Expanding the territory of degrowth: Analyzing borders and migration through the lens of Economic and Inclusive degrowth

By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between degrowth and migration by defining two currents of degrowth - Economic degrowth and Inclusive degrowth. In the first half, I define what I call 'Economic degrowth' and 'Inclusive degrowth'. Economic degrowth views degrowth as a type of *economy*, to replace the current growth economy through implementing national policies to regulate growthism. I argue Economic degrowth needs to be rejected while Inclusive degrowth should be embraced. Inclusive degrowth views degrowth as a type of *society* that is anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and global, with plural ways of understanding and implementing degrowth. The second part of the thesis is Chapters 3 and 4. I highlight how Economic degrowth supports closed borders because of assumptions it makes about capitalism, the role of government and nature. Inclusive degrowth supports open borders because it is grounded on anti-colonial, anti-capitalist and pluralistic understandings of degrowth.

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Introduction: What is degrowth?

Degrowth: a critique of growth

To understand degrowth, we need to understand where it began. The term "décroissance" or degrowth was first used in 1972 by André Gorz, a French-Austrian philosopher (Parrique 2019; 172). The early understanding or "prehistory" of degrowth was limited to the reduction of throughput and material production (Parrique 2019; 172-4). Degrowth first arose within the field of ecological economics as a direct critique of growthism, the unrestricted economic growth of capital and material usage, infeasible with ecological boundaries (Victor 2008; Hickel 2022, 4; Kallis 2018). Early works of degrowth are connected to post-development theories, with Serge Latouche being one of the most prominent figures. Serge Latouche began to challenge the idea of Western development and the negative effects of imperializing this idea to the Global South (Latouche 2014). As a post-development scholar, Latouche advocated degrowth to "decolonize the imagery of what is possible" (Latouche 2014, 117). Degrowth is a critique of green growth and neo-liberal climate approaches (Hickel and Kallis 2019; Hickel 2022 video; Jackson and Victor 2019).

According to degrowth theory, green growth is not enough to respond to the climate crisis because it does not challenge the fundamental structures and culture of growthism that sustain the climate crisis. Green growth advocates for green technology and market-based approaches, such as carbon capture sequestration technologies, biofuels, nature-based solutions and the carbon tax, which do not address the root cause of growthism. These approaches protect capitalism which leads to corruption and destruction (Fraser 2022). They have furthered the new climate denialism where people are in 'denial' that we need a radical transformation (Klein 2020). The new climate denialism leads to passive revolutions by delaying support for radical

decarbonization, and the re-imagination of alternative ways to organize society (Carroll et al 2020). This is also the case with socialists who are advocates for traditional forms of anti-capitalism. While socialists are anti-capitalist, many focus on policy as a way to deal with the crisis, limiting the scope of the movement. Green growth and socialist movements do not recognize the larger interconnected structures of power that perpetuate neo-colonialism and growthism. This is why degrowth scholars advocate for a cultural transformation that tackles the capitalist systems (Latouche 2014, 121; Hickel 2019, 20).

How is degrowth defined?

There is no one way to define degrowth. However, core principles are shared amongst its different interpretations (Demaria et al 2013; D'Alisa et al 2014, xxi; Victor 2008; Gilmore 2013). Early understandings of degrowth originally focused on the reduction of consumption, production, and material throughput in North countries (Demaria et al 2013). They were associated with ideas of voluntary simplicity, that living with less is better for humans and the environment (Kothari et al 2014, 369). This is still one of the core principles of degrowth: to decouple the economy to relieve pressure from ecosystems and promote lifestyles that work, earn, sell, and consume less (Demaria et al 2013, 196-8). Degrowth has expanded its scope to support democracy, justice, and diversity of cultural/social values (Demaria et al 2013, 200). Hickel provides a more concise definition, defining degrowth as "a planned reduction of energy and resource use designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human well-being" (Hickel 2021, 1005). In essence, degrowth envisions a small local economy that supports communities and the web of relations between humans and non-humans.

Furthermore, the term has been understood and used differently depending on the context. For instance, Timothee Parrique in his doctoral dissertation, *The political economy of degrowth* (2019), discusses how degrowth has been used in three ways: degrowth as decline, degrowth as emancipation and degrowth as a destination (Parrique 2019, 212- 228). Degrowth as a decline is understood as the decoupling and rapid downscaling of throughput to meet ecological limits. Degrowth as an emancipatory project is the change in social imagination (Parriquee 2019, 225). This understanding is similar to Latouche's vision of degrowth, a counterculture to the current mode of society. Lastly, degrowth as a destination point to the actualization of the alternative society. It is a society where equality, justice, democracy, and sufficiency are realized (Parrique 2019, 230). Degrowth as a destination can be also understood as post-growth. Understanding these distinctions is important to recognize the diverse interpretations and origins of degrowth.

Furthermore, degrowth can be categorized into five currents (Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023, 5).

1. Institution-oriented current
2. Sufficiency-oriented current
3. Commoning or small economy current
4. Feminist current
5. Post-capitalist and globalization-critical current

The ordering of these currents reflects the timeline and evolution of degrowth discourse. The institution-oriented current critiques growth from the economics standpoint, arguing that market-based reforms are sufficient to challenge growth. It focuses on national institutions to drive change and achieve degrowth (Daly 1974; Jackson 2009; Victor 2008) This current is what I call Economic degrowth, which will be explored in Chapter 1. The second current, sufficiency-oriented, focuses on the reduction of consumption and throughput of our society. It advocates for

voluntary simplicity and reforms on the local and regional levels. The third current supports the commoning of societies, critiquing the international global economy and advocates for smaller economies (Perkins 2010 and 2019). This current is most similar to anti-globalization movements that advocate for localized societies (Bello 2019; Schnider 2015). Fourth is the feminist current that values care and re/production while critiquing the patriarchal system (Dengler and Lang 2022; Paulson et al 2020). Lastly, the post-capitalist and anti-colonial current advocates for the reduction of global inequality (Latouche 2014; Hickel 2019), to pay reparations for the Global South (Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023) and decommodify bodies and territories (Gilmore 2013; Ramose 2014, 212; Hoeft 2018; Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019). I situate my position in this last current and call it 'Inclusive degrowth'.

Research interests and topic

There are three reasons my topic is important and interesting to me. First, I think there is a fascinating tension between migration and degrowth. Degrowth promotes the localization of markets and power. It is about strengthening relationships within one community in a certain territory. Meanwhile, displacement and migration are globalized processes. Thus, degrowth and migration have a unique tension that has not been sufficiently explored. In relation to this, there is a lack of consideration of migration and displacement within the degrowth discourse. I believe it has been neglected because degrowth scholarship and movement have occurred mostly in Europe, centred around western ontologies and epistemologies. More specifically, I believe the topic of migration has been avoided by many degrowth scholars because migration is a political and contentious topic in Europe. In other words, the prevailing negative sentiment about migrants and displaced people in Europe has disincentivized degrowth scholars to talk about how degrowth relates with migration and borders. Strategically, the topic of migration has been

refrained to avoid backlash and to continue the support it has already gained from Europeans. Lastly, this topic is important to me personally as I am a first-generation immigrant. As someone who wants to advance degrowth, I want to talk about migration so that degrowth does not become an environmental project that alienates and disregards vulnerable populations. Thus, I wanted to explore this topic in order for people like me, and displaced people, to see themselves represented and discussed in degrowth.

I will explore this topic through the following question: **"How does embracing open borders better align the degrowth movement with decolonization and anti-capitalism?"**

Before I answer this question, I want to provide a short literature review. Although there is limited work on degrowth and migration, there are two main streams of argument: those who oppose migration and call for 'closed' borders, and others who support migration and advocate for 'open' borders. Closed borders can be interpreted as a restrictive border policy that prevents new people from settling in the host country (Daly 2015). Meanwhile, open borders can be understood as having looser or more flexible border policies that are open to accepting new people to settle in the country.

The broad migration degrowth discourse makes several assumptions. First, degrowth scholars frequently use the term migration or immigration without discussing the causes of migration or the period of settlement. Many scholars view migrants as forced migrants without explicitly stating so. Displaced people are assumed to be fleeing from their home country and moving for long-term or permanent settlement. Again, this is not clearly stated but is embedded within underlying arguments. Second, scholars assume that migrants are moving from the Global South to the Global North. There is a lack of discussion on the causes or motivations of migration, and it is assumed that people want to move to the North for "economic" reasons (Daly 2015, 132; Kallis 2015). This is why Kallis specifically uses "socio-economic refugees" instead

of the broader term migrants (Kallis 2015). I want to clarify that I will be using the term

displaced people rather than migrants, refugees or immigrants to "refuse binaries of forced and

voluntary, deserving and undeserving" people that move to another area (Walia 2019, 92). It is to

acknowledge the complex reasons that force or motivate people to move. As well, I will be using

displaced peoples instead of migrants to counter dehumanizing effects in the refugee discourse

(Hiraide 2023, 269). However, I will still use the terms migrants, immigrants or refugees in some

areas to stay consistent with the scholar's use of vocabulary.

Chapter Outline

My thesis is divided into four chapters. The first is on Economic degrowth, which

believes that growthism can be regulated with national economic policies. It views the economy

as a separate system and degrowth as a *type* of economy. I discuss the limitations of Economic

degrowth and reject it. We need to embrace Inclusive degrowth, which is the focus of Chapter 2.

Inclusive degrowth is a planned, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and global project. It aligns with the

visions of the pluriverse, embracing multiple ways and implications of degrowth. I argue that

Inclusive degrowth needs to be realized to align with existing environmental justice movements.

Using the two currents of degrowth, I discuss migration and borders in Chapters 3 and 4.

In Chapter 3, I highlight the relationship between Economic degrowth and closed borders

through an exploration of existing scholarship and show why both must be rejected. Chapter 4

discusses the relationship between Inclusive degrowth and open borders. Inclusive degrowth

supports open borders based on its core principles: anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism and the

embracing of a pluriverse. I argue that we need open borders and that displaced people can be the

counter-hegemonic force necessary to transform the dominant growth culture.

Chapter 1: Economic Degrowth and its Limitations

Introduction

In the first half of this chapter, I unpack the concept of 'Economic' degrowth: understanding degrowth only as a type of *economy,* rather than a type of *society*. I highlight prominent thinkers that ground the ideas of Economic degrowth: Herman Daly, Peter Victor and Tim Jackson. All three scholars critique the growth economy and propose a steady-state economy (Daly 1974), without-growth economy (Victor 2008) and post-growth economy (Jackson 2009; Victor 2008). The alternatives they propose are premised on two large assumptions. First, they all to an extent agree that degrowth can coexist with capitalism. Second, they assume top-down economic regulation is the most efficient and effective way to transition away from growth-oriented economies. I critique these assumptions and describe the limitations of Economic degrowth in the second half of Chapter 2.

My critiques are based on two main arguments. First, I argue Economic degrowth is grounded on economic rationalism and management of the earth that neglects non-western ontologies and epistemologies. Second, it nationalizes degrowth, neglecting the interconnected material relations which are embedded in colonial and imperial systems. Therefore, I argue that Economic degrowth reduces the potential for degrowth to truly be an alternative society.

Economic Degrowth: Steady-state, Without-growth, Community Economics

Economic degrowth proposes to replace the current growth-oriented economies with a degrowth economy. It uses degrowth to describe all *non*-growth economies. These include the steady-state economy proposed by Daly (1974), without-growth economy outlined by Victor

(2008) and post-growth economy suggested by Jackson (2009). By critiquing growth and proposing an alternative non-growth economy that reduces throughput, many of these scholars' proposals share similar values with my own preferred version of degrowth. However, I want to distinguish Economic degrowth as a less radical position on the "degrowth spectrum" (Eversberg and Schmelzer 2018).

The differentiation between these two categories of degrowth is not new. Economic degrowth has also been known as "moderate degrowth" (Schmid 2019, 4), "right-wing degrowth" (Cattaneo 2016, 261-3) and "Anglo-American liberal-inspired idea of degrowth" (Abraham 2019). This contrasts with what I call Inclusive degrowth, also termed "radical degrowth" (Schmid 2019, 4), "left-wing degrowth" (Cattaneo 2016, 261-3) or "degrowth à la Française" (Abraham 2019). Yves-Marie Abraham, a degrowth scholar in Quebec, positions the two versions of degrowth in connection to geographical region. Radical degrowth originates from the rise of post-development theory in Europe which is why it is "degrowth à la Française" (Parrique 2019, 184). It focuses on "decolonizing the imagery" of the capitalist economy and our relations (Latouche 2014, 134). Economic degrowth, on the other hand, is largely supported from North America and is "Anglo-American liberal inspired" (Abraham 2019). Degrowth in North America is rooted in ecological economics, portraying degrowth as an alternative economic model to align with planetary boundaries (Daly 1994; Victor 2008). This relates to my rationale for choosing these three scholars even though others critique growth without questioning capitalism and development (Van den Bergh 2011; Gadery 2012; Meda 2013; Raworth 2017).[1] All three scholars have been influential in developing the early understanding of degrowth and

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[1] See the full list of anti-growth scholars in this category in Timothee Parrique's *The political economy of degrowth* (2019, 168).

are ecological economic scholars. Thus, they share a distinct vision of degrowth without explicitly using the term 'degrowth'.

Herman Daly critiqued the growth economy and proposed a steady state economy or SSE (Daly 1993). Daly states that growth is not beneficial when "ecological costs [increase] faster than production benefits" (Daly 1993, 815-6). Economic growth is unattractive once we acknowledge its negative consequences (Daly 1993, 815). Thus, he proposes a steady state economy (SSE). He defines it as an "economy with constant stocks of people and artifacts, maintained at some desired, sufficient levels by low rates of maintenance 'throughput'…." (Daly 1997, 17). Daly's ideas of SSE are extended in the book "*For the Common Good"*, written in collaboration with John Cobb and Clifford Cobb (1994). The three authors propose "community economics" or "economics of community" as an alternative to growth economies (Daly et al 1994, 169). Community economics focuses on decentralizing political power and supporting smaller economies while prioritizing communities over individuals and profits (Daly et al 1994, 176-8). These ideas share many fundamental principles of degrowth, and the book contributes significantly to the foundation of degrowth.

Secondly, Peter Victor, a Canadian economist, published *Managing without growth: slower by design, not disaster* in 2008. He calls for a without-growth economy. Victor argues that the economy needs to be re-designed to reduce human activity and align with environmental limits (2008). As stated in his title, Victor advocates for better 'management' of the growth economy to reform policies and priorities. Similarly, Tim Jackson discusses the limits of growth economies and the need to redesign or re-orient the economy in consideration of planetary boundaries. Jackson proposes a "coherent post-growth macroeconomics" to critique the Western ideas of growthism and development (Jackson 2017, 182). Interestingly, he argues that "degrowth is not the opposite of growth" but an alternative to modern growth-based

development (Jackson 2017, 161). He states that a post-growth economy should enable people to define and realize prosperity without growth. This points towards the cultural shift required to realize a non-growth economy. Ideas advocated by Victor and Jackson complement the early work of Daly and further increase the support for degrowth. In summary, all scholars critique growth-based economies and offer varying alternatives. In this regard, there should be recognition and credit for their immense contributions. However, I want to dissect and critique some of their assumptions to move the degrowth agenda. This is why I have chosen to categorize the three scholars' versions of non-growth economies as Economic degrowth. The main characteristic of Economic degrowth, and their proposals, is viewing the economy as a distinct section of society.

Economic degrowth views the economy as a separable system from cultural, social or political sectors of society. Daly graphs the economy as an "isolated system" and asks, "How big is the subsystem (economy) relative to the total system? How big can it be? How big should it be?" (Daly 1993, 183-4). In asking this question, Daly assumes the economy can be separated from the 'total system'. Similarly, Victor states that the economy has the potential to "damage and destroy important social structures" as an independent entity (Victor 2008, 36). Victor does acknowledge the interconnectedness of the economy with other social structures: "economies are integrated with and supported by a whole range of social systems" (Victor 2008, 35). Even so, Victor assumes the growth-oriented economy is an independent social structure that influences other structures. Lastly, Jackson discusses degrowth as an opportunity to "build a new economics" and "fix economics" (Jackson 2017, 163 and 207). This means that post-growth is rebuilding or replacing the current economic system. He assumes this is sufficient to combat growthism.

All three scholars view the economy as an entity that can be distinguished from other sectors of society. Growth is driven by a particular economic agenda and is one type of *economy* that can be restructured and regulated, rather than a type of *society* or *culture*. This assumption is necessary to justify the approaches the scholars present to achieve a steady-state or without-growth economy, which do not focus on transforming the culture, politics, or societal values but prioritize replacing the growth economy with a non-growth economic system. This view provides insight into how scholars view capitalism.

Capitalism and degrowth

All three authors of Economic degrowth claim, to an extent, that it is possible to have a post-growth or a non-growth economy with capitalism. This is most clearly stated by Jackson when he mentions that a post-growth economy is incompatible with casino or consumer capitalism but not the "end of capitalism entirely" (Jackson 2009, 223). He notes that post-growth economies would be "less capitalistic", not necessarily anti-capitalistic (Jackson 2009, 225). Jackson recognizes the negative consequences of capitalism as it makes it difficult for people to access their needs because of privatization. However, capitalism itself does not need to be destroyed because the negative consequences can be managed by increasing public goods and social infrastructure (ibid). Thus, without-growth economies can co-exist with capitalism if the government deals with its negative externalities. Jackson looks to government regulation rather than challenging the innate logic and nature of capitalism in relation to growth.

Daly and the Cobbs do not reject capitalism. For instance, Daly and Cobbs remain "skeptical" of socialist and Marxist economic policies (Daly et al 1994, 14). They do not position themselves on the "spectrum of socialist and capitalist" because they argue that the focus should be on building economies that support communities, whether they are capitalistic or not (ibid).

However, it is made clear that they prefer markets to centralized planning in transition to and within SSE and community economics (Daly et al 1994, 14). They support markets because they are more efficient than bureaucratic or centralized planning (ibid). While markets themselves can be less capitalist, or not capitalist at all, their reason for supporting markets is efficiency. This aligns with a more neoliberal capitalist rationale than one that is grounded on sufficiency, solidarity, and care advocated by degrowth (Parrique 2019, 391). Thus, while Daly and Cobbs do not explicitly state their position concerning capitalism, their skepticism of Marxist policies and prioritization of efficiency reflect a position that is not anti-capitalist.

Lastly, Victor presents a more recent perspective on capitalism and degrowth. He initially claimed that the focus of degrowth should be on managing material and energy flows and "then we will see if capitalism is compatible with the required changes" (Victor 2011). In this sense, capitalism and growthism are separately prioritized in achieving a non-growth society. Tackling capitalism is not a prerequisite for realizing a non-growth society. Later in 2023, in a degrowth seminar session held by York University, Victor offered a much clearer position on capitalism (Victor 2023, 48-52). Victor claimed that "degrowth is fundamentally contradictory to capitalism" (Victor 2023, 49:05). However, he cautioned against framing degrowth as an anti-capitalist project for strategic reasons. People historically have failed to overthrow capitalism so overthrowing capitalism as an end goal for degrowth will be unproductive and discouraging (ibid). Thus, he argues that degrowth should not try to deliberately be anti-capitalist but focus on reducing throughput (Victor 2023, 48-50:20). Then eventually, capitalism, and how we relate to it will evolve (Victor 2011). Victor recognizes that degrowth and capitalism are in conflict but still does not want to frame degrowth as countering capitalism. In essence, Victor does not support capitalism but also is not anti-capitalist.

In summary, each scholar has a nuanced perspective on capitalism, but none reject capitalism or are anti-capitalist. By framing degrowth as a type of economy, capitalism, in their perspectives, is another type of economy which can be regulated. The negative consequences of capitalism can be controlled by government or market regulation. Their understanding of capitalism is directly linked with their assumptions about the role of the state in non-growth economies.

Role of state and policy

A key theme in Economic degrowth is the strong role of government. All three authors position the government as a key actor in leading the transition away from growth economies to non-growth and post-growth economies. They emphasize the government's responsibility and capacity to aid citizens during the transition while enforcing policies to regulate both growth and capitalism. All three scholars recognize the government's role in perpetuating the growth narrative based on progress (Victor 2008, 9), security (Jackson 2017, 196) and sustainable development (Daly 1993, 813). Since governments have actively benefited and pushed for growthism, they also see the potential of governments to resist growth and move away from growth economies. In this understanding, capitalism and liberalism are not the main problems that contribute to the growth narrative, but rather the lack of government regulation and oversight in growth economies. The legitimacy and authority of the government are established through their capacity and ability to enforce national policies for post-growth. This is exemplified by Jackson and Victor. Jackson argues that this can be done through a "reinvigoration of…the social contract" between people and the government where the government commits itself to shift away from materialistic individualism to shared prosperity (Jackson 2017, 199). Similarly, Victor emphasizes how government policy can lead the

transition which will eventually bring "dramatic changes in individual mindsets and societal values" (2008, 193). They both highlight the potential of the state to lead the transition toward post-growth. Furthermore, scholars highlight two main duties of the state in Economic degrowth.

First, the government has the responsibility to protect its citizens through increasing social spending to limit inequality (Jackson 2017,182; Daly 1974, 19) and combatting social exclusion and poverty (Victor 2008, 209). A strong government is necessary to protect vulnerable citizens who are exposed to social signals, status competition and unregulated corporations (Jackson 2017, 200). Second, there is an emphasis on the state to implement strict regulations to ensure economic activity aligns with environmental limits. Victor argues that the government needs to set quantitative targets to measure resource inputs and waste outputs to stabilize the economy (Victor 2008, 207-8). Meanwhile, Daly argues that institutions have an important role in stabilizing population, physical wealth and reducing throughput to ecological limits (Daly 1974, 19). The three scholars agree that the government should set and implement clear restrictions and limits in recognition of the nation's environmental capacity. This can be achieved through government economic policy (Victor 2008, 191-224; Jackson 2009 185-210; Daly et al 1994, 209- 360). These policies are predominantly based on economic modelling, equations and quantitative measurement.

In summary, all three highlight the need for the government to set the agenda through strict economic policies. This would require centralization of power and planning of government. In some respects, this contradicts Daly's desire to rely on markets to reorganize society. This shows there is inconsistency or differences in opinion when thinking about the role of the state. However, the perspectives of Economic degrowth generally seem to support top-down economic policies. Now that I have outlined the basic understanding of Economic degrowth, I want to turn to part II of this chapter to discuss its limitations.

Part II: Limitations of economic degrowth

There are two main critiques of Economic degrowth. First, viewing degrowth as a type of economy leads to economic rationalism and commodification of nature. Second, Economic degrowth focuses on one nation's economy and its environmental capacity, restricting the scale of the movement.

Economic rationalism and management of the Earth

Economic degrowth proposes to achieve post-growth through economic policies. This leads to two limitations. First, economic policies commodify nature and reject non-Western ways of knowing and relating with nature. Second, economic policies will be ineffective in changing the growth culture.

Economic degrowth advocates for policies because it views the economy as a "physical concept" (Daly 1994, 814). Therefore, the growth economy can be calculated and managed with the help of quantitative economic measurements. For example, Victor uses the IPAT equation to determine the scale of economic activity on the environment (Victor 2008, 102-4):

I = P x A x T, where
       I = Impact
       P = Population
       A = Affluence (GDP/population)
       T = Technology (impact/GDP)

This equation calculates the "magnitude of future changes required to reduce environmental impacts to acceptable levels" (Victor 2008, 104). Daly and Jackson also use economic equations and modelling throughout their book to argue that prosperity in non-growth societies is feasible (Daly et al 1994, 25-44; Victor 2008, 4-23; Jackson 2009, 84-118). As economists, they use these methods to provide quantitative evidence and proof that infinite

economic growth is inefficient and unnecessary. Economic policies are useful in increasing

predictability and policy confidence by analyzing common behaviour patterns (Sen 2001, 265).

They play an important role in moving theory to action that can be implemented and realized in

society. Quantitative methods are a "convenient rule of thumb" (Jackson 2017, 96), but the

scholars acknowledge that change should be accompanied by grassroots mobilization and

promotion of voluntary simplicity (Victor 2008, 222). In recognition of its limits, they still

believe economic policies are important to realize post-growth. However, I argue economic

policies often rely on the commodification of nature: economic equations and modelling assume

that nature and non-humans can be calculated within an economic model, which Dryzek calls

economic rationalism (Dryzek 2013, 122-24).

Quantifying nature and using equations to determine the threshold of the environment is

an anthropocentric concept that is human-centric (Malm and Hornborg 2014). It assumes that

nature and the climate crisis can be 'managed' by determining and reducing human impact on

nature. In *Decolonizing degrowth in the post-development convergence,* Nirmal and Rochelle

critique this attitude, arguing that it is an "exclusive logical positivist posture" (2019, 469) that

embodies a sentiment of superiority for humans to determine how to 'save' the planet. Such

ways of relating with nature reduce nature to a resource and a commodity, neglecting many

Indigenous ontologies and place-thought worldviews that view nature as kin (Walken 2007, 311-

14; Zoe 2020; Watts 2013, 21). In this sense, economic rationalism and Economic degrowth lead

to environmental racism. Rather than using economic policies that commodify nature, degrowth

needs to embody "nehiyaw (and other Indigenous) ways of balance, reciprocity, sharing and

caring" with nature and with each other that are not present in current economic modelling or

quantitative measurements (Alook et al 2023, 36). Even if quantitative measurements provide

more certainty or liability, we need to re-imagine how we predict and understand economic

security. Degrowth should not over-depend on dominant ways to realize post-growth. Furthermore, Economic degrowth fails to consider the value of care work, love and sacrifice that cannot be internalized in economics (Perkins 2019, 186). Thus, economic policies and Economic degrowth approaches prevent aligning with feminist or Indigenous movements.

This leads to the second problem. Implementation of economic policies will not be enough to shift the dominant culture and system of capitalism. Embracing voluntary simplicity and promoting localization (Victor 2008, 222) are not enough to completely transform the embedded and unconscious culture of growthism. Critiques would say economic policies and laws can be useful to slowly shift dominant culture by restricting individualistic and capitalist behavior. Through time, living in non-materialistic ways may be normalized (Jackson 2009, 62-4). Regulations can re-design the economic system and change people's priorities and the meaning of prosperity (Victor 2008, 223). However, economic policies will be insufficient to disrupt the global system of capitalism that is strategically wired to continue the dominant culture. Implementing policies in a broken system will not be enough. While economic policies may be a start, degrowth needs to be more radical and advocate for approaches that can transform the structure.

Solutions within national boundaries

Economic degrowth and the proposed solutions are focused on achieving post-growth in one nation through national policies. I believe this comes from their understanding that degrowth is mostly for Global North countries, which are already 'developed' with no need for more growth. Jackson mentions that the benefits of growth "have not been uniform" so wealthy countries that have reaped the benefits should now degrow or reduce throughput and consumption (Jackson 2008, 88). Each scholar proposes national policies based on these

arguments (Victor 2008, 191-224; Jackson 2009, 185-210; Daly et al 1994, 209- 360). This seems reasonable from a global justice perspective, as it leaves more space for South countries to advance their economic agenda. Nationalizing policies also make sense as it is more difficult for smaller communities to coordinate action between other cities and territorial powers (Daly et al 1994, 178). Therefore, states are best suited to initiate non-growth economies based on the current structures of society. While I agree to some extent, I argue that nationalizing degrowth is still problematic for two reasons.

First, it neglects the interconnectedness of material systems and relations that exist beyond borders. Ecosystems and planetary life cycles interact beyond national borders. This means that the protection of one environment and the stabilization of one economy will be ineffective in accounting for global levels of throughput. Stabilizing or reducing the throughput of one nation will be pointless if other countries continue to increase their throughput. When economic approaches focus on one nation, it misunderstands complex material and non-material relations that exist beyond borders. There needs to be consideration for larger geographical scales of degrowth that recognize these interconnected systems (Krahmer 2022, 339). The conservation of the environment and biodiversity needs to be a global effort beyond nation-states (Buscher et al 2020).

Second, national solutions do not acknowledge the history of colonialism and its current impacts. Nationalizing degrowth neglects how colonization and imperialism have privileged certain countries to degrow. Global North countries have become rich and 'developed' through the extraction and expropriation of the South. They have the stability and power to degrow. Furthermore, Global North countries cannot suddenly choose to implement degrowth and cut off economically dependent relations with the South. When North countries degrow without proper reparations, it will put Global South countries in a vulnerable state without recognizing existing

inequalities and capacities (Hickel 2019 and 2021; McAfee 2015, 237-260). This means that degrowth policies cannot only think about one nation's economy and well-being. Degrowth needs to recognize the need for Global North countries to pay ecological debt and reparations to the South (Hickel et al 2021; Frame 2022, 432).

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I have outlined how Economic degrowth views degrowth as an economic project to replace the growth-driven system. Economic degrowth tries to combat growthism with economic modelling, quantitative measurements and equations which rely on the commodification of nature. While there is a role for economic policies in achieving post-growth, overreliance on them will be insufficient to change and disrupt the culture and system of capitalism. Furthermore, there is a strong potential for these economic solutions to oppress vulnerable communities and perpetuate neo-colonialism by neglecting other ways of relating with nature. Economic degrowth nationalizes degrowth, preventing it from being a global movement and forming allies. Thus, by discussing Economic degrowth and its limitations, I argue that this version should be rejected. Rather, degrowth should be a global project that counters the culture of capitalism through reorganizing and reimagining our society. I call this '*Inclusive degrowth'*.

Chapter 2: For a More Inclusive Degrowth

"Re-embedding the economy and the market in society, instead of having society driven by the economy and the market"

Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation*

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be discussing 'Inclusive degrowth' also known as "radical degrowth" (Schmid 2019, 4) and "degrowth à la Française" (Abraham 2019), which views degrowth as a type of *society* and transforming the culture of capitalism. It requires decolonizing the way we view the economy and society (Schmid 2019, 4; Abraham 2019). I will argue that we need to support Inclusive degrowth to ensure it is a just project. First, I will discuss capitalism as a hegemony and the need for degrowth to be a counter-hegemonic, anti-capitalist project.

Second, I argue that degrowth needs to ally itself with existing political movements to mobilize on a larger scale and create the force needed to resist the dominant hegemony. This also means it must be a global project, in recognition of the globalized nature of capitalism and of material and non-material systems that exist beyond borders. A global degrowth movement should be planned with multiple phases to avoid relying on spontaneous violent disruptions. Furthermore, planning degrowth globally does not mean one universal understanding or implementation of degrowth but realizes the pluriverse. Lastly, I argue that degrowth needs to challenge identities built on capitalism and bring people together based on shared needs and values that transcend race, gender, ability, ethnicity, citizenship and class. In this sense, Inclusive degrowth is anti-capitalist, global, planned, pluralistic, challenges constructed identities and is an ally to existing political justice movements.

Capitalism as a hegemony

Antonio Gramsci first developed the idea of hegemony through the concept of "common sense" (1971). He defined common sense as the "uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become *common* in any given epoch" (Gramsci 1971, 322). Hegemony is the process of shaping this common sense: how people come to know and be in society (O'Manique 2015, 58). Capitalism and the growth imperative have become this 'common sense' for the majority in the Global North and neoliberal societies (Schmelzer 2016, 25-30). This is supported by Mattias Schmelzer, who discusses the hegemonic nature of growth in *Growth as a Hegemony* (2016). Schmelzer outlines the history of growthism and explains that it comes from ideas of Western 'development' (Schmelzer 2016, 8-11). To develop economically translated to prosperity and progress (Schmelzer 2015, 267; Parrique 2019, 71). Economic growth became the dominant cultural goal to combat inequality and poverty. It has become common sense and the norm in Western culture to view growth positively and to seek it (Hickel 2019, 30). Those opposing growth are seen as irrational, illogical, and unpatriotic. Societies apart from capitalism and growth are seen as too radical and difficult to imagine because it is the hegemonic norm. New ideas and imaginaries are extremely vulnerable, unstable and unpopular because they are in direct conflict with common sense (Gramsci 1971, 340). Thus, economic growth and expansion have been normalized to be viewed as necessary rather than harmful. It has become a major driving force and motivation, in Western society, for people to labour, consume and live.

Capitalism as a hegemony reaches beyond the economy and into the political, social and cultural systems of relations that influence what and how we know. When we understand capitalism as a hegemonic system, we can recognize the larger systems of relations that have

produced a unique mode of growth culture. This affects people's morality, purpose and values.

This is highlighted by Marx who argues that capitalism has determined human "social

consciousness" (Marx 1859, preface). Marx states that "It is not the consciousness of men that

determines their being, but on the contrary, their social [economic] being that determines their

consciousness" (Marx 1859, preface). In claiming this, Marx asserts that our existence and

purpose of being has been unconsciously shaped by liberalism and capitalism (Kolakowski 1978,

340). Capitalism constructs a unique way to organize society that is based on labour productivity.

This view differs from how Economic degrowth understands capitalism.

In Economic degrowth, capitalism can coexist with post-growth because it can be

controlled by policies. However, when we view capitalism as a hegemony, a distinct culture and

system of relations cannot be managed by policies and state control. For Inclusive degrowth,

capitalism is a cultural norm that drives consumerism, productivism, and the methodologies in

science and economics (Zoe 2020; Max 2021). These ways of knowing and being in the world

are unconsciously part of the everyday norms and infrastructures of Western society. An

alternative way to live and be is difficult to imagine to the extent that liberal democracy is

viewed as the end of history or "final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1989,

4). Degrowth needs to transform the culture of capitalism because the history of growthism tells

us that growthism also began with a cultural movement to support development. With this

understanding, it does not make sense to try to resist growthism with only top-down economic

policies if the public still believes in the growth narrative. Therefore, degrowth needs to be a

cultural movement against the larger structures of capitalism that have birthed growth. As Kallis

would say, "Growth is the child of capitalism" (2018, 165). Degrowth should be anti-growth and

anti-capitalist to recognize the interdependency between growth and capitalism.

Degrowth as a counter-hegemonic and anti-capitalist project

I have argued that capitalism is a hegemony that perpetuates a unique culture, where degrowth needs to be a transformation of it. I now want to emphasize that opposing capitalism and framing degrowth as a counter-hegemonic and anti-capitalist project is crucial to ensure that degrowth is not viewed as simply an 'economic' project. I will first highlight the multiple crises that capitalism produces (Fraser 2022). This will set the ground for me to argue that capitalism is fundamentally contradictory to degrowth principles. Then I will argue that Economic degrowth fails to consider these impacts of capitalism because it assumes capitalism can be controlled.

Capitalism actively produces multiple crises because it is a "type of society" dependent on cheap labour and free riding on nature (Fraser 2022, xv). This continuously maintains the crisis of patriarchy, racism and climate change (Fraser 2022, 151). This system relies on economic models that commodify non-humans and humans by their economic contribution. Value and worth are diminished to quantitative terms, such as numbers. Capitalist ways of organizing society disproportionately affect women and marginalized communities who perform care work which is unrecognized in wage-labour systems. In this sense, love, care and sacrifice are neglected. Society is arranged to support profit maximization which maintains global inequalities. Other crises which capitalism perpetuates are colonialism and imperialism (Hickel 2019, 48-52). Capitalism produces relations of dispossession, Land acquisition and access to Land (Max 2021, 14).[2] It oppresses Indigenous communities and relies on racial capital as a source of cheap labour (Walia 2019, 201). Social order is obtained through economic hierarchies through border imperialism and global inequality (Walia 2019, 46; Hickel 2019, 84). In this

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[2] Land is capitalized because of the understanding that land (lower case) is the dominant understanding that views land as a resource and place; whereas Land (capital case) uptakes the Indigenous ways of being in relations with Land and more-than-humans (Max 2021, 14).

understanding, capitalism directly coincides with neo-colonialism and the production of racism. Capitalism is a global system, in which Western ideals of prosperity through growthism are promoted and universalized. Thus, the consequences of capitalism have disregarded other economic relations and ways of organizing society.

Critically analyzing the nature of capitalism and its production of the crises of patriarchy, racism, colonialism and inequality shows that degrowth and capitalism cannot co-exist and are fundamentally contradictory. This is not new in the degrowth discourse where existing scholars have characterized degrowth as a countercultural or counter-hegemonic project (D'Alisa et al 2013, 213; O'Manique 2015, 60). While many degrowth scholars critique capitalism, it should be made clearer that degrowth is anti-capitalist (Hickel 2019, 196; Boonstra and Joosse 2013, 173; Paulson 2017; Foster 2011; Parrique 2019, 390). Degrowth needs to make capitalism its enemy and counter the dominant capitalist culture (Wright and Nyberg 2015). A critique of capitalism naturally makes degrowth a counter-hegemonic force (Fraser 2022; Kolakowski 1978; Nyberg et al 2015; Klein 2019). In other words, being an anti-capitalist project will ensure that degrowth challenges the cultural hegemony of capitalism (O'Manique 2015, 52-60). This is necessary to align itself with those existing environmental justice movements and decolonize our society (Rodríguez-Labajos et al 2019, 179).

Degrowth as an ally

When degrowth is framed and mobilized based on anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism and counter-hegemonic principles, it can better align itself with existing political movements globally and mobilize on a larger scale. Aligning and collaborating with existing movements is necessary to combine efforts and resist the dominant hegemony (Burkhart et al 2020). Diverse communities can encourage the exchange of ideas and build upon one another. While not all environmental

justice movements are anti-capitalist, degrowth can intentionally try to expand its network to encourage existing movements to embody anticapitalism and mobilize together on shared goals. There may be challenges and disputes when degrowth ally with non-anti-capitalist movements. However, I believe environmental justice movements can still find common ground and sustain each other for the long run. Differences can be respected in recognition of diversity and pluriverse, and they can still come together with the shared goal to meet basic needs (Sultana 2022, 8). Ultimately, all humans need to eat, be in relations and participate in civil society. This can be a starting point to unite diverse justice movements and move forward. More significantly, allying with other communities is important to prevent degrowth from becoming a Global North, Eurocentric movement (Rodríguez-Labajos et al 2019, 179). This requires aligning with, but not limited to, feminists, environmental conservationists/scientists, and Global South and Indigenous communities: I hope to see more collaboration between degrowth and these three movements.

First, feminists have allied themselves with degrowth since the early stages of the degrowth movement (Paulson et al 2020; Perkins 2010 and 2019; Dengler and Lang 2022; Puwar and Pateman 2002). Degrowth needs to align with feminist movements to ensure that degrowth resists ideas and patterns of patriarchy that normalizes wage labour and care work that women disproportionately perform (Fisher and Tronto 1990,40). Not all feminist movements are anti-capitalist, but some point towards the connection between capitalism and patriarchy (Paulson et al 2020). This is an important starting point and degrowth should continually expand its scope to ally with all feminist movements to recognize how the patriarchy continues the commodification and control over bodies and nature. Aligning with feminist movements is a two-way street where degrowth can encourage feminists to embrace anti-capitalism, thereby making them more inclusive, while ensure degrowth resists patriarchy. This necessitates the rejection of Economic

degrowth that relies on population control to manage human impact and activity (Daly 1974, 20).

Second, Inclusive degrowth should ally with environmental conservationists/scientists. I believe this is necessary to ensure that degrowth is a movement supported by people in diverse fields and attracts more people. The expertise and innovation of climate scientists, biologists and other scholars can ensure that degrowth has grassroots support from people who are influential in the climate discourse. This can prevent the overreliance on the state or market while supporting existing conservation movements that are anti-capitalist. Bram Buscher and Robert Fletcher, both conservationists, argue that capitalism is the main problem that prevents the protection of biodiversity and the environment (Buscher et al 2017, 408). They represent the recent wave of climate scientists who argue capitalism is the source of the climate crisis. Aligning with environmental conservation movements, that are anti-capitalist and not, is significant to ensure that the 'scientific' driven communities are also supporting the future of degrowth. Conservationists can provide knowledge which is crucial in planning out the transition geared towards place-based knowledge of ecosystems. Scientists are not exclusive to this role, as many Indigenous ways of knowing can help facilitate this (Tully 2018, 84). By aligning with capitalist and non-capitalist feminist and scientists, it provides an opportunity for degrowth to mature, spread and bloom. To progress as a movement, it is always important to learn and receive feedback from others that may be capitalist.

Lastly, degrowth needs to make more effort to intentionally connect with Indigenous justice and anti-capitalist movements in the South to ensure that degrowth is anti-colonial. Explicit connections between degrowth, the Global South and Indigenous movements are necessary to advance as a decolonial movement (Frost 2019; Gilmore 2013; Ramose 2014, 212; Hoeft 2018; Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019). The main goal in strengthening the relationship

between Indigenous movements and degrowth should be to fight neo-colonialism. Meanwhile, aligning degrowth with Global South movements will further allow degrowth to embrace the multiple ways of understanding and applying degrowth.

Many Indigenous climate and resurgence movements aim to resist systems of colonialism and patterns of capitalism (Simpson 2017; Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019). Diverse Indigenous communities have practiced anti-capitalist modes of living and knowing for centuries. Degrowth as a movement, that originates from the North, needs to learn from Indigenous communities. This will strengthen degrowth as an anti-colonial project meanwhile reconciling relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and with non-humans (Tully 2018, 92). Many Indigenous communities across the globe practice anti-capitalism and small economies. These include the Zapatista Indigenous community in Mexico, Adivasi community in the Attappady region of southern India (Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019), African communities who have lived according to Ubuntu (Gilmore 2013), Kichwa people of Sarayaku in Ecuador (Current Conservation 2022) and Mediterranean islanders of Italy (Kallis et al 2022). These Indigenous and small communities highlight the importance of localized knowledge and place-based understandings which are fundamental principles of degrowth and anti-globalization movements (Perkins 2019, 185-8; Zoe 2020).

In summary, each community has a role in mobilizing and attracting people to participate in degrowth. This does not mean there is one way of understanding degrowth. Rather, degrowth needs to make an intentional effort to ally itself with existing political justice movements. This will expand the scope and scale of the movement to counter the dominant hegemony. Countering capitalist hegemony cannot be achieved solely with degrowth activists in one region. It requires forming alliances and collaborating with diverse movements and communities on a global scale. If degrowth aims to counter capitalism, it needs to also tackle the globalized nature of capitalism.

Therefore, by becoming allies with diverse movements that are capitalist and not, degrowth can scale up and increase the potential to resist the dominant culture on a global scale.

A Global Project

As outlined above, degrowth needs to be a counter-hegemonic, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial project that allies with existing environmental movements. To counter the globalized nature of capitalism, it also needs to be a global project, in recognition of larger hegemonic structures of capitalism that punish and alienate those who practice or try to live in anti-capitalist ways. Capitalism constrains collective and individual action, requiring global resistance from various actors across territories (Wright and Nyerbg 2019, 47). Communities, small and large, resisting capitalism in their own ways is a start. However, it is difficult to challenge and rupture the hegemony of capitalism when communities and movements are distant and isolated. Even if resistance may not be the same, communities and existing political movements can come together on shared principles to resist capitalism. This means working with grassroots organizations and movements to challenge the growth imperative, collaborating beyond borders, territories and identities in ways that are sustainable over the long run. (Frame 2022, 428).

More importantly, degrowth needs to be a global movement to resist over-reliance on national policies. Nationalizing degrowth approaches do not account for interconnected economic and material systems that go beyond borders (Frame 2022, 435). As mentioned in Chapter 1, nationalizing degrowth also neglects colonialism and over-relies on the state to challenge capitalism (Chapter 1, 23). Apart from Economic degrowth, the current degrowth literature overall is vulnerable to this critique, with only 4% of the degrowth literature talking about degrowth internationally (Cosme et al 2017, 327). Mariko Frame also highlights the need for degrowth to engage with globalization and world-systems theory to prevent degrowth from

being a Global North project (2022, 428). Inclusive degrowth calls for a global degrowth, actualized in the North and South, and acknowledges the ecologically unequal exchange between the North and South and the need to degrow at different scales and paces (Frame 2022 429). Thus, global degrowth moves beyond national economic modelling and policies.

Inclusive degrowth is a global movement that should be planned in a time frame. It means degrowth should be a project that occurs in phases and multiple stages to allow communities and countries to transition. In other words, degrowth as a global movement cannot occur spontaneously but it requires a transformative transition (Parrique 2019, 474).

Planned vs. Unplanned Degrowth

While degrowth should be a global movement, it should not be a movement that justifies spontaneous acts of violence and chaos (Fanon 1961, 50-75). Anti-colonial and anti-capitalist movements should rupture and challenge current institutions, however, the transition should be planned. Violence can only be justified if it makes the movement more inclusive and purposeful (Fanon 1961, 94). With this understanding, degrowth needs to be a global transformative transition, with careful planning to ensure that the consequences of shifting towards post-growth societies do not harm or oppress people, especially the marginalized. Furthermore, degrowth needs to be planned to ensure that the transition away from a growth-oriented society is a permanent transition towards post-growth. Degrowth scholars have agreed that degrowth should be planned, based on the assumption that there should be multiple phases.

For example, Cattaneo and Vanstintijan propose degrowth to have at least two stages in Europe, a short-term transition phase and a long-term stabilization stage (Cattaneo and Vanstintjan 2016, 20-21). Similarly, Parrique states that there are multiple stages of degrowth on varying timelines: an early stage where the state should implement "fast top-down interventions"

to rapidly decarbonize, and the later stage that consists of a public cultural shift grounded on

"slower bottom-up strategies" led by community initiatives (Parrique 2019, 673). More recently,

degrowth scholars describe the necessity of the state to realize post-growth (Cattaneo and

Vanstintjan 2016, 20-21; Parrique 2019, 673; D'Alisa and Kallis 2020; Meissner 2021, 511-532).

They argue that states and grassroots movements are equally important in facilitating a smooth

planned transition. The state should build a counter-hegemony within the internal structures of

the state, while grassroots and bottom-up organizations shift the public perception and culture

(D'Alisa and Kallis 2020, 6). This would change both civil and political society, where planning

and implementation of degrowth would be supported by the government and legitimized by the

public (D'Alisa and Kallis 2020, 6-7; Schneider 2015, 3). This is necessary to ensure that

degrowth is a democratic transition and has broad-based support and involvement of the masses

(Demaria et al 2013; Smith et al 2021, 2). There is no denying that a cultural shift will take time

to adjust, adapt and uphold new ways of living and relating. However, it is still important that

degrowth is a planned global transformation, at least in many Global North communities, to

ensure that degrowth is democratic. Degrowth occurring in multiple stages builds public support

and avoids backlash.

　　　　A globally planned transition does not mean enforcing one universal policy on

communities. Rather, degrowth needs to maximize the number of paths out of capitalism (Gorz

1999, 79). How 'planning' is defined and incorporated may mean various things. Degrowth

should support the diverse and creative "exit routes" to capitalism as there is more than one way

to tackle the hegemony of capitalism (ibid). Parrique expands on the notion of degrowth policy,

stating that degrowth policymaking should be "open, transparent, pluralistic and participatory…

where not one but a diversity of actors think together" (Parrique 2019, 481). It is a rejection of

the universal way of realizing and understanding degrowth and an embrace of the pluriverse. This is crucial to reject the national top-down approaches supported by Economic degrowth.

A Degrowth that Embraces a Pluriverse

While it should be a globally planned transition, planning, implementation, and applications of degrowth should look different based on the culture, history and capabilities of communities.

First, degrowth needs to reject one world (one universal implication of understanding degrowth) to prevent the dominance of Western empirical ontologies (Zoe 2020). A pluriverse is a decolonial, feminist critique of the one-world or universal way of envisioning epistemologies, culture and progress. Pluriverse is a world that contains multiple worlds that uphold multiple ways of being and knowing (Escobar 2018; Hoeft 2018, 13). It challenges the hegemonic Western understanding in recognition that knowing and being can differ amongst cultures (Zoe 2020, 28). *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* states that a pluriverse is when "all people's world… coexist with dignity and peace without being subjected to diminishment, exploitation and misery" (Kothari et al. 2019, xxviii). Many degrowth scholars have pointed out that degrowth shares the vision of a pluriverse, recognizing positionalities and diverse cultural ways of thinking, living and being (Hoeft 2018; Kothari et al 2019; Nirmal and Rocheleau 2019; Perkins 2019). Degrowth should, therefore, avoid approaches that universalize degrowth. Economic policies and modelling should be used only in specific circumstances when they seem suitable (Zoe 2020).

Second, degrowth needs to recognize colonialism and imperialism, including how the Global North benefits from the colonial project (Buschar et al 2019). Inclusive degrowth for the Global North is a way to rapidly down-scale its throughput and consumption, halt its growth-

oriented approach and reflect on complicity in the destruction of humans and nature. The current

capitalist system disproportionately dispowers and destroys the Global South. For the Global

South, degrowth can be viewed as delinking with the Global North and becoming self-sufficient.

This does not mean that the Global North and South are separate and disconnected. Rather, the

North needs to support and fund projects in the South so they can achieve self-

sufficiency. Support from the North to the South is granted under the recognition of historical

and present extraction, trauma and exploitation (Hickel 2021, 1009; Sultana 2022; Frame 2022,

432).

Going beyond the binary distinction between North and South, a pluralistic understanding

of degrowth should recognize that there are multiple ways of being and knowing within one

nation or territory. It needs to avoid assuming the homogeneity of the interests and values of a

nation's population. As Liboiron Max, a Red River Metis/Michif scholar, states "There can be

solidarity without a We" (2021, 22). Even if there are differences in identities and various

communities that do not form one homogenous group, solidarity and collaboration can still exist.

Challenging Capitalist Identities

The last characteristic of Inclusive degrowth is that it should challenge identities built on

capitalism, social [economic] consciousness, and economic growth (Marx 1859, preface).

Identities based on economic growth and productivity perpetuate national identities that alienate

and separate people. Capitalism prioritizes the self-interest of one nation and encourages nations

to one another (Helleiner 2003, 689; Ince 2021, 1090). This means that Inclusive degrowth

should challenge identities that promote individualism and radical right-wing nationalism.

Furthermore, challenging capitalist identities means disrupting identity politics built on national

state borders, which were built in the process of colonialism (Walia 2019, 305-6).

Deconstructing identities grounded on national citizenship will challenge radical nationalism that prevent us from engaging with one another in a global community. Deglobalization share many principles with degrowth (Bello 2007 and 2019).

Like degrowth, deglobalization promotes economies grounded on social solidarity, justice, equity and diversity (Bello 2019, 8). It "prioritizes values above interests, cooperation above competition and community above efficiency" (Bello 2019, 8). Walden Bello, a Filipino economist, provides an anti-globalization perspective from the South (Bello 2019), highlighting that deglobalized communities should transcend differences in blood, gender, race, class and culture (Bello 2019, 9). This is important to challenging capitalist identities that protect far right nationalism and one-identity politics. Even if there are differences in wealth, culture, ethnicity, ways of viewing nature and degrowth, degrowth should emphasize the commonalities and shared values rather than separate people. At the end of the day, degrowth should encourage collaboration, cooperation and solidarity globally rooted in anti-capitalism.

Conclusion

As Serge Latouche mentions, "Degrowth should not be an alternative to growth…but one to the growth *society*" (Latouche 2014, 134). In Chapter 2, I have highlighted the need to embrace Inclusive degrowth rather than Economic degrowth. Inclusive degrowth means is a project that transforms society and grounds itself in principles of counter-hegemony, anti-capitalism and anti-colonialism. This will allow degrowth to align itself with existing political movements and scale up. Inclusive degrowth is globally planned, with recognition of plural ways of understanding and applying it. Lastly, Inclusive degrowth transforms capitalist identities that forces people to prioritize individualism and nationalism. It is about humility, where "humility means that you are connected to others, and it is the recognition that you cannot do anything

without these many others" (Max 2021, 30). It is realizing our interdependence and being aware

that a transformative transition requires the support and cooperation of everyone (Tully 2018,

84). I now turn the topic of migration in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3: Economic Degrowth + Migration

Now that I have created a baseline for what degrowth should be (Inclusive degrowth), I will discuss borders. In this chapter, I discuss migration and borders through the lens of Economic degrowth, rejecting its support for closed borders.

Economic degrowth in relation to migration

Economic degrowth supports closed borders based on four prominent assumptions. First, Economic degrowth assumes degrowth is a type of economy rather than a type of society. It assumes the economy can be a separate system which can be controlled and regulated with economic policies. This assumption is crucial to supporting closed borders to justify the usage of economic models and equations such as the IPAT equation. Closed borders ensure that the population, one of the variables in the IPAT equation, is controlled and remains stable, reducing error and uncertainty of the measurements used in Economic degrowth.

Second, Economic degrowth focuses on the security and prosperity of one nation. Closed borders become the mechanism to maintain a post-growth society, stabilizing population levels and sustaining national biocapacities. Well-being is focused on one nation rather than globally.

The third assumption is closely tied to the second: states have the legitimacy to control national territories and borders. Economic degrowth scholars support closed borders because they believe the state will act in the best interest of citizens, rather than acting to oppress and continue forces of colonization (Alook et al 2023), green growth (Carroll 2020) or the new climate denialism (Klein 2020). This assumes the homogeneity of the interests and citizens in one nation. Closed borders provide legitimacy to the state and its citizens.

Lastly, Economic degrowth assumes capitalism can coexist with degrowth societies because the negative consequences of capitalism can be regulated by economic policies. Yet capitalism produces displacement and displaced people. In Economic degrowth, an increase in displaced people is another negative externality of capitalism, which can be controlled through closed borders.

Current Arguments for Closed Borders: Perspective from Economic Degrowth Scholars

Now that I have discussed how Economic degrowth supports closed borders, I will highlight scholars who advocate for closed borders in non-growth societies, starting with Herman Daly, Peter Victor and Tim Jackson. Then I will discuss Timothy Parrique and Rob Harding, who are in a more recent wave of degrowth scholars supporting closed borders.

The debate around migration in degrowth started with Daly's *Mass Migration and Border Policy* (Daly 2015,130-33). Daly comes from a neo-Malthusian perspective, arguing that closed borders are necessary for population stabilization (Daly et al 1994, 238-9). Closed borders "maximize the cumulative number of lives over time" without exceeding the carrying capacity of the planet (Daly et al 1994, 238-9). Furthermore, Daly and the two Cobbs support closed borders based on their understanding of security (Daly et al 1994, 334). They argue that a "nation's loss of control over its borders" is a security threat and tightly policed borders are needed to combat illegal immigration (ibid). For Daly and the Cobbs, closed borders help achieve SSE and community economics in one nation. In contrast, Victor advocates for closed borders considering the security and stabilization on a global scale.

Victor advocates for closed borders to reduce brain drain and global inequality (Victor 2008, 201). He argues that open borders will incentivize younger and more capable members to

migrate away from their home country, preventing the retention of professionals in the Global South. This leads to brain drain, which increases global inequality (Daly 2015, 3). Therefore, closed borders reduce the inequality gap between the North and South. More recently, Victor argued that degrowth should first try to prevent migration rather than focus on closed or open borders (Victor 2023, 45-46:00). In a 2023 degrowth Zoom forum held at York University, he argued that degrowing wealthy countries will take pressure off the biosphere and the impacts of climate change that cause ecological displacement (York 2023, 45:54). More importantly consumption levels and GDP will decrease in the North, making it less appealing and desirable to move there. For Victor, degrowth should focus on wealthy countries first. Both Victor and Daly see borders as a mechanism to establish non-growth societies in the North. Meanwhile, Tim Jackson does not explicitly discuss migration or borders. However, Jackson's idea of degrowth has roots in Economic degrowth. Thus, based on the assumptions about capitalism, state control and understanding of prosperity within national terms, (Jackson 2009, 164) it can be inferred that Jackson is more likely to support closed borders than open ones.

Rob Harding and Timothy Parrique are among the more recent wave of degrowth scholars who support closed borders (Harding 2018; Timothy 2019, 420-6) to stabilize the population and protect national biocapacities. More people lead to increasing food production and building infrastructure to adjust to the increased population (Harding 2018). This can lead to ecocide and threaten biodiversity as more land will have to be used to accommodate this population (ibid). The host country, then, is burdened with ecological and social pressure to accommodate for masses of people that originally were not part of their region (Harding 2018). Accepting displaced people can lead to "social justice to the exclusion of eco-justice" (Harding 2018): open borders prioritize social justice without considering impacts on the nation's environment (Harding 2018). Open borders prevent ecojustice as displaced people would

populate spaces that should be conserved to protect wilderness and large mammals.

Environmental conservationists agree, supporting respectful avoidance and separation between

humans and non-humans (Buscher et al 2020).

Parrique emphasizes that every nation has varying social and environmental "welcoming

capacities" that prevent open borders (Parrique 2019, 424): "limits are necessary" in degrowth

and "a political-geographical frontier is a limit like any other" (ibid). Both Harding and Parrique

emphasize the need to conserve national environments to relieve social and ecological pressures

of host countries.

The Debate on Population and Hardin's lifeboat ethics

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Economic degrowth scholars and advocates of closed borders

stress the significance of a stable population in post-growth and Economic degrowth. Garret

Hardin compares earth to a lifeboat: only so many drowning people can be brought on board

before everyone's life will be compromised. The moral choice is therefore not to try to save

everyone. This idea is embedded within more recent wave of degrowth scholars who support

closed borders: some "developed countries" are already overpopulated and have no carrying

capacity to accept more immigrants (Harding 2018; Daly 2015, 13). This is why "managing

without growth implies a stable population" in North countries (Victor 2008, 201). Embracing

open borders in the name of "complete justice" can lead to "complete disaster" (Daly 2015, 131).

Open borders will only overfill the 'boat' of Global North countries, and no one will be able to

survive. This is why closed borders guarantee survival of a few, at the least, without drowning

everyone.

This logic of population embodies a Malthusian perspective. Malthusians make the

argument that excessive population growth creates poverty because the population will continue

to grow at a rate that exceeds the availability of resources (Malthus 1798; Jackson 2009, 9). Thus, strict population control and management of population are necessary. Closed borders make it easier for government to manage and stabilize the population: "birth quotes, depletion quotas and distributive limits" should be implemented to "any degree of gradualism desired" to achieve SSE (Daly 1974, 20).

While Daly aligns with the older Malthusianism perspective, other degrowth scholars characterize themselves as neo-Malthusian or eco-Malthusian (Parrique 2019, 424). Neo-Malthusianism recognizes women's reproductive rights and their choice to control their bodies (Hodgson and Watkins 1997). Meanwhile, Eco-Malthusianism focuses on reducing population through non-coercive measures in the name of social-ecological justice (Parrique 2019, 413). In this sense, voluntary reduction of procreation or self-limitation is emphasized by degrowth scholars in recognition that population increase will cause stress on the environment (Martinez-Alier 2015, 128). A smaller population will make it easier to "facilitate social organization [and] sharing of space" which will allow humans to be in peaceful relations with nature (Sourrouille 2014). Thus, embracing closed borders seems logical given how population increase becomes an ecological burden.

Pt. II Critiques of Closed Borders

There are three main critiques of closed borders in degrowth. First, I argue that closed borders are ineffective in combating climate change or reducing human activity in alignment with planetary boundaries. Second, closed borders are in close alignment with eco-fascism and have the potential for degrowth to turn into a green fascist right-wing project. Last, closed borders align with contemporary exclusive environmental movements.

Respecting national biocapacity and environmental limits… is it effective?

First, closed borders will be ineffective as an approach to stabilizing the global population in alignment with planetary boundaries because it neglects net population and global environmental capacities. Population may be stabilized in one country with strict enforcement, but is it possible to ever control global population rates? It is nearly impossible to control the global population in a way that is just and fair. As well, population control tends to be oppressive and racist. Robert Zubrin argues that population control is top-down dictatorial, dishonest, coercive, medically irresponsible and negligent, racist, and abuses human dignity and rights (Zubrin 2012, 40-1). Furthermore, population control has been critiqued by feminist and Indigenous communities as it rejects women's rights and their ability to control reproduction (Hodgson and Watkins 1997, 469; Stote 2017). Even if neo-Malthusians and eco-Malthusians argue for voluntary reduction of population, a history of colonization highlights the oppressive nature of population control on marginalized and colonized subjects (Stote 2017). Thus, degrowth should not align with measures that try to control and manage the population but focus on reducing consumption habits and changing the imperial mode of living for wealthy people.

Second, closed borders are supported as the method to protect one nation and it's biocapacity. This logic, however, does not consider the role of urban planning or spatial organization. Population increase can be managed effectively by better designing urban and rural spaces. Buildings, public infrastructure, and transportation can be reorganized and recycled to reduce carbon emissions while making them more inclusive and accessible (Xue and Keblowski 2022; Wells, n.d.). This will allow countries to better manage the population increase through the densification of spaces rather than expanding to spaces set aside for non-humans: population increase stay within national environmental limits through densification and open borders. There

are many policy and city design proposals outlined by urban planners that envision post-growth

societies. For instance, upgrading existing infrastructures and increasing the number of shared

housing and transportation are ways urban spaces can be reorganized to reduce throughput (Xue

and Keblowski 2022, 399; Martinez 2022; Cattaneo et al 2022). Such planning methods would

create solidarity communities and increase social capital while decreasing the overall carbon

footprint (Anderoni and Galmarini 2013).

Enforcing closed borders will not solve net population rates or protect the biocapacity of

one nation. An increase in the population of one nation can be accommodated with careful

planning and reorganization of spaces in the North. Suburbs can be densified and there can be

more sharing which will create solidarity and communities without stressing the environment. So

there are more inclusive and critical ways to deal with an increase in population and displaced

people than closed borders.

Closed borders = Eco-Fascism?

Economic degrowth can turn into a green fascist movement by prioritizing the well-being

of one nation and its people. Ecofascism promotes a homogenous people where "forms of

racialized power are wielded over and through the environment" (Moore and Roberts 2022, 12).

Ecofascism is rooted in strict population control and the protection of the eugenics of one race

and ethnicity (Moore and Roberts 2022, 24) in a territorial space. This is discussed by Moore and

Roberts in *The Rise of Ecofascism: Climate Change and the Far Right* (2022). They argue that

contemporary far-right movements "reaffirm nature's national character", which justifies the

privatization, securitization and financialization of nature (Moore and Roberts 2022, 49). The

nationalization of nature is necessary to protect the nation's usage and well-being. An important

characteristic of ecofascism is the role of the state to lead and promote nationhood and

patriarchism by protecting their environment, including through increased military spending and policing of national borders (Walia 2019, 296). These ideas resonate to the understanding of security discussed in Economic degrowth.

Eco-fascism also legitimizes state control and leadership, like Economic degrowth (Chapter 1,18-9). Economic degrowth does not necessarily argue for a homogenous population but if degrowth supports closed borders, it will naturally prioritize the dominant race and cultural group existing in the country, supporting ecofascist narratives. This becomes problematic for two reasons.

First, it will further securitize and criminalize displaced people. The view that migrants are a security threat is already a prominent and established view of the far-right in Europe (Bird and Schmid 2021; Bourbeau 2011; Malgorzata and Bogdan-Nicolae 2019). Displaced bodies are viewed as security threats based on their race and ethnic background, and this prejudice will increase if degrowth is nationalized. Closed borders will create more negative sentiment and Othering of displaced subjects, making degrowth closely connected to far right-wing nationalism and white supremacy. Closed borders will promote nationalism that strives to save the 'purity' of the white race and the Western culture, which are "stewards" to the environment (Phillips 2022).

Second, closed borders and eco-fascist narratives are problematic as they can justify increased military spending and border patrols. Ecofascism has roots in masculine, saviour ideologies that rationalize increased military spending and militarized borders (Walia 2019, 296). Degrowth should not be a project that prioritizes funding for military projects (Burton 2023). Security and peace do not come from creating a bigger military but from global cooperation and solidarity. More specifically, the government should be funding projects that focus on investing in infrastructure that supports communities rather than patrolling borders. Therefore, supporting closed borders makes degrowth a racist and fascist project that is exclusive.

Closed borders in connection to contemporary exclusive environmental movements

My last critique is that closed borders makes degrowth allies with exclusive environmental movements. As mentioned in Chapter 2, degrowth should be aligned with anti-colonial, counter-hegemonic movements. However, closed borders cause polarization and alienation rather than inclusion and collaboration. A rejection of closed borders is necessary to distance degrowth from far-right-wing environmentalism and eco-Malthusian arguments.

First, closed borders align with racist, antisemitic, and anti-immigrant views (Bailey and Turner 2023, 30-2; Phillips 2022). Far-right environmental politics or the "New Right" is against immigration based on their usage of the IPAT equation, Impact = Population + Affluence + Technology efficiency (Cattaneo 2016, 261). Both neo-Malthusians and the New Right focuses on the reduction of population through strict immigration control rather than reducing excessive consumption. Such logic is selfish and racist. It comes from the understanding that individuals in the North do not want to accept displaced people because it requires them to give up their imperial mode of living (Brand and Wissen 2017; Ufer 2024). The New Right justifies closed borders to protect one's comfortable and privileged lifestyle from 'others'. In Europe, these ideas have been framed as ecobordering (Turner and Bailey 2022).

Ecobordering portrays "borders as a form of environmental protection" because immigration causes a "threat to the local or national environment" (Turner and Bailey 2022, 111). Ecobordering is justified for two main reasons. First, borders create a barrier to population increase, which is necessary because immigrants are viewed as an "environmental plunder" (Turner and Bailey 2022, 116). Second, migrants are racialized and viewed as "uncivilized" beings who are unwilling to or incapable of protecting the environment (Turner and Bailey 2022,

120). It assumes that displaced and people from the South are too barbaric and uneducated to be stewards of the environment. The race and skin colour of displaced people from the Global South are made "hyper-visible", and there is a need to protect the homogenous, white population with borders (ibid). Borders act as a barrier to protect 'the people' and 'their nature' from uncivilized beings. A clear example of this is represented by Jean Marie Le Pen and his politics justifying anti-immigration policy and making France the "first ecologically civilized state" (Szenes 2021, 147).

The New Right and ecobordering hierarchize race: the 'purity' of one culture and way of living needs to be conserved to protect the environment (Pratik 2023), guarding oneself from the uncivilized and backward ways of displaced people. These logics have roots in neo-Nazism (Szenes 2021): it becomes patriotic to support closed borders and be anti-immigrant in degrowth. The sacrifice of some lives is rationalized to save a few 'superior' lives. Nationalism, patriotism, and security of one state are prioritized by organizations like the American Carrying Capacity Network and Earth First. These organizations and narratives echo anti-immigration policies and Hardin's lifeboat ethics. When degrowth supports closed borders, it justifies saving and prioritizing the lives of white, wealthy populations over those of racialized and poor populations. This is the opposite direction of what degrowth should promote. Well-being of one community, nation or ethnicity should not be the goal of degrowth. Closed borders in degrowth needs to be rejected.

Conclusion: Closed borders in degrowth, missing the mark?

In conclusion, degrowth should reject closed borders because it aligns with Economic degrowth and exclusive environmental rationales. I outlined three critiques for closed borders. Apart from them, closed borders do not align with core values and visions of degrowth.

Degrowth aims to shift the dominant understandings of the economy and culture of growthism. It

is a movement that is inclusive of diverse ways of knowing, being and relating. It is a global

justice project that tries to reduce global inequality and tackle colonialism. If degrowth supports

closed borders, the main values of degrowth are neglected.

Chapter 4: Inclusive Degrowth + Migration

Introduction

Chapter 4 explores migration and borders through the lens of Inclusive degrowth. Embracing open borders ensures that degrowth truly is a global, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist cultural project. I begin by outlining the relationship between Inclusive degrowth and open borders, highlighting scholars who support open borders in degrowth then bringing out positive implications of open borders.

Inclusive Degrowth and Open Borders

Inclusive degrowth supports open borders based on four main principles. First, it supports open borders as a cultural movement that transforms *society*, not just the *economy*. A cultural shift requires challenging current identities constructed on capitalism and individualism, including "exclusionary racial state citizenship" and one identity politics (Walia 2019, 18). In this sense, open borders prevent Othering and segregation (Bourbeau 2011) and the realization of diversity, emphasized in Inclusive growth (Raghu 2023). In other words, Inclusive degrowth supports open borders because it advocates for building of communities beyond identity politics.

Second, Inclusive degrowth supports open borders by treating government and grassroots organizations as levers of change. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Inclusive degrowth scholars emphasize the need for both top-down and bottom-up organizations in the transition: this relies on grassroots and community-based organizations beyond borders. Collaboration and cooperation amongst actors should occur across territorial boundaries and open borders help facilitate the movement of people and ideas. This is significant for mobilizing on a global scale and realizing global degrowth.

This relates to the third assumption, that degrowth is a global movement. Inclusive degrowth recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of global material and nonmaterial systems. Stabilizing the population rate should be about maintaining a *global* population rate, and having open borders and encouraging people from the South to move to the North can help (Kallis 2015). The movement of displaced people coming from the South will decrease and slow down the net population as displaced people are likely to have fewer children in the new country (Kallis 2015; Parrique 2019, 422). Kallis argues that open borders are "fast and resource-efficient" ways to reduce existing inequality between South and North. Since the population rate is highest in poorer countries, it makes sense for wealthy countries to open their borders to distribute population rates globally (ibid). Open borders would advance a global post-growth society where equality increases and the population naturally stabilizes.

Lastly, Inclusive degrowth supports open borders because degrowth needs to be anti-capitalist: capitalism and imperialism cause displacement and therefore displaced people should be welcomed (Buscher et al 2020; Georgi 2019, 569; Hiraide 2023; Walia 2019). The history of colonization and unequal exchanges between the North and South has produced circumstances that force people to move (Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023). Open borders acknowledge the responsibility of the Global North and colonizer countries in perpetuating displacement and global inequality. As Global North countries are the highest GHGs emission emitters and beneficiaries of Southern resource extraction, the North has a "moral obligation" to accept more immigrants (Kallis 2015).

Furthermore, Harsha Walia argues that capitalism creates border imperialism (Walia 2013), the recognition that borders create violent dispossession and are racist, gendered and ableist (Walia 2019, 303). They perpetuate free capital through immobilized labour and differentiate people based on their identity and ability (ibid). In these ways, closed borders

perpetuate neo-colonialism and oppress marginalized communities. Walia advocates for a borderless world where people can free themselves from relations of colonialism, a world where "no human being is illegal" (Walia 2019, 306). While I will not be discussing the possibility of borderless degrowth, I share Walia's understanding of borders. Therefore, Inclusive degrowth advocates for open borders.

Current Arguments for Open Borders

There are four scholars I want to highlight to show how my argument fits within the broader picture of open borders: Giorgios Kallis, who provides a critique on population control (Kallis 2015 and 2019); Français Schnieder, who advocates for open localism (Schnider 2015); Wallen Bello arguing for progressive deglobalization (Bello 2007 and 2019); and Jenny Ufer, who is against Fortress Degrowth (Ufer 2024). Others also support open borders in degrowth, including Miriam Lang (Lang 2017), Cattaneo Claudio (Claudio 2016), Pratik Raghu (Raghu 2023), Karl Krahmer (Krahmer 2022), and Caesar Lopez (Lopez 2022). Schnieder and Bello are not degrowth scholars but share core principles with Inclusive degrowth and argue for open borders, showing agreement across fields of study. Meanwhile, the other five scholars I have listed are degrowth scholars whose perspective can be represented by Kallis. Thus, I hope to provide an expansive overview of the arguments that support open borders by highlighting both degrowth and non-degrowth scholars.

Kallis argues that population control in one nation is not effective in determining a nation's biocapacity given the interaction between Population, Affluence and Technology in the IPAT equation (Kallis 2015). He made his case on migration in *Author's Response to GTI Roundtable "On Degrowth,"* (Kallis 2015) a response to Daly's original article on SSE and borders (Daly 2015). In the commentary, Kallis states that there is no evidence that an increase in

population will lead to environmental damage (Kallis 2015). Degrowth should focus on how

different factors determine the net carbon footprint rather than focusing on only population

(Kallis 2015): the footprint of a population matters more than the number of people (Parrique

2019, 416). Carbon emissions inequality is significant between the richest ten percent and the

poorest half (Oxfam 2015) and is greater within countries than between countries displayed by

studies done by Oxfam in 2015, *Extreme carbon inequality* and Chancel and Piketty's *Carbon*

and inequality from Kyoto to Paris (2015). Both studies highlight that "high individual emitters"

need to reduce their emissions more than a country's emission levels (Chancel and Piketty 2015,

9). Closing one's borders does not necessarily mean total emission levels and throughput will be

reduced.

Furthermore, transnational corporations, organizations and highly mobile individuals

contribute excessively and disproportionately to emission levels (Adkin 2017). Reduction of

population does not translate to reduction of emissions in a country. Increase in population can

be managed by changing the high-carbon lifestyles of the imperial mode of living (Ufer 2024):

when wealthy individuals reduce their consumption levels, it will create space for more people to

sufficiently meet their basic needs. There needs to be a shift away from blaming displaced people

and recognizing the inequality in emissions levels.

Second, Français Schnieder supports open borders by supporting open localism, "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"

(Schnider 2015, 2). Open localism is about having open borders while viewing degrowth as a

project that should adopt diversity and pluralistic communities. It is about transforming identities

that are currently based on consumption (Schnieder 2015, 1). Embracing open localism promotes

the well-being of everyone regardless of their identities while resisting exclusion or

separation (Schneider 2017). Thus, open localism aims to counter Western cultural hegemony and aligns with principles of Inclusive degrowth.

Like the concept of open localism, deglobalization or progressive deglobalization also supports open borders (Bello 2007 and 2019). The ideas of progressive deglobalization share fundamental values with degrowth, mentioned in chapter 2 (Bello 2019, 8; chapter 2, 38). With many similarities between the society envisioned by deglobalization and degrowth, Walden Bello supports open borders. He states that people should have the right to "join a desired community" (Bello 2019, 9). Deglobalized communities should transcend differences in social and cultural identities (ibid). In this way, Bello and Schnider both emphasize how degrowth should ultimately be a transformation of identities, shifting the dominant narrative and envisioning a global community beyond race, class, ability, nationality and culture. Even if there are differences, a post-growth society should reconcile relations between humans and non-humans.

Last, Jenny Ufer highlights the connection between capitalism, borders and degrowth. She argues that closed borders create "Fortress Degrowth" (Ufer 2024). Fortress degrowth is similar to Economic degrowth, where degrowth is exclusive, "inward-looking" and nationalized within wealthy countries (Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023). She argues that capitalism reinforces borders, protecting the imperial mode of living in Western societies (Ufer 2024). Thus, from a global social justice perspective, degrowth should advocate for no borders to embody anti-capitalist, feminist and decolonial ideas of degrowth (Dengler and Seebacher 2019). Her argument emphasizes that open borders are necessary to support Inclusive degrowth.

Open Borders as an ally to anti-colonialism

Degrowth needs to implement open borders to align with anti-colonialism (Ufer 2024; Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023; 1-9). First, I want to highlight that colonial relations and power imbalances between the South and North produce conditions that create displacement and forced migration. Thus, the North has a responsibility to accept displaced people and have open borders.

There are a few main ideas that outline the relationship between colonialism and displacement (Masinda 2004; De Vries and Spijkerboer 2021; Noiriel 2006). First, colonialism and imperialism claim territory and construct what we know as 'national' borders through processes that neglect Indigenous territorial and cultural communities that lived long before colonizers enforced borders (Midzain-Gobin 2019). Second, colonialism has produced asymmetrical power imbalances between the South and North, perpetuating extractive neo-colonial relations (Kallis 2015). These power imbalances reproduce the unequal exchange of resources, materials and bodies, maintaining the large inequality gap between the North and South (Hickel et al 2021; Ma 2023, 4-5). Poverty, war and corruption disproportionately occur in the South, displacing people and motivating them to move to the North. In other words, colonizer countries are responsible for creating "socio-economic refugees" (Kallis 2015). Global North countries have a responsibility to uphold open borders in recognition that they are benefiting from processes that cause displacement. Open borders are crucial to pay reparations for causing harm and oppression (Schmelzer and Nowshin 2023, 6): degrowth needs to take a global justice perspective which recognizes people's right to move.

Lastly, degrowth needs to embrace open borders to reconcile and restore relations with Indigenous communities that have been separated by borders constructed for imperial and colonial gains which disregard Indigenous communities that exist across national borders (Bleie et al 2024, 1-38; Gardner and Warren 2024). Open borders are part of the decolonial process of giving land back and recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous communities. Degrowth scholars

and global justice movements also acknowledge that cross-border exchanges between Indigenous communities and grassroots organizations are important to strengthen advocacy and build solidarity networks (Yifat 2024). Embracing open borders creates space to discuss alternative ways of imagining communities in light of internal and external displacement.

Displaced people as a counter-hegemonic force

More significantly, degrowth needs to support open borders because displaced people can be the counter-hegemonic force necessary to reject capitalist hegemony, playing an important role in changing the dominant culture that is oriented around growth. They have the potential to redefine spaces and create meaning (Gordillo 2012, 157), producing a new culture that challenges the dominant and capitalist ways of being, living and relating.

An inflow of new people will inevitably challenge traditional structures. This presents an opportunity for the host community to reorganize and adjust in ways that are different from the current capitalist modes of living. Early stages of degrowth would still be embedded in capitalist culture and would require constant resistance and countering. Displaced people would be less immersed within the host country and its dominant culture, and can encourage the formation of new economies and ways of organizing. They have more potential and capacity to imagine alternative forms of living during the process of adjusting to another environment. This is evidenced by the example of metal waste pickers in Barcelona, Spain.

In Spain, metals have become more valuable and collecting discarded metals is one way to respond to this scarcity. While there is demand for metals, there is little interest from people born in the EU to partake in scrap metal or recycling activities because of the perception that the work is not dignified (Cattaneo 2016, 226). A cultural barrier prevents people born in the EU from collecting metals. People not born in the EU, mainly migrants, have fulfilled the role of

collecting and reselling metal in El Poblenou, a region in Barcelona (Cattaneo 2016; 226, 265).

Discarded metal, which is seen as waste by locals, is recycled and made valuable from the

perspective of migrants. It can be argued that their financial and political situation forced them to

be metal pickers and being a metal picker may not be the most dignifying job. However, it can

also be asserted that migrants have the ability to redefine dignity in work settings and encourage

a shift in thinking. As 'newcomers', they are forced into situations that unleash human potential

to adjust, create, and re-construct. With open borders, new people can bring different ideas that

can intervene and intercept the dominant ways of thinking about waste, employment and society.

Non-migrants can learn ways of living in counter-hegemonic ways from displaced people.

Migration across stages

I argued that Inclusive degrowth should be democratically planned and have multiple

stages to fully shift the culture of capitalism and growthism (chapter 2, 34-5). I also described

roles for both the state and grassroots organizations. It is the same case for displacement and

borders: both government and grassroots organizations have roles in permanently shifting the

dominant narrative that securitizes and criminalizes displaced people.

First, the state can implement "fast top-down interventions" and adopt open borders in

the early stages of degrowth (Parrique 2019, 673). This will require large amounts of funding

and investment to create safety nets and educational programs for citizens, needed to avoid

backlash, resentment and anger from citizens who have negative perceptions of displaced people.

If degrowth principles are embraced properly, there should not be a recession or an increase in

unemployment (Hickel 2020). Thus, safety nets and educational campaigns should be targeted to

help shift the culture and the perception of displaced people. Furthermore, the state needs to fund

social services and long-term integration programs that allow displaced people to adjust to the

new society (Banulescu-Bogdan 2022, 28). This is crucial to prevent displaced people from

falling into poverty, which leads them to be seen as criminals or security threats.

In the meantime, grassroots movements and organizations need to work to culturally shift

the negative perceptions and securitization of migrants, including racialized perceptions. This

will be difficult and require time. However, a cultural shift that encourages people to reflect on

their identity and relationship with each other is significant in embracing a post-growth society

that is grounded on solidarity and community. Citizenships can be reimagined by supporting

organic citizenship, where people's belonging to a region determines their status rather than legal

citizenship (Spektorovski, 2000, 359). While there needs to be more discussion on how to define

'belonging', organic citizenship is opposed to liberal citizenship constructed by capitalist

societies (ibid). Thus, grassroots organizations and mobilization can shift dominant

understandings of citizenship or 'nationhood' to embody communities beyond borders. This

further allows degrowth to embody diversity and plurality, important to rejecting ecofascism.

Conclusion: Degrowth, an alternative way of relating

Adopting open borders aligns with the principles of Inclusive degrowth. Open borders

allow degrowth to embody a global justice perspective that recognizes global inequalities created

through colonialism and imperialism. First, degrowth needs to challenge constructed borders that

separate and alienate communities from working together to achieve alternative, more just

societies. Second, open borders in degrowth allow displaced people to be the counter-hegemonic

force, creatively responding and intervening in the dominant culture. Lastly, degrowth needs to

support open borders that build global community that considers the well-being of all humans

and non-humans. Open borders mobilize a version of degrowth that is truly inclusive and just.

Conclusion: Expanding the Territories of Degrowth

The last four chapters have highlighted the need to support open borders in degrowth. Degrowth should be a global movement that encourages people to mobilize together on shared common values and goals while recognizing the diversity and plural ways of doing so. Embracing open borders allows degrowth to collaborate and build solidarity networks on a global scale. Closed borders portray degrowth as a national project that protects one nation, race and biocapacity within one country. This should not be the direction or future of the degrowth movement. Degrowth is about cultural and systematic transformation: a reimagination of society and how we relate to one another.

Limitations of Research

I would like to highlight a few limitations in my research. First, it is important to acknowledge that most of my sources are from the perspective of Global North countries. Furthermore, I rely primarily on Western ways of knowing to gather information, such as reading published work, which has limited my openness to other epistemologies. I think this is a limitation in the degrowth discourse in general, which needs to prioritize incorporating diverse ways to know, including to appeal to a larger audience.

Second, I want to highlight that I discussed only three Economic degrowth scholars in Chapter 1: there are many more (Parrique 2019, 168) and if time allowed, it would have been insightful to analyze nuances and go further into depth from other perspectives.

Lastly, I did not talk about internal migration or displacement, focusing on the displacement of people across borders rather than displacement on a regional or national scale. This is a topic that can be further explored in future research.

Future research

My research focused on global displacement with the assumption that there will be national borders in degrowth. One topic that can be explored is degrowth within a world with no borders. It's important to imagine a borderless world in recognition that degrowth is a complete restructuring of society: a world without borders may align better with Inclusive degrowth. However, I decided to focus on open borders as the first right step: no borders or a borderless world can be a longer-term vision. As degrowth should occur in phases, open borders can be embraced before borderlessness is realized. I recognize that a borderless world aligns with the larger picture of degrowth to decolonize, reimagine and restore human relations with one another and the earth (Lopez 2022). The idea of borderlessness and degrowth would be an important future research project.

Additionally, research on the role of migrants in creating social capital can further support the argument for open borders, and should be explored. There is already literature which argues that migrants create social capital in the new country (Challinor 2011; Green and Green 1999; Andreoni and Galmarini 2013). However, there is limited literature that discusses the role of migrants in creating social capital in degrowth and post-growth societies. Doing a field study of a particular displaced group may help advance the Inclusive degrowth agenda.

Lastly, the topic of migrants and securitization of borders naturally prompts questions about race and degrowth (Gilmore 2013), largely neglected in degrowth discourse. To truly

engage with concepts of inclusivity, decolonialism and anti-capitalism in degrowth, we need to talk about race.

While there are limitations to my research methodology and scope, I hope I have sparked more interest in the topic of migration and borders in degrowth. Ultimately, degrowth as a movement and discourse should continue to debate, question and imagine how it can be actualized in the 21st century. To do this, we need to further study displacement in degrowth.

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