

## DEGROWTH & GLOCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Degrowth today marks both an emergent movement and a conceptual framework within which to repoliticize the discussion of a *desirable development*. Degrowth signifies, first and foremost, an intellectual critique of growth as uneconomic and unjust, ecologically unsustainable and structurally unable to provide a dignified life for everybody anyway. In this frame, it looks for strategies of emancipation, alleviation of suffering and claim for a good life freed from the necessity of growth, which is currently regarded as the dominant political objective. Therefore, degrowth also signifies a desired direction, one in which societies will use fewer natural resources and will organize and live differently than today. 'Sharing', 'simplicity', 'conviviality', 'care', 'societal metabolism', 'entropy', 'democracy' and the 'commons' are primary significations of what this society might respect.

*Economism* overshadows vulnerability of nature, low-impact durability, mutual aid and care, creativity and revolutionary potential of grassroots communities. Degrowth, as a name and concept, deliberately plays on the shock-value of challenging this secular dogma, serves as a *missile concept*, in order to open up a conversation about what a planet of 9 billion can and should provide for us and other ecosystems alike. Degrowth's major input lies in "connecting the dots" of all aspects of the contemporary global developments and their outputs. While questioning, it expands the standard vocabulary within which understanding of wellbeing, prosperity, justice, future and development is constructed.

If degrowth supporters assume a structural end of economic growth due to external and internal limits that will be encountered within this century, degrowth is not the same as negative GDP growth. It is not dedicated to the elucidation of policies focused primarily on GDP reduction, as that would be to stay in the thralls of economism. Degrowth thinkers question how the inevitable and desirable decrease of materials and activities within GDP can become socially sustainable, given that under capitalism, economies tend to either grow or collapse.

Instead of believing that environmental foundations can be easily technologically transcended and ignored without consequences for the highly interconnected global humanity, and particularly its most vulnerable members, and in refusing to accompany political measures for environmental resilience with a morally ignoble traditional Malthusianism, degrowth seeks to construct an alternative imaginary to the hegemony of growth-driven development. Such an imaginary is an intellectual instrument for a radical grassroots-supported turn to sustainability, rid of *business as usual* approach claiming for a "green growth", and without writing anyone off as maladjusted, overpopulated or underdeveloped.

As an intellectual current, degrowth already gathers a significant intellectual and activist production, elaborating on topics such as the environmental and social limits

of the modern economic growth, alternative strategies to modernist development, deepening of democracy at different levels of social organisation, social role of contemporary science and technology, necessity of evolution out of global capitalism and rupture of colonial-based international interactions, potentials and impacts of institutional innovations such as the universal basic income, solidarity economies and alternative currencies. It finds its main contributions in European networks acting for social emancipation and ecological resilience, now slowly structuring through regular international events as biennial Degrowth Conferences and festivals, yearly summer schools and the present Green Academy.

Inclusion of degrowth as an Academy module aims to provide participants with intellectual and experience-based tools for understanding the major contemporary challenges and their reflections in our communities, as means to shift our political opportunities and visions, as well as to think and act *out of the box*.

Indeed, throughout the module we will cover the conceptual foundations of the degrowth thinking, presented through natural and social boundaries to infinite growth, emphasized by contributions of political ecology, feminist economics and environmental justice, for a construction of locally rooted common sense. We will also cover the ongoing debates on the Anthropocene linked with historical developments of Western productivism and consumerism, which nowadays impose exogenous and harmful logics of development to European semi-peripheries and the Global Souths. Overall, we will question the ability of degrowth to tackle the short-termist logics of political agendas, with a fruitful dialogue with actors, thinkers and challengers of Municipalism, Commons and Climate change governance.

Finally, the Degrowth module will connect to the most recent political and intellectual developments of the degrowth movement, with sharing the inputs of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Degrowth Conference hosted in Malmö (Sweden) right before the Academy; and to echoes between degrowth and the transformative potential of the European periphery.