

Abstract submitted by Dimitris Pettas, Christos Tsirimokos & Georgios Maroulis

Title:

Energy Democracy and Degrowth: The case study of Tilos Island. A theoretical and empirical approach

In this paper, through a theoretical and empirical study, we examine the concept and practices of energy democracy under the scope of degrowth, as two crucial processes embedded in social-ecological relations. Degrowth is considered as a sustainable alternative economic strategy aiming at the downscaling of production and consumption in order to increase human wellbeing and enhance the ecological conditions at both local and global levels. Energy democracy is a newly emerged concept aiming at ensuring to everybody access to sufficient energy. In this context, energy production must neither pollute the environment, nor harm people, while energy consumption should be followed by a sufficient reduction path. More specifically, fossil fuel resources must be left in the ground and the use of renewable sources of energy should be encouraged, while at the same time the energy means of production should be socialised and democratised. Through the case of the Greek island of Tilos, a small Mediterranean island that aspires to serve as the first global blueprint for smart microgrids and to consequently attain energy independence within the framework of the European research programme “Tilos”, we discuss energy democracy and degrowth perspectives by applying four criteria developed by Kunze and Becker (2014) in order to identify what can distinguish energy democracy in relevant energy projects in Europe. These criteria are 1) property; 2) democracy and participation; 3) surplus value and employment, and; 4) ecology and sufficiency.

CV:

Dimitris Pettas holds a PhD in Urban Geography (National Technical University of Athens). In 2009, he completed the MSc program in Regional and Urban Planning Studies (LSE), while his first degree is in Urban Planning and Development (University of Thessaly). His research interests lie in the fields of Urban Geography and Urban sociology with a focus in urban governance, public space and urban social movements.

Christos Tsirimokos is a graduate of the Department of Public Administration at Panteion University. He obtained a Master Degree in Environmental Economics from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). Currently, he is a PhD candidate in the Department of Economics and Regional Development at Panteion University, on the topic “Economic Growth and Natural Resources. Coupling or Decoupling links in

the contemporary Economic History?." Moreover, he is teaching economics and management in various High Schools Economics.

Georgios Maroulis a PhD Candidate in the Department of Economics and Regional Development at Panteion University. His PhD Thesis focuses on sustainability and intergenerational justice. He also holds a Master of Arts in Public and Private Environmental Management from Free University Berlin, while he has a Bachelor's degree in Regional and Economic Development from Panteion University of Athens. Additionally, he works as a Consultant in the Policy Department of eclareon GmbH where he is responsible for the portfolios of Greece, Cyprus, the United Kingdom as well as for the Republic of Ireland.