

***To the attention of the participants of the Montreal Degrowth Conference,
Degrowth in the Americas, May 13-19, Quebec, Canada.***

“Degrowth Bullet points” from the Barcelona conference

see also the declaration of the Barcelona conference

<http://www.degrowth.org/Barcelona-2010-Declaration.119.0.html>

and the declaration of the Paris degrowth conference

<http://events.it-sudparis.eu/degrowthconference/Declaration%20on%20Degrowth%20FR.pdf>

The first and second degrowth conference in Paris and Barcelona lead to many degrowth proposals and questions that are listed in these bullet points. This is a very important task of the Degrowth conference of the Americas to make their contribution to debate and improve this list, before it gets passed on to the international conference on degrowth in Venice.

These bullet points were built from the work of the different working groups of the Barcelona conference.

<http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/Working-groups-methodology-results-and-papers.123.0.html>

<http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/Results.125.0.html>

<http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/Stirring-papers.9.0.html>

A- General values

Degrowth of the size of the technological and economic system as well as economical, political, social and cultural structural changes are urgently needed.

We stressed the importance of:

- long-term vision (a one that fits within the ecological limits),
 - the diversity of human capabilities to realize their various potentials,
 - the escape from the homo economicus mental box,
 - identifying the fundamental human needs, and realizing the diversity of the strategies to satisfy them (taking into account that some of these can be illusory),
 - increase the visibility of positive examples and proposals of bottom up and alternative life-sustaining models
- We need degrowth in the North and truly sustainable and culturally specific growth in the South, distributing wealth and compensating for ecological debt, acting in the North to reduce degradation in the South
- We recognize that poor and other marginalized groups in the Global North are part of the Global South.

B- DEMOCRACY

- Politics is for all, and thus is to be de-commercialized and de-commodified
- Ideas and practices of direct and participatory democracy can be applied to different scales and

social and economic activities

- Improving the conditions for deep democracy would involve:
 - Interdisciplinary research (This is a diversity strategy implying that the movement and change from our current situation and position at local and global level should not be only one, and would be based on understanding different cultures and political history contexts and local successful niches of sustainability.)
 - Democratic experimentation now by participation in politics and decision-making in existing networks, and institutions (This is the loyalty strategy implying a change within the current political system)
 - Creating new experimental spaces, i.e. communities experimenting with degrowth at a local scale, to investigate in practice how best to satisfy basic needs, creating holistic spaces of education and developing social economy. (This is the exit strategy implying leaving the system and building alternatives. Establish autonomous communities and connect them. Promote this way of living and intervene in the system.
 - Public pressure (This is the voice strategy implying particular political movement and activist engagement.) Link environmental movements with social movements and focus on underlying root causes to form alliances.)

Open questions

- What kind of incentives can motivate people to participate in political activity and decision-making?
- How can we ensure that participative decision-making arrangements are possible?
- What international diplomacy for North/South convergence?
- Is the assimilation within the political party system too early and against the ideas of degrowth?

C- EDUCATION

- Education for all social actors, based on living in harmony with the social and natural environment
- Educational techniques based on self-determination and interacting with, influencing and appreciating the world and opposition to hegemonic status quo is proposed. The methods of evaluation and standard setting need to be re-examined, and inter-generational knowledge sharing and informal education promoted.
- Creativity and diversity need to be promoted through different pedagogies.
- Cooperation has to be promoted early on in the educational process and the community has to be involved in the formation of educational curricula.

Open questions

What type of ethics in education? How do we transform the present educational system?

D- SOCIAL ECONOMY

Enterprises

- Production units/Companies size is limited for maintaining the rationality of satisfaction of local needs

- Profit dividends and profits of distant shareholders that do not take part in the activity are abolished
- At the level of social and economic enterprises decisions are taken by the people working in them, rather than investors

Social Security

- A ceiling on the level of income (implying a 100% tax above certain level of income), as well as a basic income are introduced
- A maximum ratio, between the minimum level of income and the income ceiling, within both society and companies, is proposed
- A progressive tax on income, property or natural resource use is proposed to finance basic income. Basic income can be provided in the form of local currency, and specific products and services like housing or health. There is a need to develop risk sharing systems for saving and financing for the transition. Pensions can be financed by green taxes.

Open questions

- What would these proposals imply for each sector/type of production?
- What shall we do with sectors which need to be challenged, such as chemical production, weapon production, etc?
- Research on world basic income is needed as a viable alternative to development aid and social science research on basic income and its experience is proposed

Trade degrowth

- Limiting trading distances and the volume of trade as well as the relocation of economies are components of degrowth. We need to move away from “free trade” and away from growth in trade (of raw materials and finished goods. Waste should not be traded.
- Ecological and social impacts of trade have to be measured with biophysical and social indicators, and integrated in trade policies and agreements.
- Food issues should be given a priority to improve food security by working towards food sovereignty and productive autonomy.
- Foreign debt cancellations for impoverished countries.

Money and currencies / Financial institutions

- Limit interest rates and money creation (by abolishing fiat money and introducing 100% bank solvency, implying the disappearance of financial markets, and questioning global currencies)
- Transition towards local currencies for trade degrowth is needed
- Currencies and lending/borrowing should be physically-backed
- Cooperative banks managed by communities/municipalities, cooperative banks' environmental and social standards are set and regulated by the community leading to a social economy

Property rights

- Some limits to private property are needed (including natural resources and societal goods). This implies democratic management of natural resources and further discussion on the options and alternatives to private property and its regulation.
- As it is the case for materials, some limit to the consumption of space per person is needed
- What remains in context of private property should be researched/democratically defined.
- Design jurisdictions according to each global common and recognize communal property rights under national law limiting overuse and unfair ownership of natural resources.
- Share our knowledge in copyleft degrowth journal/platforms

Sharing

- We need more sharing of goods and infrastructure so that the aggregate amount of goods and resources used decreases.
- General instruments to stimulate the reduction of goods under-utilization are needed. This might include acknowledging squatter's rights.
- Strong positive demonstrations of sharing need to be put forwards.
- Reform laws which prohibit sharing (such as copyright)

Work-sharing

- Limits to paid working hours are needed, and their concrete level have to be researched and established in a democratic debate.
- A progressive income tax is needed to reduce inequality as well income ceiling.
- Incentives are needed to encourage companies to enable work sharing and part-time work (including provision of accessible childcare).
- Unpaid work needs to be shared too.
- Research is needed to define work and its aim in a degrowth society, as well as the contribution of unpaid, household/community work to current economy.

Degrowth of infrastructures

- Some infrastructure projects (nuclear-based production, incinerators, high-speed trains and large scale dams) should be abandoned, while others (highways, ammonia-based production and airports) should be drastically limited.
- Reduce and eliminate production infrastructure of toxic chemicals. Reduce the transport infrastructure and make it more collective.
- Companies that build or use infrastructure which are currently indebted, such as building and transportation companies, should be closed with state support and support for their workers should be provided.
- Support social campaigns that change the imaginary of people regarding the need to travel, long distance travel, the levels of consumption and production and the dependence on infrastructure.
- Support communities that fight against large infrastructure projects.

- Cities should be reshaped and reformed on the basis of smaller distances and size, including a reduction in urban sprawl.
- Car-based infrastructure should be converted to walking, cycling and open common spaces.
- Urban life is to be relocalized keeping or developing its multifunctionality and its public spaces.
- Proximity relationships are fostered through urban redesign-re-organization and the use of environmentally friendly regional materials and bio-climatic design.
- Make eco-cities for all, rather than for a gentrified minority. Build local social and ecological resilience in cities, use zoning to bring back nature in the city and keep neighbourhoods compact.
- Degrowth challenges centralized decisions for mono-functional use and the involvement of urban dwellers in transforming the social, political and economic relations in urban spaces. Ecological degrowth neighbourhood plans (including which areas to remove, to recycle, preserve, etc) need to be decided and implemented through collective decision-making.

Degrowth of advertising

- Advertising from public spaces should be limited and all ads that affect children/vulnerable people, health, involve CO2-intensive sectors, or have sexist messages, should be regulated. For the purpose bans, regulation and taxation of advertisement should be introduced.
- Bottom-up measures that change people's perception of advertising to recognize its manipulative nature are needed.
- Community and individual involvement, including direct action, are needed in order to expose the ubiquity of advertising and the exploitation of values associated with it. Attention should be paid to the compliance with the existing and adopting new regulation on advertising. The financial sustainability of free media needs to be ensured.

Agro-ecology, food sovereignty and degrowth

- The productivist model must be phased-out and policies that finance industrial agriculture projects must stop (including industrial fertilizers and chemicals).
- There is an urgent need to move towards a more agro-ecological integrated agricultural system of food production by:
 - providing financial support for agroecological alternatives
 - using seasonal, ecological and local food
 - less livestock production
 - having food sovereignty as a principle
 - limiting deforestation and promoting re-ruralisation
 - reconnecting rural and urban spheres
 - encouraging citizen initiatives supporting both urban and rural localised farming by diverse alliances with social movements, farmers, consumers, and public institutions as education, health sector, etc.

Open questions

- Which other production sectors need to be explored in relation to degrowth
- What about a World Relocalisation Organisation to replace the WTO?

- What about reducing all types of infrastructure for international trade, including money?
- How do we reduce inequality in international power relations?

Technology

- A selective moratorium on technologies is proposed, based on their potential risks, benefits and impacts. We need at least some limits to market and profit-driven technology and innovation (e.g. internet, antibiotics, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, space travel). Taking into account the values of all stakeholders the criteria for identifying the limits would be based on:
 - the degree of locality concerning resources, innovation and decision making
 - the scale in use of the technology and its the supporting infrastructure.
 - the required inputs and outputs of the technology (environmental, monetary, energetic, etc).
- The results should be disseminated for independent and wide review while promoting people engagement to ratify or abrogate moratoriums. We need local and small scale alternatives with low start up capital and and barriers to entry (e.g. permaculture, agroecology and various social technologies).

E- NATURAL RESOURCES

- The exploitation of natural resource is to be limited.
- Reduce the global throughput of energy and materials adjusting it to the carrying capacity of the biosphere.
- Put a limit to human appropriation of net primary production

Mining

- Public subsidies for extractive industries should be abandoned and the social and environmental cost associated with them paid by companies,
- A global moratorium on resource extraction in areas of high biodiversity and ethnographic value should be established,
- Local communities should participate in decision-making on mining projects.

Waste

- Waste should be limited and production, treatment and final disposal of waste should close material cycles and be as local as possible. In these lines, the working group suggested:
 - legal instruments (such as taxation),
 - integrating proximity principles in waste regulation,
 - encouraging reuse through product-service design, cooperative sharing, community-based approaches, deposit and refund systems and facilitation of sharing of good practices.

Water

- Abandon new irrigation plans, large-scale water transfer and supply infrastructure.
- Public ownership and management of superficial, ground and desalted water at municipal level,

without considering it a commodity.

- Domestic tariff systems with free access until a basic threshold and a quota up to a ceiling in physical blocks terms per day per person, as well as heavy industrial tariff to physical parameters and thresholds.
- The Virtual water content (full life cycle) should be available to reduce the hidden consumption of water

Energy

- Total energy consumption and production should reduce while switching to locally produced renewable energy.
- Some energy production has to degrow dramatically (fossil fuels), while others – disappear (nuclear).
- Foster policies, incorporating a multi-criteria evaluation to have an energy system with the highest EROI and the lowest environmental impact and material throughput with least transport distance
- The decision making process of planning for future policies should be done in a democratic and decentralized manner ensuring fair access to fossil fuel as their scarcity increases.

Open questions

- How could we enforce a national cap on fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources while maintaining fair access, and a possible fund for financial compensation for non-extraction?
- How should decisions on the extraction of natural resources be globally discussed? We support the Yasuni initiative, what about quotas, material certificates, carbon taxes etc.?
- How can the North repay its ecological debt by returning the commons, robbed from the South?
- How do deal with renewable resources?

F- DEMOGRAPHY

The degrowth movement advocates full reproductive rights taking into account environmental and social consequences for our own and other species.

- It welcomes the conscious procreation, co-responsibility of the partners in child rearing.
- Government coercion is opposed as well as incentives to increase the birthrate as seen in some countries.
- The declining rate of population growth and peak population are welcomed.
- Migration is not caused by overpopulation but primarily because of the extreme inequalities in the world. The degrowth movement supports the right to migrate and opposes the “lifeboat” ethics. Simultaneously, degrowth movement supports the shift to greater local resilience to reduce the need to migrate

RESEARCH

- Research is needed on the drivers of innovation, or on whether socially and environmentally

beneficial technologies can be developed and spread in a non-profit seeking context and way.

- At what level do we want to exploit resources (both directly and indirectly), and how fast do we want to reduce their exploitation in the North as opposed to the South.
- Development categories (North, south, poor rich 1-2-3-4 world, national state, developed underdeveloped, post- anti- high income, low income central marginal eco abuse, green economy) need to be redefined. Find the right lenses to identify who is affecting and who is affected.
- Identify interventions/shocks/group struggles that cause shifts
- Explore case studies of non-growing economies
- Research on degrowth indicators is needed, aiming at reducing resource use, waste and emissions and keeping them within the ecological limits, while maintaining and enhancing quality of life.

What is to be measured?

- environmental as well as social indicators (economic ones being part of the latter)
- qualitative and quantitative aspects
- objective and subjective indicators

What is to be considered:

- bottom-up and deliberative approach.
- indicators for communication and analysis
- consumption and production aspects
- use of available (Sustainable Development) indicators where appropriate
- do not remain within the paradigm of what is being measured already but rather consider what should be measured

Macro models for degrowth can be informative. They should include and consider:

- labour income and employment benefits of work-time reduction, unpaid work (paying attention to a changing definition of work),
- resource constraints, considering strong sustainability,
- degrowth scenarios of the financial system and interest rates,
- the possible increase in marginal utility of people from redistribution of income and reduction of working time and inequalities,
- welfare state and social services,
- the stability of the system during contraction and modeling macro-micro relationships,
- a diversity of models: regional, local, national.