

# Don't Forget the Rich

## A Strategy Proposal to Spread the Idea of Degrowth

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### Introduction

How to spread the idea of degrowth and make it accepted in the society?

The general consensus is that the rich should act in priority in favor of a transition toward a socially sustainable economic degrowth.

On the other hand, it is often explained that the necessary transition should come from initiatives that create cooperation between individuals.

But, it is never explained how the rich could actually accept the idea of degrowth.

Nevertheless, it seems that we could obtain their support in favor of a socially sustainable economic degrowth if we follow a strategic path.

### Purpose / Methodology

#### Purpose

The aim of this paper is to formulate a strategy proposal in order to get upper class individuals become less reluctant to accept the idea of a necessary transition, and then more likely to support a socially sustainable economic degrowth.

#### Methodology

Although the paper is mostly conceptual, a short survey has been executed among a sample of 19 people being mostly MBA students at Northeastern University (Boston, MA, USA). This survey intended to help understand the relation between wealth and concern about global issues.

### Context

#### A necessary degrowth transition

- Global issues are wrongly understood which leads to formulate wrong solutions.
- We must understand the roots of global issues to advocate a transition.
- Necessity of a transition towards an economic degrowth for ecological sustainability and social equity.

#### Why the rich should act first

- Lower class individuals are much to go over a transition (Matthey, 2008).
- However, lower class individuals are those who benefit the least from the capacity to actually initiate this transition.
- Upper class individuals seem to possess the material and intellectual resources to participate actively in such a transition.
- Thus, upper class individuals are those from which the transition should begin (Kempf, 2007).

### Strategy Proposal

#### 1. Increase awareness about global issues and economic degrowth

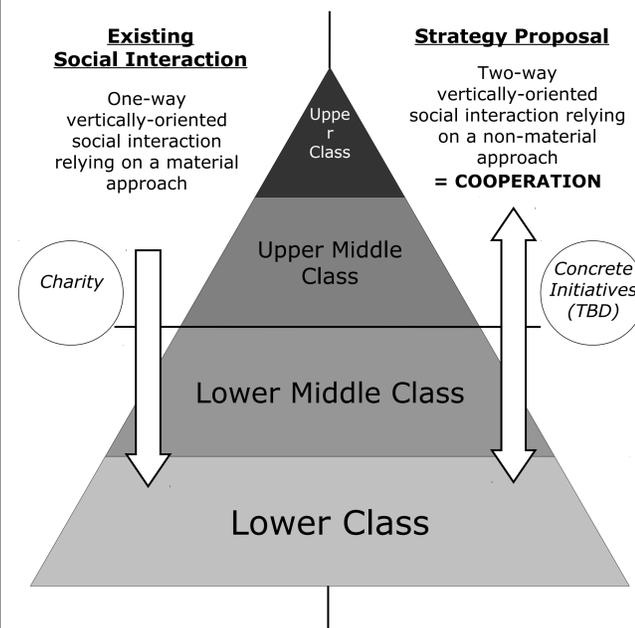
- The rich are concerned by global issues but do not consider themselves affected.
- Therefore, upper class individuals are not willing to act in favor of a transition (Kempf, 2007; Laval, 2007).
- The spread of the idea of degrowth is limited because of the selective exposure to information (Hart et al., 2009) and the feelings of loss (Matthey, 2008).
- **Results:**
  - Proponents should not explicitly advocate the idea of degrowth.
  - Proponents should insist on the infinite positive changes that degrowth could bring to society and citizens.

### Strategy proposal (cont'd)

#### 2. Create non-material vertically-oriented cooperation

- Cooperation relies on uneconomic approach of action (i.e. gift) (Caillé, 2009).
- Cooperation is considered being a particular case of the more general term of social interaction, leading to a win-win situation for both parties.
- Horizontally-oriented social interaction could not support a transition because it does not concern people from different classes.

#### • Results:



#### 3. Propose concrete initiatives

- We shall give the rich some tools, the use of which will lead them to think differently (Buckminster Fuller in Ehrenfeld, 2008).
- **Results:**
  - We suggest to adopt concrete initiatives based on a non-material approach to achieve cooperation.
  - These concrete initiatives shall rely on the voluntary participation of both classes.

### Conclusion / Discussion

#### Conclusion

Once these three steps are achieved, we expect upper class individuals to become less reluctant to accept the idea of a necessary transition, and then more likely to support a socially sustainable economic degrowth.

#### Discussion

Concrete initiatives that will implement this strategy proposal still need to be designed.

We demonstrated that the incentives should rely on the voluntary participation of both classes, the concrete initiatives being proposed and not imposed. In that case, how to maintain the free participation of people if such concrete initiatives are implemented within policies which by definition are imposed to the community?

### References

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