

**Online Master on Degrowth**  
**Academic year: 2024-25**

**Module 4: Policies and Politics for Degrowth**

Coordinator: Claudio Cattaneo  
12 ECTS – 75 hours

**Course 4.1: State and degrowth**

**Instructor**

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**Objectives**

This course aims to offer you a brief introduction to different state theories for investigating various state apparatuses and public officers' roles in transforming the current westernized societies. Then you will be able to critically assess a Gramscian understanding of the state as relevant for thinking about the multi-layered politics of degrowth.

**Structure**

The course has five, two-and-a-half-hour classes. Each one will involve a mixing of teaching, discussion and group work. To participate in class, you should have read the readings carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited.

**Content**

***Class 1: Introduction to theories of state***

We will start the course by exploring the main features of several theories of the states.

***Class 2: State neutrality***

During Class 2, we will discuss the concept of state neutrality, a core idea for liberal approaches to the state.

***Class 3: Welfare State: Beyond redistribution***

In Class 3, we will understand the role of the state apparatuses and agencies in producing and distributing the values circulating in current capitalist societies.

***Class 4: State and Degrowth: a Gramscian approach***

In Class 4, we will go deep into the Gramscian state theory and how this can inform visions of state transformations.

***Class 5: States enforcement: Between growth and degrowth***

In class 5, we will conclude our course by looking at empirical analyses that use Marxian and Gramscian approaches to the state.

## Evaluation

There will be a three-tiered evaluation of the module as a whole (and not this course separately) that will involve three outputs – one or two written, and one or two visual or oral. This will be confirmed in due time.

## Material

### Class 1: *Introduction to theories of State*

- Bourdieu P. (2014) *On the State. Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992*. Cambridge: Polity, 2015. Lecture of 18 January 1990.

Recommended:

- Vom Hau M. (2015) *State Theory: Four Analytical Traditions*. In Leibfried S., Huber E., Lange M., Levy J. D., Stephens J. D. *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State*. Oxford University Press.

Optional:

- Jessop B. (2016) *State: Past, Present, Future*. Polity Press. Introduction

### Class 2: *State neutrality*

- Lehning P. L. (1990) Liberalism and Capabilities: Theories of Justice and the Neutral State. *Social Justice Research*, Vol. 4, No. 3

Recommended:

- Mason A. D. (1990) Autonomy, Liberalism and State Neutrality. *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 40, No. 16

Optional:

- Romano O. (2014) *The Sociology of Knowledge in a Time of Crisis. Challenging the Phantom of Liberty*. Routledge. - Chapter 4 The Rise and Fall of Neo-Horizontalism

### Class 3: *Welfare State: Beyond redistribution*

- Koch M. and Fritz M. Z (2014). Building the Eco-social State: Do Welfare Regimes Matter?. *Journal of Social Policy*, 43, pp 679-703
- Marianna Mazzucato TED Talks about governments. Video

Recommended:

- Mazzucato M. (2018). *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs Private Sector Myths*. Penguin books. - Foreword, Introduction, and Chapter 9

Optional:

- Cousins M. (2005) *European Welfare States. Comparative Perspectives*. Sage publications.
- Mitchell W. and Fazi T. (2017) *Reclaiming the State. A Progressive Vision of Sovereignty for a Post-Neoliberal World*. Pluto Press. - Chapter 5 The State Never Went Away: Neoliberalism as a State-Driven Project

### Class 4: *State and Degrowth: a Gramscian approach*

- D'Alisa G. and Kallis G. (2020). Degrowth and the State. *Ecological Economics*. Vol. 169, 106486.

Recommended:

- Thomas, P. D. (2009). *The Gramscian Moment. Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. Brill, Leiden, Boston. - Note 61 page. 16; Section 3.1.3 pages 93-95, Section 4.1 pages 137-141, Section 4.3 page 143-144, Section 5.2 pages 167- 195.

Optional:

- Hirsch J. (2003): The State's New Clothes: NGOs and the Internationalization of States, *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, 15:2, 237-262

- Koch M. (2022) State-civil society relations in Gramsci, Poulantzas and Bourdieu: Strategic implications for the degrowth movement. *Ecological Economics* 193, 107275
- D'Alisa G. and Romano O. (forthcoming). *Degrowth a state of Dépense*. In Kassiola J. (eds.). The palgrave handbook on Environmental Politics, Activism, and Theory. Palgrave MacMillan

**Class 5: *States enforcement: Between growth and degrowth***

- Akbulut B. (2029) The 'state' of degrowth: Economic growth and the making of state hegemony in Turkey. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*. Vol.2 Issue 3, pp. 513-527.

Recommended:

- Andreucci, D. (2017). Resources, regulation and the State: Struggles over gas extraction and passive revolution in Evo Morales's Bolivia. *Political Geography* 61: 170-80.

Optional:

- Jessop B. (2008) *State Power. A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Polity Press. - Chapter 5 Poulantzas on the State as a Social Relation.
- Öcalan A. (2011) *Democratic Confederalism*.

## **Course 4.2: Policies for degrowth**

### **Instructor**

Nick Fitzpatrick

PhD Candidate, Nova University Lisbon, Portugal

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### **Objectives**

Degrowth yes, but *how*? This course explores transition strategies from a policy design perspective. After introducing a conceptual framework for designing public policies, we will explore the policy ends and means of degrowth policy proposals. This will include critical reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of relying on public policy processes and the State to achieve degrowth.

### **Structure**

The course has 5 x 2.5hr classes, which consist of short lectures and group exercises. To encourage in-depth participation, I encourage everyone to read the paper and make brief notes before the class.

### **Content**

#### **Class 1: Policy Design**

Understand the purpose and processes of public policy and policy design.

Pre-task: Write a few notes on the following questions: (1) What is a policy? (2) Who are policymakers?

#### **Class 2: Designing degrowth destinations: Goals, objectives, targets**

Identify the policy ends – what the policy is supported to achieve – via examining of the goals, objectives, and targets of degrowth policy proposals.

Pre-task: Imagine yourself crafting the Sustainable Degrowth Goals, a new policy framework that details how to translate degrowth critiques and values translates into goals and objectives (just like the Sustainable Development Goals). What would be your goals and objectives?

#### **Class 3: Designing degrowth destinations: Methods, instruments, calibration**

Following on from the previous session, we will now identify the policy means – how to achieve the policy goals, objectives, and targets – via examining the methods, instruments, and calibration of degrowth policy proposals.

Pre-task: Based on [Fitzpatrick et al. \(2022\)](#) and/or *SPPD*, choose 10 policy instruments that you believe would combine to have the highest transformative potential to achieve degrowth.

#### **Class 4: Reform or abolish: Money and work**

Following on from the previous session, we will now identify the policy means – how to achieve the policy goals, objectives, and targets – via examining the methods, instruments, and calibration of degrowth policy proposals.

Pre-task: When reading, write brief notes to the following questions: (1) what elements are critical or missing from this analysis? A nuanced discussed in two groups (money, work) during class.

#### **Class 5: Through or beyond the state?**

Open space for critical reflection on policy processes and the state to achieve degrowth.

Pre-task: At the start of this course, we discussed (1) What is a policy? and (2) Who are policymakers. However, this approach assumes that policymakers are keystone species for social change. Instead, now answer the following questions: (3) Why do we need policymakers support? (4) What happens if we don't get it? (5) On whose terms will it unfold even if we do?

## Evaluation

There will be a three-tiered evaluation of the module (and not this course separately) that will involve three outputs – one or two written, and one or two visual or oral. This will be confirmed in due time.

## Material

### Class 1: *Policy design*

- Howlett, M. (2019). *Designing public policies: Principles and instruments*. Routledge. (Chapter 3: What is policy design?)

### Class 2: *Designing degrowth destinations: Goals, objectives, targets*

- Fitzpatrick, N., Parrique, T., & Cosme, I. (2022). Exploring degrowth policy proposals: A systematic mapping with thematic synthesis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 365, 132764. (especially Appendix A)

### Class 3: *Designing degrowth destinations: Methods, instruments, calibration*

- Explore Sustainable Prosperity Policy Database (SPPD)

### Class 4: *Reform or abolish: Money and work*

Read one of the following:

- Parrique, T. (2019). [The political economy of degrowth](#) (Doctoral dissertation). **Chapter 10: Transforming work (65 pages)**
- Nelson, A. (2022). Beyond Money: A Postcapitalist Strategy. Pluto Press. ISBN: 9781786807816. (Chapters 1, 2, and 4, 69 pages)

### Class 5: *Through or beyond the state?*

- Spash, C. L. (2020). A tale of three paradigms: Realising the revolutionary potential of ecological economics. *Ecological Economics*, 169, 106518. **(12 pages)**
- Spash, C. L. (2023). Herman Daly: Some Personal Reflections. *Environmental Values*, 32(2), 126-130. **(4 pages)**

## **Course 4.3: Activism and degrowth**

### **Instructors**

Sara Fromm  
activist  
sara@familie-fromm.de

Claudio Cattaneo  
Precarious Professor, ICTA-UAB  
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### **Objectives**

This course will centre on Erik Olin Wright Theory of change, namely structured around 4 ways to create alternatives to capitalism. After the introductory class to the work of E.O. Wright and social movement theory, the second class will focus on Squatting as a strategy to escape capitalism. The case study of Stay Grounded, in the third class, will consider the strategy of Taming capitalism. The fourth class will look at civil disobedience as a strategy to smash capitalism and, finally, the focus of the last class will look at communication as the fourth way identified by E.O. Wright, namely, resisting capitalism. The teachers of the course are experienced activists in their fields of research.

### **Structure**

The course has five, two-and-a-half-hour classes. Each one will involve a mix of teaching, discussion and group work. To participate in class, you should have read the readings carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited.

### **Content**

**Class 1: *General introduction to Theory of Change* - Sara Fromm**

**Class 2: *Escaping Capitalism: Squatting* - Claudio Cattaneo**

**Class 3: *Taming Capitalism. Campaigning and alliance building around anti-aviation work* - Sara Fromm**

**Class 4: *Smashing Capitalism: Civil Disobedience* - Sara Fromm**

**Class 5 *Activism: experiences from students. Student-led class.* Claudio Cattaneo**

This last class will be led by students who can take the opportunity to share their experiences in any type of activism. Interested students can offer brief presentations related to what they do/have done, what type of strategy -if any- they consider their activism follows, personal insights on the value of their actions and the personal sustainability of their activism (i.e. the risk of activist trauma, burn-out...)

### **Evaluation**

There will be a three-tiered evaluation of the module as a whole (and not this course separately) that will involve three outputs – one or two written, and one or two visual or oral. This will be confirmed in due time.

## **Material**

### **Class 1: *General introduction to Theory of Change* - Sara Fromm**

- Erik Olin Wright (2019) - How to be an anticapitalist in the 21st century (especially chapter 3)

#### **Optional:**

- Pelenc, et al. (2019): Alternative and Resistance Movements: The Two Faces of Sustainability Transformations?. *Ecological Economics*. Volume 159, 2019. Pages 373-378. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800917318451>

### **Class 2: *Escaping Capitalism: Squatting* - Claudio Cattaneo**

- Claudio Cattaneo and Miguel A. Martínez - Introduction: Squatting as an Alternative to Capitalism. In Cattaneo and Martinez (eds.). *The squatters movement in Europe*. Pluto Press

#### **Optional:**

- Claudio Cattaneo. How can squatting contribute to degrowth? In Nelson, A and Schenider, F., (eds.). *Housing for Degrowth*. Routledge.

### **Class 3: *Taming Capitalism. Campaigning and alliance building around anti-aviation work* - Sara Fromm**

- Stay Grounded (2019): Degrowth of Aviation; Chapters 2 (Eliminating Tax Exemptions) and 3. (Making Excessive Flyers Pay: Frequent Flyer Levy & Air Miles Levy)

#### **Optional:**

- Engler & Engler (2021): André Gorz's Non-Reformist Reforms Show How We Can Transform the World Today. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2021/07/andre-gorz-non-reformist-reforms-revolution-political-theory>
- Stay Grounded (2020): A Rapid and Just Transition of Aviation. [https://stay-grounded.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SG\\_Just-Transition-Paper\\_2021.pdf](https://stay-grounded.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SG_Just-Transition-Paper_2021.pdf)

### **Class 4: *Smashing Capitalism: Civil Disobedience* - Sara Fromm**

- Malm (2021): How to Blow Up a Pipeline: Learning to Fight in a World on Fire (especially chapter 2: Breaking the Spell). Verso. ISBN 978-183976025

#### **Optional:**

- Schweitzer (2014): Stages of escalation in a nonviolent campaign (p. 64 - 66). In War Resisters International, *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns*, 2nd edition. <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/handbook-for-nonviolent-campaigns/>
- Sovacool & Dunlap (2022): Anarchy, war, or revolt? Radical perspectives for climate protection, insurgency and civil disobedience in a low-carbon era. In *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 86. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S221462962100503X>

### **Class 5: *Activism: experiences from students***

No readings.

## **Course 4.4: Post-growth business and degrowth**

### **Instructor:**

Verónica Devenin  
Eada Business School  
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Melanie Rieback  
Radically Open Security  
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### **Objectives**

Degrowth invites new ways of consuming and producing. Businesses and associated forms of organization are charged with the provision of most goods and services in modern societies, shaping consumption and production, and, therefore, they will have to be part of any hypothetical transition beyond growth. The objective of this course is to explore cases and approaches that highlight how businesses may transform and become more compatible with a postgrowth scenario.

### **Structure**

The course has five, two-and-a-half-hour classes. Each one will involve a mixing of teaching, discussion and group work. To participate in class, you should have read the readings carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited.

### **Content**

#### ***Class 1: Introduction to postgrowth businesses: setting the challenge and revisiting business frameworks from a postgrowth business perspective***

The first class provides an introduction to the course and the emerging debate on business and degrowth, setting the challenge on how to solve the provision of goods and services and exploring how business management concept could be translated and adapted to postgrowth businesses.

#### ***Class 2: Revisiting business frameworks from a postgrowth business perspective***

The second class we will analyse a case of a business and its process of downscaling and approaching to postgrowth.

#### ***Class 3: Fundamentals of Post-Growth Entrepreneurship (part I)***

The third class with Melanie focuses on Post Growth Entrepreneurship.

#### ***Class 4: The other side of the coin: from mainstream consumption to sufficiency and voluntary simplicity***

We will dedicate the the fourth class to analyse the consumer perspective, and the transformation that is needed for a postgrowth scenario.

#### ***Class 5: Fundamentals of Post-Growth Entrepreneurship (part II)***

Finally, the fifth class will be used to finalize the fundamentals of Post Growth Entrepreneurship.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation will consist in choosing a real business and assess how it could be transformed into a postgrowth business (individual).



## Material

### **Class 1 – Introduction to postgrowth businesses: setting the challenge and revisiting business frameworks from a postgrowth business perspective**

- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for 'other worlds'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), 613–632. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090821>
- Nesterova, Iana. "Degrowth business framework: Implications for sustainable development." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 262 (2020): 121382.
- Froese, T., Richter, M., Hofmann, F., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. 2023. Degrowth-oriented organisational value creation: A systematic literature review of case studies. *Ecological Economics*, 207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2023.107765>.

#### Recommended:

- Colombo, L. A., Bailey, A. R., & Gomes, M. V. (2023). Scaling in a post-growth era: Learning from Social Agricultural Cooperatives. *Organization*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084221147480>
- Gebauer, J. (2018). Towards growth-independent and post-growth-oriented entrepreneurship in the SME Sector. *Management Review*, 29(3), 230-256. DOI:10.5771/0935-9915-2018-3-230

### **Class 2 – Revisiting business frameworks from a postgrowth business perspective**

- Teaching Case Las Cañadas

#### Recommended:

- Michaelis, T.L., Carr, J.C., Scheaf, D.J., Pollack, J.M. (2020). The frugal entrepreneur: A self-regulatory perspective of resourceful entrepreneurial behavior. *Journal of Business Venturing*, Volume 35, Issue 4, 105969. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2019.105969>.
- Siegner, M., Pinkse, J., & Panwar, R. (2018). Managing tensions in a social enterprise: The complex balancing act to deliver a multi-faceted but coherent social mission. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 174, 1314-1324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.11.076>

#### Optional:

- Vlasov, M. (2019). In transition toward the ecocentric entrepreneurship nexus: How nature helps entrepreneur make venture more regenerative over time. *Organization & Environment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026619831448>

### **Class 3 – Fundamentals of Post-Growth Entrepreneurship (part I)**

- Watch the first 4 videos of Melanie's PGE lectures <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL14vcCXv7XVONAwzNv0ApYwZ5iepLzz3S>

Optional: any of the reading materials proposed in the youtube lectures.

### **Class 4 – The other side of the coin: from mainstream consumption to sufficiency and voluntary simplicity**

- Lorek, S. & Fuch, D. (2013). Strong sustainable consumption governance - precondition for a degrowth path? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 38, 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2011.08.008>
- Devenin, V., & Bianchi, C. (2022). Trajectories towards a voluntary simplicity lifestyle and inner growth. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14695405221122065>

Optional:

- Meissner, M. (2019). Against accumulation: lifestyle minimalism, de-growth and the present post-ecological condition. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 12(3), 185-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2019.1570962>
- Chang H (2018) Exploring consumer behavioral predispositions toward voluntary simplicity. *Current Psychology* 40: 731–743. DOI: 10.1007/s12144-018-9994-4.
- Osikominu J and Bocken N (2020) A voluntary simplicity lifestyle: values, adoption, practices and effects. *Sustainability* 12: 1903. DOI: 10.3390/su12051903.
- Rich SA, Hanna S and Wright BJ (2017) Simply satisfied: the role of psychological need satisfaction in the life satisfaction of voluntary simplifiers. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 18: 89–105. DOI: 10.1007/s10902-016-9718-0.

### **Class 5 – Fundamentals of Post-Growth Entrepreneurship (part II)**

- Watch videos 5-8 of Melanie's PGE lectures <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL14vcCXv7XVONAwzNv0ApYwZ5iepLzz3S>

Optional: any of the reading materials proposed in the youtube lectures.

## **Course 4.5: Social Movements, democracy and degrowth**

### **Instructors**

Barbara Muraca, PhD

Associate Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies

Associate Department Head, Department of Philosophy

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<https://philosophy.uoregon.edu/profile/bmuraca/>

Lorenzo Velotti

Predoctoral researcher

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<https://www.sns.it/en/persona/lorenzo-filippo-velotti>

### **Objectives**

This part of the course will present research and debates over connections between degrowth and democracy, and the role of social movements in pursuing degrowth. We will introduce key concepts such as deliberative decision-making, direct democracy, autonomy, and degrowth as a mural of alternatives for socio-ecological transformation; and discuss challenges concerning the transformative potential of democracy, and the role of democracy for achieving degrowth transformations.

### **Structure**

The course has five, two and a half hour classes. Each one will involve a mix of teaching, discussion, group work and interactive exercises. Some classes will include pre-recorded lectures which you will need to listen to before the class. To participate in class, you should have read the readings carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited.

### **Content**

#### **Class 1: Introduction: Social movements, democracy and degrowth – Lorenzo Velotti**

Class 1 will introduce students to issues and debates relevant for understanding links between social movements, democracy and degrowth.

#### **Class 2: Mobilizations: understanding social movements and environmentalism – Lorenzo**

Class 2 introduces how social movements have been understood by the social sciences, focusing on environmentalism.

#### **Class 3: Degrowth in movements - Lorenzo Velotti**

Class 3 will explore degrowth as an emerging social movement and its ideological and practical intersections with other existing movements denouncing capitalism, colonialism, extractivism and oppression.

#### **Class 4: Degrowth and democracy – Barbara Muraca**

In Class 4 will discuss degrowth and democracy.

#### **Class 5: Degrowth as radical alternative to neoliberalism: resistance and transformation – Barbara Muraca**

A space to collectively reflect on key topics we have explored with the course.

## Evaluation

There will be a three-tiered evaluation of the module as a whole (and not this course separately) that will involve three outputs – one or two written, and one or two visual or oral. This will be confirmed in due time.

## Material

### Class 1: Introduction: Social movements, democracy and degrowth – Lorenzo Velotti

- Asara, V., Profumi, E., & Kallis, G. (2013). Degrowth, democracy and autonomy. *Environmental Values*, 22(2), 217-239.

Optional:

- Hausknost, D. (2017). Degrowth and democracy. In *Routledge Handbook of Ecological Economics* (pp. 457-466). Routledge.
- Zografos, C. 2015. Démocratie directe [Direct Democracy]. In: D'Alisa, G. Demaria, F., Kallis, G. Décroissance. Vocabulaire pour une nouvelle ère [Degrowth. Vocabulary for a new era]. Neuvy-en-Champagne: Éditions le passager clandestine, pp: 187-194. (A copy of this chapter in English will be provided)

### Class 2: Mobilizations: understanding social movements and environmentalism – Lorenzo Velotti

- Asara, V. (2022). Environmental movements. In L. Pellizzoni, E. Leonardi, & V. Asara, *Handbook of critical environmental politics* (pp. 483–504). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Optional:

- Della Porta, D. (2020). The study of social movements: Recurring questions, (partially) changing answers. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani, *Social movements: An introduction* (Third edition, pp. 1–30). Wiley Blackwell.
- Wennerhag, M., & Hylmö, A. (2021). Social class and environmental movements. In M. Grasso & M. Giugni, *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Movements* (1st ed., pp. 355–373). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367855680-28>

### Class 3: Degrowth in movements - Lorenzo Velotti

- Treu, N., Schmelzer, M., & Burkhart, C. (2020). *Degrowth in movement (s): Exploring pathways for transformation*. John Hunt Publishing. (A copy of chosen excerpts will be provided)

Optional:

- D'alisa, G., Demaria, F., & Cattaneo, C. (2013). Civil and uncivil actors for a degrowth society. *Journal of Civil Society*, 9(2), 212-224.

### Class 4: Degrowth and democracy – Barbara Muraca

- Kallis, G. et al. (2018): “Degrowth.” In: *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* (ARER) 43, 291-316
- Rosa et al: Appropriation, Activation and Acceleration: The Escalatory Logics of Capitalist Modernity and the Crises of Dynamic Stabilization. (<https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/42046/1/0263276416657600.pdf>)

- Selection (TBD) from: Streeck W. 2016. *How Will Capitalism End?: Essays on a Failing System*. London: Verso
- Dardot and Laval: *Never-Ending Nightmare*. Verso. Conclusion: Democracy as experimenting with the Commons

**Class 5: Degrowth as radical alternative to neoliberalism: resistance and transformation – Barbara Muraca**

- Muraca, Barbara (2020). “Possibilities for Degrowth: a radical alternative to the neoliberal restructuring of growth-societies.” *Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, Vol 2. In: Keller, J., Legun, K., Carolan, M., and Bell, M. M. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 478-496.
- Asara V, Otero I, Demaria F, Corbera E. 2015. Socially sustainable degrowth as a social-ecological transformation: repoliticizing sustainability. *Sustain. Sci.* 10(3):375–84
- Lazzarato M. 2009. Neoliberalism in action: inequality, insecurity and the reconstitution of the social. *Theory Cult. Soc.* 26(6):109–133
- Selection (TBD) from: Dardot and Laval: *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* – Introduction.

## **Course 4.6: Strategies and organization for degrowth**

### **Instructor**

Ekaterina Chertkovskaya

Researcher and project coordinator, Technology & Society, Lund University

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### **Objectives**

This course will explore the emerging discussion on strategy in relation to degrowth and social-ecological transformation. Its objectives are to examine what it means to think strategically, how strategies can be built in line with the plurality of degrowth (including for degrowth as a social movement), and to apply this knowledge to specific contexts.

### **Structure**

The course consists of five two-and a half hour classes. Classes take place in a variety of formats. The first and second classes have the format of a lecture, with substantial time for discussion. The third class is run as an assembly, where after a short introduction students take the role of actors of the degrowth movement, to collectively deliberate on its strategies. The fourth and fifth classes are student-led and based on group work and individual preparation. Each group will have a specific theme assigned to them, which they will present to the rest of the class, followed by discussion. It is important to come to each class well-prepared.

### **Content**

#### **Class 1: Strategy and degrowth: An emerging debate**

*Format: lecture + discussion*

*The first class* provides an introduction to the course and the emerging debate on strategy in degrowth, taking stock of the discussion so far. It positions strategy as a key issue to engage with in order to address *how* to make degrowth visions possible, whilst arguing that strategic thinking can be compatible with the plurality of degrowth.

#### **Class 2: How to think about strategy analytically**

*Format: lecture + discussion*

*The second class* is devoted to engaging with strategy analytically. In critical dialogue with the work of Erik Olin Wright (see also Course 3), we will explore different modes of transformation and strategic logics for degrowth, their potentials and limitations, and some of the key issues to think about to align strategies with degrowth values.

#### **Class 3: Strategies for the degrowth movement**

*Format: introduction + assembly*

*The third class* focuses on strategy for degrowth as a social movement (or network of networks), and the possible directions for acting (or not) strategically. We will collectively explore these directions, and how they can be organised.

#### **Class 4 – Strategies in context: Provisioning sectors &**

#### **Class 5 – Strategies in context: Economic and political reorganisation**

*The fourth and fifth classes* zoom in on strategies in different contexts, and engage with examples of concrete strategies. The former addresses strategies for degrowth in several provisioning sectors (e.g. energy, housing, transport, digital technologies). The latter pays attention to strategies in some of the

key areas for economic and political reorganisation that would bring about degrowth (e.g. care, work, money, trade).

Format: student-led class + discussion

For Classes 4 and 5, you will be split into groups, with several groups co-leading each class. Each group will co-lead one class only, i.e. either Class 4 or Class 5

Group work for the co-led class: Prepare a 15-minute presentation on the theme assigned to your group. Presentation needs to draw on the chapter of the book that addresses this theme (and critical reflection on it), your knowledge from this course so far and anything else you find relevant.

When not co-leading the class: Your group will be assigned one chapter to read from Part II, which will be presented by your peers. Read it carefully and be prepared to engage with your peers' presentation in class. Feel free to discuss in your group beforehand.

### **Evaluation**

There will be a three-tiered evaluation of the module as a whole (and not this course separately) that will involve three outputs – one or two written, and one or two visual or oral. This will be confirmed in due time.

### **Material**

The main reading for the course is *Degrowth and strategy: How to bring about social-ecological transformation*, edited by Degrowth Vienna and allies. Specific chapters from the book will be assigned for each class, but you are most welcome to read the whole book.

#### **Class 1: Strategy and degrowth: An emerging debate**

- Chapter 3 'Taking stock of degrowth's consideration of strategy' by Nathan Barlow

Optional:

- Parker, Martin (2021) 'The romance of prefiguration and the task of organization', *Journal of Marketing Management*, DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2021.2006755.

#### **Class 2: How to think about strategy analytically**

- Chapter 2 'A strategic canvas for degrowth: In dialogue with Erik Olin Wright' by Ekaterina Chertkovskaya

Optional:

- Chapter 7 'Equity in degrowth strategies' by Samantha Mailhot and Patricia E. Perkins

#### **Class 3: Strategies for the degrowth movement**

- Chapter 5 'Degrowth actors and their strategies' by Carol Bardi, Constanza Hepp, Joe Herbert, Andro Rilovic and Joelle Saey-Volckrick

Optional:

- Chapter 4 'Degrowth's plurality and the challenge of a common strategy' by Viviana Asara

#### **Class 4 – Strategies in context: Provisioning sectors**

No readings.

#### **Class 5 – Strategies in context: Economic and political reorganisation**

No readings.