

# ‘Mes enllà de la societat tecnològica, la aposta pel decreixement’

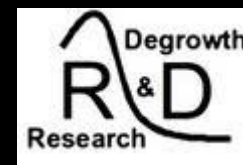


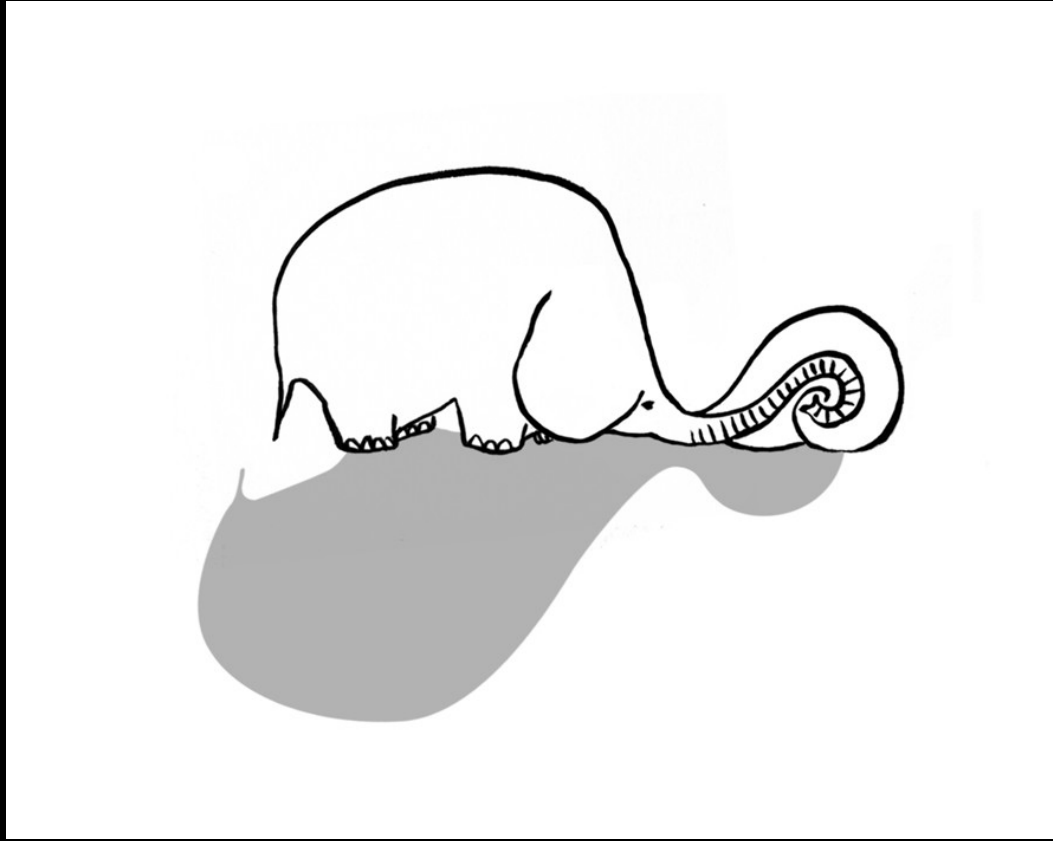
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Recerca & Decreixement  
[www.degrowth.org](http://www.degrowth.org)

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# Index

1) Diagnosis

2) Prognosis

The example of climate change.

# 1. Diagnosis

- What are the social problems?
- Who is responsible for them?

e.g. Climate change

# Theoretical framework

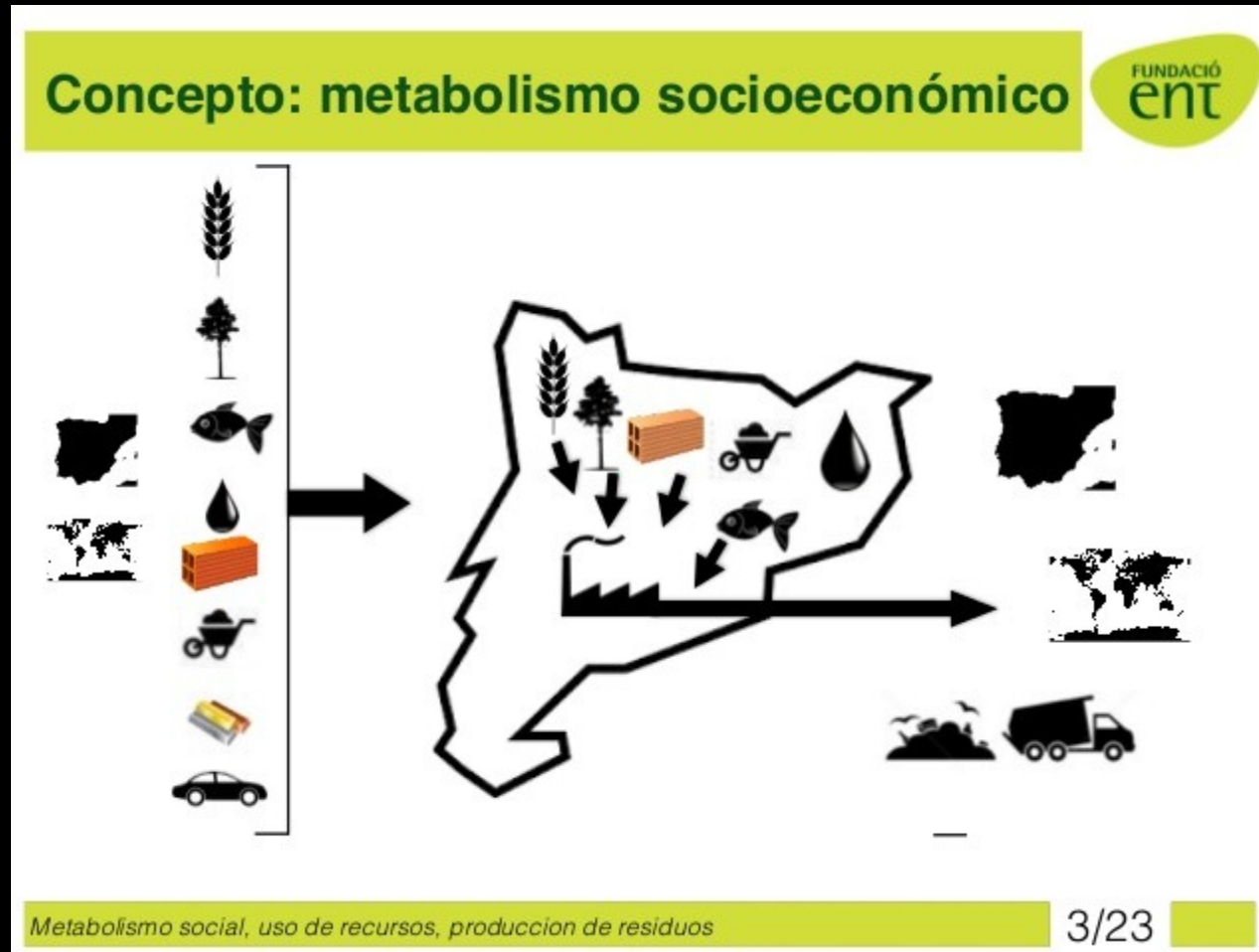
- **Ecological economics:**

Is the study of the relations between the economy and the environment;

- **Political ecology:**

is the study of the relationships between political, economic and social factors with environmental issues and changes.

# Social metabolism



Fuente: “Recursos i política a la Catalunya del segle XXI” de Sergio Sastre, ENT.

# Ecological limits to growth

- **Inputs:** e.g. Peak oil;
  - **Outputs:** e.g. Climate change.
- + Keep in mind: Energy cannot be recycled, and materials only up to a certain extent.

# Environmental conflicts

**Environmental Justice Atlas**  
Home EJAtlas EJOLT Maps Login

Go full screen

World Map  
1734 cases reported

You can contribute to EJ Atlas and / or fill out our survey.

- > Legend
- > Filter
- > Browse maps
- > Get Involved
- ▼ Featured Maps

**A PLANET IN DANGER: the world of CHEVRON**  
Chevron is well known around the world as a company that systematically applies the "Polluter does not Pay Principle". This scholar-activist collaborative mapping project shows stories of communities reclaiming justice. #DíaAntiChevron

**Climate Debt**  
The overconsumption of the available capacity of the Earth's atmosphere and climate system to absorb greenhouse gases by the developed countries has run up a climate debt to developing countries and Mother Earth.

**Permanent Peoples Tribunal Hearing on Corporate Human Rights Violations and Peoples Access to Justice**  
On the first anniversary of the UNHRC resolution to address corporate abuses, this Feature Map updates the state of some cases presented in the Geneva PPT Hearing.

**DISMANTLE CORPORATE POWER**

Leaflet | Tiles © Esri — Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEO, TomTom, Intermap, iPC, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China

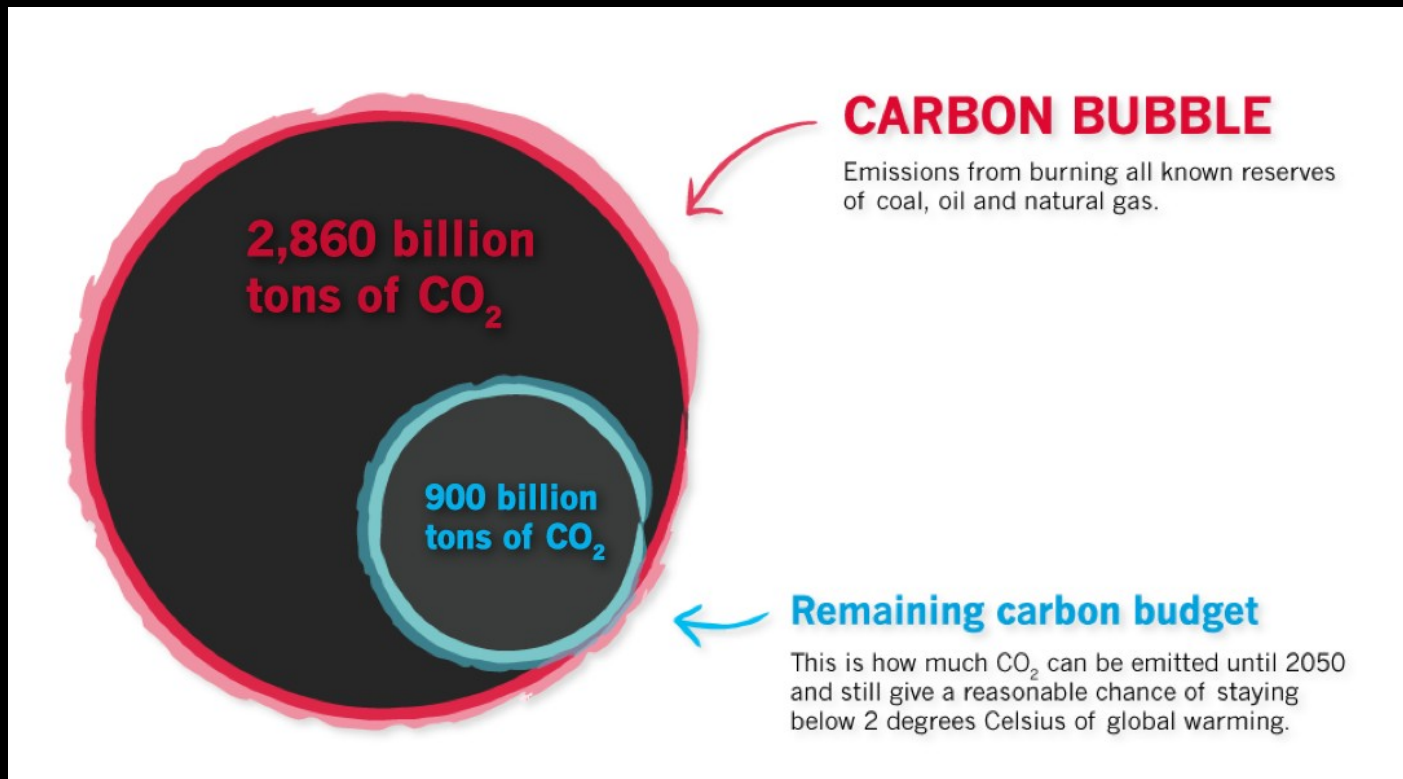
Source: Environmental Justice Atlas (ejatlas.org)



# Climate change

- It is the evidence of the limited assimilative capacity of ecosystems.
- It is arguably the most important environmental conflicts, related to 'waste'.

# Carbon budget (IPCC, 2013)



Source: Carbon Tracker and Grantham Institute (Imperial College – LSE; 2013; carbonbubble.info)

See also: Meinshausen et al, 2009; IPCC, 2013; Le Quere et al, 2013.

# “Unburnable fuels”

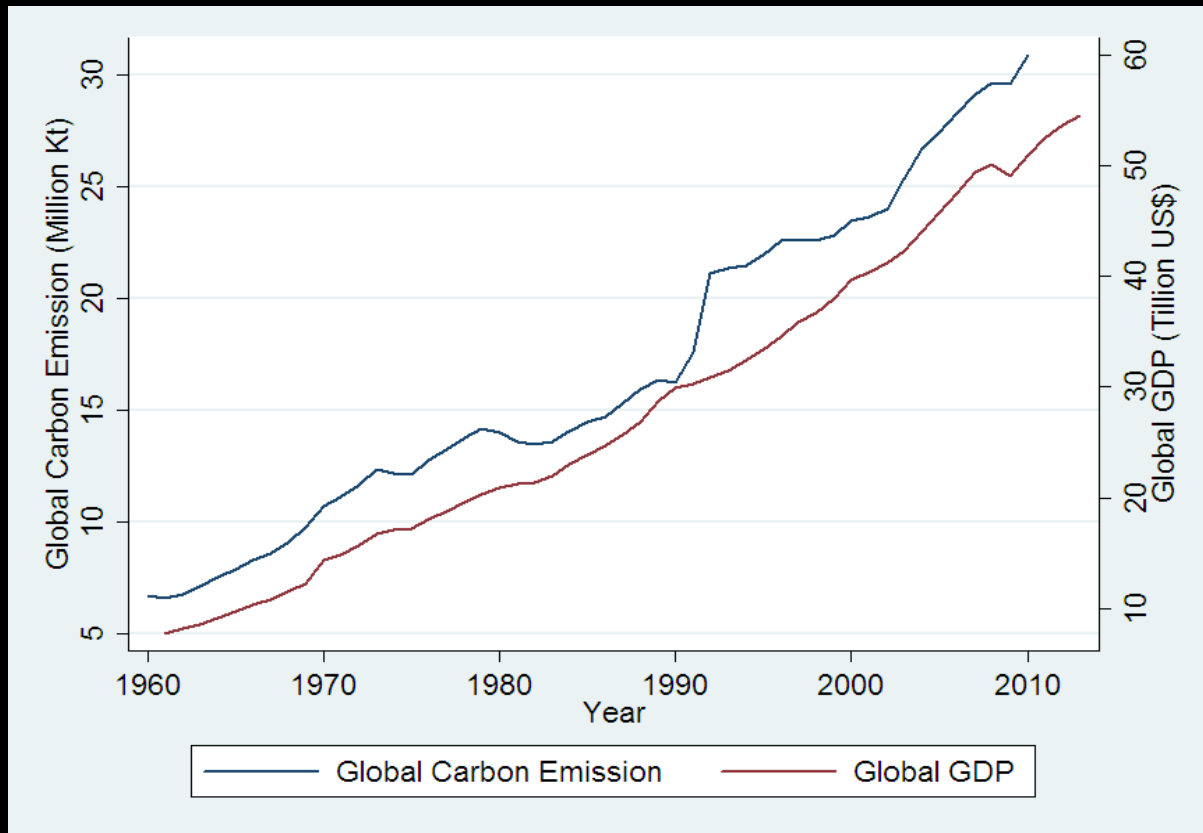
(The Economist, 4<sup>th</sup> may 2013)

Most of the world’s fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground, unburned, to keep global temperature rise to no more than 2°C.

Slogan: “Leave oil in the soil, coal in the hole, tar sands in the land, gas under the grass” (EJOLT, 2013)

Estimation: 88% of global coal reserves, 52% of gas reserves and 35% of oil reserves are unburnable and must be left in the ground (McGlade and Ekins, 2015).

# Global environmental impacts are directly related to the scale of the economy



# Renewable energies?

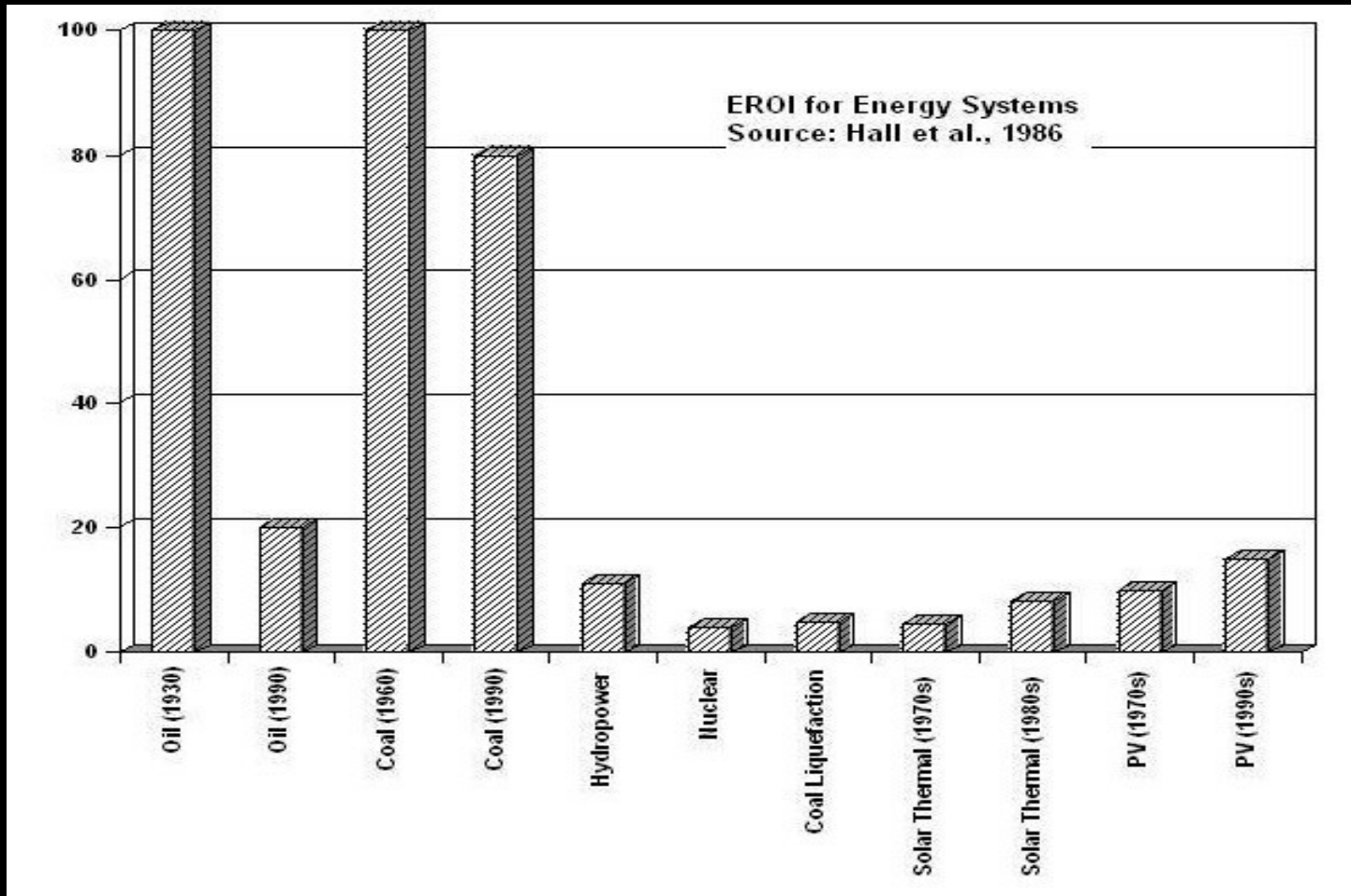


Figure from Murphy, D. J., & Hall, C. A. (2010). Year in review—EROI or energy return on (energy) invested. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*

# Efficiency?

Rebound effect (or Jevons' Paradox):

is the reduction in expected gains from new technologies that increase the efficiency of resource use, because of behavioral or other systemic responses.

e.g. Low-consumption bulbs (LCB)

The importance of systemic effects!

# Technological solutions?

- Carbon capture and storage;
- Agro-fuels;
- Hydrogen;
- Electric cars;
- Geo-Engineering (carbon dioxide removal and solar radiation management);
- ...

# Beyond the 'technological society'!

## Technology:

- Instead of it being subservient to humanity, "human beings have to adapt to it, and accept total change."
- It creates an artificial system which "eliminates or subordinates the natural world."
- It is a self-referential system that discovers what can be discovered for the sake of itself.

→ Technological society: a threat to human freedom (Ellul, 1964)

- Degrowth calls for the politicization of science and technology, against the increasing technocratization of politics.

See: Jacques Ellul (1964): "*La Technique: L'enjeu du siècle*" (In english: The technological society).



# Kevin Anderson

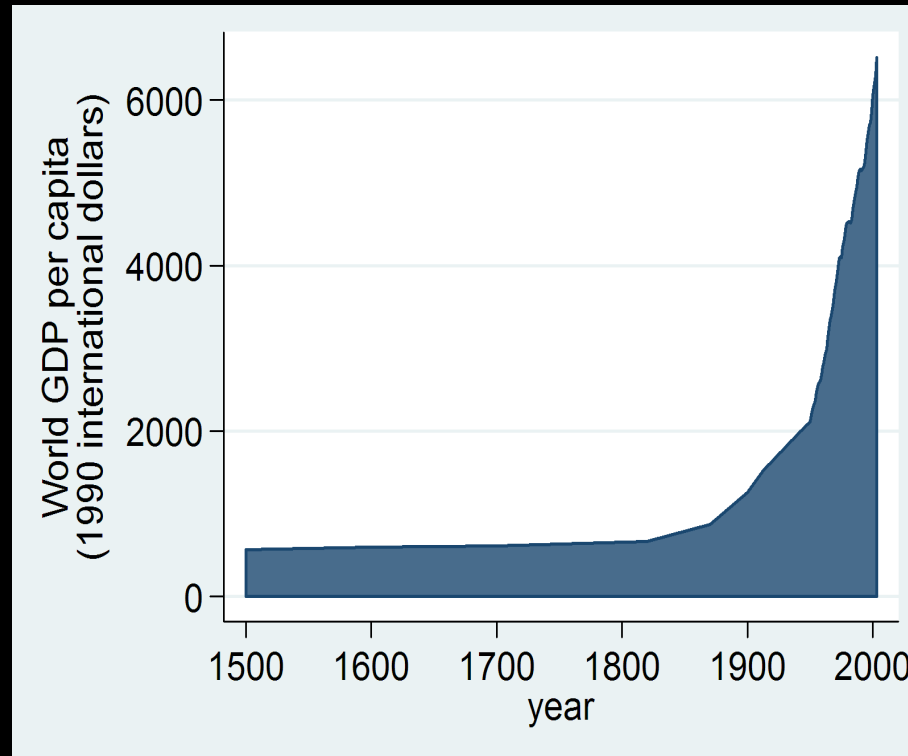
“Reducing emissions in line with 2°C does remain a viable goal [...]. But it begs immediate and profound political, economic and social questions; questions that undermine a decade of mathematically nebulous green-growth and win-win rhetoric.”

“Avoiding dangerous climate change demands de-growth strategies from wealthier nations”

Kevin Anderson

Climatologist, Deputy Director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research (UK).

Geometric growth is a recent phenomenon, an unreasonable goal that cannot be sustained forever



With 2% annual growth rate, an economy has to double in size every 35 years – the most ‘lethal’ of capitalism’s contradictions? (David Harvey)

# So what?

How do we move beyond the 'technological society'?

# Limits to growth

- Ecology;
- Happiness;
- Inequality;
- Poverty;
- GDP (Gross Domestic Product);
- Secular stagnation (low growth potential).

# The Degrowth alternative

- Question the hegemony of growth, a magic bullet.
- Green, dematerialized growth is implausible.
- Sustainable development is an oxymoron.

# The Degrowth alternative

Imagining and enacting alternative visions to modern growth-based development.

## DEFINITION:

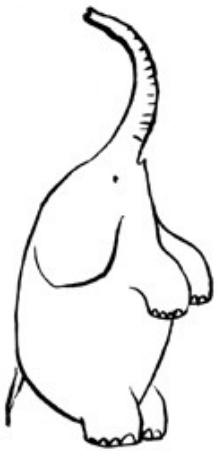
“Calls for a democratically led redistributive downscaling of production and consumption in industrialized countries as a means to achieve environmental sustainability, social justice and well being”

# Degrowth

Both a critique and alternative political project.

It is the hypothesis that we can live better with less.

It is possible to prosper without growth.



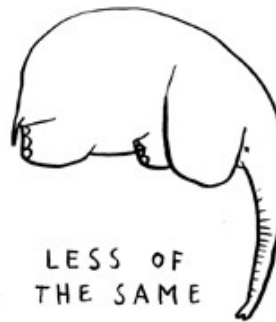
MORE OF  
THE SAME

GROWTH



SAME OF  
THE SAME

STATIONARY  
STATE



LESS OF  
THE SAME

RECESSION

DEGROWTH,  
SIMPLY  
DIFFERENT





# “Degrowth: A vocabulary for a new era” (EN: Routledge, 2015; ES & CAT: Icaria, 2015)

More than 10 foreign editions:



See: [vocabulary.degrowth.org](http://vocabulary.degrowth.org)

## 2. Prognosis

What can be done?

How?

Who is going to do it?

For whom?

# Multiple strategies and actors

- Research;
- Activism;
- Building alternatives;
- Education and dissemination;
- Policy making.

Supporters: from the Pope to David Harvey! :-)

# 10 'Degrowth' policy proposals

1. Citizen debt audit
  2. Work-sharing
  3. Basic and maximum income
  4. Green tax reform
  5. Stop subsidizing and investing in polluting activities
  6. Support the alternative, solidarity society
  7. Optimise the use of buildings
  8. Reduce advertising
  9. Establish environmental limits
  10. Abolish the use of GDP as indicator of economic progress
- A coherent package of mutually supportive measures

# Conclusions

1) Sustainable development and its more recent reincarnation “green growth” depoliticize genuine political antagonisms between alternative visions for the future.

They render environmental problems technical, promising win-win solutions and the impossible goal of perpetuating economic growth without harming the environment.

# Conclusions

# Merci!

GIACOMO D'ALISA, FEDERICO DEMARIA i GIORGOS KALLIS (eds.)

## Decreixement

Vocabulari per a una nova era

Pròleg d'Amaia Pérez Orozco

429

Icaria Antrazyt

Generalitat  
de Catalunya



«Quina meravella de vocabulari! Tota una gama d'autors internacionals analitzen l'emergent àmbit d'una economia que diu adéu a l'obsessió pel creixement»

Wolfgang Sachs

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# Gracias!

GIACOMO D'ALISA, FEDERICO DEMARIA y GIORGOS KALLIS (eds.)

## Decrecimiento

Vocabulario para una nueva era

Prólogo de Amaia Pérez-Orozco

427 Icaria Antrazyt



«¡Qué espléndido vocabulario! Toda una gama de autores internacionales analiza el emergente ámbito de una economía que dice adiós a la obsesión por el crecimiento»

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THE END