**Session 2 — Ecological Justice & Island Metabolisms**

**Overall Idea of the Session**

This session looks at relationships between ecological justice, resource distribution, and the metabolic flows that sustain both human societies and natural systems. We examine how economies have been shaped by notions of scarcity and abundance, and how these concepts structure ecological relations. Ivan Illich’s *Energy and Equity* critiques modern energy dependence and its impact on social structures. Giorgos Kallis’ work on degrowth questions the assumption that economic growth is necessary or desirable, advocating for alternative ways of organising economies that respect ecological limits. Fredrik Albritton Jonsson and Carl Wennerlind trace the history of scarcity as an economic and political construct, examining how it has been used to justify economic inequalities. Together, these readings push us to rethink the dominant narratives of progress and necessity, encouraging us to consider ecological justice as a metabolic process that requires a fundamental reorganisation of social and material exchanges.

**Summaries of the Readings**

**Ivan Illich, Energy and Equity**

Illich critiques modern energy-intensive societies, arguing that high-energy consumption creates structural inequalities and reduces individual freedom. He proposes that a more equitable society requires scaling back energy use to a level that supports social autonomy and conviviality, rather than reinforcing dependence on industrialized infrastructures.

**Giorgos Kallis, Degrowth: The Economics of Degrowth**

Kallis challenges the dominant economic paradigm of perpetual growth, arguing that economies should prioritize ecological sustainability and social well-being over profit and expansion. He introduces degrowth as a deliberate shift away from extractive economic models, advocating for reduced material consumption and a reimagining of value beyond market-based measures .

**Fredrik Albritton Jonsson & Carl Wennerlind, Scarcity: A History from the Origins of Capitalism to the Present (Excerpt, p. 102-123)**

This text explores the historical construction of scarcity as a justification for capitalist accumulation and social hierarchy. The authors argue that scarcity is not a natural condition but a socially manufactured concept used to discipline labor, control resources, and maintain economic power structures .

**Fredrik Albritton Jonsson & Carl Wennerlind, Scarcity: A History from the Origins of Capitalism to the Present (Excerpt, p. 40-45)**

This excerpt examines early conceptualizations of scarcity, particularly through Thomas More’s *Utopia*, which imagined a world without private property and accumulation. The authors highlight how scarcity was historically manipulated to justify economic and political inequalities, setting the foundation for later capitalist expansion .