

# **Deliberating a Sustainable Welfare-Work Nexus**

**Jayeon Lindellee, Max Koch, Johanna Alkan-Olsson**  
(all Lund University)

**Norrköping, 17 May 2022**

## **Contents**

- 1. Climate emergency, (de-)growth and policy implications**
- 2. Sustainable welfare: the centrality of human needs**
- 3. Deliberating needs satisfaction and eco-social policies**
- 4. Triangulating forum and survey data: support for eco-social policies**
- 5. Conclusion**

# 1. Climate emergency, (de-)growth and policy implications

- **Welfare systems** provide **foundational services** in education, healthcare, social security and housing and are vital to the wellbeing of citizens
- Combined **challenges**: rising inequality, demographic changes and, especially, environmental crises including **climate emergency**
- **Post-war era: parallel growth** of **production** and **consumption** patterns resulting in fast growth rates of GDP used to finance emerging **welfare states**
- Economic **growth no longer sustainable solution**: absolute decoupling of GDP growth from resource use and greenhouse gas emissions is ‘rare, short-term’ (mostly in relation to recessions) and ‘at scales insufficient for mitigation pathways’ (IPCC 2022) in line with Paris Agreement
- **Implications**: ‘Decoupling needs to be complemented by sufficiency-oriented strategies and strict enforcement of absolute reduction targets’ (Haberl *et al* 2020); **de-prioritization of GDP** growth as overall target in policy making (Koch 2021): **degrowth**

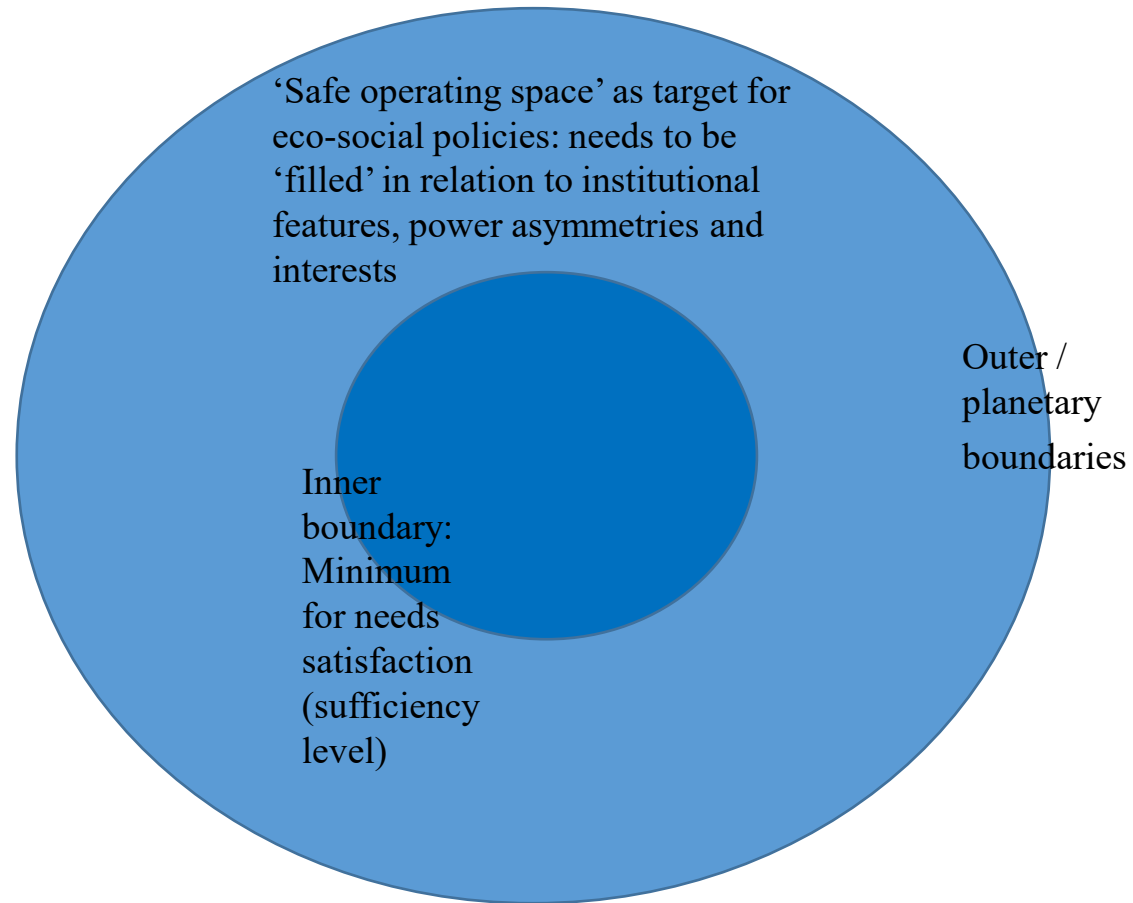
## 2. Sustainable welfare (Koch & Mont 2016)

- **Reduces complexity** associated with a degrowth transition by addressing the intersection of the environment and welfare
- **Aim:** Make welfare theories, systems and policies compatible with principles of environmental sustainability and apply these to all human beings (**universalisability**), now and in future (**intertemporality**)
- (Preliminary) **definition:** Meeting **human needs** within **planetary limits**

<b>Needs/Need-satisfiers following Max-Neef (1991)</b>	<b>Being</b> Physical and psychological characteristics (can be individual or collective)	<b>Having</b> Societal structures, policies, norms and attitudes	<b>Doing</b> Individual or collective actions	<b>Interacting</b> Physical spaces and the social environment surrounding
<b>Nutrition and Health</b>				
<b>Protection and Support</b>				
<b>Proximity and Love</b>				
<b>Understanding and Knowledge</b>				
<b>Participation</b>				
<b>Idleness</b>				
<b>Creation</b>				
<b>Identity</b>				
<b>Freedom</b>				

Matrix of needs and need-satisfiers as basis for 11 deliberative forums on sustainable needs satisfaction and eco-social policies (Lindellee et al 2021): ‘Synergetic’ needs satisfiers especially relevant for social-ecological transformations.

**Floors and ceilings: Inner and outer boundaries for economic and societal development (Koch 2021)**



Elaborated on Steffen et al (2015), Hirvilammi (2020), Gough (2020), Spash (2020), Koch and Buch-Hansen (2020)

### 3. How did 84 citizen forum participants operationalize the ‘safe operating space’ in 2020? Eco-social policies for the respect of its inner and outer boundaries

Safe operating space	Examples of policy ideas
Regulating maximum level of needs satisfaction (‘ceiling’, ‘upper threshold’)	Limiting living space per person
	Limiting the number of flights per person per year
	Introducing maximum income (2 million SEK/år)
Guaranteeing minimum level of needs satisfaction (‘floor’, ‘lower threshold’)	Regular distribution of a food basket with ecological and Swedish-produced raw ingredients, free or cheap basic amount of electricity and water as well as public transportation within regions (Universal Basic Services, UBS)
	Unconditional Basic Income (UBI)

## 4. Support for eco-social policy ideas (Sweden 2021)

	Limit living space	Limit number of flights	Max income	Food basket	Free public transport	Basic income
Very bad	43.2	38.8	31.9	27.9	8.7	39.7
Fairly bad	27.2	20.9	18.8	17.1	9.6	19.4
Neither good nor bad	21.1	18.8	22.1	28.6	16.2	19.4
Fairly good	6.5	12.3	12.5	16.2	28.1	13.4
Very good	1.9	9.1	14.7	10.1	37.5	8.2
	100	100	100	100	100	100

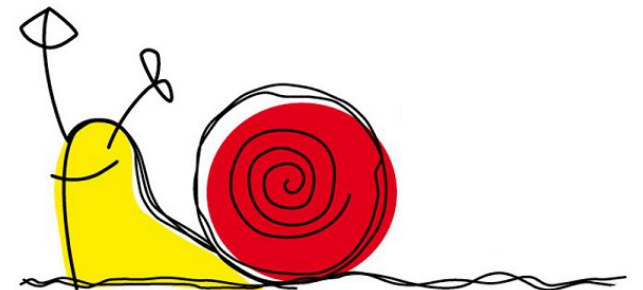
# Support for basic services in five areas (no fee / low rate)

	<b>Water</b> Without fee / at low rate	<b>Electricity</b> Without fee / at low rate	<b>Internet</b> Without fee / at low rate	<b>Bus/train in nascent area</b> Without fee / at low rate	<b>Living space</b> Without fee / at low rate
<b>Very bad</b>	18.1 / 13.8	18.2 / 13.2	16.3 / 11.9	18.2 / 12.6	23.3 / 16.0
<b>Fairly bad</b>	9.5 / 11.3	13.0 / 12.7	13.1 / 12.7	9.5 / 10.0	15.0 / 15.3
<b>Neither good nor bad</b>	22.3 / 24.7	21.6 / 25.4	27.8 / 29.0	19.3 / 22.7	29.1 / 30.6
<b>Fairly good</b>	23.0 / 26.9	24.7 / 28.0	24.0 / 27.8	26.7 / 29.9	17.8 / 20.1
<b>Very good</b>	26.7 / 23.3	22.4 / 20.8	18.8 / 18.7	26.3 / 24.8	14.8 / 18.1
	100	100	100	100	100



# Conclusion

- Green growth is unlikely to happen and **degrowth necessary** to address climate emergency
- **Sustainable welfare** focus helps reduce the **complexity** associated with degrowth transitions
- **Gap** between **qualitative** forum and **quantitative** survey data: **support** for basic services and **sufficiency policies strong** but **weak** for policy suggestions that **limit consumption** and **wealth**
- **Expansion of alternative spaces** (Koch 2022) where people interact in other ways than based on competition and status: representative citizen forums or **assemblies** to **co-develop eco-social policies** at local, national and European levels
- **Many thanks!**



# References

- Gough, I. 2020 Defining floors and ceilings: the contribution of human needs theory. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 16 (1): 208–19.
- Haberl, H. et al. 2020. A systematic review of the evidence on decoupling of GDP, resource use and GHG emissions, part II: synthesizing the insights. *Environmental Research Letters* 15 (6): 065003.
- Hirvilammi T 2020 The virtuous circle of sustainable welfare as a transformative policy idea. *Sustainability* 12: 391.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2022. *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, [https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGIII\\_FinalDraft\\_FullReport.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf).
- Koch, M. 2022 State-civil society relations in Gramsci, Poulantzas and Bourdieu: Strategic implications for the degrowth movement. *Ecological Economics* 193: 107275.
- Koch, M. and Mont, O. (eds) 2016 *Sustainability and the Political Economy of Welfare*. London: Routledge.
- Koch, M. 2021 Social policy without growth: Moving towards a sustainable welfare state. *Social Policy and Society*, ahead of print: [Social Policy Without Growth: Moving Towards Sustainable Welfare States | Social Policy and Society | Cambridge Core](#).
- Koch, M., Lindellee, J., Alkan-Olsson, J. 2021 Beyond growth imperative and neoliberal doxa: expanding alternative societal spaces through deliberative citizen forums on needs satisfaction. *Real-world Economics Review* 96: 168-183.
- Max-Neef, M. 1991. *Human Scale Development. Conception, Application and Further Reflections*. New York: The Apex Press.
- Lindellee, J., Alkan-Olsson, J. and Koch, M. 2021 Operationalizing sustainable welfare and co-developing eco-social policies by Prioritising Human Needs. *Global Social Policy* 21 (2): 328-331.
- Spash, C.L. 2020 A tale of three paradigms: Realising the revolutionary potential of ecological economics. *Ecological Economics* 169: 106518.
- Steffen, W. et al. 2015 The Anthropocene: From Global Change to Planetary Stewardship. *Ambio* 40 (7): 739-761.