

DEGROWTH

- AN INTRODUCTION

Global Degrowth Day 2020
Webinar by New Economic Network Australia

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A black and white cartoon illustration. A large ship is shown from a side profile, moving from left to right. The ship's hull is labeled with the word "Progress" in a cursive font. On the deck, a large brick chimney is being carried. The chimney is emitting a thick, billowing cloud of smoke. Inside the ship, several small figures of people are visible, looking out. Behind the ship, a man is swimming in the water, holding a rope that is attached to the back of the ship, as if he is pulling it. The ship is about to go over a steep cliff, which is depicted with vertical lines representing a drop-off. The water is represented by simple horizontal lines. In the bottom left corner, there is a signature that reads "WITTE".

PLURIVERSE

Practices and search for alternatives

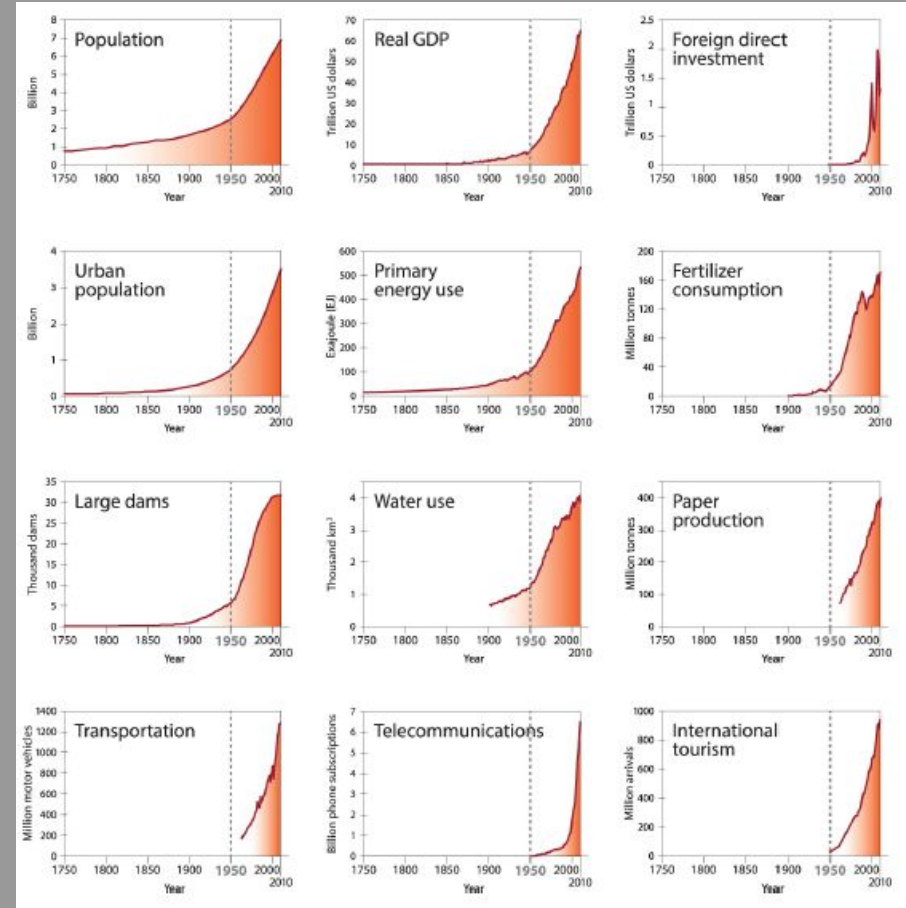
What is wrong with growth?*

1. Material growth of the economy

1% GDP growth \rightarrow 0,8% increase in material use (Steinberger et al., 2013)

\rightarrow 0,5%-0,7% CO₂ emissions increase (Burke et al., 2015)

\rightarrow Impacts on ecosystems and climate



(Steffen et al. 2015)

*Barbara Muraca's presentation at 1st Utrecht Degrowth symposium

What is wrong with growth?

2. Monetary growth

- GDP does not express wellbeing
- Happy Planet Index: measuring life expectancy, ecological footprint, inequality, satisfaction with life
- e.g. Costa Rica and Nicoya Peninsula (pics).



Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula ...
travelawaits.com



Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica: On the ...
escapismmagazine.com



icoya Peninsula - Costa Rica: Get the ...
mesofindia.indiatimes.com



Blue Zone: Some of the Healthiest ...
number8.com

What is wrong with growth?

3. Growth as cultural and social process

- Growth as "mental infrastructure" - investing, competing, always more and better, more productive, individualism.
- Personal level: Stress, anxiety, burnouts.
- Societal level: Lack of imagination of alternatives. Fixation on "development" and "progress" as more production and consumption.

What is wrong with growth?

4. Growth as structural condition for our economies.

- Seen as only way to secure/improve living standards and social stability.
- Locked-in an accelerating bicycle that cannot stop.
- “...But we need it to reduce poverty..”
- What about inequality?

THERE IS ENOUGH WEALTH

World's 2,153 billionaires have more wealth than 60% of the world population. (Oxfam 2020)

Degrowth Definition(s)

“Degrowth is not a reversal of what we have right now, shrinking, less. Degrowth is a radical change of the structure of society...” (Barbara Muraca)

Degrowth is:

a process of political and social transformation,
which downscales production and consumption,
reducing society’s material and energy use,
while

improving the quality of life
and enhancing equity and ecological
conditions on the planet.



(Desazkunda)

Adapted from Degrowth.org and Demaria, Kallis and Bakker 2019

Degrowth and COVID-19



HI NEIGHBOURS!
AN OFFER TO HELP

If you or someone you know in the building is at increased risk, feels uncomfortable, or is unable to get groceries, run errands, pick up medication, etc., we're happy to help!

TOP PRIORITIES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Degrowth Activism

Global Degrowth Day – Good Life for All

The next Global Degrowth Day will be on 6th June 2020!

Many different public events all over the world will be organised to share alternatives to a growth based society. They want to show: A good life for all is possible!



**Degrowth international
activist group**
(<https://www.degrowth.info/en/globalday/>)

- Global Degrowth Day
- Network of degrowth (minded) groups



**Ontgroe.nl - Dutch
Degrowth Platform**

- Started late 2018
- 2 symposiums
- talks/group debates

Thank you!

‘the politically
acceptable is
ecologically disastrous
while the ecologically
necessary is politically
impossible’ ?

(Wackernagel, M. and Rees,
W., 1998. Our ecological
footprint: reducing human
impact on the earth)

Policies for degrowth?

- Downscaling western economies at 4-6% per year (Anderson and Bows 2011) makes it decarbonization easier (3% growth = doubling economy every 24 years).
- Maximum income + Basic income or Minimum autonomy allowance
- Slowing down economy by reducing working hours.
- Establishing environmental limits. Sufficiency 1st, efficiency 2nd.
- Restricting advertising.
- Abandon GDP.
- Green tax reform (from labour to resources, highly tax highest incomes/wealth)
- Stop subsidies of polluting activities, and support green activities instead.

What is degrowth? (who)

Movement of
movements?



Activists and
researchers