Learning from Barcelona's grassroots housing struggles:
Towards a transformational Degrowth agenda

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Abstract

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This article contributes to the nascent literature on housing for Degrowth. It recognises that housing plays a pivotal role in the creation and perpetuation of socio-ecological injustices, and therefore must be a core strategic element of a transition towards a Degrowth society. I argue for a deeper integration of bottom-up, scalable strategies and class politics in Degrowth housing proposals in order to create the widespread and emancipatory social transformation called for by the Degrowth agenda. The militant research for this paper was rooted in a case study of the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca* (Vallcarca Housing Union; SHV), which is part of Barcelona's multifaceted grassroots movement for housing justice. The analysis first explores the synergies between Degrowth and the SHV using a Degrowth framework, and then looks beyond this framework, asking what both movements can learn from each other's theoretical and strategic approaches. It highlights the SHV's grassroots, class-based politics of solidarity and social inclusivity, and explores how the SHV could benefit from engaging with the ecological and intersectional politics of Degrowth. The article raises the importance of building connections between post-growth theories and radical housing struggles on a broader scale, in order to tackle top-down and growth-based 'sustainable housing' initiatives and create genuinely transformational and emancipatory housing alternatives.

Keywords

Housing, degrowth, social movements, social justice, class politics

Introduction

The interconnected global phenomena of natural resource depletion, global warming, growing social inequalities and human exploitation have given rise to a heterogeneous social

movement and theory called Degrowth. Drawing on various intellectual and activist 'sources' (Demaria et al., 2013), Degrowth identifies the capitalist pursuit of economic growth at all costs as the root cause of these crises (Hickel, 2020). Its proponents call for 'an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human wellbeing and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global levels, in both the short and long terms,' (Schneider et al. in Ferreri, 2019, p. 109). Such downscaling is recognised as a necessary response to the threat of social and ecological collapse currently faced by humanity. This would be achieved via a broad social transformation towards a much more egalitarian distribution of resources and power in society (Kallis, 2018), to ensure that everyone's needs can be met without exceeding planetary boundaries. Degrowth advocates claim that such a radical transformation requires a 'decolonisation of the imaginary' from the hegemonic growth narrative (Latouche, 2015). This refers to a shift in the dominant mentality, whereby economic growth, 'development' and the accumulation of profits are replaced by social and ecological well-being and justice as the fundamental goals of social and political organisation (D'Alisa et al., 2015). These objectives are the cornerstones of what I will refer to as the Degrowth agenda.

The matter of housing is a crucial element of the Degrowth agenda, as housing infrastructures, institutions and policies play a central role both in the environmental impacts of an economy (Schneider et al., 2013) and in the configuration of social relations and inequalities (Aalbers & Christophers, 2014). Moreover, housing plays a key role in fostering growth in capitalist economies. This is due to the fact that housing is fundamental for the circulation of capital: it is simultaneously a commodity for consumption, a vehicle for investment and a source of job creation (Aalbers & Christophers, 2014). The key challenge for Degrowth housing studies is the following: mass construction of state-provided social housing could provide affordable accommodation to those most in need, which would satisfy (to some extent) the social justice and wellbeing elements of the Degrowth agenda. However, this approach implies more building and fails to respond to the need to reduce material demand, which is also an indispensable element of the Degrowth agenda. In fact, housing is recognised as 'the sector where the trade-off between social and environmental goals is the most challenging', (Savini, 2022, p. 3). A successful Degrowth transition towards a more environmentally and socially just society must, therefore, involve a radical and systemic change in the way housing is built, managed, distributed, imagined and lived in (Schneider, 2019).

Nevertheless, the literature in the nascent field of Degrowth and housing 'has been less covered in research to date than some other aspects of degrowth', (Tunstall, 2022, p. 15). There remain many unresolved issues and unanswered questions. A major concern of mine, echoing Ferreri (2019), is that certain proposals for Degrowth housing alternatives lack the potential for radically transforming the existing housing sector on a large scale. This is because they are either exclusionary and inaccessible to certain members of society (for example, requiring financial capital, free time and/or the physical ability to build one's own home), or they rely on the individual choices of people making changes to their lifestyles or homes, rather than proposing systemic changes to the existing housing stock and sector

(Xue, 2021). If Degrowth housing strategies are to generate a systemic overhaul of the growth-based housing paradigm, they must include considerations of inequalities, power and scale as integral, not tangential, factors (Tyberg & Jung, 2021). The current article addresses this concern, arguing that a centring of bottom-up, grassroots strategies and class politics in Degrowth housing literature and activism can strengthen its potential for widespread transformational change.

This paper is rooted in a case study of the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca* (SHV; Vallcarca Housing Union), a neighbourhood-based union in Barcelona that was created by local residents in 2016 to 'tackle the housing problem in our neighbourhood [Vallcarca], denounce speculation and find collective solutions for meeting such a basic need as the access to a decent home,' (Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca, n/d). The SHV forms part of Barcelona's extensive network of grassroots organisations struggling for the right to decent and adequate housing (Rivera Blanco et al., 2021). This right is enshrined in both Spanish and international law, yet is guaranteed by neither (Amnistía Internacional, n/d). The SHV's activities are based on the principles of mutual support (*apoyo mutuo*), self-organisation (*autogestión*) and direct action (*acción directa*). These principles have been the core tenets of many Iberian autonomous and anarchist movements, both historically and currently, and situate the SHV's philosophy within this regional-ideological tradition (Taibo, 2022). The SHV employs strategies such as blocking evictions, negotiating social rents and squatting empty flats as tools to achieve housing justice on a local level, as well as campaigning and organising for the right to housing and against speculation on a larger scale.

During my involvement with the SHV as an activist over the past two years, I have been struck by the extent to which the struggles, discourse and modus operandi of the group overlap with the narratives and goals of Degrowth. However, despite their synergies, there is no formal engagement between the two movements, nor is there an explicit ecological agenda in the SHV. Given the current context of ecological disaster and the importance of housing in terms of environmental (un)sustainability, the SHV would benefit from incorporating a more sophisticated ecological dimension into its activities. The Degrowth agenda provides an ideologically aligned framework that could be used to develop such a dimension. Driven by reflections on these two very distinct yet complementary movements, this paper seeks to answer the following two questions:

1. How is a Degrowth agenda manifested in the actions and narratives of the SHV?
2. What can the experience of the SHV offer to Degrowth and housing scholarship/activism, and vice versa, how can the SHV benefit from the Degrowth housing framework?

It should be noted that, while I will explore synergies between the Degrowth movement and the SHV (as part of Barcelona's wider movement for housing justice), they are materially and functionally very distinct. The SHV is a grassroots neighbourhood collective focused on fighting for the right to housing on-the-ground, and is entirely made up of voluntary members. In contrast, Degrowth is an international, heterogeneous movement made up of practitioners, activists and scientists. One of its approaches has been described as "activist-led science" (Demaria et al., 2013, p. 204) and it has a significant academic output.

This article is structured as follows. In the following section, I explain the methodology used to carry out my research, in line with 'militant research' methods (Russell, 2015). I then provide an overview of the Degrowth and housing literature, highlighting the need for bottom-up, scalable and inclusive approaches to housing for Degrowth. Next, I present the context for my case study, exploring Barcelona's recent housing politics and struggles from a Degrowth perspective. The subsequent two sections unpack my findings and analysis. First, I develop an analysis of the narratives, activities and strategies of the SHV from a Degrowth perspective, using some of the core concepts and principles of the Degrowth agenda as analytical frames: politicised communities, open localism, transforming narratives and decommodification. These concepts were selected as the most pertinent to analyse for two reasons: firstly, they were the areas of Degrowth which were most salient in the case of the SHV. Secondly, they cover a range of strategic issues regarding the social, political and material conditions needed for a Degrowth housing transition. Second, I discuss solidarity, inequalities and class consciousness, using the case of the SHV to highlight the importance of centring these considerations in Degrowth housing strategies. Finally, I conclude with some reflections on how both the SHV and Degrowth can be strengthened by engaging with each others' strategies and theoretical bases, and ideas for further research and exploration.

Before continuing, a brief note on terminology. Drawing on research in language politics and the complexities of translating terms used by social movements (Rivera Blanco et al., 2021), I aim to avoid creating misunderstandings or inaccurate assumptions through the anglicisation of certain important terms. I therefore use the Catalan terms *sindicat* (union) and *sindicat d'habitatge* (housing union) throughout this article, rather than their English translations, because the words have slightly different social and cultural connotations in each language and context. I employ the term *Sindicat* interchangeably with the abbreviation SHV to refer to the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca*. I use the Spanish term *vecina(s)* instead of the English 'neighbour(s)' for similar reasons, as explored in Rivera Blanco et al. (2021). Finally, I use the Spanish term *vivienda digna*, rather than its English translation 'decent housing', as it has (subjectively) stronger emotive connotations than the English equivalent, evoking concepts such as dignity and respect.

Methodology

This paper is inspired by my experiences as a member of the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca* since early 2021. During this time, I have attended weekly assemblies, joined actions such as blocking evictions and 'opening' a block of empty flats for squatting, participated in strategy meetings and campaigns, collaborated in the preparation of squatted flats for new occupants, and supported other members in defending their right to a *vivienda digna*. Therefore, this project has not been carried out as a study *of* the SHV, but rather as an opportunity to reflect on and harness the insights and knowledge produced by the SHV, drawing on personal experience as an activist in dialogue with other members of the *Sindicat*.

My work is situated within a growing body of activist-scholarship known as 'militant research' (Jimenez, 2021; Russell, 2015; Youngman & Barrio, 2021), which aims to deconstruct and eliminate the hierarchical and extractive dynamics that often exist in ethnographic scholarship. Militant or activist research rejects positivist, 'neutral' knowledge production in favour of horizontal, collaborative, situated knowledge construction that serves communities and social movements in their struggles against injustices (Portelli & Yildirim Tschoepe, 2020). In this sense, my objective has been to co-create knowledge—as part of and in collaboration with the SHV—that can be used as a tool for strengthening both the grassroots struggle for housing justice in Barcelona and the housing for Degrowth movement. To this end, I wrote an article for *La Directa*, a local social transformation-oriented newspaper published monthly in Catalan, using information collected in my interviews. The purpose of the article was to challenge negative stereotypes around squatters and housing activists by sharing their experiences and reasonings, as well as to denounce the unjust current reality of housing in Barcelona (Ribbons, 2022). Despite the research process being horizontal and rooted in activism, the selection of the research topic was based on my own interest as a student of Degrowth, and was influenced by its original context as a masters' thesis. I proposed the research topic to the other members of the collective for their approval before starting the project. Nevertheless, within a militant research framework, I recognise the limitation of this decision originally coming from me as the activist-scholar, rather than resulting from a collective need or deliberation process.

Table 1 Interviewees

Name*	Age	Nationality	Gender	Date & location of interview
Alex	50-60	Colombian	Male	25 November 2021, Alex's home
Eliza	30-40	Moroccan	Female	29 December 2021, Eliza's home
Manu	30-40	Spanish (Catalan)	Male	9 December 2021, café in Vallcarca
Marina	20-30	Spanish (Catalan)	Female	30 November 2021, café in Vallcarca
Olga	50-60	Spanish (Catalan)	Female	23 December 2021, Olga's home

* Some names have been changed according to the interviewees' wishes.

I used three research methods to carry out this project. I engaged in 'observant participation/participant observation' (Di Feliciantonio, 2016, p. 4) during meetings and activities of the SHV (I attended around 30-40 assemblies between March 2021 and February 2022 and four strategy meetings for a specific campaign in Spring-Summer 2021, alongside

various other activities as mentioned above). I also carried out content analyses of documents such as the SHV website and blog, articles written by and about the SHV, and my own field notes. Finally, I held five semi-structured interviews with other members of the SHV, conducted between November and December 2021. All of the interviews were held in Spanish, and the quotes have been translated by myself. The five people I interviewed are fairly representative of the demographic of the SHV in terms of age, gender, nationality and housing status (see Table 1 above for demographic data), and provided a broad range of the perspectives and experiences encountered in the *Sindicat*. I analysed these interviews using a content analysis tool, picking out terms and concepts prominent in the Degrowth literature as well as themes that occurred frequently across the interviews and/or are core to Barcelona's grassroots housing movement.

Degrowth and housing

As Degrowth is a relatively young movement, the literature on Degrowth and housing is limited and explorative. There are many ongoing debates and research gaps that are still being filled (Nelson and Schneider, 2019; Xue, 2021). Notwithstanding, I identify three core objectives on which this nascent field of research is based, in accordance with the overall Degrowth agenda and key challenge of housing for Degrowth, as articulated in the introduction. Firstly, reducing the ecological impacts of housing infrastructures: from the carbon emissions and natural resource depletion caused by the construction sector; to the energy, water and land used for and by homes; to the waste created by the entire sector (Schneider et al., 2013). Secondly, guaranteeing the human right to a decent home (*vivienda digna*). Homes are valued primarily 'as places that fulfil important social needs and basic human rights' (Schneider et al., 2013, p. 12), rather than as financial assets, status symbols or investment opportunities (Nelson 2019a). In other words, the use value of homes is prioritised over their exchange value. The third objective, relating to the two previous points, is the decommodification of housing (Savini, 2021). This entails a shift away from the capitalist logic of commodifying basic necessities, i.e. giving them a monetary value and turning them into market-exchangeable goods (Kallis, 2018). The commodification of housing facilitates speculation and its use as a tool for creating economic growth, to the detriment of environmental sustainability (Schneider et al., 2013), social equalities and housing security (Aalbers & Christophers, 2014; Obra Social Barcelona, 2018). Its decommodification is, therefore, a logical core demand of the Degrowth housing agenda.

Certain Degrowth housing proposals and analyses, motivated by the imperative to reduce humanity's ecological footprint and live within planetary boundaries, point to alternative solutions such as ecovillages (Nelson, 2019b; Trainer, 2019), intentional communities (Cattaneo & Gavaldà, 2010; Lietaert, 2010; Verco, 2019) and small-scale, low-impact housing (Anson, 2019; Dale et al., 2019). These academic approaches are reflected in the prefigurative politics of many degrowth practitioners who engage in similar kinds of projects (Demaria et al., 2013; Tyberg & Jung, 2021). These are undoubtedly valuable and necessary proposals that help to 'decolonise' society from the growth-based housing imaginary (Nelson, 2019a) and work towards a more environmentally sustainable world.

However, they often fall short of satisfying the radical social justice element of the Degrowth agenda through tackling the unjust power structures and institutions that underpin society's growth dependency (Savini, 2021; Tyberg & Jung, 2021). This is primarily because they often require a considerable amount of economic resources, spare time, geographical flexibility and social capital. This makes them inaccessible to many, creating 'imaginaries of exclusivity' (Ferreri, 2019, p. 110) and potentially reproducing forms of social injustice and segregation along class and racial lines (Anson, 2019). Although steps have been taken to tackle these issues and make such housing alternatives more socially inclusive (Anson, 2019, Hurlin, 2019), a 2021 analysis found that 'many intentional community housing projects characterised by a degrowth narrative…still show high levels of elitism,' (Cucca & Friesenecker, 2021, p. 13). Moreover, many of these 'DIY' solutions require a certain—often high—level of physical work (e.g. building or renovating a home) and/or mental capacity (e.g. organising and planning for life in an intentional community) that excludes certain members of society according to mental/physical ability.

I reaffirm Ferreri's assertion that 'the wider transformative potential of a housing degrowth agenda should be tested against its capacity for transforming existing housing towards greater social and environmental justice,' (Ferreri, 2019, p. 110). To fulfil this potential, Degrowth housing solutions should tackle the dominant housing model in many capitalist economies across the globe of speculation, highly pollutive/extractive construction, unjust property relations and extreme inequality (Tyberg & Jung, 2021). For this reason, my research is aligned with that of authors such as Asara (2015), Ferreri (2019) and Olsen et al. (2019), who analyse radical grassroots struggles for housing justice through a Degrowth lens. Such scholarship advocates a just distribution of resources and space, social inclusion and the 'right to metabolism' (i.e. the right to inhabit and participate in cities and not be displaced by gentrification (Olsen et al., 2019)), whilst exploring ways to make the existing housing infrastructure more environmentally sustainable. My research is also informed by the work of Savini (2021, 2022), which explores the concepts of autonomy, finity in development (in opposition to the capitalistic "infinite growth" paradigm), care and commoning as bases for a Degrowth urbanism paradigm.

This paper also highlights the paramount importance of deep democracy, grassroots action and widespread political engagement for a successful Degrowth transition (Asara, 2015; Kallis, 2018). The political context and recent housing reality of Barcelona, discussed in the following section, make proposals for top-down urban Degrowth transitions driven by the city's public authorities seem insufficient at best, and infeasible at worst. In contrast, Barcelona's heterogeneous grassroots movement for housing justice is engaging in radical and emancipatory practices that reflect the Degrowth agenda. I will now explore the dynamics of recent housing politics and struggles in Barcelona through a Degrowth lens.

Contextualising the case:
housing provision and struggles in the city of Barcelona

"People always lead the way, then institutions follow." - Olga

Spain suffers from an extremely small social housing stock and a limited, unstable rental sector compared to other European countries, a result of policies going back to the 20th Century Franco dictatorship, which use the housing sector as a key driver of economic growth through construction, financialization and the promotion of home ownership (Di Feliciantonio, 2016; Jimenez, 2021; Pareja-Eastaway & Sánchez-Martínez, 2017). Barcelona's social housing stock reflects this reality: it comprises less than 2% of the city's total housing stock, much less than in other European cities such as Amsterdam (48%) or Berlin (30.2%) (Uzqueda et al., 2021). Moreover, much of Spain's social housing is subsidised private homeownership rather than state-owned properties (Pareja-Eastaway & Sánchez-Martínez, 2017), making it more volatile, being affected by changes in the private market. This lack of social protection, combined with the widespread financialisation and speculation of housing in Spain, has been the cause of long-term and multifaceted grassroots struggles for housing justice across the country. These struggles exploded in the wake of the housing bubble collapse and ensuing financial and housing crisis in 2007-8, with the emergence of the *Indignados* movement and, in 2009, the PAH *(Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca;* Platform for People Affected by Mortgages) (Di Feliciantonio, 2016; García-Lamarca, 2017a; Jimenez, 2021).

It is against this backdrop that Ada Colau became the Mayor of Barcelona in 2015, after emerging as a prominent housing rights activist within the PAH post-2007. Once in power, her party – *Barcelona en Comú* (Barcelona in Common) – presented its extensive 2016-2025 Right to Housing Plan (*Pla pel Dret a l'Habitatge*) (Montaner et al., 2018), putting housing at the forefront of the city's agenda. The plan contains ambitious proposals that aim to 'radically change how housing is conceived and championed as a right,' (ibid. p. 3) and establish a functioning, well-developed public housing service across the city. The narratives of this plan, as well as other initiatives of *Barcelona en Comú* regarding housing and urbanism such as the Neighbourhood Plan (*Pla de Barris*), demonstrate a prioritisation of social rights, social cohesion and welfare over speculation and profit maximisation (Martínez Alonso, 2021; Uzqueda et al., 2021). Martínez Alonso's (2021) critical analysis of *Barcelona en Comú*'s housing policies concludes that, in principle, they 'appear fully in line with anti-austerity urbanism and degrowth and entail a clear example of anti-poverty politics,' (Martínez Alonso, 2021, p. 11). Nevertheless, their implementation has considerable shortcomings when analysed through a Degrowth lens. These are mainly due to their dependency on the construction of new buildings—pointing to an underlying logic of economic growth and urban expansion—and their lack of emphasis on redistributive mechanisms or 'the design of innovative spatial configurations to embody alternative values,' (ibid., p. 12). This was reflected by one of the members of the *Sindicat* I interviewed, who stated:

> *[The City Council] continues to perpetuate capitalist dynamics regarding consumption and production and expenditure, and this is evidently opposed to any kind of sustainability, degrowth, or ecology.* - Manu

Nor have these policies come close to achieving their stated goal of guaranteeing the right to a *vivienda digna* for all of Barcelona's inhabitants. In recent years, the city's pre-existing housing crisis has been compounded by the social and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bayona, 2021). Thousands of vulnerable families have been evicted throughout the pandemic for non-payment of rent, despite this being temporarily banned on a state level (Caro, 2021). Barcelona's public housing provisions are grossly incapable of meeting the city's housing demand: the 'emergency' housing mechanism (*Mesa d'Emergència*) has a waiting time of over two years, with over 600 families waiting to be housed (Habitatge, 2021). It is important to note that Barcelona's municipal-level authorities are seriously limited in their capacities, as 'housing falls mainly under the jurisdiction of the Catalan regional government and the Spanish state' (Larsen, 2020, p. 80), which are still dominated by the growth-based ideology. Nevertheless, the severe underdevelopment of Barcelona's social housing infrastructure, the ongoing housing speculation and crisis of affordability in the city, and the continued dependence (in practice) of policymakers on the economic growth paradigm indicate that Barcelona is still a long way from achieving significant steps towards a radical Degrowth transformation through institutional means.

Since the emergence of the PAH in 2009, Barcelona's movement for housing justice has expanded and diversified. Neighbourhood-level housing groups and *sindicats d'habitatge* now exist across the city (Rivera Blanco et al., 2021; Lira & March 2021). These collectives create local housing alternatives in tension with the existing housing infrastructure (for example, through squatting), whilst also campaigning to make wider-scale changes in the housing sector. The objective of *sindicats* such as the SHV is 'not only to solve individual housing problems, but to contribute to the construction of strong communities and to weave solidarity networks between neighbours, with the geographic-neighbourhood axis as a starting point' (Rivera Blanco et al., 2021, pp. 150-151). These groups constitute a heterogeneous and decentralised grassroots resistance to the 'unprecedented real estate speculation and…highly accelerated process of "centrifugal gentrification"' being witnessed in Barcelona (Assemblea de Vallcarca, 2016, p. 6, own translation). Focusing on the particular case of the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca,* I will now explore how this movement converges with the goals of housing for Degrowth, using the following Degrowth principles as a framework for my analysis: politicised communities, open localism, transforming narratives and decommodification.

Findings and Analysis I: Grounding the Sindicat in Degrowth theory

Politicised communities

'Look what you've found, an organised neighbourhood!' ['Mireu ho que heu trobat, un barri organitzat!']
- chant of the SHV and other Catalonian housing justice groups.

As mentioned in a previous section, deep democracy and politically engaged communities are indispensable characteristics of the Degrowth agenda. This is for two major reasons: firstly, because the dominant neoliberal ideology has been characterised by the 'de-

politicisation of the economy…and the economisation of politics' (Swyndedouw, 2015, p. 91), whereby concepts such as capitalism, economic growth and market forces are treated as unquestionable and inevitable realities (Fisher, 2010). This undermines democracy by delegitimizing dissent and restricting the possibility of imagining and building radically alternative socio-political systems (Swyndedouw, 2015). Secondly, because complex systemic overhauls and transformations such as that called for by the Degrowth movement risk being authoritarian, non-emancipatory or oppressive if they do not have a solid democratic popular base (Wright, 2010; Kallis, 2018). A re-introduction of the political—understood as the 'sphere of antagonistic dispute and struggle over the environments we wish to inhabit and on how to produce them' (Swyndedouw, 2015, p. 90)—is, therefore, necessary in order to radically transform society away from the hegemonic neoliberal growth imaginary and engage with emancipatory, socially and environmentally just alternatives (Asara, 2015). This is exemplified in the following quote from Manu:

> *People talk about speculation and people getting evicted from their homes as though it was a climatological effect, you know? Like, 'that's the way it is, there's nothing you can do,' you know, as if it was an approaching hurricane or a volcano or an earthquake, and it's like, no, no, this is an artificial phenomenon that is subject to certain particular interests of people…it responds to some very concrete human logics that, just as they have been set up, they can be taken apart and work differently. So we don't have to accept this, it's not a natural law, it's not mandatory. But capitalism has turned into this, into something natural and divine.* - Manu

Refusing to accept things as they are is not just an ideological choice, but a necessary survival mechanism for many of the *Sindicat*'s members, as the alternative would mean either becoming homeless or displaced. Eliza, who I interviewed, had been on the City Council's 'emergency' housing waiting list for two years and seven months (at the time of interviewing) since being evicted from her previous home. She currently lives in Vallcarca with her elderly parents and teenage daughter in a flat that has been squatted by the *Sindicat*. She told me that if it wasn't for the SHV, she and her family would have been left on the streets. The abundance of stories such as Eliza's explains the shared sentiment within the *Sindicat* that *'here the state doesn't work'* (Manu), and their widespread frustration and anger at the politico-economic system, as expressed by Olga:

> *Really I think that people become quite corrupt [when they reach power], because a character with the trajectory of Colau [mayor of Barcelona at the time of interviewing], how she was and how she thought…[I think] the right thing to do is resign if you see that you can't contribute what you were contributing until now, I mean I understand that in many things she has her hands tied, ok, because that's what politics is like, but the truth is it is all so disappointing…in the end, politics is so tied to economic issues and in matters of economics, well, the people who always end up winning…are always powerful people within the wealthy class'* - Olga

Across the five interviews I carried out, 'critiques of the politico-economic system' and 'state failures' were notably among the most prominent and frequently-mentioned themes. The SHV's existence is a direct response to this sentiment that the state cannot be relied upon to protect its most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society and guarantee the right to a *vivienda digna*. In this sense, their activities and practices have 'significant emancipatory

potential because they enact equality for those who have no part in the dominant system…and have the potential for profoundly disrupting the dominant production of space,' (García-Lamarca 2017a, p. 39). Connecting the SHV with Degrowth's anti-capitalist and emancipatory theories of change could be a powerful way of harnessing this potential and strengthening the transformative political dimension of the sindicat.

An important element of the politicisation process, central to the assembly model of Barcelona's *sindicats d'habitatge,* is information sharing and collective knowledge building (Lira & March, 2021). During assemblies, new members share their case to the group and are offered advice and support, often from other members who have had similar experiences. This process is known as *asesoramiento colectivo*, or collective casework. It emphasises the "protagonism of those directly affected" as "active agents…in resolving their own problem as well as those that affect other participants," (PAH, 2015, author's translation). *Asesoramiento colectivo* is used by groups and collectives across Spain's housing justice movement, having been popularised by the PAH over the last decade (Di Feliciantonio, 2016; García-Lamarca, 2017b). This model is an example of bottom-up, non-expert knowledge creation (García-Lamarca, 2017b) and the democratisation of knowledge advocated by the Degrowth movement. Moreover, as García-Lamarca (2017b) claims, it catalyses a powerful process of political subjectification, whereby people begin to disassociate themselves from the stigma, fear and loneliness of being unable to pay for their home, and start to see their situation as the consequence of a wider structural injustice. Importantly, it makes people feel supported and empowered to fight for their case and against the speculation and commodification of housing, which can be transformative in terms of subjectivity-formation and politicisation. This was the case for Olga, who joined the *Sindicat* after having received an eviction notice:

> *[When you start going to assemblies] you don't really know what they are talking about...but once I started to get it and I realised that desperate people came to ask for help and I identified with these people, [I became really involved]…It wasn't from one day to the next…and the help is on a functional level, at an informative level, but most importantly it is also on an emotional level, you feel like they're not going to leave you on your own. - Olga*

The SHV's core principles of direct action, mutual support and self-organisation underpin a prefigurative 'politics of possibilities' (Di Feliciantonio, 2016) that creates on-the-ground alternatives to the growth-driven mainstream housing model in Barcelona. As Olsen et al. (2019) demonstrate with the case of Rome's squatting movement, the *Sindicat's* direct action strategies, such as blocking evictions and squatting empty buildings, reflect a Degrowth theory of change in terms of enacting autonomy beyond—and in tension with—policy-making strategies. They provide examples of organised communities 're-appropriating the political dimension' (Asara, 2015, p. 70, referencing Latouche) and building alternative, autonomous spaces of resistance to the capitalist phenomena of commodification and gentrification (Savini, 2022). Engaging with these theoretical concepts and framing their activities within an emancipatory theory of change would benefit the SHV in terms of reinforcing their narrative and challenging the negative stereotypes that exist in Spain around squatters. On the other hand, the SHV's emphasis on pragmatism ('*I talk about the allotment,*

but I also put my hands *in the allotment*,' (Alex)) provides a valuable message to the academic/intellectual branch of the Degrowth movement. To achieve the widespread socio-environmental transformation they seek, Degrowth scholars must continually ensure their scholarship is not only rooted in, but also complemented by, praxis and activism.

Of course, the autonomous practices of the SHV are not carried out in a political vacuum. The state has a monopoly of power over property rights and value (re)distribution, and is therefore 'inseparable from the process of transforming socio-ecological property relations' (Andreucci et al., 2017, p. 12). The preeminence of the state and its control over property relations is a constant presence in the activities of the *Sindicat*, whether through the police violence experienced and fines received for participating in eviction blockings and other activities; the threat (and execution) of evictions for those who are unable to pay their rent; or the lack of social housing provisions and regulatory or redistributive policies to protect tenants from homelessness. For this reason, the *Sindicat* also has a systemic perspective that includes campaigning to change housing policies and laws: *'direct action [is a key principle] also because we are signalling to the property owners and to the City Council, you know, to the public administration,'* (Marina). Two of the major policy changes that the *Sindicat* pushes for are the regulation of rents and expansion of social housing. The multi-layered strategy of engaging in prefigurative, autonomous practices locally whilst campaigning for systemic politico-economic change offers a useful blueprint for advancing the kind of paradigm shift in housing called for by Degrowth. This strategy is facilitated by the decentralised model of Barcelona's wider network of neighbourhood-based housing justice groups, which I will explore in the following section.

Open localism

> *'Each district, each neighbourhood has its* sindicat…*and all of them work hand-in-hand for the same cause.'* - Alex

Open localism is a concept advocated by Degrowth housing scholar-activists such as Schneider and Nelson (2019). It 'consists of reorienting the organisation of human communities towards personal relationships of proximity, and reduces that distance that has grown with production for trade and related economic, social and political management,' (Schneider and Nelson, 2019, p. 228), whilst maintaining an open, cosmopolitan perspective. Open localism promotes solidarity and 'unity in diversity' (Velegrakis & Gaitanou, 2019, p. 261), and emphasises the importance of radical political organisation, community building and 'common struggle that empowers from below,' (Velegrakis & Gaitanou, 2019, p. 260). This perspective, combined with a multi-scalar approach to Degrowth housing and urbanism strategies (Krähmer, 2022), can help to ensure such strategies fulfil the widespread transformational change required by the Degrowth agenda.

The neighbourhood-based network of Catalonia's *sindicats d'habitatge* embodies the concept of open localism, providing an example of how community-based, integrated, cosmopolitan and multi-scalar forms of political organisation can work in practice. The format consists of many localised *sindicats* based in each neighbourhood and town, which

regularly communicate between each other to provide support in actions such as blocking evictions, share relevant information, and coordinate larger-scale activities such as campaigns and congresses (Lira & March, 2021). This is a powerful model: the local scale and autonomy of each *sindicat* allows them to be agile and respond to urgent problems in their neighbourhood, as well as build affective personal ties and community cohesion. As Verco (2019) claims, these are important characteristics of Degrowth-oriented societies. Meanwhile, the cross-neighbourhood coordination and cooperation enables the *sindicats* to work towards the larger-scale political changes they are fighting for, strengthening the movement for housing justice and the right to a *vivienda digna*. This is encapsulated in the following quote from Marina:

> *When I think about what the* Sindicat *is and what its objective is…I imagine the* Sindicat*, although it is a neighbourhood collective, united with other* sindicats *and with coordination between all of the* sindicats *so that we can carry out actions on a bigger scale, because at the end of the day the enemies that we have are really powerful…* - Marina

One prominent example of this large-scale coordination between the different groups of Catalonia's housing movement was the first *Congrés d'Habitatge de Catalunya* (Catalonia Housing Congress) that was held in Barcelona in 2019. This congress brought together over 500 activists and 70 grassroots housing groups, including representatives from various PAHs and tenants' unions (Europa Press, 2019), to develop political demands and strategies for the housing movement. The decentralised, multi-scalar and heterogeneous nature of this movement provides an on-the-ground example of the kind of political organisation advocated by Degrowth and embodied in the concept of open localism. However, in practice this model is not without limitations. Ideological differences between certain *sindicats* sometimes cause barriers to cooperation when they overshadow the shared goal of housing justice. Furthermore, the socioeconomic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on Catalonia's housing movement in recent years. The SHV is one of various *sindicats d'habitatge* that have experienced both an increase in need and a decrease in capacity since 2020, which has limited the potential for large-scale, coordinated political actions and strategising. This reality exposes the fragility of such voluntary-based organising in the face of external socio-political challenges and crises.

Transforming narratives: towards decommodification

> *'The role [of the* Sindicat*] is to signal, to generate discussion, to grow this mentality that housing is not a commodity, it's a right.'* - Marina

Through its various activities and strategies, including its blog,[1] the SHV—alongside the wider network of *sindicats d'habitatge* and other housing justice groups—is playing an important role in tackling the dominant narratives in Catalonia surrounding matters such as housing as a right, property speculation and squatting. As such, they are contributing to the Degrowth agenda through 'decolonising' society (Latouche, 2015) from the hegemonic

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[1] https://habitatgevallcarca.wordpress.com/blog/

growth imaginary and growth-based housing narratives (Nelson, 2019a; Schneider et al., 2013). They open space for counter-narratives by exposing the contradictions, injustice and absurdity of Spain's current housing situation, whereby homes owned by banks and vulture funds are kept empty, whilst families are being evicted from their homes and forced to live on the streets. The practise of shouting slogans such as '*no s'entén la gent sense casa i casa sense gent*' ('people without homes and homes without people doesn't make sense') during actions, inherited from the PAH, is a form of planting this counter-narrative in society, making people question the morality and sense of the capitalist housing model. Such alternative narratives are fundamental to emancipatory housing struggles, as they provide the foundations for 'counter-hegemonies' that challenge the dominant logic of capital accumulation and commodification in housing (Jimenez, 2021).

One important element of the *Sindicat's* counter-narrative is the legitimisation of squatting from a human-rights and -needs perspective: '*Squatting…is justified when you are on the street and there are loads of empty flats,*' (Olga). The SHV publicises their opening (or 'expropriating', as it is sometimes referred to) of empty flats for squatting, highlighting the fact that they will be used by vulnerable families and members of the community in need of a home. One such example is from May 2021, when members of the SHV (myself included) 'expropriated' a block of flats, one of which had belonged to an elderly man called Francisco for 40 years, until he was illegally evicted in 2020. The eviction was carried out because the owner—an investment fund—had bought the entire block, and was planning to demolish it and turn it into luxury flats (Roca, 2021). Although a court case later deemed the eviction illegal, Francisco (who had been forced to move to Madrid to live with his brother due to a lack of housing provisions in Barcelona) was never given the option of moving back into his flat. When the *Sindicat* squatted the block, which had been partially destroyed by the owner to prevent people from living in it, they announced:

> The Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca *has entered in the building to tell Francisco that he can come back to live in his flat whenever he wants, and to re-house, in the other flats, vulnerable families from the neighbourhood…the* Sindicat *is doing what neither the Council nor the judicial system has been capable of doing: returning Francisco's flat to him.* (Guerrero, 2021, own translation).

Publicising the squatting of empty housing to meet people's needs is a familiar approach in Spain's grassroots housing justice movement and is a powerful emancipatory tool (García-Lamarca, 2017a; Youngman & Barrio, 2021). Its primary purpose is to galvanise community support for those who are squatting as a means to meet their basic human needs, in order to resist their eviction and negotiate for social rent with landlords (Lledin, 2018). However, it serves further purposes in terms of building a counter-hegemonic narrative: firstly, it draws attention to the insufficiency of the public housing infrastructure in Barcelona, by indicating that there would not be such a need to squat empty buildings if there was a functional social housing provision in the city (Ferreri, 2021). Secondly, it tackles the negative narratives around squatters that are fomented by the Spanish and Catalan media. Furthermore, it strengthens the argument for the decommodification of housing, by emphasising its use value as fulfilling a basic human need. Finally, it highlights the wastefulness and excess of constructing new buildings when there are so many empty buildings. This alternative

narrative overlaps with and complements the work of other Degrowth housing activist-scholars who have shed light on the socio-ecological benefits of squatting and its significance as a Degrowth practice (Cattaneo & Gavaldà, 2010; Cattaneo, 2019; Olsen et al., 2019). As Cattaneo (2019) argues, squatting as an organised, politicised activity offers an important contribution to the Degrowth movement 'by exemplifying an institution that is neither private nor public,' (Cattaneo, 2019, p. 46). Furthermore, squatting is an example of 'commoning' housing (Ferreri, 2021), i.e. removing it from the market and turning it into a democratically managed communal good. Politicising and publicising this process serves to dismantle the dominant narratives surrounding private property relations and housing as a commodity, creating space for new imaginaries of housing aligned with the Degrowth agenda. This was elucidated by Manu, when discussing the case of Barcelona:

> *[We say] that all of these people with their distinct cases have the right to stay in their home. This I think is powerful and has made a change in the sense that now there is a social consciousness around evictions and the people that stop evictions, like there is a sympathy or affinity that has been growing over the years…[however,] squatting continues to be very demonised. There have been specific media campaigns [against squatters]…but despite that it is pretty accepted that, well, if it's an occupation of a bank or a business, or even of the institutions in certain cases, people don't see it so badly'* - Manu

While there is strong confluence between the SHV and Degrowth narratives regarding the socio-political value of squatting, its ecological benefits as explored by Cattaneo (2014, 2019) and others are largely absent from the SHV's narratives. These benefits include a reduced material and energy throughput due to the predominance of sharing, recycling and DIY practices, and minimising the need for new constructions (#kraakdecrisis, 2020). Incorporating the environmental case for squatting according to the Degrowth framework could serve to broaden support for the *sindicat*'s squatters, as well as for their strategies in general. The SHV could also draw on the approaches of groups such as *Alianza Contra la Pobreza Energética* (Alliance Against Energy Poverty)[2] for inspiration on how to incorporate an ecological angle into the struggle for social justice.

The political and ideological messaging of the *Sindicat* is complementary to and intertwined with their on-the-ground activities: '*on one hand [the role of the* sindicats *is] to generate discussion that is theoretical, and on the other hand, praxis, as in lead by example, like demonstrate to people that it really is possible…to live without paying rent and have a decent home or at least achieve an accessible rent,*' (Marina). This double-pronged strategy of praxis plus discourse is effective for creating new imaginaries surrounding housing as a right rather than a commodity, and is therefore a crucial element of a Degrowth housing transition.

Findings and Analysis II: Revisiting the Degrowth framework through the experience of the *Sindicat*

'The issue of class always, always, always influences.' - Marina

[2] https://pobresaenergetica.es/es/

Solidarity and mutual support are two of the core principles of the SHV, being fundamental to its *modus operandi*. As the *Sindicat* was created by and for members of the community in precarious housing situations, in order to meet an urgent need that was not being fulfilled by the state, there is an inherent consciousness of the poverty, challenges and injustices that are suffered by the most vulnerable and oppressed members of society: *'This comes from poor people with the same problem…they don't have a home or they [can't pay for it]…like me, and like a lot of people with the same problem and in the same situation,'* (Eliza). The overarching philosophy of solidarity also comes from the collective awareness that many members of society with different socio-economic situations—not only the most socially excluded—are being victimised, abandoned and exploited by the dominant capitalist class:

> *There are lots of people that are affected [by the housing crisis] and in very different ways, some more difficult than others…I'm young, for example, and I still can't move out of my parents' house…or all of the people that are squatting…there are different grades, no?...lots of people have come [recently] who don't have a home…or all of the Romanian community that are living without water, without light…but the elderly lady is also affected who can't renew her contract…and that right now for her to move house would be a complete nightmare, you know…everyone is screwed over in different ways…* - Marina

This perspective demonstrates a class consciousness and the formation of a class-based political subjectivity that is founded in the members' common struggle for the right to a *vivienda digna*, and is fomented by the 'reciprocal solidarity' (Jimenez, 2021, p. 99) encountered in the *Sindicat*. It represents a refusal to accept the segregation, fracturing and displacement of working-class communities caused by capitalist forces (Wright, 2010). Overall, the principles, demographic and grassroots organisation of the SHV ensure that they do not lose sight of the importance of, firstly, addressing people's basic needs, and secondly, collective action for protecting the rights of community members against speculative interests.

Such a class-based perspective is strongly aligned with Degrowth theory, which draws on Marxist analyses of class and power as part of its anti-capitalist rationale (Kallis, 2018). This perspective is especially pertinent in the field of housing, as housing plays such a critical role in the formation and perpetuation of class relations, inequalities and economic paradigms (Aalbers & Christophers 2014; Di Feliciantonio, 2016; Martínez Alonso, 2021). Accordingly, many Degrowth scholars have class consciousness, solidarity and social (in)equalities as an important focal point of their analyses and proposals (Anson, 2019; Ferreri, 2019; Martínez Alonso, 2021; Olsen et al., 2019). However, this is not ubiquitous: certain Degrowth housing proposals – such as eco-villages or cohousing communities – are inaccessible to many working class or socially marginalised people. They therefore run the risk of perpetuating socio-spatial injustices and power hierarchies, failing to fulfil the transformational social justice element of the Degrowth agenda (Cucca & Friesenecker, 2021; Xue, 2021). Intent on overcoming this limitation, various proposals coming from Degrowth urbanism and housing scholars engage with class-based struggles regarding, for example, just redistribution of space (Cucca & Friesenecker, 2021; Mete, 2021) and anti-capitalist organising (Hurlin, 2019; Savini, 2022). As projects such as the Climate Justice Alliance demonstrate, this kind of co-learning and synergy between labour and environmental

movements can be a powerful tool for radical change. The cross-fertilisation of class-based, decolonial and environmental principles leads to truly emancipatory socio-ecological agendas, exemplified by the concept of Just Transition.[3] Deeper engagement with class-based organising in housing movements would help to ensure that Degrowth housing and urbanism proposals fulfil Degrowth's transformational goals on both an ecological and a social level, avoiding the social/environmental "trade-off" (Savini, 2022).

Although the SHV does not have an explicit decolonial philosophy, the support of and attitudes towards immigrants and racialised people in the SHV demonstrates a non-nationalistic, inclusive and anti-racist form of solidarity. This is elucidated by the interviews I carried out with two racialised non-Catalan members of the *Sindicat*:

> *[The* Sindicat*] changed a lot for me because it's a huge support…we are all equal, all of us, equal, the* Sindicat *receives you the same whether you are from this country or a foreigner, they see your situation and they look at how they are going to fight with you…they take on your case [and] struggle with you, until the very end* - Eliza

> *For us here, it's about behaviour, and I think in the other* sindicats *it's the same…foreign people receive help as much as native people, you know, they receive the same benefit as anyone…* - Alex

The sentiments of Eliza and Alex are reinforced by the cooperation of the *sindicat* with the local community of Romanians, who are heavily stigmatised and marginalised in Spain (Lagunas, 2021). Various members of this community have squatted flats in Vallcarca with the support of the SHV, and some are active members of the collective. Moreover, the SHV has recently been working and campaigning with Romanian families to defend them against the (very real) threat of having their children taken from them or being evicted from their homes as a result of social exclusion and discriminatory policies. The participation of Romanians and other racialised and minority groups in the *sindicat* contributes to their integration in the neighbourhood, tackling the dominant culture of social exclusion and racism towards these communities: *'it's much more difficult for foreigners, you know, if you are foreign, well, they don't trust in you to rent you a place, they ask for a lot of money,'* (Eliza). Therefore, as Manu expressed in his interview, *'the* Sindicat *is also an anti-fascist struggle, in the sense that the best way to combat racism and xenophobia is by getting* vecinos *who were born here sitting at the same table with* vecinos *who arrived some years ago, or who have just arrived.'*

Anti-racist practices, such as denouncing and tackling the racist practices of property owners and housing institutions, are prevalent across Catalonia's housing movement (Sindicat de Llogateres, 2022). However, many of these groups lack a more in-depth decolonial perspective or theoretical foundation for these practices. This perspective could be developed by engaging with Degrowth theory, which includes an elaborate critique of colonisation and its relation to capitalist exploitation and growth (Hickel, 2020). Degrowth scholars denounce the colonial roots of the concept of 'development' and the global systems of oppression and exploitation that are sustained in today's capitalist politico-economic systems (Kallis, 2018; D'Alisa et al., 2015). Nevertheless, some critical voices allied with the

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[3] https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/

movement argue that beyond the theory, certain practical Degrowth proposals lack a revolutionary angle that actively engages with the decolonial and class-based politics of dismantling exploitative global power and property relations (Muradian, 2019; Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019; Tyberg & Jung, 2021). This absence is notable in Degrowth housing scholarship, which may be explained to some extent by the limited amount of research that has been done in the field so far. Nevertheless, it is important that this element is not sidelined by either Degrowth housing proposals/projects or Catalonia's housing justice movement, given the environmental injustices, exclusion and discrimination experienced by many migrants and racialised people when trying to access housing in European countries (Harrison et al., 2005). Both movements would benefit from engaging with the wider Degrowth literature on decoloniality to ensure their proposals and activities contribute towards dismantling racial/colonial hierarchies.

Whilst there are strong class and anti-xenophobic politics in the SHV, its gender politics are weaker. The *Sindicat* shows steps towards promoting feminist ideals, such as having a female-only gender commission, and many members of the group have feminist sensibilities. However, certain activities typically manifest—rather than challenge—traditional gender roles, and as an entity it lacks a developed, integrated gender perspective. For example, debates during assemblies can sometimes be dominated by the male members of the group, revealing a hierarchy that is reinforced by certain members' deference to these men for opinions or information. More effort could be made to train and inform other members of the group in key matters, so that these knowledge/experience hierarchies are dissolved. It is particularly important to overcome this deficiency, considering women are the worst affected by the housing crisis in Spain due to intersecting oppressions (*Amnistía Internacional España*, 2017) and are therefore often at the forefront of housing struggles (*Obra Social Barcelona*, 2018; Rivera Blanco et al., 2021). Feminism, in particular feminist economics and ecofeminism, constitutes one of the foundational tenets of Degrowth theory (Demaria et al., 2013; Gregoratti & Raphael, 2019). Feminist critiques of women's exploitation and the unequal sexual division of reproductive/productive work under capitalism, for example, feed naturally into Degrowth's anti-capitalist agenda (Demaria et al., 2013) and offer pathways to radically more equal forms of living (Feminisms and Degrowth Alliance, 2020). These feminist roots of Degrowth offer frameworks for deepening and consolidating the SHV's gender politics. Integrating these frameworks into the SHV's narratives and activities would serve to fulfil its potential as an emancipatory movement that tackles all intersecting forms of injustice through the focal point of housing.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the current debates regarding housing for Degrowth by reflecting on the activities and narratives of the *Sindicat d'Habitatge de Vallcarca*, how they align with the Degrowth agenda, and what can be learned from the cross-analysis of these struggles. As I have shown in the first part of my findings and analysis, the SHV embodies Degrowth principles and goals such as politicising communities, open localism, transforming narratives away from the hegemonic growth imaginary and decommodification.

Furthermore, this case study provides an example of a social movement that operates in tension with the state whilst pushing for institutional and political change, rooted in bottom-up community organisation, class solidarity and autonomous direct action. In the second part of the findings and analysis, I explore some of the strengths and limitations of both the SHV and the Degrowth housing movement according to class, race and gender politics. These analyses demonstrate how cross-fertilisation of ideas, strategies and theories could mutually benefit both movements and maximise their 'wider transformative potential' (Ferreri, 2019, p. 110).

Relatedly, future activist-research could contribute to this field by exploring further how grassroots housing movements such as Barcelona's network of *sindicats d'habitatge* or the PAH can integrate an overt ecological angle in their narratives and praxis using Degrowth frameworks. Given the strong overlap and alignment between the principles and goals of the two movements, as explored in this article, and the urgency of the ecological and climate crises we are facing, this would be a powerful development in these movements. This synergy could be used, for example, to question top-down green growth initiatives such as the EU 'Renovation Wave',[4] and propose genuinely sustainable alternatives that engage with the socio-environmental housing realities of working-class communities. For urban housing struggles, Savini's (2021, 2022) Degrowth urbanism framework offers a robust conceptual base with which to carry out further analyses along these lines.

More broadly, deepening connections with the Degrowth movement could strengthen radical housing struggles across the world by connecting them to a global struggle for eco-social justice that offers an alternative vision to the exploitative capitalist paradigm in which they are currently situated. Degrowth is informed by and forms part of an emerging global network of post-growth theories and movements, many from the Global South, which propose alternative socio-ecologically just and egalitarian futures based on decolonial, feminist and anti-racist thinking (see Kothari et al., 2019). The engagement of radical grassroots housing movements with Degrowth and related post-growth ideologies would ensure that they are working towards an emancipatory housing paradigm that is genuinely transformative on both an environmental and a social level, and responds to the multidimensional eco-social crises that humanity is facing.

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[4] https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/renovation-wave_en

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