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# Towards a Postgrowth Sustainable Welfare State

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# 1 and 3. What states can/should do to facilitate a social and ecological transformation (Koch 2020, *Environmental Politics* 29,1)

<b>Economic development</b> regarded as bio-physical process and oriented at the provision of use values serving as sustainable need satisfiers	<b>Spatial target</b>	<b>Eco-social policies</b> oriented at respecting planetary boundaries through redistribution of, above all, wealth/income, work and pollution rights
<p>States ensure production and consumption patterns not to exceed environmental limits</p> <p>Define limits for economic and social inequality</p> <p>Steer governance of public, collective, communal and private actors</p>	<p>Global and local levels</p> <p>Global: Identification of thresholds for matter and energy throughput</p> <p>These delineate the leeway within which national and local economies may evolve</p>	<p>Outer planetary boundary: e.g. caps on wealth and or income, carbon budgets</p> <p>Inner boundary/sufficiency level: e.g. Universal Basic Income and/or Universal Basic Services and/or vouchers, reduction in working hours</p>

## **2. Four of the main obstacles why states do not act**

- Growth imperative and its appearance as natural way to run ‘the’ economy (Koch 2018)
- Material interests of the dominant (Buch-Hansen 2018)
- Wellbeing concerns among the electorate (Büchs and Koch 2017/2019)
- Societal power asymmetries are ‘condensed’ (Poulantzas) and expressed within the state as ‘metafield’ (Bourdieu): concentrating power over all other fields and capital holders, but with particular agents, interests and struggles (e.g. between its ‘left’ and ‘right’ hand)

## 4. Three preconditions for states to become active

- Better *academic* understanding of state roles in growth economy, welfare and environment, symbolic domination and its internal divisions that may serve as entry points for challenging the status quo
- *Political and social mobilization* towards shifting the balance within the state by occupying ‘centres of opposition’ (Poulantzas) to strengthen its ‘left hand’ – and overcome the growth imperative
- *Co-development of eco-social policies* serving as sustainable needs satisfiers and initiating a ‘virtuous circle of sustainable welfare’ (Hirvilammi 2020) between researchers, activists and citizens
- Many thanks!