

Degrowth: a missile word that backfires?

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Based on Stefan Drews & Miklós Antal (2016) *Ecol. Econ.* 126, 182-187.

Importance

BIG – UPLIFTING – GROWTH

- wording matters
- framing is unavoidable
- metaphors, embodied metaphors (love is warm)
- slogan key to raise attention, gain support
- complex world: attention economy, fast decisions

Advantages

- + raises attention
- + short, easy to remember
- + signifies stance: polar opposite
- + has not been co-opted yet

Disadvantage #1

1. up is good, down is bad
- up will always be good

2. growth is up
- growth will always be up

--> grow/growth: 6.26/6.00 on a scale of 1-9

3. degrowth is down
- degrowth will always be bad

--> most people don't like it





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Grow, dammit, grow!

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Please can we start the engines now, Mrs Merkel?

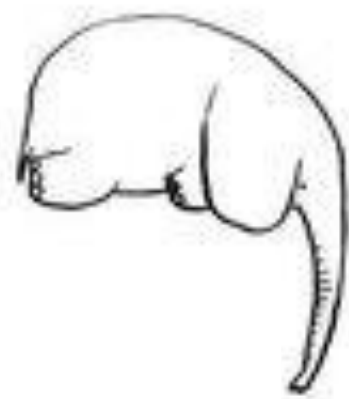
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pain

Disadvantage #2

Logical, ubiquitous misinterpretation



Disadvantage #2

Logical, ubiquitous misinterpretation: crisis

Correction hardly possible:

- no clear meaning, only broad ideological lines
- any measurable definition is restrictive, has downsides
- can be stolen

Annoying to get the degrowth label

Disadvantage #3

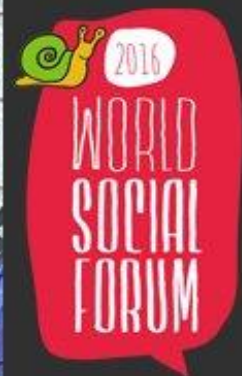
Activates growth

- Marx: Capital – book title
- initiating vs. winning a debate

Activates undesirable frames in defence

*Convivial degrowth doesn't
advocate for a
step backwards.*

*Rather, it simply
proposes, if we may say so,
to get out of the path of
the economic growth
followed by our societies,
to "take a step to the side".*



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<https://fsm2016.org>

Their recession is not our degrowth!

By Federico Demaria | 2



So what?

- Post-growth / beyond growth
- Green/sustainable/advanced economy
- Balanced/happiness/solidarity economy
- Caring/thriving/plentitude economy
- Simple/stable/fair/sustainable prosperity
- Good/better life / great transition
- Sufficiency, well-being, harmony
- or D.E.growth? (de-emphasize growth, delight-equity growth)

--> all these in a positive narrative