

Who Is Afraid Of Degrowth?

Content

Misunderstanding #1 page 01-04

Degrowth is not recession. It is not the antithesis of growth but its nemesis, a concept whose raison d'être is to dethrone a mode of thinking that sees everything as either a rise or a fall in GDP.

Sources: page 160

Misunderstanding #2 page 05-09

Degrowth is not miniature capitalism with tiny corporations, tiny speculative financial instruments, and tiny free trade agreements. It is an alternative system of provision - not just smaller and slower, but different.

Sources: page 160-161

Misunderstanding #3 page 10-14

Degrowth is not the end of INNOVATION but a shifting of innovative efforts from commodity problems (e.g. faster trading algorithms, ads, and drilling techniques) to community problems (e.g. local currencies, labour commons, and object-sharing networks).

Sources: page 162-163

Misunderstanding #4 page 15-20

Degrowth is not against human nature. Perhaps we are hard-wired to struggle for progress, but what constitutes "progress" is socially defined. More money is not a universal recipe to improve the human condition.

Sources: page 163-164

Misunderstanding #5 page 21-30

Degrowth is not deprivation. The reduction in consumption are not applicable in communities where the great majority of needs remain unmet. Downshifting mainly concerns the abnormal lifestyle of the polluter elite.

Sources: page 164-165

Misunderstanding #6 page 31-46

Degrowth doesn't reject technology but suggests that it must be democratically managed/controlled. Technology should be fit for a purpose determined outside of itself - tool, not master. Not everything that is technically possible is culturally desirable.

Sources: page 166-170

Misunderstanding #7 page 47-58

Degrowth is not reactionary. It just rejects a linear idea of Progress which holds that the future is always more desirable than the past. Degrowth is an active research for new forms of betterment.

Sources: page 171-174

Misunderstanding #8 page 59-80

Degrowth is not capitalism saving itself. Degrowth is anti-capitalist. Degrowth is a temporary phase to dismantle capitalism and reverse uneconomic growth. A transition at the end of which stands a well-being postgrowth economy that is smaller and slower but fits within its biocapacity.

Sources: page 174-178

Misunderstanding #9 page 81-122

Degrowth is not malthusian or authoritarian. Degrowth's core thrust – is a focus on global justice, criticises Malthusianism and rejects any kind of 'climate apartheid'. And if one understands degrowth as an emancipation from hierarchy and as a utopian aspiration for autonomy, then the term "authoritarian degrowth" is an oxymoron. Degrowth cannot be done to people but only by people.

Sources: page 179-193

Misunderstanding #10 page 123-158

Utopias are not blueprints or destinations but a compass. They are tools for criticism, opening doors to debates about problems that often didn't even have a name before. And seen in this light, it becomes clear that Utopia has always been the driving force of human development and history. The fact that it is haunted by reversals into its dark side or Dystopia, only helps to underscore that the utopian impulse is a process, a self correcting, critical mechanism, that aims for a better rather than a perfect world. Degrowth is utopian, and that's a good thing.

Sources: page 193-202

(Please download your digital copy of "Who Is Afraid Of Degrowth?" at celinekeller.com to see and use the sources, they are all clickable links.)