



Struktur anhand der mail von Beate Littig:

Warming up participants: preferred form of work(ing) considering socio-ecological issues?

For the first round with you: Can you please prepare a 10-12 minute input regarding the general question of the session: The link between work and de-growth/growth. What are the major issues and implication of your particular position?

I propose Willi to start, then Daniel and then Adelheid/Uta.

Adelheid/Uta:

Three Arguments about “good” and “bad” links between work and de-growth/growth

Introduction: Our perspective: Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften. We don't look from a market-perspective but from the – often “forgotten” – perspective of “life-world”. In this perspective it comes into sight that work is a multifaceted activity within and outside the market.

First Argument: About the “bad” link of work and the capitalist production system, about externalization and jobless growth

In the capitalist society work is only seen as paid work, as work for and within the market.

This work is embedded into a production system which transforms resources into waste – with growing speed. It is an unsustainable work.

This work is considered as gainful employment and as productive. It has a value which is represented by wage. But this is only half of the story. The predominant working is outside the market – caring work to sustain human life, voluntary work for the society, work for one's own (alone or with others), political engagement. This work is seen as not productive, in the best case as reproductive. The same happens with nature.

What we call “externalisation as principle” is the “shadow” of paid work, invisible and unvalued. But markets, also job markets, could not exist without this shadow. They need all this valueless social (care work) and ecological (nature) “resources”. One actual development is outsourcing – also outsourcing from paid to unpaid work. This actual development tends to “jobless growth”.

This “externalisation as principle” entails a hierarchy: The market stands above the non-market sphere. And because the unpaid care work is mostly done by women, it also entails hierarchal gender relations.

The consequence of this “externalisation as principle” is the multiple crisis. It is, in its very core, a crisis of the “reproductive”. Modern economies produce their wealth and growth by systemically destroying the basic living productivities for this growth. Systemically these economies with their concept of paid work are not sustainable.

Second Argument about the “good” link between care (we prefer “Vorsorge”, but you cannot translate it), (re)production, and sustainability.

A “post-growth-economy”, in our opinion, must be a sustainable one. This means to overcome the “externalisation as principle”. For the concept of work it means to integrate the “productive” and the “reproductive” work as well as the capabilities of nature to regenerate. The principle of care, then, dominates the today hegemonial principle of gaining profits.

What does care mean? “On the most general level, we suggest that caring should be viewed as a *species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible.* That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.” (Tronto 2013:19, quoting Fisher/Tronto 1990.)

Caring means working in relationships to others and to nature. “Vorsorge” means the caring concern not only for the present but also for the future which is understood as the present of next generations. It encompasses responsibility because participants are not co-present. This also means responsibility for the consequences of our actions.

From this the concept of work in a sustainable society (understood, now, as “the whole work”) it follows that the long-term consequences for nature have to be taken into account, and that products and processes must be designed to further natural and social regeneration. Such an understanding of work would also delete the contradiction between “work” and “nature” – workers could no longer be plaid off against nature.

In this concept of work everybody can participate in all fields of work. No field is better than another. The experiences of every woman and man in all spheres of work are necessary for the further development of the (re)productive process. This also means that sustainable work is based on the equity between the genders.

Third Argument about degrowth and emancipation and some doubts about the “good” links between them

Referring to the “externalisation as principle” and the hierarchical gender relations within this structure the concepts on the subject of degrowth show some blind spots: They do not discuss this structure and its destroying character against the

“reproductive” and the “regenerative”. In their analytical framework these concepts are largely “gender-blind”. And nearly all of them are also blind with reference to power relations. In these concepts a lot of proposals are made for new working activities in a post-growth-society – activities for the provisioning of the different individuals. But nothing has been said about how and by whom these works have to be done. Again by women? If the existing gender relations are not discussed and criticised the degrowth-debate runs the risk of stabilising the existing hierarchal gender relations.

Furthermore the debate has to be aware of contradictions between the criticised growth and emancipation. Anonymous market relations and possibilities to gain an autonomous income have the character of empowerment and emancipation especially for women. Their growth therefore may offer an alternative and a liberation from traditional and patriarchal domination structures. But simultaneously marketisation means integration into the capitalist working relations with their hierarchical relation between work and capital. Therefore the gender question about work and degrowth is also a question of hidden or obvious domination within a degrowth society.

The second round will be about clarifications of and comments to your opening statements. Also including the audience.

The third round will focus on potential actors (and alliances) and measures in favour of a socio-ecological transformation of work and current working societies. Here again I would ask for inputs, maximum 5 minutes, starting with Adelheid/Uta then Daniel and Willi.

Adelheid/Uta:

At this point we want to present the third action principle of our theoretical approach within the Network Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften. It is the principle of “Orientierung am für das gute Leben Notwendigen“: Orientation to what is necessary for a good life. This is more a paradigmatic orientation than an orientation on potential actors and measures. But we think it could work also for a socio-ecological transformation into a sustainable society. It is not only a “degrowth-society” because there are probably shrinking and growing areas. Orientation to what is necessary for a good life means for example: food and work for nutrition first – and no speculation with basic needs. It also means: a basic level for sustainable existence as political and social task.

Referring to the transformation of work towards what we call “the whole work” it is clear that this also is a political task. Work as part of a good life cannot mainly be regulated with and within a labour market. Three first steps are necessary: the radical reduction of the time for paid work, the redistribution of care-work between the genders and the revalorisation of unpaid as well as of paid care-work. For the first step trade-unions may be potential actors, together with the state. But they have no understanding of the new life-world perspective which is associated with the orientation to what is necessary for a good life. The second and the third step, therefore, again are political and social tasks.

The fourth round will be about clarifications and comments to your second statement. Again including the audience.

To end: A very brief final statement by each of you (order as in the first round).

„In the context of working time and the challenge of work time reduction, sustainability takes on a particular meaning. It encompasses not just the quantity but also the quality of working time, not just the commodity but also the lived complexity. It involves combining into a coherent whole the incompatible time systems that currently stress and stretch our lives beyond endurance. A precondition to sustainable work would be that we render explicit what is currently known implicitly and that time was understood in its complexity as timescape. Different practices would need to be appreciated in terms of their temporal logics, which are not necessary compatible with the logic of other time systems. Working time understood in its economic, social and environmental complexity would therefore be the starting point from which we could begin to take account of the temporal needs at all these levels and address current inequalities embedded therein. As such it would be an essential first step on the long path to sustainable work.”

Barbara Adam (2013): Clock time: tyrannies and alternatives. In: Coot, Anna/ Franklin, Jane (ed.): Time on our side: Why we all need a shorter working week. London: nef (the new economic foundation), pp. 31-39