



# 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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**Spiral of Contradictions Between Financialised Capitalism and Rural Smallholdings in South and Mesoamerica**  
Irreversible destruction of the Earth's soil food webs leads to drought and collapse of global food security

**Nubia Barrera Silva**

**Abstract:** Capitalism's spiral of contradictions between financialised capitalism and rural smallholdings in South and Mesoamerica is the subject of this article. The article analyzes the irreversible destruction of the Earth's soil food webs, which leads to drought and the collapse of global food security. This process is driven by the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few, leading to the dispossession of the rural smallholders. The article argues that this process is irreversible and that the only way to avoid it is through a radical transformation of the capitalist system.

**Ecology and the Future of History**  
The subject of historical knowledge is the struggling, oppressed class itself

**John Bellamy Foster**

**Abstract:** The subject of historical knowledge is the struggling, oppressed class itself. This article explores the relationship between ecology and history, arguing that the subject of historical knowledge is the struggling, oppressed class itself. It discusses the role of the working class in the development of history and the future of the planet.

**The Limits to Growth: Ecosocialism or Barbarism**

**Alberto Garzón Espinosa**

**Abstract:** We assess and review how capitalism is behind the ecological disorders and why the only democratic political solution to the ecosocialist crisis is the ecosocialist project. This article examines the limits to growth under capitalism and explores the possibility of a democratic political solution through ecosocialism.

**Scientists' Warning on Affluence**  
Affluence as a driver of environmental and social impacts

**Thomas Wiedmann, Marlene Lorenz, Lorenz T. Knyfner and Julia K. Steinberger**

**Abstract:** Affluence as a driver of environmental and social impacts. This article discusses the impact of affluence on the environment and society, highlighting the need for systemic changes to address these issues.

**Human well-being and climate change mitigation**

**William F. Lamb and Julia K. Steinberger**

**Abstract:** Well-being approaches that focus on capabilities and human needs are better suited to inform climate change mitigation research than hedonistic or happiness approaches. This article compares different approaches to climate change mitigation, emphasizing the importance of human well-being.

**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.

**Nubia Barrera Silva**

**Abstract:** The trees of the forest, a natural paradise of complex plant engineering under the deception of 'net zero' emissions in the Amazon. This article discusses the role of forests in carbon sequestration and the impact of deforestation on the climate.

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**SPIRAL OF CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN FINANCIALISED CAPITALISM AND RURAL SMALLHOLDINGS IN SOUTH AND MESOAMERICA — Nubia Barrera Silva – Irreversible destruction of the Earth's soil food webs leads to drought and collapse of global food security.**

**The Jus Semper Global Alliance**  
In Pursuit of the People and Planet Paradigm

Sustainable Human Development  
November 2022

ESSAYS ON TRUE DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALISM

**Spiral of contradictions between financialised capitalism and rural smallholdings in South and Mesoamerica**

Irreversible destruction of the Earth's soil food webs leads to drought and collapse of global food security

Nubia Barrera Silva

Overview

Climate collapse is being felt on Earth without the leaders of developed countries having met the mitigation targets they set themselves. This is an unpayable ecological, environmental and economic debt to the countries of the Global South, as they are the main dispossessed of their well-being. The continuous denial of the natural right to dispose of their natural wealth for the benefit of the quality of life standards (unlimited consumption) of the Global North. The spectre of climatic events, anticipated for decades since the last century, are no longer science fiction but realities that no one can hide in any of the continents.

In the Asia Pacific region, countries are devastated by floods, droughts and cyclones, damaging precious collective infrastructures, housing, and crops, leaving a host of diseases in vulnerable populations. Similar events occur in South America and Mesoamerica. Increasing water scarcity and droughts with local waters above 40°C and pernicious flood availability exacerbate stress and confrontations between peoples within the same country and across international borders. For example, governments have been unable to agree on the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, and Egypt fears losing access to part of the Nile River water resources. The massive privatisation of forest free contracts with declining forests in Central Europe, Poland and Hungary. It is believed to be the worst suffered since the 16th century. Seventeen per cent of the land remains in a severe state of alert, i.e., soil, plants, and crops are dying out. The Rhine River is becoming more impassable for transporting diesel and coal. France is experiencing the worst drought since 1939 in 80% of its territory. These are just a few examples of the severity of climate collapse.

Turning to the subjects of this paper, we expose the food insecurity in South America and Mesoamerica, shaped by the conversion of fertile land into monocultures of export cereals, which reduces the biological potential and regenerative capacity of arable land. We also discuss how the war in Ukraine has worsened access to the fertilisers needed to meet the needs of agricultural soils. In reference to the economic contradictions - the focus of this paper - we expose the conflicts between regional elites and corporations with rural farmers to the detriment of food sovereignty under the collapse of climate and geopolitical conflicts in the war in Ukraine. When referring to the agri-food model and soil depletion, we inevitably come to the dependence on hydrocarbons and the addiction of soils to chemical fertilisers, the contamination of groundwater and its effects on declining human health. In contrast, we present the political-organisational model of some integral agroecological systems resilient to the climate crisis as an alternative to deliberate economic degrowth in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic in short value chains.

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**ECOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF HISTORY – John Bellamy Foster**

*The subject of historical knowledge is the struggling, oppressed class itself. —Walter Benjamin*

Nothing so clearly demonstrates the inherent limits of capitalist ideology as its innate denial of the future of history. The capitalist metaphysic, as Jean-Paul Sartre critically observed, is one of a “barred future”; there is “no exit” from the system and its burning house. Even in the context of the present planetary emergency brought on by capital accumulation, Margaret Thatcher’s well-known mantra that “there is no alternative” to the regime of capital — a view she repeated so frequently that she

was nicknamed with the acronym Tina— continues to exercise its frozen grip on society.

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The notion of bourgeois society as “absolutely the end of History,” intrinsic to liberal thought, found its most powerful concrete expression in the early nineteenth-century writings of G. W. F. Hegel. In recent years, credit for the questionable notion that capitalism marks the termination of the historical process has often been accorded to Francis Fukuyama, based on his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*. In advancing the thesis of “a universal and directional history leading up to liberal democracy,” Fukuyama, who served as deputy director of policy planning and as deputy director of European political-military affairs in the U.S. State Department during the George H. W. Bush administration, was merely repackaging long-standing claims of liberal ideology in the context of the demise of the Soviet Union, which he took as representing the final defeat of socialism and the ultimate victory of capitalism, closing off history in any

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.

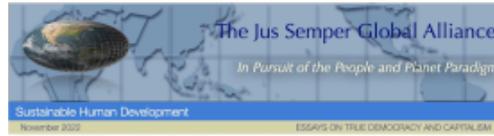
Yet, a mere quarter of century after the celebration of the end of history in the permanence of the liberal order, humanity is confronted with a chain of catastrophic threats extending beyond anything it has experienced in the long course of its development—all arising from the laws of motion of capitalism. 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**

Alberto Garzón Espinosa

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 ecosocial 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.

**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

WGA/ISSUE 01/26 November 2022 Albert Garzón Espinosa

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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 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

WGA/ISSUE 01/19 December 2022 Thomas Wiedmann and

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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 procedural 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

WGA/ISSUE 01/02 February 2023 Lamb & Steinberger

Climate change migration 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 geo-being, which includes theories of human needs, capabilities, and multidimensional poverty. Aspects of each

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**TREES AND THE 'NET' EMISSIONS HOAX**

— *Nubia Barrera Silva* — *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.*



**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.

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,<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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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

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



Stephanie Manning, 'Break the Chains'

Representative democracy, having lost all its meaning, has also lost its legitimacy.

TJSCA Essay 50 (8/19) October 2022/23, Amir & Manji

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

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 Jahm, Angela Carter, Qingzhi Huan, Giorgos Kallis, Joan Martínez 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



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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, 390 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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TJSCA Essay 50 (1/20) November 2022/23, Fitzpatrick et al

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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),<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> John Ali, "The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, ed. William R. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Andrew Cockburn, *The Spoils of War: Power, Profit and the American War Machine* (London: Verso, 2021); William Hurrett, "Profile of War: Corporate Beneficiaries of the Post-9/11 Pentagon Spending Surge," *Waste Institute of International Affairs*, Brown University, September 13, 2021; Erica Alessi, Claudia Steinwender, and John Van Rooyen, "The Intellectual Spoils of War: Defense R&D, Productivity and International Spillovers," *Economics Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley*, July 2021. Also: Kenneth A. Bricker, *The Military-Industrial Complex* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2021); Adam Bore, "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).

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

<sup>3</sup> TSCA/ISSD #1270 November 2022 James M. Cypher

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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.

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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 III's contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change came out. This "mitigation report" summarises 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."<sup>1</sup> "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 guide to solving 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

<sup>1</sup> IPCC, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, April 2022.  
<sup>2</sup> "Scientists: Climate crisis isn't still as how to solve the climate crisis," *will the world listen?* – *The Guardian*, 6 April 2022.  
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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).

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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

society. To make sense of this mission, I need first to sketch briefly the crucial dynamics of consumerism and to show how anxiety plays a role in it.

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**END ECOCIDAL CAPITALISM OR EXTERMINATE LIFE ON PLANET EARTH: A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTRIBUTION TO ECOSOCIALIST STRATEGY — Vishwas Satgar**



**End Ecocidal Capitalism or Exterminate Life on Planet Earth: A South African Contribution to Ecosocialist Strategy**

Vishwas Satgar

**Introduction**

Globalised carbon capitalism is like a snake eating its own tail, self-inflicting wounds. This is not new in the history of capitalism. Between 1870 and 1914, capitalism was also plagued by a general crisis, contributing to imperial conflict and the First World War (which claimed the lives of ten million people). Rosa Luxemburg wrote her classic *Accumulation of Capital*, published a year before the war, in this context. She observed:

*The more ruthlessly capital sets about the destruction of non-capitalist strata at home and in the outside world, the more it lowers the standard of living for the workers as a whole, the greater also is the change in the day-to-day history of capital. It becomes a string of political and social disasters and convulsions, and under these conditions, punctuated by periodic economic catastrophes and crises, accumulation can go on no longer. But even before this natural economic impasse of capital's own creating is properly reached it becomes a necessity for the international working class to revolt against capital!*<sup>1</sup>



Color adjusted photograph by Vishwas Satgar, 2022. © Vishwas Satgar. All rights reserved. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

<sup>1</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1951), 466-67. TSCA/ISS/SD #1146 January 2023/Vishwas Satgar

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From a Marxist ecological perspective, the catastrophes Luxemburg refers to here, resulting from the destruction of natural economies and non-capitalist strata, can be seen as referring not only to the economic convulsion brought on by capital, but also to its ecocidal logic. This

is associated with enclosures in the centers and peripheries, large-scale destruction of human and nonhuman life, and expropriation resulting in ecocide. War is merely one form and moment of extending this logic of deep systemic crisis. In such conjunctures, strategic working-class and anti-oppression politics must come to the fore in order to leverage the crisis against capitalism. However, this kind of conscious strategic politics is not always given or inevitable; sometimes, the crisis of capitalism is also the crisis of the historical social forces meant to resist it.

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**SURVIVING COLLAPSE THROUGH SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND REGENERATION — Christina Ergas**



**Surviving Collapse Through Social Transformation and Regeneration**

Christina Ergas

Climate change is a global phenomenon that adversely affects all biospheric systems and threatens the survival of many species, including our own. Global average temperatures have already increased 1.1°C since the pre-industrial period. The world is at risk of far exceeding a 1.5°C change, which scientists consider a critical threshold, if we do not cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero in the coming decades. Climate change is already affecting crop yields, social conflicts, weather events, and ocean acidification, to name a few of the latest calamities. Until recently, mitigation, directed toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, has been the primary focus of most activist and scholarly efforts. However, because the climate will continue to warm even if we stay within the 1.5°C pathway, and given that the effects are already being extensively felt, more attention is now being given to transformational adaptation, or changing the ways in which we live in order to survive extreme weather events, mass species extinction, and resource depletion, among other threats.<sup>1</sup>

*It is necessary to ground our efforts in the radical imaginaries, or visionary futures, that emerge from the experiences of the most oppressed peoples, who have experienced systematic exploitation, devaluation, displacement, and violence.*

With this shift, it is necessary to ground our efforts in the radical imaginaries, or visionary futures, that emerge from the experiences of the most oppressed peoples, who have experienced systematic exploitation, devaluation, displacement, and violence. These visions must include the liberation of other species, ecosystems, and natural spaces as well.<sup>2</sup> Radical imaginaries are similar to what Erik Olin



Cooperative Alliance, Cuba. Newsletter from the 9th States of Solidarity, by Nils Appel. CC-BY-SA 4.0 License.

<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (Geneva: Working Group II, IPCC, 2022).  
<sup>2</sup> Max Haver and Alex Khasnabish, *The Radical Imagination: Social Movement Research in the Age of Austerity* (London: Zed, 2014).

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**MARX'S CRITIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT HUMANISM: A REVOLUTIONARY ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE — John Bellamy Foster**



**Marx's Critique of Enlightenment Humanism: A Revolutionary Ecological Perspective**

John Bellamy Foster

The fact that Karl Marx was the foremost revolutionary critic of Enlightenment humanism in the nineteenth century can scarcely be denied. No other thinker carried the critique of the Enlightenment's abstract, egoistic Man into so many areas—religion, philosophy, the state, law, political economy, history, anthropology, nature/ecology—nor so thoroughly exposed its brutal hypocrisy. But Marx's opposition to Enlightenment humanism can also be seen as transcending all other critical accounts down to the present day in its distinctive character as a dialectical and historical critique. His response to bourgeois humanism did not consist of a simple, one-sided negation, as in the Althusserian notion of an epistemological break separating the early and mature Marx. Instead, it took a more radical form in which the substance of his original humanist and naturalist approach was transformed into a developed materialism. The result was a simultaneous deepening of his materialist ontology, which now took on a definite, corporeal emphasis focused on the conditions of human subsistence, together with the extension of this to the historical realm in the form of a practical materialism.

Marx's analysis was thus unique in offering a higher synthesis envisioning the reconciliation of humanism and naturalism, humanity and nature. Rather than stopping with a mere antithesis (as in most contemporary "post"



Illustration, shared in a printing while the age of Progressism was still in its infancy, depicting the figure of Progress (or Civilization) as a woman, seated at a desk, writing. (Public Domain)

<sup>1</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 32-39, 221-47. A more compelling and focused interpretation of Marx's "epistemological break" than the one offered by Althusser is provided by Joseph Fracchia in his monumental work, *Bodies and America*. Fracchia sees Marx's emphasis on human corporeal organization in the *German Ideology* as the starting point of his historical materialism. Unlike Althusser's interpretation, Fracchia does not argue that Marx left his humanist beliefs, but rather he shifted the focus of his materialism to human corporeal existence. See Joseph Fracchia, *Bodies and America* (Baltimore, 2022), vol. 1, 1-4, vol. 2, 1209-17. This shift, however, was already prefigured in Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, making it less of a break.

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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.



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<sup>1</sup> 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/2021/10/20/20211020.html>

**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. 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 Joe Calan: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/industrial-structure-3285226/>

<sup>1</sup> John Rockström et al., “A Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Nature* 461, no. 74 (2009): 472–75; Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney, and Corinna Leung, “The Trajectory of the Anthropocene,” *The Anthropocene Review* 2, no. 1 (2015): 81–98; Corey J. A. Bradlow et al., “Understanding the Challenges of a Challenging Future,” *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 13 (2021).

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. 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 that has undergone a deeper conceptual unfolding. However, the concept of the Capitalocene is not devoid of important misconceptions regarding the crisis and its relation with the fundamentals of the capitalist mode of social production based on the reproduction of capital.

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

planetary crisis, and of the different conceptualisations underlying these terms. The focus is mainly on the Anthropocene versus Capitalocene dispute both because these are the more widespread terms and because they have undergone deep theoretical development. I show that the flaws in these terms are based on a misunderstanding of both the planetary crisis and the fundamentals of the capitalist mode of production, and of their mutual intertwining. These shortcomings are reflected in the proposals to formalise the planetary crisis in the GTS and they are discussed in this context. Emphasis is put on the methodological and epistemological limitations of the Anthropocene and Capitalocene approaches, which are ultimate

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**NUCLEAR GREEN, NUCLEAR GAS – THE CLARIFYING CONTRADICTIONS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION — Juan Bordera and Antonio Turiel — *The clarifying contradictions of the energy transition***



arguing that nuclear power is essential to overcome other worse options such as coal. On its productive playing field, Germany seeks to counterattack by defending gas as an unavoidable transitional energy. They argue that it does not generate as much hazardous waste, serves to stabilise the grid and has the lowest emissions rate of all fossil sources - about half that of coal.

The debate is hot because members of the nuclear lobby support (oh, surprise) nuclear, and those who consider this energy source an economic ruin full of risks often defend gas as the lesser evil or argue that renewables will soon be enough to cover the supply. Who is right? What would be wiser to do?

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**FROM SANDSTORM AND SMOG TO SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE – Lau Kin Chi, Jin Peiyun and Yan Xiaohui**



**From Sandstorm and Smog to Sustainability and Justice: China's Challenges**

Lau Kin Chi, Jin Peiyun and Yan Xiaohui

From March 14 to 27, 2021, a severe sandstorm that started in the Eastern Gobi Desert stepped swept across the Mongolian Plateau South, the Loess Plateau, the North China Plain, and the Korean Peninsula. Beijing and twelve provinces in China were hit by the worst sandstorm in a decade. In Beijing, on March 15, a blue sun appeared, as the red rays were absorbed by the sandstorm particles. In a 2015 sandstorm, PM10 (coarse atmospheric particulate matter) was at 1,000 micrograms per cubic meter—30,000 tons of sand fell onto Beijing, amounting to 1 kilogram of sand per capita for the city's population. The 2021 sandstorm, however, was more severe as PM2.5 (fine atmospheric particulate matter) levels reached a height of 680 micrograms per cubic meter and PM10 were 8,108 micrograms per cubic meter. The World Health Organization guidelines for safety levels of PM2.5 and PM10 for twenty-four hours are, respectively, 25 micrograms per cubic meter and 50 micrograms per cubic meter.

As for smog, a few days before the sandstorm arrived, Beijing authorities issued a yellow warning—the second-most severe level of a four-tier air pollution warning system. According to a Community Modelling and Analysis System-Integrated Source Apportionment Method model that determines the source of air pollutants, 35 percent of pollutants came from Beijing and 65 percent from outside.<sup>1</sup>



Photo of gzhm1010000

**Nuclear green, nuclear gas**

*The clarifying contradictions of the energy transition*

Juan Bordera – Antonio Turiel

Green, I want you green, methane green, nuclear green. France with uranium and Germany with gas. Not even the eternal García Lorca managed to make green as fashionable as the energy transition. But when we take a closer look, the supposed green fades, and we find a rather dark, raw colour.



Close nuclear plant as viewed from the sea. Photo: — BERNARD SPRINGER / CC BY-SA 4.0/USA MEMBERS COMMONS

A derby of sorts is taking place between the two quintessential European powers. The teams are nervous about the final stages of the "encounter", where gas prices - and therefore electricity prices in a marginalist market - have broken records that few would have predicted so soon. France and its (nuclear) power plant defence is attacking the German rearguard, arguing that nuclear power is essential to overcome other worse options such as coal. On its productive playing field, Germany seeks to counterattack by defending gas as an unavoidable transitional energy. They argue that it does not generate as much hazardous waste, serves to stabilise the grid and has the lowest emissions rate of all fossil sources - about half that of coal.

The debate is hot because members of the nuclear lobby support (oh, surprise) nuclear, and those who consider this energy source an economic ruin full of risks often defend gas as the lesser evil or argue that renewables will soon be enough to cover the supply. Who is right? What would be wiser to do?

According to the Minister for Ecological Transition, Teresa Ribera, the draft leaked to the press, which advocates inclusion in the "taxonomy of sustainable finance" - a term that can be translated as "invest here without regrets" - is wrong: "It makes no sense and sends the wrong signals for the energy transition of the EU as a whole".

TSCA/MSD 8058 October 2023; Bordera - A. Turiel

Green, I want you green, methane green, nuclear green. France with uranium and Germany with gas. Not even the eternal García Lorca managed to make green as fashionable as the energy transition. But when we take a closer look, the supposed green fades, and we find a rather dark, raw colour.

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The approach to climate change and the mainstream "remedies" pro-posed require serious attention. As Gustavo Esteva has noted, the terms climate change or global warming are too mild to have a strong impact on general perception. The term climate collapse is a much more accurate rendering of the immense challenge for the whole of humanity. However, in the mainstream, the symptoms may be dealt with, but the fundamental problem is not. As in the case of the disposal of radioactive water in Fukushima, which certainly deserves concern, the fundamental question to be asked is how to stop more contaminated water from being generated, so the limelight needs to fall on the molten nuclear mass inside the reactors. In the same manner, the solution is not setting carbon-emission trading quotas, because this presumes emission can continue after purchasing a quota; business as usual. In the same manner, the crucial question is not to choose between fossil fuel or renewable energy, but to interrogate the paradigm that consumes so much energy. Thus, the entire paradigm of modernisation and development as we know it, which has persisted for over two centuries, needs to be interrogated and radically changed. We cannot have business as usual, or lifestyle as usual for the elites, and suffering and sacrifice as usual for the subaltern.

China, given the scale of its problems as well as the scale of its population, economy, and resources, is in a position to make a significant contribution to a turn in the trajectory for humanity—this century may see catastrophic consequences for life on earth, including humans, if we cannot avoid a global warming of 2 degrees Celsius.

Thus, while there are proposals for remedial measures, these may be futile if some key orientations are not pursued. In 2020, despite the global pandemic, China's total input and output value was ¥32.1557 trillion (\$4.93 trillion), an increase of 1.9 percent over 2019. With the sanctions and hostilities from the United States and its allies in the unfolding of a New Cold War, China, in May 2020, pronounced a "dual circulation strategy," which essentially means readjustment of its four-decade-long strategy of integration into the global economy since 1978, which was to

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.

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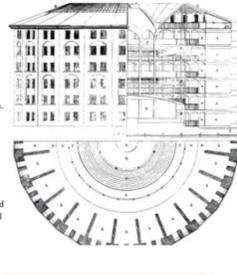
**Panopticon**

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1 of "Ethics Explainer: The Panopticon," Ethics Centre, July 18, 2017. [DSCARh9tDj0K6Q](#) 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**

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.



1 DSCARh9tDj0K6Q 81222 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 well-being, 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.



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.



**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 anthropogenisation 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

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 geneses

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> <sup>46</sup> <sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup> <sup>56</sup> <sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup> <sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup> <sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup> <sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup> <sup>69</sup> <sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> <sup>72</sup> 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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.



Activists, Indigenous people and youth from Indígena for Future Belém (Brazil) protest against the fires in the Amazon, Pantanal and the Cerrado in part of the global climate strike day of Action, Credit: (2022).

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. 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.

TSCA/Eu/SO 8124 October 2022 | L. Brand-Correa | J. Steinberger

**A Framework for Decoupling Human Need Satisfaction From Energy Use**

Lina I. Brand-Correa and Julia K. Steinberger

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 eudaimonic need-centred understanding of human well-being, 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 well-being-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.



Photo by Derek Thomson on Unsplash

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. (Krausmann et al., 2020). The extent of global social metabolism is such that, during the last century, the physical scale of energy and

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

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28/03/23

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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.



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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. 2009). 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/Eu/SO 8130 December 2022 | N. Rao and J. Min

We define a set of universal, irreducible and essential set of material conditions for achieving basic human wellbeing, along with indicators and quantitative thresholds

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.

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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.*



Consumo Emocional La Banca del Lobo

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,

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.



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

scenarios on economic growth trends and their environmental consequences. In doing so, the report focused on five growth factors: population, food production, industrialisation, pollution, and consumption of nonrenewable natural resources. 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:

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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.



Woman working in a vegetable in Senegal. INHUP

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 Hassellöv, Matthew MacLeod, Morten W. Ryberg, Peter Sogaard 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 Jason Hillier on Unsplash

TSCAEssay/SD 0140 March 2023 Linn Persson et al

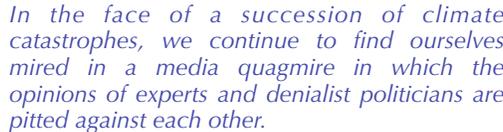
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outside the planetary boundary based on the weight-of-evidence for several of these control variables. The increasing rate of production and releases of larger volumes and higher numbers of novel entities with diverse risk potentials exceed societies' 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 Bordera —**



**Climate chaos (and an excess of Hopes and Mbappes)**

Juan Bordera

*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.*

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, Mbappé. Thank you, Galtier. Be



Screenshot from the film 'The Last Day' - considered a metaphor for the climate disaster disaster

TSCACommentary/SD 0123 October 2023, Bordera

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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**

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 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



Photo by Elena Nishchenko on Unsplash

See the forum page: <https://forum.greattransition.org/gtforumwith-constitution-main>

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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.

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**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.



Photo by Brad Reid on Unsplash

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&WSD 8062 November 2023; Barth - MJ Jacobs

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**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 (RIT). 'Violence: age plotted in Bhima Koregaon case, U.S. firm finds,' Mint, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 shocked comments, including: “It looks like a very dirty encounter. [The government] has done visthavaaghat [betrayal] with the talks. I am deeply pained by the developments. Yes, I suffer from a deep sense of guilt

<sup>1</sup> 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. Pradhy, “Faking an Encounter: Killing the Peace Process,” People’s Union for Democratic Rights, October 6, 2010. See also Saroj Jiri, “The Killing of Azad,” Sarvagat, July 12, 2010.

TSCA&WSD 8112 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.



Uma imagem em Belo Horizonte em um parque de Matão. FOTÓ REBELEZ

TSCACommentarySD 02301 February 2023/Prats

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.

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**RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL RATIONING IN THE AGE OF ENERGY DESCENT — Juan Bordera 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 Bordera

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.



Young man looking at his reflection in a shop window. FREDERICK CALDERON

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.

TSCACommentarySD 02301 February 2023/A. Turiel & Bordera

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.

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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.*



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 Schmelzer, 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 characterize 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

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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.

<sup>1</sup> Barry (2016), “Green Political Economy: Beyond Orthodox, Undifferentiated Economic Growth as a Permanent Feature of the Economy”, in The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory, ed. T. Catherine et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 314–327).  
TSGACommentarySD 03100 | February 2023 | Anna Coote

**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 developmentalism 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.



TSGACommentarySD 03103 | March 2023 | Gustavo Duch

*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.

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*A final thought*



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If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail us: [syg@jussemper.org](mailto:syg@jussemper.org)



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.

