ACCELERATIONISM AND DEGROWTH: FROM A COMPARATIVE READING ON TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT TO *FULLY AUTOMATED GREEN COMMUNISM*

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Abstract

This study examines how degrowth and Accelerationism approach technological development in the early 21st century, both emerging as critical responses to the neoliberal order. Rooted in ecological economics and political ecology, degrowth advocates for the deliberate downscaling of production and consumption to respect planetary boundaries and promote social well-being, challenging neoliberalism's relentless growth imperative. In contrast, Accelerationism seeks to harness and repurpose technological progress as a strategic tool to overcome the structural constraints imposed by late capitalism and neoliberalism's austerity policies. Through a comparative analysis of foundational texts, this research finds that degrowth frames technology as a means to slow down social metabolism – favoring low-impact, decentralized, commons-based, and sharing-oriented innovations – directly contesting neoliberal technological commodification. Accelerationism, on the other hand, envisions technological infrastructure as a crucial lever for systemic disruption toward a post-work and post-scarcity techno-social body through accelerating socio-historic dynamics. Despite significant divergences, both currents position technology as central to post-capitalist transformation and firmly reject its current subordination to profit-driven imperatives.

Keywords: degrowth, Accelerationism, Post-capitalism

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Resumo
Este estudo investiga como o *degrowth* e o Aceleracionismo abordam o desenvolvimento tecnológico nas primeiras décadas do século XXI, ambos emergindo como respostas críticas à ordem neoliberal. Ancorado na economia ecológica e na ecologia política, o *degrowth* defende a redução deliberada da produção e do consumo, de modo a respeitar os limites planetários e promover o bem-estar social, desafiando o imperativo de crescimento incessante da ordem capitalista. De outro lado, o Aceleracionismo busca mobilizar e reorientar o progresso tecnológico como ferramenta estratégica para superar as restrições estruturais impostas pelo capitalismo tardio e pelas políticas de austeridade neoliberais. A partir de uma análise comparativa de textos fundamentais, o artigo identifica que o *degrowth* compreende a tecnologia como meio de desacelerar o metabolismo social – priorizando inovações de baixo impacto, descentralizadas, baseadas em bens comuns e orientadas ao compartilhamento – em oposição direta à mercantilização neoliberal da tecnologia. Já o Aceleracionismo concebe a infraestrutura tecnológica como alavanca crucial para a ruptura sistêmica em direção a um horizonte pós-trabalho e de pós-escassez através da aceleração de dinâmicas sócio-históricos. Apesar das divergências significativas, ambas as correntes situam a tecnologia como elemento central na transformação pós-capitalista e rejeitam de forma contundente sua atual subordinação aos imperativos do mercado.

Palavras-chave: Decrescimento, Aceleracionismo, Pós-capitalismo

Introduction

The neoliberal structure is deeply entangled with both material and subjective tensions. Among the outcomes of the fiscal, debt, and real economy crises that marked the transition from the postwar democratic capitalism (STREECK, 2014) to neoliberal financialized capitalism (MANDEL, 1975), notable results include growing income concentration and widening social inequality, stagnant investment and labor productivity, austerity measures and cuts to social benefits, rising public debt, and the deindustrialization of the Global North – which, in turn, reshapes global production networks. Additionally, neoliberal rationality has fueled the erosion of democratic institutions in Western nations, the increasing dominance of private firms with predatory practices toward the public sector, and the surge of anti-globalization and anti-capitalist resistance movements (BROWN, 2019; FOUCAULT, 2010; FRASER, 2023; HARVEY, 2020; JAMESON, 1991; MANDEL, 1975; MILANOVIC, 2019).

The current development path is no longer viable with the survival of Earth's ecosystems. The AR6 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022) indicates that the targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels are unlikely to be met by 2030. More realistically, without firm commitments by our national governments, the current development trajectory is expected to drive warming beyond 2°C, which could lead to the mass extinction of a significant portion of the world's biodiversity. The year 2024 was the first to surpass the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement (WMO, 2025), and the likelihood of even worse outcomes in the

future remains high (BEVACQUA *et al*., 2024). As Fraser (2023, p. 86) puts it:

> "Grounded deep in the system's structure, [...] capitalist society makes "economy" *depend* on "nature," while *dividing* them ontologically. Enjoining maximal accumulation of value, while defining nature as not partaking of it, this arrangement programs economy to *disavow* the ecological reproduction costs it generates. The effect, as those costs mount exponentially, is to *destabilize* ecosystems – and, periodically, to *disrupt* the entire jerry-rigged edifice of capitalist society. Simultaneously needing and rubbishing nature, capitalism is in this respect, too, a cannibal that devours its own vital organs. Like the ouroboros, it eats its own tail."

In this context, access to technologies suited for disaster prevention and preparedness can quite literally be a matter of life and death. However, if we accept Mandel's (1978, p. 252) argument that technological acceleration can be decomposed as a function of the rate of profit, surplus value, and capital accumulation, and that the more dynamic a society's economy, the greater its per capita environmental impact (GEORGESCU-ROEGEN, 1981), the following implications emerge: first, if the Global South persists in its endless attempt to catch up with development through the adoption of conventional productive technologies and energy sources, while the Global North fails to undergo a full green transition, the world will face absolute climate collapse. Second, if there is no fair economic and technological redistribution between these two groups of countries – meaning if the current trajectory remains unchanged – the Global North will be more resilient to the climate crisis, while developing nations will bear the brunt of disasters they did not create.

This sense of deadlock is further reinforced by the declining political influence of left-wing forces, which have largely failed to articulate an updated and coherent program for the 21st century – often falling back on an outdated, disjointed agenda of neoliberal productivity (WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2013; NEGRI, 2014). If there is any truth to Fisher's (2009) and Streeck's (2014) arguments – that reality has become so terrifying, and collective agency so eroded – then perhaps we should take seriously Haraway's (1991) proposition that engaging with conceptual absurdities may allow for the emergence of new realities. This is precisely the aim of the present discussion: to juxtapose two seemingly opposing and marginal perspectives – degrowth and Accelerationism – in order to explore potential responses to the crises we face. The focus will be on technological development, given its historical centrality in shaping socioeconomic transformations. It is through this lens that we will examine how technology operates as a key point of convergence between these two political-economic frameworks.

On one hand, the degrowth movement argues that current models of economic growth are, first, incompatible with the continuation of life on the planet and, second, socially undesirable. The movement denounces the concept of sustainable development for failing to identify capitalist (and socialist) economic development as socially responsible. For Kallis, Demaria, and D'Alisa (2015, p. 33),

> "degrowth signifies, first and foremost, a critique of growth. It calls for the decolonization of public debate from the idiom of economism and for the abolishment of economic growth as a social objective. Beyond that, degrowth signifies also a desired direction, one in which societies will

> use fewer natural resources and will organize and live differently than today"

Next, the authors note that the wealth of proposals within the movement is centered around the following fundamental critiques:

> "the first is the criticism of growth. Next is the criticism of capitalism, a social system that requires and perpetuates growth. Two other strong currents in the degrowth literature are, first, the criticism of GDP, and second, the criticism of commodification, the process of conversion of social products and socio-ecological services and relations into commodities with a monetary value" (KALLIS, DEMARIA & D'ALISA, 2015, p. 33).

Technological development plays a pivotal role in degrowth perspective, as it represents a space for the struggle to sustain the metabolism between society and nature. Like degrowth, Accelerationism begins with the diagnosis that capitalism's dependence on perpetual and renewed accumulation generates harmful social and environmental consequences. From this shared starting point, however, Accelerationism diverges sharply: it contends that the existing capitalist trajectory should be strategically appropriated and intensified in order to produce a radical rupture – one that could pave the way for a new, post-capitalist mode of existence (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015; NOYS, 2014). The following excerpt from the Accelerationist Manifesto (2015) encapsulates this position:

> "Our first demand is for a fully automated economy. Using the latest technological developments, such an economy would aim to liberate humanity from the drudgery of work while simultaneously producing increasing amounts of wealth. Without full

> automation, postcapitalist futures must necessarily choose between abundance at the expense of freedom (echoing the work-centricity of Soviet Russia) or freedom at the expense of abundance, represented by primitivist dystopias. With automation, by contrast, machines can increasingly produce all necessary goods and services, while also releasing humanity from the effort of producing them. For this reason, we argue that the tendencies towards automation and the replacement of human labour should be enthusiastically accelerated and targeted as a political project of the left." (SRNICEK and WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 109).

The final sentences explicitly reveal accelerationists' disdain for degrowth, which is grouped here within the field of "primitivist dystopias," alongside other movements such as ecosocialism, anarcho-primitivism, solar communism, ecofeminism, etc. In this grand framework, the technological development of the productive apparatus would be the main driver responsible for ensuring the satisfaction and overcoming of human needs, as well as a means of transforming human relations – promoting what was called "*Fully Automated Luxury Communism*" by Bastani (2019).

In this study, we compare how these post-capitalist currents engage with neoliberal capitalism and technological development. We begin by examining how Accelerationism and degrowth interpret the need to construct post-capitalist imaginaries in order to confront the polycrisis of the neoliberal capitalist system in the 21st century – and what forms of left politics they envision as necessary to overcome it. We then analyze their respective perspectives on the role of technology in building a post-capitalist society, with particular emphasis on addressing the climate crisis. Finally, we assess their programmatic proposals for the systemic overcmoming of capitalism. For the degrowth perspective, the primary

reference will be *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era* (2015); for the evaluation of Accelerationism, the analysis will focus on the collection *#Accelerate#: The Accelerationist Reader* (2019) and the book *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (2015).

Echoing the binary opposition between the terms themselves, much of the theoretical literature has framed the two currents are fundamentally antagonistic (AKBULUT, 2021, p. 103; BASTANI, 2019; PHILLIPS, 2015, p. 63; SAITŌ, 2022). However, the brief intervention by Vansintjan (2017) suggests that it is indeed possible – or at least worth attempting – to establish common ground between them, grounded in a shared critique of two common adversaries: capitalism and the destructive trajectory of climate change. In this sense, the present work offers a modest contribution to the theoretical and programmatic debate on two post-capitalist pathways.

Throughout the text, we will maintain an ongoing dialogue not only with Vansintjan's (2017) article – arguably the only explicit and preliminary attempt at establishing a dialogue between the two currents – but also with the work of Fluss and Frim (2022), which sought to bring Accelerationism into connection with Eco-Pessimism. Similarly, we will engage with four specific thematic dimensions proposed in their study: *utopian thinking, technology, economy,* and *political strategy.* Here, however, technology and economy will be treated as transversal elements, with a particular focus on the former.

At the end of the article, I hope that a fundamental distinction between the two approaches to technological development in the neoliberal (and late) stage of capitalism should become evident. The central strategy of Accelerationism consists in the collective appropriation of technology so that, once the constraints imposed by capital on its disruptive

potential are removed, society may be redirected toward an emancipatory *post-capitalist*, *post-work* and *post-scarcity* future (FLUSS & FRIM, 2022; SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2014, 2015; MACKAY & AVANESSIAN, 2015; FISHER, 2021, among others). Degrowth, on the other hand, argues that since productive technologies cannot be separated from the sociohistorical conditions in which they emerged – namely, as instruments of value extraction and domination – their harmful character must be either neutralized through democratic governance or actively rejected in favor of technologies compatible with socio-environmental limits (DERIU, 2015a, 2015b; HICKEL, 2022; JACKSON, 2010; KERSCHNER *et al*., 2018; among others).

1. We need new utopias

The first point of contact between the two currents I would like to discuss lies in the need for subjective-ideological renewal of contemporary leftist political tendencies. Both degrowth and Accelerationism are movements that assert themselves through the utopian reconfiguration of imaginaries. As a corollary, both understand that the ideological power of capitalism – and currently, neoliberalism – can only exercise a foundational role in society because it has managed to capture subjectivity itself. In addressing this issue, Serge Latouche (2015) introduces the concept of the "self-colonization of the imaginary" in the context of his degrowthian critique of economic development:

> *"growth and development are beliefs, and therefore imaginary significations like "progress" and all founding categories of the economy, then to get out, to abolish and go*

> *beyond them (the famous Hegelian Aufhebung), means that the imaginary must be changed. The achievement of a degrowth society therefore in part, means to decolonize our imaginary; to really change the world before the change of the world condemns us"* (LATOUCHE, 2015; p. 147)

In other words, the process of decolonizing the imaginary focuses on the attempt to liberate subjectivity from its colonization by economism – particularly with regard to the myths of infinite growth, linear technological progress, and the domination of nature (D'ALISA, DEMARIA & KALLIS, 2015). This effort unfolds through a critique of the economy as ideology, the rejection of dominant techno-scientific rationality, and the valorization of plural and popular forms of knowledge. In doing so, space could be opened for the emergence of sociabilities founded on alternative values, such as self-sufficiency (or autonomy), conviviality, and respect for ecological limits (DERIU, 2015a; KERSCHNER *et al*., 2018).

On the Accelerationist side, Fisher (2021) draws on Marcuse's (1987) interpretation and integrates it with the theoretical framework of French libertarian philosophy (D&G, Lyotard, Baudrillard, among others) to argue that capitalism is fundamentally a system for the production and mobilization of desires in forms compatible with the reproduction of the system itself. It operates, therefore, through the capture of individual and collective affects and aspirations and their redirection. Accelerationists refer to the capacity to produce and desire a new future under the concept of *hyperstition*:

> *"Hyperstition is a positive feedback circuit including culture as a component. It can be defined as the experimental (techno-) science of self-fulfilling prophecies. Superstitions are merely false beliefs, but hyperstitions – by their very existence as ideas – function causally to bring about their own reality.*

> *Capitalist economics is extremely sensitive to hyperstition, where confidence acts as an effective tonic, and inversely. The (fictional) idea of Cyberspace contributed to the influx of investment that rapidly converted it into a technosocial reality"*[2]

In summary, *hyperstition* refers to the process by which fictional narratives are formulated and mobilized in such a way that they produce real effects–ultimately contributing to their own realization. A paradigmatic example would be a technofuturist narrative that, by influencing collective subjectivity, begins to shape political choices and technological development in the society from which it emerged. At this point, two key distinctions arise in relation to the degrowth notion of the "decolonization of the imaginary." First, *hyperstition*, as conceptualized by Accelerationism, seeks to project and materialize an emancipatory, ultra-technological, post-capitalist future. Second, the pathway toward this future explicitly embraces fiction as a form of political technology – one capable of catalyzing the emergence of desired (or inevitable) futures, often by means of technological, informational, or financial mediation (CCRU, 1999, p. 68).

It is important to highlight Fisher's critical perspective (2009; 2022) regarding neoliberalism's capacity to constitute a historical phase in which the utopian potential of previous decades – particularly the 1960s and 1970s – is gradually drained and replaced by a repetitive and melancholic present, a process he terms the "*slow cancellation of the future*" (FISHER, 2022, pp. 13-50). For accelerationists, the

[2] Nick Land interviewed by Delphi Carstens in 2009. The full interview is available at the following link: https://www.orphandriftarchive.com/articles/hyperstition-an-introduction/

neoliberal victory of capitalism over communism in the East not only eradicated humanity's capacity for innovation but also suppresses the desire for the new through hegemonic control over collective libidinal energy. Whereas we once dreamed of flying cars, immortality, space colonization, and teleportation, today we settle for hyper-realistic, ultra-technological gadgets that are mere simulacra of what the world might have been (GRAEBER, 2012).

Furthermore, while the overcoming of labor and the end of hunger were once integral possibilities of the future, we are now confronted with precarious and meaningless *bullshit jobs*, alongside the constant threat of being crushed by the system – an aspect of what Fisher (2009) calls "*capitalist realism*". Contemporary capitalism reproduces the exhaustion of our capacity to imagine alternative futures precisely because neoliberalism has managed to appropriate the future itself (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, ch. 4), relegating utopias to a distant past.

Therefore, despite profound divergences in political, epistemological, and technological orientations, there is a significant point of convergence between the perspectives of degrowth and Accelerationism: both recognize that transforming the world necessarily requires a transformation of subjectivities. On one hand, degrowth establishes a critical stance capable of rupturing the established reality; on the other, accelerationists invest in a mechanism of redirecting and intensifying the collective flows of desire to found a new society emerging from the existing one.

The second point of convergence I would like to address concerns the urgency of climate change. Fraser (2023) argues that this issue permeates often antagonistic political-economic platforms, resulting in near paralysis due to

disagreement over the political means to address it. Up to this point, it should be clear that the global climate crisis is inseparable from the rise of capitalism as the hegemonic world system. In this regard, the key to overcoming the climate crisis must lie in

> "transcending the 'merely environmental' issue [...] and linking its ecological diagnosis with other vital concerns, including livelihood insecurity and the denial of labor rights; public disinvestment in social reproduction and the chronic undervaluation of care work; ethno-racial-imperial oppression and the domination of gender and sexuality; the dispossession, expulsion, and exclusion of migrants; and militarization, political authoritarianism, and police violence" (FRASER, 2023, p. 96).

It cannot be said that degrowth or Accelerationism lag behind: both mobilize the climate emergency as a pivotal point for articulating agendas across other fields. While it is inaccurate to claim that degrowth emerged strictly as a response to the environmental impacts of human economic activity, it seems difficult to conceive of its theoretical foundation developing at a time when the threat of natural and climatic resource depletion was not yet a conceivable horizon (SAITŌ, 2022). Perhaps the same cannot be said of Accelerationism: in Lyotard (1992) and more recently when Noys (2010) coined Accelerationism as the "*persistence of the negative*", this current seeks the liberation of the new precisely through capitalism's disruptive and deterritorializing potential (FISHER, 2021). In any case, the fact that the climate crisis is explicitly recognized from the outset of the Accelerationist Manifesto (2013; §§ 1.1-1.2) as humanity's greatest survival challenge signals how central the issue is to the accelerationist agenda.

A third significant point of convergence between both currents concerns the need to overcome work as it is configured in contemporary societies, whose subjectivities are colonized by neoliberal capitalism. First, both share the notion that a considerable portion of work performed by humanity is dispensable (*bullshit jobs*) and that it is necessary to advance towards the decommodification of labor to achieve its de-alienation. The study by Vincent and Brandellero (2023) shows that the degrowth perspective on work rests on two fundamental themes: first, the reduction of paid working hours; second, the expansion of what should be recognized as work. In this regard, accelerationists are not far behind: the reduction of working hours is considered a goal to be pursued, and the very notion of work must be redefined to encompass, for example, unpaid domestic labor predominantly carried out by women (BASTANI, 2019; FISHER, 2021; LABORIA CUBONIKS, 2018; SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015).

I have decided to focus specifically on climate change and labor not only because of their intrinsic importance for the survival of the planet and the transformation of the mode of production, but also because I see them as key points of convergence between the two currents. To explain: the degrowth platform radically centers the climate issue, and therefore the proposed changes are primarily directed toward reducing social metabolism and minimizing the environmental impacts of human activities, ultimately aiming to abolish the separation between the natural and human spheres. On the other hand, Accelerationism adopts a hybrid stance toward capitalism: while acknowledging its immanent disruptive potential, it concentrates on overcoming the problems of value and alienated labor – which arise precisely from the structure of the mode of production – to revive longstanding utopias of

full automation and abundance, as already anticipated by Marx (2014).

To support this argument, we can assert that one of the most fundamental aspects of Accelerationism lies in its rejection of the existence of an "outside" to capitalism that could serve as a reference point against it – a notion that could similarly apply, for instance, to a growth-oriented society. The radical explanation proposed by Lyotard (1992), concerning the libidinal commitment of the (oppressed) working class to capital aims to show that it is impossible to overcome capitalism without fully committing to it:

> "The 'phantasy of a non-alienated region', as he puts it. These kinds of dualisms, whereby there is a pure subversive region – a primitive region untainted by capitalism. There are no such regions. There are no such spaces. This is a relentless message in this text. And I think it's not clear if he means there never were primitive societies in this way, or certainly not now – there is no access to anything that would function like that. And it would also mean that there is no revolutionary outside either." (FISHER, 2021; p. 177)

Once again, this does not imply that Accelerationism neglects the issue of climate change, nor that degrowth disregards the problem of labor; however, one can observe a recurring pattern in which *degrowth operates as an external critique, whereas Accelerationism functions as an intensifier and channeler of immanent tendencies*.

2. On Technology

From this point onward, we turn our attention to what is arguably the most critical point of divergence between

the two perspectives (BASTANI, 2019; PHILLIPS, 2015; SAITŌ, 2022; VANSINTJAN, 2017): the role technology should play in shaping a post-capitalist future. To support this discussion, we will draw on empirical evidence concerning the socio-environmental impacts of current technological development.

As a starting point, we identify three key areas of convergence between degrowth and Accelerationism. First, both perspectives call for the *decommodification* of not only material infrastructure but also social organization – most notably, labor. Unless technology is liberated from capitalist imperatives, automation will continue to serve as an auxiliary force for capital expansion rather than as a means for its transcendence (WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2015; ANDREUCCI & McDONOUGH, 2015). Second, both currents acknowledge that any technological intervention – whether through acceleration or through redirection toward a convivial society – requires taking control through popular appropriation of technology itself (D'ALISA, DEMARIA & KALLIS, 2015; DERIU, 2015b; FISHER, 2009; LIKAVČAN & SCHOLZ-WÄCKERLE, 2016; WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2015). Finally, they converge in their critique of certain technologies deemed inherently incompatible with just post-capitalist futures. The clearest example is military technology aimed at mass destruction and social control, typically aligned with imperial or authoritarian structures. Similarly, both perspectives question innovations designed to reinforce capitalist logics – such as advanced behavioral marketing systems or algorithmic financial speculation tools – whose development serves the accumulation of capital and inequality far more than collective well-being (ANDREUCCI & McDONOUGH, 2015; DERIU, 2015b; SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015).

2.1 Divergences on the nature of technology in late capitalism

The differences begin with the conceptual and strategic approaches to technology adopted by each of the two currents. Degrowth generally assumes a deeply critical stance – if not openly reactive and oppositional – towards technological innovation under capitalism (KALLIS *et al*., 2018; WEISS & CATTANEO, 2017, p. 225). The issue with technology is not merely a matter of instrumentality or misuse; rather, it is embedded within the very technical structure of capitalism. In other words, modern technology appears as neither neutral nor inherently emancipatory (ILLICH, 1973). As such, while the democratic appropriation or redistribution of technological benefits may be essential, it is not sufficient. What is required is a fundamental rethinking of the modern technological paradigm – its purposes, its means, its scales, its temporalities, and its socioenvironmental imbrications (KERSCHNER *et al*., 2018; SAMERSKI, 2018).

Accelerationism, in contrast, elevates technology to the status of a key driver for the radical transformation of the social fabric (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015). While acknowledging that science and technology have historically been subordinated to the logic of capital, this current rejects the notion that such subordination is politically inevitable, nor does it consider the corruption of technological systems to be entirely insurmountable (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 159). Within this framework, accelerationists identify two fundamental problems in the relationship between capitalism and technological development. First, capitalism cannot allow technology to progress to the point where human labor – the central source of value extraction (MARX & ENGELS, 1981) – becomes fully obsolete, or where scarcity of goods and services

is overcome to such a degree that the market loses its disciplining and regulatory function over society (BASTANI, 2019; FISHER, 2009; 2022).

The second problem stems from the first: since capitalism must continuously promote technical innovation to sustain accumulation, it ends up generating a techno-scientific infrastructure that – although oriented toward capital reproduction – harbors latent emancipatory potentials. These potentials – understood as *deterritorializing flows* in the sense of Deleuze & Guattari (1972), constantly recaptured by *reterritorializing forces* – can be activated through collective appropriation, rational planning, and the redefinition of production's aims. Accordingly, the development of automation, artificial intelligence, logistical systems, and large-scale data use should not be rejected, but rather selectively accelerated under new institutional and political frameworks. The goal is to build a society freed from the constraints of capital and market logic – a post-work, post-scarcity society.

Accelerationists argue that the current level of technological development in the 21st century falls far short of what humanity envisioned as desirable during the first half of the 20th century. If the idea of overcoming work was already present among early 20th-century Russian pre-revolutionary thinkers (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015), if in 1930 J. M. Keynes predicted that work would be obsolete by the end of the century (KEYNES, 1963; WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2013, §3.2), or if by the 1950s Marcuse already considered the abolition of labor a task for the coming decades (MARCUSE, 1987), pursuing the same goal today seems nearly impossible. This is the result of two phenomena. First, the capitalist mode of production intrinsically requires the continuous extraction of value – even at the cost of pushing the planet to the edge of collapse

(GRAEBER, 2012; VAROUFAKIS, 2024). Second, neoliberal capitalism has undermined the capacity of states to engage in public spending – which, in turn, has diminished their ability to fund long-term and risky innovation projects, replacing them with the short-term, risk-averse logic of private investment (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015).

Finally, the two currents also diverge in terms of methodological foundations and evaluative criteria. Accelerationism, by advocating for the appropriation of capitalism's productive forces, remains tied to the analytical tools of conventional economics – such as traditional economic indicators[3], general equilibrium models, and econometric techniques – arguing that, once capitalism is overcome, its normative metrics can then be redefined (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015). Degrowth, by contrast, calls for the immediate replacement of these indicators with alternative metrics oriented toward sufficiency, well-being, and ecological justice, such as prosperity without growth, the reproductive capacity of the commons, and just decarbonization (HICKEL, 2020; KALLIS, DEMARIA & D'ALISA, 2015; O'NEILL, 2012, 2024).

[3] In general, Bastani (2019, pp. 232–236) would agree with Srncek & Williams (2015) and Phillips (2015). Nevertheless, he offers a notably original position within the accelerationist field. Similarly to the degrowth perspective, he shares the view that GDP is not an adequate metric for measuring social and environmental wellness. However, he diverges both in his diagnosis and in his proposal for overcoming traditional metrics in the context of FALC. According to Bastani, GDP is becoming increasingly inadequate due to two simultaneous trends: the falling cost of goods in the market economy, and the rise of free, technology-intensive production in an extra-market sphere. In response to this, "the post-capitalist state would move towards an 'Abundance index' accounting for all of this, while integrating the emerging economic model of ever fewer things paid for with money. Initially such an index would integrate CO2 emissions, energy efficiency, the falling cost of energy, resources and labour, the extent to which UBS had been delivered, leisure time (time not in paid employment), health and lifespan, and self-reported happiness. Such a composite measure, no doubt adapted to a variety of regional and cultural differences, would be how we assess the performance of post-capitalist economies in the passage to FALC. This would be a scorecard for social progress assessing how successful the Third Disruption is in serving the common good" (BASTANI, 2019, pp. 235–236).

According to the accelerationists, the failure of the contemporary left lies in its abandonment of the ambition to hegemonize the future, effectively leaving technopolitics in the hands of capital (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015). Rather than being suspicious of the complexity and disruptive power of advanced technologies, Accelerationism claims them as essential components of the modern socialist project, in continuity with rationalist Enlightenment ideals and scientific Marxism (FISHER, 2022). The solution, therefore, is not to reject capitalist management tools or slow down innovation, nor to scale back technology – but rather to increase its speed beyond capital's control. The goal is to build a society of near-zero marginal cost (RIFKIN, 2014) – a scenario structurally incompatible with capitalism – and to restore a collective imaginary of progress and abundance.

2.2 Divergent views on technology's role in overcoming the climate crisis

The fundamental divergence between the two currents lies in the necessity of *dematerialization* – that is, reducing the use of material and energy resources by the economy – as a prerequisite for building a post-capitalist future. Generally, accelerationists do not see a reduction in consumption levels as necessary or desirable in response to the climate crisis. On the contrary, they express explicit confidence in the disruptive potential of automation, integrated economic planning within cyberspaces – to the example of *Cybesyn* (SRNCEK & WILLIAMS, 2015; p. 149) –, the development of

backstop technologies[4], and technological advances in general. Practical examples of what this *Third Rupture* (BASTANI, 2019) in relation to climate change could entail include large-scale solar and wind energy generation, long-duration batteries to replace fossil fuels, carbon capture technologies, and climate geoengineering as technological strategies to mitigate climate impacts; molecular nanotechnology, genetic engineering, and even space mining to overcome planetary limits. For accelerationists, these elements would not only enable the *decoupling* of economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions and natural resource use but would actually allow us to "overcome" the climate crisis and realize the ideal of a *fully automated luxury communism* (BASTANI, 2019). Vansintjan (2017, s.p.) observes that this reliance on large-scale disruptive technologies may seem "dangerously close to the techno-modernism" criticized by eco-pessimists (FLUSS & FRIM, 2022). Williams & Srnicek (2013, §3.7), however, disagree, arguing that "Whereas the techno-utopians argue for acceleration on the basis that it will automatically overcome social conflict, our position is that *technology should be accelerated precisely because it is needed in order to win social conflicts*".

Here, degrowthers share the eco-pessimists' skepticism toward technological progress. They doubt that green innovations – understood primarily as input-efficient improvements – have advanced with the speed or scale

[4] According to Levy (2000; p. 1), a backstop technology may be defined as "a new technology producing a close substitute to an exhaustible resource by using relatively abundant production inputs and rendering the reserves of the exhaustible resource obsolete when the average cost of production of the close substitute falls below the spot price of the exhaustible resource (Dasgupta and Heal, 1978). For instance, the technology of harnessing solar energy can be perceived as a backstop technology to oil, coal and natural gas". In the same paragraph, the author observes that critiques of these technologies rest on the premise that "the development of a backstop technology shortens the planning horizon and, in turn, can accelerate the extraction and lower the spot prices of the exhaustible resource". In other words, "doomsday could arrive despite the availability of a backstop technology" (PRELL, 1995; p. 1).

promised by proponents of green growth (JACKSON, 2010) and are thus far less transformative than the visionary aspirations of accelerationists. Furthermore, degrowthers warn that technological development often entails unpredictable side effects (ALCOTT, 2005, 2015; FLUSS & FRIM, 2022, pp. 103-150; GRUNWALD, 2018; MURACA & NEUBER, 2018; VANSINTJAN, 2017). A quintessential example of this critique is the growing reliance on technology as a singular, definitive solution to the ecological crisis: technology ceases to be one among multiple possible tools and instead occupies an almost exclusive place in the imaginable horizon for saving the planet. As DERIU (2015a), KERSCHNER *et al*. (2018), and VANSINTJAN (2017) point out, this techno-salvationist stance – often imbued with messianic overtones – shifts responsibility for the ecological transition onto an idealized, future technical-scientific breakthrough. This, in turn, empties the debate about the urgent need to reassess the social values that shape consumption patterns, production rhythms, and emissions. In this process, the very autonomy of societies is weakened, since delegating the task of overcoming the climate crisis to technology compromises the collective capacity to imagine and enact political, cultural, and economic transformations grounded in alternative ways of life (DERIU, 2015a). In the following paragraphs, we will delve deeper into the evidence concerning *decoupling*[5], as well as phenomena closely linked to this debate, such as the "*rebound effect*" or "*Jevon's Paradox*" (ALCOTT, 2005) — i.e., the process of rising total resource consumption due to an increase in efficiency.

[5] A brief clarification may be important here. The concepts of *dematerialization* and *decoupling* are relatively similar. In this study, they are used analogously to Lorek (2014, p. 111): "Dematerialization is often used in relation to the term decoupling and gets mixed up with it. Resource decoupling means reducing the rate of resource use per unit of economic activity measured in GDP. Decoupling generally refers to the economy and its activities while dematerialization takes the Earth's capacity and its limitations as the reference point."

Firstly, the specialized literature tends to support the degrowth narrative by demonstrating that evidence for *absolute decoupling* on a global and sustained scale remains inconclusive (HABERL *et al*., 2020; PARRIQUE *et al*., 2019; SHAO & RAO, 2018), although evidence for *relative decoupling* in specific industrial sectors is reasonably extensive (HABERL *et al*., 2020). Based on the formulations of Georgescu-Roegen, degrowthers argue that the transition from a fossil fuel-based energy matrix to renewable sources would imply a significant reduction in available energy, incompatible with maintaining continuous economic growth (ENGLER *et al*., 2024). In this context, Lenzen *et al*. (2016) and Siami & Winter (2021) indicate that reducing emissions associated with fossil energy consumption will require high-intensity technological innovations and global coordination – a point favorable to the accelerationist view, which precisely bets on the intensification and expansion of these capacities. Parrique *et al*. (2019), meanwhile, consider *absolute decoupling* a theoretical possibility, though they recognize the absence of robust empirical evidence supporting it to date.

Moreover, there is evidence that the pace of *absolute decoupling* in Global North countries has been relatively faster than in developing nations. Even so, these advances remain insufficient to keep global warming within the 1.5°C limit – a threshold that continues to elude current trajectories (VOGEL & HICKEL, 2023; CSEREKLYEI & STERN, 2015). The latter study also shows that economic growth has been the primary driver of the rise in per capita energy consumption – raising important questions about the development strategies pursued by the Global South (FÜHR, 2021). Major emitters among developing countries – China, India, and Russia – still exhibit relatively low energy efficiency

(KIPOUROS, 2017). If economies continue to be organized around the imperative of capital accumulation, one of the greatest challenges ahead – and one for which neoliberalism appears structurally unprepared (FLETCHER & RAMMELT, 2017; FRASER, 2023) – will be reconciling economic development with environmental sustainability. Gosens (2020), in contrast, adopts a more optimistic view. Aligning with the conventional perspective, he argues that although historically excluded from the benefits of intensive industrial growth, Global South economies do not need – and, in fact, cannot – follow the same high-intensity energy model developed by Western capitalism. Their starting point, he suggests, can instead be green technologies.

Technological innovation is regarded as the main driver of decoupling. However, the *rebound effect* emerges as one of the greatest obstacles to its full realization (ALCOTT, 2015; FIX, 2024; SIAMI & WINTER, 2021). Brockway *et al*. (2021) estimate that, at the global level, approximately 50% of the energy savings expected from technological improvements are offset by this effect. Freire-González (2017) found similar results in the European Union, where seven countries experienced *backfire* in household energy consumption, while the remaining countries exhibited rebound effects above 50%. Liu *et al*. (2022) identified a similar pattern in the Chinese context.

The literature indicates that reducing the economic impact on the environment requires a combination of multiple strategies. These include identifying strategic sectors for the application of environmental targets and taxes, accelerating the development of key technologies for material and energy efficiency, planning for a reduction in throughput, and building supranational governance bodies to coordinate responsibilities

and commitments (HENNICKE & KHOSLA, 2014; IPCC, 2022; PARRIQUE *et al*., 2019). Some studies also propose refining decoupling indicators by incorporating more realistic metrics of well-being and sustainability – such as the relationship between energy consumption and GDP per capita (BITHAS & KALIMERIS, 2013).

In light of the available evidence, the degrowth perspective enjoys stronger empirical support – emphasizing that gains in technological efficiency have been systematically offset by deleterious effects – understood as a structural trait of growth-oriented economies. Accelerationists, by contrast, interpret such effects as contingencies of capitalism – arguing that a rationally planned post-capitalist society could harness advanced technologies to overcome planetary boundaries without reducing consumption (BASTANI, 29; PHILLIPS, 2015). This view, however, remains speculative – as it relies on still-nascent innovations and a radical social transformation (VANSINTJAN, 2017). (SRNCEK & WILLLIAMS, 2015, p. 139) acknowledge this weakness not only in this specific point but in several others, and defend their position by stating that "whereas scientific approaches attempt to reduce discussions of the future to fit within a probabilistic framework, utopian thought recognizes that the future is radically open." It is within this potential to unlock new desires and perspectives that the future remains open.

3 Overcome capitalism now

In this third and final section, I would like to further explore the concrete proposals put forward by each of the two currents to guide the transition toward their respective visions

of what a post-capitalist society should become. According to the framework adopted in this study, technology will also serve as one of the central axes driving much of the discussion that follows.

3.1 Organizational approaches and major strategic priorities:

Degrowth begins with the diagnosis that, for institutional arrangements compatible with a post-growth world to take root, it is essential that they operate within ecological boundaries and be guided by principles aligned with this paradigm. As Banerjee *et al*. (2021) emphasize, "the first step for organizations in their path towards degrowth is understanding and embracing growth independence." In this sense, degrowth calls for governance models capable of sustaining such a transition – models that are diverse, rooted in socio-ecological values, democratic and participatory, cooperative, needs-driven, open yet territorially grounded, and committed to overcoming the divide between production and reproduction (SCHMELZER *et al*., 2022, p. 181). These institutional forms aim to foster convivial forms of sociability, anchored in simpler ways of living and more closely attuned to the dynamics of the social metabolism (D'ALISA, DEMARIA & KALLIS, 2015). To that end, degrowth prioritizes the expansion of direct, participatory, and community-based democracy, seeking to decentralize power and incorporate local knowledge into collective decision-making processes (ANDREUCCI & McDONOUGH, 2015).

Accelerationism also places emphasis on popular control. However, it puts ends before means to achieve it – advocating for a strategic reorientation of organizational forms, where tactical effectiveness and power-building take

precedence over ideal or purely normative notions of democracy. That is, "the overwhelming privileging of democracy-as-process needs to be left behind. The fetishisation of openness, horizontality, and inclusion of much of today's 'radical' Left set the stage for ineffectiveness" (WILLIAMS & SRNCEK, 2015, §3.13). Reality is too complex for a single organizational form to prevail – what is needed is an ecosystem of multiple organizations of different types, coordinated around the same points of leverage (SRNCEK & WILLIAMS, 2015; pp. 162-169):

> "The only criterion of a good tactic is whether it enables significant success or not. We must be done with fetishising particular modes of action. Politics must be treated as a set of dynamic systems. riven with conflict, adaptations and counter-adaptations, and strategic arms races. This means that each individual type of political action becomes blunted and ineffective over time as the other sides adapt. No given mode of political action is historically inviolable. Indeed, over time, there is an increasing need to discard familiar tactics as the forces and entities they are marshalled against learn to defend and counter -attack them effectively" (WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2015; §3.12)

Degrowthers agree that the transition to a post-growth society can only be viable through an ecosystem of autonomous and allied organizations – grounded in principles of autonomy, voluntarism, and collaboration – that can advance the vision of a convivial society (LATOUCHE, 2009; SCHMELZER *et al*., 2022). Examples include eco-communities, producer and worker cooperatives and associations, back-to-the-land communities, socially managed enterprises, and a wide array of other community-based initiatives (BANERJEE *et al*., 2021; D'ALISA, DEMARIA & KALLIS, 2015; p. 39; SEKULOVA *et al*., 2023).

Accelerationism strongly criticizes this approach of relying on localized solutions based on direct actions, community organizations, and horizontal forms of resistance. Such practices, which Srncek & Williams (2015) refer to as "*folk politics"*, are accused of responding to the complexity of contemporary capitalism with a simplifying gesture, turning to human-scale and immediate levels as a way to maintain a sense of control. By rejecting the density and abstraction of current systems, the formulation of a robust post-capitalist project becomes unfeasible. Consequently, politics tends to be reconfigured as an ethical and individual struggle, focused on everyday and immediate gestures, unable to structurally confront systemic power mechanisms (FISHER, 2009; NEGRI, 2015; SRNCEK & WILLIAMS, 2015). This reduction is symptomatic of a cognitive and organizational exhaustion in the face of the vastness of capitalist processes, making necessary instead a more complex, technology-intensive, and globalizing approach – just as global capitalism itself is. In this sense, they assert that:

> "if complexity presently outstrips humanity's capacities to think and control, there are two options: one is to reduce complexity down to a human scale; the other is to expand humanity's capacities. We [left-Accelerationists] endorse the latter position" (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 16).

The central opposition, therefore, is between a politics that retreats to the scale of everyday life – arguably compatible with planetary boundaries – and another that embraces modernity in all its abstraction, complexity, globality, and technology. As they summarize in one of the most incisive passages of the *Accelerationist Manifesto* (2015, §3.1):

> "We believe the most important division in today's Left is between those that hold to a folk politics of localism, direct action, and relentless horizontalism, and those that outline what must become called an accelerationist politics at ease with a modernity of abstraction, complexity, globality, and technology".

Vansintjan (2017) notes that the programmatic orientation of degrowth is characterized by a multiplicity of demands emerging from diverse social sectors, whereas accelerationists concentrate on a more restricted set of strategic goals – with an emphasis on large-scale structural transformations. In the case of degrowth, Schmelzer *et al*. (2022, p. 180) outline six high-level proposals, shared by a substantial amount of degrowth peers (KÄYRÄ & KUHMONEN, 2017; COSME, SANTOS & O'NEILL, 2017; D'ALISA, DEMARIA & KALLIS, 2015):

> "(1) the democratization of the economy, or the strengthening of the commons, a solidarity-based economy, and economic democracy; (2) social security, redistribution, and caps on income and wealth; (3) convivial and democratic technology; (4) the redistribution and revaluation of labour; (5) the equitable dismantling and reconstruction of production; and (6) international solidarity."

The *Accelerationist Manifesto* (2013; §3.16–18), on its turn, outlines a less diffuse and more strategically focused transition program, built around three core objectives: (i) the construction of an advanced intellectual and technopolitical infrastructure – a leftist articulation modeled after the *Mont Pèlerin Society*, capable of providing a new utopia to dismantle neoliberal hegemony; (ii) the radical reform of communication systems, placing them under popular control; and (iii) the reconstruction of class-based power structures capable of

contesting the direction of techno-scientific and social development. Although also not explicitly opposed to the principles of degrowth outlined in the previous paragraph, accelerationists prioritize structural interventions aimed at securing hegemonic control over technology, information, and social organization – with the goal of overcoming capitalism through its internal acceleration.

In the field of international technology governance, Accelerationism advocates for the intensification and coordination of techno-scientific capacities on a planetary scale – aiming to construct a political project capable of mobilizing nation-states and multilateral institutions around a rational, post-capitalist planning agenda (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 146). Within this framework, the state is conceived as a strategic actor, endowed with the ability to carry out long-term investments beyond the imperatives of short-term corporate profit – as historically demonstrated in the development of foundational innovations, from the internet to nanotechnologies and green technologies. Yet, the global neoliberal articulation has progressively dismantled this capacity through widespread austerity policies (WILLIAMS & SRNICEK, 2013; NEGRI, 2015). For some authors, such as Phillips (2015), degrowth proposals would amount to a form of *green austerity* on a global scale – further deepening neoliberal constraints under a renewed logic of scarcity.

Within a post-capitalist horizon, the state would thus be responsible not only for increasing the scale and intensity of technological investment but also for democratically steering its direction – through the collective appropriation of decisions concerning science and innovation. This conception, however, rests on the assumption that technologies can be universally applied and equitably

distributed – an assumption that often reflects a Western bias, both epistemologically and geopolitically. From the degrowth perspective, such a premise risks reproducing dynamics of domination and cultural homogenization, while disregarding local knowledge systems and plural ways of organizing life (LATOUCHE, 2015).

3.2 Key policy proposals

We now turn to a discussion of more specific points within each current's agenda. Georgio Kallis[6] puts forward ten policy proposals for a renewed political program of the green left:

1) *Citizen debt audit* – aimed at canceling illegitimate debts accumulated under the guise of fictitious growth, holding speculators accountable while protecting ordinary savers;
2) *Work-sharing*: reduction of the workweek to 32 hours, combined with job-sharing policies and income protection for the majority of the population;
3) *Universal Basic Income* (UBI): paired with a maximum income capped at 30 times this amount, to promote redistribution and social justice;
4) *Green tax reform*: shifting the tax burden from labor to energy and resource use, with high taxes on wealth, inheritance, and unproductive properties;
5) *Stop subsidizing and investing on activities that are highly polluting*: redirecting investments towards public

[6] The text was originally published in 2015. It is available on the following link: https://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/01/28/yes-we-can-prosper-without-growth-10-policy-proposals-new-left.

transportation, decentralized renewable energy, and sustainable urban spaces;

6) *Support the alternative, solidarity society*: incentives for cooperative networks and non-commodified care systems;
7) *Optimise the use of buildings*: more efficient utilization of existing housing stock, including high taxes on vacant properties and potential for social expropriation;
8) *Reduce advertising*: severe restrictions on advertising in public spaces and media, prioritizing quality public information;
9) *Establish environmental limits*: progressively decreasing caps on emissions and material use, also considering the ecological footprints of imports;
10) *Abolish the use of GDP as indicator of economic progress*: promoting new metrics based on human well-being and the planet's ecological boundaries.

Interestingly, accelerationists appear to share more points of convergence than divergence with the programmatic proposals of degrowthers. Measures such as Universal Basic Income (proposal 3), the redirection of subsidies from traditional sectors to sustainable alternatives (proposals 4 and 5), large-scale income redistribution (proposals 3 and 4), and restrictions on advertising (proposal 8) align with an accelerationist agenda – particularly in its shared commitment to social justice mediated by technology and institutional reorganization. On the other hand, proposals such as abolishing GDP as an indicator of progress (proposal 10) – which entail a critical break from hegemonic measurement systems and governance technologies – and support for local, community-based, and small-scale economic initiatives (proposal 6), stand

in contrast, once these prioritize non-scalable forms of economic organization and embrace systemic limits on growth. The proposal to shift taxation in favor of labor (proposal 4) is more nuanced, as it implies a societal revaluation of labor that conflicts with the accelerationist vision of progressive and totalizing automation.

Degrowthers seek to articulate a range of decentralized, multiscalar proposals that engage with local initiatives, everyday practices, and territorial resistances. In contrast – accelerationists such as Srnicek and Williams emphasize automation, the role of unions, and the reduction of the working week as the primary levers for moving beyond capitalism. Their focus is on the "big issues" (*labor*, global trade) – and they argue that the left's focus on small-scale interventions is part of the problem rather than the solution. Degrowth scholars instead look toward small "nowtopias" and build alliances with those resisting extractivism – often peasants, forest-dwellers, and indigenous peoples (VANSINTJAN, 2017).

Next, we revisit the core accelerationist programmatic proposals aimed at building a post-work and post-scarcity society. Srnicek and Williams (2015) list three fundamental measures:

1) *Full automation,* aiming to free human beings from repetitive and alienating tasks, including domestic labor;
2) *Reducing the working week as much as possible without reducing wages* – as a way to redistribute productivity gains and counterbalance capital's power;
3) *Universal Basic Income*, which must be truly universal and sufficient to guarantee subsistence without wage labor, while not competing with the provision of public

goods and services. UBI is also understood as fundamental to *decommodify* labor and transform the political relationship between labor and capital.

The accelerationist proposal for the full automation of labor emerges as a sharp critique of the dynamics of late capitalism. Srnicek and Williams (2015, p. 94) highlight that, in the Global North, real wages have stagnated for decades, while the share of labor in national income has progressively declined. This phenomenon largely results from automation and globalization, which have produced a structural surplus of labor power. In the Global South, premature deindustrialization and automation are reshaping the contemporary proletariat: where once it was separated from the land, it is now also separated from manufacturing due to automation (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 97). This labor restructuring has generated *jobless recoveries* – periods of economic recovery in which lost jobs are not recreated – and growing polarization between high-skilled workers and the precariat, foreshadowing the gradual extinction of much low-skilled employment. Preparing transition is, therefore, a political imperative.

Automation could also open up space to rethink domestic arrangements and dissolve historically entrenched gender roles (LABORIA CUBONIKS, 2018). As SRNICEK and WILLIAMS (2015, p. 113) observe, "*the household has been a space that featured little technological change: its unpaid nature and lack of productivity norms have given capitalism few incentives to invest in the reduction of household labour*." However, the authors warn that the primary obstacles to building a *post-work* society sustained by a UBI are not economic-only, but most importantly political and cultural. On the one hand, there are powerful institutional and social forces that tend to resist such a transformation; on the other, work is

deeply embedded in both individual and collective identities, making it difficult to accept alternatives to the centrality of wage labor (SRNICEK & WILLIAMS, 2015, p. 127). The full realization of automation, therefore, requires not only technological advancement, but also far-reaching institutional and ideological shifts.

BASTANI (2019, sec. II) expands upon these three core demands by revisiting the ideals of economic planning to achieve *Fully Automated Luxury Communism*. To initiate this transition, Bastani identifies four strategic sectors:

4) *Post-scarcity in Energy*, through universalizing the provision of clean and abundant energy sources, such as solar and wind, in order to enable productive expansion without surpassing ecological limits;
5) *Post-scarcity in Resources*, addressing the scarcity of natural resources by means of technologies like space mining and advanced recycling;
6) *Post-scarcity in Health*, transforming the healthcare system through widespread use of genetic editing and biohacking, aiming to expand access, increase treatment efficacy, and, potentially, achieve immortality;
7) *Post-scarcity in Susteinance*, guaranteeing universal access to basic nutrition through solutions such as automated agriculture and synthetic food production.

Points 2 and 3 of Bastani's proposal – regarding technological progress to boost productivity and the implementation of a UBI – resonate strongly with the degrowth agenda. Both are seen as means to reduce the amount of necessary labor and the environmental impacts associated with

current production regimes (WEISS & CATTANEO, 2017, p. 225). However, the last three pillars of Bastani (2019) program are far more contentious and directly clash with degrowth principles. They reflect an aspiration toward the *mastery of human over nature*, with unpredictable socioeconomic and ecological consequences.

Degrowth scholars have emphasized the need for technologies to be *recontextualized* (DERIUb, 2015, VANSINTJAN, 2017) – that is, adapted to diverse socioeconomic settings, modes of living, and local epistemologies. This perspective aligns with environmental justice movements that critique the imposition of "green" techno-fixes on communities in the Global South without respecting their autonomy or ecological knowledge. Whereas Accelerationism tends to see technology as a neutral force to be expanded and equitably distributed, the degrowth perspective insists on democratizing technological decisions – asking what technologies should be developed, for whom, and according to which values (KERSCHNER *et al*., 2018). Rather than promoting a universal technological path forward, degrowth calls for plural and situated approaches to innovation, attentive to social justice, power asymmetries, and planetary limits.

3.3 Limitations and contradictions

Finally, it is important to highlight some of the internal limitations and contradictions within the political agendas of both currents. Neither Accelerationism nor degrowth constitutes a cohesive or homogeneous bloc; both are marked by theoretical and programmatic divergences. Within the degrowth field, tensions remain regarding the role

of technological innovation: while some strands advocate its strategic use to enable a *post-growth* society, more radical positions warn that it may ultimately undermine efforts to build more convivial, autonomous, and decommodified ways of living.

In the case of Accelerationism, although the left-wing strand analyzed in this work seeks to instrumentalize technology in service of an emancipatory project, a significant portion of the broader movement has been co-opted by far-right sectors[7]. These groups view the acceleration of civilizational collapse as a means to establish new authoritarian forms of order. According to Kieran (2023), this reactionary variant mobilizes technofetishist and anti-democratic ideas, promoting elitist, misogynistic, and explicitly supremacist visions. For such groups, the collapse of liberal institutions and the widening of inequalities are not problems to be addressed, but rather desirable conditions for imposing supposedly "natural" racial and social hierarchies. This extremist appropriation of the accelerationist discourse reveals the dangers of political-philosophical currents that lack a clear normative horizon rooted in social justice, equality, and universal human rights.

This lack of clarity does not directly manifest in the proposals themselves advanced by accelerationists, but rather

[7] For an introduction to the right-wing strand of Accelerationism, the following materials may be useful: the Guardian article "How a fringe philosophy predicted the future we live in" (2017), available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/11/Accelerationism-how-a-fringe-philosophy-predicted-the-future-we-live-in; the dossier Accelerationism: The Obscure Idea Inspiring White Supremacist Killers Around the World, available at Accelerationism-the-obscure-idea-inspiring-white-supremacist-killers-around-the-world.pdf; and The Techno-Optimist Manifesto (2024), by Marc Andreessen, published at: https://a16z.com/the-techno-optimist-manifesto/. Finally, the ideas of Peter Thiel – arguably the first multibillionaire explicitly associated with Accelerationism –, briefly discussed in: https://www.hoover.org/research/apocalypse-now-peter-thiel-ancient-prophecies-and-modern-tech.

in how these proposals could be implemented in practice (Vansintjan, 2017). Srnicek and Williams (2015) acknowledge that experimenting with new forms of organization will be necessary – particularly in terms of governance models for a post-capitalist society – which may lead to instability and uncertainty. Moreover, Vansintjan (2017) argues that Accelerationism tends to focus on a narrow set of core proposals, with the expectation that others may emerge later. While this approach may be strategically sound, it also renders the movement overly reliant on a few foundational pillars, making it more vulnerable to significant setbacks and potentially weakening its long-term capacity for political articulation.

On the degrowth side, Cosme, Santos, and O'Neill (2018) note that some proposals lack concreteness due to their overly general character, which makes practical implementation difficult. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on principles such as voluntarism, direct democracy, and small-scale organization may conflict with the need for more structural social transformations – ones that would require an active role for the state, both in regulating material throughput and in redistributing income and resources. Büchs and Koch (2018) point to one of the central challenges to implementing degrowth: the potential compromise of current generations' well-being. This may involve reductions in consumption or even negative impacts on indicators such as life expectancy, especially in scenarios of declining average income. *For any post-capitalist utopia to be politically viable, it must convincingly demonstrate that a livable and desirable world remains possible after the end of capitalism*.

Final remarks

Throughout this work, we have sought to examine some of the theoretical foundations underpinning the interpretations of two post-capitalist movements, degrowth and Accelerationism, regarding the role of technology in the process of overcoming capitalist sociability in its neoliberal phase. We have observed that technology is central to envisioning a post-capitalist future, whether oriented towards a *post-growth* or *post-scarcity* horizon. Climate change – one of the most urgent crises of our time – has also been identified as a crucial leverage point for mobilizing the debate. In this concluding section, I highlight some of the findings of the work regarding both the understanding of technology and those emerging from the transition proposals concerning the role of technology in the two currents analyzed. Finally, I outline ways for formulating a proposal of theoretical synthesis derived from the two perspectives.

First, the accusations that degrowth is a *primitivist* movement, as advanced by Phillips (2015) and Bastani (2019), seem rather unfounded. In other words, degrowth does not belong to the political ecology spectrum that advocates for a technological rollback aiming to return humanity to a pre-industrial state – such as the eco-primitivism associated with John Zerzan and Eric Jensen. Conversely, it is also difficult to defend Accelerationism against charges of *prometheanism*, since what was once a pejorative term is now embraced by its own proponents, who claim the promethean heritage linked to marxism. Following Brassier (2013), the *Accelerationist Manifesto* (§3.21) asserts: “we declare that only a Promethean politics of maximal mastery over society and its environment is capable of either dealing with global problems or achieving

victory over capital." On the other hand, the accusation of mere *productivism* (SAITŌ, 2022) appears less convincing. As Srnicek and Williams (2015) describe, it is erroneous to reduce Accelerationism to a simple "*politics du pire*" (NOYS, 2010). Rather, it emerges as a critical movement that appropriates and transcends the material foundations of capitalism.

Regarding technology, degrowth challenges the very foundations of modern (capitalist) technology and calls not only for its democratic reappropriation, but also for profound changes in the relationship between humanity and technology. Its proponents emphasize replacing existing systems with simpler, more accessible, and low-impact tools, aligned with planetary boundaries and the preservation of more desirable social bonds. Accelerationists, in contrast, advocate redesigning these very technologies to foster ruptures across multiple dimensions of social life – from overcoming alienated labor to subverting traditional gender roles. Accelerationism places greater emphasis on the transformative potential unlocked by harnessing technological acceleration itself, understood as a force already embedded in the perpetual dynamics of technological revolution under capitalism.

In this regard, Bastani (2019, ch. 2) places the most recent advances in information technologies alongside agricultural techniques and industrialization, which fundamentally transformed human organization in the Neolithic era and in Modernity, respectively. An additional important contribution is offered by Vansintjan (2017), drawing on Paul Virilio's work Speed and Politics (2006):

> "Virilio traces how changes in social relations were brought about through the increased velocity of people, machines, and weapons. Through Virilio's eyes, the history

> of Europe's long emergence out of feudalism into 20th century modernity was one of increasing metabolism of bodies and technologies. Each successive regime meant a recalibration of this speed, accelerating it, managing it. For Virilio, political systems [...] emerged both as a response to changes to this shift in speed and as a way to manage human-technologic co-existence" (VANSINTJAN, 2017; n.p.)

Therefore Virilio (2006) theorizes that the reproduction of social relations is closely tied to shifts in society's metabolic relations. For Vansintjan (2017), the key distinction is that while Accelerationism focuses on "socio-political speed" as an outcome of technological change, degrowth emphasizes "socio-metabolic speed."

On the political platform for overcoming capitalism, we have seen that Accelerationism emphasizes the need to articulate grand objectives capable of rebuilding political agency to confront both exploitation and the limits of capital. Degrowth, in turn, favors small-scale interventions and organizations – although, interestingly, these are sometimes combined with proposals that could only be implemented through global coordination. Degrowthers centralize decontaminating their strategies from the imperative of accumulation, aiming instead to cultivate forms of sociability outside the sphere of influence of the growth ideal. It is worth noting that this notion of positioning oneself "outside" capitalism resonates with one of the foundational excerpts of the Accelerationist tradition: Deleuze and Guattari's (1994, pp. 239–240) critique of Samir Amin's isolationist proposal of withdrawing from the market. Just as D&G argued in the early 1970s, accelerationists here would respond to the degrowther position by suggesting that, like the current mode of production

itself, planetary and subjective limits can also be overcome from within – through a wager on the contemporary deterritorializing flows. In short:

> "can what gives us modernity—a colossal global infrastructural web of extraction, transportation, and fabrication—be democratized? For accelerationists, this would require making that web more efficient and modifying political systems to make it easier to live with—shifting the gears of social relations beyond capitalism. For degrowthers, it would require slowing that system down and developing alternative systems outside of it. *I don't think these two aims are mutually exclusive*" (VANSINTJAN, 2017; n. p.)

Towards Fully Automated Green Communism?

If Vansintjan (2017) is correct that these two objectives are not mutually exclusive, how might we envision a *degrowth-Accelerationist synthesis*? Rather than simply rejecting the technologies developed under capitalist modernity, or doubling down on the techno-capitalist path with no clear horizon, why not imagine emancipatory futures that merge a radical critique of nature exploitation and material consumption with technological acceleration beyond the market and planetary boundaries? Such synthesis would require a political imagination that is both liberatory and performative, capable of generating real displacements by intervening in the ways we desire, think, and construct the world.

This development would need to be grounded in a post-growth rationality – one that recognizes planetary boundaries and the urgency of reorganizing society, both materially and symbolically, toward a reduction of metabolic

and energy throughput. From the accelerationist tradition, such a fusion could draw on the generalization of automation, the appropriation of existing technologies, and the experimentation with large-scale democratic planning, displacing them from the circuits of capitalist valorization. From the degrowth perspective, it would require reorienting those same technologies toward convivial purposes, with alternative metrics of prosperity, new indicators of well-being, and an ethical-political commitment to the regeneration of Earth's ecosystems. From both traditions, one might inherit not only the aspiration for a new sociability but also the necessity of radical income redistribution and a careful selection of the technologies desirable for humanity's future. Thus, far from sterile antagonisms, automation, artificial intelligence, and distributed networks could be mobilized to abolish labor as compulsion while simultaneously reducing social metabolism and fostering more equitable forms of life.

Such a synthesis would also require rethinking forms of socio-technical coordination. If Accelerationism emphasizes the need for highly complex systemic strategies, while degrowth privileges localized institutional experiments, a conciliatory path might lie in a dialectical articulation between top-down global coordination and bottom-up community reappropriations – some kind of technological democratic centralism, in which planetary and communal scales mutually reinforce one another.

Evidently, such a hybrid project would demand abandoning certain premises of each camp. On the accelerationist side, it would require acknowledging the persistence of material scarcity and ecological limits, as well as tempering the transhumanist impulse that wagers on overcoming humanity as a normative ontology – reframing such

perspectives in more robust ethical-political terms. On the degrowth side, it would mean questioning the universalization of the ideal of frugality and simplicity of life, often articulated from a Global North standpoint and detached from historical inequalities and political claims over access to abundance and technological freedom.

I call this synthesis between Accelerationism and degrowth "*Fully Automated Green Communism*". In a nutshell, it can be envisioned as a political and theoretical project that harnesses the technological and automating capacities of modernity – as emphasized by Accelerationism – while redirecting them towards degrowing throughput. This hybrid approach would require rejecting the illusion of green growth while embracing fast-paced technological development. Through a collective reappropriation of productive infrastructures by these red and green factions, automation, artificial intelligence, and distributed networks could no longer serve the expansion of markets, but rather be mobilized to abolish work (in both practical and ethical terms) and minimize resource use and foster more equitable and sustainable ways of living.

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