

JUS SEMPER NEWSLETTER

In Pursuit of the People and Planet Paradigm

Our Latest Publications on Building the New Paradigm of People and Planet

HIGHLIGHTS

JUS SEMPER Newsletter – Winter-Spring 2023

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Ecology and the Future of History
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— Thomas Wiedmann et al.



Human Well-being and climate change mitigation
Well-being approaches that focus on capabilities and human needs are better suited to inform climate change mitigation research than hedonistic or happiness approaches.
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Trees and the 'Net' Emissions Hoax
The trees of the forest, a natural paradise of complex plant engineering under the deception of 'net zero' emissions in the Amazon. The irreconcilable contradiction between the cycles of nature and the spiralling growth of capital.
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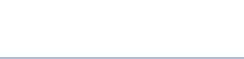
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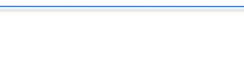
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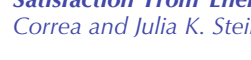
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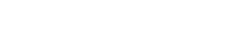
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meaningful sense. Humanity, according to this hegemonic view widely circulated in the 1990s, had reached its political-economic-ideological apex: there was no future beyond capitalism and liberalism.

Yet, a mere quarter of century after the celebration of the end of history in the permanence of the liberal order, humanity is confronted with a chain of catastrophic threats extending beyond anything it has experienced in the long course of its development—all arising from the laws of motion of capitalism. In the present epochal crisis, there are multiple dire threats to the world as a whole and to “the wretched of the earth” in particular—from economic stagnation in the capitalist core, to the planetary ecological rift, to the epidemiological threat represented by COVID-19, to the renewed imperialism directed at the Global South and the New Cold War with its growing threat of nuclear holocaust. All rational responses to this age of impending catastrophe point to the need for a global transformation aimed at surmounting capitalism’s laws of motion and promoting a world of sustainable human development, that is, socialism and ecology. As Karl Marx indicated in the nineteenth century, in those cases where capitalism leads to the ecological destruction of entire social formations and the extermination of the material basis of human existence, the choice left to working populations and their communities inevitably becomes one of “ruin or revolution.”

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THE LIMITS TO GROWTH: ECOSOCIALISM OR BARBARISM – Alberto Garzón Espinosa — We assess and review how capitalism is behind the ecological disorders and why the only democratic political solution to the ecosocial crisis is the ecosocialist project.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of *The Limits to Growth*. This report warned of the serious ecological consequences for industrial society of maintaining the trajectory of global economic activity. Half a century later, however, the situation has only worsened in terms of environmental pressure and impact, while ideologies and practices built around the fetish of economic growth have continued to expand. The scientific community warns that time is running out and that the only way to avoid an environmental collapse with catastrophic consequences, especially for the most vulnerable social sectors, is to rescale economic activity to a level compatible with the planet’s limits. Some international institutions and various national governments are approving programmes and policies to achieve these objectives, with meagre results. The alarm is growing at the possibility of a reactionary and eco-fascist solution to the eco-

social crisis. In this article, we assess the state of the question and review how the model of production and consumption is behind the ecological disorders and why the only democratic political solution to the ecosocial crisis is the ecosocialist project.



The Limits to Growth: Ecosocialism or Barbarism

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Introduction

It has now been fifty years since the scientist Donella Meadows led the publication of a report titled *The Limits to Growth*, which aimed to analyse the physical impacts of economic growth patterns on the planet. A computer model was used for the assessment, which looked at, among other things, the effect of economic exploitation on soils, the

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SCIENTISTS’ WARNING ON AFFLUENCE – Thomas Wiedmann, Manfred Lenzen, Lorenz T. Keyßer and Julia K. Steinberger — Affluence as a driver of environmental and social impacts — Systemic drivers and possible solutions.



Scientists’ Warning on Affluence

Thomas Wiedmann, Manfred Lenzen, Lorenz T. Keyßer and Julia K. Steinberger

Abstract

For over half a century, worldwide growth in affluence has continuously increased resource use and pollutant emissions far more rapidly than these have been reduced through better technology. The affluent citizens of the world are responsible for most environmental impacts and are central to any future prospect of retreating to safer environmental conditions. We summarise the evidence and present possible solution approaches. Any transition towards sustainability can only be effective if far-reaching lifestyle changes complement technological advancements. However, existing societies, economies and cultures foster consumption expansion and the structural imperative for growth in competitive market economies inhibits necessary societal change.

Introduction

Recent scientists’ warnings confirm alarming trends of environmental degradation from human activity, leading to profound changes in growing life-sustaining functions of planet Earth (1,2,3). The warnings warn that humanity has failed to find lasting solutions to these changes that pose existential threats to natural systems, economies and societies and call for action by governments and individuals.

The warnings aptly describe the problems, identify population, economic growth and affluence as drivers of unsustainable trends and acknowledge that humanity needs to reassess the role of growth-oriented economies and the



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HUMAN WELL-BEING AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION — William F. Lamb and Julia K. Steinberger — Well-being approaches that focus on capabilities and human needs are better suited to inform climate change mitigation research than hedonistic or happiness approaches.



Human well-being and climate change mitigation

William F. Lamb and Julia K. Steinberger

Abstract

Climate change mitigation research is fundamentally motivated by the preservation of human lives and the environmental conditions which enable them. However, the field has to date rather superficial in its appreciation of theoretical claims in well-being thought, with deep implications for the framing of mitigation priorities, policies, and research. Major strands of well-being thought are hedonic well-being—typically referred to as happiness or subjective well-being—and eudaemonic well-being, which includes theories of human needs, capabilities, and multidimensional poverty. Aspects of each can be found in political and philosophical accounts such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Situating these concepts within the challenges of addressing climate change, the choice of approach is highly consequential for: (1) understanding inter- and intra-generational equity; (2) defining appropriate mitigation strategies; and (3) conceptualising the socio-technical provisioning systems that convert biophysical resources into well-being outcomes. Eudaemonic approaches emphasise the importance of consumption thresholds, beyond which dimensions of well-being become saturated. Related strands of well-being and mitigation research suggest constraining consumption to within minimum and maximum consumption levels, inviting normative discussions on the social benefits, climate impacts, and political challenges associated with a given form of provisioning. The question of how current socio-technical provisioning systems can be shifted towards low-carbon, well-being enhancing forms constitutes



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TREES AND THE 'NET' EMISSIONS HOAX

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The trees of the forest, a natural paradise of complex plant engineering under the deception of 'net zero' emissions in the Amazon. The irreconcilable contradiction between the cycles of nature and the spiralling growth of capital.

Nubia Barrera Silva

"A tribute to his Majesty, the Tree, a marvellous creature of Mother Earth. In it, day by day, the miracle of photosynthesis and the reproduction of the cycle of life takes place. With its extermination, humanity disappears."

Introduction

The U.S., the European Union and China, the world's biggest polluters, have fallen far short of the commitments and targets in the climate change targets. These were to be achieved by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This is evidenced by the 1.1°C rise in global temperatures, the highest since the end of the 19th century. The climate policies of the North are driven by the rhetoric of energy transition and a return to fossil fuels. At the same time, in the Global South, countless corporations, environmental NGOs and private investment funds are scattered everywhere to plunder the natural world. Together they are selling carbon credits to third parties at higher prices, replacing fertile agricultural land with large-scale commercial monoculture tree plantations, and selling off land, water, air and photosynthesis as part of the definition of ecosystem services.

In the Pan-Amazonian region,¹ corporate policies of adaptation and mitigation to the climate crisis have updated old mechanisms of ethnic-peasant eviction from their territories and accelerated the destruction of vegetation cover, and native trees, including ecosystems and biodiversity as a whole. After COP27, green capitalism has swept through tropical rainforests and natural reserves for the conservation of biodiversity, as well as the oceans, water, air and photosynthesis. Among the legal instruments, the concession, another form of deterritorialisation of indigenous peoples, occupies a privileged place. This is defined as the act or effect of granting, making available, and making accessible consent or permission. This is the case of the Fundo or Fecho de Pasto communities, who are confronted with concessions in defence of their customary rights by supporting the notion of dispossession established in colonial times with renewed exploitative tools. Capital accords with local governments, its unconditional accomplices in the fragmented surrender of every component of the majestic Amazon forest to financialised capital.

¹ It is made up of 17 countries: Brazil, Venezuela, French Guiana, English Guiana, Suriname, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

² Jus Semper 2022, 11-19 October 2022, Jus Semper 11-19

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From the Pan-Amazon region, we ask ourselves, will the trees at the top of plant evolution survive the sixth extinction of humanity? We do not know, but we are sure that extinction announces and also forewarns us about what to do about the coming eco-social instabilities in the making. For more than fifty years, a conflict between industrial societies and nature's biophysical limits has been predicted to engulf the Global South. We are at a turning point. Projections are distorted, and politicians are confused and make decisions contrary to the demands of their citizens in the face of an avalanche of unexpected climatic, environmental and social events. In these scenarios, the only possible reality is uncertainty. Hence sooner rather than later, rebellions will be the order of the day.

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URBAN COMMONS AND COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE — Johan Colding, Stephan Barthel, Robert Ljung, Felix Eriksson and Stefan Sjöberg



Urban Commons and Collective Action to Address Climate Change

Johan Colding, Stephan Barthel, Robert Ljung, Felix Eriksson and Stefan Sjöberg

Abstract

Climate change and the coupled loss of ecosystem services pose major collective action problems in that all individuals would benefit from better cooperation to address these problems but conflicting interests and/or incomplete knowledge discourage joint action. Adopting an inductive and multi-layered approach, drawing upon the authors' previous research on urban commons, we here summarise key insights on environmentally oriented urban commons and elaborate on what role

We deal with three types of urban commons, i.e., "urban green commons," "coworking spaces," and "community climate commons." They have in instigating climate-proofing activities in urban areas. We deal with three types of urban commons, i.e., "urban green commons," "coworking spaces," and "community climate commons." We describe how allotment gardens, community gardens, and other types of urban green commons contribute to environmental learning that may boost understanding of environmental issues and which constitute important learning arenas for climate-change mitigation and adaptation. We also deal with the newly emerging phenomenon of coworking spaces that share many essential institutional attributes of urban commons and which can work for climate-change mitigation through the benefits provided by a sharing economy and through reduction of domestic transportation and commuting distance. Community climate commons represent commons where local communities can mobilise together to create shared low-carbon assets and which hold the potential to empower

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by identifying some critical determinants for the up-scaling of environmentally oriented urban commons.

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TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WORKING AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES —

Samir Amir and Firoze Manji — *The last written words of Comrade Samir Amin (2018)*



Toward the Formation of a Transnational Alliance of Working and Oppressed Peoples

Shortly before his death on August 12, 2018, Samir Amin, working together with Firoze Manji, prepared a document he hoped would be widely circulated. His aim was to initiate the building of a transnational alliance that was both radical and enabled a diversity of perspectives. Amin's friends have commenced an international conversation to that end. With the intent of furthering that nascent project, and in boundless appreciation of his invaluable contributions to Monthly Review over many decades, we present the last written words of our comrade Samir Amin.

—The Editors

Samir Amir and Firoze Manji

1

For the last thirty years, the world system has undergone an extreme centralisation of power in all its dimensions—local and international, economic and military, social and cultural.

Some thousand giant corporations and some hundreds of financial institutions, which have formed cartels among themselves, have reduced national and globalised production systems to the status of subcontractors. In this way, the financial oligarchies appropriate a growing share of the profits from labor and from companies that have been transformed into rent producers for their own exclusive benefit.

Having domesticated the main right-wing and left-wing parties, as

well as the unions and organisations of so-called civil society, these oligarchies now also exercise absolute political power. They exercise power over the media that is subordinated to them, creating the necessary disinformation to depoliticise public opinion. The oligarchies have



Signature: 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall'

workers and peoples' internationalism opens up ways to further evolutions that are necessary and possible.

An alliance of all working peoples of the world, including all wage earners of the services, peasants, farmers, and the peoples oppressed by modern capitalism, must be founded on other new principles.

Comrades, we call on your sense of historical responsibility. This meeting could help identify the conditions for achieving new revolutionary socialist advances (taking stock of the lessons of past revolutions). In the absence of such progress, the world will continue to be ruled by chaos, barbarian practices, and the destruction of the earth.

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FROM PLANETARY TO SOCIETAL BOUNDARIES: AN ARGUMENT FOR COLLECTIVELY DEFINED SELF-LIMITATION —

Ulrich Brand et al



From Planetary to Societal Boundaries: an argument for collectively defined self-limitation

Ulrich Brand, Barbara Muraca, Eric Pineault, Marlyne Sahakian, Anke Schaffartzik, Andreas Novy, Christoph Streissler, Helmut Haberl, Viviana Asara, Kristina Dietz, Miriam Lang, Ashish Kothari, Tone Smith, Clive Spash, Alina Brada, Melanie Pichler, Christina Plank, Giorgos Velegrakis, Thomas Jahn, Angela Carter, Qingzhi Huan, Giorgos Kallis, Joan Martinez Alier, Gabriel Riva, Vishwas Satgar, Emiliano Teran Mantovani, Michelle Williams, Markus Wissen and Christoph Gorg

Abstract

The planetary boundaries concept has profoundly changed the vocabulary and representation of global environmental issues. We bring a critical social science perspective to this framework through the notion of societal boundaries and aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the social nature of thresholds. We start by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of planetary boundaries from a social science perspective. We then focus on capitalist societies as a heuristic for discussing the expansionary dynamics, power relations, and lock-ins of modern societies that impel highly unsustainable societal relations with nature. While formulating societal boundaries implies a controversial process - based on normative judgments, ethical concerns, and socio-political struggles - it has the potential to offer guidelines for a just, social-ecological transformation. Collective autonomy and the politics of self-limitation are key elements of societal



Photo from USGS in Landsat

TBCARep/SD 0111 October 2022, Ulrich Brand (Ed.)

implies a controversial process - based on normative judgments, ethical concerns, and socio-political struggles - it has the potential to offer guidelines for a just, social-ecological transformation. Collective autonomy and the politics of self-limitation are key elements of societal boundaries and are linked to important proposals and pluriverse experiences to integrate well-being and boundaries. The role of the state and propositions for radical alternative approaches to well-being have particular importance. We conclude with reflections on social freedom, defined as the right not to live at others' expense. Toward the aim of defining boundaries through transdisciplinary and democratic processes, we seek to open a dialogue on these issues

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EXPLORING DEGROWTH POLICY PROPOSALS: A SYSTEMATIC MAPPING WITH THEMATIC SYNTHESIS —

Nick Fitzpatrick, Timothée Parrique and Inès Cosme



Exploring degrowth policy proposals: A systematic mapping with thematic synthesis

Nick Fitzpatrick, Timothée Parrique and Inès Cosme

Abstract

Degrowth – the planned and democratic reduction of production and consumption as a solution to the social-ecological crises – is slowly making its way to the sphere of policy-making. But there is a problem: proposals are scattered through a voluminous literature, making it difficult for decision-makers to pinpoint the concrete changes associated with the idea of degrowth. To address this issue, we conducted a systematic mapping of the degrowth literature from 2005 to 2020 using the RepOrting standards for Systematic Evidence Syntheses (ROSES) methodology. Out of a total of 1166 texts (articles, books, book chapters, and student theses) referring to degrowth, we identified 446 that include specific policy proposals. This systematic counting of policies led to a grand total of 530 proposals (50 goals, 100 objectives, 380 instruments), which makes it the most exhaustive degrowth policy agenda ever presented. To render this toolbox more accessible, we divided it into 13 policy themes – food, culture and education, energy and environment, governance and geopolitics, indicators, inequality, finance, production and consumption, science and technology, tourism, trade, urban planning, and work – systematically making the difference between goals, objectives, and instruments. Following this, we assess the precision, frequency, quality, and diversity of this agenda, reflecting on how the degrowth policy toolbox has been evolving until today.



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TBCARep/SD 0110 November 2022 / N. Fitzpatrick et al.

For the last thirty years, the world system has undergone an extreme centralisation of power in all its dimensions—local and international, economic and military, social and cultural. Representative democracy, having lost all its meaning, has also lost its legitimacy. Late contemporary capitalism matches all the criteria of totalitarianism. The glorification of competitiveness and the freedom of the market, which the subservient media present as the freedom and efficiency of civil society, are in fact the antitheses of the actual situation.

Membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (which is inextricably linked to the construction of Europe) and the militarisation of Japan reflect the requirement of this new collective imperialism that has taken over the national imperialisms. The ecological devastation that is necessarily associated with capitalist expansion reinforces the reasons why this system is not viable.

There is no alternative other than that enabled by a renewal of an international radical left... There is no alternative in Europe, as elsewhere, to the setting up of national, popular, and democratic projects (not bourgeois, indeed antibourgeois) that will begin the delinking from imperialist globalisation. The hypothesis of a

The planetary boundaries concept has profoundly changed the vocabulary and representation of global environmental issues. We bring a critical social science perspective to this framework through the notion of societal boundaries and aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the social nature of thresholds. We start by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of planetary boundaries from a social science perspective. We then focus on capitalist societies as a heuristic for discussing the expansionary dynamics, power relations, and lock-ins of modern societies that impel highly unsustainable societal relations with nature. While formulating societal boundaries

Degrowth – the planned and democratic reduction of production and consumption as a solution to the social-ecological crises – is slowly making its way to the sphere of policy-making. But there is a problem: proposals are scattered through a voluminous literature, making it difficult for decision-makers to pinpoint the concrete changes associated with the idea of degrowth. To address this issue, we conducted a systematic mapping of the degrowth literature from 2005 to 2020 using the RepOrting standards for Systematic Evidence Syntheses (ROSES) methodology. Out of a total of 1166 texts (articles, books, book chapters, and student theses) referring to degrowth, we identified 446 that include specific policy

proposals. This systematic counting of policies led to a grand total of 530 proposals (50 goals, 100 objectives, 380 instruments), which makes it the most exhaustive degrowth policyagenda ever presented. To render this toolbox more accessible, we divided it into 13 policy themes – food, culture and education, energy and environment, governance and geopolitics, indicators, inequality, finance, production and consumption, science and technology, tourism, trade, urban planning, and work – systematically making the difference between goals, objectives, and instruments. Following this, we assess the precision, frequency, quality, and diversity of this agenda, reflecting on how the degrowth policy toolbox has been evolving until today.

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF U.S. SYSTEMIC MILITARISM — James M. Cypher



The Political Economy of U.S. Systemic Militarism

James M. Cypher

After what seems a couple of decades of near quietude, Dwight Eisenhower's *bête noire*, the military-industrial complex, is again fashionable. We see it in the 2021 outpouring of articles and books, a (now rare) U.S. Senate hearing, and even an extended encyclopaedia entry.¹ A more accurate and meaningful term, which could lead the inquisitive to the structural roots of U.S. militarism, would be the industrial-military-congressional complex. Nonetheless, it must come as some relief to those who leverage the Pentagon, and did so with the better-named U.S. Department of War (1789–1947), that the focus is on the military in the first instance and not on the industrial interests that usually determine (or steer) the larger dynamics of procurement, geostrategic diplomacy, and military strategy.² An adequate encapsulation is the iron triangle, with (1) military contractor corporations forming one side (the base) of the equilateral triangle; (2) the military forces, intelligence agencies, expedition-ready National Guard units, mercenary private security companies, and veteran organisations forming another side; and (3) the civilian national security state (headed by the chief executive, the secretary of state, the National Security Council, congressional members of key arms and security committees, NASA, and military-/contractor-funded but seemingly independent Washington DC think tanks) on the remaining side. The complex interdependent dynamics of the iron triangle take form as strategy, political-economy factors, and international affairs shift and drift—with constant, but varying, pressure (particularly from its base and both sides) to expand the resources it commands.



T.S. Madden. *Cartoon* by Chris Madden. *Chris Madden* © 2021.

¹ John Allen, "The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, ed. William R. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Andrew Cockburn, *The Spies of War: Aves, Profits and the American War Machine* (London: Verso, 2021); William Harteis, "Profile of War: Corporate Beneficiaries of the Post-9/11 Pentagon Spending Surge," *Waste Institute of International Affairs*, Brown University, September 13, 2021; Enrico Moretti, *Climate Change and the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2021); Adam Noss, "The New Age of American Power," *New Statesman* (2021): 24–31; "Waste, Fraud, Cost Overruns, and Auditing at the Pentagon," *Senate Hearing* 117–46, *Before the Comm. on the Budget*, 117th Cong., 1 (2021).

² James Cypher, "Military Spending in the Swampland," *Dollars & Sense* (2017): 25–30.

TSCA/NSD #1121 November 2022 James M. Cypher

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POPULATION IN THE IPCC'S NEW MITIGATION REPORT — Philip Cafaro

A new IPCC climate change mitigation report confirms that population increase and economic growth are the main drivers of today's historically high greenhouse gas emissions. But that scientific information has been censored and removed from the Summary for Policymakers distributed to the world's press and the public. Does a problem disappear if we don't mention it?



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Last April, Working Group II's contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change came out. This "mitigation report" summarizes the recent scientific literature on the causes of climate change and current emissions trends. It also assesses humanity's options to limit future climate change and the possible environmental impacts of different policies going forward.

A recent opinion piece in *The Guardian* titled "Scientists have just told us how to solve the climate crisis – will the world listen?" calls the AR6 mitigation report "a major leap forward compared to previous reports." "Climate scientists have just pulled off a truly impressive achievement," Simon Lewis writes. "They have stood firm and persuaded the world's governments to agree to a common goal to solve the climate emergency." This might seem unduly optimistic, given that the report states clearly that humanity is on pace to increase average global temperatures by 3° to 4° C by the end of

¹ IPCC, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, April 2022.

² Simon Lewis, "Scientists have just told us how to solve the climate crisis – will the world listen?" *The Guardian*, 6 April 2022.

TSCA/NSD #1044 December 2022 Philip Cafaro

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PARADISE LOST?—THE IRON CAGE OF CONSUMERISM — Tim Jackson — *Our systematic failure to address existential anxiety robs society of meaning and blinds us to the suffering of others; to persistent poverty; to the extinction of species; to the health of global ecosystems. With this think piece.*



Paradise Lost? — The iron cage of consumerism

Our systematic failure to address existential anxiety robs society of meaning and blinds us to the suffering of others; to persistent poverty; to the extinction of species; to the health of global ecosystems. With this think piece, Tim Jackson adds to an eclectic set of essays, published in honour of Wolfgang Sachs.

Tim Jackson

Society is faced with a profound dilemma. To resist economic growth is to court economic and social collapse. To pursue it relentlessly is to endanger the ecosystems on which we depend for long-term survival. For the most part, this dilemma goes unrecognised in government policy. It is only marginally more visible as a public debate. When reality begins to impinge on the collective consciousness, the best suggestion to hand is that we can somehow 'decouple' growth from its material impacts. And continue to do so while the economy expands exponentially.

The sheer scale of action implied by this strategy is daunting. In a world of 9 billion people all aspiring to western lifestyles, the carbon intensity of every dollar of output must be at least 130 times lower in 2050 than it is today. By the end of the century, economic activity will need to be taking carbon out of the atmosphere not adding to it. (Jackson 2009, Chapter 5).

TSCA/NSD #1118 December 2022/Tim Jackson

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Simplistic assumptions that capitalism's propensity for efficiency will solve all the problems of ecological damage and resource scarcity are almost literally bankrupt. We now stand in urgent need of a clearer vision, braver policy-making, something more robust in the way of a strategy with which to confront the dilemma of growth. This is the challenge to which Wolfgang Sachs has dedicated his remarkable energy and much of his life's work.

My aim in this short article is to address one aspect of this challenge: the role that anxiety – and our responses to it – play in consumer

nature. Rather than stopping with a mere antithesis (as in most contemporary “post” conceptions), the object was the supersession of those material conditions of the capitalist mode of production that had made Enlightenment humanism the paradigmatic form of bourgeois thought. This radical rejection of bourgeois humanism was integrated with the critique of colonialism, where capitalism was seen as walking “naked” abroad, exposing its full barbarism. In this regard, Marx’s revolutionary response to Enlightenment humanism helped inspire the later critiques by such anticolonial thinkers as W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, and Aimé Césaire, all of whom called for the development of a “new humanism.”

Recent research into the ecological foundations of Marx’s thought, particularly his conception of the metabolism of humanity and nature mediated by social production, has brought out more fully the depth and complexity of Marx’s overall critique of capitalism’s alienated social metabolism. This line of investigation demonstrates that, far from being anthropocentric, or succumbing to the Enlightenment notion of the conquest of nature, his vision encompassed the wider realm of what he called “the universal metabolism of nature.” This included an appreciation of other life forms and his critique of environmental destruction in his famous theory of metabolic rift, giving rise to what can be called a revolutionary ecological perspective.

Post-humanist (including so-called new-materialist) thinkers have recently sought to challenge Marx’s metabolic vision and revolutionary ecology in general by promoting a phantom-like world of “dark ecology,” hyperobjects, and vitalistic forces. However, such irrationalist views, as we shall see, invariably fail to address the fundamental criterion of the philosophy of praxis: the object is to change the world, not simply to reinterpret it.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS OF MONTHLY REVIEW ON THE CAPITALINIAN AGE — John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark

Our article on the relation of capitalism to the Anthropocene, “The Capitalinian: The First Geological Age of the Anthropocene,” was directed at the question of how to characterise the current geological age of Earth history. In recent years, scientists have proposed that the Holocene Epoch of the last 11,700 years should be seen as having been succeeded by the Anthropocene Epoch, reflecting the fact that anthropogenic (as opposed to non-anthropogenic) forces now constitute the dominant factors in Earth System change and lie behind the planetary ecological crisis.

However, the designation of the Anthropocene Epoch within the Geological Time Scale, though still not officially approved by the International Union of Geological Sciences, means that we are now not only in a new geological epoch, but also in a new geological age, since every epoch has a number of ages nested within it.



Notes from the Editors of Monthly Review on “The Capitalinian: The First Geological Age of the Anthropocene”

A Statement by John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark

Our article on the relation of capitalism to the Anthropocene, “The Capitalinian: The First Geological Age of the Anthropocene,” published in the October 2021 issue of Monthly Review, was directed at the question of how to characterise the current geological age of Earth history. In recent years, scientists have proposed that the Holocene Epoch of the last 11,700 years should be seen as having been succeeded by the Anthropocene Epoch, reflecting the fact that anthropogenic (as opposed to non-anthropogenic) forces now constitute the dominant factors in Earth System change and lie behind the planetary ecological crisis. However, the designation of the Anthropocene Epoch within the Geological Time Scale, though still not officially approved by the International Union of Geological Sciences, means that we are now not only in a new geological epoch, but also in a new geological age, since every epoch has a number of ages nested within it.



Photo by Ben Riley. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/industrial-structure-1389722/>

↑ John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark, “The Capitalinian: The First Geological Age of the Anthropocene,” — The Jus Semper Global Alliance, October 2021. <https://www.jussemper.org/2021/10/21/the-capitalinian-the-first-geological-age-of-the-anthropocene/>

In our article, we proposed that the first geological age of the Anthropocene Epoch, following the Meghalayan Age—the last age of the Holocene—be named the Capitalinian Age, reflecting the fact that it is the capitalist system in its mature phase of globalised monopoly capitalism that has given rise to the current anthropogenic rift in the Earth System. This framework was subsequently carried forward in a new book by one of us (John Bellamy Foster, *Capitalism in the Anthropocene* [Monthly Review Press, 2022]) and in our article “Socialism and Ecological Survival,” published in the 2 July–August 2022 issue of Monthly Review.

Unknown to us when developing this analysis, Carles Soriano, a geologist and volcanologist at Geosciences Barcelona (part of the Spanish National Research Council, or CSIC), in a 2020 *Geologica Acta* article titled “On the Anthropocene Formalisation and the Proposal by the Anthropocene Working Group,” had already introduced—prior to our discussion of the Capitalinian—the notion of the “Capitalinian as a Stage of the Anthropocene Epoch.” In this article, Soriano argues that this designation is necessary to ensure that “a truly comprehensive understanding of Earth history is obtained, which comprises the ultimate causes of the ongoing planetary transformation and its stratigraphic expression.”

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ANTHROPOCENE, CAPITALOCENE, AND OTHER “-CENES” — Carles Soriano — Why a Correct Understanding of Marx’s Theory of Value Is Necessary to Leave the Planetary Crisis



Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Other “-Cenes”

Why a Correct Understanding of Marx’s Theory of Value Is Necessary to Leave the Planetary Crisis

Carles Soriano

The perception that we are living in a critical historical period regarding the conditions of habitability on Earth—not only for humans but for many other living organisms too—is gaining more and more adepts among common people, academics, politicians, and social movements. This critical period has been typified as the planetary crisis of the Anthropocene Epoch and studies undertaken in the present century show that habitability on Earth is progressively deteriorating.¹ There is an increasing perception too, though more restricted, of the close relation between the ongoing habitability crisis and today’s global capitalist society. This perception is based more on intuition and on the historical correspondence of planetary crisis indicators with the capitalist mode of social production than on scientific studies showing that the crisis is a structural necessity of capital reproduction. As a result, a number of alternative terms to the Anthropocene have been coined to name the present historical period. Although terms such as *Plantationocene*, *Chthulucene*, *Growthocene*, *Econocene*, *Pyrocene*, *Necrocene*, and so on may have a provocative scope, it is also true that they are based on an incomplete understanding of the ongoing crisis. Among the alternatives to the Anthropocene, Capitalocene is the term



Photo by Ben Riley. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/industrial-structure-1389722/>

↑ John Ricketts et al., “A Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Nature* 461, no. 7274 (2009): 472–75; Will Steffen, Worthy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Chren Gaffney, and Corinna Lelland, “The Trajectory of the Anthropocene,” *The Anthropocene Review* 2, no. 1 (2015): 81–98; Corey J. A. Bradshaw et al., “Understanding the Challenges of a Chilly Future,” *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 13 (2021).

TBCA00000001 01/10/2023 Carles Soriano

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In this contribution, I undertake a critical analysis of the current terms for the ongoing

contribute massive human and environmental “resources” to support an export-oriented economy. The term dual circulation strategy, apparently giving equal importance to the two strategies, in essence means adding “domestic circulation” to the four-decade-long prominence of “external circulation.”

However, if this strategy of turning inward is compelled by hostilities and instabilities in the external world, it would vacillate depending on external factors. It does not necessarily mean a self-chosen turn to self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and a proactive path of “delinking” from the impositions of the United States and its allies. If the shift is to be made toward “internal circulation” based on “delinking” from the hegemony and impositions of the United States and its allies, a major reversal of the four decades of export-oriented economic development will need to be carried out. For China and the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries to pursue a path of autonomy and delinking from the U.S.-dominated capitalism, and capitalism itself, radical alternative approaches could and should be con-templated. COVID-19 with its ghastly impacts was unthinkable before December 2019. If over 90 percent of airplanes can be grounded, if extensive human activities can be suspended under lockdowns, though involuntarily, it is also possible to take a path of active (not passive) individual, collective, and systemic changes to meet the challenges of climate collapse.

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PANOPTICON — Michael D. Yates — *The panopticon is a disciplinary concept brought to life in the form of a central observation tower placed within a circle of prison cells. From the tower, a guard can see every cell and inmate, but the inmates can't see into the tower. Prisoners will never know whether or not they are being watched. This was introduced by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. It was a manifestation of his belief that power should be visible and unverifiable. Through this seemingly constant surveillance, Bentham believed all groups of society could be altered. Morals would be reformed, health preserved, industry invigorated, and so on—they were all subject to observation*

Capitalism's two main underpinnings are control and exploitation/expropriation. There are many sites of control: school, religion, laws, media. These are all generally supportive of the interests of capital, namely, the endless drive to accumulate wealth. They all help to ensure that we behave so that the system continues to reproduce itself. Since workplaces are the sites where profits are extracted from our labor, it is here that control is most critical. From capitalism's birth a few hundred years ago, successive efforts by business owners to command the labor process have given rise to

what can be called managerial control mechanisms.



Panopticon

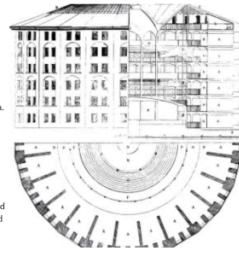
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1 • “Ethics Explainer: The Panopticon,” Ethics Centre, July 18, 2017.
TDCAR04970 0000 October 2022 Michael D. Yates

Managerial control aims to create a labor process in which the one active element, human labor power, is as limited as possible in its ability to interfere with capital accumulation. Businesses want the same predictability that can be expected from machines. If X-amount of labor power is hired, then Y-amount of output will be produced. This formula implies that workers must be conceived as machine-like parts that are combined with other inanimate entities to yield the product. How could this be anything but alienating? It is profoundly anti-human. It is not just that employers exploit labor. Rather, they consume workers, and in the process, deaden them. And when no more can be taken by capital, shells of human beings are simply disposed of, and fresh new ones put to work.

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CHALLENGES FOR THE DEGROWTH TRANSITION: THE DEBATE ABOUT WELLBEING — Milena Büchsa and Max Koch

In Degrowth scholars and activists have convincingly argued that degrowth in developed nations will need to be part of a global effort to tackle climate change, and to preserve the conditions for future generations' basic needs satisfaction. However, the barriers to building a broader degrowth movement appear to be very entrenched at present. To improve the political feasibility of degrowth it is important to better understand these structural obstacles and develop arguments and strategies to address them. To contribute to the degrowth debate we focus in this paper on current

generations in rich countries and their concerns about possible short- to medium term wellbeing outcomes of degrowth. In particular, we highlight the ‘growth lock-in’ of current societies and how a transition away from this model might therefore affect wellbeing. We also argue that taking the basic human needs framework as a new ‘measuring rod’ for wellbeing outcomes is suitable for a degrowth context, but likely to clash with people's current expectations of ever improving health and wellbeing outcomes. We propose that deliberative forums on future needs satisfaction can help establish a ‘dialogue’ between current and future generations which could support cultural shifts on wellbeing thinking which will be much needed for advancing the cause for degrowth.



Challenges for the degrowth transition: The debate about wellbeing

Milena Büchsa and Max Koch

Abstract

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TDCAR04970 0122 October 2022 M. Büchsa - M. Koch

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A FRAMEWORK FOR DECOUPLING HUMAN NEED SATISFACTION FROM ENERGY USE — Lina I. Brand-Correa and Julia K. Steinberger

Welfare Climate change poses great challenges to modern societies, central amongst which is to decouple human need satisfaction from energy use. Energy systems are the main source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the services provided by energy (such as heating, power, transport and lighting) are vital to support human development. To address this challenge, we advocate for an eudaemonic need-centred understanding of human wellbeing, as opposed to hedonic subjective views of well-being. We also argue for a shift in the way we analyse energy demand, from energy throughput to energy services. By adopting these perspectives on either end of the wellbeing-energy spectrum, a “double

decoupling” potential can be uncovered. We present a novel analytic framework and showcase several methodological approaches for analysing the relationship between, and decoupling of, energy services and human needs. We conclude by proposing future directions of research in this area based on the analytic framework.



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Photo by David Johnson in Unsplash

Introduction

Human societies require materials and energy for their activities, and these biophysical requirements (known as “social metabolism”) have been increasing with population, economic growth and technological demands (Graumann et al., 2020). The extent of global social metabolism is such that, during the last century, the physical scale of energy and

TSCA#esp50 (124 October 2022) L. Brand-Correa - J. Steinberger

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WE ONLY HAVE ONE PLANET—DEFENDING IT WILL REQUIRE COLLECTIVE MEASURES — João Pedro Stedile

The Brazilian people and Latin Americans more generally are already suffering serious consequences from climate change and environmental crimes. The current destructive dimension of capitalism leads to far-reaching consequences. Millions of hectares of the Amazon and other biomes have experienced deforestation, been burned, and converted into agribusiness land every year. Agribusiness releases millions of litres of pesticides into the environment annually, poisoning the soil, water, and human beings. Mining is taking over vast territories, overexploiting mineral assets, with immense repercussions, including dam failures and contamination by heavy metals.

Climate change is already a reality. It has altered the conditions of food production across our continent. There are long periods of drought, as well as shorter periods without rain at decisive moments for what has been planted. Rain is concentrated and often associated with frosts and windstorms that destroy many crops.

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In cities, droughts turn into a water crisis and concentrated rains lead to deaths and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, always disproportionately impacting the working class. Many popular and environmental leaders who defend their territories from this dynamic of exploitation are murdered. In short, we are living through a chaotic period, with worsening environmental living conditions.



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TSCA#esp50 (1003 November 2022) João Pedro Stedile



Activists, Indigenous people and youth from Brasília for Future Belém protest against the fires in the Amazon, Pantanal and the Cerrado as part of the global climate strike day of Action. Credit: S33499

We need to contribute to organising the working class, peasants, young people, women, students, religious people—in short, all working people—to carry out great mass mobilisations and fight in defence of our lives, the life of the planet, and the well-being of humanity. Time is short. Without mass struggle, there will be no change.

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FILOPONIA, A DISTINCTIVE ECONOMIC MODEL — Andrea Surbone

Ultimately, a viable and congruous model, first and foremost for the environment and social inequality, debt relief; a viable operational proposal for sustainable anthropogenesis and diffuse capital, all make Filoponia both a model in its own right, outside the dualism between private and collective capital and thus a true, complete and real alternative. safe and just targets for all people and how the global-scale targets can be translated to targets for actors at other scales will be explored.



Filoponia, a distinctive economic model An introspective open letter to humanity

Ultimately, a viable and congruous model, first and foremost for the environment and social inequality, debt relief, a viable operational proposal for sustainable anthropogenesis and diffuse capital, all make Filoponia both a model in its own right, outside the dualism between private and collective capital and thus a true, complete and real alternative. Andrea Surbone – Filoponia



Anonymous, "The Ideal City", second hall of the 15th century.

Andrea Surbone

Dear friend, I am writing to you, and I do so to tell you how I arrived at a different economic model in its own right, especially concerning the dualism between private and collective capital. And then, I do so to explain to you how I arrived at it (and how I arrived at it, despite the fact that I only have a bachelor's degree): knowing the genesis

1. Incipit of L'anno che venì ([https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/L'anno_che_venì_\(brano_musicale\)](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/L'anno_che_venì_(brano_musicale))), a song by Lucio Dalla from 1978. In Italy, this intro is very famous and refers to the concept of an open letter on the social situation. The text here: <https://lyricstranslate.com/lyrics-che-venì-coming-year.html>

TSCA#esp50 (121 December 2022) Andrea Surbone

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DECENT LIVING STANDARDS: MATERIAL PREREQUISITES FOR HUMAN WELLBEING Narasimha D. Rao and Jihoon Mi



Decent Living Standards: Material Prerequisites for Human Wellbeing

Narasimha D. Rao and Jihoon Min

Abstract

We define a set of universal, irreducible and essential set of material conditions for achieving basic human wellbeing, along with indicators and quantitative thresholds, which can be operationalised for societies based on local customs and preferences. We draw support for this decent living standard (DLS) from different accounts of basic justice, including the capability approach and basic needs. The DLS goes beyond existing multidimensional poverty indicators by comprehensively addressing living conditions and the means of social participation. The DLS offers a normative basis to develop minimum wage and reference budgets, and to assess the environmental impacts, such as climate change, of eradicating poverty.

Introduction

What, concretely, are the essential constituents of a decent life—one that goes beyond just subsistence, or “extreme poverty”? What “things” should people have, and what resources do societies need to provide these goods? The limitations of income, and particularly the International Poverty Line, as a measure of poverty are now well understood (Reddy and Page 2009; Reddy 2008; Stiglitz et al. 2006). Without some notion of human requirements, there is no coherent way to specify an income level, let alone across countries, that can support a particular standard of living. Since the formulation of the Human Development Index (HDI) published in the UN Human Development Report in

TSCA#esp50 (130 December 2022) N. Rao and J. Min



Photo by David Johnson in Unsplash

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THIS SYSTEM IS UTTER CRAP: ORGANISING ANGER AND OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE — Josefina L. Martínez

— *It is not a question of waiting for a miraculous event or finding escape routes for a few on the system's margins but of charting the way towards an alternative society*



This system is utter crap: organising anger and optimism for the future

It is not a question of waiting for a miraculous event or finding escape routes for a few on the system's margins but of charting the way towards an alternative society

Josefina L. Martínez

How can we not have anxiety if this system is utter crap?" shouted a 17-year-old girl in front of a rally of hundreds of students a few days ago in Madrid. On the posters, some of them handwritten, one could read: "Stop suicides", "If there is no mental health, there will be a revolution", "Strike for mental health". It may be striking that a student mobilisation

If they are not isolated cases, what do we call uncertainty, the precariousness of life, multiple violence, machismo, racism, fierce competition, bullying, individualism and meritocracy, exploitation, and much more... it is called capitalism.

is being organised on this issue. However, it is particularly relevant when suicide has become one of Spain's most important causes of death among young people.

One thing the numbers tell us when we see the increase in emotional distress is that this is a social, structural problem. Just as the feminist movement pointed out at the time that "it's not an isolated case, it's called patriarchy", the same could be said of the pain, depression or anxiety that affect thousands of young people. If they are not isolated cases,



Consumo Emocional

La Banca del Luto

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multiple violence, machismo, racism, fierce competition, bullying, individualism and meritocracy, exploitation, and much more... it is called capitalism.

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF "THE LIMITS TO GROWTH" — The Editors of Monthly Review



Note on the Limits To Growth

The Editors of Monthly Review

Last year marked the fiftieth anniversary of one of the most influential, and also controversial, environmental studies ever written: The Club of Rome's report, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe, 1972) by Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III. No other environmental work of the 1970s offered such a direct challenge to the underlying assumptions of capitalist neoclassical growth economics or was responded to so vehemently by establishment thinkers.

The Limits to Growth employed a formal mathematical-computer model to present twelve

In what was called the "standard run" scenario, as well as most of its other scenarios, the projected result was "overshoot" and collapse of the growth trends sometime in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the Limits to Growth was not meant to be predictive in any strict sense, but rather to point to the fundamental environmental dangers resulting from the growth dynamics of contemporary industrialised societies. The message of *The Limits to Growth* in 1972, developed further in follow-up studies up to the present, was thus one of needed transformation to create more sustainable development paths. As stated in the introduction:



Photo by Euse on Unsplash

TRCACommentary90 ©2021 January 2023/Blumen M

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Two core elements of the original argument stand out. The first was the devastating critique of technological optimism, which served as a major ideological barrier to conceiving the seriousness of the problem and taking the needed social, economic, and environmental actions. As *The Limits to Growth* explained, the path towards environmental crisis and collapse was due to: (1) a socioeconomic system geared to exponential growth that threatened to transgress the physical limiting factors of the planet itself, and (2) technology expressly designed to pursue that same course of exponential growth, which would inevitably prove ineffective and disastrous.

The second, and even more important, lesson that *The Limits to Growth* conveyed was that "growth," as it had come to be conceived of in present-day society, referred to growth in quantitative Gross National Product, along with growth in resource use and population, all of which were being pursued by the capitalist world economy on an exponentially increasing basis. It was "growth" in this narrow sense of capital accumulation that was limited. But this did not mean that the same limitations applied to growth conceived in a far wider sense, encompassing sustainable human development, qualitative improvements of all kinds, and genuine improvements of productivity—not to mention human-enhanced sustainable growth within nature itself.

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AFRICA BOASTS EXAMPLES OF ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE — Johari Gautier Carmona

— *Despite its low pollution levels, the black continent is much more committed to ecological transition than many other territories tied to their old patterns of industrial production.*



Africa boasts examples of ecological resilience

Despite its low pollution levels, the black continent is much more committed to ecological transition than many other territories tied to their old patterns of industrial production.

Johari Gautier Carmona

It is no longer news. In recent years, Africa has emerged as the region most affected by global warming. There is a wealth of evidence to support this assertion: temperature rises of more than 1.5°C since pre-industrial times in various regions, creeping desertification in the interior, coastal erosion along the entire western coastline, increasing droughts in the east, floods and hurricanes - all linked to a disrupted hydrological cycle that is pushing the continent to its environmental, human, social, economic and political limits.



Women working in a vegetable in Senegal

Infocaj

This context becomes even more painful when we consider that Africa is not the least responsible for the climate change we are denouncing: the warming caused by human activity and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Indeed, it is estimated that African countries account for only 3.8% of total emissions, very little compared to China, the United States or Europe, which account for 23%, 19% and 13%, respectively, of global emissions.

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OUTSIDE THE SAFE OPERATING SPACE OF THE PLANETARY BOUNDARY FOR NOVEL ENTITIES — Linn Persson et al



Outside the Safe Operating Space of the Planetary Boundary for Novel Entities

Linn Persson, Bethanie M. Carney Almoth, Christopher D. Collins, Sarah Cornell, Cynthia A. de Wit, Miriam L. Diamond, Peter Fantke, Martin Hasselöv, Matthew MacLeod, Morten W. Ryberg, Peter Søgaard Jørgensen, Patricia Villarrubia-Gómez, Zhanyun Wang, and Michael Zwicky Hauschild

Abstract

We submit that the safe operating space of the planetary boundary of novel entities is exceeded since annual production and releases are increasing at a pace that outstrips the global capacity for assessment and monitoring. The novel entities boundary in the planetary boundaries framework refers to entities that are novel in a geological sense and that could have large-scale impacts that threaten the integrity of Earth system processes. We review the scientific literature relevant to quantifying the boundary for novel entities and highlight plastic pollution as a particular aspect of high concern. An impact pathway from production of novel entities to impacts on Earth system processes is presented. We define and apply three criteria for assessment of the suitability of control variables for the boundary: feasibility, relevance, and comprehensiveness. We propose several complementary control variables to capture the complexity of this boundary, while acknowledging major data limitations. We conclude that humanity is currently operating outside the planetary boundary based on the weight-of-evidence for several of these control variables. The increasing rate of production and releases of larger volumes and



Photo by Jagan Sridhar in Unsplash

TSCA/ISS/SD (E) 40 March 2023 Linn Persson et al

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outside the planetary boundary based on the weight-of-evidence for several of these control variables. The increasing rate of production and releases of larger volumes and higher numbers of novel entities with diverse risk potentials exceed societies' ability to conduct safety related assessments and monitoring. We recommend taking urgent action to reduce the harm associated with exceeding the boundary by reducing the production and releases of novel entities, noting that even so, the persistence of many novel entities and/or their associated effects will continue to pose a threat.

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CLIMATE CHAOS (AND AN EXCESS OF HOPES AND MBAPPES — Juan Borda

In the face of a succession of climate catastrophes, we continue to find ourselves mired in a media quagmire in which the opinions of experts and denialist politicians are pitted against each other.



Climate chaos (and an excess of Hopes and Mbappes)

In the face of a succession of climate catastrophes, we continue to find ourselves mired in a media quagmire in which the opinions of experts and denialist politicians are pitted against each other.

Juan Borda

We live in times (and especially climates) of terrifying contrasts. While Pakistan is suffering the worst floods in its recent history - more than a third of the country is underwater and more than 1,200 people have already died - Europe is experiencing the worst drought in 500 years and a series of overlapping heat waves that leave little time for a brief respite. China's heatwave has also been, like Europe's, historic. The longest since records have been kept. The lack of water threatens crops and the production of goods—even energy production by affecting the hydropower sector. And at the same time, spoiled millionaires are laughing at the possibility of not using a private plane for a short trip that would take 2 hours by train. Thank you, Galtier. Be careful, in France, we already know that a few ill-timed statements can quickly change many things. Maybe that's just what we need, more like you. Thank you.



Screenshot from the film 'The Last Day' (unavailable on YouTube for the climate denialist discourse)

TSCA/Commentary/SD (E) 2023 October 2023, Borda

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careful; in France, we already know that a few ill-timed statements can quickly change many things. Maybe that's just what we need, more like you. Thank you.

We cannot become accustomed to and insensitive to disasters. No Pakistan flags are hanging from the balconies of city halls, no social media profiles. It seems that no one is Pakistan. Perhaps what needs to be realised is that either we react in a coordinated manner, or soon we all will be Pakistan.

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THE GREAT TRANSITION REQUIRES THE EARTH CONSTITUTION — Glen T. Martin



The Great Transition Requires the Earth Constitution

—Opening Essay for a GTI Forum¹

Glen T. Martin

Planet Earth struggles in a state of fragmentation and lawlessness. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the catastrophic failure of an every-country-for-itself approach to public health, and national economic interests, rather than global needs, continue to dominate discussions of climate policy, paving the path toward climate chaos. Coordination has never been so needed yet so lacking.

A broader framework of disorder exacerbates this

Nation-states have declared their "right" to assassinate persons anywhere in the world thought to be "enemy combatants" by secret evidence, without trial or any due process of law... mass media propaganda encourage seeing the world as full of enemies and security threats.

The capitalist system cultivates both egoism and an unlimited expansionist economic model that has wrought havoc on our finite planet with its multiple intersecting, delicately balanced ecosystems. Unless the people of Earth take

¹ See the forum page: <https://www.greattransition.org/forum/earth-constitution-meeting>

TSCA/ISS/SD (B) 11 August 2022 Glen T. Martin

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A broader framework of disorder exacerbates this fragmentation. Nation-state actors have declared their "right" to assassinate persons anywhere in the world thought to be "enemy combatants" by secret evidence, without trial or any due process of law. Big money influences how laws are made in nearly every country, industrial-military complexes encourage a war mentality, and mass media propaganda encourage seeing the world as full of enemies and security threats. The capitalist system cultivates both egoism and an unlimited expansionist economic model that has wrought

havoc on our finite planet with its multiple intersecting, delicately balanced ecosystems. Unless the people of Earth take charge through a true democratic system more powerful than multinational corporations, big money, global private banking, or militarised imperial nation-states, our planet has little hope for a transformed future.

[Download the full document here!](#)

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY IN AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE: A SHARED AGENDA BETWEEN GREEN GROWTH AND DEGROWTH — Jonathan Barth and Michael Jacobs



Sustainable Prosperity in an Uncertain Future: A shared agenda between green growth and degrowth

Jonathan Barth and Michael Jacobs

This paper attempts to overcome the polarisation between inclusive green growth and degrowth. The authors suggest that the idea of "post-growth" can serve as a unifying concept and define the pillars of a progressive economic policy agenda that can help Germany, the European Union, and the United States achieve their net-zero ambitions while ensuring prosperity and reducing inequality.

It is an amazing coincidence: This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Club of Rome's report on the "Limits to Growth". For half a century, economists and environmentalists have argued about the pros and cons of economic growth: its sustainability, desirability, measurability, and future trajectory. But for most of this period, the debate has remained on the fringes of academic economics and mainstream politics.

But these days, the debate is becoming very topical: Germany's new Minister of Economics and Climate, Robert Habeck, has given his annual economic report a completely new coat of paint – with a chapter that's unprecedented in the report's more than 50-year history. In it, Habeck's ministry lists 31 alternative indicators for measuring prosperity, reaching from women in leadership positions to groundwater pollution.

TSCA/ISS/SD 0802/November 2022, Barth – M. Jacobs

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[Download the full document here!](#)

THE BHIMA KOREGAON AND THE RESISTANCE IN INDIA — Saroj Jiri

It often happens: A murder takes place, an utterly foul one. But there is little outcry, no lasting sense of wrong in public memory. Deep down, everyone is aware of the gross violation that has taken place in their midst. Everyone is affected and silently appalled that there is no redress, no justice. Yet normal life and routine democracy continues—at the expense of a deep

scar in the inner recess of society, unseen and perhaps illegible, best described as a void. Like an abyss that stares back, will this void come to haunt everyone later, in some possibly unrecognisable form?



The Bhima Koregaon Arrests and the Resistance in India

Saroj Jiri

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Rona Wilson, accused of fomenting violence in Bhima Koregaon, while being taken into custody in 2018 (left). "Violence: age patented" in Bhima Koregaon case, U.S. film (right), Minn, February 11, 2021.

I, of course, have a particular murder in mind: the cold-blooded murder of the revolutionary Maoist leader Cherukuri Azad by state forces on July 2, 2010, somewhere in the forests of Adilabad.¹ In the context of what seemed like a friendly atmosphere created by the possibility of ceasefire and peace talks between the Indian government and the Maoists, Azad acted as the key emissary of peace from the side of the rebels. He was murdered in a "fake encounter," an utterly treacherous killing—what can be called an extrajudicial killing in human rights discourse.

The chief mediator of the talks, human rights activist Swami Agnivesh, was particularly incensed about the murder. He gave several shock comments, including: "It looks like a very dirty encounter. (The government) has done vishwaanghat [betrayal] with the talks. I am deeply pained by the developments. Yes, I suffer from a deep sense of guilt

¹ On the killing of Azad, see this report by a fact-finding team: All India Fact Finding Team on the Killing of Azad and H. C. Pandey, "Taking an Encounter: Killing the Peace Process," People's Union for Democratic Rights, October 8, 2010. See also Saroj Jiri, "The Killing of Azad," *Sankar*, July 12, 2010.

TSCA/ISS/SD 0112/December 2022/Saroj Jiri

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LET'S HAVE A BIG DEBATE ON THE ENERGY EMERGENCY – Fernando Prats – Paradigm Change: Without the active support of the citizenry, it will be impossible to provide meaning to the change we must necessarily face



Let's have a big debate on the energy emergency

Paradigm Change:

Without the active support of the citizenry, it will be impossible to provide meaning to the change we must necessarily face

Fernando Prats

We live in turbulent times in which it is essential to chart a course for navigation to confront what is shaping up to be a genuine crisis of civilisation. To this end, it is crucial to know how to interpret each event in itself, but also concerning a systemic and epochal change.

Regarding the latest energy measures approved by the government to deal with the energy shock caused by the invasion of Ukraine, beyond the details, it should be noted that they have urgently implemented a series of actions—basically price limits, demand reduction and support for the most affected sectors—to temporarily mitigate the effects. However, their scope will be limited concerning the following underlying trends.



Una mujer en bicicleta por un parque de Madrid.

TSCA/ISS/SD 0208/January 2023/Fernando Prats

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know how to interpret each event in itself, but also concerning a systemic and epochal change.

It is clear that we need a broad debate in the country on energy and the future. Only in this way will society be able to participate consciously in the transformations to come, which will have to go far beyond those recently approved and which will pose broad socio-economic and political problems. The active support of the citizenry is essential to give meaning to change because, without shared and fair visions, social resistance is likely to grow, the changes will be unfeasible, and opportunism, populist positions and social disintegration will grow stronger.

[Download the full document here!](#)

RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL RATIONING IN THE AGE OF ENERGY DESCENT — Juan Borda and Antonio Turiel — We have to decide what our priorities are: energy waste or fuel for tractors and harvesters, casinos or hospitals, Amazon or neighbourhood shops.



Rational and Irrational Rationing in the Age of Energy Descent

We have to decide what our priorities are: energy waste or fuel for tractors and harvesters, casinos or hospitals, Amazon or neighbourhood shops.

Antonio Turiel – Juan Borda

I imagine a tough night ahead. You have four children, only one loaf of bread and two choices: ration it equally or let the strongest one eat the piece he wants, even if the others starve to death. The humane, honest thing comes first, doesn't it? Needless to say, anyone would do the same. Well, not anyone.

Some political leaders are proving that Einstein's intuition that human stupidity is the only thing that knows no bounds is correct. These leaders are on thin ice. The main reason is that degrowth can no longer be hidden behind a flag or a shining mirage. People do not eat flags, and we know what is wasteful. Hence the efforts of the major economic powers to invest in and control media that distort reality so much.

But the spectacle is becoming harder to hide, and more and more articles, journalistic and academic, good and bad, are appearing, commenting on and denouncing an undeniable reality: both climate change and scarcity are breaking the degrowth taboos. Even presidents like the Finnish president have not hesitated to put it in crystal clear terms for anyone who will listen: people in Finland and other EU countries will have to get used to the fact that the economy will not grow every year.

TSCA/ISS/SD 0208/February 2023/A. Turiel & J. Borda

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and we know what is wasteful. Hence the efforts of the major economic powers to invest in and control media that distort reality so much.

We have to decide what our priorities are, whether it's wasting energy or fuel for tractors and harvesters, whether it's casinos or hospitals, whether it's Amazon or the local shop, whether it's the metro and essential basic services or shiny mirages that can't last. There will not be enough for everything, and that is why we must try, democratically and rationally, to choose what is best to create a new society that manages to be reborn with strength from the spoils and mistakes of the present. Nothing is lost, as some would have us believe

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STRATEGIES FOR DEGROWTH — Mariko Frame



Strategies for Degrowth

Mariko Frame

In the face of global socioecological crises, envisioning alternative futures that are realistic and desirable, yet also address the urgency and scope of these crises, is a daunting endeavour. As degrowth theorists and activists argue, at the root of our multiple, interlinked, and accelerating crises is a socioeconomic system driven by endless economic growth. The consequence of this growth—the excessive material throughput of countries in the

A welcome addition to both untangling the capitalist relations that underpin growth while tackling the formidable task of envisioning a degrowth future that will entail massive and systemic changes.



Degrowth: A Guide to the World Beyond Capitalism, by Matthias Schmeller, Andrea Vetter, and Aaron Vansintjan, is a welcome addition to both untangling the capitalist relations that underpin growth while tackling the formidable task of envisioning a degrowth future that will entail massive and systemic changes.

The stated mission of the book, per the back cover, is to "provide a vision for postcapitalism beyond growth, charting a path forward through policies that democratise the economy, 'now-topias' creating free spaces for experimentation, and counter-hegemonic movements making it possible to break with the logic of growth." Overall, the approach of the book to these challenging aims is thoughtful, nuanced, and holistic. The book is a much-needed contribution to what one could characterise as genuine "systems-thinking"—engaging history, economics, sociology, political economy, feminist critiques, neocolonial analysis, empirical treatments of social metabolism, and more. As such, it avoids reductionist or naïve solutions to problems that are complex and systemic. Further, the book promotes a solidly critical and justice-oriented vision of degrowth, addressing the concerns of those skeptical that degrowth does not sufficiently confront the realities of capitalism, neocolonial relations, patriarchy, race, or other forms of inequality and injustice. In addition, the

TSCA/Commentary/SD 03/01/February 2023/Mariko Frame

In the face of global socioecological crises, envisioning alternative futures that are realistic and desirable, yet also address the urgency and scope of these crises, is a daunting endeavour. As degrowth theorists and activists argue, at the root of our multiple, interlinked, and accelerating crises is a socioeconomic system driven by endless economic growth. The consequence of this growth—the excessive material throughput of countries in the Global North—is but the tip of the iceberg. Behind this growth stands the drive for the ceaseless accumulation of capital, itself built upon a constellation of exploitative relations. The Future Is Degrowth: A Guide to the World Beyond Capitalism, by Matthias Schmeller, Andrea Vetter, and Aaron Vansintjan, is a welcome addition to both untangling the capitalist relations that underpin growth while

tackling the formidable task of envisioning a degrowth future that will entail massive and systemic changes.

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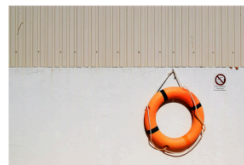
THE CASE FOR A SOCIAL GUARANTEE: UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO LIFE'S ESSENTIALS — Anna Coote



The case for a Social Guarantee: Universal access to life's essentials

Anna Coote

The Social Guarantee refocuses progressive politics on human relations, on how we care for each other, and on the importance of investing in the social infrastructure on which the rest of the economy depends. It draws on current thinking about the foundational economy, the care economy, and sustainable economic prosperity. It offers a coherent, ethical, and well-evidenced basis from which to address such issues as investment, regulation, and carbon mitigation.



Introduction

The internationally agreed goal of reducing carbon

The economy is not just a bundle of interacting mechanisms... it is a social construct that involves processing human and environmental resources. And it is a means, not an end in itself, "we live in societies with economies, not economies with societies".

emissions to "net zero" certainly calls for a rapid transformation of the economy. But the economy is not just a bundle of interacting mechanisms – such as investment, debt, interest rates, trade, competition, supply chains, pricing, consumption patterns, and so forth – to be tweaked by experts. Rather, it is a social construct that involves processing human and environmental resources. And it is a means, not an end in itself. To restate the obvious, "we live in societies with economies, not economies with societies". So the "Great Turnaround" must focus on people as well as the planet and put human as well as ecological needs at the heart of economic change.

¹ Barry (2016), "Green Political Economy: Beyond Orthodox Unidifferentiated Economic Growth As a Permanent Feature of the Economy", in The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory, ed. T. G. Campbell et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 304–317.

TSCA/Commentary/SD 03/01/February 2023/Anna Coote

The Social Guarantee refocuses progressive politics on human relations, on how we care for each other, and on the importance of investing in the social infrastructure on which the rest of the economy depends. It draws on current thinking about the foundational economy, the care economy, and sustainable economic prosperity. It offers a coherent, ethical, and well-evidenced basis from which to address such issues as investment, regulation, and carbon mitigation.

The internationally agreed goal of reducing carbon emissions to a "net zero" certainly calls for a rapid transformation of the economy. But the economy is not just a bundle of interacting mechanisms – such as investment, debt, interest rates, trade, competition, supply chains, pricing, consumption patterns, and so forth – to be tweaked by experts. Rather, it is a social construct that involves processing human and environmental resources. And it is a means, not an end in itself. To restate the obvious, "we live in societies with economies, not economies with societies". So the "Great Turnaround" must focus on people as well as the planet and put human as well as ecological needs at the heart of economic change.

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VEGAN CAPITALISM: FOOD MULTINATIONALS AND BLACKROCK — Gustavo Duch — After seducing the population with the supposed wonders of the vegan diet, transnational meat producers and big investment funds have landed in the food industry, presenting themselves as substitutes for



Vegan capitalism: food multinationals and BlackRock

After seducing the population with the supposed wonders of the vegan diet, transnational meat producers and big investment funds have landed in the food industry, presenting themselves as substitutes for the vegan diet.

Gustavo Duch

Until not so long ago, six or seven decades ago, the majority of the rural population's diet was austere, balanced and subject to the possibilities of their territories. In parallel to development and the concentration of the people in the cities, study centres, universities and prestigious magazines – in coordination with the food industry – spread the message of the need to improve eating patterns, increasing protein consumption, especially animal protein. Through the power of much advertising and propaganda, as in the case of fast food, the message permeated the culture and was installed in the imaginary as the pattern to be followed. To satisfy this "created" demand, the food industry, capable of producing much milk, meat and its derivatives at low prices without contemplating or worrying about its excessive externalities, was justified, thanked and exalted. Traditional food and agriculture were scorned and ridiculed, affecting bodies and territories. From buying and cooking fresh food, we moved on to ultra-processed food reheated in the microwave, and the industry was the clear winner. Something as intimate as our food has ended up being delegated to a few mega-corporations controlled by investment funds.



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the vegan diet.

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Did we think that veganism succeeded in the awareness-raising work of certain NGOs? Whether meat or vegan, the usual food capitalism distances us from the sovereignty that we urgently need to recover and that can only be established by adapting our diet to the cycles of the earth's abundance that peasants,

shepherds and pastoralists of our corresponding territories know how to manage: in their gardens and on their farms. Simplicity is beautiful.

[Download the table here!](#)



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A final thought



Mexico City policeman chains himself to the main doors of the City Assembly in protest because his salary does not make a living wage (19 December 2006).

A living wage is, universally, the most important element in the achievement of everyone's right to a dignified life and the eradication of poverty. Relative to the social responsibility of business, a corporation or organisational entity employing people, regardless of size or trade, public or private, cannot be considered to behave in a socially responsible manner if it does not pay a living wage, regardless of how responsibly it behaves in all other areas of activity.

Just as the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda states, *the decent work concept has led to an international consensus that productive employment and decent work are key elements to achieving poverty reduction*. Yet, everything remains in the realm of rhetoric and hypocrisy, and the system, imbued in the most perverse human instincts, remains.

