

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SOCIOLOGY MASTER PROGRAM**

MASTER THESIS

**AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ‘DEVELOPMENT
DISCOURSE’ IN THE FACE OF THE
ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: THE DEGROWTH
MOVEMENT**

**YUSUF MURTEZA
187B4002**

**THESIS ADVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. BETÜL DUMAN BAY**

**ISTANBUL
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ÖZ

EKOLOJİK KRİZ KARŞISINDA KALKINMA SÖYLEMİNE BİR ALTERNATİF: KÜÇÜLME HAREKETİ

Yusuf Murteza

Haziran, 2021

Bu çalışma küçülme tahayyülünün önemini, Fransız siyasetindeki oluşumuna, tarihsel ve entelektüel kaynaklarına, toplumsal harekete dönüşümüne ve siyasal stratejilerine odaklanarak değerlendirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu tez, küçülme düşüncesinin siyasal projesini, büyüme-sonrası ve kapitalizm-sonrası bir toplum inşa etme bağlamında değerlendirmektedir. Tezde, nitel yöntem kullanılmış ve post-siyasal teorik çerçeveden yararlanılmıştır. Günümüzde toplumsal dokunun yeni görünümü sanayi-sonrası, postmodern ve ekoloji-sonrası olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Post-siyasal, alternatif bir sosyo-ekonomik gelecek inşa fikrinin düşünsel olarak gerilemesini ifade etmektedir. Post-siyasal, Chantal Mouffe tarafından çoğulcu toplumun ortadan kalkmasını; Jacques Rancière tarafından ütopya projelerinin sonunun geldiğine olan inanışa bir karşı çıkışı; Slavoj Žižek için ise ekonominin depolitizasyonunu ifade etmektedir. Post-siyasal toplum, konsensüs siyasetinin ve tekno-yönetimsel çözümlerin yüceltildiği, alternatif ekonomik tahayyüllerin bastırıldığı bir toplumsal ilişkiler modeline karşılık gelir. Neoliberal hegemonyanın mevcut durumu, post-siyasal neoliberalizm olarak tanımlanmıştır. Diğer taraftan post-siyasal neoliberalizm, kesintisiz ekonomik büyümeyi merkezine alan kalkınma söylemine eklenmiştir. Ekonomik büyüme, çevre sorunları için yegane çözüm olarak sunulmuştur. Gezegenin uçurumun kıyısına geldiği noktada, sürdürülebilir kalkınma söylemi post-siyasal neoliberalizm ile birleşmiş, çevresel sorunların çözümüne yönelik modernist çözümleri benimsemiştir. Çevre siyasetinde, toplumun radikal dönüştürülmesi ve alternatif bir sosyo-ekonomik gelecek düşüncesi yerini uzlaşmacı siyasalara bırakmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, post-siyasal durum ve neoliberal depolitizasyon stratejilerine karşı çıkan küçülme hareketini incelemektir. Küçülme tahayyülü, alternatif sosyal dünyaların varlığını vurgulamak için post-kalkınma çevçevesini kullanırken, ekonomik büyümenin sürdürülemezliğini bioekonomi kavramı ile açıklar. Modern tüketim toplumunu eleştirmek için anti-faydacılık düşüncesinden yararlanır. Küçülme, ana akım tekno-yönetimsel çözümlerden olan sürdürülebilir büyüme, yeşil büyüme ve karbon vergisi gibi düşüncelere karşı çıkar. Küçülme hareketi, alternatif bir toplum düşüncesi oluşturmak için yerel para birimleri, iş paylaşımı, Nowtopya, kamusal para ve ekoköy stratejilerinden yararlanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post-siyasal, küçülme, ekolojik kriz, kalkınma, neoliberalizm

ABSTRACT

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ‘DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE’ IN THE FACE OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: THE DEGROWTH MOVEMENT

Yusuf Murteza

June, 2021

This research tries to assess the importance of degrowth by bringing into focus its emergence in French politics, its intellectual sources, its transformation into a social movement, and its political strategies. The study considers the political project of degrowth in a way of building a post-growth and post-capitalist society. In this study, qualitative method is adopted while it is supplied by the post-political theoretical framework. The new terrain of the social texture has been defined in various ways as post-industrial, postmodern, and post-ecological. Post-politics refers to the decline of establishing an alternative socio-economic future. The concept of post-political is used by Chantal Mouffe in a way of disappearance of pluralistic social world, by Jacques Rancière for criticizing the rallying cries of the end of utopias, and by Slavoj Žižek to examine depoliticization of the economy. In post-political society, consensus politics and techno-managerial solutions are praised. Different imaginaries of alternative futures are silenced. The neoliberal hegemony operates in the post-political condition and merged with the current development discourse. Continuous economic growth is thought as sole remedy for environmental problems. The planet has come to the edge of a cliff. Sustainable development takes part with the post-political neoliberalism and joins the claim of techno-modernist solutions. To speak of any necessary transformation of society and the imaginary of an alternative socio-environmental future are retired from the scene. The purpose of this study is to examine the Degrowth movement which challenges the post-political condition and the depoliticization strategies of neoliberalism. Degrowth embraces post-development to indicate the existence of alternative social worlds, bioeconomics to argue economic growth is unsustainable, and anti-utilitarianism to tackle modern consumerist culture. It criticizes mainstream economic policy actions as technological solutions, ‘sustainable’ growth and carbon tax. The movement designs the political strategies of community currencies, work sharing, Nowtopias, public money, and eco-communities to establish an alternative society.

Key words: Post-politics, degrowth, ecological crisis, development, neoliberalism

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All forms of research start with personal inquiry. The inquiry that ignites an intellectual research and keeps it alive is not only personal and political but also societal. I believe the discipline of sociology will show its wisdom to wake ourselves up from the dream that hinders our ability to establish a just and ecological society.

My inquiry that shaped this dissertation goes back to the time when I encountered a post from The Economist magazine on social media. It was a photo taken relatively close to an anonymous young man who was also covered full of dust and dirt in his search for collecting valuable pieces of metal in one of the landfill areas of the Philippines. The post was accompanied by a statement of the record GDP growth rate of the Philippines in that year. The main point of the post was apparent inconsistency between economic growth and its social consequences. Apart from mainstream wisdom, which fetishizes limitless growth and development in all forms, it occurred to me that the golden straightjacket of growth may not be a remedy to our social, political, and environmental crises. Growing disillusionment laid the seeds of a search for an alternative imaginary to the endless dogmas of today's relations of production and distribution systems. Thus, my readings on the possibilities of constructing secure zones outside the sphere of market logic began.

I would like to express my thanks to my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Betül Duman Bay, who contributed to sharpening my skills for academic inquiry. This research could not have been formed in the first place without her sincere advices and recommendations. At the same time, I would like to thank my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fabio L. Grassi, who accepted to be my mentor during my Erasmus stay, and Prof. Antimo Luigi Farro for his sincere recommendations at Sapienza University of Rome.

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Istanbul; June, 2021

Yusuf Murteza

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errare humanum est



1. INTRODUCTION

Where do we stand today at ‘the riddle of history’ which was famously stated by Karl Marx in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844? (2007, p. 102). Is humanity ever closer to finding an answer to the riddle than before? I believe the riddle is crucial for discussing the dynamics between humanity and nature in a historical context. Humanity declared its victory over nature. It is believed that technological solutions will provide solutions to tackle the ecological crisis. Though, the reality presented a completely different picture.

The riddle refers to the alienated condition of humanity in the capitalist mode of production. According to Marx, the riddle resulted from the development of private property and the division of labor (Diggins, 1972, p.573). Peter Singer claims the riddle of history refers to the endless conflictual trap between man and man, between man and nature (2000, p. 79). Apart from the conflicts between man and man, individual and society, Marx believed there has been a conflictual scheme of the man-nature relationship for most of history (Foster, 2000, p. 210). This became clear when the capitalist mode of production ruled out feudal relations. Marx argued that newly developing capitalism took the forces of nature into control to become more productive (2008, p. 40). This process established the naked interest of cash relations, whether in the dynamics between human and human or human and nature (p. 7). The unity which had persisted between humanity and nature was entirely altered by capitalism. The riddle now seems more difficult to be solved as the planetary crises have taken place. The earth, which was once an indivisible whole, stands at an ecological rift (Foster, Clark, & York, 2010, p. 7).

Still, the question of where we stand in history, determined by the riddle, unfolds as more complex than it appeared at first. The collapse of the Soviet Union, as leading one of the greatest exporters of the socialist agenda, meant the political and economic package of liberalism is the terminal stop of humanity. Many believed the economic package was a remedy to the social and economic problems. As Immanuel Wallerstein (2006) observes strikingly, the ideals of civilization and progress in

Western thought made their way into non-Western geographies through the rhetoric of universalism. Wallerstein believes this rhetoric results in establishing European universalism. Along with that, European universalism considers particular economic understandings as universal. For instance, capitalism as an economic system emerged in a particular historical context. Though, capitalism is considered as the final destination of humanity. Similarly, Wallerstein claims that the appeal to universalism shows its evidence as adopting the guidance of the market and its neoliberal policies around the world (2006, p. xiv).

As I will examine through the thesis, there are two crucial implications of European universalism. The first one is the idea that humanity has reached the end of history in social, political, and economic transformations. There is no need for a radical transformation in society at all. Only minor reforms would be enough to tackle various socio-environmental problems efficiently. The words ‘alternative economy’ and ‘another society’ rarely circulate both in the minds of the public and academia.

The second point refers to the idea of economic growth. Continuous economic growth spilled over the development discourse in economics and environmental politics. It is believed that economic growth policies are necessary in order to become a member of modern society. Scholars claim these policies can bring prosperity. The idea of economic growth transformed itself into a policy of *sine qua non* around the world. Similarly, environmental politics is governed by growth-based policies in the face of the ecological crisis. Thus, it is possible to claim European universalism takes part in establishing a socio-political texture where thinking of an alternative imaginary is foreclosed (Wallerstein, 2006, p. xiv).

Though, reaching out to the end of history (Fukuyama, 1989), solving the Hegelian puzzles of conflict and alienation by different means of naked market logic (Gill, 2008, p. 9-10) have not proven to be stable solutions. Still, many people believe in the miracle of the market guidance and economic growth fetishism. The siren calls have long forgotten and unheard (Gill, 2015, p. 12). Throughout the study, I will point out different siren calls that are needed to be heard and answered. For instance, the existence of the ecological crisis threatens all planetary life. The existence of the ecological crisis is one of the primary reasons behind this study. Still, I believe there is another crucial siren call. It urges us to consider an alternative imaginary of society

is always possible to the current socio-economic order. I believe alternative imaginaries are critical for challenging various ‘the end of history theses’ in political and environmental thought. This is the reason I prefer to adopt the lens of the post-political framework in this study. Today, constant personal transformation is glorified in terms of short-term contracts, just-in-time deliveries, reinvention of the self, and multiple careers (Elliott, 2013, p. 195). The post-political scholarship seems useful in describing why social and political changes on the societal level have become meaningless. A transformation in the socio-economic structure is necessary in order to solve the ecological crisis. Though, it seems we have a political environment in which there are no alternative imaginaries. Radical politics cannot offer a solution. It is an endless loop of the reproduction of the current hegemonic order, which is thought of as a solution for immediate political and environmental crises.

The concept of degrowth is striking. Degrowth is an umbrella concept that provides for incorporating various ideas from the disciplines of economy, philosophy, and social theory (Zozul'akova, 2016, p. 187). The literal meaning of degrowth describes the situation of ‘decrease’ or ‘*küçülme*’. Though as it will be cleared out in the next chapters, its intended meaning overcomes the narrower definition. As the concept of degrowth circulates widely both in academia and public opinion, much research has been conducted over the very meaning of degrowth, its core values, its political strategies, and alliances (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015; Liegey & Nelson, 2020; Hickel, 2020; Kallis *et al.*, 2020). These studies try to make clear the dust that covers the concept of degrowth and introduce readers to get familiar with the eclectic world of degrowth. After taking insights from introductory books to degrowth, some studies carried out degrowth into different political and social projects. I argue scholarly literature on degrowth can be classified into two interrelated analytic groups. The first type of studies mainly focuses on the flaws of the capitalist societies such as giant mining projects, non-eco-friendly cities, and high carbon tourism. They use the concept of degrowth to trace and criticize the very existence of economic growth and the discourse of development (Borowy & Schmelzer, 2017; Chertkovskaya, Paulsson & Barca, 2019; Latouche, 2009). It is stated that global tourism contributes to carbon emissions and to environmental degradation, necessitating a new paradigm. Degrowth can introduce environment-

friendly tourism by establishing different travel lifestyles (Andriotis, 2018; Fletcher *et al.*, 2020). Tourism increases the cities' contribution to global carbon emissions to a greater extent. At the same time, it is argued it is necessary to reconstruct the entire image of the city to establish democracy from below and create conditions for ecological society (Alexander & Gleeson, 2019). The political image of the city bears inequalities while taking part in going beyond the planetary boundaries. On a micro-scale, the question of housing is not apart from the discussions of degrowth. It is stated that gigantic urban projects are often failed, and the need for shelter and a secure place requires a new understanding (Nelson & Schneider, 2019). The relationship between degrowth and capitalism can be described as a fertile ground where different understandings are intertwined. Some scholars criticize the consumption patterns and claim it is one of the primary reasons for the ecological crisis (Hickel, 2020). By changing our patterns of consumption, it is possible to establish a post-capitalist world where unnecessary needs will be eliminated.

The second type of studies argues that the revolutionary potential of degrowth and the imaginary of degrowth can be used for establishing alternatives to the current economic mode of organization (Parker, Fournier & Reedy, 2007; Garcia *et al.*, 2017; Stuart, Gunderson & Petersen, 2020; Kostakis & Bauwens, 2014). In their studies, they take a more transformative stance. They point out that since the ecological crisis persists, the radical imagination of society is required and the imaginary of degrowth bears this potential to speak out of a decarbonized future society (Romano, 2020; Ellwood, 2014). The point for focusing on the Degrowth movement arrives by exploring how practices of degrowth contributed to other anti-capitalist and environmental movements such as Environmental Justice Movement, 15M, Buen Vivir (Treu, Schmelzer & Burkhart, 2020). Offering an alternative society begins where the present order fails. This is why many scholars claim the recent paradigm of development walks hand in hand with global inequality (Escobar, 2015). They analyze the failure of the neoliberal mode of governance and the idea of continuous economic growth to stress there needs to be a different understanding of development as the idea of post-development conveys. As taking part in European universalism, the development discourse in terms of continuous economic growth emerged in the specific dynamics of Europe and now presents itself as a global faith to be clung to (Rist, 2008). The hegemony of market civilization defines this era to

deepen economic liberal understandings in every corner of the world, while changing our economic patterns is the only way to tackle the global organic crisis (Gill, 2015). Then, it will be possible to bring forth a global society for the non-Western world and the limits of the planet.

In Turkish academic literature, the importance of the imaginary of degrowth is not much known. There are few studies that describe the insights from various sources of degrowth. Since the very meaning of degrowth relates to the idea of some form of decrease and reduction, many scholarly studies have revolved around the borders of organizational strategies, organizational re-structuration in the face of economic downsizing, and the banking sector from the disciplines of economics and business administration. The unique meaning of degrowth in terms of challenging economic growth and an imaginary of an alternative society is yet to be discovered. In one study, it is argued the idea of degrowth could be thought of as an ally to the discourse of post-development (Koyuncu & Özar, 2017). It is stated that the political strategies of degrowth present themselves as alternatives to capitalist society. From the perspective of energy studies and social metabolism, Şorman assesses the need for a decrease in total energy consumption (2012). It is pointed out that high level of consumption patterns are not compatible with the planetary boundaries. Another scholarly article on degrowth comes from Turgut (2014). He assesses the idea of degrowth and its relationship with sustainable development. The political strategies of Buen Vivir are incorporated into the idea of degrowth, while the theoretical reflection over the hegemony of the neoliberal development discourse is omitted from the study. I will try to fill this gap by taking advantage of the post-political theoretical framework. By locating the current political order and its environmental politics in the theoretical framework, it will be possible to locate where alternative imaginaries can develop. I will trace the political strategies of degrowth as a response to post-political neoliberalism and sustainable development as an ally of neoliberalism. The scholarly works conducted over degrowth mainly adopt the perspective of the discipline of economics. It causes studies to be trapped in the realm of statistical data while little is said about social theory to define the situation and guide social action. I do not claim statistical data concerning economic consumption and production patterns are not important. Rather, I argue that social theory, as the post-political framework in this context, is critical for acknowledging

the current socio-political order and exposing its Achilles' heel in order to offer an alternative imaginary. This study considers the Degrowth movement with its political strategies to speak out an alternative imaginary for the future. The study tries to analyze the very potential of the Degrowth movement by putting it in the post-political condition of neoliberalism.

The thesis takes its departure from the insight of an article presented by Demaria *et al.* (2013). Demaria and colleagues state the need for politicizing the environment, and the question ponders whether the Degrowth movement can be successful. In this study, I tried to design chains of arguments in order to evaluate whether the Degrowth movement is crucial in terms of re-politicizing the question of an alternative society. The originality of this study comes from a threefold argument that I examined throughout the thesis. First, I hold the presence of the post-political condition. The theoretical framework of post-politics can be found in various studies from urban politics, social movement studies, and environmental politics (Swyngedouw, 2014; Diken, 2014; Kenis, 2014). The contemporary form of neoliberalism presents itself in the post-political condition, which refers to a situation of the failure of the politicization of significant aspects of social life (Taşkale, 2006; Lang, 2016). In terms of constructing an alternative imaginary of social and political life, the present order seems natural and ever-present. Second, I argued that post-politics has serious consequences for environmental politics. Since the post-political condition has spread to environmental politics, the discussions about establishing an alternative economy that respects the planetary boundaries have been muffled. At this point, I would like to make another argument; imaginary degrowth can provide political strategies for breaking free from the impasse. In this context, the primary aim of this study is to evaluate the Degrowth movement in terms of re-politicization strategies in order to escape the trap of the post-political condition.

The post-political condition, the current form of neoliberalism, and its implications on the environmental scene, will be under investigation throughout the thesis. Sustainable development and the imaginary of degrowth will also be examined. This theoretical study is important for two reasons. The first one relates to the idea of 'the right to be alternative' (Kythreotis, 2012, 549). This is directly related to the post-political condition. After the Cold War, the Western mode of governing society and economy has become a universal antidote to treating all kinds of social conflicts. The

so-called European universalism has brought the conclusion of the end of history. While humanity is ever closer to the turbulent times in economic and environmental politics, the ability to offer a different understanding of economics necessary to establish a just society has diminished. This study implies there is always an alternative to guide our lives. The second point comes from various discussions over the question of ecology in political and social theory. This study contends that any radical theory on its way to offering an alternative society must think harder on ecology, environment, the question of economic growth, and a decarbonized future by considering the imaginary and the movement of Degrowth. Besides, by taking into consideration the discourse of sustainable development, I will try to point out the post-political condition has colonized environmental politics throughout the study. I will emphasize that sustainable development has aligned with the neoliberal mode of governance and forecloses any meaningful societal transformation required in the terrain of the environment. Business-as-usual perspectives are not enough to develop efficient politics in order to tackle the ecological crisis. I will further argue the recent form of environmental agenda could be identified as post-political sustainable development. It tries to hide the essence of the ecological crisis and claims techno-managerial solutions would be enough to face the crisis. It will become clear the idea of degrowth challenges the sustainable development discourse, which is filled with continuous economic growth. Thus, I will try to assess whether the degrowth imaginary and the Degrowth movement in terms of its politicization strategies could be significant in offering an alternative to escape the post-political condition.

Like all kinds of scientific questioning, this study has its own limitations. The study does not try to cover all political strategies and beliefs which are held by the degrowth participants. Also, the study does not look at the reasons for how the discourse of development puts itself at the center of the political culture. The ideals and practices of degrowth can be observed within different political and social projects. For example, anti-capitalism is a strong theme in several green political ideologies and social movements, such as deep ecology and the Occupy movement. Still, there are signs of convergence between the Degrowth movement and other environmental movements, such as ecofeminism. The limitations of this study establish two different results. First, modern environmental movements have been around for over sixty years and I had to exclude some as the Climate Justice

Movement. The potential relationship between the Degrowth and other environmental movements is a fruitful one. Within the scope of the study, the relations between the movements are an intellectual inquiry that is left for future research. Second, it is evident that there are strong points of divergence among the feminist movement. Liberal feminism employs different political strategies and aims than postcolonial and Marxist feminism. Since it is not possible to summarize all variants of the feminist movement and their relationship with the Degrowth movement because of the limitations, the feminist movement is re-packaged under one heading where the feminist and degrowth thought get closer. This study is also theoretical and do not examine the public policy proposals of the Degrowth movement in detail.

Throughout the study, various questions will be asked in manifested and latent ways. I will examine their answers. The central question of this study can be summarized as if the Degrowth movement develops necessary strategies and political actions in order to re-politicize the environmental debates. I assume environmental politics are wrapped up in the post-political condition. Therefore, an alternative image of the economy forecloses. Then, it will be possible to examine whether the imaginary of degrowth can be placed in the discussions of the post-political. Social change is another central motif of the study. I will investigate whether the post-political scholarship offers valuable arguments why social change is downgraded. Social transformation is seen as outmoded. Thus, alternative imaginaries are silenced. Similarly, I will search for the implications of the post-political condition in environmental politics. Later, I will examine whether the imaginary of degrowth presents a post-capitalist future. It is crucial, since I will argue the growth-oriented development policies constitute hegemony. These policies establish a form of European universalism. I will search for how the Degrowth movement challenges the development discourse. Also, I will examine how degrowth communicates with other social movements in Global South in order to transcend European universalism. I will assess whether degrowth constitutes a framework for a post-growth society.

The study will draw on the theoretical framework of post-politics. The works of the post-political scholarship represent a keystone in terms of materials used in this study, along with the scholarship of degrowth. I will briefly summarize the outline of the study. The thesis is organized around two key chapters. The first chapter of this

study, *A Post-Political Diagnosis of the Recent Times*, is divided into four sections. Its main theme is the emergence of the post-political condition. First, I will trace the transformation of neoliberalism. I will claim the recent form of neoliberalism carries the characteristics of the post-political condition. Second, I will turn my attention to the post-political scholarship. I will examine the thoughts of Mouffe, Rancière, and Žižek. They offer different conceptualizations of post-politics. Still, they believe post-politics refers to de-politicization of important issues in politics. Third, I will claim the post-political condition spread over environmental politics. Then, I will examine the history of sustainable development. Also, I will touch on how sustainable development and post-politics intertwined. Fourth, I will assess the dynamics among technocracy, the idea of development, and post-politics. The second chapter of the study, *The Degrowth Imagination*, includes four sections. In the first section, I will introduce the concept of degrowth. Conceptual insights will be analyzed. Then, I will trace the intellectual roots of degrowth. The second section will cover degrowth as a social movement. I will investigate the transformation of degrowth from a political slogan to a social movement. Later, I will look at the political strategies of the Degrowth movement. In addition, I rely on the argument that the Degrowth movement linked to other social movements such as the Environmental Justice movement and feminism. Third, I will examine the history of the environment in order to bring the ecological crisis into focus. Later, I will try to locate the position of degrowth among the environmental discourses. In the final section, I will argue that degrowth is critical to re-politicizing the economy in the hope of offering an alternative society because degrowth has a unique perspective on establishing a pluriverse.

I believe it is important to point out that the riddle of history is not outdated and has not solved. Today, it bears more importance than ever to find a solution to the riddle since it refers to the conflictual relationship between humanity and nature. The study would like to be a modest piece in the construction of an alternative imaginary in the way of an ecologically sound society.

2. A POST-POLITICAL DIAGNOSIS OF THE RECENT TIMES

Some reasons sustain the idea that we are living in more interesting times ever than before. For instance, scholars argue we are in the midst of a crisis of humanity (Robinson, 2014, p. 1). They claim the recent form of capitalism encounters the triple crises. These are legitimization crisis, accumulation crisis, and bio-crisis (Mueller & Passadakis, 2010). For others, we are amid the financial crisis, climate crisis, and global food crisis (Addison, Arndt & Tarp, 2011, p. 461). Though, living in these extraordinary times of crises is regarded as a normal and daily routine in the twentieth-first century (Liegey & Nelson, 2020, p. xxi). In the new socio-economic texture, our capability of making our history is diminished. Alternative voices of different political and economic establishments are silenced in the new wave of neoliberalism. Social transformation is necessary in the realm of environmental politics in order to tackle the ecological crisis. However, the mantra of there is no alternative (TINA) finds its way into environmental politics. These insights will be the hot topics for this chapter. The key insight of this chapter is reflected in the words of Terry Eagleton. Today, the hegemony of neoliberalism has established a political environment where the future being filled with the present (Eagleton, 2011, p. 6). It is thought that there cannot be any place of utopian peaceful relationship among societies and its relationship with nature. At best, there will be different retrotopias of tribalism, where an individual can feel some comfort in the age of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2017).

The negative effects of the neoliberal policies and deepening globalization process on societies are easy to be observed. Some scholars took their points from these negative outcomes of the social transformation and argue that people are currently living in the texture of feral societies (Elliott & Turner, 2012, pp. 159-160). Feral societies have some characteristics. First, civil conflicts tear societies apart. This development fell into conflict against the view that emphasizes harmony in international and domestic relations after the Cold War. Since there is no grand ideological conflict, it seemed reasonable to suggest wars, as we know, would be

impossible. Today, wars are no more fought because of geopolitical and ideological reasons, but mainly the result of identity politics. These are reflected by the struggle to mobilize ethnic, racial, or religious identity to claim state power (Kaldor, 2013, p. 3). They are named 'new wars', 'privatized wars', 'postmodern wars', and 'peoples' wars' (Malantowicz, 2013, p. 52). Second, we have observed cities are the recent sites of crime and novel forms of conflicts. Thanks to the effects of the information revolution that has helped to bridge one location to the other, it is easier to take advantage of these recent developments in technology. Information systems disrupt the flows of daily life. Third, the erosion of the public sphere has drawn attention from various scholars over recent years. This was accompanied by the cutbacks in the public spending and welfare system to implement neoliberal solutions (Elliott & Turner, p. 160). These developments caused many people to be unnoticed in the power dynamics in city life.

From another point of view, what makes our times interesting is also the growing impact of entertainment as a guiding factor in our lives. Scholars claim we are at the gates of living in the age of entertainment societies (Elliott & Turner, p. 163). When Fordism gave way to post-Fordism, as an economic organization, consumption became more important than production. This shifting pattern and its implications on daily life are addressed by many scholars as Zygmunt Bauman, Neil Postman, and Richard Sennett. Alan Bryman argues Disneyization, as he defines, occupies a key role in our lives. Disneyization means blurring the distinction between the real and the fantasy (Tomley & Hobbs, 2015, pp. 126-127). It further contributes to the ongoing dynamics of the consumption process and makes it like a spectacular activity, not mundane. It causes an inability to offer an alternative to ongoing consumption and production patterns. Today, citizens look like a passive observer of social dynamics who contributes to maintaining social order and naturalizes it (Elliott & Turner, 2012, p. 165).

I claim arguments for interesting times would be incomplete unless if one refers to the potential threats for nature and humanity. They are directly linked to the research inquiry of this thesis. Disasters and catastrophic events are noteworthy for social studies. Since disasters and catastrophic events may cause social disruptions and completely alter people's daily lives, we have to put social factors into the equivalent (Elliott & Hsu, 2016, p. 5). Even though they have catastrophic effects on daily lives,

it seems our age is no longer defined by natural disasters, such as storms and floods, but new types of threats resulted from our socio-technical systems. (p. 8). These new threats are defined as food crisis, mega pollution, mass migration, nanotechnology, the biogenetic revolution, and ecological crisis (Elliott & Hsu, 2016; Levy, 2005; Žižek, 2011; Diamond, 2005). From these clues, Giddens further argues doomsday is not a religious concept anymore but a likely possibility in our lives because of the presence of these environmental threats (Giddens, 2010, p. 228). Thus, the notion of catastrophic society shapes our social relations (Elliott & Turner, 2012, p. 165).

These trajectories of society give several insights into the daily lives of individuals. The arguments for interesting times show us two crucial lessons. First, we are living amid the potential threats and risks that could completely alter the way we live. Second, we can consider risks as opportunities for developing alternative economic practices and imaginaries. As discussed by many scholars, the crisis is an opportunity for transforming social relations toward cooperation, community, and solidarity (Petridis, Muraca, & Kallis, 2015, p. 196). It can offer an understanding of the limits of the current mode of production and consumption patterns. It allows us to figure out the root of the problem and opens up potential spaces for new policies (Schneider, Kallis, & Martinez-Alier, 2010, p. 517).

I will argue the discussion of neoliberal transformation is necessary to understand the condition of the post-political. Neoliberalism is regarded as natural that if there were no alternative to it (Duffy & Moore, 2010). Neo-extractivism with mega-construction projects, authoritarian nationalism to exclude immigrants, neoliberal austerity programs, and curbing public spending are current political responses to today's crises (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 7). The post-political arguments address the exact point of discussions that claim there is no alternative to the current socio-economic policies and establishments. The post-political framework is not away from the established criticisms. Still, I believe the post-political framework will be beneficial for criticizing the already established discourses in environmental politics. These discourses are, as Escobar (1995, p. 195) argues, economic growth and development. The post-political framework will trace the alternative possibilities outside the market-logic in the face of the ecological crisis. The greatest achievement of the post-political theoretical framework lies in its tools for re-problematizing and re-politicizing the widely accepted environmental discourses (Macgregor, 2014, p.

629). Later, I will argue degrowth joins the post-political condition debate and develops different political and economic strategies to re-politicize the environment.

I argue the depoliticized environmental discourses are directly related to post-political society. I will introduce the main theorists and assumptions of post-politics. I will also examine how these debates lead up to ‘the end of nature’ (Swyngedouw, 2011), ‘post-ecology’ (Blühdorn, 2007; 2013), and (Žižek, 2007) discussions in the field. Cleaning up the dust that silences alternative visions is only one side of the coin. Offering exit routes out of the maze in the age of neoliberalism is another. I will further argue post-political society bind to its discontents.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I will put into the context how neoliberalism has transformed itself into its current form and managed its reign in the face of growing criticisms. I will try to examine the key features of neoliberalism in the post-political age. In the second section, I will briefly summarize the key thinkers of post-politics. I will also refer to their strategies of bringing ‘the political’ back into politics. In the third section of this chapter, I will discuss how the post-political condition has sneaked over in environmental politics. In the last section, I will turn my attention to technocracy. I will argue the idea of development can be thought of as a form of technocratic politics. Technocratic politics further contributes to the process of depoliticization since post-politics is a form of depoliticization.

2.1. The End of the Political

2.1.1. The Metaphormosis of Neoliberalism

We often take particular concepts in a way that is unchanging and ever-present. This puts our reasoning in danger. We cannot acknowledge how complex dynamics and contradictions have been contributed to shaping these concepts. It bears more importance in discussing the nature of neoliberalism. On one hand, it is claimed neoliberalism seems to be everywhere (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 392). On the other hand, the crucial dimensions of neoliberalism, its flexibility and capability of adopting new situations, are forgotten. Here I would like to argue neoliberalism cannot be examined as a homogenous and monolithic concept as many scholars argued (Rowe *et al.*, 2019, p. 153). But neither I claim neoliberalism is so flexible

that makes it does not have nature (Neunhöffer, Walpen, & Plehwe, 2006, p. 2). Neoliberalism has been taking different forms when dominated social and economic policy arenas. These forms can be thought of as family resemblances (Peck & Tickell, p. 388). It means these forms may look different on the surface, but they share the core concepts and values of the neoliberal project. In this chapter, I will try to show the best way to examine these forms is through phases or waves. Some argue examining neoliberalism in terms of phrases could unfold its specific and localized settings and explain where we are going (Sidaway & Hendrikse, 2016, p. 575). It will help us understand how neoliberalism has adapted to specific environments and took the opportunities of its time (Steger & Roy, 2010, p. xi). This discussion will be useful before examining the current wave of neoliberalism in the post-political condition which is shaped by de-politicization strategies.

There are different arguments for how many waves or phases of neoliberalism have been gone through. Scholars identify two phases of neoliberalism and policies up to date (Sidaway & Hendrikse, 2016). The first wave of neoliberalism which is also called roll-back neoliberalism refers to the times of the Reagan and Thatcher regimes while the second wave which is known as roll-out neoliberalism relates to the policies after the 1990s (Graefe, 2005; Steger & Roy, 2010). Some scholars argue that especially after the financial crisis of 2007-8, neoliberalism has managed itself into a new phase as austerity neoliberalism (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, 2019). I will follow the same distinction in order to discuss the metamorphosis of neoliberalism in this section. It is so crucial to explain particularity of the recent times. Also, it will reveal how neoliberalism developed from its earlier structures (Lohmann, 2016, p. 480).

2.1.1.1. Roll-back Neoliberalism or the First Wave

The first hearings of neoliberal policies did not come out of the blue. Before moving into the discussion of the first wave of neoliberalism, it is necessary to reflect on some earlier manifestations of neoliberal thought. In first years, neoliberalism was slowly gaining a firm voice in internal and external policies. The period is called as 'defensive era' (Plehwe, 2016, p. 66). In this era, neoliberal ideas did not achieve significant support from the public officials, but neoliberal ideas prepared themselves for the potential crisis of embedded liberalism or Keynesian welfare policies in the

future. Neoliberalism was born after the Great Depression. Some scholars argue it is wrong to restrict neoliberalism after the years of Thatcher and Reagan. Since the Great Depression, many liberals worried about how capitalist mode of production and economic freedom were to survive against the threats of socialism and classical liberalism (Plehwe, p. 65). In those times, neoliberals took important positions and contributed to some policy fields, e.g., in Germany. Thus, the first wave of neoliberalism emerged from the German Freiburg School in the 1920s (Rowe *et al.*, p. 153). Though, they had achieved limited impact because of the reign of social welfare policies until the years of the 1970s.

Then, the years of the ‘movement phase’ which was the neoliberal critique of welfare policies and Keynesianism arrived (Plehwe, p. 67). The movement phase also refers to the first wave of neoliberalism or roll-back neoliberalism. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan shaped largely the first wave of neoliberalism (Steger & Roy, 2010, p. 21). The mechanisms that helped to design the new era could be stated as austerity, monetarism, and privatization (Sidaway & Hendrikse, 2016, p. 575). There are some reasons why these political figures are important to be mentioned. Both leaders strongly converted the claims of neoliberal ideology into public programs. Also, they were committed to implement their policies even when there was a political risk (Steger & Roy, p. 21). It is necessary to unpack some characteristics of the first wave of neoliberalism before discussing the policies of Thatcher and Reagan.

Fordism as a principal system of economic production and consumption fell into decline in the early 1970s. It gave way to post-Fordism which means different understanding of the capital and economic production patterns. The new international division of labor was shaped by this paradigm shift. The production process was no longer seen as something that needed to take place within the boundaries of the national. The suppliers of agricultural products produced more industrial, chemical, electronic, and manufactured goods (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 10). Countries in Asia adopted a more export-oriented approach. Oil crises deepened these transformations and contributed to render the Keynesian welfare programs that had dominated social policies. The crisis hit the heart of the social welfare paradigm and it showed social liberalism was not the only game in town (Plehwe, 2016, p. 68).

All these processes surely had consequences for the Global North and the post-war order. The states found itself in a battle. Some political actors wanted greater protection from the state in the new international dynamics. Others demanded reform and liberalization for removing the barriers in the mobility of capital (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 11). The new understanding of capital and economic restructuring was not only put forward in the hands of state officials. Multilateral organizations and international governmental organizations such as IMF, OECD, and various think tanks wanted limited government intervention and allow the miracle of the market (p. 11). The neoliberal agenda hoped for creating the conditions of de-nationalized production, standardization of regulations, convertibility for efficient production and distribution capabilities (p. 12). For some scholars, it was the removal of the barriers of the nation-state paradigm, which was an obstacle for flexible accumulation, made the first wave of neoliberalism unique and legitimized the ground for these actions (pp. 12-13). The state officials were not free to choose the policies and actions of rollback neoliberalism in the menu. Hence, these policies were spread by forced imposition as a result of economic crisis, the collapse of communism, and the emergence of shock therapies (p. 13). Famously, Stephen Gill argued this form of neoliberalism is disciplinary neoliberalism. It aims at achieving market efficiency, discipline, and confidence (1995, p. 412). The Washington Consensus similarly defined the first wave of neoliberalism with its call for tax reform, the discipline of fiscal policy, privatizations, and deregulations. It claims the market mechanisms are the key to economic prosperity.

The rising levels of unemployment and inflation rates marked a big political shift. Thatcher in the United Kingdom, Reagan in the United States, and Kohl in Germany determined this political shift (Plehwe, p. 68). It gave signs of the neoliberal policies that were about to implement its hegemony. As Gill argued, the political life in most parts of the world were designed by neoliberal policies because of the decline of the left and the rising power of transnational capital (Gill, p. 406).

When we look into the policies of Reagan, it is clear to figure out that he aligned it with supply-side economics (Steger & Roy, p. 25). Supply-side economics argues it is necessary to lower the tax rates and decrease regulations in order to boost an economy. When Reagan came to the office, he focused on mostly reducing tax rates at first (p. 26). After that, the time came for decentralization via public choice theory.

Public choice theory achieved that giving more voice to local governments in order to let them follow the rules of the market (p. 30). The deregulation and decentralization continued to spread over the other policy sectors. Reagan issued the policy that aimed at privatizing the federal lands. At the same time, social expenditures were largely dropped out on the agenda.

Thatcher, as one of the leading figures of the neoliberal policies, did not hesitate to criticize Keynesian welfare spending. This line of criticism that stemmed from a similar comprehension makes Thatcher's policies close to Reagan's. Thatcher was not keen on a decentralist approach that aimed at giving more voice to local authorities as Reagan did (Steger & Roy, p. 40). She was eager for neoliberal privatization policies. Thus, she issued the sale of state assets to the private sector and hoped the national corporations would turn into global competitors (p. 41). These transformations also changed the dynamics of the workforce. Thatcher echoed the theory of comparative advantage of Ricardo and argued for Britain's role needed to be based on the financial sector. Thus, a flexible workforce was necessary (pp. 42-43). This understanding of labor is famously named as 'workfare' or 'welfare to work' (p. 43). It urges workers to be ready for the shifting dynamics of market conditions and flexible enough to embrace those changes. It would also point out the end of traditional security programs that covered the expenses of workers and those who were in the need.

The first wave of neoliberalism had strong criticisms from many angles. Some argue the policies of neoliberalism helped to contribute to the widening gap between developed countries and underdeveloped ones in terms of inequality. Its assault on social spending and labor power established the opposition base. Even though these seemed the failures of neoliberalism, the first wave of neoliberalism was a successful ideological attack on the Keynesian style of big government. Even the democratic Left adopted some of the key tenets of neoliberalism (Steger & Roy, p. 49). The existence of some edges of neoliberalism in the first wave, curbing social spending and labor rights, established the second wave as 'reinvention of neoliberalism from within' (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 13).

2.1.1.2. Roll out Neoliberalism or the Second Wave

The political climate had radically changed in the 1980s and 1990s. This transformation was related to the new form of neoliberalism. The second wave of neoliberalism took shape in the 1990s. This form of neoliberalism rejected its hard-edge policies and solid market fundamentalism in the Reagan and Thatcher era for adopting itself to the new environment (p. 14). As mentioned in the previous section, Reagan and Thatcher shaped the first wave of neoliberalism. Bill Clinton in the United States and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom emerged as the key policymakers of roll-out neoliberalism. They contributed to shaping the transformation of the first wave of neoliberalism into the second wave. Some scholars define this new form of neoliberalism as ‘consolidation phase’ (Plehwe, 2016, p. 68) while others define it as ‘market globalism’ (Steger & Roy, 2010), and as ‘roll-out neoliberalism’ (Graefe, 2005).

The story of the 1990s marked the vision that there was no alternative to neoliberal capitalism. This form of neoliberalism did not claim for narrowing down the duties of the state as the first wave of neoliberalism did. It wanted to give a new positive role to the state. The second wave neoliberalism focused on the role of the state to manage and regulate the market system (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 14). The second wave of neoliberalism sought to stabilize the environment by establishing new institutions. These institutions would aim to fix the post-war institutions responsible rather than voicing down them (Graefe, p. 3; Peck & Tickell, p. 389). The new form of neoliberalism tried to humanize markets and make them easily preferable (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 14). The new policies ensured a system of governance to make it work better rather than a rejection of the market guidance (p. 14). Neoliberalism designed the new modes of a social policy for those affected by the first wave of neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389). Also, the neoliberal policies associated with a technocratic form of governance contributed to depoliticize significant issues (p. 389). The new wave of neoliberalism, emphasizes on technocratic mechanisms and depoliticization strategies, is directly related to our discussion of post-political neoliberalism.

This changing environment for neoliberal policies reflected the very core process of globalization. Even though the essence of globalization is not clear, the second wave of neoliberalism considered globalization through the economic lens (Scholte,

2005, p. 7). Similarly, Manfred Steger argued market globalism refers to globalization, which is filled up with neoliberal values (2009; 2010). The second wave of neoliberalism established regional and international trade agreements to remove economic barriers (Steger, 2009, p. 30). The world market became more integrated and consolidated thanks to bilateral and multilateral agreements (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, p. 15). Many scholars attempted to define this new environment. For instance, Thomas Friedman claimed the world has become flat. Thus, competition is welcomed by the development of new technologies (2005). Competition was a core theme in the second wave of neoliberalism (Carroll, Gonzalez-Vicente, & Jarvis, 2019, p. 15). Similarly, Kenichi Ohmae claimed we live in a 'borderless world' where capital markets shape the issues (1990). Clinton and Blair wanted to get rid of aggressive stands of the first wave of neoliberalism such as militarism, disbelief of multiculturalism, and the projection of hard power (Steger & Roy, p. 51). They thought neoliberalism can be reconciled with social welfare mechanisms. In this new climate, social solidarity, which the first wave of neoliberalism ignored, and remaining stick to the market guidance were required (p. 50).

When Clinton came to the office, he emphasized the American economy's interconnectedness to the world economy. Market globalism refers to his policy framework. Clinton acknowledged the changing political environment and the information revolution for creating wealth. Thus, Clinton was aware of a transition from an industrial society to a knowledge society. He asserted mutual agreements between the US and the Global South would be beneficial, so trade was the key to prosperity (p. 54). Clinton, guided by his economist advisor Joseph Stiglitz, believed international trade would make the international system more peaceful. Therefore, economic policies should include structural adjustment programs and make developing countries adopt the market-oriented approaches (p. 55). In reality, these policies ensured American hegemony over the developing countries. Clinton wanted to continue the policies of Reagan in terms of social programs such as welfare to work in domestic politics (p. 64). Clinton preferably opted for adopting a neoliberal style of governance, which puts a priority on efficiency and profitability (p. 65).

The policy set of Tony Blair is known as the 'Third Way'. Anthony Giddens, an advisor of Blair's Government, expressed that it would be no longer necessary to

choose the private or the public over another within the Third Way. Giddens claimed this framework went beyond the classical dualisms of the left or the right therefore it would end to class warfare, which symbolized the old way of doing politics (Steger & Roy, p. 67). This point is vital, since the post-political condition refers to the situation where conflicts are considered old-fashioned. Thus, this novel way of politics naturally reflects a heavy emphasis on consensus in society. Then, it is not surprising that Blair had a strong sympathy for European integration. He aimed at establishing international cooperation and consensus through bilateral and international agreements (p. 68). In domestic politics, Blair embraced neoliberal ideas and weakened his party's socialist leanings to gain support from citizens. He also acknowledged the claims Bill Clinton's market globalism across the Pacific (p. 67). He claimed this was a necessary step to transform the national welfare system. Thatcher's partnership model in the welfare system further supplemented and radicalized (p. 71).

I will make some conclusions about the second wave of neoliberalism before move on to the next section. First, the second wave of neoliberalism referred to the total acceptance of the market guidance in promoting economic wealth (Heywood, 2017, p. 132). The second wave of neoliberalism continued the turbo-capitalist projects and emphasized the idea that the market and community could be reconciled (Steger & Roy, p. 75). The other conclusion is more related to our discussions of the post-political condition. The second wave of neoliberalism established a form of consensual environment. This way of thinking is easy to detect when looked into the second wave of neoliberals' view of society. The second wave of neoliberalism represents a different understanding of socio-economic relations. It dismisses the conflictual society view of socialism. Also, it rejects the dualistic worldviews and emphasizes social harmony (Heywood, p. 132). These interpretations provide valuable insight into the potential link between the second wave of neoliberalism and the post-political condition in the next section.

2.1.2. Post-Political Neoliberalism

Small facts, such as the titles or themes of books and movies, can sometimes be very useful in expressing the core of a discussion clearly. I believe the title of Mouffe's book (2013) can do the same. The book's title, *Agonistics: Thinking the*

World Politically, raises some interesting questions about the current era. The following are some possible questions. What do we understand from politics? Is it possible that our way of thinking about the world has a flaw? These questions encourage us to consider how we perceive and judge current events in world politics. Second, if this is the case, what could be the proper ways to bridge the gap and help us think about social problems politically and take action in the age of neoliberalism? These questions will be the main subject of this section.

Since its first introduction three decades ago, neoliberalism's transformation had consequences in the political terrain. This section aims to summarize how these developments have altered how we see politics. In this section, I will differentiate the words 'the political' and politics. This distinction is important to comprehending the post-political condition. Furthermore, the terms such as 'post-political', 'post-politics', 'post-democracy', and 'post-ideological' are used interchangeably. They will be discussed. Concurrently, it would be important to understand why neoliberalism, especially the second wave of neoliberalism, is related to this debate.

Distinguishing the concepts of politics and the political may seem confusing in the very first place. Though, it will be understandable after discussing the rationale behind it. Similarly, Mouffe argues it seems often odd when someone talks about the difference between these two concepts. In daily life, it is not common to talk about 'the political' (2005, p. 8). We are mostly not even aware of the concept of 'the political'. People attribute all issues in power politics to the definition of politics. As I will examine in this section, this is not the case. The post-political scholarship adopts this distinction. Mouffe's claims will support me because her study of the difference between the definitions carries more weight.

Mouffe claims the distinction between politics and the political is analogous to the distinction between political science and political theory in academia (p. 8). Political science is concerned with empirical facts that are related to the concept of politics. Political theory is concerned with more hermeneutical debates and refers to the concept of 'the political'. To put it another way, politics refers to all the institutions and practices that govern and organize human coexistence in a particular society (Mouffe, 2013, p. xii). Politics, in its broadest sense, refers to everything that occurs in social order. In sum, the term 'politics' refers to any established political order with its own set of norms, beliefs, and institutions. On the other hand, 'the political'

is the ontological level at which politics is constituted. In the writings of post-political scholarship, the understanding of 'the political' varies. For example, Mouffe claims Hannah Arendt considered 'the political' as a space of freedom. Some scholars, such as Carl Schmitt, claim 'the political' is entwined with power and conflict (Mouffe, 2005, p. 9). This does not mean political culture will be characterized by conflictual relationships. On the contrary, truly democratic politics can only be accomplished by expressing dissent in the current system.

Post-political, post-politics, post-democracy, and post-ideology are all concepts that are often used interchangeably. They are all employed in post-political studies. Mouffe believes the post-political situation occurs when the hegemonic order rejects antagonism, which is at the core of 'the political', through discourses such as good governance, cosmopolitanism, and partisan-free democracy (p. 2). They place a strong focus on agreement and avoid even discussing the likelihood of conflict. Jacques Rancière and Colin Crouch coined the word 'post-democracy'. For Rancière, democracy and the idea of politics are synonymous. He argues post-democracy is realized by various depoliticization strategies. Politics is governed without political divisions on both the domestic and international levels. Crouch, on the other hand, argues the emergence of neoliberalism led to the development of post-democracy by causing people to lose confidence in democratic institutions and their reluctance to participate in political action (Ritzi, 2014, p. 171). Similarly, Žižek employs the concept of post-ideology to define the condition of the post-political. In the post-ideological texture, the old ideological divisions have faded away, and new political projects, which situate themselves outside of the conflictual scheme, have arisen.

The neoliberal paradigm has taken different stages. Some scholars recently argued neoliberalism has merged with the post-political condition (Taşkale, 2016; Lang, 2016). Neoliberalism presents itself as a project that has an aim for expanding economic rationalities into different areas of social life (Davies, 2014, p. 244). The neoliberal agenda has influenced every aspect of society. Neoliberalism claims there is no such thing as an idea outside of the market relations. All ideas of happiness, success and, self-worth revolve around the center of economic rationality (Weeks, 2011). Post-political neoliberalism is characterized by replacing politics with economics (Taşkale, 2016, p. 2). Degrowth, as discussed later in the study, aims to re-politicize the economics and save the political from economic rationale. Post-

political neoliberalism rules out the idea of conflict in society. Society is considered harmonious. Economic measurement replaces conflict and antagonism, while radical social change for an alternative society is marginalized (Taşkale, p. 3). A space of contestation and conflictual relations between different political projects are thrown into the dustbin of history. Technocratic mechanisms and other institutional frameworks do not question free-market economics and its logic (Lang, 2016, p. 21). As the post-political condition triumphs, the history of ideological disagreements and alternative imaginaries of the future are no longer relevant. The world is regarded as static and harmonious. The current economic and political structure is considered eternal and natural. Thinking of the world, which refers to political, economic, and environmental issues, is not considered political. Post-political neoliberalism depoliticized it. Returning to the title of Mouffe's book at the start of the section, we need to think about the world politically. Now, we will look at the theoretical contributions to post-political neoliberalism.

2.2. The Political is Dead, Long Live the Political

The main thinkers who contributed to the emergence of post-political debates will be studied in this section. Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Rancière, and Slavoj Žižek's ideas will be briefly discussed. The pattern will be similar as we delve deeper into their arguments. First, I will discuss how each thinker considered recent political transformations. Their perspective differs in how neoliberal politics has transformed, but their diagnosis is the same. This refers to the first part of this section's title, namely the decay of the political. Later, I will examine their arguments and visions for a way out of the neoliberal deadlock. This is related to the second part of the title of this section, namely the recurrence of the political. 'The political' dimension can offer alternatives in the face of the ecological crisis. The post-political scholarship adopts a common vocabulary for challenging neoliberal hegemony. These are weaknesses of the political, offering a path to radical democratization, and emancipation (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 11).

2.2.1. Chantal Mouffe and Searching for Agonism

Mouffe starts by asking, "What does it mean to be post-political?" in order to provide a detailed account of the post-political situation. She continues to argue that

the Western culture, in particular, accepted the situation that occupied the central stage after the Cold War. Socialism, the great enemy of liberal thought, is condemned. The market-based solutions are praised. A cosmopolitan future and liberal democracy were anticipated at the turn of the new century (Mouffe, 2005, p. 1). The reality unpacked a different story.

The story of the post-political world contained several terms that attracted a wide audience among both intellectuals and public figures. Global civil society, cosmopolitan sovereignty, good governance, and cosmopolitan sovereignty were among them (Mouffe, p. 2). The idea of anti-politics is the common theme that runs through these terms. They all refuse to acknowledge the concept of 'the political' is a source of antagonism and conflict. Conversely, their political project can be described as extending beyond the traditional world of ideological establishments. They want a world where the left-right distinction and antagonistic politics have no place (Mouffe, p. 2).

The apolitical worldview stretches beyond the ordinary politics of state bureaucrats. It is simple to locate the intellectual sources. According to Mouffe, the post-political vision carries insights from the discipline of sociology. She argues Daniel Bell's post-industrial society thesis, Francis Fukuyama's end of ideology, reflexive modernity thesis of Ulrich Beck, and Anthony Giddens' concept of post-traditionality contributed to forming the post-political and turning it into a common sense (Mouffe, p. 35).

Norberto Bobbio, an important Italian political philosopher, developed his ideas about the ideological distinction after the Cold War ended. Many scholars, he argued, claimed the traditional left-right distinction was no longer accurate. However, he firmly argued the ideological distinction of left and right did not end (Bobbio, 2005). The ideological distinction of left and right is necessary for a dynamic democracy. Therefore, he titled his book *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction*. The apolitical worldview, as Mouffe suggests, wants to eliminate the ideological distinction that establishes collective politics. According to Beck and Giddens, collective identities do not arise from the dichotomy of we/they but from life politics and sub-politics (Mouffe, 2005, p. 48). Simply put, they argued adversarial models of politics based on old modes of modernity are no longer effective in the world of individualization.

Mouffe sustains agonism is necessary for a truly functioning democracy (Mouffe, p. 52). In politics, antagonism is a political situation in which political actors define themselves as enemies. Antagonism is a universal phenomenon in politics. Antagonisms need to be transformed into agonism for a functioning democracy. Agonism refers to dynamics between adversaries rather than enemies. Adversaries fight against each other because they want their interpretation of socio-economic relations to become hegemonic, and they do not put into question other political actors' right to establish hegemony (Mouffe, 2000).

Hegemony is another term in the work of Mouffe for understanding the post-political condition. To understand hegemony, the concepts of politics and 'the political' are crucial. According to Mouffe, politics refers to an already established set of institutions, practices, and norms that are used to maintain order in a society. On the other hand, 'the political' refers to the dimension of antagonism, which is the very root of human societies (Mouffe, 2005, p. 9). The political is downgraded particularly during the time of liberal democracy. Even though there are different forms of liberalism, one may claim that liberalism negates the very essence of antagonism which cannot be escaped (Mouffe, p. 10). Liberalism thus revolves around consensus and the rejection of confrontation (Mouffe, 2000, p. 104). It has to be known that there could be no consensus. Liberalism and its current mode, post-political neoliberalism, cannot accept that the social universe is pluralistic, as the idea of pluriverse will be discussed in the final chapter, and there are many perspectives and values that could feed different socio-economic futures (Mouffe, 2005, p. 10).

Any order, according to Mouffe, is political and bears exclusion. Alternative voices and imaginaries are marginalized and repressed. They are considered radical and nonsense (Mouffe, p. 18). Every form of consensus means limited hegemony and temporary stabilization of power dynamics (Mouffe, 2000, p. 104). Antagonistic dimension is inherent to all human societies (Mouffe, 2013, p. 2). A well-functioning democracy needs to consider the legitimacy of conflict in the political arena. The neoliberal mode of capitalism caused this political impasse, and it needs to be challenged (Mouffe, 2005, p. 32). Establishing counter-hegemony would make this possible. Mouffe argues every hegemonic order can be put in the operation table and its non-functioning parts can be revealed through counter-hegemony (p. 18). Different and alternative stories will remind the idea that the present is not natural.

The post-political situation, in which the neoliberal mode of production exists, prevents alternative voices from being heard in the political terrain. The post-political is a form of hegemonic order, which silences and represses the antagonistic dimension of the political. Therefore, alternative future imaginaries are not considered. In environmental politics, techno-managerial solutions are preferred to solve the ecological crisis while reformism is valued (p. 18). The presence of alternative discourses and practices, which question the hegemonic order, is the only way out of the post-political situation. Alternative discourses re-politicize the present, which has been depoliticized by post-political neoliberalism (Kenis & Mathijs, 2014, pp. 4-6).

2.2.2. Jacques Rancière and the Disappearance of Politics

Jacques Rancière has made major contributions to the post-political theory. Though, one needs to be aware of the fact that Rancière uses the concept of post-democracy as equal with Mouffe's post-political and Žižek's post-ideology. The notion of democracy is just another term for politics in the works of Rancière (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 12).

Rancière argues humanity constantly is being told the political divisions, social antagonisms, and utopian projects now have ended. Humanity has entered the age of national and international consensus (Rancière, 1995, p. 3). For Rancière, the political terrain dominated by the space known as the Centre. The Centre denotes a new configuration which is devoid of political differences and represents an apolitical economic development (p. 6). In every public debate, politics is thought without ideological dimensions (p. 7). The end of politics, according to Rancière, is connected to two other endings. The first is the end of hope, which notes that it is more important to glorify the present than the future. The second form of endism, known as the end of division, argues consensus must be achieved rather than conflict (pp. 7-8). The so-called end of political divisions was also a theme in Mouffe's writings.

Rancière introduces a threefold division in order to better portray the condition of post-politics. He devises the terms of the political, politics, and the police (Rancière, 1999, pp. 29-31; Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 12). Rancière uses the term 'the political' in the same way as Mouffe does. However, in Rancière's works, politics

applies to the police. In Rancière, the political is influenced by equality, rather than antagonism. Politics, on the other hand, is the meeting point between ‘the political’ and politics (Wilson & Swyngedouw, p. 12). The police or existing order try to naturalize the order and makes it common sense. Though, just as antagonisms are central to the roots of society, so is equality. Politics or democracy takes place when a group of people who are not part of the existing order demonstrate their existence (Rancière, 1999, p. 99).

The post-political condition arises not through repression but through disavowal in Rancière’s thought (Wilson & Swyngedouw, p. 13). As Mouffe examines, every form of hegemony has its own collection of discontents. Any political rupture away from the status quo will be catastrophic. There are three ways of disavowing politics, according to Rancière. Post-democracy will emerge as a result of these experiences. Rancière claims post-democracy is not a democracy but consensus democracy (Rancière, 1999, pp. 101-102). In the end, ‘the political’ disappears from the scene through the mechanisms of disavowal. The banner of consensus has occupied the center stage in the present societies (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 14). The main goal of policing in current societies is to suppress politics. It is because democratic politics disrupt the social order and there are different ways of politics (May, 2008, p. 43).

Three forms of the disavowing of politics are archi-politics, meta-politics, and para-politics (Rancière, 1999, pp. 61-93). In Rancière’s words, these forms of politics do not constitute the real meaning of politics and democracy. Archi-politics is the model of Plato. It entails the creation of a community as an organism. In order to have an organic, functional community, all parts of society must be included. Plato, according to Rancière, achieved this by introducing the narrative of the three races and three metals in his book. Every member of society is conscious of their role (p. 65). They will not try to change their positions in society. Anti-immigrant nationalism could be further an example for archi-politics (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 13). Para-politics refers to the rule of political institutions. The famous example comes from the liberal theory of contractarianism. It is argued individuals need to give up their power and submit to a particular state order in order to avoid the conditions of pre-modern living (May, 2008, p. 44). Finally, meta-politics is another form of the disavowal of politics. Meta-politics refers to the subordination of the willingness of

politics to a deeper source or essence (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 13). It is more recent than the other two forms of disavowals. Politics here is subordinated to a theory in order to guide the social and political spheres. Rancière claims Marxism is a form of meta-politics, but it is not the only one. The neoliberalism of the 1990s certainly referred to the end of politics (May, 2008, p. 45). Meta-politics and para-politics argue society is split. Though, they claim societal differences are the product of individual choices (Van Puymbroeck & Oosterlynck, 2014, p. 14). Para-politics argues everyone is free to pursue their own goals, and competition is welcomed, thanks to the established institutions. Meta-politics claims the causes of inequality cannot be changed because it is how things work.

In general, the goal of these strategies is to ensure those who are in the margins of politics remain the same. Arch-politics creates an unequal order for common good. Para-politics demands the subordination of the will of people, and meta-politics discard all political struggles in favor of the deeper source that guides social life (May, p. 46). Post-politics hides all forms of disagreements and conflicts in society.

2.2.3. Slavoj Žižek and Farewell to the Ideological Age

The idea of taking ‘the political’ out of the picture is at the center of the post-political condition. This process is described as ‘repression’ in the words of Mouffe, while Rancière preferred the word ‘disavowal’. Žižek, on the other hand, prefers ‘foreclosing of the political’ in his works. Žižek argues today societies face the denegation of the political. Postmodern post-politics not only repress the political but also foreclose it (1999, p. 198). Žižek claims the complete for power, which includes ideological divisions, has been replaced by a technocratic group of economists in order to reach a consensus situation (p. 198). Žižek claims the art of government refers to managerial business in postmodern post-politics (Žižek, 2002, p. 303). It is possible to infer that Žižek follows Mouffe and Rancière's logic.

Though echoing Mouffe, Žižek believes Tony Blair and his New Labour project offer the best example for the times of postmodern post-politics. The politics of New Labour was radical in the sense that it dismantled all the old traditional ideological divisions. New Labour was pragmatic. They believed whenever it is useful, all ideas should be accepted if they are proven to function (p. 199). It is easy to catch the idea that pragmatic understanding dictates its own domination in the political terrain. In

the world of post-ideology, which refers to post-political and post-democracy, Žižek argues the governments are mere agents of the market forces that have gained momentum as a result of neoliberal globalization.

Žižek claims there is an important reason why humanity is living in a post-political age or the post-ideological age. This is because of the radical depoliticization of the economy (1999, p. 353). The way the economy works is thought of as natural and unrelated to history. The insights of Žižek reminds the thoughts of Derrida that what seems natural, obvious, and universal needs to be reexamined in order to expose its history and its position as a cultural construct (1981, p. xvi). Similarly, Karl Marx claimed that the conditions of the capitalist mode of production are regarded as a natural law and economic relations interpreted as something outside of history (2008, p. 197). That is the economy declares its independence from the realm of politics as echoed in the various sections of the thesis. Žižek argues as long as the sphere of economy stays as depoliticized, the real demands of the public will remain limited and it will undermine the possibility of acting 'politically' (Žižek, 1999, p. 353). Claus Offe similarly claims that the outcome is the loss of confidence in the capacity for political action (Offe, 1996, p. vii).

Žižek discusses post-political bio-politics elsewhere. He argues post-political bio-politics means leaving behind the old ideological baggage and conflicts in order to reach and enjoy the expert management systems (2008, p. 40). In order to sustain the expert management systems, the politics of fear is necessary. Post-political bio-politics works on that dynamic. It gives only fear, as a passion, to individuals since passions for ideological causes were expelled from the political arena (p. 40).

Žižek accepts three ways of disavowal, which are devised by Rancière. However, he adds a fourth, namely ultra-politics. These forms of depoliticization strategies work under the banner of post-political neoliberalism and revolve around consensus. Ultra-politics tries to depoliticize conflictual relations in society. It silences other voices by establishing an extreme militarization of politics by reformulating the political arena between 'us' and 'them' (Žižek, 1999, p. 190). Any political project which stresses social transformation is thought of as marginal and irrational. Radical social transformation is considered an external threat to society. Ultra-politics, like Rancière's concept of archi-politics, asserts that society is not split between its parts but embraces harmony (Van Puymbroeck & Oosterlynck, 2014, p. 14).

Žižek argues radical re-politicization of the economy is necessary in the post-ideological age. Then, common acceptance and subordination to Capital and market mechanisms will alter (Žižek, 1999, p. 353). Since the political parties on the Left totally embraced the idea of consensus and adopted various depoliticization strategies, the only challenge to rule of the market comes from the populist Right (p. 355).

2.3. Post-Politics for the Environment

2.3.1. Nature, Among the End of Many Things

Whether the social world is defined by various scholars as a post-industrial society or post-modern society, post-political society has occupied the central stage as a result of the previous discussions. Post-politics refers not only to conventional politics. Rather, I argue post-politics has transformed environmental politics. In recent times, environmental issues have been examined through the lens of post-politics. The most obvious result of post-political environmental politics is the decay of alternative imaginaries. Erik Swyngedouw is the most important scholar who adopted post-politics in environmental politics.

Anthony Giddens famously stated ‘we have no politics of climate change’ (2010, p. 4). Though, I believe this is partly correct. There are environmental policies of climate change and of the ecological crisis in general. As John Urry points out in his critique of the post-political scholarship, there are marches, demonstrations, organizations, and political parties to politicize the debate of climate change (Urry, 2011, p. 91-92). Also, grassroots movements such as Transition Towns and Climate Justice Action try to re-politicize environmental politics (Kenis, 2018). As it is stated by Swyngedouw, the climate and other environmental issues are being more politicized than ever before. Though, I believe Giddens is right in terms of a meaningful transformation of society. There is no politics of climate change to offer an alternative imaginary. Environmental politics are shaped by the post-politicization of neoliberalism (Swyngedouw, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, we don’t have politics of climate change and environmental politics in a real sense.

Swyngedouw argues that the current hegemonic understanding, namely post-political neoliberalism, reduces serious ecological problems into easily manageable

technological and managerial solutions. This helps to maintain the socio-political status quo (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 214). The ecological crisis presents itself as something that market mechanism can use in order to attract consumer demand. The current form of capitalism uses the ecological crisis as a marketing tool (Cock, 2011). The crisis of climate change and other ecological issues are treated as a danger to humanity, but a meaningful transformation of society has not been observed yet. The public space is filled with post-political values, which embrace consensus. The post-political consensus decides the fact that absolute, radical, irrational choices and imaginaries are eliminated, and politics turns into something that can be done without dividing and separating (Diken & Laustsen, 2004, p. 99).

The post-political condition is built upon the idea of the inevitability of capitalism and its market logic (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 215). There are different sources of the current ecological crisis. Many apocalyptic scenarios explain what will happen to planetary life in the future. The apocalyptic scenarios about the end of life on Earth share one thing in common. They work under the banner of post-politics (Swyngedouw, p. 219). They repress 'the political' and foreclosure it. The aspect of 'the political' develops alternatives to the hegemonic order. The apocalyptic scenarios produce depoliticized imaginary. The capitalist order is presented beyond dispute. Also, the ecological crisis is seen through the techno-managerial worldview (Swyngedouw, p. 219).

According to Swyngedouw, the post-political condition shapes the environmental politics. The actors of the green movement such as Greenpeace and the German Greens have aligned themselves with negotiation policies rather than contestation and radical disagreement (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 228). As Swyngedouw argues, there are various processes of depoliticization of the environment in the post-political condition (Swyngedouw, pp. 221-225). First, climate change and other ecological crises are regarded as a universal threat to humanity. People from different geographic locations are considered unitary victims of the ecological crisis. As we know, people from the Global South are expected to get more harm than Western countries as the result of ecological threats. The post-political environmental imaginary hides inequality among countries. Different ideological and political visions of socio-economic futures, which challenge the current mode of order, are ignored. Second, these post-political environmental imaginaries believe in a diving

line between nature and society. Nature is considered as something external to civilizations. Ecological issues are thought to be easily solvable under the guidance of techno-managerial approaches. Then, revisiting the dynamics of capitalism is not needed. Third, a group of scientists who often produce solutions to ecological issues is thought of as neutral and free from political debates. It is believed scientists will achieve the best potential solution by technocracy. Fourth, the elites who take necessary measures in order to tackle the ecological crisis rest on consensual. At the same time, there is not a policy that aims at replacing the elites. People only urge them to take policy measures in the existing conditions of the system (Swyngedouw, pp. 221-225).

Swyngedouw points out that the post-political environmental policies limit conflicting and alternative imaginaries of socio-environmental futures. Different perspectives on economic relations are silenced and thought of as irrational. It aligns itself with post-political neoliberalism, which values harmony and consensus, and tries to get rid of different stories for future societies (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 228). When humanity faces the ecological crisis in the age of post-politics, we need better stories (Aschoff, 2015, p. 1). The stories that argue there are different imaginaries like Degrowth will be helpful to re-politicize the environment again.

2.3.2. Covering Sustainable Development

In this last section, I aim to examine the politics of sustainable development, which has certainly turned out to be a buzzword for the new century. Many discussions have taken place since its first use in academia. There are disagreements over the concept of sustainable development. Still, sustainable development offers an alternative route for a decent society in the face of the ecological crisis for some people. The main topic of this section will be the agenda of sustainable development. As the Degrowth proponents argue, any discussion for offering an alternative society must face the rules of the game in the town. Here, the rules of the game are devised by the sustainable development paradigm in environmental politics. In the first part of this section, a brief history of the concept of sustainable development will be examined. The second part of the section will cover how the agenda of sustainable development contributed to the post-political condition and depoliticization.

2.3.2.1. The Conceptual Career of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development is the guiding principle in socio-environmental policies, especially after the 1980s. Even, it has also been observed a distinct field of study known as sustainability science, which fuses natural and social sciences, is emerging (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019, p. 682). One thing is certain in examining sustainable development: its new vision for a new century clearly envisages something like a grand project. For some scholars, the growing reputation of sustainable development seems surprising. Since the end of the Cold War, the grand narratives faced with the criticisms of post-modernist and post-structuralist thought (Meadowcroft, 2000, p. 370). It was believed the age of grand narratives was over. Now, the idea of sustainable development becomes a primary policy target of the key international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank (Elliott, 2013, p. 1). Since then, the agenda of sustainable development has been thought of as a vision to harmonize the negative consequences of development policies and the environment (Gomez-Baggethun, 2019, p. 71).

However, despite its dominance in the political arena, there is not much of an agreement over the meaning of sustainable development (Carvalho, 2001, p. 62; Sutton, 2004, p. 140). Some kind of consensus is reached in the documents of international agencies (Meadowcroft, 2007, p. 300). Similarly, we can argue one key point is common in nearly all definitions. It is sustainable development's strong emphasis on maintaining development (Elliott, 2013, p. 16). Scholars claim the growing impact of the concept of sustainable development, at least in the conceptual realm, is related to its flexibility. Many diverse and conflicting thoughts can be easily grouped together under the banner of sustainable development and used for various political and practical projects (p. 19).

In order to overcome the complexity of the notion, there are some frameworks at work. Three factors are depicted as the key pillars of sustainable development. They are thought as pillars, dimensions, components, and aspects (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, p. 682). These are economy, environment, and society or social. These dimensions are thought of as architectural pillars of the building of a sustainable society (Elliott, 2013, p. 21). In some papers, these dimensions are portrayed as interlocking circles. They are interrelated. The economic pillar refers to using economic resources in the best possible way without causing harm to the planet

while also aiming at profitability. The social pillar means realizing individual needs. It also includes providing a safe zone for individuals in terms of gender inequality, poverty, and health problems. The pillar of environmental sustainability stands at the outmost circle. It covers both the pillars of economy and society. It aims at keeping natural resources safe from dangerous businesses.

Sustainable development did not come into existence all of a sudden. Its scientific sources came from various disciplines. First of all, environmental sciences like ecology and biology contributed to understanding environmental problems. Second, economics, especially ecological economics, developed alternative tools to determine the true cost of economic activity in case of environmental pollution. Third, political science and sociology contributed to the studies taking place in environmental justice. They design projects to understand how people from different regions are affected by environmental degradation (Elliott, pp. 22-25).

In practical use, the concept of sustainable development brought alive by the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development which is famously known as the Brundtland report in 1987. Though, its modern meaning is in the famous paper of *Limits to Growth* published by The Club of Rome (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019, p. 682). Still, some scholars argue its modern roots can be traced back to the work of *Small is Beautiful* by Schumacher and the Stockholm Conference in 1981. Other scholars trace it back to the work of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* in which a steady-state economy is developed in 1848 (Carvalho, 2001, p. 62; Sutton, 2004, p. 141).

In 1992, the UN Earth Summit took place in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The summit contributed to establishing the famous plan called *Agenda 21*. In *Agenda 21*, it was claimed the environmental problems mainly were arisen because of the consumption and production patterns in the rich countries. Still, more economic growth was recommended. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development restated an urgent need to tackle poverty and establish a firm structure to stop environmental degradation. A relatively new theme in the agenda of sustainable development was developed at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio in 2012. It was the concept of the green economy in order to achieve sustainable development. Some aspects of sustainable development were replaced by green economics after the Rio Summit (Başkaya, 2020, p. 131). A green economy is defined as an economy that

aims to reduce environmental risks while focusing on economic growth with low carbon outputs (Kettunen & ten Brink, 2012, p. 1). The green economy paradigm contributed to the transformation of sustainable development into neoliberal development agenda and established unsustainable of sustainable.

The key idea of sustainable development is the need for economic growth in order to have better living conditions. While aiming at that objective, human societies should not underestimate two things. First, the basic needs of people living in underdeveloped regions should have taken into consideration. Second, the environment should be preserved for future generations (Meadowcroft, 2000, p. 371). The crucial point is the dilemma of economic growth versus the environment. Here, sustainable development presents itself as a way out of this crucial debate. It is claimed we don't need to make a choice between environmental protection and socio-technological development but to find compatible policies that would unite economic growth with the environment (Meadowcroft, p. 371). Sustainable development has established so much influence in the policy papers of governments and international organizations. Governments found the premises of sustainable development as a novel way to bring prosperity. Multinational corporations take advantage of adopting green policies to sustain the brand image. Sustainable development's emphasis on economic growth in the age of neoliberal development created strong disillusionment among scholars and environmental activists. Many scholars questioned that whether the agenda of sustainable development can bring ecological harmony.

2.3.2.2. Post-Political Sustainable Development

I argue the main argument of this section can be stated as follows; sustainable development is completely depoliticized in the age of neoliberal hegemony and neoliberal development discourse (Elgert, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2007). Depoliticized sustainable development creates conditions that are suitable for the neoliberal development agenda. It presents an important challenge to tackle the environmental crisis.

The neoliberal agenda closely follows depoliticization strategies. It tries to hide the real problems of conflict while it tries to design environmental politics in a suitable way for technical solutions to the crisis (Clarke, 2008, p. 142). Sustainable

development is the realization of techno-managerial solutions to the ecological crisis. Environmental movements find themselves under the labels of ecological modernization which argues for eco-efficient technologies. These technologies establish reasonable solutions to the ecological crisis and manage it (Fournier, 2008, p. 530). They don't aim at a radical transformation of society.

Some scholars accuse sustainable development as being part of the larger neoliberal capitalist discourse and a form of greenwashing because it is aligned with the green economy after the Rio summit (Elgert, 2009, p. 375). Since it is possible to argue neoliberalism operates in the post-political condition, so sustainable development does. Here, the post-political condition refers to an apolitical world (Catney & Doyle, 2011, p. 175; Chaturvedi & Doyle, 2015, p. 46). Sustainable development, constituting an important part of the process of post-politicization, emphasizes consensus rather than conflict. Also, sustainable development promotes consensual policies in public affairs (Catney & Doyle, p. 178). Then, possible alternatives to the present paradigms in the environmental policy are limited. This delays the production of real outcomes to find a way out in the face of the ecological crisis. I believe that two points are crucial here. The first one is about how post-political sustainable development presented itself as a bridge between the economy and the environment in the age of neoliberalism. Naturally, we may think the consumption and production patterns are not good for the environment. Sustainable development claims the subordination of the environment to the market mechanisms is a solution in the ecological crisis. The second point is related to examining the promises of post-political sustainable development for the future. They will be examined briefly in turn.

Under the banner of sustainable development, it is widely acknowledged the economy and the environment have become contextually equalized (Tulloch & Neilson, 2014, p. 27). We can understand it from environmental policies in the governmental documents. If there is a conflictual issue between the economy and the environment, there will be a capitalist market economy and rational individuals as solutions to the crisis (Macgregor, 2014, p. 619). Then, the economy imposes its own logic into the field of the environment. The neoliberal market order is naturalized and the entire project of sustainable development becomes part of capitalism's survival (Tulloch & Neilson, p. 27). Therefore, the economic logic of neoliberalism shapes

sustainable development. One of the most crucial aspects of the metamorphosis of the sustainable development agenda is its shift towards the concept of sustainable neoliberalism (Cervantes, 2013, p. 26). That explains why the concept of sustainable development has become popular over the years. It is because sustainable development aligned with the dominant discourse of neoliberalism and its development strategies.

The transformation of sustainable development into post-political neoliberalism has taken place in several strategic steps. Sustainable development merged with the post-political condition in three key phases (Tulloch & Neilson, p. 32). First, the economy is depoliticized. The economy and its logic are considered a savior of both humanity and ecology. If we survey the founding paper of sustainable development, economic growth is treated as a cornerstone to promote ecological harmony and improving humankind (WCED, 1987). As Kallis states, sustainable development reincarnated into the green growth paradigm and designed its policies in favor of perpetuating economic growth without taking the environment into consideration (Kallis, 2015, p. 1). Economic growth is measured with the tool of gross domestic product (GDP). Scholars argue GDP is not good at measuring the real means of prosperity and the negative effects of economic activities on the environment (Rist, 2011, p. 119). Second, sustainable development is located next to mainstream economics with a special emphasis on neutrality. This strategy has two aspects. On one hand, market economics is seen as something eternal and ever-present. This strategy is related to the founding concepts of the economy, such as equilibrium, balance, and forces which are rooted in physics (Rist, p. 24). It does not hold true that the competitive economic paradigm is natural and it is the only way how the world works (Coetzee, 2007). On the other hand, nature is presented as something to be subordinated to human will. Nature does not have an intrinsic value in sustainable development.

Today, the political terrain defined by the post-political condition. What does sustainable development promise for the future? Scholars argued sustainable development limits possibly enriching alternative projects to tackle the ecological crisis and establish a just society. Now, nearly all solutions that offer a way out from the ecological crisis are based on continuous economic growth and capitalist mode of production. As the post-political condition expands, consensual policies become a

rule within domestic and international politics. Consensus revolves around the paradigm of neoliberal economics. Thus, as Swyngedouw brilliantly argues, post-political sustainable development seeks to limit what is possible and throws radical imaginaries out of the picture (2007, p. 27). The discourse of sustainable development is shaped according to the needs of the Western countries and their definitions of welfare (Catney & Doyle, 2011, p. 180). Over time, the concept of development updated itself and reached its final form in the age of globalization. Its core aspect as economic growth is never changed. Its emphasis on the Western mode of thinking persists and continues to dictate neoliberal policies in countries in the Global South. Globalization is a process imposing the Western mode of thinking and its values over the non-Western cultures (Latouche, 1996). Also, other voices, imaginaries, and alternative futures are unheard under the banners of the depoliticized and post-political future. Now, I will turn my attention to technocracy and the idea of development as a form of technocratic politics.

2.4. Technocracy and the Idea of Development as a Form of Technocratic Politics

Technocracy is directly related to the implications of the post-political condition. It goes hand in hand with the current paradigm of sustainable development. The aspect of ‘the political’ is removed from the scene. Therefore, I argue technocracy operates in a socio-political texture, which is drawn by post-politics.

In this section, I will briefly introduce the social life under technocratic politics. I will also point out the key parameters of technocracy. The first section will cover these issues. Later on, I will turn my attention to the idea of development through history. I will examine how the concept of development has evolved and adopted by policymakers. There is a dynamic relationship between technocracy and the idea of development. Then, the relationship will be further examined in the third part of this section. I argue the idea of development can be thought of as a form of technocratic politics in the post-political condition. The primary aim of this section is to examine the idea that development politics operates in the same texture as technocratic politics. Sustainable development, the recent form of the development project, is a modern project of this century with positivist and technocratic ambitions (Hartley, 2020, p. 234). It makes us believe development is necessary to tackle the ecological crisis. Also, it claims we should expect decisions from the elites as governmental

actors, multinational corporations rather than grassroots activism. In the end, the ecological crisis is framed by post-politics, where meaningful discussion for an alternative future is omitted from the scene.

2.4.1. The Life under Technocratic Society and Politics

Technocracy is away from clear-cut answers. The term technocracy is Janus-faced (Gunnell, 1982, p. 392). Technocracy is thought of as a positive phenomenon in which experts make decisions. Therefore, urgent political solutions will be achieved by efficiency (Machin & Smith, 2014, p. 50). Technocracy is presented as a form of a utopian project (Gunnell, p. 392). By the same token, technocracy is considered a rational and value-free decision-making process (Boo Teik, 2014, p. 415). As in the minds of past philosophers, technocracy was praised as the wisest form of political rule (Putnam, 1977, p. 383).

On the other hand, technocracy can be direct threat to democratic politics. That is due to exclusion of non-experts from the political decision-making process. Since the post-political condition is defined by different strategies of depoliticization, I argue technocratic form of politics cannot be divorced from post-politics. Therefore, it is necessary to examine briefly how technocratic ideals look like and how they are related to environmental politics.

If we examine technology and its relationship with culture, Neil Postman claims our cultures can be classified into three distinct understandings of the technology-culture relationship. These are tool-using cultures, technocracies, and technopolies (Postman, 1992, p. 22). Tools result from technological developments in society. First, Postman argues tools do not invade the cultural realm in tool-using cultures. Tools are integrated into their worldview (p. 25). Postman claims tools challenge the cultural realm and fall into conflict with it in technocracy (p. 28). Technocratic culture emerged from three crucial developments in medieval Europe (pp. 28-29). First, the mechanical clock completely altered previous understandings of time. Its prime effect was on managing time. Managing time turned into a secular activity and away from religious influence. Second, the invention of the printing press was another crucial development for technocratic society. It established freely circulating secular ideas against the religious authorities. Last, the development of the telescope coincided with other inventions. The idea of religious designs of the universe

declined. Postman claims the mantra of technocratic society can be summed up as one key point. It is the separation of moral and intellectual values (p. 31). Before technocratic society, moral and intellectual values were intermixed. If ancient scholars were to look for an answer to the prime cause of the universe, they were involved in theology. God was thought of as the prime cause. Technocratic society completely changed this picture. For instance, Francis Bacon argued it was time to rescue science from religious underpinnings and leaving the existence of God as a private issue for everyone (pp. 35-36). Technocratic society was truly developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. In technocratic society, the technological and the traditional world-views coexisted with tension. Only after the development of technopoly, the conflict resolved on behalf of the technological world-view. Postman claims technopoly is a totalitarian technocracy that shapes all concepts of family, politics, and truth (p. 48).

What technocracy and technopoly mean for politics? First, the concept of technocracy means government by technicians and technocrats in politics (Ridley, 1966, p. 36). Though, there are different understandings of what constitutes technocrats. Administrators, economists, and engineers constitute the technocratic elite (p. 38). Technocracy is a form of authoritarianism in which democratic ideals are bypassed in favor of scientific knowledge (Machin & Smith, 2014, p. 50). Also, technocrats take part in power politics. As Ridley explains, a technocrat believes technological developments will establish a harmonious society while considers progress desirable (Ridley, p. 36). At the same time, a technocrat is truly rationalist and pragmatist (Machin, pp. 42-43). Then, it is not much of a surprise considering Henri de Saint-Simon as a modern theorist of technocracy (Putnam, p. 384) and assuming the positivist outlook of science as the origins of technocracy (Postman, p. 163). The vision of Enlightenment and technocracy seems similar.

The technocratic vision results from the actions of the technocrats. I argue the technocratic vision aligns with post-politics. I will briefly examine the outlook of the technocratic vision and its relation with the post-political condition. First, technocracy claims that technics and technology must come before politics and even replace it (Putnam, p. 385; Ridley, p. 43). The reason is technocratic solutions are considered value free. They are efficient in managing social and environmental problems. As a result, technocracy is skeptical about political institutions and politics

in general (Putnam, p. 386). Conflict and bureaucracy define the political arena. In order to have efficient solutions, ‘depoliticization of problems’ is necessary (Ridley, p. 43). I argue it is the same logic that underpins the post-political vision. ‘The political’ gives dissent to the established political order. In technocratic politics, it is silenced. Technocracy considers politics, emotions, and interests fatal threats to the rational establishment of society (Ridley, p. 44). The technocratic form of government does not believe conflicts are natural rather it claims conflicts occur because of misinformation (Putnam, p. 387). Since technocracy respects scientific management tradition, it is believed the age of ideology is out of date (Ridley, p. 43). As I argued before, Mouffe and other post-political scholars consider the end of ideology thesis as the central aspect of post-political neoliberalism. Last, the technocratic ideal believes a good society can be measured by the technological processes and material output of an economy (Putnam, p. 387). I argue measuring material output to determine the level of good society falls into the trap. The current development discourse fetishizes economic growth without taking into consideration of the planet’s carrying capacity. It tries to measure well-being in the Western mode of thinking of success, welfare, and happiness.

How technocratic politics shape environmental issues? Some scholars argued environmental politics are framed as policies without politics (Ojha *et al.*, 2015, p. 419). Totally technocratic form of government is uncommon in the real world of politics. Though, the privilege of technological experts and technocrats in the decision-making process is common (Machin, p. 51). These technocrats are not only natural scientists and engineers but also neo-classical economists (Machin, p. 51). In the end, we are left with the political arena where different alternative imaginaries are unheard. Since environmental decisions are started to be left for experts, there is going to be less space for urgent siren calls (Machin, p. 52).

Democracy truly occurs in a political texture where different interests compete. As I examined earlier, the post-political condition is characterized by certainty, disinterested politics, and rational calculation of the decision-making process. Technocracy and expert systems fill the political texture with certain scientific claims and they depoliticize environmental politics (Machin, p. 52). In this situation, post-normal science, one of the main pillars of the Degrowth movement, developed. The ideas of scientists and especially economists are challenged because their expert

systems contribute to colonize the social and political texture in a way of depoliticization (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2015, p. 187). Sustainable development as a current development discourse is characterized by post-politics. Sustainable development discourse and its implementation by technocrats design the political texture where alternative ideas are de-platformed (Hartley, p. 234). In the sustainable development discourse, alternative stories about the origins of the ecological crisis are unseen because sustainable development discourse serves powerful interests (p. 236).

Technocratic vision could damage the very essence of politics. Consensus politics, which is post-politics, harm the essence of politics. It omits 'the political' from political life. Technocratic decisions need to be put into contestation (Barry, 2012, p. 269). Now, I will turn my attention to the history of development.

2.4.2. The Idea of Development in Historical Context

Concepts are the main building blocks of doing science. Some concepts in social sciences and philosophy are essentially contested. There are conceptual confusion, conceptual contestation, and openness (Gallie, 1956; Collier *et al.*, 2006). Uwe Poerksen (1995) argues we are living in the age of plastic words. The words we use in daily life emigrated into science. After they return to the common language, where they were used by politicians and public figures, they lost their essence and became dominant myths (1995, pp. 4-5). In the age of plastic words, concepts are so malleable that they resemble the plastics blocks of Lego (van der Laan, 2001, p. 349). The concept of development is one of the plastic words (Rist, 2008, p. 11). Ideas and concepts are often thought of as natural and ever-present. Roland Barthes claims it is impossible to trace the transformation of an idea in this situation. If we don't wonder where a concept comes from, its historical setting will be omitted from the scene (Barthes, 1972, p. 152). Development is recently invented. Though, its history can be traced back to first civilizations (Soares & Quintella, 2008, p. 105; Hettne, 2005, p. 26; Rist, 2008, p. 4; Gardner & Lewis, 1996, p. 3). We need to put concept, ideology, or myth into its historical context and bring history back into analysis.

In this section, I will trace the history of development. I will argue the idea of development can be thought of as a discourse. Each historical context is characterized and defined by certain development discourse (Knutson, 2009, p. 4).

Development is defined according to its historical setting, geographical setting, and various political interests (Herath, 2009, p. 1449). Since many government officials devoted themselves to the development projects, the concept is defined in multiple ways (Cowen & R.W., 1996, p. 4). Erik Thorbecke (2006) sees six different historical settings of development discourse. Björn Hettne argues there are three different phases of development (1995; 2005). Gilbert Rist examines the idea of development from Antiquity to neoliberal globalization (2008). I begin to discuss the history of development after the Second World War. Many scholars argue the real history of development started after the Second World War (Haynes, 2005, p. 5).

There are over 500 publications on the various aspects of the concept of development (Cobbinah, Black, & Thwaites, 2011, p. 135). Development is on everyone's lips, as Payne and Phillips argue, that is why examining development is a difficult task (2010, p. 1). There were plenty of things that are associated with development such as higher living standards, increasing productive capacity, subordination of nature, economic growth, and liberation (Arndt, 1987, p. 1; Payne & Phillips, 2010, p. 2). Bauman asserts development, as the concept of civilization, sticks to the notions of hope, social order, and progress (Bauman, 1998, p. 59).

The end of World War II marked a new phase in international politics. European countries found themselves in a state of devastating infrastructure and turmoil. The US and the Soviet Union were the key actors. The new political era included constant competition between two political and economic systems, along with the existence of nuclear arms (Hettne, 2005, p. 33). The US and the Soviet Union tried to exert their influence over other regions. The US and the Soviet Union wanted to disintegrate the European colonial system (Knutson, 2009, p. 10). The second phase of decolonization gained momentum (Knutson, p. 9). The concept of nation-state or territorial state became a foundational principle. Thus, state-building and nation-state turned into a universal phenomenon (Hettne, 2005, p. 33). Hettne's concept of 'the geopolitics of poverty' was the defining character in this era (2005). Development was a matter of national security.

Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine were the cornerstones of this era. Also, the Bretton Woods institutions established a new international structure. The IMF concerned with promoting the stability of the monetary system while the World Bank aimed at the stability of economic growth. The GATT agreement dealt with

international trade and removed the barriers. That structure of the international economic and political system defined as embedded liberalism (Harvey, 2005, p. 11). These institutions took part in a larger schema of global governance with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. President Truman claimed poverty in other countries was a threat to national security, so modern industrial countries were the bearers of development (Knutson, 2009, p. 9).

In order to be a part of the liberal capitalist world system, non-Western countries needed to implement serious reforms. The notion of backwardness was at the heart of development (Hettne, 1995; Knutson, 2009). The idea of economic growth was the primary aim in newly independent countries (Thorbecke, 2006, p. 3). The vision of development included modernization, economic growth, industrialization, and functional specialization (Knutson, 2009, p. 11). There was a strong emphasis on modernization in the Western capitalist and Eastern socialist development projects (Hettne, 1995). The Soviet Union adopted an extreme vision of a development project, which was characterized by a high rate of growth and regulated finance. (Wieviorka, 2012, p. 87).

Thanks to the decolonization process, the UN membership increased from 51 to 100 by the end of the 1960s (Koehler, 2015, p. 737). The existence of nuclear arms defined the actual character of this era. In this environment, development was thought of as a policy tool in order to protect national security. The United Nations announced the first development decade, which states that every country needs to acquire 5 percent annual growth (Knutson, 2009, p. 12; Koehler, 2015, p. 737). States were thought of as responsible for the development process. Poverty was a sign of economic backwardness, and it could create insecurity for the US. These development policies contributed to the hegemony of the United States. Also, development policies were considered as the American Liberal ideology and ideology of developmentalism (Higgott, 1980, p. 28).

The years between 1970 and 1980 in the Cold War reflected a different phase known as *détente*. Tensions between the leaders of both camps got loose. Negotiation and diplomacy were valued. Still, both superpowers continued to support their allies in order to expand their sphere of influence. Two important political events shaped the political climate of this development phase. The first one is the oil crisis in 1973. The OPEC announced they would cut oil exports to the US and its allies. The key

outcome of this oil crisis is that the US economy fell into stagnation and inflation (Knutson, 2009, p. 15). The intellectual climate considered and implemented neoliberal policies. The second crucial event was the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system. The US policies received heavy pressure because of the costs of the Vietnam War in order to preserve Pax Americana. The US announced they could no longer keep the gold standard and the fixed exchange rate system (Knutson, 2009, p. 15).

At the same time, newly independent countries seemed to have growing economies. These countries did not aim at challenging the Westernized notion of development paradigm per se; they sought to design the international environment in order to keep up with economic growth (Knutson, p. 16). Global South achieved some form of economic growth, but income distribution within those countries did not turn out to be better (Thorbecke, 2006, p. 10).

Development was a political tool for the US. The two core concepts of ‘poverty’ and ‘development’ determined that if a country modernized or not (Zein-Elabdin & Charusheela, 2004, p. 1). Poverty meant an inability to follow the Western way of economic growth and prosperity. Rostowian view of economic history and modernization supported this view. Rostow claimed some internal factors such as tradition, norms, and belief systems caused a nation to be underdeveloped (Turner, 1978, pp. 10-13). Rostow did not consider the logic of capitalist accumulation. The rich countries exploited periphery countries and caused them to be underdeveloped. Scholars criticized the mainstream development paradigm and devised new concepts. Self-reliance, basic needs, eco-development, and ethno-development were the alternative ways of development (Knutson, 2009, pp. 19-21).

The 1980s were the end of détente and the beginning of the Second Cold War. The tensions between the two great superpowers rose due to increased military spending and technological innovations in weaponry systems. Globalization debates took place. The potential effects of the development policies on the environment were discussed. The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan altered the policies of the United States. Jimmy Carter declared these events as the most serious challenge after the Second World War (Leffler, 1983, p. 245). Reagan announced the doctrine of Strategic Defense Initiative which aimed at protecting the US from ballistic nuclear weapons (Knutson, 2009, p. 22). The election of Thatcher

in Great Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US marked that there would be a policy shift regarding international political economy. Mikhail Gorbachev elected in the Soviet Union. The Soviet influence over the region decreased.

The triumph of neoliberalism and monetarism as new guiding frameworks were the key events in this era. Neoliberalism has replaced Keynesianism. Neoliberalism argued for stability in economic policies and favored fewer state regulations in the economy (Thorsen, 2010, p. 196). International institutions promoted this neoliberal understanding of development. The Washington Consensus increased the power of the IMF and the World Bank in order to implement Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's) (Knutson, 2009, p. 23). Neoclassical economists, who criticize Keynesian welfare state and call for privatization and integration of world markets establishes these programs (Kapoor, 2008, p. 25). Their aim was to address the balance of payments, currency devaluation, price controls, and cutting public spending (p. 25). Also, foreign direct investment (FDI) was one of the important pillars for attracting foreign capital in order to boost the economy.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the 'new world order' emerged. This decade was presented as more optimistic than the earlier decades (Knutson, 2009, p. 28). It coincided with the end of history thesis. Western liberal democracy and its forms declared their victory. Though, it turned out new forms of antagonisms emerged in the post-Cold War texture. The Gulf War of 1991, the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, and the Kosovo crisis of 1999 were among those antagonisms. The effects of globalization and nationalism characterized these (p. 28). Unnoticed antagonisms within those societies came into sight (Heywood, 2011, p. 45).

The concept of development also changed. Development was tied to national security during the years of the Cold War. New security concerns emerged in the post-Cold War era. These are poverty, maldevelopment, global warming, drug trafficking, mass migration, civil war, and the problem of failed states (Knutson, 2009, p. 30). They are all cross-border problems. These problems spread over neighboring countries. They cannot be solved by a single state. Then, a new vision of development was required. The concept of good governance gained momentum. Scholars claimed the agenda of good governance constructed because of the negative outcomes of the structural adjustment policies (Kapoor, 2008, p. 29). Though, structural adjustments of the neoliberal framework did not disappear. It basically

joined into good governance and emerged as ‘adjustment with a human face’ (Knutson, 2009, p. 31). Human development was another new concept. It is called human rights-based development. Human development challenged the classical security paradigm (Knutson, p. 33). Human rights, mass migration, global pandemics, and transnational crime have added to the repertoire of development.

The attacks of 9/11 radically marked a beginning of a new era. This era has been identified as global development because globalization and development intertwined. Globalization refers to the continuation of development in a new form (Hettne, 2005, p. 36). The US adopted unilateralism and the doctrine of war on terror. Conflicts will be primarily cultural rather than ideological (Heywood, 2011, p. 47). The economic growth of China and India showed there are many emerging powers. Still, emerging powers did not enjoy the same economic benefits as Western powers (Knutson, 2009, p. 34; Heywood, 2011, p. 51). The disparity in economic growth rates established a new criticism wave. Serious statements of global warming and environmental degradation contributed to emerging networks of global justice movements and the World Social Forum (Knutson, 2009, p. 35). The global financial crisis of 2007-09 or the Great Recession is further contributed to ongoing critics of the neoliberal framework of economy and development practices.

We can make two related arguments about development in this decade. First, multiple forms of development projects such as good governance and human development gained momentum in the 1990s. Development vision reflected more multidimensional nuance (Cobbinah, Black, & Thwaites, 2011). In Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s), development refers to a multidimensional concept (p. 141). Though, the idea of economic growth persists. Second, as Hettne clearly examines, development separated from national security (Hettne, 2005, p. 39).

How the vision of development looks, today? Liberalization and privatization shape the idea of development (p. 39). Also, the vision of development incorporates poverty, patterns of production and consumption, human rights, governance, and inequality (Knutson, 2009, p. 39). I argue the concept of development is well alive and shapes political and environmental policies.

2.4.3. Development as a Technocratic Idea

Björn Hettne argues long-term understanding of development refers to the structural transformation of society. Pragmatical understanding of development is ahistorical, and it is in the policy papers of international institutions (Hettne, 2009, p. 3). The ideas of development can be classified into three distinct understandings. These are development as a historical idea, development as a discursive idea, and development as a technocratic idea. The first perspective on the definition of development sees development as societal transformation. The second perspective adopts a critical stance towards all forms of development projects. It influenced by postcolonial and postmodern ideas. The last perspective, which is the topic for this section, adopts a technical stance. Development as a technocratic idea is considered a cure for ecological and societal problems.

Development as a technocratic idea focuses on non-governmental organizations. For international organizations, development is crucial within this new environment. International organizations occupy critical positions alongside the states as key actors of development (Koch, 2012, p. 4). Development as a historical idea puts special emphasis on the state. States can implement development policies. Governments involved in nearly all forms of development projects in agriculture, infrastructure, and telecommunications (Andrews, 2013). Charles Gore claims the bureaucratic elites acted as emancipators and servants of 'modernization' and 'progress' (2000, p. 795). The Washington Consensus that calls for the neoliberal framework has given the state only a limited role in implementing the development practices. It can be argued that the consensus helped to guide the development policies of the international organizations (Calvert, 2005).

Development as a technocratic idea carries ahistorical performance (Gore, p. 794). The concept of development turned into something to be measured periodically. International organizations settle the development indicators. These indicators help them to guide and monitor progress in society. The indicators are GDP growth rate, macroeconomic stability, inflation rate, and budget balance (p. 794). Thus, the development concept has become narrower (Sumner & Tribe, p. 13). I would argue development adopted a pragmatic and operative stance because of this transformation. Many policies established by experts in case of economic downturns. It is argued that establishing market-friendly and disciplined government policies

constitute various projects designed by various international organizations namely the World Bank (Andrews, 2013). Those projects were also monitored by international credit agencies to evaluate the current performances of governments. This situation reflects indirect and micro ways of control. Thus, it is defined as transnational e-control (Kapoor, 2008, p. 27). For instance, these international governmental institutions do not need to present themselves physically in any country, so they monitor and shape economic policies at remote (p. 27).

Critics of the development as a technocratic idea come from different sources. First of all, there are critics on the very essence of the indicators used to measure 'development'. This led to an investigation of whether there is a link between wealth, material standard of living, and subjective well-being. Thus, the indicators of economic growth rate and per capita income are not really useful to measure happiness. These indicators measure only a few dimensions of the concept of development and ignore non-material aspects (Aziz *et al.*, 2015).

Another source of critics directs their attention to the neoliberal understanding of development. There are two crucial dimensions of that critique. The first way to criticize this conceptualization of development stems from the structure of global politics and adopts a macro view. In this view, international organizations are tools of powerful states to support the current world order. The second way of criticism adopts a more micro perspective and focuses on individuals in the late modernity period. Individual lives in the neoliberal era are completely different. In this decade, Ulrich Beck argues we have observed the emergence of synthetic well-being indicators such as the Human Development Index, which refers to the management of public opinion by technocrats (Soares & Quintella, p. 113). Charles Gore argues the dominance of the indicators in this conceptualization relates to the performance-based ethos of the new era (Gore, p. 795). While focusing on the outcomes and performance, it adopts a short-term outlook (Sumner & Tribe, p. 13). This corresponds to Sennett's concept of short-termism as a defining character of the new era (Sennett, 2006). The new ethos of performance, whether it is a government or an individual, requires constant monitoring in order to meet the objectives and outcomes. Byung-Chul Han argues the self has quantified in this new age of measurement and neoliberalism (Han, 2017). In sum, the development critics share a common outlook. They see development as a tyranny of objectives. Outcomes and

objectives define and set the boundaries of the good. Though, they are not good at examining the real meaning of happiness, welfare, and ecological harmony.

In the second part of the thesis, I will examine how the vision of degrowth looks like. The origins and the emergence of the Degrowth movement will be under investigation. I will discuss how degrowth develops its strategies to criticize the post-political diagnosis in our times. As I tried to explain, post-political neoliberalism, the sustainable development discourse, and technocratic politics seem to be aligned in establishing politics without ‘the political’. They form politics without politics (Mouffe, 1987). To tackle the ecological crisis, alternative imaginaries should be developed within democratic politics.



3. THE DEGROWTH IMAGINARY

Earlier discussions clearly illustrate two points. First, sustainable development, the dominant economic paradigm in environmental politics, occupied the central stage in the twentieth-first century. The sustainable development discourse and neoliberalism aligned in the post-political condition. Sustainable development silences political imaginations when they offer an alternative socio-economic order. As a result, the sustainable development discourse considers environmental problems as manageable. Managerial solutions claim radical transformation of society is unnecessary. They argue industrial developments can continue and some institutional reforms would be enough in the face of the ecological crisis (Sutton, 2004, p. 133).

Second, the idea of sustainable development is neither a desirable nor a workable solution when humanity is facing environmental degradation. Though, our societies have not figured out the unsustainability of the neoliberal economic system (Baykan, 2017, p. 513). The current development and environmental policies exploited agricultural yields, biodiversity, and soil. The extinction rate of species is 100 to 1,000 times faster than the earlier periods of history (Hickel, 2018). Hence, adopting a novel way of thinking to deal with the ecological crisis is required. Degrowth is at the center of the debate on whether an alternative world is possible. Albert Einstein famously stated that we cannot solve the problems in the same ways they were originated or contributed to. Therefore, the train must be brought to a halt and we must change its course (Welzer, 2012, p. 175). The main aim of this chapter is to claim that degrowth will be crucial to re-politicize environmental politics. I argue the recent form of sustainable development discloses alternatives to the current environmental policies. The Degrowth movement challenges this idea by implementing various socio-economic strategies.

This chapter will be opened by the discussion of the historical and intellectual roots of degrowth. I will argue degrowth is complex and there are various definitions of the concept. Later, I will examine intellectual contributions to the development of

degrowth. In the next section, I will investigate how degrowth turned into a social movement from a political slogan. After, the political strategies of the Degrowth movement will be examined briefly. Crucially, I will evaluate how the Degrowth movement relates to other environmental and social movements. In the third section of this chapter, I will turn my attention to the relationship between degrowth and environmental politics. I will discuss the history of the environment briefly. Later, I will examine the environmental discourses. In the last section, I will discuss degrowth and the future. I will argue that establishing an alternative society is only possible if we re-politicize the economy. Following that, I will consider degrowth as a transition discourse and a part of the pluriverse. A transition discourse aims at establishing pluriverse where alternative imaginaries of the future circulate.

3.1. Unpacking Degrowth

Degrowth did not come into existence all of a sudden. Rather, the concept of degrowth is a response to several crises in modern society. We define these crises in terms of environmental, social, political, and humanity (Aries, 2005). The environmental crisis refers to climate change and other ecological threats. The social crisis is about increasing inequalities among nations. The political crisis is the loss of affection for politics. It resembles post-politics and post-democracy. The crisis of humanity is related to the meaning of life and modernity (Baykan, 2007, p. 513). These crises present challenge to the social and political order. Still, the question of ecological crisis seems more critical and pressing. There is a deadlock in environmental politics. Meaningful transformation of economic policies has not been realized. As I examined earlier, post-politics shaped environmental politics. I believe the imaginary of degrowth offers a rich vocabulary in case of addressing the post-political condition. According to scholars, current political repertoires appear to be limited to only neo-extractivism, authoritarian nationalism, and austerity policies (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 7). Degrowth claims there is always an alternative in times of crisis. The Degrowth movement designs various alternative socio-economic practices. Now, I will turn my attention to the conceptual and intellectual career of degrowth

3.1.1. On the Concept of Degrowth

Degrowth is a complex concept. It is difficult to find what is common in different definitions of degrowth. There is no single definition of degrowth (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015, p. xxi). On one point, its recent emergence in academia caused this complexity. This complexity arises because degrowth aligns with various lines of intellectual schools. Thus, degrowth is thought of as an umbrella concept because it draws on disciplines like economics, philosophy, social theory, political ecology, and ecological economics (Zozul'akova, 2016, p. 187). Apart from its complexity, the very core of degrowth can be found in its idiosyncratic relationship with the growth paradigm. According to the growth paradigm, economic growth is desirable and can be limitless (Dale, 2012). However, degrowth argues continuous economic growth is neither possible nor desirable on the finite planet.

Degrowth is a translation of the French word '*Décroissance*'. We find its first use in Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen's book, which was translated into French by Jacques Grinevald (Baykan, 2007, p. 514). How is the concept of degrowth used in *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* of Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen? In the book, Georgescu-Roegen (1971) argued that a new understanding of the economy and epistemology are required. The new epistemology would rest on the academic fields of thermodynamics and biology. The classical understanding of the economy did not consider the natural environment. Georgescu-Roegen claimed that all forms of economic activities, including production and consumption, depend on the natural environment (Missemer, 2017, p. 494). He argued that the foundations of economics should not be rested on physics but biology. In our current economic paradigm, we rarely take these dynamics into consideration. Georgescu-Roegen stressed continuous economic growth is not possible in the finite world. If economic growth is thought to be limitless, economic activities would disrupt ecological harmony and lead to an ecological crisis. Therefore, the growth for growth's sake should be abandoned. Georgescu-Roegen argued degrowth is a direct consequence of the ecological limits which is imposed by nature (Baykan, p. 514). In the book, degrowth meant the opposite of growth, namely reduction. Even though degrowth is related to various disciplines, the core idea of degrowth is found in the discipline of economics. Some argue that the very essence of the concept of degrowth is the critique of growth (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, p. 11).

Later, degrowth found its way into the English language at the first conference regarding degrowth in Paris, 2008. Since then, the concept of degrowth has circulated over different disciplines and produced significant debates. The translation of *Décroissance* to English has established some controversies. Some scholars thought whether degrowth is simply a concept for the decrease of GDP in the economy. Ecological economists argue degrowth means down-scaling the size of production and consumption in order to reduce carbon emissions. Therefore, degrowth will include a shrinking in terms of material outputs in the economy. The narrow definition of degrowth refers to reduction (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 191). Still, the criticisms are not well-designed. Apart from its narrow definition, degrowth calls for a different understanding of economic relations. Degrowth insists on good living, equality, and ecological harmony with less money and less exploitation (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 1). Thus, scholars argue that degrowth is not just merely an economic concept (Demaria *et al.*, p. 193). Degrowth claims for shrinking the size of economic activities to some extent but it also tries to establish a new economic structures (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015). Degrowth aims at re-politicizing environmental politics and establishes alternative visions to the market-based and the growth-oriented development paradigms (Kallis, 2015, pp. 1-3). Degrowth is a political project that seeks to find alternative ways to organize the economy. It is why the concept of degrowth is thought as a missile word. In this way, degrowth challenges the current understanding of the development paradigm and utilitarian philosophy (Demaria *et al.*, p. 196). Degrowth as a missile word criticizes environmental politics. Degrowth challenges the sustainable development paradigm. The sustainable development discourse is thought as an oxymoron (Latouche, 2009). As I examined earlier, economic growth is the cornerstone of the sustainable development paradigm. Continuous economic growth in the name of development does not reconcile with the environment.

Advocators of degrowth argue that downscaling production and consumption is necessary to improve human and planetary well-being (Herath, 2016, p. 45). The Degrowth Declaration defines degrowth as a transition towards a just, participatory, and ecological society in which the ecological impact of the growth-economy is reduced and distributed equally among nations (Research & Degrowth, 2010, p. 524). Therefore, degrowth implies more than the reduction of the size of the

economy. Degrowth carries the tool of deconstruction. The current economic understanding causes environmental damage. Degrowth tries to deconstruct the economy by arguing the market relations are not universal and natural. Degrowth does not mean returning to a pre-modern modes of the economy by reducing all forms of growth (Leff, 2009, p. 103). Technological developments will be key in transition to a degrowth society (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 59).

There are different interpretations that can be used to better understand degrowth. For instance, Van den Bergh argues there are five different understandings of degrowth (2010). First, there is GDP degrowth. It is a narrow definition of the degrowth imaginary. It means negative GDP growth in the economy. Most scholars, politicians, and the public understand degrowth as GDP degrowth (p. 882). It is why even Left politics cannot escape from the growth hegemony. GDP growth is thought of as so crucial and comes before any other policies. Second, consumption degrowth aims at a reduction in consumption level in the economy. It focuses on over-consumption in a society and the advertising industry is blamed (p. 883) for unnecessary consumption (Hickel, 2018). Third, worktime degrowth is about less production and fewer working hours. It claims that happiness and less consumption will contribute to ecological harmony. Fourth, the term 'Radical degrowth' refers to a complete transformation of the economy. Capitalist values, ethics, labor relations, and the role of money in society are criticized (van den Bergh, 2010, p. 884). Finally, physical degrowth refers to some level of shrinkage in the overall picture of the economy in terms of consumption and production patterns (p. 884). It is analogous to GDP degrowth. Though, it is claimed physical degrowth does not solve environmental problems suddenly (p. 884).

According to Ott, there are four variants of degrowth. These make up the critique of GDP, a path of strong sustainability, an anthropological and social critique of growth, and a strategy to transform the capitalist mode of production (Ott, 2012). Degrowth as a critique of GDP is the same as GDP degrowth. It rejects the concept of GDP. Several Green parties adopted this definition of degrowth, but later they preferred green growth at the end (Ott, p. 573). Sustainability and degrowth is the second interpretation of degrowth. Since material outputs of economy and consumerism harm the environment, degrowth calls for reducing economic waste in order to reach a sustainable society (p. 574). Degrowth as a critique of growth

examines the condition of modern life. It focuses on the constant competition between individuals and consumption patterns. It also encourages us to imagine different understanding of labor, welfare, and leisure (p. 574). Last, degrowth as a strategy to transform society is the most radical among these variants. Degrowth is presented as anti-capitalism (p. 574). Here, degrowth advocates claim that minor reforms would not be enough to tackle the ecological crisis. Therefore, not only GDP as an economic tool, but economic structure or system needs to be transformed (p. 574).

Different interpretations of degrowth arise because of its complexity. Scholars disagree on whether a narrow or broad definition should be considered. The narrow definition of degrowth focuses on the critique of GDP fetishism. GDP measures the well-being of society in terms of economic output. Degrowth challenges this idea. According to the narrow definition of degrowth, GDP cannot measure welfare and the well-being of individuals. Here, degrowth gets closer to the philosophy of Cynicism and Stoicism (Andriotis, 2018, p. 13). These philosophical roots claim simplistic lifestyles and criticize unnecessary burdens of civilized life as wealth. Scholars who criticize degrowth find the narrow interpretation of degrowth attractive. It lets scholars criticize degrowth easily without examining other meanings of the concept.

In this study, I interpreted degrowth in its broad definition. The broad definition of degrowth is called radical degrowth. Radical degrowth aims to politicize environmental politics in order to transform social and economic structures. The prefix of 'de' in degrowth is thought of as similar to the word 'anti' (Ott, 2012, p. 574). Capitalism depends on the existence of constant growth (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 27). So, a capitalist economy cannot exist without continuous economic growth in order to accumulate capital. Since degrowth challenges economic growth, degrowth is not possible in capitalist societies (Jackson, 2011; Kallis, 2015). Degrowth claims it is not possible to develop alternative policies for environmental solutions in current economic understanding. Therefore, capitalism and its recent form are criticized. There needs to be a complete transformation in the economic structures.

I would like to examine some criticisms of degrowth before concluding this section. It is often claimed degrowth is synonymous with recession and negative growth. However, I argue that such concepts as recession and negative growth are

only relevant in capitalist and growth economies. Degrowth advocates a society that is not based on continuous economic growth. Degrowth presents different economic relations with less competition, more solidarity, more satisfying work, and greater respect for nature (Kallis *et al.*, 109). Criticizing degrowth in terms of negative growth is not accurate. As I argued, degrowth does only aim to reduce the size of the economy in terms of GDP. Though, there will be a reduction in the size of the economy in degrowth policies. Therefore, the economic growth rate will be slowed down. It is because high carbon emission industries and unnecessary sectors will not be at the center of the economy. A Keynesian version of GDP measures all forms of monetary transactions in the economy, including negative ones such as mega-construction projects, advertising, and timber industry (Hickel, 2018). Degrowth results in lower GDP because different economic alternatives are not counted in the current economic system. According to degrowth, our production and consumption patterns need to be changed (Kallis *et al.*, 2020, p. 5). In sum, the idea of degrowth is not de-growth (Parrique, 2019, p. 326). Rather, degrowth challenges the colonization of our lives by economic logic. Another criticism claims that degrowth is anti-science and anti-enlightenment (Parrique, p. 338). Rather, degrowth challenges the colonization of our lives by economic logic. Also, another criticism claims degrowth means anti-science and anti-enlightenment (Parrique, p. 338). So I argue many scholars fall into a trap. According to Foucault any criticism of modernity makes you align with anti-modernism or anti-rationalism. For him, this is the blackmail of the enlightenment project (Foucault, 1984). It is necessary to free ourselves from the dilemma that we are either on the side of modernism or anti-modernism. Still, degrowth activism does not call for abolishing all forms of science and rejecting modernity. Degrowth criticizes techno-science in terms of artificial intelligence and genetically modified organisms (Parrique, 2019, p. 342). Degrowth encourages interdisciplinary studies and values post-normal science (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015).

3.1.2. Intellectual Lines of the Degrowth Thinking

Since there are different understandings over the meaning of degrowth, its intellectual sources are also many. There are various sources for the emergence of degrowth. Social theory, ecology, and ecological economics contributed to the intellectual line of degrowth. For instance, Serge Latouche asserts that degrowth has

two primary sources. These are the ecological critique of economics by Georgescu-Roegen and the culturalist critique of economics by post-development (Latouche, 2009, p. 13). The thermo-industrial society is the focus of the culturalist critique. This novel society is the result of the Anthropocene (Gras, 2016, p. 12). The planet, according to Positivist understanding of science is infinite. Therefore, continuous economic growth is welcomed. It harmed the environment and led to different economic imaginaries. This was challenged by Durkheim, Mauss, and Polanyi (Latouche, p. 13). Post-development is another source of degrowth. It claims thermo-industrial society is not just undesirable but unsustainable (p. 14). It is because there are limits to economic growth in terms of the material output of the economy. 'The limits' imaginary is not new, dates back to Malthus and Sadi Carnot (p. 14). It is related to the laws of thermodynamics. Classical economic understanding does not take entropy into consideration. Therefore, bio-economics should replace it (p. 15).

Fabrice Flipo's framework is the most popular. He argued we can identify five sources or streams that contributed to the idea of degrowth (Flipo, 2007). These are ecology, bioeconomy, post-development, democracy, and individual well-being (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, pp. 195-200). Some scholars also add anti-utilitarianism, justice, social metabolism, and political ecology in the intellectual lines of degrowth (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015). Now, I will briefly examine these sources.

The idea of degrowth takes one of its sources from ecology. Ecology is the scientific study of ecosystems. Ecology claims all ecosystems are interrelated and depend on each other to survive. Ecosystems have their unique value and need to be free from any human intervention. Ecological thought urges us to consider the planet's carrying capacity. Thus, it will be possible for ecosystems to regenerate themselves sustainably. The current economic understanding threatens ecosystems and the ecological balance (Parrique, 2019, p. 237). Ecological thought also argues the anthropocentric worldview measures progress and individual well-being in terms of total economic output. It is not sustainable. The anthropocentric worldview needs to be replaced by an ecocentric worldview. Degrowth embraces an ecocentric worldview, claiming that continuous economic growth is incapable of solving ecological and political problems. Ecology brings the problem of commons into the scene. Degrowth adopts *res communis* rather than *res nullius* to manage environmental goods (Demaria *et al.*, p. 196). The former refers to commonly shared

goods such as air and freshwater. The latter means environmental goods belong to no one specifically. This can lead environmental goods to be destroyed (p. 196). Ecology as a scientific discipline also contributed to political ecology. Political ecology combines ecology and political economy in order to better examine current politics. Political ecology looks for alternative modes of economic production without stressing economic growth in any society and contributes to the degrowth project (Paulson, 2015, p. 47). The idea of degrowth took form around the philosophical and political debates of *l'écologie politique*. It included famous thinkers like André Gorz and Ivan Illich. Political ecology and degrowth aim at challenging techno-managerial solutions, which are designed by the dominant socio-economic paradigm, and try to establish an alternative imaginary (Paulson, p. 48).

Another intellectual source of degrowth is bioeconomics or ecological economics. It is possible to claim that the degrowth imaginary would have not been possible without the existence of ecological economics. As I stated, bioeconomics takes its roots from Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen. The French translation of Georgescu-Roegen's book was a pivotal moment in the emergence of degrowth in France. Georgescu-Roegen basically introduced biology into the field of economics. He claimed that every amount of waste and pollution a result of economic production contributes to the law of entropy (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 198). Therefore, the level of entropy goes up. The most crucial point of the high level of entropy is the impossibility of continuous economic growth. Neoliberal economics favors growth-oriented policies, which causes irreversible damage to the environment (Fournier, 2008, p. 531). Bioeconomics contributes to degrowth by criticizing growth oriented society and sustainable development (Bonaiuti, 2015, p. 27). Bioeconomics criticizes technological developments and efficiency in material use. Ecological modernization, as sustainable development, claims new technological developments and minor reforms will sustain infinite economic growth (Demaria *et al.*, p. 198). Degrowth and bioeconomics claim these solutions will not work because of thermodynamics. Since the growth society is not sustainable in the face of the ecological crisis, degrowth criticizes the Western way of development.

Anthropology is another intellectual source contributed to degrowth. As a scientific study, anthropology examines development dynamics among societies. Post-development discourse is established in order to critique the current development

discourse in anthropology. Arturo Escobar, Gilbert Rist, Wolfgang Sachs, and Gustavo Esteva are among scholars who contribute post-development theory (Demaria *et al.*, p. 196). Post-development theory claims the development discourse continues to colonize political imaginaries, especially after 1945 (p. 197). The development discourse tries to spread its influence through particular production and consumption patterns (p. 197). These patterns reflect continuous economic growth and harm the environment. In sum, post-development theory challenges the development paradigm and it calls to deconstruct the development discourse. The growth paradigms in the development discourse contribute to the hegemony of the Western countries. Post-development theory insists consumerism and continuous economic growth cannot be guiding principles for an alternative society (Escobar, 2015, p. 31). Buen Vivir, degrowth, and ecological Swaraj are thought of as challenges to the current development discourse (Escobar, 2015). Degrowth draws on anthropology in order to criticize sustainable development, which is the dominant environmental imaginary. Degrowth argues sustainable development is a part of Western hegemony and seems like an oxymoron (Demaria *et al.*, p. 197).

Degrowth also takes insights from democracy and individual well-being. Liberal democracy is the defining character of current politics. Liberal democracy is being on the defense (Strunz & Bartkowski, 2017, p. 2). It seems democracy is weakening under the dominance of neoliberal policies. Degrowth tries to establish radical and participatory democracy. Degrowth challenges liberal democracy by drawing on the ideas of Ivan Illich and Jacques Ellul. Illich examines the scale of democracy and monopolies of power in modern societies. He claims if a scale of the system increases it will be less democratic because complex systems are controlled by experts (p. 516). Similarly, Ellul claims that we do not live in democratic societies but rather in technological societies (p. 516). In technological societies, there is not enough democratic feedback (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 199). According to Illich and Ellul, technology dominates modern societies. Since citizens do not have control over technology and its mechanisms technology has dominated the primary institutions of society (p. 199). In sum, degrowth advocates for deepening democratic processes. Radical democracy will be possible when technological and bureaucratic systems are controlled by citizens.

Degrowth also considers individual well-being. The question of individual well-being is related to critics of conventional economics and modernity. Classical economics claims positive correlation between happiness and the level of income of individuals. Easterlin claimed that this was incorrect. After a certain point, individual well-being and happiness don't respond to material gains (Demaria *et al.*, p. 197). It is called the Easterlin Paradox. This corresponds to the narrow definition of degrowth. It focuses on simplicity and a different understanding of consumption patterns. Henry David Thoreau and Ernst F. Schumacher contributed to degrowth and the question of individual well-being. According to Thoreau and Schumacher, increasing total economic output is not required for individual well-being in modern societies (Demaria *et al.*, p. 197).

Societal metabolism refers to material and energy flows in human societies. Social metabolism as a concept claims all living organisms must consume material and energy in order to survive. Therefore, it focuses on biophysical processes that make the production and consumption of material goods possible. Then, it examines what is produced, how it is produced, how it is consumed, and why it is produced (Şorman, 2015, p. 43). Since the planet has a carrying capacity thanks to the studies of ecological economics, societal metabolism tries to measure energy flow rates. Then, we will understand how each society contributes to the unsustainability of the planet. Social metabolism challenges the dominant view of economic growth and claims there needs to be an alternative way to organize economic institutions (p. 43).

Last, I would like to examine degrowth, steady-state, and zero growth before concluding this section. Steady-state and zero growth are used interchangeably (Kerschner, 2010, p. 544). Some scholars argue that steady-state economics and degrowth are actually the same thing. According to Kallis, there are three points that need to be examined in order to understand these concepts (2011). First, degrowth criticizes market relations and does not view capitalist relations positively. Degrowth scholars argue a steady-state economy is not possible in a capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, advocates of steady-state economy claim that this transformation is possible under capitalism. Degrowth, as we examined, is anti-capitalist. Second, degrowth is more involved with social and political issues. According to degrowth, value-free science is not possible (Demaria *et al.*, 2013; Kallis, 2011). Third, steady-state economics and its arguments do not have a

coherent theory of social change. Therefore, steady-state economics does not radically challenge the foundations of the market economy (Bonaiuti, 2015). Steady-state economy is developed by Herman Daly. Daly claimed a sustainable society is possible under the stationary condition. Georgescu-Roegen rejected steady-the state economy and claimed only a declining state is sustainable (Kerschner, 2010, p. 544).

3.2. Degrowth as a Social Movement

3.2.1. From French Politics to a Social Movement

The intellectual interest in degrowth took form in France, Italy, and Spain during the 1990s. Some scholars claim the widening use of degrowth is related to post-development theories (Ekström & Glans, 2011, p. 182). According to post-development theory, economic growth policies cannot be a solution for economic prosperity. It also argues the current development discourse is a tool for Western hegemony. The idea of development brings homogenization of world cultures. Then, post-development theory challenges the uniformity of the development policies and criticizes economic growth. Since degrowth opposes continuous economic growth, it is linked to post-development theory. Degrowth has become a a missile word (Demaria *et al.*, 2013). After, degrowth became a grassroots social movement. Degrowth, as a social movement, tries to establish an alternative economic organization that is characterized by ecological sustainability (Treu & Schmelzer, 2020).

There is not an agreement among scholars on what constitutes a social movement. Scholars rarely focus on terminological and conceptual issues in social movement studies. For instance, they investigate the key factors for social mobilization without even referring to the concept of social movement (Diani, 1992, p. 2). Though, there are different definitions of social movement because of various approaches. For instance, some scholars define a social movement as collective behavior. The aspect of collectivity gives a social movement to transform society (p. 4). On the other hand, a social movement is also defined as the principles of identity and totality if we look at Touraine's definition (p. 4). Here, identity formation is one of the key characteristics of a social movement (p. 6). However, Tilly argues that the structure of a society is more important than ideas in order for a social movement to emerge (Tilly, 1978).

Social movements are thought similar to political parties and interest groups (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 25). Social movements differ from political parties in that they lack a formal structure (p. 25). Rather, social movements are defined by informal networks (p. 26). Thus, social movements differ from ordinary political activities (McCann, 2006, xiv). They challenge to the existing political institutions and seek to transform society. In sum, a social movement is defined as various strategic efforts and actions in order to transform the structure of society (Coglianese, 2001, p. 85).

Where does the Degrowth movement fit in among other social movements? Who are the political actors of the movement? These questions are directly related to the distinction between old and new social movements. It is claimed new social movements differ completely from traditional social movements. There are two key differences that distinguish new social movements. These are theme and social basis (Eggert & Giugni, 2012, p. 337). It is argued that new social movements refer to different themes which are related to recent issues in late modernity. For instance, continuous economic growth and technological development are considered a threat to humanity and nature (p. 337). These risks constitute the building blocks of our times. At the same time, new social movements criticize authoritarian control over private lives and promote new cultural values (p. 337). On the other hand, it is argued that new social movements constitute a different social basis than old social movements. New social movements incorporate new middle class and post-materialist values (p. 338). According to Ronald Inglehart, Western societies experience a transformation in which the concerns over quality of life replace physical and material questions (Inglehart, 1977). The actors of new social movements, Claus Offe claims, includes the new middle class, who work in public and service sectors, and people who are outside the labor market (Offe, 1985, p. 831). Still, some scholars argue that there are no clear-cut distinctions between old and new social movements (Tarrow, 1991). Other scholars also pointed out a social movement can employ the logics of old and new social movements together (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Demaria *et al.*, 2013).

In order to better portray a social movement, there are several points to be examined. The key idea of a social movement, the political subject of a social movement, and proposals for social change are crucial aspects of a social movement

(Burkhart, Schmelzer & Treu, 2020, pp. 16-17). The Degrowth movement incorporates some elements of new social movements. It is because criticizing economic growth and industrial policies are central to the movement. It also addresses the issue of development and democracy. The Degrowth movement aims at transforming the central aspects of capitalism, namely consumerism, the imaginary of growth, and economism (Petridis, Muraca & Kallis, 2015, p. 186). The social base of the Degrowth movement includes academics, citizens, activists, research institutions, and civil society (p. 186). Therefore, class relations do not define the political subject of the Degrowth movement (p. 186). Then, the Degrowth movement is a form of new social movement. It is not only about post-materialism (Demaria *et al.*, p. 208). As some scholars have observed, traditional conflicts such as inequality, justice, and wealth remain important in new social movements. The Degrowth movement also criticizes established political power dynamics and justice in contemporary society (p. 208). The Degrowth movement employs various political strategies as I will examine in the next section. It includes direct opposition as well as establishment of alternative socio-economic institutions. As a result, the Degrowth movement is better defined as a social movement that combines various features of both old and new social movements (p. 208).

According to one useful classification, the historical context of degrowth can be divided into four phases (Parrique, 2019). The first phase, also called as the prehistory of degrowth, spans the years 1968 to 2002. The second phase is between the years of 2002 to 2004. This period was characterized by the birth of degrowth. The third phase lasted between 2004 and 2008. It is related to the internationalization of degrowth. The last phase of degrowth has started in 2008. It refers to the rebirth of degrowth. (p. 171).

French intellectual André Gorz contributed to the discussion of the concept of degrowth. He designed his studies under the title of political ecology. Since Gorz is credited by shaping the early discussions of degrowth, so the prehistory of degrowth starts with him. He summarized the issues at stake in the relationship between the environment and capitalism. He argued the planet has limited carrying capacity in terms of economic output. Then, it is not possible for capitalism to survive. Gorz's points coincided with two important intellectual discussions. The first one was Georgescu-Roegen and his influential book. The second one was the report of the

Club of Rome (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 195). These intellectual debates contributed to the idea that continuous economic growth is neither possible nor desirable. Also, May 68 and the emergence of environmental movements challenged the capitalist mode of production and extractivism. They provided a crucial foothold for widening the audience of degrowth and criticizing economic growth (Parrique, p. 179).

The second phase of degrowth took place in France. This period is considered the birth of degrowth. Thus, French politics came into the scene. Several academic journals in France laid a firm basis for degrowth ideas to gain an audience. *Silence* magazine and the conference of *Défaire le développement, refaire le monde*¹ in Paris were the pivotal moments in the second phase of degrowth (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 195). The conference in Paris was organized by La Ligne d'Horizon and Le Monde diplomatique (Baykan, 2007, p. 514). The consequences of development policies over non-Western societies were discussed. Ivan Illich, John Berger, and Wolfgang Sachs were the key figures at the conference. At the same time, the conference titled “Does development have a future?” was held in Paris, bringing many environmental activists and post-development institutions together (p. 516). Later, post-development theories and degrowth made their way into French politics. Degrowth activists challenged The French Green Party by. The intellectual debate was about whether sustainable development could realize its premises to protect the environment. Degrowth activists stated that the French Green Party could not radicalize its own ecological agenda and instead followed the technocratic and pragmatic policies of the Socialist Party (p. 516). Here, we encounter the post-political condition. Green and socialist parties in many European countries simply followed the political ideology of the Third-way. They accepted market solutions in order to solve environmental problems. The Degrowth Party established in France amid this political environment. The intellectual debates over peak oil and the impact of non-renewable energies contributed to the formation of the Degrowth Party (Ekström & Glans, 2011, p. 182). On the other hand, the political ideology of the Degrowth Party was widely discussed. Some scholars argue that the Party's emphasis on the critique of economic growth and extractivist policies refer to extreme left politics. For others, challenging globalization could be defined as right-wing and national policies (Baykan, p. 516; Ekström & Glans, p. 182).

¹ Unmake development, remake the world.

The journey of degrowth was not limited to French politics. Later, the third phase of degrowth was defined by its spread across European countries. In 2004, the name of *Decrescita* first appeared in Italian politics. On the other hand, *Decreixement* and *Decrecimiento* moved to Catalonia in Spain in 2006. After, the idea of degrowth moved to Switzerland and Germany in 2008 (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 195). Since degrowth emerged in France, these historical experiments took their roots from French politics. (Parrique, p. 185).

There was a turning point for degrowth in 2008. It is the final stage, and refers to the rebirth of degrowth. Six different international conferences took place in Europe during this period. Paris hosted the first international conference. The first use of degrowth in the English language marked an important point for degrowth. Later, degrowth emerged as a scientific field of study. According to the first conference of degrowth, continuous economic growth led to increased use of raw materials and energy. Economic production went beyond ecological sustainability limits. It also increased inequality among societies. Therefore, a paradigm shift was necessary for the transition towards a just, participatory, and ecologically harmonized society (Degrowth Paris, 2008).

The second international conference took place in Barcelona. For the conference, the financial crisis of 2007-2008 was not only financial but also economic, social, political, and ecological. The global middle class and their consumption patterns were not compatible with ecological harmony. Especially, growth-oriented economies aligned with the current debt and financial system were not ecologically sound. An alternative degrowth society needed to be designed. Implementing local currencies, small-scale production, reduced working hours, and support for emerging environmental movements in the Global South were among the proposals of the second international conference (Degrowth Barcelona, 2010).

The third international conference was held in Venice. The key themes were democracy, work, and global commons. Leipzig hosted the next international conference. The audience of degrowth widened and the conference welcomed nearly 100 speakers and 3000 participants (Parrique, 2019, pp. 210-212). The key topics were organizing a degrowth society, building an ecological economy, and learning experiences of the Global South. The conference was conceived as a bridge between various political actors (p. 212). The fifth conference took place in Budapest in 2016.

The conference was organized around three special themes. The challenges referred to the condition of socialism today and abolition of the growth economy. Strategies pointed to various strategic transformations such as environment economies. Alliances referred the relationship between degrowth and other social movements (Degrowth Budapest, 2016, p. 9). The conference argued it was necessary to find out the major obstacles for degrowth thinking. New ideas on social metabolism and post-normal science were also discussed (p. 15).

The sixth conference took place in Malmö, Sweden. The conference aimed at building a bridge between critical social theories and social movements in order for the transition towards an alternative society. The conference welcomed 800 participants and 150 speakers (Parrique, 215). At the same time, an international conference on degrowth was held in a Latin American country for the first time. In 2008, The First North-South Conference on Degrowth took place in Mexico. It was held in Mexico City because more than 65 indigenous communities were inspired by the works of Ivan Illich (Degrowth Mexico, 2018, p. 4). The core themes of the conference were divided into three sections. Survival was about climate change, new technological developments in biogenetics, and nuclear weapons. Cultures referred to the rights of indigenous peoples and cultural diversity. The topic of wealth examined in terms of its dependence on market logic, inequality, and poverty (p. 10). The seventh international conference on Degrowth was delayed because of the global Covid-19 pandemic. It is going to take place in Manchester in 2021.

For some scholars, there are three ideal-typical movements within the Degrowth movement (Muraca & Schmelzer, 2017). There are degrowth debates in English-speaking countries and they are shaping the vision of a steady-state economy. The debates in Southern European countries described as *Décroissance*. Finally, the debates in German-speaking countries named post-growth (p. 175). Though, they are parts of sustainable degrowth in order for establishing an alternative society. Now, I will examine various political strategies of the Degrowth movement.

3.2.2. The Political Strategies of the Degrowth Movement

Social change does not occur without the will and coherent strategies of the actors. It is not enough to criticize the existing conditions in order for social change. Developing various policy proposals and transformation strategies is also required.

These are cornerstones of an ideology. It has two core dimensions. First, it provides a description of social and political reality in the context of an overall picture of society. Second, it creates a vision for the future (Dobson, 2007, p. 103). These two dimensions of a political project bring social change into focus. It is worth noting that there were few serious debates about green politics. The link between social transformation and the political strategies of political actors has been developed recently. Some argue that the political strategies of ecological movements were weak for a variety of reasons. It is believed that the description of the ecological crisis would be enough to cause social transformation. On the other hand, the collective action problem shapes the environmental politics. Political actors can be reluctant to act if they believe there is a free-rider situation (Dobson, pp. 103-104).

The Degrowth movement, like ecological movements, aims at establishing an alternative society. Therefore, the political strategies of the Degrowth movement are directly linked to anti-capitalism and post-growth society. There is only one study that examines the policy proposals of degrowth (Parrique, 2019, p. 493). Still, it is important to discuss how the political strategies of a social movement related to the logics of social transformation. Erik Olin Wright contends that there are three logics of transformation in terms of how to interpret the nature of political strategies. These are ruptural transformation, interstitial transformation, and symbiotic transformation (Wright, 2010, p. 303). Ruptural transformation refers to establishing new institutions. It claims that existing institutions should be directly confronted (p. 303). According to ruptural transformation a radical break from the old socio-economic structures is required. Ruptural transformation favors challenging the institutions of the state (p. 304). Interstitial transformation means establishing alternative institutions and structures within capitalist society. The main actors of interstitial transformation are social movements. This form of transformation widens the socio-political base of social movement and results in social change (p. 305). Last, symbiotic transformation refers to taking advantage of the state institutions. It establishes different social coalitions among political activists in order to transform the state (p. 305). A game metaphor was also used to explain these different logics of transformation. Ruptural transformation aims at challenging the game itself. Therefore, it targets the entire socio-economic structure. Interstitial transformation

refers to moves in the game. It suggests ignoring moves in the game. The rules of the game are central to symbiotic transformation (Wright, 2016, p. 42).

The Degrowth movement employs various political strategies in order to build an alternative society. The classification of degrowth-related political strategies can be divided into three ideal types of attitudes. These are oppositional activism, reformism, and building alternatives (Demaria *et al.*, 2013). Oppositional activism might seem like a form of ruptural transformation. It is because oppositional activism aims to undermine the very foundations of the existing system. Still, the Degrowth movement does not resemble a political party in terms of revolutionary way. Therefore, oppositional activism mainly refers to the political actions taken by individuals and local groups. Oppositional activism does not seek radical rupture but rather to raise awareness (Petridis, Muraca & Kallis, 2015, p. 186). Reformism can be linked to symbiotic transformation. It works with existing structures. Building alternatives are directly related to interstitial transformation. It focuses on formation of various networks among political actors along with establishment of secure zones outside the capitalist structure.

According to Demaria *et al.* (2013), degrowth actors engage in political actions such as demonstrations, boycotts, civil disobedience, and the establishment of campaigns in order to stop the expansion of highways and nuclear power plants. All forms of socio-environmental conflicts are examples of oppositional activism in the Degrowth movement (D'Alisa, Demaria & Cattaneo, 2014, p. 104). These are various political strategies of the Degrowth movement in terms of oppositional activism. One of the most important figures in oppositional activism is Enric Duran. He is known as 'Robin Hood of the Banks' (p. 104). He took many small loans from 39 banks in Catalonia. After that, he used those loans to fund different anti-capitalist movements (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 201; Parrique, 2019, p. 477). He aimed to undermine the structure of the capitalist financial system. Civil disobedience plays an important role in the political strategies of the Degrowth movement. For instance, squatters challenged the policies that aimed at abolishing free housing in France in 2011 (Renou, 2015, p. 163). In sum, oppositional activism refers to a challenge to the established norms of dominant institutions. For that matter, oppositional activism challenges the foundation of capitalism and the financial sector.

Reformism is another political strategy of the Degrowth movement. It basically refers to designing policies within the existing social and economic structures. Reformism opposes capitalism, but claims that the point of departure for an alternative society lies within capitalism. Therefore, reformism is linked to symbiotic transformation. Reformism is crucial because it challenges hierarchical gender relations and opens a space for alternative institutions (Petridis, Muraca & Kallis, p. 187). For instance, reducing working hours and campaigning for a new tax can be seen as reformism (Parrique, 2019, p. 478). The job guarantee and basic income policies are also among reformist strategies of degrowth. According to job guarantee claims, every qualified person needs to be given a job promise. Proponents of basic income argue that every person needs a periodic payment in modern societies. Basic income will establish the economic securities of individuals. Similarly, the maximum income is related to inequalities in society. Maximum income argues that there must be a limit in terms of individual income (Alexander, 2015, p. 146). The maximum income policy is expected to reduce growing inequalities within society.. The Degrowth movement considers some political institutions as vital. Even though capitalism is challenged, social security systems and public health services need to be preserved (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 203). The political strategies of reformism are more than just about social policies. There are environmental and economic proposals such as resource caps, ethical banks, environmental taxation, and restriction on the advertisement (Petridis, Muraca & Kallis, p. 187). Resource caps are related to the global resource use rates. All types of material use in an economy should be downsized in order to tackle the ecological crisis. Environmental taxation is within the policies of international governmental organizations. It aims at taking the negative externalities of economic production into consideration. It calls for aligning production and consumption patterns in an environmentally friendly way. Advertisement is one of the key pillars of modern consumer society. Many scholars argue that advertising sector has a crucial impact on material consumption (Hickel, 2020). Therefore, the Degrowth movement claims the power of the advertising sector should be declined. For instance, advertisements are restricted in some parts of São Paulo and this has a positive effect on people's well-being (Hickel, p. 212).

Another political strategy of the Degrowth movement is building alternatives. The political strategy of building alternative establishments is a critical part of the

Degrowth movement. Creating socio-economic alternatives would be an important step in social transformation. Interstitial transformation includes building alternatives. Building alternative socio-economic practices refer to ignoring capitalism to death (Trainer, 2012, p. 597). Eco-villages or eco-communities, agro-ecology, solidarity economy, community currencies, Nowtopias, and Transition Towns are part of the political strategies of the Degrowth movement (Demaria, Kallis, & Bakker, 2019; D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015). These alternative socio-political strategies offer a participatory, ecologically sustainable, and self-sufficient society (Petridis, Muraca & Kallis, p. 187). For instance, nowtopias refer to activities that take place out of the market realm. Nowtopian activities aim at establishing a post-capitalist form of work and life. They emphasize solidarity and collaboration in order to challenge the efficiency models of capitalism (p. 187). These activities can be stated as urban gardening, farming, do-it-yourself repair shops, and hacker collectivities (Carlsson, 2015, p. 183). Participants collectively engage in activities in their free time. These activities do not represent wage-labor system. The main idea behind Nowtopias is to create safe zones outside of the market logic. Wage labor and the market logic dominate every activity in our daily lives. Nowtopias are linked to urban gardening projects. The goal of urban gardening is to build strong community bonds. It calls for being local and sustainable. Work sharing challenges the idea of work society in capitalism and constitutes one of the political strategies of degrowth. Eco-communities include eco-villages, work sharing, and nowtopias. Eco-communities adopt the pillars of direct democracy and autonomy in order to promote more sustainable lives (Cattaneo, 2015, p. 165). Eco-communities are characterized by their small scales. One of the recent developments in the current era is the dominance of information and communication systems. Therefore, the Degrowth movement acknowledges this transformation and adopts digital commons. Digital commons try to establish alternative norms in the digital environment. They aim at forming online communities and realizing free knowledge for all. On the other hand, community currencies are considered as a medium of exchange that is not issued by any governmental authority. Community currencies develop alternative values in a local community. At the same time, when people lack the ability to access conventional money for their basic needs, community currencies help people in need and make them feel safe (Dittmer, 2015, p. 150). Solidarity Economic Networks in Italia and the Catalan Integral Cooperative are the main examples of

building alternative socio-economic institutions. They are based on democratic participation and fulfillment of basic human needs (Demaria *et al.*, p. 203).

The Degrowth movement does operate not only on the local scale. It tries to develop a unifying strategy in order to bridge local, national, and global scales (Demaria *et al.*, p. 204). The Degrowth movement combines different actors and political strategies to bring social change (D'Alisa, Demaria & Cattaneo, p. 221). The Degrowth movement is comprised of both civil and uncivil strategies. For instance, Transition Towns, reformist projects, and building alternatives are civil strategies (p. 221). Uncivil practices refer to more radical confrontation with capitalism as in the case of Eric Duran. The Degrowth movement establishes the pluralism of the political strategies. As Erik Olin Wright argues, it is necessary to combine different political strategies in order to erode capitalism (Wright, 2019). The Degrowth movement also tries to build bridges with various environmental and social movements. I will examine the dynamics between the Degrowth and other social movements in the next section.

3.2.3. Degrowth and Social Movements

The Degrowth movement is under constantly evolving and does not have a unified organizational body. In other words, degrowth is a movement in becoming (Muraca, 2020, p. 4). This establishes its dynamic and complex nature. As I examined, degrowth emerged as a political slogan and evolved into a social movement. Apart from its rich history, degrowth is also present in social and environmental movements (p. 4). It means degrowth is imagined as a platform where different social movements interact and learn from each other. I believe degrowth as a social movement and degrowth as a platform for social movements are not contradictory. They are two sides of the same coin. It is because, as Muraca explains, the hegemony of neoliberal order is challenged in the end (p. 5). Degrowth and its alliances criticize green growth, sustainable development, and the growth paradigm (Burkhart, Schmelzer & Treu, 2020, p. 12). They also criticize economic consumption and production patterns. They try to develop alternative policies for the current socio-environmental policies. Degrowth and various social movements establish anti-hegemonic bloc to challenge neoliberal globalization. They form 'mosaic of left-wing groups' (Burkhart, Schmelzer & Treu, p. 14). Degrowth

emphasizes the importance of an alternative future in terms of pluriverse. Pluriverse refers to multiple strategies, different visions, and various alternatives to the socio-economic structure of neoliberalism.

In this section, I will try to examine how degrowth and other social movements interact. Since they attempt to establish an anti-hegemonic bloc, they often adopt similar political strategies. There are also divergences in the key idea of social movement, the main actors of social movement, and policy proposals for the future (Burkhart, Schmelzer & Treu, pp. 16-17; Demaria *et al.*, 2013). I will focus on Ubuntu, Buen Vivir, the Environmental Justice movement, and feminism in terms of their history, main actors, and political strategies. Interaction among the Degrowth movement and these movements creates a unique synthesis.

3.2.3.1. Degrowth and the Environmental Justice Movement

It is claimed there are three major flows in environmental movements. These are the Cult of Wilderness, the Gospel of Eco-Efficiency, and the Environmentalism of the Poor (Martinez-Alier, 2015, p. 37). The Environmentalism of the Poor is another name for the Environmental Justice movement (EJ). The Cult of Wilderness has existed since the Industrial Revolution. The main aim of the movement is the preservation of nature such as landscapes, tropical rainforests, and wildlife (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, 2014, 168). Though, The Cult of Wilderness did not criticize macro-structures of the economy (p. 167). The Gospel of Eco-Efficiency determines many environmental politics today. It mainly uses the concepts such as ecological modernization and sustainability (Martinez-Alier, 2015, p. 38). As previously examined, sustainability development establishes the post-political condition in environmental politics. Therefore, the conflict between the conservation of nature and economic growth is avoided (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, p. 168). It is expected that technological advancement and efficiency will produce necessary solutions to address the ecological crisis. The Cult of Wilderness and The Gospel of Eco-Efficiency can be thought in conflict with each other. This is not the case. It seems they form an alliance. The reason is because Eco-Efficiency takes advantage of the proposals of The Cult of Wilderness (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, p. 168). For instance, it adopts the concept of wilderness and claims that market services are required to protect natural resources. Since natural resources are under threat, we

must use them more efficiently (p. 168). In the end, we discovered that natural resources have been commoditized.

Environmentalism merged in the USA in the 1970s. It was the movement of the white middle class (Müller, 2020, p. 116). Their main aim was to keep their commons safe from the effects of nuclear power plants and toxic industries. Despite their efforts, such industries moved to the poorer communities such as Hispanics and Native Americans (p. 116). These people did not welcome the negative effects of industrious facilities and protested them. Therefore, the concept of environmental racism emerged under the Environmental Justice movement (Martinez-Alier, 2016, p. 3). Social inequalities as the result of racism do not take place only in the socio-economic structures. Since they depend on natural resources and minerals to survive, they find themselves vulnerable to governmental decisions which favor multinational corporations. They are named 'frontline communities' because their survival depends on natural resources (Müller, p. 120).

Environmentalism of The Poor or the Environmental Justice movement examines the economic structures of capitalism and places justice at the center of environmental politics. The Environmental Justice movement strives for recognition and participation (Schlosberg, 2007, p. 11). Recognition ensures the political rights of indigenous communities. Many indigenous communities find themselves weak against the decisions of multinational corporations. Commons such as freshwater, minerals, and fisheries are depleted by the capitalist logic of economic growth. As a result, their political rights must be recognized. Participation is related to democratic structures. They work to establish local democratic institutions. The status of commons needs more participatory democracy (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, p. 170). Since continuous economic growth can only be achieved through extraction of natural resources, indigenous people's right to manage their commons is under threat. People protest and try to establish more democratic political institutions. They attempt to design multinational corporations more liable (p. 170).

The Environmental Justice movement focuses not only on natural resources. Scholars argue the Environmental Justice focuses on 'brown injustices'. These are air pollution, fresh air, and water supplies (Anguelovski, 2013, p. 160). Today, healthy foods, transit systems, infrastructure, income inequalities, and racial inequalities remain on the agenda of the Environmental Justice movement (Anguelovski &

Martinez-Alier, p. 171). These are named green injustices (Anguelovski, p. 160). Importantly, Environmental Justice prioritizes the ‘right to the city’ and ‘spatial justice’ frameworks in terms of urban environmentalism (p. 163). Right to city examines how urban spaces are transformed by the current economic understanding. It tries to establish democratic structures in order to take a part in the decision-making process in urban transformation. Spatial justice refers to establishing equal opportunities for marginalized communities. It investigates how resources can be equally distributed in space (p. 163).

Justice is a common theme in both the Degrowth movement and the Environmental Justice movement. I will look at how the Degrowth and the Environmental Justice movements interact briefly. There are three important points of convergence. These are equality, resource caps, and alternative economy (Demaria *et al.*, 2013, p. 201; Martinez-Alier, 2015, p.). First, both movements argue that inequalities arise because of the current global economic relations. Western countries continuously exploit countries in the Global South in order to obtain cheap natural resources. Degrowth and Environmental Justice criticize the discourses of ‘lifeboat ethics’, ‘we are all in the same boat’, and ‘the spaceship Earth’ (Demaria *et al.*, p. 200; Müller, p. 115). These discourses hide conflictual power relations within societies. They assume that every society contributes equally to global carbon emissions. Rather, Global North countries are more responsible than the rest of the world. The ecological crisis will affect Global South more seriously in rising sea levels and droughts. Therefore, international politics should be rearranged in order for more equal income distribution among nations. Second, Degrowth and Environmental Justice attempt to implement resource caps. It tries to limit countries with high carbon emission rates. It will also allow non-Western countries to adopt necessary policies in terms of infrastructure, health, and education. Third, both movements seek to create an alternative image of the economy. Capitalism’s constant growth threatens the ecological balance. The economy should be founded on the concept of use-value rather than exchange-value. They claim that everyone has an equal right to access natural resources (Martinez-Alier, 2015). Degrowth and the Environmental Justice movement work together to create more just, equal, and ecologically harmonious society (Velicu, 2019; Müller, 2020).

3.2.3.2. Degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu

Even though Buen Vivir and Ubuntu emerged in the Global South, the Degrowth movement considers these movements as important social platforms. As some scholars argue, I believe there is a common denominator among degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu. It is a critique of capitalism as well as the current development discourse (Kothari *et al.*, 2014; Brown, 2020; Escobar, 2015; Acosta, 2020). Therefore, degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu can be viewed as post-development projects. Their political imaginaries challenge neoliberal capitalism.

The concept of Buen Vivir means ‘good living’ or ‘living well’. It originated in Ecuador and Bolivia. The idea of Buen Vivir is expressed through three pillars: social, spiritual, and material (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019, p. 5). The social pillar is associated with the plurality of opinions, non-linear understanding of progress, and harmony with nature. The spiritual pillar refers to multiplicity of cultures, reciprocity, and critical attitude towards an anthropocentric worldview. Finally, the material pillar is about equal access to natural resources, quality of life, and challenging GDP to measure well-being (p. 5).

There are three different uses of Buen Vivir. These are generic use, restricted use, and substantive use (Gudynas, 2015, p. 201). Its generic use refers to criticizing the development projects of multinational corporations and governments in South America. A restricted use also criticizes capitalist development but also refers to post-capitalist development models (p. 201). Finally, substantive use of Buen Vivir is linked to radical criticism of all development projects. In this context, Buen Vivir presents itself as a post-development idea. Some argue that Buen Vivir comes closer to degrowth in its substantive use.

According to Buen Vivir there are no concepts similar to ‘development’ in indigenous cultures or nature (Kothari *et al.*, p. 367). As a result, we conclude that the concepts of development and underdevelopment are meaningless. Buen Vivir tries to construct an alternative worldview. It challenges the anthropocentric view of the economy and replaces it with a socio-biocentric view of the economy (Acosta, 2020, p. 88). The Western way of development is not a remedy for other societies. Buen Vivir advocates multiple histories. It criticizes the modern understanding of historical linearity (Gudynas, p. 202). Modernity and the development project of

neoliberalism cannot be a universal trajectory since they emerged in particular times and locations.

Buen Vivir holds the idea of the plurality of knowledge (Gudynas, p. 202). It argues that the concepts such as nature, knowledge, and tradition do not have a fixed definition. Each culture views them differently due to their unique environment. It should not be given to privilege one particular definition to another. For this reason, Buen Vivir is not a mono-cultural project. It is plural and asserts that there are multiple 'good livings' (Kothari *et al.*, p. 367).

It is possible to draw analogies between the Degrowth movement and Buen Vivir. I will try to argue that there are two points of convergence. These are the critics of GDP and the capitalist development project. As we cleared out earlier, degrowth confronts GDP as an economic tool. According to advocates of Degrowth, GDP includes material outputs that could be harmful to the environment. Continuous economic growth would not be beneficial for the ecological balance. Buen Vivir argues that GDP cannot measure the well-being of individuals and the environment by simply looking at total economic output in a society. It is because GDP rests on the anthropogenic view of the environment. Therefore, degrowth and Buen Vivir both claims that measuring the well-being of society through material output in an economy should be challenged. Second, Buen Vivir criticizes current development discourses. Current development discourses, according to Degrowth, are shaped by neoliberal growth policies. These policies assert that technological solutions will eliminate environmental threats. Buen Vivir also acknowledges the hegemony of growth policies and claims that a different understanding of economic policies is required to address the ecological crisis.

Ubuntu is a non-Western philosophy as well. It emerged among Bantu-speaking people in Africa. Ubuntu, is a two dimensional concept that refers to humanness. These are 'being' and 'becoming' (Le Grange, 2019, p. 323). According to this philosophy, people depend on each other. Being a human is inextricably linked to others. Ubuntu does not put emphasis only on human beings. It believes that all living beings have value and should not be harmed (Ramose, 2015, p. 201). In sum, the Ubuntu philosophy argues that if we harm other living beings, we will be harmed because everything in the universe is related and interdependent (Le Grange, p. 324).

Similarly, Ubuntu considers all living beings through the concept of ‘wholeness’ (Ramose, p. 202).

The Ubuntu philosophy transcends the binary of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism (Le Grange, p. 325). It is because Ubuntu defines humanity as being dependent on other living beings. The Ubuntu philosophy touches on two crucial points in this context: the concept of homo economicus and nature (Terblanché-Greeff, 2019, pp. 100-101). Homo economicus is an economic man who constantly calculates and maximizes his profit. The concept depends on the capitalist mode of production. Since the well-being of an individual is measured by his or her status and material holdings in capitalism, individual identity is formed through ‘I’ in ‘Me’ (p. 101). It means that each individual try to develop a distinct identity from others in terms of self-reliance and independence (p. 100). The Ubuntu philosophy criticizes homo economicus and its identity formation in terms of ‘I’ in ‘Me’ and replaces it with ‘I’ in ‘We’. Therefore, competitive and conflictual relationships between individuals will be transformed. The philosophy of Ubuntu also challenges capitalist understanding of nature. Nature is seen as something to be commodified in order to realize continuous economic growth. Ubuntu claims that nature should not be seen through the lens of economic rationality. According to Ubuntu, humans need to design their lifestyles around the concepts of sufficiency and care (p. 102).

Ubuntu is thought of as an alternative imaginary to the capitalist development project. Therefore, the Degrowth movement and Ubuntu criticize the existing world order through examining the concept of development (Ramose, p. 214). Ubuntu offers a completely new perspective on development. It calls into question the capitalist modernization paradigm and economic growth (Terblanché-Greeff, p. 104). Its philosophy criticizes the commodification of nature as well as the image of homo economicus. Ubuntu, like Degrowth, calls for collaboration, respect to nature, and solidarity (p. 104). Ubuntu puts special emphasis on commons to keep natural resources available for everyone (Ramose, p. 214).

Ubuntu, unlike Buen Vivir and Degrowth, is not considered as a global imaginary. According to some scholars, this could turn the Ubuntu philosophy into a project that excludes others (Le Grange, p. 325). There are concerns about whether international organizations can use Ubuntu in order to re-brand their image in the environmentalist manner (p. 326). I believe it is necessary to build a bridge between Ubuntu and

Degrowth. Since the Degrowth movement emerged in Global North, post-colonial policies have become necessary. It will only be possible if the Degrowth movement evaluates the unique vocabulary of the Ubuntu philosophy in terms of care, humanness, and wholeness.

Degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu can be thought as transition discourses (Escobar, 2015). Transition discourses emerge because of social, political, and ecological crises in modern society. Transition discourses argue that we need to leave our current socio-political imaginaries behind in order to establish a just society. They propose a radical social transformation. For instance, transition discourses argue that our cultural, ecological, ontological, and economic understandings of modern society must be replaced by post-colonial and post-development insights (Escobar, p. 454). Transition discourses such as degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu call for post-carbon economies while criticizing capitalism (p. 454). Pluriverse is a term used by scholars to describe transition discourses. Pluriverse refers to a world in which many different imaginaries coexist (Kothari *et al.*, 2019, p. xxviii). Pluriverse opposes all forms of discrimination and development that are based on economic growth (p. xxviii). Therefore, we can argue degrowth, Buen Vivir, and Ubuntu aim at establishing a post-capitalist future.

3.2.3.3. Degrowth and Feminism

The feminist movement became visible in the late 1960s, particularly in the US (Albelda, 1995, p. 254). Feminism and the women's movement are inextricably linked (Heywood, 2017, p. 219). The feminist movement pursued various political strategies in terms of reformist and radical solutions. Still, the feminist movement is characterized by two core beliefs. First, women are thought to be disadvantaged because of their sex in society. The Men's hegemony persists whether it is economic relations or cultural values. Second, the socio-political structures should be changed to achieve gender equality (p. 219). The hegemony of men over women is not natural. Women's position in society was determined not by their intellectual capabilities but by the patriarchal system itself (Albelda, p. 254). Therefore, it is clear that gender divisions are political (Heywood, p. 219).

In order to examine the feminist movement, scholars contend that there are three waves of feminism (p. 220). First-wave feminism started in the nineteenth century. It

was mainly based on achieving sexual equality in the political arena (p. 220). The main aim of first-wave feminism was achieving female suffrage. Women were thought to be unable to vote because their intellectual abilities deemed inferior than to those of men. The feminist movement considered that it would be easier to end discrimination in other areas of social life if political equality was achieved (p. 221). Second-wave feminism refers to a distinct project of the movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. After achieving female suffrage, it was thought that the gender equality had been achieved. It was discovered that the social status of women was not equal to men's. Then, the aim of the feminist movement shifted from political emancipation to women's emancipation (p. 221). It was claimed that women's emancipation was directly linked to the public and private divide. According to Second-wave feminism, public sphere was dominated by men and their values. High values of art, politics, and economy are in the public sphere. The private sphere refers to family relations between men and women. It was considered to be non-political. Then, feminist scholars argued that women are kept out of the public sphere and are confined to the private sphere where domestic labor and childbearing take place (p. 221). It was believed that public and private divide needed to be completely transformed. Third-wave feminism emerged in the 1990s. There is one common thought that unites various positions within third-wave feminism: It is the politics of difference (p. 242). The feminist movement argued that the politics of inequality and difference existed not only between men and women but also within women themselves. It implies that the feminist movement is not limited with women in the Global North. Especially, the experiences of women in colonized countries in the past should have been considered. The politics of difference takes insights from post-colonial and post-structural studies. Concepts such as discourse and difference contributed to third-wave feminism in deconstructing fixed female identity (p. 229).

The feminist movement also criticizes capitalism. In order to challenge capitalism, feminism relies on feminist economics. I believe the feminist movement and the Degrowth movement have become similar in offering an alternative economy. The economy as an institution is made up of human practices that are bounded by cultural setting. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the economy is culture (Banet-Weiser & Castells, 2017, p. 4). Since the economy is about production and consumption, the question of value becomes crucial. Different understandings of the economy

determine what is valuable in the economy. The value-making process is also cultural and political (p. 5). In every society, there is a constant struggle for value-making among various political imaginaries (p. 5). Feminism as a political project tries to replace capitalism with a feminist economy.

According to the feminist economy the capitalist economy is unequal. Therefore, it is necessary to offer an alternative way of value-making in the economy. The economy is thought to be natural and separate from history. As political subjects, we can imagine and establish an alternative economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 14). The feminist economy argues that capitalism is a destructive system because there is a constant conflict between profit and the well-being of laborers (Picchio, 2015, p. 209). In order to establish an alternative society, it is necessary to examine the politics of distribution (p. 210). Since capitalism rests on the wage-labor, the process of labor is a commodity (p. 209). Domestic labor is unpaid. Capitalist economy naturalizes the status of women in society as being responsible for the reproduction of labor.

The Degrowth movement and feminism put emphasis on the concept of care. Care work, according to feminist economy, should be valued (Banet-Weiser & Castells, p. 27). It is believed that the economy is not only about consumption and production patterns but also the reproduction of labor, care work, and domestic labor (p. 26). Care work is commodified in capitalist economies and left to the responsibility of the individual (p. 28). The feminist economy challenges this assumption by arguing that care work is a social right (p. 28). Furthermore, degrowth claims care work should be separated from growth-oriented market logic and should be seen as commons (Dengler & Seebacher, 2019, p. 250). There is a direct relation between public-private divide and care work. It is argued that the expressions like ‘taking care of’ and ‘caring about’ are masculine and refer to the position of men in the public sphere. Though, the terms ‘care-giving’ and ‘care-receiving’ are considered feminine and linked to the private sphere (D’Alisa, Deriu & Demaria, 2015, p. 65). The Degrowth movement challenges this distinction, emphasizing the importance of care work. Since reproductive work is devalued in the capitalist mode of production, degrowth will establish a different economy (Hickel, 2020).

3.3. Degrowth and Environmental Politics

Degrowth is intertwined with environmental politics. In this section, I will briefly examine the history of the environment. Later, I will turn my attention to the environmental discourses. Discourses shape and construct how we think about the environment. Therefore, they are crucial. Finally, I will also assess how degrowth relates to the environmental discourses.

3.3.1. A Brief History of the Environment

In this section, I will look at the history of the environment from the Neolithic Revolution to the Anthropocene briefly. The dynamics between human activity and the environment have been changed throughout history (Foster, 1999, p. 34). Examining the history of the environment is critical for three reasons. First, it is important to acknowledge how human activity has contributed to the current ecological crisis. Second, scholars argue that ecological politics wishes to establish a pre-industrial society. Therefore, ecological harmony would be restored (p. 36). According to Raymond Williams industrialism is seen as a threat to natural order and harmony (1989). Similarly, Habermas pointed out the attack of modernity's strategic and calculative thinking, which colonizes them. Still, Habermas claimed that we should not glorify the pre-Enlightenment societies (2015). Third, pre-industrial societies also experienced ecological collapses (Diamond, 2005). Advanced industrial and technological societies have negative effects on the environment, but pre-industrial nostalgia is not a solution to the ecological crisis.

The human impact had shaped the environment before the Industrial Revolution took place. The Anthropocene, a new geological era, started when human activity transformed the environment (Doughty, 2013, p. 504). The Neolithic Revolution contributed to pre-industrial societies in producing an extensive amount of food and extract surplus. After, the division of labor emerged in order to organize society more efficiently. Many civilizations arose as a result of the division of labor. These ancient civilizations were defined as tributary societies and were characterized by rigid social structures and hierarchies (Foster, p. 36).

Tributary societies stretched out nearly 5500 years in history. Tributary societies relied heavily on agriculture to extract a large amount of surplus. The negative human impacts on the environment brought ecological collapse and the decline of

civilizations. For instance, Sumer in Mesopotamia collapsed due to changing conditions of the environment. The ruling elite and soldiers forced farmers in order to extract an enormous amount of agricultural surplus. Irrigation systems were crucial in agricultural productivity. Civil war and conflicts disrupted irrigation systems and productivity of the land were largely decreased (Foster, p. 37). After, the Sumerian civilization collapsed because of environmental change. The soil-water system was critical to the success and failure of any civilization, especially in Mesopotamia, in the pre-modern times (Hillel, 1991, p. 78).

The second phase history of the environment in pre-Industrial times began with the Age of Discovery and the emergence of merchant capitalism in the sixteenth century. Merchant capitalism, as a new production system, united with the scientific discoveries in this historical period. Later, Francis Bacon devised a social program for advocating the control of nature for human needs. It coincided with the new philosophy of science based on reason, progress, and technology. The new philosophy was also related to the subjugation of nature and women (Foster, p. 41; Merchant, 1983, p. 164). Bacon argued humanity's perception of nature changed through history. Nature was thought of as a living being in the earlier stages. The image of nature was described as an error in the following stage. Then, nature was ready to take orders from humanity in the last stage (Merchant, pp. 170-171). Nature was thought to be something that could be tempered and changed in order to fit the desires of humanity (Foster, p. 41).

Cities depended on agricultural and material goods from other towns. Cities received food supplies and resources from surrounding rural towns. Though, their dependency was limited. Therefore, their ecological footprints were relatively small before capitalism (Harvey, 1996, p. 410). At the dawn of the capitalist mode of production, as Marx brilliantly illustrates, the bourgeoisie revolutionized all instruments of production and gave a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption patterns (Marx & Engels, 2008, p. 38). The physical size and population of cities grew. Their need for agricultural and material resources also increased. Raw materials and resources were shipped to growing cities as a result of the technological developments and science that led to explorations of the New World (Foster, 2000, pp. 153-156). Primitive accumulation helped to liberation of capital and peasants (Moore, p. 125). Because of this transformation, commercial

towns declared their victory over the countryside. The subordination of rural peasants to the capitalist mode of production meant two things. The first one was related to agricultural urbanization. The second development forced dispossessed peasants to move cities and sell their labor in order to survive (p. 126). The new division of labor assigned one part of the globe to agricultural production for supplying the other with the colonial mentality (Marx, 1976, p. 579; Moore, 2000, p. 126).

The rise of merchant capitalism and the spread of commerce caused massive destruction of wildlife and soil. It is estimated that 250.000 sea otters were killed in the late 18th century for their furs. Nearly 15 million beavers were killed for the same reason in North America (Foster, 1999, p. 42). Since all animals take part in forming an ecosystem, the extinction of wildlife had enormous effects on other species. For instance, the shrinking population of beavers led other animals which take advantage of beaver ponds to decline. This further resulted in limited food supply for red foxes and ultimately, destruction of an entire ecosystem (p. 43).

Industrialization is one of the great markers for dividing environmental history into phases (Barca & Bridge, 2015, p. 367). The Industrial Revolution completely transformed nature and labor. Merchant capitalism and mercantilism both contributed to the transformation of nature for the sake of profit. Though, merchant capitalism was more of an ecological takeover rather than an ecological transformation (Foster, 1999, p. 51). Therefore, Industrial Revolution is thought of as a new phase in environmental history. Industrial Revolution refers to several things. The first is the factory or manufacturing system (p. 53). Economic production was taking place in the workshops before the Industrial Revolution. It was local, and the material outputs were consumed immediately. Economic goods were not transported to distant lands. The establishment of the factory system brought tremendous production capacity. It was because of rational calculation of the working hours and the division of labor. The second feature of the Industrial Revolution is wage-labor. Workers could only sell their labor in the factory system. The Industrial Revolution was extremely dynamic because it could commodify land and labor (p. 51).

Industrial capitalism was characterized by its dependence on mechanical production. Industrialism is a revolution because it relies on organized mechanical production (Barca & Bridge, p. 368). Industrialization refers to the use of non-living energy or

inanimate power in the economic production system (p. 369). It does not mean that machines were left alone to do all tasks. Rather, preparing weekly schedules and organizing workers were crucial in order to handle complex tasks. The industrial workplace was a highly politicized environment, and it had an ability to produce unrest and social tension (p. 369).

The rise of industrialization was characterized by extensive use of fossil fuels, rapid population growth, and urbanization (Mosley, 2010, p. 83). These developments disrupted ecological harmony. The expansion of urban cities harmed the rural sections of the world. Contrary to the pre-Industrial period, the ecological footprint of these cities increased tremendously. These urban cities had to have well-functioning transport, communication, and waste disposal systems. They were the center of increasing demand for new consumer goods. Thus, the growing demand sustained thanks to newly invented machines. Clean water supplies started to decline and rivers got polluted because of the industrial production waste (Mosley, p. 94).

The first phase of the Industrial Revolution refers to the period of 1760-1880. New processes and socio-economic transformations took place in Britain and slowly expanded its influence to the Western geographies. In the second phase, which lasted from 1880-1950, the effects of the industrialization influenced non-Western countries. Finally, the third phase of the Industrial Revolution refers to the post-War period (Stearns, 2013, p. 14; Hobsbawn, 1999). The cotton industry was at the center of the first phase (Foster, 1999, p. 54). Many scholars argued that studying the Industrial Revolution requires thinking about cotton (Hobsbawn, 1999, p. 34). The cotton industry played a key role in industrialization of Britain. The character of the cotton industry fitted to mechanized production, and it was open to new developments (Stearns, 2013, p. 28). Developments in the cotton industry led to many discoveries in mining and metallurgy. Steam power, iron, and coal defined the first wave of the Industrial Revolution. The amount of coal production in the world was equal to the total coal production by countries before the Industrial Revolution. Later, an individual country was able to produce a large volume of coal, which corresponded to the total production in the world (Hobsbawn, 1995, p. 54).

As was the case in the European continent, the rise of the railroad systems and heavy industry shaped North America and led to a connection to the slowly growing world market. The role of science in industrialism is completely changed in the

second phase of the Industrial Revolution. The role of science was limited in the first phase. Technical developments contributed to the expansion of industrialism and had a more scientific basis in the second phase. The electrical and chemical industries led to the development of high industry (Hobsbawn, 1999, p. 152).

In the second phase, all types of work were mechanized (Stearns, 2013, p. 162). The scientific management of working hours required to break down the production processes into manageable sections. F. W. Taylor was the key figure of the scientific management program in the US. The Fordist principles in the heavy industry allowed every worker to complete their repetitive tasks. Though, workers did not have general information about material outputs (Hobsbawn, 1999, p. 154). The scale of economic production was another transformation in the second phase. The means of production were owned by a tiny minority (p. 155). The service sector emerged with the production of cheap goods (Stearns, 2013, p. 160).

The impact of the Industrial Revolution on the environment was best captured in the United States. There had been 40 million bison population in North America until the first European settlements arrived. The bison population dramatically decreased when commercial hunting began and became nearly extinct around 1890s (Foster, p. 74). Alongside, several bird species and forests were also removed from the picture (p. 74). The degradation of ecosystems was not only limited to the capitalist world. Since the Soviet Union followed the same scientific management programs as the United States, it produced wasteful materials and took part in exploiting nature (pp. 97-98). The rapid industrial growth of the Soviet Union was related to its production capacity in heavy industry and agriculture. The agricultural sector in the Soviet Union used 80 percent more fertilizer to increase output. Heavy industries in the Soviet Union used 10 percent more electricity when compared to the United States (p. 98).

The third phase of the Industrial Revolution, which is defined as an agro-ecological era, refers to the post-War period (Moore, 2000, p. 144). Scientific developments have continued, especially in agriculture. Many chemical products have been used in order to increase the agricultural output. Though, the soil has become depleted. DDT caused serious ecological and health problems (Foster, 1999, p. 94). The concept of the Anthropocene has become popular in scientific literature. There are several characteristics of the Anthropocene (Malhi, 2017, p. 253). First, the Anthropocene

refers to global nature of the change. Since all ecosystems are interlinked, environmental degradation threatens all species. Second, global environmental change is not limited to the climate crisis. The Anthropocene includes the decline of biodiversity, ozone depletion, and ocean acidification (Malhi, p. 253). Third, it refers to mutual dependence between humanity and nature (p. 253). Humanity can transform nature. However, there will be negative outcomes.

Some authors suggest that the Capitalocene should be used rather than the Anthropocene to describe the ecological crisis (Moore, 2015). I believe these discussions are related to post-politics. Moore argues that the Anthropocene imaginary is so compelling and it rests on coal and steam (Moore, p. 173). There is not a mention of class relations, capital, or inequality. These are largely omitted. The Anthropocene resembles humanity as a homogenous totality (p. 173). As I examined earlier, the post-political condition also operates in environmental politics. People from different parts of the world are considered unitary victims of the ecological crisis. Different modes of commodification, imperialism, racial formations, and patriarchy are not mentioned (p. 173). Therefore, the post-political condition emerges. In the next section, I will briefly examine how the environmental discourses are at work in global environmental politics. I will also discuss where the imaginary of degrowth stands among the environmental discourses.

3.3.2. Degrowth and the Environmental Discourses

Political imaginaries and discourses are bound up to political actors and power (Dryzek, 2013, p. 10; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 175). Thus, it is not possible to talk about discourses without referring politics (Hannigan, 1995, p. 53). It is because language considered being the house of power (Khayati, 1966). Therefore, examining environmental discourses gives crucial insights into environmental politics.

Why examining environmental discourses is necessary? I will give a twofold explanation. First, as Dryzek brilliantly puts forward, language matters (Dryzek, 2013, p. 11). Discourses as an analysis unit bring unnoticed dynamics to the reader apart from governments. Here, looking at how language works in case of how it constructs, interprets, and analyses environmental problems have serious consequences (p. 11). The way we discuss environmental problems has a direct

impact on political action. Since environmental problems cannot be easily packaged in a well-defined box, complexity is ever-present (p. 9). This situation generates many perspectives. These perspectives are known as discourses, and they are modes of imagining the world. They develop approaches to resolve environmental problems (p. 9). Discourses, which are bound up to language, enable one to think about what is possible or not (Goswami, 2014, p. 9). In another saying, discourses are interrelated sets of story-lines (Hannigan, 1995, p. 36). They are linguistic productions that include the devices of narrative and rhetoric (p. 36). These stories have three crucial missions. They create meaning, mobilize action, and they define alternatives (Hannigan, p. 36; Gelcich *et al.*, 2005, p. 379). Each one story is built upon several assumptions and judgments. These assumptions include not only environmentalists, but lawyers, citizens, and bureaucrats (Dryzek, 2013, pp. 10-11). People interpret ecological problems differently because of the dynamics between discourse and power.

Second, I will try to examine how environmental discourses locate themselves in environmental politics. One of the most important discourses in environmental policies is sustainable development. I will discuss how sustainable development conceives environmental problems in a techno-managerial way. In the face of the ecological crisis, sustainable development does not believe there are alternative stories. I will try to discuss where the idea of degrowth fits into the environmental discourses. Discourses enable stories to be told (Dryzek, p. 17). However, stories about globalization or the environment may not be accurate (Veseth, 2010). Therefore, we need to seek for better stories..

There are many classifications of the environmental discourses (Hannigan, 1995, p. 37). Here, I will follow John Dryzek's typology and briefly outline crucial environmental discourses. There are four main environmental discourses (Dryzek, 2013). I will also point out where degrowth is located among environmental discourses. Dryzek argues in order to understand environmental discourses, it is necessary to set a game table or a chessboard (p. 14). Two distinct dimensions set the positions of the environmental discourses. The first dimension is related to how to solve the conflict between environmental values and economic rationality. Every environmental discourse is defined by its relationship with industrialism. According to industrialism, an increasing amount of material goods and services will ensure

individual welfare (p 14). There are reformist and radical approaches. The second dimension is about the structure of the chessboard. Some discourses argue that environmental problems are opportunities, while others consider them as troubles. The environmental discourses are either prosaic or imaginative (pp. 14-15).

The first environmental discourse is the limits and survival discourse. It is both prosaic and radical in nature. It is radical because it challenges the political economy of industrialism. It argues that the planet has limited carrying capacity and that material outputs harm the ecological balance. The limits and survival discourse is radical because it emphasizes the limits of economic growth. It is not imaginative as green radicalism because it uses the terminology of the industrial political economy. It expects environmental solutions will be devised by administrators and scientists (pp. 15-16). Thus, the limits and survival discourse fall into a trap and it cannot change the structure of the chessboard. In the end, it had a relatively limited impact on global environmental politics (p. 50). The limits discourse received many criticisms from the left and feminist thought. This is partly because of their sexist language. The limits discourse conceptualizes the Earth with femininity and fertility (p. 49).

The environmental problem-solving discourse is another crucial environmental discourse. The environmental problem-solving discourse is both prosaic and reformist (p. 73). It recognizes the presence of ecological problems, but argues that the social transformation is unnecessary. Coordination among different political actors can solve social and ecological problems. Therefore, there are three main varieties of the environmental problem-solving discourse. According to the discourse, ecological problems can be solved through bureaucracy, democracy, and markets (p. 73). Administrative rationalism refers to a bureaucratic solution to the ecological crisis. As I discussed earlier, technocracy plays a critical role in administrative rationalism. It is believed that a society can be led to take the right direction without serious social transformation (p. 89). Administrative rationalism accepts liberal and capitalist mode of economic production. It argues that scientific experts and managers will bring the best policy packages after the cost-benefit analysis applied (pp. 80-87). Administrative rationalism claims the subordination of nature to humanity (p. 89). If an environmental problem arises and threatens humanity's survival, anthropocentric perspective will provide necessary solutions.

Democratic pragmatism also shares nearly the same assumptions with administrative rationalism. Here, individual citizens, activists, and organizations express their opinions along with experts and managers (p. 115). This plurality of voices may be seen beneficial. However, it limits the potentiality for collective action (p. 118). Finally, economic rationalism seems more crucial than other discourses. Degrowth activists directly challenge economic rationalism. Economic rationalism is also another word for market liberalism or neoliberalism (p. 122). Similar to the essence of market logic, economic rationalism argues that leaving ecological problems to market mechanisms will be beneficial (p. 122). One of the most striking characteristics of economic rationalism comes from its view of nature. Economic rationalism believes that the environment does not exist (p. 134). It is only an external factor that influences the rational decision-making process. It argues that nature exists solely to satisfy human desires and needs (p. 135). Nature is seen in the eyes of the profit mechanism. Economic rationalism supports 'cap and trade' and 'carbon tax' policies (p. 129). Sustainable development and green growth also share some market approaches. These policies criticized by degrowth. They contribute to the privatization of nature.

The sustainability discourse presents itself as both reformist and imaginative (p. 145). It argues there is a contradiction between economic production and natural balance. Though, it reassembles economic production and environmental justice under the banner of sustainability. Sustainability discourse has two components. These are sustainable development and ecological modernization (p. 146). The sustainability discourse claims that the present economic system can manage environmental problems by assuming continued economic growth in a green way (p. 149). It asserts that economic growth and long-term sustainability can bring prosperity (p. 160). Sustainable development seems environment- friendly discourse. Nature, on the other hand, is thought to be in the service of humanity. Nature refers to natural capital. Therefore, nature is seen as economistic (p. 159). According to ecological modernization, which is deeply committed to social progress, economic growth can be decoupled from the material output (p. 174). It also emphasizes technological solutions and technocratic policy-making process in order to tackle the ecological crisis (p. 176).

The green radicalism discourse rejects the fundamental structure of industrial society and calls for reorganizing the human-nature relations in a more holistic way. There are numerous associations with green radicalism. However, it is argued that green politics can be subdivided into two categories: green consciousness and green politics (p. 185). Green consciousness considers the transformation of our individual lives is necessary for social change. It focuses on how individuals perceive ecological problems. Deep ecology, ecofeminism, bioregionalism, and eco-theology constitute green consciousness (p. 185). Green politics challenges the current socio-economic institutions more openly. They design various political strategies and establish alternative practices. Green politics is comprised of social ecology, transition towns, environmental justice movement, Marxist ecology, and anti-globalization movement (p. 185).

According to green consciousness, the planet has limited carrying capacity. There are planetary boundaries that should not be crossed. Green consciousness puts emphasis on philosophical idealism. They see ideas, rather than material forces, drive history forward (p. 198). Thus, changing people's thoughts on the environment and ecology is crucial. Green politics is the more practical side of green radicalism. For instance, the transition towns, which are considered a social movement, started in 2005 and have gone global. They aim at promoting self-sufficiency and less energy consumption (p. 211). Similarly, the Environmental Justice movement brings together people from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds (p. 214). It has gained momentum and spread throughout Latin America. According to the movement, economic growth produces negative consequences on the ecological balance. These are not equally distributed. Multinational corporations cause destruction to native lands. Therefore, the Environmental Justice movement aligned with anti-globalization movements (p. 216).

How the degrowth project is related to the environmental discourses? Where does degrowth locates among them? Degrowth criticizes the environmental problem-solving discourse on two fronts. First, the environmental problem-solving discourse uses the market mechanism and technocratic policies in order to manage the ecological crisis. Degrowth claims that these solutions are not radical. Carbon taxes and carbon emission rates do nothing, but only postpone the ecological crisis. Similarly, as I discussed earlier, technocratic politics pose a real danger to

democracy. Citizens cannot participate in the decision-making process that is necessary to bring social transformation. Technocratic politics results from the post-political condition. The key aim of degrowth is to re-politicize environmental politics. Second, the environmental problem solving discourse holds the anthropocentric view of nature. Nature is shaped according to human desires. Degrowth believes that all ecosystems equal in value. Therefore, we should create an alternative economy with ecocentric values. The sustainability discourse is also reformist. Sustainable development, ecological modernization, and green growth views claim that economic growth is possible on a finite planet. They argue that we should find better ways to produce environmentally friendly products. Economic development is essential to social progress. Therefore, the growth policies should be universal. According to degrowth, economic growth cannot be environmentally friendly. Economic growth cannot be decoupled from carbon emissions (Hickel & Kallis, 2020). Likewise, the development agenda is shaped by the Western values of well-being and welfare. There is not enough room for alternative values.

Degrowth may appear to be more in line with the limits and survival discourse. The limits discourse uses the planetary boundaries and the impossibility of continuous economic growth. Though, I believe there is one crucial point to be made. The limits and survival discourse accepts of the language of industrialism. The limits discourse can be traced back to Malthus. He argued that humanity has limitless wants that cannot be satisfied. Then, there are external limits to be met if we are to survive. Environmentalists liked the idea of limit and embraced it (Kallis, 2019, p. 38). The desire for social change stemmed from survival and acceptance of external limits. Therefore, establishing an alternative society is not a matter of voluntary transformation. It is because of external limits. Similarly, the limits discourse puts boundaries on nature, but not on our intentions and desires (p. 42). Degrowth does not accept the language of capitalism. I believe degrowth can be classified within green radicalism. Degrowth uses both green consciousness and green politics. For instance, Degrowth embraces ecofeminism. It challenges conventional economics, and argues reproductive work and domestic labor undervalued in the capitalist economy. Similarly, care work is being privatized. Degrowth emphasizes care work as a social right. Also, degrowth considers deep ecology to be critical. The anthropocentric view of nature causes environmental degradation. But Degrowth

implies the ecocentric view of nature. Similarly, degrowth is linked to other social movements. As I examined, the Environmental Justice movement and the Degrowth movement share a common outlook. The Degrowth movement also develops various political and economic practices to change society. Thus, degrowth is included in the green radicalism discourse. Degrowth is radical in that it seeks to go beyond industrialism and continuous economic growth. Degrowth is also imaginative. It tries to change the chessboard and establish a new structure.

3.4. Degrowth and the Imaginary of Alternative Society

Degrowth wants to build a completely different society in the age of social, political, and ecological crises. I examined how degrowth evolves through various political strategies in the earlier sections. As mentioned earlier, degrowth challenges the current economic system and proposes building a new one. In this section, I will look at degrowth proposals in order for re-politicization of the economy. Degrowth implies that liberal capitalism is not the only economic alternative. Later, I will discuss how degrowth can help for establishing alternative society.

3.4.1. Degrowth and Repoliticization of the Economy

The idea of degrowth is definitely radical. Degrowth contradicts the dominant mode of thinking about socio-economic futures. It demands one crucial thing. It is re-politicization (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015). Re-politicization aims at finding a way out of the post-political condition. The post-political condition is the most recent manifestation of neoliberalism. Its impacts not only include fiscal and monetary issues but also environmental politics and alternative futures. The idea of degrowth develops an alternative language in order to attain ecologically sustainable future.

The Degrowth movement opposes Western mode of capitalism, consumer culture, and continuous economic growth. They are used to dominate non-Western societies. Degrowth criticizes orthodox economic thinking and economism for colonizing collective imaginary (Fournier, 2008, p. 529). Therefore, the degrowth project is not the only economic one. It examines the economic understanding of neoliberalism and offers oppositional, reformist, and alternative projects.

The idea of degrowth presents an antithesis to economism and the post-political condition. Thus, degrowth advocates a new understanding of the economy. Also,

degrowth argues that the neoliberal paradigm and sustainable development are related. They contribute to the post-political condition. The economy needs to be pulled back to the terrain of the political (Fournier, p. 533). Different political and economic imaginaries could then be established. Since continuous economic growth is emphasized, re-politicization of the economy is an important step.

Degrowth presents a different view of the economy. In the face of the ecological crisis, the idea of sustained economic growth is not desirable. Degrowth society is not possible in capitalist economies (Kallis, 2017, p. 35). There are strategies for 'exiting' and 'taking back' in the literature on degrowth (p. 38). These strategies are related to re-politicization of the economy. Therefore, degrowth rests on a completely different economy. Kallis argues that degrowth embraces six key insights in terms of re-politicizing the economy (p. 36). I will examine them briefly.

First, degrowth argues that the economy is an invention (Kallis, p. 36). Here, it is argued that the idea of economy should not be seen as something universal that has always existed. Economics is based on a high level of abstraction. Even though it does not seem like a problem, the arbitrary division of firms, households, and flows of goods and services can cause important mismanagements. GDP is thought as the highest level of abstraction. This economic understanding is not participatory or democratic. It disrupts the reality. Since the economy is thought as universal, it spreads over different societies. Degrowth calls into question GDP as a tool to measure the well-being of an economy. The economy does not refer to single and universal human activity, but many imaginations (p. 37).

Second, degrowth claims the economy is political (Kallis, p. 37). The phrase 'economy is political' refers to market ideology as something artificial, rather than natural. It is not ever-present. Myths about free market economics are bound to historical context. Every economic understanding is shaped by historical and geographical terrain. Thus, the current mode of production and its economic comprehension are not the only option. If we consider the economy to be apolitical, radical politics will not be possible. It is because the economy is thought as neutral. Karl Marx strikingly observes that capitalist economy dislikes historicization its past (Marx, 2008, p. 131). As I explained, all economic relations take place in a historical setting. Therefore, there are no eternal laws. Similarly, Karl Polanyi argued that the economy cannot escape from politics (Kallis, p. 38). Free market hides crucial

political implications and keeps the state out of the scene. Therefore, economic theory and its concepts have limitations. They are not the natural law of how things work. Today, economic science has turned into a religion and its foundations need to be revised (Keen, 2001, p. 19). The new understanding of economy should consider the economy to be political.

The third principle for a new economy is the question of surplus (Kallis, p. 41). Conventional economics puts the problem of scarcity at the center of debates. Human needs, it is claimed, are always increasing, and resources to meet those needs are insufficient. So, choices need to be made about what to produce. Choices are made by rational individual actors thanks to constant information flows. Though, the scarcity argument was actually refuted by the evidences in Anthropology (Rist, 2008). Scholars believe that there will always be more products to satisfy basic human needs. The key insight is that capitalism differs from other economic systems in terms of its unique relationship with surplus (Kallis, 2017, p. 41). All social surplus put into new production in both modern capitalist and socialist states (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2015). Therefore, continuous economic growth is preserved. Though, economic growth and investing surplus into new projects do not consider the planet's carrying capacity.

The carrying capacity of the planet has been controversial in the realm of the environmental politics. Increasing economic output cannot be reconciled with the ecological harmony. Degrowth argues that the new basis for alternative economy should be material (Kallis, 2017, p. 38). Here, the thoughts of Georgescu-Roegen provide a base for an alternative economic understanding. As I examined, all economic activities include energy and raw materials (p, 38). For this reason, economic production increases the level of entropy in a society. Since climate change and other environmental problems arise because of carbon emission, it seems necessary to avoid from 'the entrophic death' of life on the planet (p. 38)

Also, the economy constitutes co-evolutionary process (p. 42). Co-evolutionary process claims that economic transformation does not take place unilinear way. New economic system does not remove all practices of an old mode of production. Rather, new economic system coexists with the current economic system. It develops, and novel forms of economic interactions arise. In the end, mutations take place in the economy and economic transformation occur (p. 42). Thus, establishing alternative

economic practices is crucial. They can cause mutations in the economic structure and finally establish new values.

Last, one of the important points for re-politicizing the economy and developing an alternative model implies the economy as diverse (Kallis, p. 40). It is believed that the economy constitutes a flow that begins with an individual earning a wage for his labor. After, wage is spent on various products manufactured by firms. The cycle of flow goes on. This model of representing the economy is short-sighted. It accounts for only a small part of the economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006). There are many non-market activities in the capitalist mode of production. Solidarity economies, non-market exchanges, public money, volunteer work, ethical banks, gift economies, digital commons, and urban gardening are examples of post-capitalist economic activities (Kallis, 2017, p. 40). More radically, the formal economy, which includes private property and wage labor, is only possible because of the informal economy like domestic and voluntary work (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

These are the principles that underpin the economic understanding of degrowth. They will contribute to reinventing the economy (Kallis, p. 51). The ecological crisis will only be overcome by an alternative economy in the age of post-political neoliberalism.

3.4.2. Degrowth as a Transition Discourse

Degrowth prioritizes social change. An alternative worldview will remove the deadlock in environmental politics. Degrowth is defined as a transition discourse (Escobar, 2015, p. 451). Transition discourses transform the current mode of thinking in economics. There are various sources of transition discourses. They emerge from various social movements, intellectual figures, the visions for alternative futures, and the religious and cultural ideas (Escobar, p. 452). Transition discourses emerge when humanity face multiple crises. These crises are the results of industrialism, modernity, anthropocentrism, and rationalism (Escobar, p. 452). Transition discourses suggest a radical understanding of the present and the future.

Throughout the study, in the environmental terrain, the new form of neoliberalism in the recent stage, namely post-political neoliberalism, has contributed to form its environmental paradigm. It is post-political sustainable development. According to the current paradigm of sustainable development, it is unnecessary to change

individual lifestyles in order to prevent environmental catastrophes. The growing impact of technology could provide the necessary means to tackle the ecological crisis. Under the post-political condition, transforming society and imagining alternative socio-economic futures have been shown to be impossible and unnecessary. Alternative economic relations are condemned as nonsense, irrational, and nonsensical.

When humanity faces the planetary crisis, alternative imaginaries of the future are necessary. Our relation to nature is not sustainable. There needs to be a systemic change as a whole, which transition discourses endorse (Harvey, 2010, p. 78). Green urbanism, green economy, and ecological modernization are techno-managerial solutions to the ecological crisis. They have to be overcome. Examining the failures of the present will help to form a political stronghold for alternative futures. To transform the present, as Bourdieu puts, it is an urgent task to understand the present (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 83). Then, it will be possible to have a true imaginary of the future (Eagleton, 2011, p. 79).

Degrowth challenged the premises of the current economy. The current economy includes the fable of scarcity, the myth of rational man, and the fetishism of economic growth (Rist, 2011). Giorgio Agamben claimed that the economy belonged to the realm of mortals in the past. It was removed from the realm of mortals and now given to the gods (2007, p. 81). Today, the economy needs to be returned to the realm of mortals. Similarly, we must challenge the political myths. They silence 'the political' and make the economic order seem apolitical (Barthes, 1972). The political myths constantly claim that the world cannot be any different than it is now (Bourdieu, 1998). In current times, as Jameson expressed, 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world today than to imagine the end of capitalism' (Jameson, 2003, p. 76). For some scholars, degrowth establishes different socio-economic activities outside of the market relations. This is called pluriverse (Kothari *et al.*, 2019). The concept of pluriverse implies that there are alternative paths that could save us from upcoming environmental catastrophe. Degrowth shares the vision of pluriverse.

According to Alvin Gouldner, there is a myth created by scholars in social sciences. The myth claims that social science should be value free and maintain its current status (Gouldner, 1962). Gouldner named it Minotaur from the Ancient Greek mythology. I believe that we can consider sustainable development and

neoliberalism as Minotaur. Degrowth questions the sacred status of sustainable development and neoliberalism, arguing that there is always an alternative society. There are alternative economic practices such as common currency and ethical banks, which I examined throughout the thesis. Degrowth is an economic, as well as a political concept. It presents an escape from the fetishism of growth. It offers an alternative society where activities, relations, gender roles, work and the relations with the nature will be very different than the present (Demaria & Latouche, 2019, p. 148)



4. CONCLUSION

A spectre is haunting the world again. It is not communism but climate change and other ecological crises (Levene, 2006). Nature has long been thought of as something to be tamed by humanity for prosperity and economic growth (Engels, 1954, p. 241). Now, humanity is amid social and ecological crises. Ecological crises are nothing new in the history of humanity. The ancient civilizations had experienced them and fell into decay. However, I believe the ecological crisis intertwines social and economic crises. Therefore, the situation is more urgent.

Žižek believes the capitalist system is marching towards an apocalypse. The dead-end of capitalism is defined by four different sources. These are the ecological crisis, the results of the biogenetic revolution, the conflicts within the economic system, and growing social divisions (Žižek, 2011, p. x). These crises can bring an end to life in the world. The future does not look bright. Similarly, future worlds are limited because of the high-level carbon production and consumption (Urry, 2011, pp. 46-47). The chance of humanity surviving in the twenty-first century is low if environmental degradation persists (Rees, 2003). Scientists have been thinking about planetary boundaries for a decade. The planetary boundaries are necessary in order to keep ecosystems and humanity safe. Climate, ocean acidification, the condition of the ozone layer, the nitrogen cycles, global fresh-water use, the condition of land use, biodiversity, aerosol loading, and chemical pollution are defined as planetary boundaries (Foster, Clark, & York, 2010, pp. 14-15). Three of the planetary boundaries, which are the climate, the nitrogen cycle, and biodiversity, have been crossed. I argue an alternative economic understanding is necessary in order to avoid crossing other planetary boundaries. The idea of continuous economic growth, which is put into context by modern economics, is not possible in a finite world (Monbiot, 2008). The planet has a carrying capacity in terms of material outputs.

There are two main intellectual inquiries behind this study. First, people constantly seek personal transformation in our cultural environment. These transformations refer to the strategies of reinvention of the self and multiple careers. Short-termism is

the key feature of modern culture (Sennett, 2006). Everything can be re-designed whether it is a bodily part or a career goal. I wondered why discussing societal transformation is downgraded. Also, the current political texture considered eternal. Then, I examined the post-political condition. It gives insights into an apolitical world where alternative imaginaries are silenced. Second, growth-oriented economic policies are considered necessary for prosperity. However, the existence of the ecological crisis is clear. The idea of economic growth is modern. Also, it is a form of European universalism. The development policies place economic growth at the center. Therefore, the post-political condition and European universalism contributed to the hegemony of the current economic system. Degrowth represents a novel approach in order to challenge post-politics and Western unilateralism.

I make three key assumptions throughout the thesis. First, we are in a post-political condition. The recent form of neoliberalism is aligned with post-politics. All economic activities take place in a cultural context (Zelizer, 2011). Therefore, culture and economic values are interconnected. Technocratic ideals, social harmony, and economic measurement are the key values of post-political neoliberalism. The transformation of society refers to establishing alternative economic values and vice versa. I believe it is a troublesome task since we are living in the age of post-politics. Post-political neoliberalism represses alternative imaginaries. A radical transformation of society is considered unnecessary in the post-political condition.

Second, environmental politics is shaped by post-politics. The post-political condition does not cover only conventional politics. It has serious consequences for environmental politics. Green parties and other environmental actors accepted post-political values. They do not incorporate contestation into their political strategies. Environmental politics considers technological and managerial solutions crucial. They can produce necessary solutions without a radical social transformation. Similarly, Thomas Friedman claims we should mobilize ‘Father Profit’ to save ‘Mother Nature’ and tackle the ecological crisis by market mechanisms (Friedman, 2008, p. 244). Sustainable development, which is the dominant environmental discourse, holds post-political values. It emphasizes consensus. Conflictual politics has been devalued. Also, sustainable development believes a capitalist market economy can establish necessary solutions. It claims the growth-oriented policies should continue.

Third, the Degrowth movement can challenge the post-political condition and offer an alternative society. Developing new ideas is easy, but getting rid of the old ones is a challenging task. They colonized every corner of our minds (Keynes, 2018, p. ix). Many scholars believe the imagination of any alternative society is doomed (Hayek, 1988, p. 63). Degrowth designs various political strategies and establishes alternative economic values. Therefore, it challenges the current socio-economic understanding. Degrowth believes continuous economic growth is not possible on the finite planet. Degrowth interacts with other social movements. It designs a political platform for developing alternative voices. Since the ecological crisis persists, the inability to offer an alternative society will bring social collapse. I claim the argument of ‘no need for social transformation’ should be challenged. Humanity needs to establish an alternative economy for a just and ecologically sound society.

I began with the analysis of neoliberal transformation in the current socio-political environment. The emergence of the neoliberal paradigm is examined in three distinct phases in this study. The first wave of neoliberalism refers to the policies of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. In this period, neoliberalism challenged the welfare policies of Keynesian economics. That is why the first wave of neoliberalism is also called roll-back neoliberalism. After that, I argued that neoliberalism adapted itself to the new international environment. It is because the Cold War and ongoing tensions between the two superpowers came to an end. Bill Clinton and Tony Blair were the key policymakers in the second wave of neoliberalism. This form of neoliberalism did not directly challenge the state. It gave the state a positive role in taking care of the monetary system. Neoliberal policies consolidated in the second wave. Neoliberalism and its economic logic spread over other social institutions as a guiding factor. Therefore, the second wave of neoliberalism is defined as roll-out neoliberalism. I argue that the recent transformation of neoliberalism resembles a new phase. The neoliberal paradigm has moved closer to post-politics. Neoliberalism in the third phase shares some characteristics of earlier forms of neoliberalism. Still, it has one key characteristic, which is depoliticization. I believe that analyzing neoliberal transformation is critical. The reason is that neoliberalism can be considered a grand political project. The current form of neoliberal determines how we think about and manage political, environmental, and social problems. I wanted to understand whether our

neoliberalism injected policies have a flaw in terms of thinking about global problems properly. I found out that post-political neoliberalism prioritizes economics and its logic over politics. This situation establishes some form of inadequacy in democratic politics, environmental politics, and social change. Post-political neoliberalism believes in technological optimism. Therefore, it is believed technological developments will provide necessary solutions whenever a problem arises. Radical social transformation is considered unnecessary. Some institutional reforms will be sufficient in the post-political condition.

In order to portray the post-political condition better, I turned my attention to the works of Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Rancière, and Slavoj Žižek. Their theoretical contributions to post-politics are crucial. I argue that post-political neoliberalism, as with Mouffe, misconceives the essence of politics. Democratic politics has lost its true meaning and has come to value only election procedures. Alternative political projects and various demands are largely ignored. Also, I put forward that politics refers to an activity that does not constitute the mechanisms of dividing and separating. Rancière made it clear that politics and political theory are subordinated to a grand mysterious theory. In this case, it is neoliberalism. Conflicts are ruled out by the political texture. Žižek argued that the Left politics totally embraced mainstream policies of consensus. Ideological disagreement is over and neoliberalism is located at the center of politics. The post-political scholarship enabled me to examine the characteristics of recent times. Also, I could draw parallels between post-politics and neoliberalism.

In order to make post-politics relevant to current politics, I examined its two key symptoms in current politics. These are sustainable development and technocracy. I started with the arguments of Eric Swyngedouw and claimed that post-politics has serious implications for environmental politics. I was able to show that reformist solutions are generally preferred in environmental politics rather than radical social transformation. This picture would be incomplete unless we look at where post-political ideals can be found in environmental politics. Thus, I traced a brief history of sustainable development. I argue that sustainable development includes the very same ideals as post-political neoliberalism. Sustainable development prefers technological solutions and believes in the technocratic mode of politics. A conflictual image of man-nature relationship is omitted. Also, sustainable

development claims the economic logic of neoliberalism, efficiency, and entrepreneurship is necessary to tackle the ecological crisis. Therefore, I argue that sustainable development is a form of post-politics. Later, I examined technocracy to stress its alignment to post-politics. I discussed the characteristics of technocratic politics. Technocracy incorporates development politics, which in turn establishes the growth fetishism in economic policy. In technocratic politics, the concepts of modernization and economic efficiency determine how to conceive the ecological crisis. Thus, a true solution to the ecological crisis cannot be developed.

The degrowth imaginary is intertwined with the post-political condition, sustainable development, and technocracy. I conducted this study in order to show that degrowth and its strategies can be thought of as a response to these triple crises in our society. First, the post-political condition refers to the end of politics (Puymbroeck & Oosterlynck, 2014, p. 2). Technocratic governance, the ideal of consensus, and the persistence of neoliberalism are characteristics of the post-political condition (Duncan, 2016). Therefore, I consider it a political crisis. The political crisis of our current times includes two key aspects. These are the depoliticization of the economy and the undesirability of social change. As I explained earlier, degrowth sets out several arguments in order to re-politicize the economy. The economy, according to neoliberalism, is separate from the political. Degrowth challenges this version and tries to bring the economy back into the political texture (Kallis, 2017; Fournier, 2008). The discussion of social transformation is another aspect of the post-political condition. It is believed radical social change was outdated in the post-Cold War period. This idea brings the inevitability of neoliberal capitalism and the mantra of ‘there is no alternative’. Degrowth, as I discussed earlier, challenges the capitalist modes of economic and social organizations. Degrowth is a form of post-capitalist politics and it tries to establish a post-capitalist society (Schmid, 2019). Also, degrowth acknowledges capitalism rests on continuous economic growth. Degrowth calls for a post-growth society where cooperation, mutual aid, and solidarity replace the constant accumulation of capital (Chertkovskaya *et al.*, 2019; Koch & Buch-Hansen, 2020). Second, sustainable development is considered a crucial environmental paradigm to tackle the ecological crisis (Nebbia, 2012, p. 101). The sustainable development discourse established an impasse in environmental politics (Popescu & Hrestic,

2014). There is a deadlock in environmental studies. Sustainable development, which operates in the post-political condition, forecloses counter-hegemony projects and depoliticizes ecological demands (Swyngedouw, 2007). Sustainable development adopts technological fixes and market policies (Schmid, 2019). Degrowth criticizes sustainable development's emphasis on ecological modernization, green growth, and economic efficiency models. Degrowth calls for socio-ecological transformation and alternative society (Demaria, *et al.*, 2013). Third, technocracy incorporates growth-injected development policies in international governance. The development hegemony constitutes the Western notion of wealth and progress (Rist, 2008). Degrowth supports various social movements in the global South and designs post-developmental society.

In order to examine the degrowth imaginary, I began with the meaning of degrowth. I argue that degrowth is complex and there are various meanings for it. Still, the most important aspect of degrowth is the radical social transformation of society. I briefly examined the key figures of degrowth. Since degrowth is complex, its intellectual lines are diverse. I argue that degrowth is on the move and has transformed into a social movement. Degrowth has emerged in French politics but shortly after it went global. I discussed the political strategies of the Degrowth movement, which are oppositional activism, reformism, and building alternatives, and examined its political actors. Degrowth carries both characteristics of old and new social movements. The Degrowth movement tries to replace capitalism. Nonetheless, it creates new conflictual themes, such as environmental struggle. Also, The Degrowth movement interacts with other social movements, such as Ubuntu and Buen Vivir in the global South and feminism. I argue that degrowth challenges the sustainable development discourse in environmental politics. I located the degrowth imaginary within green radicalism. I examined whether degrowth offers an alternative society. I contend that degrowth re-politicizes the economy in response to the depoliticization of the economy in post-politics.

The revolutionary potential of degrowth and its emphasis on establishing alternatives are already discussed (Parker, Fournier & Reedy, 2007; Garcia *et al.*, 2017; Stuart, Gunderson & Petersen, 2020; Kostakis & Bauwens, 2014). Still, the post-political diagnosis of recent times is largely omitted from the studies. Degrowth cannot directly confront neoliberalism in conventional politics and sustainable

development in environmental politics without acknowledging the characteristics of the political texture. In this study, I aimed to examine whether degrowth carries the political tools of challenging the post-political condition. I argue that the Degrowth movement embraces radical politics. Therefore, it constitutes an alternative to the established order.

The discussions I made in this study draw attention to some points. First, there is the question of radical or emancipatory politics. Radical politics includes re-politicization in the neoliberal age and social change. Today, the critique of capitalism is replaced with subordination to capitalist forces (Swyngedouw & Wilson, 2015, p. 300). Still, there are possible movements that could challenge capitalism. Today, locating alternative political projects to the capitalist hegemony is challenging. Degrowth stands at the gate of radical politics. Second, the discussions of degrowth and the development discourse bring post-development into light. The idea of development colonized our minds. Post-developmentalism argues that the classical understanding of development embraces a linear mode of thinking and considers the West as the sole actor of development (Bendix, 2017). Development politics prioritizes the Global North over the Global South. Degrowth rejects the development discourse. Therefore, degrowth can be further utilized to establish more just and equal global politics.

Throughout the study, I attempted to assess the importance of the degrowth imaginary in terms of its policy strategies and its intellectual history. I believe that there are several points to be briefly touched on this section. First, I argue that degrowth resembles a novel approach in academic and public debates in Turkey. Its original meaning is yet to be discovered. Though, this does not imply that some of ideas of degrowth are completely unknown. There are various intellectual movements in Turkey that struggle against the ideology of developmentalism which is associated with neoliberalism. For instance, Lütfi Bergen argues that underdevelopment is a form of superiority rather than an economic status to ‘be cured’ (2019). He gets closer to the thoughts of Ivan Illich in terms of the nature of technology. Bergen argues individuals are not able to manage the conditions of sickness and death in modern society. For him, patients are turning into unitary victims of modern medicine. This form of thinking is related to what Illich notes as cultural iatrogenesis (Illich, 1976). Also, Firat Mollaer criticizes techno-

conservatism, which is a political and the cultural position in Turkey in terms of civilization, technology, and rationality. Mollaer argues that techno-conservatism is aligned with liberal conservatism and constitutes hegemony. Instrumental rationality and modern themes of neoliberalism is evident in relatively less known form of conservatism (2016). Similarly, İsmet Özel opposes the capitalist development project. He stresses that labor and leisure activities in modern capitalist society are deeply problematic (2014). As I discussed earlier, degrowth refers to similar points as reducing working hours and increasing leisure activities for achieving the real meaning of welfare society.

Second, the political strategies of degrowth is also evident in some of social movements in Turkey. For example, eco-villages and the concept of a slow city or *cittaslow* are present in environmentalist movements in Turkey (Efe *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, I believe it is possible to infer that ideas and political strategies of degrowth take place in Turkey. Third, expressing familiarity with policy proposals of degrowth in Turkey does not end future scientific inquiry. The policy proposals and political strategies of degrowth in Turkey lack a unified study. For that matter, it is important to evaluate the dynamics between political and environmental movements in Turkey and their relationship with the emerging Degrowth movement.

The Club of Rome argues that people believe most of our current problems can be solved by isolating them from their context, especially in the field of engineering (1970, p. 12). However, environmental degradation, poverty, illiteracy, pollution, irrational agriculture techniques, and localized warfare cannot be solved in isolation from others (p. 14). There are no well-defined borders of a problem. The boundaries are often blurred. These problems are interrelated and cannot be solved by our orthodox problem-solving approaches (p. 13). Therefore, problems should be seen as a 'problematique'. Thanks to this approach, we will be able to figure out these problems are system-wide, interdependent, and holistic (p. 16). The desire for continuous economic growth is the most important aspect of the 'world problematique' (Furtado & Furtado, 2020). Technological developments will not be enough to tackle the ecological crisis. Also, these developments will not make more space for economic growth. I contend that humanity is still a long way from solving 'the riddle of history', but the ecological crisis is nearing its end.

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