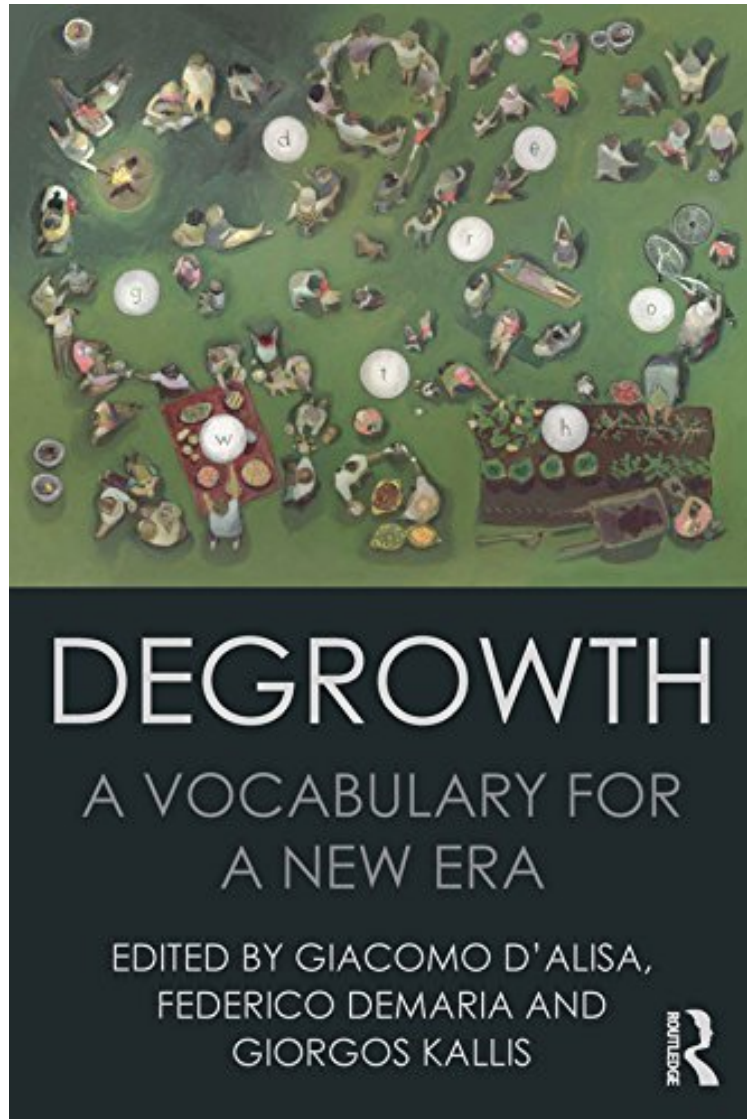


(Download pdf) Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era

## Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era

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**From Routledge : Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy CustomerGood introduction to the broad topic of Degrowth9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Some good chapters, but needs to be more ecumenical and less theoretical (3.8-ish stars)By A. J. SutterThe appearance in English of a militant book about degrowth is an all too rare event, but a welcome one. "Degrowth" in its contemporary sense is most often an umbrella term for a variety of political and philosophical positions questioning whether economic growth should be a social, political and economic priority. Debate about this subject is very important for our collective future.This book by more than 45

authors approaches the subject through the filter of 51 concepts. Each concept is allotted a very concise chapter, with from 1-1/2 to 3-1/2 pages of main text followed by a list of no more than half a dozen references. [ADDED 2016 May: Unfortunately, sparse as they are, these lists are riddled with minor errors -- as I discovered once I started trying to use them.] The Foreword, Introduction and Epilogue are also worth reading (with the editors allowing themselves a longer reference list, of about 40 cites, in their Introduction). The concepts chosen include many that are frequently discussed in the degrowth literature, some that are pertinent but less often mentioned, and at least one where the author of the related chapter repudiates any connection [50] (bracketed numbers refer to chapters, not pages). The effect is something like a mini-encyclopedia, coming in at a very modest 220 pages or so. I'll have more to say about the brevity of the book and of the reference lists below, but let me say at the outset there are some good articles here, many of them by contributors new to me. Overall I was very heartened to see that many more people, especially younger scholars, are getting interested in this field. Some other virtues: the book also includes contributions from some of the most best-known Anglophone degrowth advocates; particularly Peter Victor on "Growth"; [23], Tim Jackson on "New economy"; [42], and Juliet Schor on "Work sharing"; [47]. These chapters, moreover, are among the best-written and clearest-thinking in the book (even if the title of Jackson's chapter isn't so descriptive). Also, the editors come up with a novel philosophical footing for degrowth in their Conclusion, based on the notion of "deacutepenser" (expenditure) from a 1933 essay by French sociologist Georges Bataille. This is an original and imaginative step, even if personally I believe it's not so successful, as I'll explain below. This will be a long review, but not because I disagree with the concept of degrowth; quite the opposite. My own interest in this field has been ongoing continuously for roughly 8 years as I write, and I've published several articles and a book about it in Japan, where I live. I'm also personally acquainted with a number of scholars and others who are active in the field, particularly in Europe, have corresponded with others, and in 2014 participated in a very large degrowth conference (3,000 attendees) in Leipzig, in which the editors and many contributors to the present work were speakers. Rather, my main concern with this book is that it's way too tilted toward theory. From one perspective this is a refreshing departure from many earlier Anglophone books about degrowth, which tended to emphasize private action: be frugal, recycle, go solar, share things, change your consciousness. But all the most erudite theory in the world is academic wheel-spinning if degrowth can't be translated into a program for public policy. Actually, there are many scholars who are interested in practical implementation, but they're greatly underrepresented by this book. For a work intending to provide "a vocabulary for a new era," this isn't the sort of book that will help to educate your local Congressman or MP; it's far more likely to alienate him or her. Here's a short overview of what I'll discuss in the rest of this review: (1) some nuances of the term "degrowth"; (2) the many currents of degrowth thought that are overlooked by the book, (3) the book's preference for certain less-than-crystal-clear thinkers who are way more amenable to the seminar room than to practical action, (4) some topics that weaken the book by their absence, and (5) some other pros and cons of the book. My bottom line is that I suggest you read some other books on the topic before you dive into this one. I'll name a few in my penultimate paragraph, so if you're impatient you may want to scroll down to there. (1) "DEGROWTH": This word's connotation as a critique of economic growth entered English from the French "deacutecroissance" ("Croissance" is French for growth; your morning croissant is called that because it looks like a crescent (growing) moon.) Probably more has been written about degrowth in French than in most other languages. But the word itself has generated a lot of political and philosophical controversy in France. In its positive sense, "deacutecroissance" tends to connote a focus on a global reduction in growth, and a departure from the discourse of economic "development" (or "deacutveloppement", in French). The leading writer in this vein is economist Serge Latouche, now emeritus professor at Universiteacut; de Paris-Sud, and contributor of two chapters here. Especially after the 2007 death of Andreacut; Gorz, who was more concerned with work-related issues than with global development issues, Latouche has become the most public sage of "deacutecroissance". Another prominent author is Fabrice Flipo, a philosopher of science and technology currently in his 40s, who co-authored the Foreword to this book. He shares Latouche's highly philosophical approach to the subject (though earlier he had done some very applied work about the environmental impact of cell phones). There are also a number of rowdier, activist "deacutecroissancistes", associated especially with the polemical newspaper "La Deacutecroissance" (Vincent Cheynet, Philippe Ariegrave;s, et al.), whose very Gallic style of irreverence is something like that of the satirical journals Charlie Hebdo and Le canard enchainecut;. When used by French politicians, mainstream economists and others, though, "deacutecroissance" connotes a return to the Stone Age, a lowering of the standard of living, hippies playing their guitars around a campfire, a purely negative concept that doesn't describe what it stands for, etc. As a result, some economists, sociologists, philosophers and others in France have taken to calling themselves "objecteurs de croissancercut;" (objectors to growth). This still isn't descriptive of what they stand for, but they use the phrase in part to distinguish themselves from the "La Deacutecroissance" style of confrontational rhetoric, Latouche's style of unspecific, lofty rhetoric reminiscent of the Marxist "60s and "70s, and the barbs of politicians and the media. Some "objecteurs" also focus more on degrowth as a

practical program that could begin in the so-called developed countries. Even Latouche has begun to speak more of "a-croissance" than "deacute;croissance" in recent years. The "objecteurs" and the "deacute;croissancistes" have a lot in common nonetheless, and the now-defunct academic journal ENTROPIA, published between 2006 and 2013 from Lyon (a center of anti-neoliberal activism), was a shared forum for both groups. A considerable literature about related concepts has also grown in Italy (decrescita), Spain (decrecimiento), Germany (Postwachstum or Wachstumsruum;cknahme), and also in some countries of the South, including Latin America, India, and South Africa. As mentioned above, I've written about it in Japan, and another scholar has translated one of Latouche's books into Japanese, though we translate "deacute;croissance" differently (the pre-existing Japanese word "dasseichour" in his case, the neologism "genseichour" in my case, since this sounded less pessimistic and more neutral, more like "a-croissance" perhaps). As in France, there tends to be a diversity of voices within each of these cultures of degrowth advocacy. There even is political diversity, with right-wing reactionary versions of degrowth as well as the (more typically) left-derived versions. From this it should be apparent that to create "a vocabulary for a new era" based on degrowth, as the present book aspires to do, one has to be either encyclopedic or rather selective. To a somewhat radical degree, this book chooses the latter route. Although published originally in English, when the French translation appeared in 2015 it bore the very appropriate title "Deacute;croissance, vocabulaire pour une nouvelle ère". Now that you know more about the nuances of the French word, you can get a hint of the dominant outlook expressed in this book, albeit more Latouche than La Deacute;croissance.

(2) UNMENTIONED AUTHORS CURRENTS: Having a point of view is fine. But a reader new to the field, or monolingual in English, wouldn't have any inkling that this supposed overview of degrowth completely omits mentioning literally dozens of its leading thinkers. A fundamental problem with this book's design was the decision to strictly limit both the chapter exposition and the reference list, which seems to have been capped at six — the references at least should have offered a more generous spectrum on each topic. I'll try to approach this concisely, without including all the names I'm tempted to mention.

A) Right-wing degrowth: The book never alerts the reader to the fact that degrowth arguments can be — and have been — mustered by right-wing authoritarians, plutocrats, social conservatives and opponents of immigration. Examples, respectively, include Alain de Benoist (France), Meinhard Miegel (Germany), Edward and Robert Skidelsky (UK; mentioned once in the book in a banal context), and ecological economist Herman Daly, a degrowth icon (US; though de Benoist is even more xenophobic). Some of this stuff is very creepy indeed, particularly Miegel and de Benoist, but this dangerous trend remains lurking below the radar of most degrowth researchers. (One exception: Jean-Louis Prats's 2008 article about de Benoist, "La Deacute;croissance est-elle réactionnaire ?" in the *Revue de Mauss* permanente, available for free online.)

B) German authors: As mentioned above, the editors were involved with the 2014 Degrowth Conference in Leipzig. The rockstar speaker there was German economist Nico Paech, who has authored a couple of books about degrowth, at least one of which has been published in English. Yet his name doesn't appear anywhere in the book, nor do those of other prominent authors such as Irmi Seidl, Uwe Schneidewind or Christian Felber, among others.

C) Italian authors: The book does contain contributions by several Italian researchers. Mauro Bonaiuti, who works in the theoretical field of bioeconomy (inspired by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen) [2], was the one most familiar to me. However, many significant names are omitted even from citation. One is the most prolific of the writers on *decrescita*, Maurizio Pallante. Another is Alberto Magnaghi, the leader of a very important group at the *Università di Firenze* who have developed the idea of "territori" (territory) as a principle for regional management that deprioritizes growth. Both Pallante and Magnaghi are close to Latouche — but their approach is either as activist-provocateur (Pallante) or as hands-on planners and community organizers (Magnaghi group). Their omission is entirely consistent with the book's bias towards the theoretical and against the practical. Even more disappointing is the omission of the Civil Economy school, comprising several dozen researchers, and led by economists Stefano Zamagni of Bologna and Johns Hopkins, and Luigino Bruni in Rome. Their project is a revival of economic ideas from the Renaissance and especially from the 18th Century Neapolitan economist Antonio Genovesi that have an anthropology opposite to that inferred from the "invisible hand" story in *The Wealth of Nations*: civil economy assumes a duty of humans to help each other instead of following self-interest. This school also has ties to the Magnaghi group and (via Bruni) to Latouche. Ideally they would have been included among the potential allies of the degrowth movement, which are described in Part 4 of the book (all the more so since the spokesperson for one of the proposed allies, feminist economics, rejects the alliance). Zamagni, who is the former head of the Italian government's agency for charities and non-profits, is also, along with his wife, among the world's leading authorities on cooperatives, so it's too bad their book published in Italian and English on that topic is nowhere mentioned in the cooperatives chapter [34]. Incidentally, Zamagni and Bruni edited a book very analogous to the present one, entitled "Dizionario di economia civile" (Dictionary of civil economy, 2009) — but they went for a more inclusive, encyclopedic approach, making for a book I keep close to my desk and refer to often.

D) Francophone authors: The most surprising and sweeping omission is that of almost all living authors writing in French about degrowth. The few who are mentioned include Fabrice Flipo and Françoise Schneider,

who contributed a foreword; Denis Bayon, co-author of a book with Flipo and Schneider and contributor of a good article on unions [45]; and Latouche himself, who contributes an OK article focusing on Cornelius Castoriadis [25] and a very short article on the "pedagogy of disaster"; that seems hastily written and ill-considered [19]. A couple of thinkers from the anti-utilitarian group known as MAUSS, especially Alain Cailleteau, are also mentioned, esp. in [1]; but Cailleteau's writings over the years have variously run hot and cold — or tepid and cold — about deacate;croissance. For a good idea of whorsquo;s left out, check the 15-issue run of ENTROPIA, the scholarly journal of deacate;croissance mentioned above. The present book contains exactly zero cites to articles from the journal, and mentions only a tiny fraction of authors who appeared in the journal's pages. One can also check the list of signers of the 2013 "Manifeste convivialiste". Senior French economists and sociologists like Jacques Gadrey, Dominique Meacate;da, Christian Comelieu, Franccedil;ois Flahaut, Florence Jany-Catrice and Agnes Sinau; among many, many prominent "objecteurs de croissancerdquo; — not even a citation. Also among those ignored is economist Marc Humbert, former head of the Maison Franco-Japonaise in Tokyo, and host of a 2010 conference I attended there that included Cailleteau, Latouche, Patrick Viveret (also ignored) and many others. That conference, which led to a subsequent book by the four lead participants, was the birthplace of the use of "convivialism" as a slogan in connection with degrowth. (The idea of conviviality as developed by Ivan Illich in the 1970s of course has a longer association with the movement.) So it's all the more ironic that the editors conclude their book with the French expression "Vive la deacate;croissance conviviale!" even though they ignore most of the folks who are promoting that idea. Finally, Timothy Duvergerr's excellent history of the French degrowth movement and its many subtleties, fissures and fractures (2011) also goes unnoticed by the present book.

(3) TILT TOWARD ABSTRACTION: Let's start with the more traditional topic, the "pioneers" of degrowth. Along with economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen and the conservative English economist Ezra Mishan (who wrote a popular anti-growth book in the 1960s complaining especially about traffic), three names that often come up in the literature are Ivan Illich, Andreacate; Gorz and Cornelius Castoriadis. One of the virtues of this book is that Illich is mentioned at all, and even gets a chapter devoted to one of his most pertinent ideas, conviviality [15]. Given that he wrote in English and his works were first published in the US and UK, it's ironic that only one reasonably successful English-language book about degrowth (Richard Heinberg's "The End of Growth") even mentions him, albeit as a name in a tossed-off list and without citation to his work (Heinberg cites to Latouche, instead); the books by Jackson, Schor, Victor, Skidelsky Skidelsky, and Naomi Klein ignore him absolutely. Gorz, a French philosopher, novelist and journalist and founder of a news magazine still publishing today (Le nouvel observateur, a/k/a Lrsquo;Obs), was a friend of Illich, and some in France believe that this friendship was directly responsible for Gorz's interest in degrowth. Both were excellent prose stylists and capable of vivid, down-to-earth and highly original arguments. Yet in this book Illich is discussed mostly at a highly abstract level [15], and Gorz is only mentioned a couple of times in passing, including an erroneous attribution to him of the first use of the word "deacate;croissancerdquo; [Intro. @ p.1.]. Rather, the patron pioneer of this book is Castoriadis, a sociologist influenced by psychoanalytic theory, whose prose is very difficult to make sense of, regardless of whether one tries in French or English. To some extent this made the book more interesting for me, since I hadn't succeeded before in understanding what he was about (though I'm not sure if success is the best word even now). But hersquo;s definitely a theoretician's choice. More typical potential readers would find Gorz and Illich much more persuasive — which is one reason why they tend to be discussed more widely in the literature, especially outside of France. Even more problematic is the editor's more original contribution, their promotion of Georges Bataillerr's 1933 essay "The Notion of Expenditure" (La notion de deacate;pense) as a new source of inspiration for the degrowth movement. Like Castoriadis, Bataille might not be obscure in reputation, but his writing style is another story. In its original form, much of the essay deals with the social functions of hugely wasteful private expenditure, including something very similar to conspicuous consumption, though Bataille seems to have been unaware of Thorstein Veblen's "Theory of the Leisure Class" written more than 30 years earlier. Later in the piece he talks about the class struggle as "the grandest form of social expenditure," and related to Christian religious ecstasy. (OK, I'll be honest: by its end I found Bataillerr's essay to be verging on incoherence.) The editors take this idea of wasteful expenditure and attempt to turn it to a social end: "Deacate;pense refers to a genuinely collective expenditure — the spending in a collective feast, the decision to subsidise a class of spirituals [sic] to talk about philosophy, or to leave a forest idle — an expenditure that in a strictly economic sense is unproductive. Practices of deacate;pense "burn" capital out and take it out of the sphere of circulation, slowing it down. Such collective "wasterdquo; is not for personal utility or for the utility of capital. It aspires to be political. It offers a process through which a collective could make sense of and define the "good life," rescuing individuals from their meaningless privatized lives." [Epilogue, pp. 217-219]. This is original and provocative, but is it an idea worth pursuing? May I suggest that there's a difference between (i) abandoning the requirement that every public expenditure be "productive," and (ii) \*deliberately\* spending money in non-productive ways, for the sake of spending it (especially when done in a Rousseauian, we-will-force-you-to-be-free spirit, as the term "rescuingerdquo; suggests here). I'm fine with

(i), but (ii)? In a seminar room, proposition (ii) might occasion many delightful hours of discussion, especially because, as the editors chortle, "sense generates horror" among economists of all stripes (id.) From a real world perspective though, it's hard to think of anything that says "loss" in a more intellectual way. It's hard enough to convince policy-makers that some public expenditures are worthwhile even if their direct benefit isn't clearly economic (support for the arts, help for the homeless, preserving biodiversity, etc.). Telling them that they should spend money to pull capital out of circulation and thereby rescue people from meaninglessness is not going to be persuasive at all. An elegant, erudite, but really, really silly, argument.

(4) TOPICS OMITTED: But unfortunately, persuasiveness is not the editors' priority. They seem to assume that readers are on their side, a priori. Too many of the articles brush aside objections and alternative perspectives in summary fashion, or don't mention them at all. For example, in an article that discusses both the Spanish Indignados and the US/global Occupy movement [39], we're never told that the US Occupy movement was a failure, or that many of the demonstrators actually didn't begrudge people getting rich through capitalism if they did so fairly. An article on dematerialization [16] presents a narrow and idiosyncratic definition of the term, without ever mentioning that it's used in a very different sense in most of the environmental and ecological economics literature (and degrowth discourse). Even when objections or alternative points of view were mentioned, none of the references listed at the ends of articles guide the reader to anything critical. A welcome exception to this rosy-eyed trend was Antonella Picchi's contribution on feminist economics as a supposed "ally" of degrowth [50]. She thoroughly trashed the editors' premise that the two movements have anything in common. Her negativity was terrifically refreshing; I really enjoyed the piece. Unfortunately, though, her premises were incorrect. E.g., she seems to believe that "the degrowth narrative does not challenge the structure of capitalism," but that the capabilities approach of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen does so — this is 180 degrees backwards. I was particularly disappointed that the book doesn't give the reader tools for responding to pro-growth arguments. Often those arguments are based on optimistic, Promethean foundations that go something like this: Man is naturally an inventive animal, and all problems are susceptible to being solved by human ingenuity. In particular, all environmental disasters predicted in the past have been averted thanks to "innovation." Arguments about running out of resources, ditto. Remember how that Chicken Little "Limits to Growth" book from the '70s said we'd all be in trouble by the year 2000? Actually we're doing great. Furthermore, the argument goes (especially in the mainstream academies of economics and law in the US), any deliberate slowing of the pace of innovation, such as through the observance of a "precautionary principle," (a) is an attempt to inhibit human nature, (b) does not pass the criteria of cost-benefit analysis because of the valuable benefits foregone, and/or (c) is impossible to apply in a logically consistent way. How does one get around these conceptual obstacles to gain acceptance of degrowth? The book doesn't give you a clue. Innovation isn't really discussed at all, much less its role in neoliberal ideology. Precaution is alluded to, but doesn't get a deep treatment. Even more striking, though, was the absence of any discussion of income and wealth inequality within countries. Perhaps because of the book is strongly influenced by the outlook of Latouche, questions of North and South, i.e. rich countries vs. poor countries, play a prominent role in many chapters. Class issues within countries are mentioned only rarely (e.g., in [39]). Thomas Piketty is nowhere mentioned, even though his book "Capital in the 21st Century" had been published in France more than 2 years before this book was published, and had become an international bestseller more than a year before publication too. Piketty's book emphasizes that if the rate of financial return on investments exceeds a country's rate of economic growth, inequality will worsen — and that the bigger the gap between the two rates, the worse the inequality will be. At a policy level, some have interpreted this to mean that increasing the growth rate is urgent for reducing inequality. So if you're a "degrowth" (the book's rather ugly term, new to me, for degrowth proponents) and someone lobbs this argument in the middle of your spiel, what do you say? Even more broadly, how can lower GDP possibly reduce inequality — doesn't it mean average per capita income is going down? Either or both questions might occur to a reasonably critical reader. But the book addresses neither issue. Since I am, I suppose, a "degrowth" myself, I'm playing devil's advocate here. But the upshot is that the book is better at preaching to the converted (or to the intellectually innocent) than as a work that will help in what Castoriadis called the "Imaginary, decolonization of"; [25]. Or to borrow the clearer jargon of election year politics: this book focuses way more on playing to its base than on winning over undecideds.

(5) Other pros and cons: Many of the above objections could have been cured if each author had been allowed another page or two to discuss her or his topic, and also allowed a longer list of references. That would have brought the book to around 350 pages tops, hardly unreasonable. What is unreasonable in a book of this nature, though, is the absence of an index. This makes it impossible to trace themes and thinkers through the 54 substantive chapters. (Moreover, the publisher saw fit to include three pages of blurbs up front, but zero blank pages at the beginning or end of the book, limiting the space for the reader to compile an impromptu index of key terms and cited authors, etc. of his or her own.) I'll only mention in passing that the authors would have been served better by the assistance of a professional copy editor: these seem to be a vanishing species throughout academic publishing today. To end on a more upbeat note, here are a few more articles I thought were particularly good and not already praised above: Joan Martinez-Alier

provides two articles in this category, on environmentalism [5] and on neo-Malthusians [27], the latter making some especially useful distinctions. Mauro Bonauti provides a nice overview of bioeconomics [2], as do Silke Helfrich and David Bollier on the commons [14]. Kristofer Dittmer's piece on community currencies [33] and Mary Mellor's on public money [41] were also quite interesting. The most intriguing piece for me was the final one, by Mogobe B. Ramose about the Ubuntu philosophy of Bantu-speaking Africa [51]. Some of Ubuntu's key notions are that "a person is a person through other persons," and that "if and when one ought to choose between the preservation of life, especially of human life, and the possession of excess wealth, one must opt for the preservation of life." As an inspiration for degrowth, this leaves Bataille in the dust. **BOTTOM LINE:** If you're a current or aspiring career academic with a love for theory who knows next to nothing about degrowth, and especially if your French is weak, this book could be a very good place to start. If you're someone who already knows something about degrowth, you'll find much that is stimulating - both to interest you and to annoy you - in this book, too. If you're simply new to the subject and looking for a more down-to-earth treatment in English, I'd recommend you start with books like Tim Jackson's "Prosperity without Growth," Peter Victor's "Managing without Growth," Andre Gorz's "Ecologica," Ivan Illich's "Tools for Conviviality," and Juliet Schor's "Plenitude." There are few problems with this book that an expanded, revised edition couldn't cure. I hope a revision that takes more of a big-tent approach will materialize without too long a wait. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. The book that a movement has been waiting for. By nikolas kosmatopoulos. Degrowth has been a silent movement at the sidelines of the debate on economy, ecology and the possibilities of collective life for some time now. This book amplifies the voice of a growing movement, showing it as a credible alternative to the current obsession with growth, energy overconsumption and ecological disaster. The great thing about the book is that it links an economic discussion on degrowth with philosophical ideas of slowing down a rather speedy life, with reporting on political experiments of collective sharing, and with the much needed habit of collective reflection about our future in a common world. Having said that, the book is inherently linked to the crisis-stricken European South, where its authors come from and work on. In that sense, it is a clear product of the european crisis, with all the unlimited possibilities and the possible limitations of such origins. It would be interesting to see how other parts of the Global South would respond to such a perspective, which is somewhat missing in the book. In any case, after this publication the stage is set for a much needed global discussion.

Degrowth is a rejection of the illusion of growth and a call to repoliticize the public debate colonized by the idiom of economism. It is a project advocating the democratically-led shrinking of production and consumption with the aim of achieving social justice and ecological sustainability. This overview of degrowth offers a comprehensive coverage of the main topics and major challenges of degrowth in a succinct, simple and accessible manner. In addition, it offers a set of keywords useful for intervening in current political debates and for bringing about concrete degrowth-inspired proposals at different levels - local, national and global. The result is the most comprehensive coverage of the topic of degrowth in English and serves as the definitive international reference. More information at: [vocabulary.degrowth.org](http://vocabulary.degrowth.org) View the author spotlight featuring events and press related to degrowth at <http://t.co/k9qbQpyuYp>.

Dalisar's book is an excellent introduction to the politics of "degrowth" in its different meanings and dimensions that are analyzed and catalogued in dozens of entries providing an indispensable point of reference for anyone interested in joining the debates surrounding this perspective. It is also an eye-opener to the evolution of the concept. For as the editors' introduction demonstrates, "degrowth" for many signifies a variety of initiatives - time banks, local currencies, urban gardens, solidarity economies - proposing an alternative to capitalist accumulation and the reconstruction of our reproduction on more cooperative terms. This then is a volume that those committed to building non-exploitative relations will need to consult as it offers a map to the world of alternatives to capitalism. Silvia Federici, Professor Emerita of Social Science at Hofstra University, Hempstead. At a time in history when political, economic and intellectual leaders assure us that nothing fundamental can any longer be questioned, nothing could be more important than the movement - of thought, and of action - that this volume on Degrowth represents. It raises the prospect of finally ejecting the twin demons of productivism and consumerism that are responsible for so many historical failures of the left as well as the right, and begins to set about the real work of imagining and building a society fit for human beings to live in. David Graeber, Professor of Anthropology at London School of Economics, London. This book is one of the most thorough and insightful presentations and discussion of economic theory and practice in the field of de-growth economics, a revolutionary attempt to understand the economy as if humans and Nature matter. Manuel Castells, Professor Emeritus of City And Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley. A thought-provoking, wide-ranging, spirited, and deeply original analysis; this book is a must-read on degrowth debates. Karen Bakker, Professor and Canada Research Chair Director, Program on Water Governance, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. "DeGrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era" illuminates

diverse concepts for clear thinking, provides us with new languages for political discourse, and outlines the many steps we can take to recreate our economy, our lives, and our relations to planet Earth. Call it what you want: happiness, living within limits, community, real democracy —; DeGrowth both calls and empowers us to bold action. Richard Norgaard, Professor Emeritus of Energy and Resources, University of California, Berkeley. This dictionary is a vital resource for those who want to engage with the diverse networks of ideas and traditions, analytical concepts and theories known as Degrowth. It is also one indispensable compass to find orientation in the complex simplicity of alternatives. Massimo De Angelis Professor of Political Economy and Development at the University of East London, London. Humanity has already crossed the ecological limits of the earth; we have been terrible guests of our planet. Radical steps to reduce our impacts are our most crucial task, particularly so for those parts of the world that have been responsible for unsustainable development pathways. It needs to be heeded even by so-called 'developing' countries as they blindly follow the same pathways. Degrowth is very much a part of the global search for alternative ways of human well-being that are sustainable and equitable, and this book offers a comprehensive exploration of its various dimensions. The section on 'Alliances' from non-western perspectives is a bit thin, but a welcome beginning to the possibilities of a truly global framework of values that could lead us out of our collective planetary crisis. Ashish Kothari, member of Kalpavriksh, Puna; and co-author of "Churning the earth: The Making of Global India".

Reinventing the growth trajectory is equally critical for the rest of the world in this age of climate risk and present and future danger. Degrowth is then the new vocabulary that we must learn and practice. Sunita Narain, Director of the Centre of Science and Environment Delhi; and editor of the magazine Down To Earth. In times marked by political stupor, it is refreshing to have such a light-footed guide through a universe of anti-mainstream ideas ranging from conviviality to Ubuntu, and from urban gardening to entropy. Marina Fischer-Kowalski, Founder and long-term of the Institute of Social Ecology at Alpen Adria University, Vienna. For the poor to grow up to a steady-state economy that is sufficient for a good life and sustainable for a long future, the rich must make ecological space by de-growing down to the same sufficient (not luxurious) steady-state level. Essays in this collection recognize the necessity to face this difficult convergent task of justly sharing our finite world. Herman Daly, Emeritus Professor of Ecological Economics at University of Maryland, Maryland. The editors invite the reader to make their own voyage through this book. It is sage advice, for readers will wander through a wonderland of radical thoughts, intriguing observations and bold visions for a different kind of world. It's exciting and deeply subversive. Clive Hamilton, Professor of Public Ethics at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University and University of Melbourne, Melbourne. Author of Growth fetish and Earthmasters We know that there are limits of growth just as there are limits to growth. The former teaches us that beyond a certain size of the economy, certainly as measured by GDP, more growth doesn't increase welfare but reduces it, so that society would be better off with less GDP. Many "advanced" countries today are already beyond that point and are experiencing what herman daly calls "uneconomic growth." This exciting book is a pioneering exploration of the recently come-of-age field of degrowth economics and policy. It will be landmark for all those who want to transcend the growth fetish that has so many enthralled today. James Gustave Speth, Professor of Law at the Vermont Law School, Royalton. Author of "America the possible: manifesto for a new economy." We really need to develop a vocabulary for a new era, and this timely book takes us a great step forward by providing an impressive collection of concepts and ideas related to the degrowth debate. It is a very useful resource for both newcomers and seasoned participants. Due to the broad coverage, everyone can find inspiration and new links between ideas by following one's own personal track through the entries —; it is a pleasure. Inge Roslavsky, Professor of Ecological Economics Aalborg University, Copenhagen. This volume is indispensable for anybody interested in moving beyond mere retrofit solutions to the most important economic and ecological conundrums of our time. This book helps bury several oxymoron-constructs masquerading as solutions to the human predicament. It achieves this by landing definitive intellectual and political blows to both the desirability and possibility of unfettered economic growth as a panacea for all ills. Deepak Malghan, Professor of Ecological Economics at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, India, and Princeton University, USA What a splendid vocabulary! A range of international authors brilliantly surveys the emerging field of an economics which bids farewell to the obsession of growth. The entries are compact yet eloquent, learned yet action-oriented. In the new style of economic thought, ideas like sharing, frugality, debt-free money, dematerialization, and digital commons play a leading role. Whoever wants to know more about an economy of permanence for the 21st century should reach for this book. Wolfgang Sachs, Professor of Social Science at the Wuppertal Institute, Berlin. Editor of: "The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power". In this timely and important (both academically and politically) contribution, Drsquo;Alisa, Demaria and Kallis offer the definitive collection on Degrowth. Comprising 51 compelling contributions by key international scholars, the collection juxtaposes in a critical manner the economic, social, political, and ecological aspects of the Degrowth thesis, to mainstream debates on economic development, sustainable growth and environmental (in)justice. This is an invaluable source of knowledge and inspiration for anyone interested academically or politically in alternative ways of thinking and acting about the environment and development. The collection is of interest to economists, political scientists, ecologists, geographers, planners, environmentalists, activists, development scholars, anthropologists, policy makers, and to anyone who wishes to think and act in ways

that transcend the current environmental and economic impasse. Maria Kaika, Professor in Human Geography, University of Manchester, Manchester. Degrowth takes the false coin of economic growth via capital accumulation and confronts it head on: There is no wealth but life and to protect life on the planet and to ensure the future for all it is necessary to exit the current system of production. This is the essential message for our time. John Bellamy Foster, professor of sociology at the University of Oregon, Eugene; and editor of Monthly and author of "Marx's ecology". Degrowth thinking is a strategic meeting place for many trends in contemporary environmental politics, and this encyclopaedic compendium, at once widely accessible and deeply informative, will be invaluable in advancing the work of both academics and activists committed to building eco-sufficiency and global justice. Ariel Salleh, Professor of Social Science at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. Degrowth is more than just an idea: it is a dream. A recurrent, collective dream that has spread from philosophers and visionary economists to a variety of social movements that have put it into practice by activating economies of care. Born in the 1970s, it has survived the neo-liberal hegemony and — as this book convincingly shows — has gone more political (and more feminist) through collective thinking and social practices such as squatting, urban agriculture, work-sharing, and other forms of common-ing, developed in the last decade. Like it or not, this persistence of the concept must be recognized, and credit given to its capacity of spurring new debates and new forms of social mobilization, appealing to all those who continue to see 'growth' as a false solution to social problems and a true disaster for the environment. Stefania Barca, Environmental Historian at University of Coimbra, Coimbra. Breaking away from myths has always been difficult... But this is the spirit of the contributions of this book which ask: will it be possible to escape from the monster of growth? The answer is simple. It is not only possible, but indispensable. But is also not sufficient. We also need to think new utopias to orient us. And these one can find in this book... Those utopias imply a critique of perverse reality as well as the patient construction in solidarity of new and diverse options. Alternatives imagined collectively and implemented democratically... Alberto Acosta, Economist and ex-President of the National Constitutional Assembly of Ecuador For new ideas on de-growth like frugality, sobriety, dematerialization and digital commons to sink in, the editors have assembled keywords and concepts to construct a language that can take the discourse on de-growth forward. The book is not prescriptive but suggestive in nature, inviting readers to make their own voyage and reach their own sense of what de-growth means to them. It is a must read for all those who firmly believe that modern economy has reached its dead-end. Dr. Sudhirendar Sharma, Independent Environmental Consultant This book should be compulsory reading for all students in universities and sixth form colleges everywhere. The authorities would be well advised to ban it. Perhaps, as in 'Fahrenheit 451', in the transition to degrowth global societies idealists will memorize some of these short and inspiring prose poems showing that another world is possible. Leslie Sklair, London School of Economics About the Author Giacomo D'Alisa is Research Fellow at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. Federico Demaria is a PhD candidate at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. Giorgios Kallis is Research Professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. The three editors are members of Research Degrowth, [www.degrowth.org](http://www.degrowth.org)