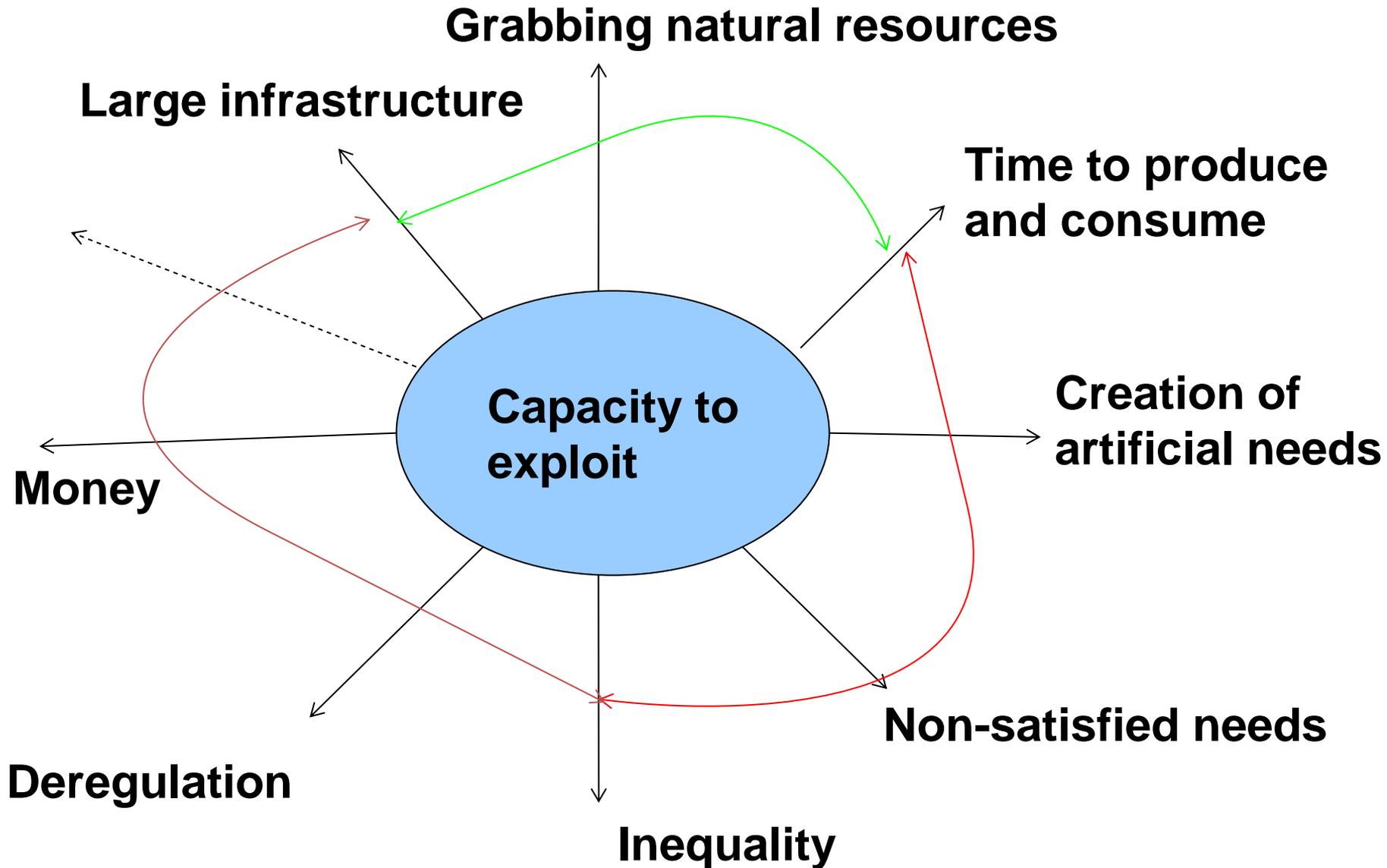
Diversity of Limits to growth

Our economy is dependent on growth

There are limits to growth, those create crises

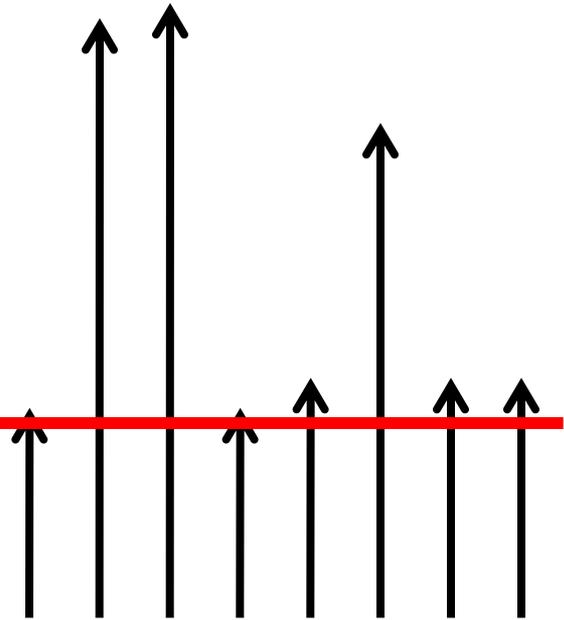
The belief in growth (“Croyssance”) make us try to continue with artificial growths: overwork, expanding commodity frontiers, large infrastructures, financial bubbles, deregulation, social comparison, planned obsolescence, adverts, etc.

(De)growth means acknowledging a Combination of limits (not just physical limits)



Ready for the crisis

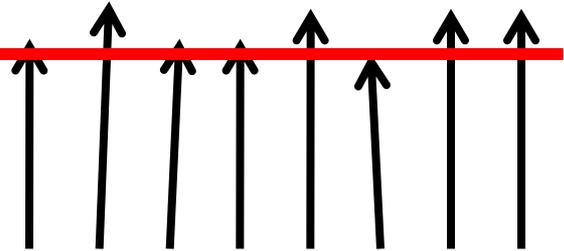
Production and
consumption capacity



Capacities along different dimensions

Ready for sustainable degrowth

Production and
consumption capacity



Limits to inequalities





Limits to adverts

Sharing & commons





**Leaving
resources
In/on the ground**

Less speed



Work-sharing



Less money & finance



LA PAZ
de Bolivia
La Paz
de España
Enlaces
de los
CEBIBOT
de la
MERDA

UNA ES UNA UNIÓN
LUNAR JUNTAS VAGA SOCIAL
SALVATGE

al
es
S
C
I
S

Strategies

Opposition strategy

- Oppositional activism, such as the campaigners working
- to stop the expansion of developmental infrastructures of transport (i.e. highways, airports, high speed trains),
 - Challenging waste management (i.e. incinerators),
 - Opposing big dams and interlinking of rivers
 - Opposing nuclear plants, agrofuels.
 - (...)

Opposition takes different forms: demonstrations, boycotts, civil disobedience, direct action and even protest songs.



Frugal innovations - *Alternatives building*

Reuse and composting.

Co-housing and sharing

Ecological and dense housing.

Bicycles and public transport.

Open localisation

Face to face relations

Slow travel.

Organic and vegan food

Renewable energy

Appropriate simple tools

Independent and participative information

Writing

Silence

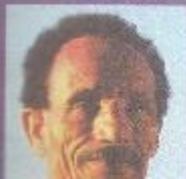
91280
Février
2002
1 €
6 FS

S!lence

Ecologie • Alternatives • Non-violence

Décroissance
soutenable et conviviale
Serge Latouche
Mauro Bonaiuti
Bruno Clémentin
Vincent Cheynet
François Schneider

La décroissance



Politique

Reformism: actions despite-capitalism

- many actors oppose or challenge some institutions but only propose to reform others.
- some institutions actually need to be defended like natural areas and public health.
- On one hand we might have to defend the democratic institutions put at risks with the crisis and at the same time support the development of deeper, more participative and direct ones.

Who degrowth?

PRACTICE



COOPERATIVE RESEARCH



2nd Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity

BARCELONA
Spain
March 26-29th 2010



Keynote speeches
Working group on policies and research
Poster session
Plenaries

2nd degrowth Conference Barcelona 26th-29th of March 2010

www.degrowth.eu

at / www.degrowth.eu / www.degrowth.asia / www.degrowth.us / www.degrowth.org.uk / w

ACTIVISM





ARTS

D- “Diversity” of degrowth

E- “Diversel”: the dialogues to build
“degrowth stories”

A way to find

- Neither top-down universalism
- Nor tribal closure (local or not):



**The new frontiers
to cross are the
ones that came us
discover new ways
to satisfy our needs**

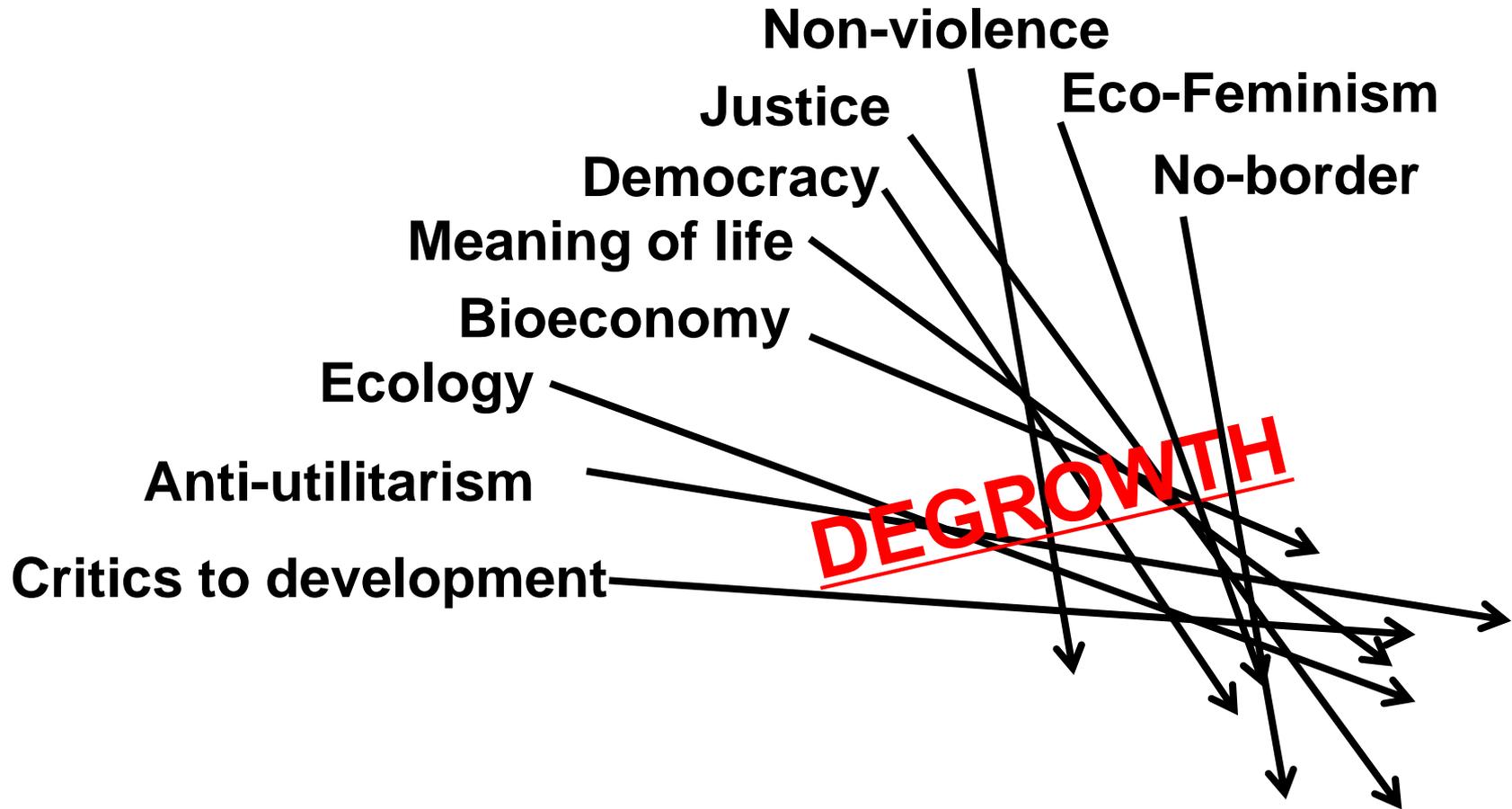
There is no unique definition of degrowth

Degrowth is a space of dialog where different ideals – democracy, justice, agro-ecology, bioeconomy, conviviality, good life – meet each other in order to constitute a sort of practical and theoretical utopia.

Dialog of the sources

The concerns to which degrowth responds

Degrowth is not an ideology



“Inter-source”

Concerns need to be combined

- Bioeconomy without meaning of life would be depressing
- Ecology without justice could be about human genocide
- Justice without democracy could be about top-down authoritarianism
- (...)
- ***Degrowth without justice could be about closure***

Dialog of the limits to growth

Justice: resources

Introduction of a basic income; institutionalization of an income ceiling based on maximum-minimum ratios





**Taxation of advertising
and its prohibition from public spaces**

Defense and expansion of local commons and establishment of new jurisdictions for global commons. Discouragement of overconsumption of non-durable goods and under-use of durables by regulation, taxation or bottom-up approaches.





**Moratoria on
mining
activities**

**Yasunisation:
leaving resources
In/on the ground**

**Support for
environmental
justice
movements**

Abandonment of large-scale infrastructure such as nuclear plants, dams, incinerators, high-speed transportation; conversion of car-based infrastructure to walking, biking and open common spaces



Establishment of integrated policies of reduced working hours (work-sharing), rethinking work



**Facilitation of local
currencies; gradual
elimination of money
creation by banks; not-for-
profit banks**



Dialog of the strategies

Convergence of strategies

A-growth

Theory and dissemination

Local scale

.Alter-growth

Voluntary simplicity

.Anti-growth

Opposition to
some technologies

.Despite-growth

Small cooperatives

Larger scale

.Alter-growth

Developing new institutions

Anti-growth

Challenge some institutions

Despite-growth

Defend some institutions

Transform some institutions

Dialog of the actors
Less specialisation

Multiple level actors

challenging the over-specialisation

- The degrowth multiple diagnosis relates to
 - local actors (activists and practionners),
 - researchers (inside or outside academia),
activist-led science: concept that can be analysed by academia
 - and society-wide politics (activists and policy makers)

Usually “Researchers - Activists – Practionners”

Acting and thinking at local, global and intermediary levels

Community of Project

DEGROWTH

Epilog: Definitions of degrowth

There is no single definition of
degrowth

Degrowth as...

- as physical decay
- voluntary simplicity
- as anti-utilitarianism
- as condition for ecological regeneration
- condition for justice and democracy

“Anti-utilitarian” definition of degrowth

- A slogan, a “missile word”, meaning to repoliticize social and environmental debates:
 - creating dissidence to the present economic representations,
 - and demystifying growth, sustainable development and progress.

Bioeconomic definition of degrowth

A collective decision to produce and consume less locally and globally... (less exploitation of natural resources & people) initiated by activists in the 2000's.



Can Decreix is a place to **demonstrate** and **reflect** around the topic of **degrowth**. Can Decreix is a centre for **transformation** (of fruits, vegetables, constructions, societies), for **research**, for **testing** frugal technologies, arts, agroecology. . .



- Contact us at network@degrowth.org (Spain)
or Contact@degrowth.net (France)
- www.degrowth.org