

From basic income to transformations of work and into degrowth?

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„“degrowth society“ signifies a social formation *beyond the mode of dynamic stabilisation*, which, at any point in time, is *able* to grow, accelerate and innovate, in order to *change* the status quo in a desired direction (to overcome scarcity or a problem),
however, which is not *constrained (or condemned) to escalate*, in order to *preserve* the institutional status quo and to reproduce itself structurally“
(Rosa, 2016, p.727)

Prospects beyond growth?

- capitalist society is characterised by inherent growth constraints (Deutschmann, 2008)
- causes = reproduction of capital, competition in the market
- conditions = separation between labour and capital, (non)-ownership of means of production, social actors as carriers of growth constraints



Basic income: a break with the „money-labour nexus“ (Deutschmann, 2008)

- partial decommodification of labour
- basic income as time and power -> a „flat rate“ for democracy (Liebermann, 2010), for a care revolution (Winker, 2015), for collective strike and the social economy (Wright, 2006)
- individual and collective change

Institutional characteristics supporting emancipation versus stabilisation

- universality
 - amount and welfare state
generosity
 - finances
 - accompanying economic policy
- (Reuter 2016)



Growth subjectivities and social norms

- “mental infrastructures” (Welzer 2011) geared towards growth and productivity
- time becomes leisure (Muße) if it is “socially structured and legitimised accordingly” (Franzmann 2014, p.2)

Empirical evidence

- Haigner et al. (2012) survey in Germany: the currently unemployed want to increase working hours and vice versa
- DemoSCOPE (2016) survey in Switzerland: 2% report quitting their jobs, 53% more time for family, 54% further education/ qualification, 40% more voluntary work
- Marx & Peeters (2008) “win for life” study in Belgium: no radical work hour reduction but loss of sense of insecurity and a more relaxed way of living
- -> emancipative potential of basic income depends on the self-transformation of contemporary work- and employment centred society

Conclusion

basic income *does not eliminate* the *causes* of growth constraints, but *changes* the *conditions* necessary for growth: by partially decommodifying labour the basic income *enables* a transition into *degrowth*. Yet, for subjects to actually make use of the emancipating potential of the basic income, growth subjectivities and social norms have to be transformed.

-> A “new social reproduction regime” (Srnicek & Williams 2016) still having to create its subjects!

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Thank you very much.