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14. The need to align research on economic organisations with degrowth

Ben Robra and Iana Nesterova

1. Introduction

Human civilisation is facing unprecedented changes through human induced climate change, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, and other forms of ecological degradation (Kallis, 2018). For an ever-increasing number of scholars, the continued ecological degradation and intensified climate change are the result of the unrestricted pursuit for economic growth in the capitalist system. In other words, the ecological “crisis is not being caused by human beings as such, but by a particular economic system: a system that is predicated on perpetual expansion” (Hickel, 2020, p. 1). Hickel (2020) describes capitalism as an economic system that is based on and requires economic growth (i.e. expansion of economic activity) to function. However, in this chapter capitalism is not only seen as an economic system but much rather at once as a socio-economic as well as political economic system based on and leading to economic growth (Foster et al., 2010; Ruuska, 2019). Beyond economic structures, society’s structures in general are likewise based on capitalism’s imperative of capital accumulation and growth (Büchs and Koch, 2019).

The acknowledgement that the capitalist system and its drive for accumulation and expansion are the core cause of ecological degradation and climate change has profound implications on how to view economic organisations in connection to sustainability. A perspective on organisations that takes a political economic perspective is required. Ergene et al. (2020) remark that the field of ‘business sustainability’, as well as business schools in general, focus on the business case for sustainability and win-win perspectives. Such perspectives explicitly ignore the political economic system of capitalism, thus making it impossible to address the root cause of the ecological crisis. Further, the aforementioned perspectives often entail a focus on eco-efficiency (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002) to create economic, competitive advantages and win-win

outcomes (see e.g. Porter and Kramer, 2006). Eco-efficiency means producing with less energy/resources per unit. This highlights an approach to sustainability where being green needs to pay off (Ergene et al., 2020). In other words, this approach to sustainability represents a capitalist motivation to reduce costs to ensure capital accumulation.

Not only is the above capitalist approach to a problem created by the modus operandi of the capitalist system an oxymoron in itself, it also leads to further ecological degradation. A focus on eco-efficiency within the capitalist system leads to the rebound effect and backfire (van Griethuysen, 2010). The rebound effect is the phenomenon of absolute increase in resource/energy use despite eco-efficiency measures to reduce ecological impact (Alcott, 2005). Eco-efficiency measures lead to reduction in cost per unit produced, which in the capitalist system either lead to higher production consumption of the good (direct rebound) or other goods (indirect rebound) (Dietz and O'Neill, 2013; van Griethuysen, 2010). Backfire in this context describes the absolute increase in resource/energy use above the use levels before the introduction of eco-efficiency measures. Without acknowledging these inherent aspects of the capitalist political economy, organisational studies on sustainability will fail to contribute to the needed transformation of society towards sustainability. Economic organisations play an important role in this transformation and their study is vital (Nesterova, 2020; Robra et al., 2020). Ergene et al. (2020) therefore call for a radical and normative approach to organisational research that explicitly acknowledges the political economy of the capitalist system. Normative approach meaning here a value laden approach that seeks to achieve a societal change.

The degrowth discourse not only acknowledges the capitalist system and its growth imperative as the root cause of climate change and ecological degradation (D'Alisa et al., 2015; Hickel, 2020) but has recently connected this to explicit political economic perspectives (Chertkovskaya et al., 2019). Degrowth aims to reduce the absolute societal levels of resource and energy use to ensure a return to operating within planetary boundaries (Robra and Heikkurinen, 2021; Rockström et al., 2009). However, research on economic organisations in the context of degrowth has been meagre (Nesterova, 2020). Yet degrowth represents a radical and normative discourse that would fit Ergene et al.'s (2020) call for a shift in focus well. This book chapter therefore aims to present the need for a research agenda on organisations aligned with degrowth and suggest several directions for such an agenda.

D'Alisa (2019) advocates the use of Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony and counter-hegemony to describe degrowth's ideological opposition to the

capitalist system. In line with this, the chapter will describe degrowth as a counter-hegemony and its incompatibility with capitalism in Section 2. This section further translates these insights to the organisational level to highlight the resulting incompatibility of business with degrowth. Following these theoretical insights, Section 3. will present the need for a counter-hegemonic research agenda for organisations and what this research agenda might look like. Further, this section will conclude the chapter.

2. Degrowth and its incompatibility with capitalism

As mentioned in the introduction, degrowth aims to reduce the levels of resources and energy used in society in absolute terms (Hickel, 2020). This translates into degrowth aiming to decrease matter-energy throughput of society (Kallis, 2018; Robra and Heikkurinen, 2021). Matter-energy throughput means a unidirectional flow of energy and resources from the environment through the socio-economic system and back into the environment, which begins ultimately with usage (and thus depletion) of low entropy resources and ends with high entropy wastes, that is, pollution (Daly, 1985). Degrowth often gets misinterpreted as merely aiming to reduce economic growth, but this is not the aim per se. Yet, a reduction in matter-energy throughput will very likely lead to a decrease in economic growth as well as overall economic activity as counted in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Kallis, 2018; Latouche, 2009). What is important to note here is that in a societal system which heavily relies on the limitless expansion of economic activity (i.e. capitalism) a reduction or indeed negative economic growth will lead to recession and crisis (Hickel, 2020). In a capitalist system various societal structures and functions such as for example health care and pensions are based on and intertwined with the continued expansion of capital accumulation and economic activity (Büchs and Koch, 2019). Degrowth therefore aims to transform society and its structures to lose their reliance on economic growth to allow for a voluntary downscaling of production and consumption (Kallis, 2018).

Capitalism aims at continued capital accumulation which leads to and requires constant economic expansion (Marx, 1969 [1867]). Degrowth represents a polar opposite to this ideology (Kallis, 2018). Capitalism and its growth imperative represents the dominant ideology in society (Dale, 2012; D'Alisa and Kallis, 2020). Concepts like infinite economic growth, profit maximisation and capital accumulation are depoliticised and largely unquestioned; turning them into common senses¹ (Buch-Hansen, 2018). Capitalism can thus be described as the current hegemony of society. The term 'hegemony' is used

here in the Gramscian sense as an ideology that dominates in society through (largely) non-violent means and structures (Fontana, 2008).²

The core drivers of climate change and ecological degradation (i.e. the imperative of endless growth and accumulation) identified by degrowth and other post-growth discourses (see e.g. D'Alisa et al., 2015; Jackson, 2011; Victor, 2008) are largely unquestioned under the capitalist hegemony. It is thus to little surprise that concepts such as green growth, green capitalism, or decoupling are peddled as the solution(s) to the various ecological crises. Yet, these concepts focus on continued economic growth and capital accumulation; the very drivers of the ecological crisis. This is highly problematic as these so-called solutions are unable to address or even acknowledge the root causes driving continued climate change and ecological degradation. Even the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) arguably aim to make continued growth and accumulation possible instead of addressing sustainability (see Hickel, 2019; Robra and Heikkurinen, 2021).

Degrowth is often criticised for not acknowledging the potential of future technological innovation that supposedly could allow for continued economic growth (see e.g. Schwartzman, 2012). Two interrelated concepts relying on such technology in this context come to mind: green growth and decoupling economic growth from ecological impact. Green growth aims to continue economic growth by focusing economic activity and its constituents (e.g. employment, production, consumption) on seemingly more sustainable options and particularly 'greener' industries and products (Kallis, 2018). What is interesting to note is that degrowth would similarly allow for particular sectors (such as renewable energy production) and consumption of selected goods and services to grow. Further, degrowth scholars tend to emphasise that economic activity in the global South must be allowed to increase to meet needs (see e.g. Hickel, 2020). Yet, degrowth makes clear that this selected and equitable increase in economic activity can only be sustainable if overall global production and consumption (i.e. growth) decreases. Under this assumption economic activity and hence growth is capped, and some sectors (such as fossil fuel production), products and services (such as flying for pleasure) are set to diminish. Green growth on the other hand aims to infinitely continue growth, which includes that of destructive industries, providing some 'greening' occurs (e.g. offsets for flying). What is unfathomable here is that such an intent completely disregards thermodynamic principles. Economic activity necessarily relies on resources and energy that come from the finite resource that is the planet Earth. How a concept can aim at infinite increases on a finite planet (Jackson, 2011) is profound.

Proponents of green growth claim that through technological innovation it is possible to decouple economic growth and economic activities from ecological degradation and thus continue to grow indefinitely (Hickel and Kallis, 2020). Further claims include the possibility to dematerialise the economy through, for example, a focus on services instead of material goods. Dematerialisation completely disregards the material base and energy that services still require, even if not directly visible (Jackson, 2011). For example, the often claimed to be dematerialised service industry heavily relies on digital services which require large amounts of energy, particularly servers. Further, devices to access these services (e.g. computers and smartphones) require material such as rare metals that are mined with severe consequences for workers and the environment alike.

Decoupling, on the other hand, can empirically only be observed in relative terms (Parrique et al., 2019). Relative decoupling reduces ecological impact in relative terms, that is, it makes future increases in growth less impactful but does not address the overall impact (Dietz and O'Neill, 2013). Further, relative decoupling relies heavily on eco-efficiency measures that (as previously described) in a capitalist system lead to rebound effects and backfire, effectively not only doing nothing to decrease the absolute ecological impact but potentially increasing it (van Griethuysen, 2010). It should be noted however, that eco-efficiency measures should not be denounced completely, but only as incapable of achieving sustainability on their own and/or in a capitalist system as overall consumption and production are not addressed (Heikkurinen et al., 2019; Robra et al., 2020). Absolute decoupling, on the other hand (i.e. economic growth without ecological impact), has no empirical foundations³ (Jackson, 2011). Further, Parrique et al. (2019) argue that the technological innovations required to make absolute decoupling even remotely possible seem highly unlikely. That is, technology that could potentially create negative emissions and impacts such as carbon capture. This does not even take the thermodynamic likely implausibility of such technologies into account.

What is becoming blatantly clear is that concepts such as green growth are not aiming to achieve a sustainable economy and society but rather vehemently trying to 'green' an inherently destructive imperative of the capitalist hegemony. The imperative of economic growth has become such a strong common sense that it seems impossible to imagine a societal system without it. Growth and capitalism are historically claimed to lead to wellbeing, despite increasing well-founded critique of this not being the case (Dale, 2012; Kallis, 2018). Degrowth represents a counter-hegemony to the capitalist hegemony by highlighting that a transformation of society is not only possible but also desirable. Degrowth repoliticises common senses around growth and capital

accumulation to imagine a different society not based on and requiring infinite expansion of economic activity (Latouche, 2009). A counter-hegemony should not only critique but practically highlight how things can be done differently and in line with alternative common-senses (D'Alisa et al., 2013; Kallis, 2018). There are a breadth of projects, initiatives and practitioners that demonstrate how a different world in line with degrowth could be possible (D'Alisa et al., 2015; Liegey and Nelson, 2020). Some of these degrowth-connected initiatives include concepts such as the occupy movement (see Asara and Muraca, 2015) or the back-to-the-landers (see Calvário and Otero, 2015). Yet, the topic and role of economic organisations in this counter-hegemonic context has been largely and surprisingly untouched.

Organisations and particularly economic organisations are vital to societal transformations (Ergene et al., 2020; Mason, 2015) like the one envisioned by the degrowth discourse. Yet, organisations are under-researched in the context of degrowth (Nesterova, 2020; Robra et al., 2020). However, a few studies on the topic exist, albeit some focus on businesses as economic organisations (see e.g. Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018; Roulet and Bothello, 2020). This is problematic in the context of degrowth. The problem with focusing on businesses as economic organisations in the context of degrowth lies in degrowth counter-hegemony in stark opposition to capitalism. This chapter defines businesses as synonymous with firms and corporations (these are the main types of business). In line with this definition, businesses are capitalist economic organisations that intentionally or unintentionally, but still inevitably, reproduce the capitalist hegemony and its destructive imperatives. Regardless of such a definition, many organisational sustainability studies disregard the political economy of capitalism (Ergene et al., 2020). That is, such studies are unable to address the root causes of the ecological crisis, namely capital accumulation and growth, the imperatives of capitalism.

By studying economic organisations without acknowledging political economic implications means studying these organisations in line with the capitalist hegemony. Many business sustainability studies focus on the business case for sustainability (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002). These do not only disregard the political economy but actively try to fit sustainability around the business case, an inherently capitalist conceptualisation including the imperative of accumulation. That is, sustainability in forms of 'greening' is patched around the microeconomic concepts that are the root causes of the ecological degradation. It should not be surprising that similarly to foci on green growth and decoupling, these approaches concentrate on eco-efficiency gains while disregarding the rebound effect and backfire (Nesterova and Robra, forthcoming; Robra et al., 2020). Essentially these approaches try to make sustainability

approaches still pay out in capitalist terms (Ergene et al., 2020). In other words, these approaches still cater to the idea of capital accumulation while sustainability is an extra.

Sustainability as a concept and practice, should not be made to fit around the business case. Acknowledging political economy and severity of ecological and societal degradation means that sustainability should be at the very core of economic organisations on the microeconomic level and at the very core of theorising on this level. The term ‘economic organisation’ instead of business is used deliberately here. As an inherently capitalist organisation, business is incompatible with sustainability by degrowth’s definition. On the other hand, alternative economic organisations can arguably be aligned with degrowth. This is, inevitably, conditional. These organisations must fit the counter-hegemony of degrowth.

Degrowth’s counter-hegemony implies a transformation of society, its economy as well as its agents and structures away from the capitalist hegemony. This means that degrowth also implies a complete transformation of economic organisations away from capitalism and its imperatives of accumulation and growth. This includes, for instance, organisations’ role in society, their aims and practices. In other words, organisations’ nature as economic structures and agents must transform. Instead of the capitalist hegemony, economic organisations need to align with the environment as well as humans and non-humans. Further, a deviation from the imperative of profit maximisation is essential for degrowth (Nesterova, 2020).

Economic organisations operating in line with degrowth need to reduce their matter-energy throughput, collectively and individually (Robra et al., 2020). That is, organisations must aim to reduce not only their own throughput but must help to enable other organisations to do the same. This means re-focusing production for wants to production for need satisfaction. This implies that production needs to go far beyond the notion of eco-efficiency. Robra et al. (2020) argue that eco-efficiency alone cannot lead to sustainability but only if seen as a sub-category of eco-sufficiency. Robra et al. (2020, p. 2) define eco-sufficiency as a concept “that focuses on the overall level of production by emphasising ‘enough production’ (i.e. sufficient levels). ‘Enough’ relates in this context to sufficient fulfilment of human needs.” However, a focus on eco-sufficiency within a capitalist system or indeed by capitalist organisations seems impossible (Robra et al., 2020). Further, products need to be high quality, durable, local wherever applicable, and produced using methods and technologies which are respectful towards life on Earth, both human and non-human. This is in stark opposition to the notion of planned

obsolescence often observed in capitalist production (Dietz and O'Neill, 2013; Illich, 2001; Kallis, 2018).

The capitalist hegemony reduces humans to their labour input into the process of production. Further, capitalist production is carried out for the purpose of making profit, the pursuit of which allow organisations to accumulate capital. Degrowth on the other hand presupposes viewing production as a necessarily social process where people spend their lives, and which affects communities of people and non-humans, that is, humans are not just viewed as an input for profit purposes. Economic organisations compatible with degrowth must fully deviate from the pursuit of profit seeking, making and maximisation. Further, economic organisations must refocus their principles of operation from competition and exploitation towards cooperation and wider belonging in the social and natural worlds (Nesterova, 2020). Without profit creation being the reason for an organisation's existence, possibilities for other forms of organising could unfold that aim to satisfy needs. Degrowth as a counter-hegemony in opposition to capitalism requires economic organisations to also be counter-hegemonic. This means the current research focus on economic organisations in the form of capitalist business and firms is unfit for sustainability in line with degrowth.

3. The need for a new research agenda

Degrowth has a significant impact on how economies should operate to enable a truly sustainable society. It has direct implications for all socio-economic structures and agents embedded within them (Büchs and Koch, 2019). This naturally includes economic organisations themselves. Considering degrowth, research on economic organisations should radically change. The need for a radically new research agenda on economic organisations arises directly from the incompatibility of degrowth and capitalism. Broadly speaking, a new research agenda on economic organisations must actively acknowledge the political economy of capitalism. Further, the research agenda must include a normative perspective opposing capitalism's destructive force on ecology and society.

Stemming from the incompatibility between degrowth and capitalism, the new research agenda on economic organisations must be based on the premise that degrowth is incompatible with any capitalist economic manifestation on the microeconomic level as well. This includes businesses such as firms and corporations. Hence, this research agenda means decidedly leaving behind

any attempts to find a common ground between degrowth and capitalism, its structures and agents. This particularly includes capitalist economic organisations. Economic organisations aligned with the capitalist hegemony reproduce capitalism and its destructive force. That is to say that business whether business-as-usual or business-as-usual-but-greener necessarily reproduces capitalism. Instead, the research agenda must focus on alternative economic organisations (i.e. non-capitalist economic organisations).

Considering the incompatibility of degrowth and capitalism, a radically new research agenda must overcome neoclassical economics, that is, “the economics of capitalism” (Rees, 2019, p. 134). In particular, neoclassical *microeconomics*, which reduces organisations to firms and firms to profit-maximising entities. Management and organisational studies traditionally and heavily borrow their assumptions from neoclassical microeconomics (Ergene et al., 2020; Luhmann, 2018). Degrowth, on the contrary, is liberated from the domination of neoclassical economics. It borrows from multiple heterodox schools of economics including Marxist (particularly, eco-Marxist), feminist, ecological economics, and other sciences, traditions and philosophies. This must be reflected in degrowth’s research agenda on economic organisations.

Particularly promising is social ecological economics (Spash, 2012), as a branch of ecological economics which can inform theorising and research on economic organisations in relation to degrowth. It brings together an ecological and social critique and assumes a critical realist position in terms of philosophy of science (see Bhaskar, 1998, 1989). This signifies embracing normativity and interdisciplinarity. Social ecological economics openly rejects neoclassical economics’ assumptions and allows a more adventurous theorising on socio-economic agents and structures far beyond capitalism. Critical realism does not represent the only research philosophy that can be used in the contexts of this chapter. However, the authors of this chapter have made personally very positive experiences with adaptation of this philosophy. Similarly, the chapter does not seek to point towards one methodology that could be used for future research on economic organisations. Yet, the authors, from personal experience, can recommend qualitative research methods including in-depth interviews and particularly case study research to answer research questions arising from this chapter’s influence.

Social ecological economics and degrowth theories can be translated to the microeconomic level to inform what economic organisations may look like and what their role is in achieving a degrowth society. Broadly speaking this implies that organisations are not seen as isolated and profit-maximising entities. Instead, economic organisations should be viewed as embedded within

society and the environment (Nesterova, 2020). This embeddedness within society further means that economic organisations must also play an active role in society's transformation towards degrowth. The acknowledgement of capitalism and its destructive role on society and environment (Foster et al., 2010) means that organisations play a role in the transformation away from capitalist structures which also means a deviation from capitalist principles at the organisational level. This will also mean that alternative economic organisations will likely struggle within existing capitalist structures before society's transformation to degrowth (Robra et al., 2020). A research agenda which brings together degrowth and economic organisations must include the following:

1. A focus on alternative types of economic organisations beyond business, firms and corporation. This may include alternatives in terms of ownership and governance. Concrete examples of alternative economic organisations that have previously been connected to degrowth are radical cooperatives (see e.g. Blauwhof, 2012) and commons-based peer production organisations (see e.g. Kostakis et al., 2018; Robra et al., 2020). These alternative forms of economic organisation and production are suitable for degrowth because they do not automatically aim to produce for profits and accumulate capital. However, these types of organisation do not automatically align with degrowth and can also be co-opted for capitalist purposes (Robra et al., 2020). A focus on traditional economic organisations such as businesses as firms is only plausible in the context of transition. That is, a transition away from business or similar to alternative economic organisations (see Nesterova, 2020; Nesterova and Robra, forthcoming). Further these transitions must focus on a move away from the imperatives of capital accumulation and economic growth.
2. Since economic organisations exist within societal structures, they can and must help transform these structures towards ones compatible with degrowth. Research must investigate how economic organisations can participate in the transformation of society towards a degrowth society, which structures constrain, and which structures empower this transformation. For this, keeping in mind the vision of society that degrowth as a counter-hegemonic discourse aims to achieve, is important.
3. It should be expected that capitalist structures will constrain and actively oppose transformation. Further, alternative economic organisations will need to actively resist co-optation (Robra et al., 2020). Resisting co-optation and the nature of struggle against the capitalist system while being within it represent other vital avenues for research in the proposed research agenda. This means researching how alternative economic organisations can resist

co-optation by the capitalist system while still continuing to reproduce as organisations is vital for degrowth.

4. Since the new research agenda emphasises alternative economic organisations, success measures will have to change. In a capitalist society success is measured in monetary terms (Jackson, 2017). In terms of organisations, these are measures such as profit, turnover, sales, and growth. In a degrowth society, what is meant by success, and hence the measures of success, must change on a societal level as well as the level of organisations. Instead of producing for the imperative of profit maximisation, in a degrowth society economic organisations will have to produce for needs satisfaction (Nesterova, 2020). Hence, success may be measured in terms of, for instance, needs satisfied. How success can be thought of, theorised and measured in relation to organisations is yet another strand the proposed research needs to focus on.

The four points above do not represent an exhaustive list but are much rather a start to actively imagine a different research agenda. Researching the microeconomic level, that is, the level of economic organisations is vital for the degrowth discourse which has traditionally focused on matters on the macroeconomic level. Overlooking the microeconomic level can, and does, result in co-optation of degrowth. Recent publications (see e.g. Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018; Roulet and Bothello, 2020) disregard many of the key points outlined in this chapter and simply maintain neoclassical economic assumptions on the microeconomic level. Researchers looking into economic organisations in relation to degrowth need to reimagine how to conceptualise and research economic organisations instead of falling back on theories and methods that maintain the status quo by reforming capitalism and its mode of production.

The likes of “corporate social responsibility, green accounting, investment in new technologies, sustainable development and [...] a ‘Green circular inclusive sustainable smart economy’” (Spash, 2020a, p. 122) are examples which distract and reproduce capitalism and from which research on economic organisations should be emancipated. Researchers trying to create business cases for degrowth (Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018) or advocate degrowth as tools for competitive advantages (Roulet and Bothello, 2020) might not actively aim to co-opt degrowth but do so regardless. That is, this research reproduces the capitalist hegemony instead of opposing it. As mentioned before, businesses might be part of a transition towards a degrowth society, this part is, however, to transform away from business and its capitalist imperatives. In other words, businesses defined as capitalist economic organisations cannot be the agents for transformative change. As long as businesses remain businesses, all they

can achieve is reform instead of needed transformation and the reproduction of the capitalist hegemony instead of a counter-hegemony.

Creating business cases or competitive advantages represents a continuation of the status quo that is the capitalist hegemony. Degrowth as a counter-hegemony seeks to transcend and overcome this hegemony. Hence, the idea to make degrowth fit a business context (and therefore a capitalist context) ignores the counter-hegemonic and political economic arguments made in this chapter. It can be compared to the problem of critiquing economic growth without critiquing the capitalist system or hegemony (see Spash, 2020b). This means critiquing a symptom of a bigger societal system and its structures without critiquing the root cause, that is, capitalism. It is important to understand that degrowth as a counter-hegemony seeks to overcome capitalism, its structures, norms, and culture. This means a completely radical societal transformation that cannot be achieved through appealing towards reformist transitions (Nesterova and Robra, forthcoming).

This chapter calls on junior and senior researchers alike to use the arguments made in this chapter as a start to reimagine research on economic organisations to become truly sustainable by helping achieve a sustainable society. For undergrad and postgrad students, this chapter hopes to have created enough interest to consider going down paths less travelled and consider more heterodox approaches as worthwhile alternatives to standard theses approaches. To conclude, as the chapter's authors we maintain that a truly sustainable society is a society aligned with degrowth. Research on economic organisations must therefore similarly align with degrowth and its principles.

Notes

1. Common senses exist as a plural only in Gramsci's (1971) conceptualisation of the term.
2. Albeit it should be stated that the ideological domination of capitalist ideology was never fully non-violent as the capitalist colonial expansion shows. Generally speaking, the capitalist hegemony has become more violent again in recent decades. Yet, the capitalist hegemony presents itself as non-violent. Due to colonial history of capitalism, degrowth has also been connected to the post-development discourse (see Escobar, 2015).
3. Studies claiming to show empirical absolute decoupling, do so on national levels and only achieve this through either accounting tricks where ecological impact of imported goods is accounted towards other nations or with very small levels of growth over relatively short time periods.

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