

Chapter 10

Postextractivist Manifest: Case Study of a Thermal Leisure Center as a Prototype of Degrowth Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Currently, there are many indicators that suggest that our consumption model is outdated. Architecture is not immune to this issue, but rather emerging critics which argue that a new architecture is not only desirable but also necessary, are increasing day by day. In this chapter, we present the current state of construction practices and how degrowth theories can bring about a change in our approach to architecture. Throughout the chapter, we focus on all these economic, social and thermodynamic strategies. Focusing both on the new regulations and the theories that support these initiatives, using as a framework a case study of a thermal leisure center in an abandoned quarry in the Sierra de la Culebra, understood as a prototype of degrowth strategy, which represents all the harmful consequences of an extractive society. In this sense, the strategies implemented are explained, covering the different dimensions of sustainability, in order to compare the final architectural outcome with its conventional equivalent.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

On August 2nd, according to the Global Footprint Network, Earth Overshoot Day was celebrated. This symbolic day represents the exceeding of human demand of the planet natural resources over its capacity to regenerate those resources and absorb the waste generated by this human activity.

Most countries enter into this red list throughout the year. Countries like Qatar or Luxembourg reach this overshoot barely 45 days after the new year start.

Rethinking our production model is a key point in order to mitigate this problem and not jeopardize our future well-being, thus addressing the current framework of the climate crisis we find ourselves in. (Kallis et al, 2018).

Circular economy emerges as a solution to the climate crisis and involves the transformation of the current economic model. This model follows a linear deployment, in which we extract, transform, consume, and waste goods, while the circular economy proposes to decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources and waste generation, a new system beyond the “take-make-dispose” approach is being introduced (Ajl,2023). These ideas are not new; as early as 1972, the Franco-Austrian philosopher André Gorz coined the term “degrowth,” and that same year, the American scientist Donella Meadows published the report “The Limits to Growth” for the Club of Rome, concluding as shown in graphic 1, that without changes in population growth, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource exploitation, The Earth would reach its limits within the next hundred years. (Meadows, 1982).

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