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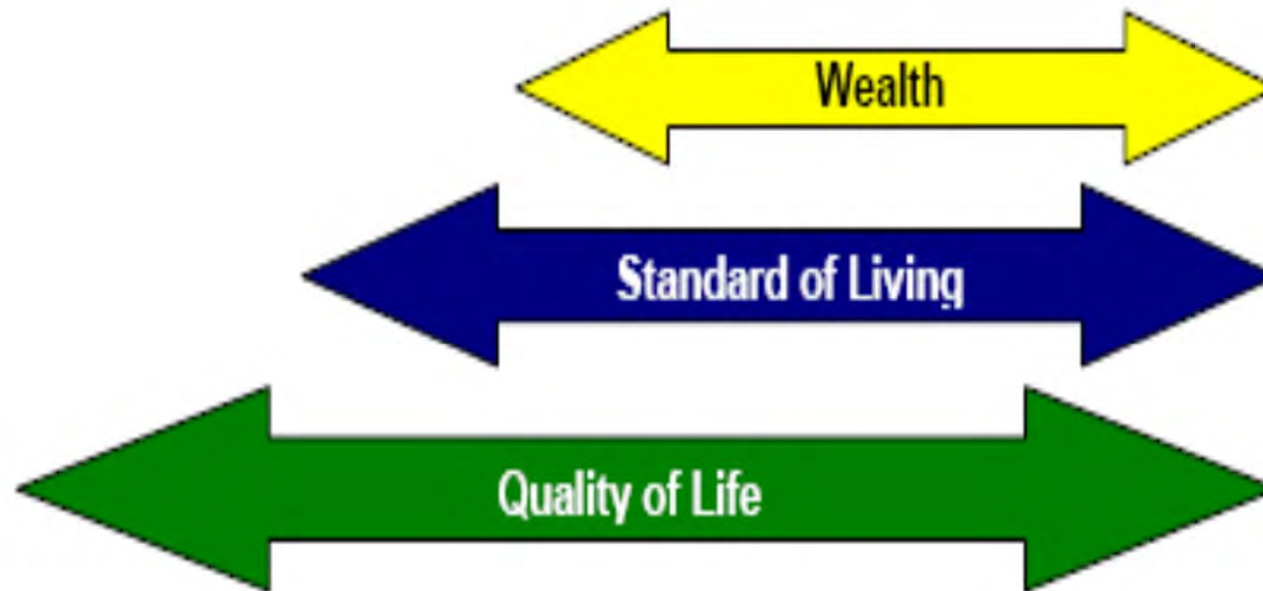
Sufficiency and the future of labour

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Factors contributing to the quality of life

Sustainable Consumption

$$\text{Quality of Life} = \frac{\text{Satisfaction}}{\text{Service}} \times \frac{\text{Services}}{\text{Product}} \times \frac{\text{Products}}{\text{Resource use}} \times \text{Resource consumption}$$



Sustainable Production

The Degrowth Nightmare

The collapse of production and capitalism?



The risk of unemployment and poverty increases



Social Impacts

- No gains from growth, only from productivity increase: old distribution patterns are obsolete.
- New distribution conflicts arise between corporations, their staff, and the state over the non-growing cake. Reduced working hours may be necessary to safeguard employment (but possibly without compensation), quality orientation & de-intensification in the service sector.
- Salaries stagnate or decrease, QoL deteriorating
- Limited room to increase funding for health and social security aside from tax increases.

The future is not what it used to be

The Sustainability Challenge

For development to be sustainable, the economy must

- reduce resource consumption,

i.e. resource productivity Y/R must grow faster than the economy Y ,

$$(1) \quad d(Y) < d(Y/R) \quad \text{and}$$

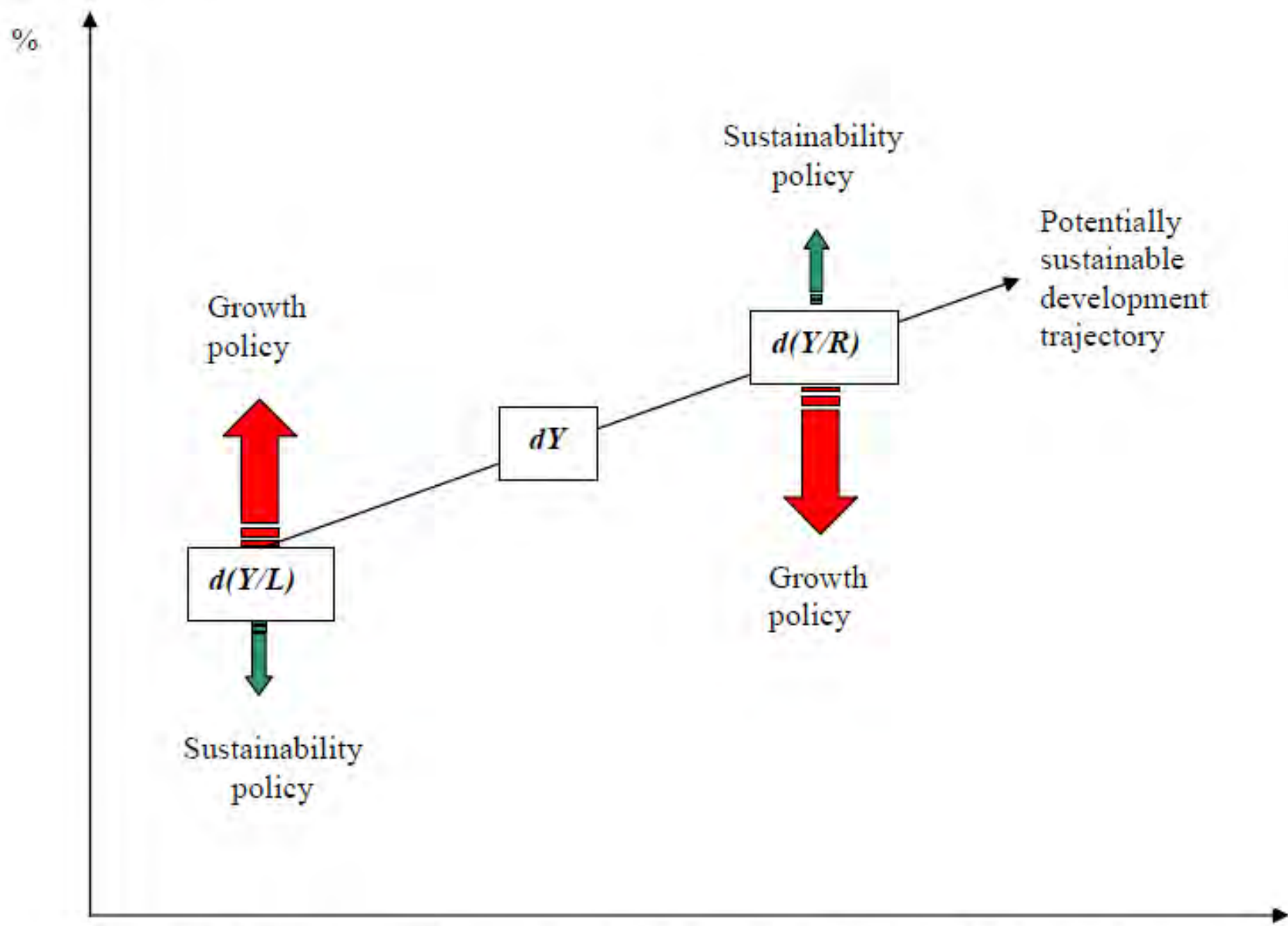
- and create additional jobs.

i.e. per capita production Y/L must grow slower than the economy Y ,

$$(2) \quad d(Y) > d(Y/L)$$

Jobs, growth, and the environment are reconciled (for the time being), if the Inequality of Sustainability is valid:

$$(3) \quad d(Y/L) < d(Y) < d(Y/R).$$



Growth policy is structurally anti-sustainable, pushing both ends of the inequality towards the wrong direction.

Old Concepts Fail

“Secular stagnation” means that growth cannot be revived despite all growth politics. Projections of >3% are futile, just postponing decisions.

In the **industrial age**, **labour productivity** increase meant more and cheaper with similar or better quality. In the **service society**, labour productivity means **less nurses per patient, less teachers per pupil, less professors per student, badly paid kindergarten staff, to few social workers and unpreparedness for an ageing society.**

The latter becomes even worse with the collapse of private pension expectations.

Old Solutions Fail

For better services we need work de-intensification, de-celeration, partly de-commodification:

- More staff for social services, extended breaks (e.g. for lorry drivers or flight personnel), healthy work, corporate democracy and work place self-determination, fair payment, **good work**.
- With $d(Y/L) > d(Y)$, unemployment increases. Such measures decrease Y/L in the service sector.
- So do shorter working times, if not the post fossil „circular“ economy requires more work. But then salaries will decrease as no growth pays for it.

Perspective Change: Sufficiency

Sufficiency means accepting limits

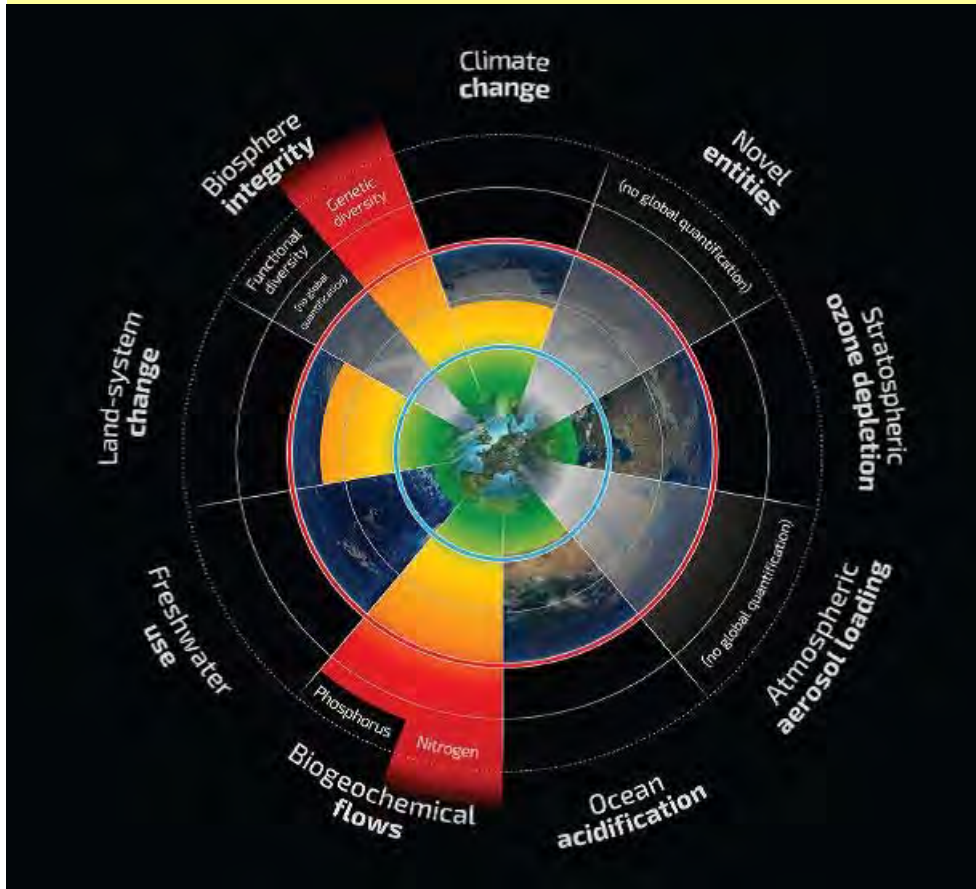
Sufficiency is the counter-concept to ever “higher, faster, further, more”.

It calls for new **World Views** for **reducing pressures on humans and environment.**

It addresses **intensification, acceleration, commodification and commercialisation.**

Thus Sufficiency includes but is much **broader than environmentalism.**

Environmental and social limits



There will also be limitations to income and wealth, for all citizens

Efficiency vs. Sufficiency

Efficiency is doing more with less.

Sufficiency is doing less.

Efficiency drives economic growth.

Sufficiency decelerates growth.

Efficiency and Sufficiency address

natural and human resource use.

**Good work is about a good life,
not about more money**



The future of work & the work of the future

Paid labour will remain the most important kind of work for a long time;

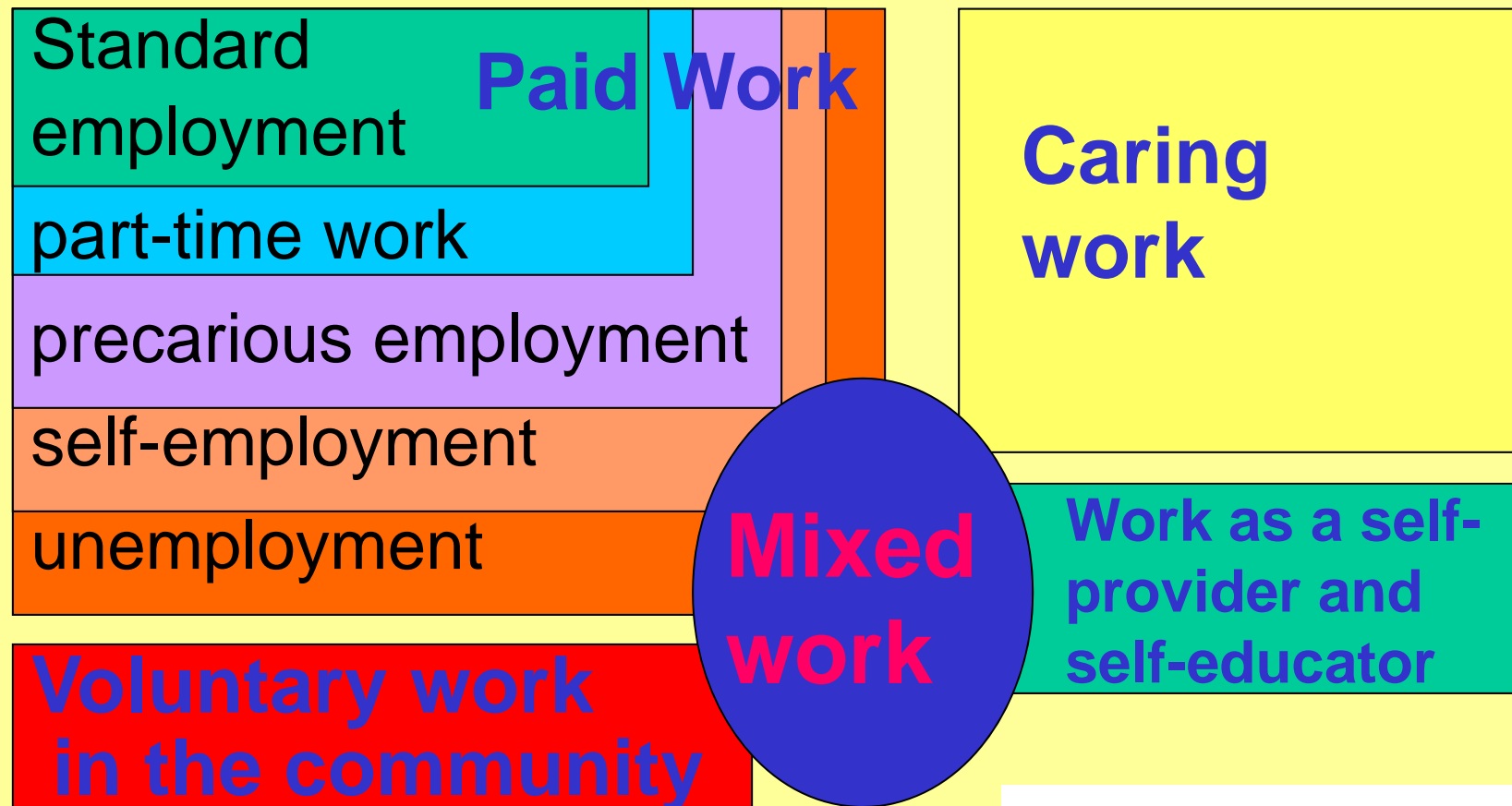
All the more important is to make sure that it is “good work” regarding H&S, work place democracy and the social & environmental impacts;

Unpaid work and the social economy grow, and need to be acknowledged.

Permeability, freedom of choosing varying models over one’s working life, and mutual recognition of skills acquired are important.

Mixed Work

A broader concept of work, income, qualification



Criterion: Cui bono?

Sufficiency requires justice

Social, environmental, access, gender, opportunity, distributional & other justice

Reasons: stability without growth is only possible if the status quo is satisfactory to the vast majority. Polarised income, wealth, opportunity, access and power distribution doesn't fit to that.

Result: Limits to resource use must apply to all. For environmental, social and political reasons privileges must be reduced (equitable env. space)

Distribution and welfare

Assumption: redistribution of wealth, top-down

**Reasons: no hope for gains from growth fuels
distributional justice demands.**

**Current distribution is stretching social and
economic limits.**

Result: resistance from those who have to give.

**Total welfare would be increasing, but decreasing
salaries might require substituting public services
for private property of durable consumer goods.**



**Redistribution
requires
determination,
a sense of
urgency and
policies that
bite...**

What to do? The environmental side

According to the WCED, the environmental pillar is all about accepting limitations to safeguard the availability of ecosystem services to future generations. This requires

- **A capping of overall resource consumption.**
- **An accelerated decarbonisation of our economies.**
- **Reducing land use intensity, regulating global trade (avoiding invasive species) and reducing chemicals use to safeguard biodiversity.**

Circular economy & bioeconomy are not solutions but tools of a change avoidance discourse.

What to do? The social side

- Have social security systems guaranteeing a **decent life**, above the poverty line, for every citizen. Pay out key **supply in services, not in money** to reduce impacts from price volatility.
- Introduce a **unconditional basic income**/negative income tax.
- For full employment, **reduce working hours if possible**, partially compensated from redistribution, strengthen workers' autonomy.
- Support non-profit business (the **social economy**).

How to pay for it (a provocation)

- Introduce a **minimum and a maximum income** (all sources of income), in a relation of e.g. 1:30.
- Do it by **progressive taxes**, with 100% top tax rate.
- **Limit inheritance** to e.g. 10 million € (= a monthly rent of 10,000 € for 90 years).
- For privately owned companies, develop models what to do with value above 10 m €.
- Use the tax income for public or collective **social security systems**.
- → food for thought – plausible and/or radical?

**Thank you for your attention
& good bye**

For further information, you are invited to
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