



Degrowth in the Americas

An International Conference

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

May 14-20, 2012

Dear friends,

A voice is rising among those who are deeply concerned with global environmental degradation and escalating poverty and inequality. A root of the problem lies in an unrelenting priority given to economic growth. Degrowth is a new social and economic paradigm that challenges the growth-driven economic model on which existing policies are based. To build on the emerging international discussion on degrowth and alternative models, the Organizing Committee is pleased to announce the Montreal International Conference on Degrowth in the Americas from May 14-20, 2012.

Twenty years after the Earth Summit in Rio, the linkage of sustainable development to economic growth requires profound rethinking. It has not offered a convincing solution to one of the most dramatic crises in history: how to avert ecological collapse while enhancing social justice and improving life's prospects. In advance of Rio plus 20, our Conference seeks to challenge and move beyond the sustainable development agenda. A degrowth perspective will help us visualize and build towards a truly prosperous world.

Drawing from previous degrowth conferences the Montreal conference will focus on the particular situations and dynamics of the Americas. What does degrowth mean for our Hemisphere with its rich geographical, cultural, social and economic diversity? How can degrowth models apply to different contexts from the Arctic to Tierra del Fuego? What does degrowth mean for the indigenous peoples of the Americas and their aspirations for their lands and peoples? How can degrowth concepts be made audible, understandable and attractive to rich North Americans?

In the spirit of seeking alternative societies, the conference will bring together a diversity of social actors to share a deeper understanding of degrowth and build networks and relationships. The format will encourage participants to "live degrowth" during the conference. It will include a convivial degrowth fair, with exhibits, art/video/cultural events, and opportunities for international participants to exchange beyond what is possible in most formal academic conferences. Interaction with social movements and alternative food, housing, and cooperative experiences in the Montreal region are planned. Every effort is being made to reduce the ecological footprint of the event and to maximize its benefits in relation to the ecological and carbon impacts of traditional travel and research activities. Trilingual translation will be available for larger sessions and a cadre of volunteer personal translators for French, Spanish and English speakers will be recruited.

Let us come together to articulate the needs and aspirations of the Americas for postgrowth equitable societies on a flourishing Earth.

Yves-Marie Abraham, HEC, Université de Montréal

Peter G Brown, McGill University

Nicolas Kosoy, McGill University

Olga Navarro-Flores, UQAM

Hervé Phillipe, Université de Montréal

François Schneider, Research & Degrowth, Autonomous University of Barcelona

Paul Shrivastava, Concordia University.

Bob Thomson, Ottawa