

FEMINIST →

ACTION NEXUS

for Economic and Climate Justice

DEGROWTH FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE #1

What is Degrowth?

PRIMER SERIES BY EMILIA REYES



INTRODUCTION

For generations, communities in the Global South and Indigenous Peoples worldwide have carried out relational and productive practices that ensure harmony among different spheres of life, centering collective wellbeing with a sense of a belonging to a larger ecological balance. Some of these traditions are more widely known, like *Buen Vivir*¹ or *Ubuntu*.² These are examples of a wide variety of traditions that originated in Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and communities, that are practiced at a local level, and refer to effective and balanced economic dynamics that hold many solutions to the current ecological challenges the world is facing.³

The notion of degrowth derives in part from these traditions, and in a wider sense, has embraced the many and varied Transition Discourses (TDs) that have been proposed in the Global South as part of a *pluriverse* of alternatives.⁴ Degrowth was also generated in recognition of the need to accelerate solutions based on the historical and current responsibility of Global North countries, corporations, elites and harmful sectors, in generating and reproducing both the obscene structural inequalities at the global level as well as the ecocide that is unfolding in front of our eyes⁵. In the face of this ecocidal collapse and the direct responsibility of the Global North, the degrowth framework makes explicit the need to formulate differentiated approaches for the Global North and the Global South.⁶

This paper, the first in the series of three advocacy briefs, offers an introduction to the concept of degrowth, in relation to the struggle for global justice. It emphasizes the need to transition towards a post-extractivism stage for Global South countries, with a recognition of the Right to Development and under principles such as equity, common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and reparations. This paper also outlines initial feminist proposals within the field of degrowth, and discusses them from a decolonial lens and rooted in a feminist structural tradition.

The second piece in the series describes the need for degrowth for Global North countries specifically, centering the accountability of extraterritorial impacts and reparations, as well as for the wealthy in both Global North and Global South countries, and harmful economic sectors worldwide. It examines the colonial and imperial dynamics of wealth and harmful economic practices operating in both the Global North and South. Overall, the framework of degrowth is not devised to be applied for Global South countries given the historical oppression they have lived for centuries, and continue to live,

1 Lang, Miriam, "Buen Vivir as a territorial practice. Building a more just and sustainable life through interculturality", in *Sustainability Science*, February 2022.

2 Tamale, Sylvia, "Reconceptualizing Justice through Ubuntu", in *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*, Daraja Press, 2020. pp. 139-147.

3 For purposes of space, this paper will not dwell much into detail in these proposals, but they are key for establishing real economies on the ground.

4 "In the Global South (mostly in Latin America), TDs include post-development and alternatives to development, crisis of civilizational model, Buen Vivir and the rights of nature, communal logics, and transitions to post-extractivism (...) [While in the Global North there are also other framings to refer to processes that signal what is to come, such as] post-growth, post-materialist, post-economic, post-capitalist, and post-human, those for the south are expressed in terms of post-development, non-liberal, post/non-capitalist, biocentric, and post-extractivist.... [T]ensions remain, for instance, around the critique of modernity and the scope for dematerialization". Escobar, Arturo, "Degrowth, postdevelopment, and transitions: a preliminary conversation", in *Sustainable Science*, 25 April 2015.

5 See: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/reports>; and <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

6 This is explored further in the second issue of this series.

under colonial dynamics. Targeted degrowth actions in the Global South need to be conceived in larger systems that should emphasize a transition towards a post-extractive phase.

The third and final paper outlines the significance of the degrowth framework in the context of global struggles for justice, especially within the multilateral arena.

WHAT IS DEGROWTH?

There are many definitions of degrowth.⁷ Giorgos Kallis describes it as “a trajectory where the ‘throughput’ (energy, materials and waste flows) of an economy decreases while welfare, or well-being, improves.”⁸ Jason Hickel says it is a “planned reduction of excess energy and resource use to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a safe, just and equitable way.”⁹

The notion of degrowth criticizes the hegemony of growth—and proposes a radical reorganization of society that leads to a drastic reduction in the use of energy and resources. Reconceptualizing what is deemed necessary, desirable, and possible, degrowth can “open up the opportunity for dis-embedding life from the totalizing effects of current economic structures and processes.”¹⁰

The starting point of degrowth is the reality, demonstrated by an increasing number of studies, that further economic growth in industrialized countries is unsustainable. Even if that growth is “green” or “inclusive”, or even if accompanied by massive investments in renewable energies, industrialized countries cannot reduce their environmental impact (emissions, material throughput, etc.) quickly or sufficiently enough while at the same time growing their economies. The transformation needed in industrialized countries—if they are to reduce their emissions and environmental impacts fast enough to leave space for the Global South to administer its wellbeing, and for the world to head towards ecological balance—will also lead to reducing the size of Global North economies.¹¹

Degrowth is a framework under which proposals linked to political economy and ecological economy converge.¹² Degrowth clarifies and highlights in an unquestionable manner the criminal and ecocidal impacts of the current predatory economic system.

⁷ See Demaríá, Kallis and Bakker, “Geographies of Degrowth: Nowtopias, resurgences and the decolonization of imaginaries and places”, *Environment and Planning E*, 2019.

⁸ Kallis, Giorgos, “What is degrowth?”, Chapter 2 in *Degrowth*, Agenda Publishing Ltd.

⁹ Hickel, Jason, “Welcome to the Anthropocene”, *Less is More. How degrowth will save the world*, Windmill, 2020.

¹⁰ Demaríá et al, “Geographies of Degrowth”, Op. Cit.

¹¹ Schmelzer, Matthias, Vetter, Andrea and Vansijtjan Aaron, “Introduction”, *The future is Degrowth. A guide to a world beyond capitalism*, Verso, 2022, p. 3.

¹² Ecological economy is the tradition that focuses on the tensions generated between an economic growth paradigm and the environment. There is also a tradition called “social ecological economy”, that emphasizes the way humans and their societies operate, while making use of historical and descriptive analysis of the past and its institutions, highlighting a biophysical economy. See: *Routledge Handbook of Ecological Economics. Nature and Society*, Edited by Clive L. Spash, Routledge 2017, London. See specially “Social Ecological Economics”, by Clive L. Spash, in that same volume, pp. 3-16.

DEBUNKING "GROWTH"

While the degrowth tradition addresses many dimensions of economics, it emphasizes the notion of growth and its many components because of the centrality of the concept of “growth” to the neoliberal capitalistic paradigm. The questioning of the premise of growth in and of itself has been brought from a tangential concern to front and center in recent years, thanks to the emphasis of degrowthers. Further, growth has been unmasked as an “ideology,” unveiling the way in which, through a historic process that took place in the context of World War II, a focus on economic expansion took over prior assumptions of States, whose sole role so far had been to administer responses to socioeconomic challenges.¹³

Degrowth thinkers have also aligned themselves with the idea of shifting from the standard measurement of “growth,” which is gross domestic product (GDP), to a series of indicators that are more accurate in the portrayal of wellbeing and the health of the planet.¹⁴ As Giorgos Kallis outlines, “[W]hatever it is that GDP measures, this correlates strongly with environmental damage. A social transformation in an egalitarian and ecologically sustainable direction will in all likelihood decrease GDP.”¹⁵ The “beyond GDP” discussion is extremely important in the generation of knowledge for degrowthers, who have contributed to extensive scientific literature on this issue. “Beyond GDP,” therefore, is one of the macro-proposals of the degrowth tradition for the global justice movement, and they join other voices in advocating for a new paradigm of measurement.¹⁶

The degrowth movement challenges the notion of growth “not only for its social and ecological consequences, but for its senselessness—a mad pursuit of money after more money.”¹⁷ Julie Livingston describes this as “self-devouring growth,” encompassing “paradoxical material relationships in which consumption continually escalates, appropriating ever more resources beyond the rate of replenishment.”¹⁸ Inherent within this pursuit of growth, as framed by economists and governments, is not linear growth but exponential growth.¹⁹ Exponential growth is equivalent to exponential extraction (and therefore exponential ecocidal practices) and exponential generation of inequalities, alongside massive destruction that escalates in a short period of time and therefore very quickly becomes untenable within planetary boundaries.

¹³ Schmelzer, Matthias, “Undoing the Ideology of Growth: Hegemony, Path Dependencies and Power in the History of the Growth Paradigm”, *Degrowth*, Blog, July 07, 2016.

¹⁴ This critique to GDP as a standard measurement and the invisibilization of the harm caused by the current economic system has also been questioned by feminist economists in the past. See: Catia Gregoratti and Riya Raphael's “The Historical Roots of a Feminist ‘Degrowth’ Maria Mies's and Marilyn Waring's Critiques of Growth,” in *Towards a Political Economy of Degrowth*, Edited by Chertkovskaya, Paulsson and Barca, Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019.

¹⁵ “What is degrowth?,” Op. Cit.

¹⁶ Currently, there is also a strong work of feminist economists working on a “beyond GDP” framework and for decolonial economic alternatives. See for instance, the work by Sonia Tesfaye, Lebohng Liepollo Pheko, Sonia Phalatse and others are doing in this respect.

¹⁷ Demaría et al, “Geographies of Degrowth”, *Ibid.*

¹⁸ “Self-devouring growth names paradoxical material relationships in which consumption continually escalates, appropriating ever more resources beyond the rate of replenishment, and producing attendant waste”. Livingston, Julie, “The problem of self-devouring growth. A forward-looking afterword”, in *Medicine Anthropology Theory*, Volume 6 Number 3, 2019. Last seen on August 22nd, 2023, in: <http://www.medanthrotheory.org/article/view/4961/6985>

¹⁹ For a clearer explanation of the logic of exponential economic growth, see Hickel, “Chasing the fix”, in *Less is More*, Op. Cit., pp. 89-91.

To stand against growth is not to stand against progress or wellbeing, but the opposite. **It is to call for a rational economic framework that centers wellbeing and the health of the planet as opposed to accumulation of profits at the expense of everything else.**

DEBATES AND CRITICISMS

Among the main criticisms of degrowth are misconceptions that equate degrowth with entirely inaccurate understandings. Degrowth has been called regressive because it promotes “recession.” However, the cycle of the capitalistic system inherently includes crisis and recession, whereas degrowth is conceived as a planned effort, not towards negative growth, but to avoid recession.²⁰ While it has also been accused of promoting austerity, degrowth advocates exactly the opposite: to invest in sectors that are needed for the wellbeing of people and the planet while reducing expenditure in those sectors solely centered on profiteering.²¹ Ironically, those who accuse degrowth of being dangerous are those who defend the exact economic system that promotes recession, poverty and austerity.

The term “degrowth” itself is at the center of many debates. As the field has expanded, many dimensions of the degrowth framework address other economic dynamics.²² However, in a daring manner, the degrowth community has kept the use of the term “degrowth” as their denomination. As Federico DeMaria et al explain, it is a “‘missile word’, which strikes down the hegemonic imaginary of both development and utilitarianism”²³: a word that immediately brings about many questions and inquiries about the substance of the political proposition.

Due to the radical questioning of the very premise of the economic neoliberal system, it is also a term that resists appropriation by the opposition. Unlike many other terms, such as human rights (and even feminism!), “degrowth” is a term so loaded that it has not been appropriated by any actor who attempts to dismantle it. The term sustains a radicality hard to find in other traditions.

There have been many discussions about how to make this framework more palatable to broader audiences, or even political allies who may be interested to help advance the analysis and proposals, without being placed in a position of confrontation. Therefore, many other terms have affinity within the degrowth field of semantics: *agrowth* (using the pre-fix as in *atheism*), *post-growth*, *beyond growth*, and others.

Post-growth and beyond growth are interesting terms because they suggest, under the paradigm of planetary boundaries, that within the current trajectory humanity must face the challenge of transitioning towards a world in which an aspiration towards exponential growth will have to be

²⁰ “The goal of degrowth is not to make GDP growth negative. There is a name for that: ‘recession’ or, when pro- longed, ‘depression.’” Kallis, Giorgos, “What is degrowth?”, Loc. Cit.

²¹ As a matter of fact, austerity has been imposed on populations for the sake of growth, under the IMF and World Bank “structural adjustment” measures. Schmelzer, et al, “Introduction”, *The future is Degrowth*, Op. Cit., p. 22.

²² For the history of the degrowth movement, see: Kallis, Federico DeMaria.

²³ Demaria, Schneider, Sekulova and Martínez-Alier, “What is Degrowth? From an Activist Slogan to a Social Movement”, in *Environmental Values* · April 2013.

replaced in a rational manner. Otherwise, a post/beyond growth world will be imposed on us as a result of a collapse. Either way, even industrialized countries and decision-makers have started to think beyond growth, and are concerned about how to make that transition in a planned manner.²⁴ Furthermore, as Fatimah Kelleher of the Nawi Collective states, the degrowth agenda may not fully be a Global South project, but a post-growth agenda definitely is, as the Global South also should be stepping out of the economic growth paradigm.

Planetary boundaries

A major point of analysis for the degrowth movement is the framing of planetary boundaries. Conceived in the Stockholm Institute²⁵ as a comprehensive and encompassing paradigm that portrays the many dimensions of ecological balance, planetary boundaries measure the ways in which anthropocentric activity is leading to the overshoot of natural boundaries or safe limits. So far due to anthropogenic activities we have overshoot 6-7 out of 9 planetary boundaries, with higher risk every day to surpass tipping points that will bring us on the verge of collapse.²⁶ The correlation between economic activity, the overshoot of planetary boundaries and the proposal of measures to counter negative impacts of these two are strong additions by degrowthers to both economic and environmental justice movements.²⁷

FEMINIST ANALYSIS WITHIN THE DEGROWTH FRAMEWORK

In 2012, during the International Conference on Degrowth,²⁸ feminist economist Antonella Picchio highlighted the largest omission of degrowthers in their overall analysis. They had failed to include the dimension of unpaid domestic and care work, the subsidy that women provide to the global economy and the relevance of time use and the sexual division of labor when analyzing macroeconomic dynamics.

²⁴ The Beyond Growth Conference that took place in the European Parliament on 15-17 May, 2023, with an attendance of 4000 people, organized by the Green Parties of the major political forces in Europe is an example of the weight this agenda carries politically in some sectors. It is also a reflection of the increasing weight these concerns are having among different wealthy countries. See the website to watch the plenaries and discussions: <https://www.beyond-growth-2023.eu/>

²⁵ See: Stockholm Institute, <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>

²⁶ See: <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

²⁷ The framing of "doughnut economics" analyzes the relation between these dimensions (economic and environmental, alongside the social), in an articulation with planetary boundaries (Kate Raworth, 2017). For this reason, doughnut economics are considered part of the pluriverse of proposals within the degrowth community. However, within a focus on global justice as encompassed in this series, the framework of doughnuts economics has strong limitations. For one, it leaves aside the global dynamics of the economic and financial architecture, as well as the complex processes of extraterritoriality, imperialism and colonization. Independently of the doughnut framing, many degrowthers have worked with the paradigm of planetary boundaries to generate demands with extremely relevant inputs and proposals for the global justice struggle. This is discussed further in issue 2 of this series.

²⁸ The history of the degrowth movement is closely linked to the International Degrowth Conferences. See: Kallis, Giorgos, "What is degrowth?", Chapter 1 in *Degrowth*, Agenda Publishing Ltd.

As more feminists engage in the degrowth arena, the more clarity there is that feminist thinking should feature more prominently in the field. For starters, there are calls to recognize that for decades within the feminist movement there have been critiques of the capitalistic system, the growth paradigm, and the exploitation of the ecological dimension for economic gains. The materialist ecofeminist movement, as well as the Marxist ecofeminist movement, produced extremely relevant analysis of the structural linkages between economic activity and the exploitation and subordination of the environment (including with the notion of “primitive accumulation”²⁹) alongside the reproductive work performed by women. Therefore, it is important to recognize these as part of the genealogy of the degrowth movement.³⁰

A feminist lens has an increasing presence in the degrowth community. There is even a feminist network focused on integrating a feminist lens in the degrowth framework.³¹ The main points of entry of the feminist analysis in the degrowth space are the care agenda (encompassing paid and unpaid care work), gender wage gaps, employment, representation and participation, and gender discrimination, among others. Feminists have placed a key component in the collective demands of the degrowth community, and, alongside workers and community rights, democratic processes and ecological integrity, gender equality considerations are starting to have more prominence within the degrowth movement.

However, feminist academics including Dengler (2021) have warned that this recognition is only partial:

“[F]eminism often seemed to be an add-on rather than an integral part of degrowth reasoning (...). Feminist scholars have voiced criticism that in degrowth scholarship there is limited acknowledgment of feminist scholarship as essential underpinning for degrowth and little awareness that degrowth runs the risk of reproducing prevailing asymmetries if the existing hierarchical gender relations are not explicitly addressed, problematized, and condemned.”³²

Unpaid care work and “reproductive” labor³³ are garnering increased attention among the degrowth community, especially the one centered on local and small communities. When the main efforts of degrowthers are made to reduce material and energy consumption to focus more on local production and circulation of goods, then the labor to ensure the reproduction of life increases. Much of women’s time is spent on these tasks. These efforts, without larger structural analysis, may lead to the enhancing of time use on “reproductive” labor.

²⁹ “Primitive accumulation refers to the insight that capitalist accumulation has never managed to operate with just the mechanisms of the exploitation of labor power and the appropriation of surplus value. It has always relied heavily on outright plunder and theft. (...) Primitive accumulation is an inherently violent process of expropriation: extracting resources and appropriating them for free or without adequate compensation. Examples include the enclosure of the commons, forced migration, and the slave trade. The domination of nature and the extraction of natural resources can be viewed as another example of primitive accumulation: naturally produced use-values are plundered for productive consumption as raw materials and treated as commodities in the capitalist circuits of valorization..” This notion is key, as Maria Mies would argue that “both nature and women’s reproductive labor are expropriated as a “free resource” under capitalism”, and therefore they’re part of the process of primitive accumulation. See “Feminism, Capitalism, and Ecology”, by Johanna Oksala, *Hypatia* vol. 33, no. 2, Spring 2018, pp. 220 and 221.

³⁰ See for instance: Dengler, Corinna, “Degrowth”, in *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*, 2021, Routledge, pp. 369-377.

³¹ The Feminisms and Degrowth Alliance (FaDA) is “an inclusive network of academics, activists, and practitioners”: <https://degrowth.info/en/fada>

³² Dengler, Corinna, “Degrowth”, *Op. Cit.*, p. 371.

³³ In the tradition of structural feminist economy, all labor is productive labor. The orthodox school has made an artificial division between “productive” and “reproductive” to emphasize the relation between the monetized economy of the “productive” labor, while highlighting the “care” dimension of the “reproductive” tasks. However, as feminist economists have proven, the so called “reproductive” activities do generate value and it is actually larger than the monetized value generated by activities that circulate in the market.

As degrowth derives mostly from a Global North framework, its feminist analysis primarily still aligns with this tradition. For instance, Global North feminists' work on the care agenda places less emphasis on the dimension of "domestic" work. For more than a decade, structural feminists of the Global South have insisted on the intrinsic relationship between unpaid *domestic* and care work, because much of the work of care is performed through domestic work. In the Global North, where much of the domestic care work is externalized (in many cases externalized to marginalized and racialized women of the Global South, by means of global dynamics of migration), attention by Global North feminists in the degrowth sphere to unpaid domestic work does not have the same weight than the attention given to unpaid care work, and the many intricate complexities that are linked to the lack of access to women's human rights because of these connections.³⁴

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of systematic integration of the notion of the sexual division of labor; in this regard, Antonella Picchio calls to "help the degrowth scholarship to overcome some internal limitations, such as the portrayal of 'care' as the overarching concern of feminism and the lack of consideration for the sexual division of labour as constitutive of capitalist growth and its socio-ecological costs."³⁵ Furthermore, Picchio denounces the lack of coherence of degrowthers in going to the roots of the problem when proposing solutions: "The degrowth perspective dwells extensively on production and consumption, giving subsistence economy a mythical role, but it does not pay enough attention to the sex and class body-politics of social reproduction in the capitalist context we live in."³⁶

But as in the entire feminist movement, there are several traditions of thought in the feminist proposals within the degrowth arena. In some of these, care is seen in many degrowth discourses as a sectorial agenda, and not a foundation of the economic dynamic of our current societies. Therefore, there are challenges on several fronts. In one front, a share of the proposals refer to the care of specific groups of populations (the right to receive care) rather than including and centering the rights of carers, or further, dealing with the entire social reproduction agenda. This immediately poses tensions between groups of rights, but the issue has not been clearly addressed in this arena.³⁷

There are indeed interesting proposals on care in a larger picture,³⁸ but the type of impact of these kinds of approaches are still an open question until there is a clear resolution on how they will

³⁴ See the debates in "The Social Provisioning Approach in Feminist Economics. The unfolding research," by Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar, Routledge, 2021. They state: "By the new millennium, 'care work' or 'caring labor' took center stage in feminist economic writings with the decline in housework performed in the Global North and narrowing of the scope of domestic labor to the care of children. These developments gave rise to two related feminist debates: whether care, defined narrowly as 'nurturant' or 'direct' care, should be considered 'work' and whether paid substitutes for this type of care labor are commensurate in quality to unpaid care (Moos, this volume). The third-party principle addressed the first question, and a case was made that paid and unpaid forms of care could be commensurable. However...[T]his narrow definition of care is North-centric, since in much of the Global South people continue to meet their livelihoods through a range of unpaid domestic tasks that goes beyond direct care work." p.7.

³⁵ Dengler, Corinna, "Degrowth", Op. Cit, p. 371.

³⁶ Picchio, Antonella, "Feminist economics" in *Degrowth. A Vocabulary for a New Era*, Ed. D'Alisa, Demaria, Kallis, Routledge, 2015, pp. 410-416, p. 413. She adds: "... at the macro level, the degrowth narrative does not challenge the structure of capitalism."

³⁷ For a more comprehensive problematization on how care is understood in the degrowth field, see p. 92 of Catia Gregoratti and Riya Raphael's "The Historical Roots of a Feminist 'Degrowth' Maria Mies's and Marilyn Waring's Critiques of Growth", in *Towards a Political Economy of Degrowth*, Op. Cit.

³⁸ See for instance Lang and Dengler, "Commoning Care: Feminist Degrowth Visions for a Socio-Ecological Transformation", in *Feminist Economics*, 16 Sep 2021.

address the naturalization of the sexual division of labor. A statement released by the Feminisms and Degrowth Alliance (FaDA)³⁹ during the COVID pandemic aims to portray a feminist project on care from the degrowth perspective. This is an important first step to systematize a common view, because when degrowthers in general suggest reducing worktime, they seem to assume that a natural order of things will re-assign the sexual division of labor without specific measures to target that. This means that there is room to continue working towards a vision of systems change that does not leave solely in women's hands the responsibility of the eradication of the sexual division of labor and the expropriation of the value of women's labor in the new utopias.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A feminist analysis at the heart of the degrowth arena is key to truly transform our societies, especially in a mode of production and consumption such as the one projected by the degrowth movement, in which our societies will have more time on their hands. Unless systemic and cross-cutting measures are implemented across the entire economic system, the time use will be allocated to women to shoulder unpaid domestic and care work. The sexual division of labor and the unpaid domestic and care agendas cannot be left only to the realms of education, health and the caring of specific population groups. This would result, as Antonella Picchio warned, in the new economic system proposed by degrowthers again being built upon the shoulders of women, providing the largest economic subsidy in the world.

Another dimension that still needs more work for the degrowth project in the Global North is how to tie it to an anti-colonial and anti-imperial project. That is, a degrowth project in the Global North cannot solely focus on how to transform the reality of the people on the ground (even when dealing with the care agenda) within wealthy territories, but should also focus on how the wealth was captured from the Global Majority, especially the Global South, and therefore how to address issues of justice and reparations. Further, the feminist project of transformation in the Global North has to support the project of delinking the Global South from imperialism, the Global North and the international division of labor, which is at the heart of the anti-imperial struggle. While feminists in the Global North working on the degrowth field ascribe to intersectional principles, the intersectionality that is visible is mostly in relation to different groups of population within their territories. Analysis about the specific and differentiated extraterritorial impacts of women of the Global South is still an emerging arena, though some analysis does make connections to the debt or climate agenda.

Finally, a distinction can be made between degrowthers promoting larger systems change and those that are proposing a return to communal life in the Global North, expecting to be self-sufficient and cut their ties with unfair systems of production and consumption.⁴⁰ Onofrio Romano, an Italian philosopher within the degrowth tradition, asserts that “neoliberals find alienation in productive

³⁹ “Collaborative Feminist Degrowth: Pandemic as an Opening for a Care-Full Radical Transformation”, in <https://degrowth.info/blog/feminist-de-growth-collaborative-fada-reflections-on-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-the-politics-of-social-reproduction>, April 20, 2020.

⁴⁰ This is explored further in the second issue in this series.

labor, whereas degrowthers find alienation with reproductive labor.” This points to a key question: when will degrowthers have time to engage in the larger macro transformations of our time—clearly outlined in their complex analysis—if they retreat into community living in the Global North while the world is on fire?

Onofrio’s sharp statement also lies at the core of feminist analysis and what is really needed to transform the current economic systems, beyond just a shift in practices. A structural feminist analysis is crucial here, emphasizing the potential of the role of the state not only in the ability to dismantle the sexual division of labor and capitalist, imperial dynamics, but also to re-orient time use and the entire political, social and economic agenda, outside of androcentric premises.

The context for this three-part primer series is the commitment of feminist movements who are part of the Feminist Action Nexus for Economic and Climate Justice (“Action Nexus”) to develop more resources and materials for popular education and advocacy that advance a comprehensive feminist agenda. This feminist agenda is not a separate or new initiative, but an intentionally articulated one that draws on the work of feminist movements over generations. Our 2021 Blueprint for Feminist Economic Justice, a central piece that anchors the Action Nexus, acknowledges how our work mutually reinforces and reaffirms robust feminist agendas of over five decades and connects movements—including, but not limited to, trade justice, debt justice, and a feminist decolonial vision of a gender-just and equitable economic and climate arena. More resources as well as the summary of seven key demands of our work can be found on the Action Nexus [webpage](#).