Academic paper/Abstract: The quest for real democracy is one of the components of sustainable degrowth. But the incipient debate on democracy and degrowth suffers from general definitions and limited connections to political philosophy and democracy theory. This article offers a critical review of democracy theory within the degrowth literature, taking as its focal point a relevant debate between Serge Latouche and Takis Fotopoulos. We argue that the core of their contention can be traced back to the relationship between the concepts of democracy and autonomy as defined by philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, which both authors and generally the degrowth movement consider as one of their theoretical reference points. We show how both Latouche and Fotopoulos hold a misconception of Castoriadis' notions of autonomy, the social imaginary and politics, which in turn limits their cognisance of democracy and hence confuses their debate concerning the possibilities for a degrowth transition within the confines of a liberal parliamentary democracy. With a clarified theoretical understanding of the interconnected democracy-autonomy assemble, we proceed to an evaluation of the revolutionary potential of the degrowth movement and to a better understanding of a possible relationship between democracy and degrowth.


Academic paper: Marija Bartl is one of the workshop key speakers and a legal scholar who focuses her research on European infrastructures and policies. In this paper, she explores the major European Commission policy tool for ensuring the Affordability of Energy Supply: functioning competition with regulation targeted at so-called vulnerable consumers. She examine different regulatory strategies employed in four EU member states (the UK, France, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia), with special focus on the situation in the two new MS, in order to respond to the question as to whether these different regulatory strategies provide what is promised, i.e., affordable energy for all.


Academic papers: Stefania Barca argues that degrowth has potential to facilitate the discussion and practice of an emancipatory ecological class-consciousness, provided it engages with the centrality of work and class in the transition to a post-carbon and post-capitalist paradigm.


Report: Discussion on the role of trade union in degrowth with links to historical events and decent work.


Report: Summary of the reasoning behind shorter working weeks (21 hours) from the ecological, social and economic perspectives.

Farcy, Dario

Video: Dario is one of the three key speakers of the workshop. He is a political activist from Argentina and has been involved in the Argentinian popular schools, the Democracia Socialista Party and more. In this video, he presents the movements and the (new) neoliberal situation in Argentina:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op9M5ma0pY4&t=2022s


Book Chapter: This short chapter offers a critical review of the concept of work. Stating that work is historically rooted, Gorz discussed conception of work linked to waged labor, to alienation, and to the valorization of productivity and techniques. This opens the doors to new contemporary definitions of work, notably one steping away from a ‘work is life’ approach to allow emancipation from capitalism relations of production. Gorz argues in favor of the expansion of an autonomous activity (see Marx or Negt) and considers the reduction of working hours as necessary: “The reduction of working hours is not merely a means of managing the system, it is also an end in itself in so far as it reduces the systemic constraints and alienations which participation in the social process of production imposes on individuals and in so far as, on the other hand, it expands the space for self-determined activities, both individual and collective.” P.75 We can make here links to the conviviality of degrowth literature.

“an urgent need for mediations between the existing industrial system, its wageworkers and its jobs, on the one hand, and, on the other, post-industrial forms of society which comply both with ecological demands and with individuals’ aspirations to liberate themselves from work as it exists and find in work as great a potential for self-determination as possible.” P.78

Master dissertation: Maja Hoffmann argues that work is a central social relation of modern societies and in its structural link to production and consumption and that it is inherently unsustainable.


Report: Where the idea of Just Transition comes from labor and indigenous movements, the reports by the ILO supported popularizing the concept. The report offers a definition of the decent work and link to the institutional frameworks involved around it.


**Sweeney, Sean. (2018). Another Energy is Possible. In Radical Realism for Climate Justice. Heinrich Böll Foundation. Volume 44.2**

Academic paper: Sean will be one of the key presenters of the Labor, Democracy and Degrowth workshop. He works with TUED, the Trade Union for Energy Democracy, a network of critical trade unions across the world mobilized together around Just Transition and systemic change. For them, the transition is a key opportunity to address the worker-focused concerns into the socio-ecological transformation.


TUED’s working paper (see many more on their website): Decent work and quality work to be guaranteed through the transition toward low carbon economy. This is often called Just Transition. In the history industrial and structural change in the economy have let communities very vulnerable. The job-environment dichotomy is erroneous and TUED provide more texture to the understanding of their relation.


Book: Kathi Weeks challenges the presupposition that work, or waged labor, is inherently a social and political good. While progressive political movements, including the Marxist and feminist movements, have fought for equal pay, better work conditions, and the recognition of unpaid work as a valued form of labor, even they have tended to accept work as a naturalized or inevitable activity. Weeks argues that in taking work as a given, we have “depoliticized” it, or removed it from the realm of political critique. She proposes a postwork society that would allow people to be productive and creative rather than relentlessly bound to the employment relation. Work, she contends, is a legitimate, even crucial, subject for political theory.
Additional material from the degrowth conference in Budapest: