

Degrowth in the 'emerging' economies

31 August 2016, 14:30-16.00, room 393; Track: Degrowth 2016 conference in context

Even though there has arguably been an increase in the interest in degrowth across the world, certain contexts are almost completely absent from the discussion. In this session we will start filling the gaps by exploring the potential for degrowth in the so called 'emerging' (in itself a problematic term) countries. These have opened their doors to growth-oriented capitalism and have the potential for growth, but would usually not be labelled as 'developed' or 'developing'. We will focus on countries with large economies and significant geopolitical positions, which also comprise a substantive part of the world's population (e.g. around 42% for the BRICS) and territories, as well as natural resources. As the transition to sustainable degrowth requires a combination of solutions on global and local levels, it is particularly important to analyse the potential for degrowth within these contexts and hence to what extent they could be obstacles or facilitators of degrowth. What is the role of economic growth in organising life in these countries and how is it intertwined with other major factors that shape it (e.g. local forms of neoliberalism, corruption, political regimes, neo-colonialism/imperialism)? What understandings of good life do we come across here? Where can we see the potential for degrowth within these contexts (e.g. social movements, lifestyles, policies or histories)? To start addressing these questions, the speakers within this session will present overviews on the growth discourse and degrowth alternatives in selected countries.

Growth discourse and degrowth alternatives in Turkey by Mine Islar

This presentation is going to provide an overview of contemporary developments in Turkish politics in the context of degrowth. I will start with a historical account of various growth imaginaries since the Ottoman Empire and the ways in which these are articulated in contemporary economic, social and political goals of the Turkish society. Later, I will question contemporary commoning movements and citizen initiatives ranging from slow city movements in Southeast Anatolia to urban gardens in Istanbul in order to answer whether or not they can constitute a potential for degrowth alternatives in Turkey.

Growth discourse and degrowth alternatives in Russia by Ekaterina Chertkovskaya

Degrowth is almost unheard of in Russia – the largest country in the world with vast natural reserves in non-renewable resources, which its economy highly relies upon, and one of the largest emitters of green house gases. This presentation is an attempt to start the discussion. It will provide an overview of the (de)growth discourse in the Soviet Union and modern Russia, connecting degrowth to other major factors that shape the Russian economy and society. It will also look at initiatives and practices within contemporary Russia that might be related to degrowth.

Growth discourse and degrowth alternatives in South Africa by Vasna Ramasar

TBA