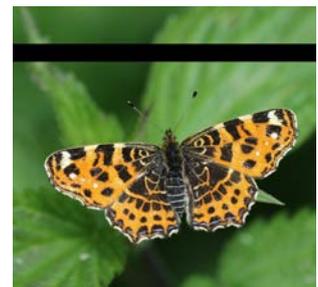




Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 4

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4. Degrowth Conference Leipzig 2014
Degrowth and Sustainable Consumption
- Inspiration for mutual learning
SCORAI Europe Workshop
2-6 September 2014, Leipzig, Germany



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Introduction

Degrowth is impossible to achieve without a commitment to strong sustainable consumption. At the same time, the potential for strong sustainable consumption governance depends on greater societal acceptance of degrowth, including among policy makers and voters. Advancing strong sustainable consumption research and governance can thus add weight to degrowth arguments, and vice versa.

The SCORAI sessions at the Degrowth 2014 conference therefore intended to further enhance mutual exchange and learning between the SC and Degrowth research communities, specifically in relation to shared research interests and common ground for advocacy and political action.

Since its inception in 2010, the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) has successfully used a specific interactive format for its workshops, combining short paper presentations with periods of intensive discussion. In this sense it proposed two sessions at Degrowth 2014 aiming to continue this tradition. The overall aim was (1) to learn where degrowth research already has developed answers where sustainable consumption research still has blind spots and (2) to identify and sharpen research questions relevant for both communities.

A first session introduced the sustainable consumption approach in order to get comments and feedback from a degrowth perspective. Contributions elaborated

- What a small-footprint-living is and how we can make it attractive? (Edina Vadovics, p. 6)
- The roles for university researchers in promoting sustainability (Audley Genus, p. 11)
- Time use, resource consumption and the dematerialisation of everyday practices (Henrike Rau, p. 14)

A second session was organized in a less academically formalized way and devoted to learn from the experience of Degrowth researchers and the participating Degrowth activists. The choice of speakers intended to reflect the fact that the Degrowth movement as well as its research substantially differ in the various countries. The speakers were therefore asked to share insights how sustainable consumption is discussed and practically approached in their specific context. The main question elaborated upon was: *What does sufficiency mean at the level of societal and personal lifestyles in your country?*

The following perspectives were given:

- Barbara Muraca: Contribution from the German debate (p 21)
- Vincent Liegey: Contribution from the Hungarian debate (p. 22)
- Francois Schneider: Contribution from the French debate (p. 23)

In addition to this input, the proceedings also document the discussions which took place during the sessions (see p. 18 for session I and p. 24 for session II) and point towards first findings and future questions for further elaboration.

SCORAI Session I

Degrowth from a Sustainable Consumption Perspective

As an introduction to the workshop Sylvia Lorek gave a brief history and background on SCORAI and also on some of the upcoming SCORAI events (e.g. workshop in London is for 20 people practitioners and researches; 2-day workshop on food, energy and in Lausanne; Conference in Galway in the framework of CONSENSUS project; and a workshop in Hungary not secure yet due to funding issues). Naturally, all participants were invited to join SCORAI. Closing the introductory session all the workshop participants introduced themselves.

Sylvia Lorek started the scientific debate by defining strong and weak sustainability in connection to Degrowth¹.

Table 1 From Green Consumerism to Degrowth

From Green Consumerism(or weak SC)	To Degrowth (or strong SC)
Efficiency	Sufficiency and efficiency
Relative decoupling	Absolute reductions within sustainability limits
Green products	Sustainable life styles (and sustainable livelihoods)
Peanuts – small changes on product level	Big Points – focusing on most important areas
Supporting Sustainable Consumer Procurement	Limiting unsustainable options
Hurry for better life	Search for good life
Corporate responsibility	Corporate accountability
Technological solutions	Technological and social innovation
Market activities count	Including non-market activities
Demand side management (markets greed)	Supply side management (available resources)
Prices solve shortage of resources	Reallocation of resources based on basic needs

After this kick off she welcomed the three speakers of the session and handed over to the presentations.

¹ Lorek, S. & Fuchs, D. (2013) Strong Sustainable Consumption Governance - Precondition For A Degrowth Path? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 38, 36-43.

Sustainable Consumption in Hungary

What is small-footprint-living and can we make it attractive?

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Abstract

The paper begins by providing a definition for small-footprint living.

Then, using footprint and consumption data trends in Hungary and the EU are compared. The aim of this brief analysis is to challenge the view that to achieve higher levels of well-being Hungary's economy needs to grow and 'catch up' to consumption levels in Western Europe. It is argued that achieving and implementing sustainable lifestyles in Hungary is in some ways a different challenge from that in Western Europe as it is often not about scaling down from large-footprint lifestyles but accepting and valuing current smaller-footprint lifestyles.

Following this, the Small Footprint sustainable lifestyle campaigns are introduced. Their methodology and success in achieving and making small-footprint lifestyles attractive are detailed. Conclusions are drawn about what could be done to make these lifestyles more widely accepted.

Key words: strong sustainable consumption, small footprint lifestyles, households, change agents

Introduction

There is a general agreement in the research and policy community that the environmental impact of consumption needs to be reduced. However, the debate in the sustainable consumption community is ongoing about whether making consumption more effective and greening will be sufficient, or there is need for the absolute reduction of consumption and small(er)-footprint lifestyles (weak and strong sustainable consumption, Lorek and Fuchs, 2013).

Further, in relation to small-footprint lifestyles the question arises whether they mean less well-being and less happy lifestyles. In other words, is it possible to achieve life

Small-footprint living

satisfaction in a sustainable way? Also, even more importantly, can we make sustainable lifestyles attractive and prove that they are 'doable' for the average person?

Defining small-footprint living

The definition used in this paper for small-footprint living is in line with strong sustainable consumption, and thus accepts the need for the progressive absolute reduction of consumption. According to this definition consumption needs to be reduced to a level that respects and stays within planetary boundaries. This often means a reduction of per capita consumption levels as well.

Apart from the environmental aspect, small-footprint living also has an equity or justice dimension relating to the way sustainable per capita consumption or resource use allowance is defined, and meaning that every human being has to have an equal access to resources.

In achieving sustainable, small-footprint lifestyles the responsibility of households and communities is recognized. Furthermore, attaining such lifestyles is a continuous, step-by-step process (cf. degrowth towards a sustainable footprint), and can be accomplished in diverse ways depending on the local context, resources, capacities and skills.

It is also recognized that defining what small-footprint living means in practice is problematic for various reasons. For example, both the size of population and the amount of available biocapacity changes over time. In addition, household and per capita footprint also varies (e.g. related to major life events).

Footprints and consumption in Hungary and Europe: different approaches to achieving sustainable consumption are needed?

Based on data from the Global Footprint Network (WWF et. al., 2012), the per capita ecological footprint in Hungary, although larger than the sustainably available footprint, is the third lowest in the European Union.

Data from the European Environment Agency (2012) shows that similarly to the ecological footprint, per capita carbon footprint in Hungary is one of the smallest in Europe: the average European Union footprint is 7.76 t CO₂/cap/yr while in Hungary it is 5.1 t CO₂/cap/yr. This is, obviously, still larger than the footprint size currently considered sustainable (cc. 2 t CO₂/cap/yr, Le Quéré, C. et al., 2014).

In line with the size of ecological and carbon footprint, data from Eurostat indicates that actual individual consumption in Hungary is lower than the European average (Eurostat, 2014a). Although this means that in Hungary certain segments of society still live within the means of available biocapacity (Csutora et al., 2011), it also suggests a higher number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2014b).

The aim of providing these glimpses of data is to challenge the decades' long view shared by many that in order to be sustainable and be able to offer higher levels of well-being, Hungary's economy needs to grow and 'catch up' to consumption levels in Western Europe. It has been observed in the literature that such a path is highly unlikely to result in a sustainable outcome (see e.g. Zsóka and Zilahy, 2012). Thus, achieving and implementing sustainable lifestyles in Hungary - and indeed in other

Central Eastern European countries - is a somewhat different challenge from that in Western Europe. Even though Hungarian society as a whole needs to reduce its ecological footprint in order to be more sustainable, at the level of individual households the question is often not about concrete reduction but a re-evaluation of existing lifestyle practices, not about scaling down from large-footprint lifestyles but accepting and valuing current smaller-footprint lifestyles and not wanting to progress to resource-rich Western European lifestyles.

At the practical level this means, for example, that the various practices households employ either because that has been the way they have always done things - e.g. make preserves from garden produce or mend clothes -, or because they need to save money - e.g. wear second-hand clothes, save bathing water for cleaning, etc. - have to be placed in a new light to be accepted as practices people should follow and be proud of. In order for this to happen, among many other things, a wide-scale awareness-raising and learning process needs to occur in society.

The Small Footprint Campaigns

The Small Footprint Campaigns were implemented in Hungary between 2010 and 2012 by GreenDependent and reached about 7000 households (Vadovics and Boza-Kiss, 2013). The overall aim of the campaigns was to initiate long-lasting behaviour and lifestyle change towards low-carbon living, and to model small-footprint lifestyles as attractive.

The methodology applied was based on behaviour change research, and emphasized the importance of small groups and community support. It was developed in a way to best educate, convince and motivate households that more sustainable, smaller-footprint lifestyles are liveable as well as desirable and attractive for both environmental and social reasons. The components of the methodology applied include

- helping people develop a positive attitude towards small-footprint living through various means, e.g. organizing community events;
- organizing informal and involving training events where households can share their already existing practices;
- training and assisting volunteers to become change agents in their local community;
- assisting people in measuring the impact of their households;
- assisting people in becoming trendsetters for their peers through publishing and presenting their case stories;
- engaging the mainstream media; etc. (see more details in Vadovics and Boza-Kiss, 2013)

Results and outcomes of the Small Footprint campaigns

Through the campaign GreenDependent and its partners managed to reach thousands of households, a lot of which did not consider themselves 'green' prior to the campaign. The mainstream media was successfully engaged, and as a result exemplary households were introduced on national TV, popular women's magazines as well as numerous radio programmes.

Small-footprint living

One of the most important questions about the campaigns, however, is whether people and households participating managed to have a footprint smaller than the average, closer to what is considered sustainable today. Using the consumption data based on meter readings entered into the carbon calculator developed for the programme, organizers calculated the average carbon footprint of the best performing households, and found that they were lower than the average Hungarian and EU carbon footprint (see table).

Table 2 Carbon footprint in context of Small Footprint campaigns

Small Footprint campaigns		Average Hungarian per capita carbon footprint*	Average EU per capita carbon footprint*
Average per capita carbon footprint			
2010-11 campaign, average of 21 winning households	2011-12 campaign, average of 25 winning households		
2 t/yr	2.65 t/yr	5.1 t/yr	7.76 t/yr
<p>* Source: EEA, http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/data-viewers/greenhouse-gases-viewer, data for 2010</p> <p>Notes: Only CO₂ emission related carbon footprint was considered. The calculator developed for the Small Footprint campaigns only includes emissions related to direct energy use in the home, diet, travel and holidays; however, direct energy use is based on consumption in winter months.</p>			

(Source: Vadovics and Boza-Kiss, 2013)

This indicates that it is possible to achieve more sustainable and happy, satisfied lifestyles if attention is paid to everyday practices and an effort is made to stick to and internalize small-footprint habits. An important observation made by the organizers is that without an awareness of the importance of sustainable living and what it really entails beyond e.g. selective waste collection, a lot of people view practices like wearing second-hand clothes, reusing bath water or making preserves as things to be ashamed of as they indicate lower levels of material affluence. Thus, one of the important first steps in making small-footprint living attractive should be the dispelling of such beliefs.

Conclusions

It needs to be emphasized that households participated in these programmes voluntarily. Thus, in order for the kind of transformation needed to happen on a wider scale, appropriate policies and funding should be available to support successful programmes for longer periods of time, allowing for the programme to spread and giving participants the chance to motivate others to join through relating their good experience as well as creating a shared group identity.

Further research would be needed to establish how to encourage and empower people more effectively to become change agents as well as what kind of frameworks, structures and stakeholder cooperation are needed to support them in this effort. In the case described here, a small-footprint living competition with set timelines, tasks and

attractive low-carbon prizes, and an expert organization available to provide continued professional support proved to be a useful and effective framework.

Finally, it is worth noting that easily understandable metrics are important for people and communities to assist change as they need to be able to see and calculate where they are at certain points in their life in relation to the 'average' as well as what would be considered sustainable. Cooperation between researchers and practitioners would help develop better metrics and related tools.

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Roles for university researchers in promoting sustainability

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Abstract

The paper considers roles employed by university researchers in initiatives promoting environmental sustainability within urban locations in which increasing numbers of citizens around the world live and which are responsible for a significant and growing proportion of global carbon emissions. The paper adopts an approach that analyses structural and non-structural factors affecting the roles that researchers play in such initiatives at the sub-city scale of activities, recognising that city-wide and regional phenomena have both received much attention in this regard. In its conclusions the paper asserts the importance of the foregoing factors but also of project-and person-specific factors in shaping the role of university researchers in local sustainability initiatives.

Introduction

There is considerable debate regarding the contribution to be made by higher education institutions and the researchers they employ in realising environmentally sustainable urban spaces, and the relationship between academic research and lay knowledge. The framing of the university researchers' engagement with citizens may be cast in terms of how researchers can help to assist residents in defined neighbourhoods or localised communities of interest to take individual and collective actions to reduce carbon emissions (whether this be in the name of 'doing something about climate change' or saving money on energy bills). Arguably the sub-city scale has received less attention than city-level or regional initiatives (for example, compare the spatial focus of attention of papers in relevant journals such as the *Journal of Cleaner Production*).

Relevant literature

The writing of the paper was inspired partly by concerns expressed about conventional 'scientifically oriented' approaches to research in which data is collected from participants, and knowledge is 'produced for disciplines' – mode 1 science (Gibbons et al, 1994), and about the limited role accorded to citizens in the science, technology and environmental matters which concern them. These tendencies are implicated with crises of legitimacy and credibility that have beset and undermined scientific expertise (and experts) and for which greater and genuine collaboration among professionals and non-

specialists has been advocated. With this in mind the paper sought to build on previous insights regarding the question of what factors enhance or detract from effective collaboration as well as the roles played by academic researchers therein. Prior research has shown that researchers may play a range of roles in collaborating with various actors to work towards the realisation of environmentally sustainable urban locations. Specifically, the paper builds on the work of Cada and Ptackova (2013) in identifying factors connected with the institutional environment, project structure and non-structural factors affecting collaboration between university researchers and others, and that of contributors such Devine-Wright et al (2001), Healy (2008), Zilahy and Huisingh (2009) and Lehmann et al (2009) on the roles of academic researchers in urban or regional sustainability initiatives.

Drawing on previous work, the paper identifies roles that may be played by academic researchers in building sustainable urban locations. Extending the focus to sub-city scale the paper illustrates how the roles played are affected by structural and non-structural factors which also shape the nature of collaboration among university researchers and other participants in urban sustainability projects. The paper does this on the basis of analysis and reflection upon research, networking and related activities taking place over the period 2007-2011 in Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England, focusing on a project called Newcastle Low Carbon Neighbourhoods. Research notes taken during the period and documentary evidence pertaining to or generated in the conduct of the project were examined, looking for non-local and local, structural and non-structural, project-specific and other factors which appeared to affect the work of the researchers on the project and their relation to other participants.

Analysis and Discussion

In the NLCN case wider institutional factors at play include changes in the requirements for securing national research funding for individual projects or centres, and for assessing the quality of research undertaken in higher education institutions, on which national funding for research in universities depends. The prevailing values of autonomous science have been challenged though arguably have yet to be supplanted by the encroachment of societal 'impact' into the allocation of research funding. However, this and certain other developments have had a catalytic but also disruptive effect on the substance and conduct of the NLCN research and the roles of the researchers.

In terms of substantive achievements, it is clear that only minor significant collective action has occurred (the thermal imaging heat loss surveys of cooperatively-owned properties) which is directly attributable to the intervention of the researchers but that individual residents (particularly tenants) have been involved a process of knowledge sharing enabling them to use central heating more efficiently and understand energy bills better. In relation to process issues the receipt of funding from New Deal for Communities for a feasibility study into the creation of an 'eco-neighbourhood' put the researchers into a client-consultant relationship with the funder; this suddenly ended when NDC folded. The conduct of the feasibility project for New Deal for Communities required the team to play the role of intellectual authorities and also of action researchers and consultants. However, the parallel receipt of funding from Beacon North East contributed to certain members of the research team assuming the role of facilitator of an interactive research project, influenced by ideas about co-inquiry and mutual collaboration between researchers and the researched and aided by related training on the concept of community-based research and the facilitation of public engagement projects and events.

Project specific structural factors influencing the roles of the researchers and their relationships with collaborators and participants may be identified. Of particular note are the density of the project network, the reciprocity of ties among the participants and the confluence of interests among some contacts and members of the research team. In order to operationalize the project, the research team played a number of distinct roles in parallel rather than perform any one overarching role (c.f. Healy, 2008), a phenomenon which may be understood when one reconsiders the institutional and social contexts of the activities discussed above. In addition to the above, the personal, pre-existing involvement of one of the research team in local 'green' groups, in which his role has been that of an activist to some extent spilled over into his work and networking on the NLCN (arguably helping to build credibility with participants). More cohesive relations were maintained with those who were similar in interest and working practice to the researchers than with those who weren't (tenants). This suggests a possible avenue for building effective collaboration and growing projects (with contacts having similar characteristics). It also indicates that such efforts may be constrained by what network theorists call 'redundancy' (Burt, 1992), drawing attention to the idea that strong 'bridging' work would be better achieved by growing 'weak ties' with actors who are quite different from researchers (Granovetter, 1973), and who could be brought into the 'magic ring' of expertise.

Conclusion

Overall, the paper's findings support the argument that academic researchers play multiple roles in such initiatives, and that national structural and locally contingent project- and person-specific factors affect the manner of collaboration with non-specialists and the durability of urban sustainability projects.

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Where do all the hours go?

Time use, resource consumption and the dematerialisation of everyday practices

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Abstract

The emergence of modern carbon-intensive systems of production, distribution and consumption coincided with fundamental changes in how people view and use time. However, predictions that time-saving technologies will radically reduce working hours and enhance people's quality of life did not materialise, partly because of the subsequent intensification of work and consumption. Moreover, material and time-related rebound effects have cancelled out many technology-aided efficiency gains. Overall, the fundamental question how people spent the time they save and how this impacts society and the environment has never been satisfactorily answered. This paper argues that a reduction in working hours alone cannot fully address current challenges of over-production and -consumption and associated reductions in human wellbeing and ecological integrity. Time-sociological and interdisciplinary research on the quality and resource intensity of people's time use can further the investigation of (un)sustainable time use and advance current sustainability and degrowth debates.

Key words: time use, consumption, sustainability, dematerialisation, degrowth

Introduction

The emergence of carbon-intensive systems of production, distribution and consumption as part of the modernisation process in Europe and beyond coincided with fundamental changes in how people view and use time. A reduction in average working hours as well as major changes in the quality of those hours in many European countries since the nineteenth century exemplify this temporal transformation. At the same time, modern practices to do with the regulation and use of time became established and expanded their impact on society, including the widespread use of clock time as a management tool for synchronising work, monitoring productivity and disciplining labour. At the same time, modern work-related time structures are also instrumental in the organisation and synchronisation of everyday life, a fact that becomes particularly evident whenever people

experience a lack of such structures as a result of under- or unemployment (e.g. Jahoda et al. 1933/1975) or technology-aided changes in the nature of work, including working hours, brought about through telework (Steward 2000, Hynes 2013). The observable diversity of human responses to the (lack of) work-related time structures confirm Young and Schuller (1991:95) argument that work-related temporal structures alone do not suffice in providing people with the advantages of organised time. Instead, it is also their composition and quality that matter.

The realm of work constitutes one of the main links between people and society through which individual notions of time become exposed to and regulated by powerful social pacers.

The control that work exercises over time is not just control over the time actually spent on it. Work dominates everything around it as a mountain dominates a plain. [...] Being without work is being without this organisational spine (Young and Schuller, 1991:93).

As a result, much attention has been paid to these connections between individuals' work-related time use and wider structural conditions emanating from the socio-political and material world that surrounds them. In particular, the sociology of work and its strong emphasis on historical materialism and political economy approaches, at least in the European tradition, has influenced on how the relationship between individuals, society and economy is viewed. While sociological investigations of work have been somewhat sidelined in recent times by other concerns and topics, their significance for both academic and public debates on the topic of work cannot be overstated.

Despite radical transformations in people's (work-related) time use during modernisation, the fundamental question how people spent the time they save and how this impacts society and the environment has never been satisfactorily answered. Apparently a reduction in working hours alone cannot address over-production and -consumption and associated reductions in human wellbeing and ecological integrity. Instead, the quality and resource intensity of people's time use is equally important. Time-sociological work is highly suitable for investigating the (un)sustainability of particular time use patterns and can significantly contribute to the advancement of current sustainability and degrowth debates.

Unsustainable Times?

Time use, sustainability and the degrowth agenda

The threat of accelerating climate change has drawn attention to the spread of socially and ecologically unsustainable time use practices such as car-dependent commuting (cf. Rau and Edmondson 2013). Solutions to these (un)sustainability challenges include recommendations by degrowth advocates for a more or less radical reduction in working hours (and resulting spending power) and an expansion of unpaid activities that enhance people's relationships and wellbeing. Proposals for an overall reduction in working hours (Schor 2010) or a twenty-one hour working week (New Economics Foundation 2011) reflect this debate.

Undoubtedly, these calls for a radical reduction in working hours to achieve a steady-state/degrowth economy and to address pressing sustainability challenges have opened up new and fruitful avenues for theoretically informed research and policy debates. However, they cannot be viewed in isolation from related debates on the causes and

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consequences of (un)sustainable consumption. For example, the question as to whether current consumption levels need to be drastically reduced (= degrowth) or whether a change in the quality of consumption (= 'greening' of existing practices) is sufficient to reign in socially and ecologically harmful forms of (over)consumption remains a key focal point of sustainable consumption debates. Many contributors to this expanding field have acknowledged the inherently social nature of everyday practices such as cooking, eating and travelling, connecting consumption to socially negotiated views of what it means to lead 'a good life' (e.g. Jackson, 2009; Shove, 2010; Hinton and Goodman, 2010; Heisserer, 2013). Others have cautioned against business-as-usual approaches that promise continued economic growth through a change in the quality of consumption. For them, calls to consume differently (rather than not to consume at all) simply prolong rather than fundamentally challenge the dominant growth-based economic system that threatens the social and biophysical foundations of human life (e.g. Latouche, 2009; Kirby and Murphy, 2011).

Recent critical debates regarding the relationship between consumption, development and quality of life have also provided opportunities for exploring more or less radical alternatives to current growth-based models of production and consumption. For example, some authors have presented convincing arguments, complemented by empirical evidence, that consumption beyond a certain level does not significantly enhance people's quality of life (e.g. Jackson, 2009; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Yet others view the current economic crisis in Europe and beyond as an opportunity to 'imagine a very different future and establish an "ecological or ethical socialist model", with less focus on (quantitative) growth and consumption, and more focus on (qualitative) living well' (Murphy and Kirby, 2013). Nevertheless, there is currently little evidence of a fundamental shift in thinking away from quantitative growth and towards qualitative changes in how societies organise themselves and their economies. Instead, many governments in the European Union and beyond have concentrated on efforts to 'spend their way out of the current recession', with a view to returning to pre-recession levels of economic growth and consumption.

Reflections and conclusions

Given the propensity of time-saving technologies to intensify work and produce consumption- and time-related rebound effects that cancel out efficiency gains, how people spend the time they save requires urgent attention. However, the question how much time people spend on what types of activities does not go far enough. Instead, both quality and material resource intensity are equally important factors in determining the impact of particular time use patterns on society and the environment respectively.

Time-sociological concepts and methodologies are ideally suited to explore the (un)sustainability of particular forms of human time use and their links with over-production and -consumption and related challenges to people's wellbeing and environmental integrity. Two topics seem particularly relevant in this context: 1) the material intensity of different time use practices and 2) the amount of labour time that is embodied in infrastructure, products, services and social activities and that frequently remains invisible. A sustained commitment to time-focused studies of everyday human practices that take seriously issues of quantity, quality and material intensity could fruitfully complement existing calls by sustainability and degrowth advocates for a reduction in working hours.

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Discussion report - Session I

Note taker: Kristóf Vadovics (GreenDependent)

Following Henrike Rau's presentation, the floor was opened for questions from the audience. The first one was on the division between work and leisure, to which Henrike Rau highlighted that there is a huge debate in the scientific community on what leisure is, that different cultures have different perspectives on it (e.g. 19th century) and that the categories established earlier do not work anymore. In connection to this Sylvia Lorek added what leisure is, that whether it is what you could do or that someone could do for you?

The second question was on whether leisure was always positive? Ms Rau's answer was that leisure time is different for men and women, and was also understood differently in various ages. A participant commented on whether it would be important to define what working time meant at all, and as an example she mentioned if 'repairing one's child's clothes was work or leisure, or we would rather pay a few EUR for it and then it is understood to be work for someone else'. What are the time use categories? Henrike Rau added that indeed this topic was important and it is not clear if child care is considered leisure.

The next question was if working less means higher well-being to which the presenter replied that we have to define first what work means and then we can move forward to the question of working hour reductions. That is why 'reducing working hours' in itself would not be a sufficient solution, e.g. in the Degrowth agenda. A participant added that in schools and in our life in general the 21-hour working week is not what we were taught about / socialized for and that is why she highlighted the importance of the role of education.

The next questions focused on time cultures, the first one was on the different attitudes in them. Ms Rau answered that there were lots of studies on this topic, but there is not enough comparative data available on how different time cultures are (the only available data are from UK and Finland) and on the different households. The second question in this topic area was on what a sustainable time culture was and if we should be talking about a time culture of 'slowness'. The presenter answered that sustainable time culture is not necessarily going towards slowness, but rather reducing our secondary, tertiary activities that are resource intensive. The time frame of institutions needs to be changed.

The first comment on Edina Vadovics' presentation was about the fact that fashion projects on secondary use of clothes have similar experience in that wearing second-hand clothes is closely associated with poverty or at least with less material well-being (a negative connotation). The question came up whether there was data available that showed whether households with smaller footprints can actually maintain their small footprint. Ms Vadovics replied that it was indeed difficult to gather reliable long-term data from households, and at this point her organisation does not have this data yet.

Sylvia Lorek highlighted that Eastern Europe is on the good side and not the bad in terms of consumption and footprint size, and that there is need to emphasise this in the various ongoing policy, research and practice debates.

The next question was on whether the Small Footprint campaign described in the presentation was a grassroots initiative or something different. How does the presenter's organization get people to participate? In the experience of the person asking the question, learning by doing was important, but in Italy they could involve 'only' middle class participants, and she asked how the presenter was able to involve poorer people. Edina Vadovics replied that the involvement of the Large Families Association in Hungary proved to be a good solution to this. This meant that environmental and social organisations could work really well and thus a wider range of economically challenged people could be involved while the environmental scientific focus of the project was kept.

Regarding Audley Genus' presentation the first comment by Sylvia Lorek highlighted the fact that action programmes have funny ways of 'going into a community and then leaving'. She wanted to know what the aim of the project was in this respect. Was it reducing the energy consumption of the project participants or setting them as role models? She added that in Germany there is a similar 'action type' funding and she was curious what the academic benefit of the project was for Mr Genus's team. Another related question was why the presenter focused on staff members and why he did not talk about student involvement a bit more? Mr Genus replied that an MSc thesis was written from the experience and 3-4 papers were published out of the data and experience, so there was a lot of student involvement. Referring to Ms Lorek's question he emphasised that he did not want to use the project participants as guinea pigs.

Supporting this statement Edina Vadovics added that they did not start their project in Hungary to get scientific data either but to motivate change. Mr Genus concluded that it is indeed true that researchers want to implement change but at the same time universities require researchers to produce papers, so, as a result there is often great tension. Mr Genus summed up his session by stating that project participants are change agents and there is need to find a way for them to develop and continue the work that was started.

Closing the workshop Henrike Rau highlighted that the common element in all three presentations were change and innovation.

The facilitator thanked all three presenters and the workshop participants their input and presence and wished a pleasant day and a fruitful conference.

SCORAI Session II

Sustainable Consumption from a Degrowth Perspective

The session began by Sylvia Lorek's introduction to the SCORAI Europe network. She emphasized the fact that SCORAI Europe is not simply about greening consumption or the consumption of green products, but about changing consumption, with a rather strong emphasis on reducing material/resource consumption. With this she also drew attention to the differences between weak and strong sustainable consumption - with the latter being quite close in thinking to the Degrowth movement (see introduction to the first session p. 5).

Following this Sylvia Lorek invited the presenters to elaborate on their perspective on the degrowth – sustainable consumption connection with the questions.

What does sufficiency mean at the level of societal and personal lifestyles in your country?

Contribution from the German debate

Barbara Muraca

DFG-Kolleg 'Post-growth-societies', University of Jena and co-director of the International Association of Environmental Philosophy

Barbara has lived in Germany for 18 years now, but could at least partly also talk about what sufficiency would mean in her native country, Italy. She expressed her preference for the word 'sustainability' to 'sustainable development' because of the contradictory and problematic meaning of 'development'. In her view, the sustainability movement offers three main strategies as to how its ideas and theories are conceptualized: the ecologically motivated perception of resilience/resistance, the economic perspective of efficiency and finally sufficiency covering the social dimension.

Sufficiency is closely related to voluntary simplicity, or, in other words, reducing ones' environmental impact through living a simpler lifestyle and through a move away from consumerism. It includes an element of obligation to future as well as current generations and ensuring that they can all satisfy their needs. This idea and way of life somehow sounds depressing to a lot of people as it is about denunciation, and there is a strong feeling that sustainability should have more to it. So, Barbara, too, was looking for something more and this is how she found degrowth and the degrowth movement. Apart from reduction and simplifying your life, degrowth places great emphasis on conviviality the sense of community, sharing, and commonly enjoying life. Thus, to a lot of people it offers a more interesting path towards the same aim, i.e. sustainability.

At the same time, Barbara pointed out that in fact degrowth can only be achieved through individuals living more sustainable lifestyles. So, sustainable consumption (SC) is an absolutely necessary element, but it is not enough, or maybe the term does not mean or entail enough if it just means doing differently in the same system of structure. Instead it can/has to mean gaining back self determination in the sense of rethinking the whole idea of consumption. E.g., the term 'consumption' is often not the right word to use, for example in the context of CSA (community supported agriculture) it is not meaningful.

Barbara wondered why it is so difficult today to buy what you needed locally and why one had to invest so much effort in it.

In Barbara's view the approach of 'justice oriented accounting' popular in the Italian degrowth movement could be a way to make a proper connection to SCORAI both at the individual/household and the municipality level. Justice oriented accounting means that we make changes in the purchasing practices of our household, e.g. switch to buying only fairtrade tea and coffee, we give up using the car as our means of transport, or start growing our own food.

Since living sustainable lifestyles is an important part of the necessary change, SCORAI Europe could play an important part, and could also take part in driving the change through researching and offering solutions.

Contribution from the Hungarian debate

Vincent Liegey

"A Degrowth Project" co-writer, Utopia, 2013

Vincent started learning about and dealing with degrowth as a mechanical engineer, so his focus has been on physical limits to growth, especially on the peak resources research and discussion. He knew that humanity had to change the way it was doing things as we were going to run out of resources and catastrophe was imminent. This message, however, was and is very depressing, so he started reading about the social / anthropological limits to growth.

As people are not all rational, it is not so easy to change society. If we want to change society, we need to shift our focus away from the catastrophe and offer a more hopeful path for people. We need to learn and then show how to deconstruct the current system step by step in a way that is neither stressful, gloomy nor in a constant hurry but to implement desirable projects. We need to show how the new system may work in practice so that it can be seen what we would like to achieve.

Change must also be democratic, non-violent, convivial, autonomous, and appropriate. Transition already started happening, a good example for which is the fact that there is an ever-increasing number of participants at the degrowth conferences (cc. 90 at the first one in Paris, cc. 300 two years later in Barcelona, 900 at the Venice conference and finally close to 3000 now in Leipzig).

To change at the individual level we need to examine how we can consume less, put it into practice, and then we will see that we in fact need less money, and can in the end work less and be more happy.

Vincent is a French citizen but currently lives in Hungary, which he likes a lot. He likes Hungary because it is less westernized, and as a result it is perhaps easier to live a less consumption-oriented life. At the same time, communities in Hungary often lack cohesion, and there is also a great deal of corruption happening.

He thinks that it is important to connect 'the west' and 'the east' in Europe in order for the two regions to learn from each other. For example, it is important that Hungary should not follow the western type of developmental model and end up with meaningless jobs, high stress levels, inequality, etc. The question arises how this could be carried out, how Hungary and Eastern Europe could follow a different developmental path and move towards a better alternative before making the mistake of closely following the west.

In Vincent's opinion degrowth has been very good at deconstructing everything, and it is now time to offer concrete alternatives, and to build things up.

Contribution from the French debate

Francois Schneider

Research and Degrowth, Barcelona

For Francois, degrowth responds simultaneously to many concerns: justice, democracy, meaning of life, bioeconomy, ecology, anti-utilitarianism, and critiques to development.

In this sense he pointed out, that there is a flaw in favour of complex systems, This is because in complex systems a lot of impacts are hidden. We buy things and don't have the possibility (or the interest) to see what is behind.

He exemplified it through the comparison of (1) a technologically best and most efficient car and (2) a bicycle. While even the most efficient car is expensive for one person, the bicycle can be shared more easily and cycling together can become a communal activity. Nevertheless, cycling today is not easy e.g. in Barcelona and in quite a few other cities world wide.

So what makes the difference beyond product specific efficiency is the type of system, society, and lifestyle they stand for. And the actual system with its growth policies has the inherent tendency to (re)fill every space which is gained through efficiency progress.

To overcome this trap or flaw in the system it is important to initiate dialogues for the construction of pathways that combine sustainable consumption and degrowth. The first step towards such dialogues would be the development of positive stories which can be told.

Unfortunately, at the moment the sustainable consumption 'movement' does not have a narrative or a 'story to tell'. A hopefully positive stream may appear from a crosslinking of the actual macro economic perspective with thoughts and initiatives developed in the collectives' movement. In the context of (the right for) housing this e.g. could be developed through combining the approach of frugal innovation with collective adjustment of the existing building stock, e.g. the better social development of sharing of housing with proper and efficient refurbishment policy. Through such a combination degrowth could indeed take place.

Francoise provided some interesting examples of possible feedback loops developed in the EU RESPONDER project: http://www.scp-responder.eu/knowledge_base.

Discussion report - Session II

Note taker: Edina Vadovics (GreenDependent)

A first question pointed towards Francois' claim that there is a lack of dialogue and challenged this with the contrasting view that there a lot going on but we just find it difficult to structure it, summarize it and follow everything.

Second a statement was posed towards Barbara that the use of time – and in this context the relationship between citizen and state – seem to be something to consider more (see also contribution on p. 14).

Again to Barbara came a question about how the approach of conviviality might be taken up by nations with a less mediteranian lifestyle?

There was also some discussion about what is SC at its core about? What do we research in SC exactly? There appeared to be a difference in view between people in the group about this: while some argue that SC mostly deals with ecology, others did not fully agree as in some countries (e.g. the UK, Ireland, Hungary) a lot of attention is paid to researching lifestyle, lifestyle practices, etc. - **it appears that there is a difference between SC research focus in various countries which may be important to follow up later, perhaps within SCORAI Europe.**

Responses and comments to questions:

Vincent commented that we need to work at different levels to change society, and there are also a lot of concerns related to how we work. For example:

- It is difficult to work out how to present degrowth best, in a way that biodiversity is also a part of the presentation as it needs to be included.
- France is a very centralized country, so it is **challenging to become a very decentralized movement in a highly centralized environment and tradition.**
- A related issue is that in order for change to happen and to be seen, there is need to reach a critical mass of people. For so many people and communities to be involved there may be need for power, management and strategy to be more centralized - however, this would work against the original idea of degrowth. People in the movement do not want to centralize, but they do not want to be too decentralized for the idea and theory to be lost, so the question of how a bottom-up movement can transform society arises.
- There are always new things, aspects and ideas that emerge and are relevant to degrowth, and a way for including them in the overall narrative needs to be found.
- There is need for the re-appropriation of free time for the collective good, and to use this to contribute to the movement.
- There is also need for open and public debate about degrowth, and a lot of different projects to experiment with different ways of putting degrowth into practice. **There is need for the right to experiment and make mistakes.**
- There are a lot of positive and promising initiatives. But aren't they like islands in a stream, isolated?

Francois emphasized the fact that no one really possesses the light and can pass it on to others. The concerns and suggested solutions of different groups of people at different places are linked and similar, but are also different and varied, and there is no universal solution. So, we all need to listen to each others' concerns, be surprised by them and learn. This takes a long time, but we do need to make an effort to understand things, even within one movement, the degrowth movement.

Importing/exporting ideas does not work, for example, we cannot just import conviviality from South America to Europe. This is why we need time for change as well as a lot of initiatives and experimenting.

Barbara added that often society is changed through a lot of generalization and extension. However, this approach does not always work, and, furthermore, does not work for all issues. Also, there are very large networks that we do not hear and know about as they are not in the media, for example, the networks of farmers and peasants.

It is important to have little niches: places where we can go to get away from capitalism and gain inspired (e.g. transition initiatives), and these initiatives do not always need to be upscaled.

At the same time, island creating is very dangerous - e.g. eco villages can have too many rules. So, it is important to find a good and healthy balance.

People often have a very contradictory attitude to institutions, although there is great variation between countries in how much institutions are trusted. First of all, "whatever happens, it's the fault of the government". Then, on the one hand, they do not trust them, but on the other, they expect them to offer solutions and solve issues.

Institutions are important, for example, through their purchasing decisions (green procurement) they can initiate a lot of change. So, it is very important to examine how we organize conferences, whether we have a flight policy, and how else we can do things differently.

- Islands or not, it feels like 95% of people still live perfectly integrated into mainstream society. Politicians always ask: who is going to vote for me? So they won't initiate real change because of the fear of losing their positions --- and kids... at the age of 3 kids are started to be trained into consumer society. So, how can all the other people out there be reached and motivated to change?
- We need to go beyond individual consumers, and even neighbourhood groups, transition groups, etc. for real change to happen. But how do we go about it?
- Degrowth just as well as SC shows a lot of variation. For example, there is an ongoing debate on what consumption means to people. Perhaps this discussion could be an interesting way to establish more connection and debate between degrowth and SC?
- It is not good to teach people - how do you achieve to have discussions instead of people feeling that they are being told what to do?
- It is important that degrowth and SC are not associated with ascetic lifestyles, maybe the term degrowth is not positive... We need to highlight the positive elements of simple living so that we do not scare people away. The promotion and discussion around the veggie day in Germany may be a good example.

Discussion report –Session II

- In the Czech Republic people are happy to have the choice to consume after the regulated economy of no choice in the previous regime (mainly prior to 1990). The shopping mall, for a lot of people, is often the place to spend your weekend. So how do you get the information out to the masses? Also, people are pressed to accumulate stuff - if the future is going to be so bad, you feel you need to secure your things now...
- The feeling often is like "I would like to change, but I don't want to be the first one because I'll be punished by the others". How do we get out of this lock-in? A study carried out in Germany in relation to this issue was mentioned as well as a game that was constructed specifically to help people get out of this lock-in situation.
- Degrowth is more appealing if you can show that you enjoy life more than the others - and you can enjoy life more if you have a part-time job...

In response to these questions, Francois mentioned his own experience when he travelled around France with a donkey and interviewed people about whether they wanted to consume more or not. For him it was interesting to see that everyone was blaming others, and, of course, almost everyone wanted to change. They just did not want to be the first to change and become heroes of simplified lifestyles. Somehow we have to get out of the pre-conceived notion that people do not want to change, because evidence shows that they do.

Lewis Akenji added that people are looking for forms of self-organization that are best at not overstepping limits - be them environmental or social. However, how can we help them? For example, referring back to what Vincent mentioned in relation to Hungary that the society there still has a chance to bypass the 'Western' way of development - but how do we really go about implementing the change and giving people a way out of the present system? Do we refer them to times in communism, before communism, other countries, or to a completely new system?

There is huge creative potential available. For example, there is no country where consumerism is more important than Japan. Still, people are discovering ways to get out of the system. We need to examine whether we are asking the right questions, what kind of research is needed, and what new forms of institutions are needed.

Barbara called attention to the fact that we tend to consider that everyone is middle-class educated and leads middle-class lifestyles, but we should not forget about the rest of the population. We bring a huge bias with us which we should be aware of.

To socialize people to be consumers is a long process - but still, there are a great many things that can be done all levels of society, for example, new legislation can be introduced to rule out planned obsolescence. This would, however, reduce growth and we need to be aware of it and be prepared for its impact on society.

Marketing and advertising are omnipresent and have incredible power. They need to be regulated, for example, advertising for the common good and for profit have to be distinguished. This could be part of a SC political and policy strategy.

Society - or societal groups - also need to re-learn sustainable practices that were lost. This learning is possible and easier if there is only a gap of 1 generation. Barbara mentioned the example of young people in Italy who were unemployed but had the chance to move to mountain houses which they renovated, and were able to relearn things that they grandparents knew. In the current degrowth movement in some countries people are going back to the land, but this trend cannot be generalized, for example, it is not there in

Germany. It seems like change will not come from the North, has to come from somewhere else.

In Vincent's view, mainstream advertising, policy, and economics stripped sustainable development from all its meaning. And, what is worth, this type of manipulation is accepted by people. So, you cannot expect people to show solidarity and change, society is dominated by fear.

We also need people to experiment and discover how they can do things differently, in more democratic and sustainable ways. We really need these kind of innovative people and we need to be able to see and analyse their examples. It is very important not to tell people what to do, and try to listen to them and initiate dialogue with them. People need to re-appropriate even the questions and spend time discussing them and experimenting with solutions. On paper everything is very easy, it is, for example, very easy to write a book about degrowth, but life is not like it at all.

Currently, degrowth is a kind of middle class movement, it is obvious if you look around at the conference. We need to accept this but at the same time we also need to try and initiate dialogue with others - implementation takes time and we need to be patient.

Closing of the session

To close the session, Sylvia once again raised the question of what would be a useful contribution from the SC field to the degrowth debate?

Henrike Rau commented that degrowth is a large project, and we would like people to buy into this, in a way a political project. SC is somewhat smaller, but they share a lot of similar elements.

In SC there is a huge focus on the everyday: how routines and consumption practices should be changed to more sustainable ones, how behaviour change happens, etc. Perhaps this could be an interesting connecting point between the two fields, and this would be where SC could offer insights for the degrowth movement.

Post Scriptum:

In the final preparation process of this proceedings Barbara suggested to add an aspect she missed to mention during her presentation. As the proceedings not only intend to document a past event but mainly to inspire future discussion we decided to still include the additional thoughts:

In many elements of the degrowth movement, the concern about sustainable lifestyles is intimately connected to the overall framework conditions, under which sustainable lifestyles are feasible and acceptable. This means addressing the political conditions for a different way of living (for example acting against in-built obsolescence of products, fostering low-cost repairing options and supporting alternative economies) and the question about who are the social actors involved or excluded (is it only a model for educated middle class or does it appeal to other social groups? Are inequalities and patterns of recognition considered?).

ANNEX

SCORAI Europe

Founded in North America and inspired by the European SCORE! Network (2005-2008), SCORAI is an international network of professionals working to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfilment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. SCORAI Europe was founded in the context of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production conference in Bregenz 2012. In that session, participants unanimously agreed that creating a SCORAI Europe network would help strengthen the sustainable consumption community in Europe, both in terms of research and practice. Shortly afterwards, SCORAI Europe was launched. Its goal is to support a community that contributes forward-thinking, innovative research in the area of sustainable consumption, while also bridging academic research with mainstream thinking and policy-making. Since then SCORAI Europe closely works with the Society of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP) and our sister SCORAI organization in North America, as well as other research networks that are focused on the challenges of addressing the society-environment nexus from a consumption perspective like the Degrowth community.

Since its inception, SCORAI Europe has organised and run a number of workshops and conferences with the aim of bringing together practitioners and researchers to enhance understanding and find innovative approaches toward sustainable consumption. For more information please click on the links below.

<u>London (2014)</u>	<u>Workshop Report</u>
<u>Rotterdam (2013)</u>	<u>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 3</u>
<u>Istanbul (2013)</u>	<u>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 2</u>
<u>Muenster (2013)</u>	<u>Workshop Results</u>
<u>Bregenz (2012)</u>	<u>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 1</u>

To learn more about SCORAI, please visit: <http://www.scorai.org>, where you will find a dedicated web page for SCORAI Europe activities.

To become a member of SCORAI Europe, please join the SCORAI EUR listserv: <http://scorai-eu.opendna.com>.

For more information on SCORAI Europe, please contact: scoraieurope@gmail.com.

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