

ECOPOLITICS PODCAST: Additional Pedagogical Resources (Episode 11)

[Episode 11: Growth, Degrowth, Agrowth.](#)

Overview: What is the relationship between economic growth and the environment - and why is there so much debate about such a seemingly simple question? In this episode we hear Dr. Susan Paulson (University of Florida) and Dr. Bengi Akbulut (Concordia University) share their answers to this question, and more!

Key Takeaways

- There is a difference between economic growth and growth of material throughput, yet for much of recent history the two have been “intimately married, deeply inseparable” (Dr. Paulson, 02:23-03:07). This relationship is contributing to recent debates on the benefits or drawbacks of growth and its relationship with the environment.
- Degrowth scholars and advocates seek a repudiation of the ideology of “growthism”. They seek a world of abundance for the things we need, for *everyone*, and a measured reduction in all those material things that are not necessary globally. “There's no degrowth without addressing injustices” (Dr. Akbulut, 00:00-00:24).
- Capitalist growth has been rooted in inequality, including colonialism, racism, and other points of exploitation, that have benefited some countries and people over others.
- Addressing the climate crisis will require fundamental changes in values at the individual, community, and global level to decrease the use of materials, change cultural relations, achieve social justice, and ground our development policies in the care of people and the planet.

Discussion Questions

- How firmly entrenched is “growthism” within your own understanding of progress?
- Do you agree that growth presents a problem for the environment, or do you see potential for “green growth”?
- What do you think are the key obstacles to addressing the growth within your political community? Would ‘degrowth’ offer a viable political alternative to contemporary capitalist relations?
- Do you believe the degrowth premise that growth in the Global North stems from extraction and exploitation in the Global South? Why or why not?

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Learn more about our Guests

Dr. Susan Paulson

- <http://www.latam.ufl.edu/people/center-based-faculty/susan-paulson/>

Select articles, books, and videos

- **Paulson, Susan.** “Decolonizing Technology and Political Ecology Futures.” *Political Geography* 88 (2021): 102369–.
- **Paulson, Susan.** “Degrowth: Culture, Power and Change.” *Journal of Political Ecology*. 24, no. 1 (2017): 425–448.

Dr. Bengi Akbulut

- <https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/geography-planning-environment/faculty.html?fpid=bengi-akbulut>

Select articles, books, projects and videos

- **Akbulut, Bengi.** “Degrowth.” *Rethinking Marxism* 33, no. 1 (2021): 98–110.
- **Akbulut, Bengi,** and Fikret Adaman. “The Ecological Economics of Economic Democracy.” *Ecological Economics* 176 (2020): 106750–.

Explore resources mentioned in this episode:

- **Akbulut, Bengi.** “The ‘state’ of Degrowth: Economic Growth and the Making of State Hegemony in Turkey.” *Environment and Planning. E, Nature and Space. (Print)* 2, no. 3 (2019): 513–527.
- Environmental Justice Atlas <https://ejatlas.org/>
- Green New Deal Europe. <https://gnde.diem25.org/10-pillars/>
- Gorz, André. *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999.
- Kallis, Giorgos, **Susan Paulson**, Giacomo D’Alisa, and Federico Demaria. *The Case for Degrowth*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2021.
- Illich, Ivan. *Tools for Conviviality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- Pacto Ecosocial del Sur <https://pactoecosocialdelsur.com/>
- Parrique T., Barth J., Briens F., C. Kerschner, Kraus-Polk A., Kuokkanen A., Spangenberg J.H. “Decoupling Debunked: Evidence and Arguments Against Green Growth as a Sole Strategy for Sustainability.” *European Environment Bureau*. Report. PDF. July 8 2019. <https://mk0eeborgicuyptuf7e.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Decoupling-Debunked.pdf>
- Latouche, Serge, and David Macey. *Farewell to Growth*. English ed. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009.

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Learn more about Degrowth and Growth

- Büchs, Milena, and Max Koch. “Challenges for the Degrowth Transition: The Debate About Wellbeing.” *Futures: the Journal of Policy, Planning and Futures Studies*. 105 (2019): 155–165.
- Katz-Rosense, Ryan. “The Great Contradiction: An Illustrated Guide to the Growth-Environment Paradox.” *Alternatives Journal*. 43 (1): 63-65. 2017.
<https://cansee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/AJ-Issue.pdf>
- Singh, Neera M. “Environmental Justice, Degrowth and Post-Capitalist Futures.” *Ecological Economics*. 163 (2019): 138–142.

Learn more about Alternatives to Austerity

- Bargawi, Hannah, Giovanni Cozzi, and Susan Himmelweit (eds). *Economics and Austerity in Europe Gendered: Impacts and Sustainable Alternatives*. London: Routledge. 2016.
- Folbre, Nancy. *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: an Intersectional Political Economy*. Verso Books, 2021.