DEGROWTH OF AVIATION
REDUCING AIR TRAVEL IN A JUST WAY
Stay Grounded's new report

The Illusion of Green Flying

Aviation is the fastest way to the climate crisis. Yet a travel is growing rapidly, with hundreds of new airports currently planned—despite local resistance and urgent need to solve the climate crisis.

The aviation industry has announced its intention to become greener in the future. Do its strategies deliver on that promise? Is carbon-neutral growth a realistic goal? Or do we need to set a limit — a real one — for air travel?

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Webinar

- Introduction
- Input by Tone Smith (editor) and Magdalena Heuwieser (co-author):
  - Why Degrowth?
  - A look into different measures to degrow aviation
  - Questions?
  - What are socially just measures? (break-out groups)
  - Summary & Lessons learned
- Discussion
- Closing remarks & feedback
The full climate impact of aviation

- Most climate unfriendly mode of transport
- “2% of world CO₂”
- But:
  - Non-CO₂ effects -> climate impact more than doubles
  - Only 10% have ever used an airplane
  - Other environmental impacts
  - Civil aviation only, military not included
The need for Degrowth of Aviation

- Change in CO$_2$ emissions between 1990-2010:
  - Global: +25%
  - International aviation: +70%
- Expected to double between 2020-40 (aircrafts, passenger km)

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The Illusion of Green Flying

- “Carbon-neutral growth from 2020 onwards“
  - Technology
  - Offsetting
- False solutions!
- Green Growth is an illusion

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Degrowth – not Green Growth

- Degrowth – more than just reducing aviation
- A project for a radical social-ecological transformation of the economy and society
- Sufficiency & System change
Degrowth of Aviation – Cluster of Different Measures

- institutional change of travel policies
- caps or bans on flights
- frequent flyer levy (FFL) and air miles levy (AML)
- alternatives to flying
- ban aviation industry’s lobbying
- ban state funding for aviation
- challenge military aviation
- counter low-cost airlines and support a just transition
- divestment from the aviation industry
- taxes on aviation: VAT, kerosene & ticket tax
- better accounting for aviation’s climate impact
- regulate international aviation’s regulator
- limiting air travel advertising
- restrict aviation’s fuel supply

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Ending Unfair Subsidies and Tax Exemptions

- Massive indirect subsidies - must end!
- In EU alone:
  - 30-40 billion euro/year
- Feasibility: good
- Ending special treatment of the aviation sector = boost other means of transport

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Taxes (cont.)

- Kerosene tax: can be implemented in spite of Chicago Convention!
- Must include non-CO$_2$ impacts
- Carbon tax: could incl. biofuels/synthetic fuels
- VAT: can be on fuel or tickets
- Ticket tax: easier nationally
Frequent Flyer or Air Miles Levy

- Social justice: make those who fly most pay more
  - Most often (FFL) (2\textsuperscript{nd} time e.g. 150\(€\))
  - The furthest (AML)
- In UK, 10\% most frequent flyers took more than half of the flights abroad
- Revenues can be used for alternative modes of transport, also in the Global South, or a Just Transition Fund
Limiting Flights

- The most effective measure
- The fairest measure
- Feasibility: Limits on short-haul flights starting to gain support
Red line for airports

- In total >1200 infrastructure projects worldwide
- Conflicts related to airports
Aviation Related Conflicts

Sources: Stay Grounded (2019d), Environmental Justice Atlas (n.d.)
Red line for airports

• Moratoria on new airport infrastructure → some successes
  • e.g. Munich (2018): 5 year
• Scaling down of regional airports
Fostering alternatives

• Good and affordable alternatives:
  – (Night)trains, (night)buses, ferries
  – Connections, booking systems
  – Video conferencing

• New visions for travelling

• Also need to reduce transportation
  – Work travel, tourism & cargo

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Change of travel policies

- Bottom-up measure
- Voluntary implementation of travel policies by organisations
- Progressive policies would include:
  - Ban short-haul flights
  - Awareness of the climate impacts of flying
  - Video conference equipment and training
  - Challenge other organisations to do the same

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Other means

- Accounting for emissions
- Banning advertisement
- Just transition
- Behavioural change
- ...

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Climate Justice

- How can measures to reduce aviation be socially just?
- Flying is at the core on an “imperial mode of living”
- Climate Justice includes:
  - Redistribution of wealth
  - Financial payments for liability and redress
  - Struggle against all forms of discrimination
  - Measures should be just
Break-out groups

How do you evaluate the presented measures from a social justice perspective?

When are measures to degrow aviation socially just?
Summary I: Socially Just measures

- Don’t harm or burden vulnerable groups (unfair taxation, destructive projects like biofuels, some offsets)
- Reduce traffic, but enable mobility and cultural exchange
- Target the wealthy frequent flyers more
- Provide a just transition for workers in the aviation or tourist sector
- Differentiate between “bullshit flights” and “necessary flights”?

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Summary II

• Measures to degrow aviation won‘t alone tackle the justice issue
• A combination of measures best
  – Fiscal + regulation (limits) + alternatives
  – Top-down & bottom-up
  – System change & behaviour change
• New narratives for (f)light travelling

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Summary III

• Recommendations to civil society
  – Call for “reduction” of aviation, not “green/decarbonised” aviation
  – Checking social justice implications
  – Focus on one campaign demand
  – Respect other strategies/tactics
  – Build alliances

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