

CULTURE, PRACTICE & EUROPEANIZATION

Vol. 2, No. 2

September 2017

Edited by:

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Editorial:

Sociological Stances on Sustainability

Klarissa Lueg & Monika Eigmüller

1 - 3

Soziologie Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit – Zur Idee der Internalisierungsgesellschaft

Michael Opielka

4 - 19

Democracy vs. Capitalism - The Consequence for Europe

Hauke Brunkhorst

20 - 32

Europe as a Green Leader? A Brief Evaluation of both the European Union's Climate and Energy Policy and Common Agricultural Policy

Bernd Sommer/ Andrea Hain

33 - 45

The Sustainability Society: A Sociological Perspective

Sighard Neckel

46 - 52

ISSN 2566-7742

Impressum

Culture, Practice & Europeanization (CPE) is an open access multi-disciplinary journal series published three times yearly. CPE seeks to enhance understanding of social, trans-national activities and processes within a European context.

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Editorial: Sociological Stances on Sustainability

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This issue of *Culture, Practice & Europeanization* (CPE) focuses on the topic of sustainability, predominantly from a sociological perspective. Following our January 2017 issue on the phenomenon dubbed Brexit, this is the journal's second themed issue and the first under its new title, "*Culture, Practice & Europeanization*," which has now replaced the former "*Culture, Practice and European Policy*." This change of title is one of many steps forward in the editorial development of CPE taken by the journal in recent months. The present editorial aims to expand on those changes, to introduce and contextualize the scholarly contributions to this issue, and to discuss the relevance of the topic of sustainability to society as a whole.

CPE Development

Since its founding in September 2016, CPE has grown substantially. From a small but ambitious project at the Seminar für Soziologie, Europa-Universität Flensburg, it has now developed into an institutionalized journal with an internationally-renowned editorial and advisory board, as well as substantial editorial and technical support. The current issue is our third over the course of little more than one year, with further issues planned for 2017 and 2018 and a publication volume that has recently risen from two to three issues per year. CPE aims to provide a scholarly platform for high-quality research on the multiplicity of transnational and transcultural encounters in and beyond Europe. The new title, chosen in July 2017 during the first annual meeting of the journal's editorial board, more accurately reflects this focus on Europeanization processes and the idea of "doing" culture, society, and change. It deliberately rejects the rather static, formal, and unintentionally territorial notion of "European policy" represented by the old title in favor of a concept of Europeanization that allows for both top-down and bottom-up perspectives (Mau 2015; Eigmüller 2013; Outhwaite 2008; Fligstein 2008) on practices relating to European ideas. Thus, with reworked aims and scopes and extended staff support, the journal is now fully established.

Acknowledgements

Our vision of founding an international journal dedicated to publishing top-quality scholarly work on the processes of Europeanization has been met with outstanding support from the scholarly community. We owe thanks, first of all, to the new associate editors of CPE, who assembled in Flensburg in June 2017 for their first annual editorial board meeting: Daniel Maul (University of Oslo); Iris Rittenhofer (Aarhus University); Christof Roos (Vrije Universiteit Brussel); and Sebastian Büttner (Erlangen University, Nürnberg). These experts in thematic areas relating to Europeanization will contribute their time to editorial planning and to the further development of the project. We are also very grateful to the top international scholars who agreed to serve as founding members of our (still-growing) International Advisory Board: Hauke Brunkhorst of Europa-Universität Flens-

burg, Georg Vobruba of Leipzig University, Arnaud Lechevalier of University of Paris, and Alison Woodward of Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of all those outstanding scholars who responded to our calls for papers with high-quality research articles which appear in the current and previous issues, the valuable work of our anonymous peer reviewers, and the dedicated support of the editorial staff at the Seminar für Soziologie at Europa-Universität Flensburg. We look forward to more and fruitful years of close scholarly collaboration with all of you.

On this issue

The articles of this issue explore the complex relationship between sustainability and society, focusing explicitly on how this relationship affects Europeanization and is affected by Europeanization.

Sustainability, a concept related to the use and finiteness of natural resources which was initially debated within the natural sciences, has recently gained momentum in the social sciences. With the development of different perspectives and applications (critical or descriptive-normative, empirical or theoretical), the concept of sustainability has rapidly become a core term in business, management, and consumer studies (Eccles et al., 2014; Lueg et al., 2016; Rittenhofer et al., 2015; Schaltegger, 2013). Sociologists have recently intensified their work and research on the manifold aspects of sustainability, developing a critical perspective on the term and contributing extensive research into its relationship to social inequality, social institutions, policy-making, and societal change.

In light of these developments, this issue of CPE seeks to enrich our current understanding of the term sustainability by offering a sociological perspective of it and juxtaposing this with hitherto different within-field-foci (see: Opielka, pp. 3 – 19 and Brunkhorst pp. 20 - 32), using the concept as an analytical benchmark for non-exploitable governmental policies (see: Sommer and Hain, pp. 33 - 45), and deliberately taking a critical stance towards the idea of sustainability itself and its impact on social change and societal problem-solving (see: Neckel, pp. 46 - 52). In the four articles published here, five sociologists provide insights into the relevance of sustainability as a general analytical tool and offer a critical sociological perspective on the term. The current pressing political and environmental developments in the European Union ensure that sustainability will continue to gain momentum as a crucially important, contemporary research area within the field of sociology and beyond. In short, our aim here is to substantially and solidly contribute to the relevant ongoing debates on the topic and to provide a pathway for further research and collaboration in related fields of study.

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Soziologie Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit – Zur Idee der Internalisierungsgesellschaft

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Keywords: Social Sustainability, Environmental Regime, Welfare Regime, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030

At the UN level, Agenda 2030 with 17 universal Sustainable Development Goals was adopted in 2015. In the main and sub-goals, they deal with social and ecological issues. In this transdisciplinary context, the author advocates a change of perspective, away from the restricted social-ecological point of view and establishing a discourse about social sustainability. By means of a distinction between social sustainability in four conceptions, which follow the welfare regimes known from social policy research, along with four thematic dimensions, the conceptual field is to be made clear, and argued why the exclusion of social policy from the discourse on sustainability and from the consideration of a post-growth society must come to an end. These considerations are rounded off with the question of the normativity of social sustainability and a critique of virulent sociological skepticism. This was to be overcome in the context of global climate change and its social consequences and to create an evident research foundation through sociology.

Mit den im September 2015 von den Vereinten Nationen verabschiedeten Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) der Agenda 2030 wurden erstmals soziale und ökologische Nachhaltigkeitsziele systematisch verknüpft. Bei den sozialen Nachhaltigkeitszielen wurden auch die Industrieländer zum Adressaten und nicht ausschließlich die sogenannten Entwicklungsländer, wie noch bei der Vor-Agenda, den Millenniums-Entwicklungszielen der Agenda 2015. Inwieweit verändern sich jedoch soziale und vor allem sozialpolitische Modernisierungsziele im Kontext der Nachhaltigkeitsperspektive? Lässt sich überhaupt von „Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit“ sprechen und wenn ja, was ist damit genau gemeint? Genügen die unter dem Begriff „sozial-ökologische“ Forschung und Politik formulierten Fragestellungen den komplexen Anforderungen der SDG und eines Programm Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit? Hier bestehen aus soziologischer Sicht doch erhebliche Zweifel, denn die moderne Gesellschaft erscheint in diesen Diskursen eigentümlich reduziert: der Wohlfahrtsstaat kommt nicht vor.¹

In den Diskursen zu ökologischer Transformation und Nachhaltigkeit wird der Wohlfahrtsstaat als zentrale Regulierungsform moderner Gesellschaften neben der kapitalistisch verfassten Marktwirtschaft fast durchweg als Thema gemieden (z.B. WBGU 2016). Eine „Soziologie der Nachhaltigkeit“ (Engels 2017) sollte sich dieser Vermeidungsstrategie nicht anschließen. Für die Soziologie ist nicht erst seit Max Weber die Sozialpolitik von hervorragender Bedeutung. Nach Weber hat Sozialpolitik ihren Ausgangspunkt in der Kritik von Prozessen und Resultaten formaler Rationalisierung, prototypisch im moder-

1 Der Beitrag basiert in Teilen auf Kapitel 1 („Zur Konzeption Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit“) in Opielka 2017, das wiederum in weiten Teilen auf einem Aufsatz des Verfassers in der Zeitschrift „Soziologie“ beruht (Opielka 2016).

nen Kapitalismus. Diese Kritik mündet in ethischen Forderungen nach korrigierenden Interventionen und wird damit Gegenstand einer Institutionalisierung, deren Rationalitätskriterium die Befriedigung individueller Bedarfe ist (Weber 1988). Sozialpolitik wurde zum dominanten Regulativ moderner, vor allem demokratisch verfasster Gesellschaften (Opielka 2008). Mit der nun offensichtlichen Gesellschaftsrelevanz des Konflikts um Nachhaltigkeit und der Etablierung von Umweltpolitik stellen sich aus soziologischer Sicht daher neue Fragen:

- Was ist der Forschungsstand zum Verhältnis von Wohlfahrtsregime und Umweltregime? Sind wechselseitige Steigerungen zu beobachten? Welche Rolle spielen dabei welche Normative?
- Welche Bedeutung kommt außersozialwissenschaftlichen Perspektiven in der Forschung zu Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit zu? Inwieweit kann der Fokus Soziale Nachhaltigkeit einen Beitrag zu vertiefter Transdisziplinarität in der Nachhaltigkeitsforschung leisten?
- Welche politischen Verwendungszusammenhänge des Konzepts Soziale Nachhaltigkeit lassen sich beobachten? Kann das Konzept einen Beitrag zur Entwicklung einer neuen gesellschaftspolitischen Arena auf der Grundlage von SDG und Menschenrechten leisten?
- Wie lassen sich Aspekte der Sozialen Nachhaltigkeit empirisch messen? Welche Indikatoren sind hier angemessen und wie lassen sich die Ergebnisse interpretieren?

Diese Fragen einer soziologischen Forschungsagenda Soziale Nachhaltigkeit werden im Folgenden diskutiert, wenngleich einige nur sehr knapp. Zunächst wird gefragt, ob der konzeptionelle, erkenntnistheoretische Rahmen des zeitgenössischen Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurses möglicherweise ganz systematisch eine ernsthafte Beschäftigung mit Sozialpolitik verhindert hat. Mithilfe einer Unterscheidung Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit in vier Konzeptionen und vier Themendimensionen soll das Begriffsfeld erschlossen und deutlich werden, warum Sozialpolitik im Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurs und in den Überlegungen zu einer Postwachstumsgesellschaft mitgedacht werden muss.

Eine der Prämissen ist, dass der Wohlfahrtsstaat selbst keineswegs nur (über das Argument der Arbeitsplatzsicherung) ein Wunschtreiber für (auch) stoffliches Wirtschaftswachstum ist, sondern zugleich ein Organisator für systemische Nachhaltigkeit sein kann, wenn seine *Binnenlogik* auf Soziale Nachhaltigkeit ausgerichtet wird. Die Diskurse zu Nachhaltigkeit und Sozialpolitik haben eine zentrale Gemeinsamkeit: ihren Fokus auf den Wert der Gerechtigkeit. Eine weitere Gemeinsamkeit ist innerhalb der Spannung zwischen Externalisierung und Internalisierung von Problemen der Fokus auf letztere: Sowohl Sozialpolitik wie Nachhaltigkeit wollen vorhandene Konflikte nicht auf – zudem möglichst schwache – Dritte externalisieren, sondern innerhalb der jeweils verantwortlichen Systeme lösen.

Die von der Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen am 21. Oktober 2015, kurz vor dem Pariser Klimagipfel, angenommene Resolution „Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development“ (UN 2015) hat mit den „Sustainable Development Goals“ (SDG) eine Strategie skizziert, die genau das leisten könnte: einerseits die systematische Verknüpfung von Klima und Wohlfahrt, von Umwelt- und Sozialpolitik, andererseits die anwendungsorientierte Differenzierung in ein komplexes Set von Unterzielen und die Bestimmung relevanter Indikatoren für eine zeitliche Einhaltung. Mindestens 10 der 17 Ziele der SDG-Strategie „Agenda 2030“ sind sozialpolitische Ziele (wie Abschaffung von Armut, Chancengleichheit, soziale Stabilität und Integration).

1. Zur Konzeption Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit

Klimawandel und Kapitalismus sind verbreitete, globale Phänomene. Doch *sie unterscheiden sich* in zweierlei Hinsicht markant, vordergründig *historisch*: Der Klimawandel erscheint seit den 1970er-Jahren auf der politischen Agenda, der Kapitalismus seit den 1840er-Jahren. Die ökologische Frage als Gattungsfrage beschäftigt die Menschheit nun bald 50 Jahre, die soziale Frage als Klassenfrage seit gut 170 Jahren. Was sehr lange währt, deutet auf Stabilität, Bedeutung für gesellschaftliche Akteure und auf Institutionalisierung hin. Vielen erscheint die ökologische Frage noch immer herbeigeredet, der Klimawandel eine Konstruktion. Ähnlich hielten und halten auch viele die soziale Frage für längst gelöst, den Kapitalismus für siegreich. Die meisten sehen aber in beiden Fragen hohe Relevanz, ahnen auch einen Zusammenhang, doch „klar“ ist er nicht. Das hat mit dem zweiten, gravierenden Unterschied zwischen Klimawandel und Kapitalismus zu tun: Sie unterscheiden sich auch *analytisch*.

Das seit den 1990er-Jahren zirkulierende, sogenannte „Dreieck der Nachhaltigkeit“ wirkt auf den ersten Blick intuitiv überzeugend. Es unterscheidet ökologische, ökonomische und soziale Nachhaltigkeit – je nach Stakeholderinteresse werden drei sich verstärkende oder sich gegenseitig bremsende „Säulen“ konzipiert. So beschreibt 1998 die Enquete-Kommission des Deutschen Bundestages „Schutz des Menschen und der Umwelt“ Nachhaltigkeit zum ersten Mal als dauerhaft zukunftsfähige Entwicklung der ökonomischen, ökologischen und sozialen Dimension menschlicher Existenz (Deutscher Bundestag 1998). Diese „drei Säulen“ der Nachhaltigkeit stehen, so heißt es seitdem häufig und zugleich kontrovers², miteinander in Wechselwirkung und bedürften langfristig einer ausgewogenen Koordination.

Das Dreisäulen- oder Dreiecksmodell der Nachhaltigkeit hat eine bislang wenig beachtete Parallele zum in der Nachhaltigkeitsdebatte ebenfalls präsenten Modell der drei Prozesse „Effizienz-Konsistenz-Suffizienz“, das auf unternehmerische Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien abzielt (Schaltegger u.a. 2003, S. 25), sinnvollerweise aber für alle stoffbezogenen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien gelten kann. Joseph Huber hatte schon in den 1990er-Jahren „Konsistenz vor Effizienz vor Suffizienz“ und eine „Gesamtstrategie der abgestuften Präferenzen“ gefordert. Man müsse „zuerst und vor allem versuchen, die ökologische Angepasstheit der Stoffströme durch veränderte Stoffstromqualitäten zu verbessern (Konsistenz), um dann, auch aus ökonomischen Gründen, die Ressourcenproduktivität dieser Stoffströme optimal zu steigern (Effizienz), und wo beide Arten von Änderungen in ihrem Zusammenwirken an Grenzen geraten, da müssen wir uns eben zufrieden geben (Suffizienz).“³

Die Parallele zwischen Dreisäulen- und Dreiprozessmodell der Nachhaltigkeit könnte folgende sein: ökologische Nachhaltigkeit und Konsistenz, ökonomische Nachhaltigkeit und Effizienz, soziale Nachhaltigkeit und Suffizienz. Doch der Stolperstein ist unübersehbar. Ein Verständnis von Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit, das sich bislang vor allem auf Ungleichheit und Gerechtigkeit bezieht, hat wenig mit Suffizienz zu tun. Andererseits öffnet sich gerade hier die Tür zur Verbindung der Diskurse mit Postwachstum und Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit, wie die Diskussion um eine sozial gerechte Gestaltung der Energiewende in Deutschland zeigt.

Die drei Dimensionen der Nachhaltigkeit finden sich als einigendes Deutungsmuster im Anschluss an die UN-Konferenz von Rio de Janeiro 1992 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED), deren Abschlusserklärung ein solches Dreieck

2 Grunwald/Kopfmüller 2012; Felix Ekardt hält die Unterscheidung für unmaßgeblich und definiert Nachhaltigkeit ausschließlich gerechtigkeits-theoretisch: „Nachhaltigkeit handelt von der integrierten Bewältigung intertemporal-globaler Problemlagen.“ (Ekardt 2011, S. 44)

3 Huber 1995, S. 157; kritisch dagegen Ekardt 2016.

jedoch nicht beinhaltet.⁴ Deutungsmuster sind in der Regel implizit und vorbewusst. Hier ist das eingangs erwähnte analytische Problem im Dreieck eingebaut: In einer kapitalistisch verfassten Weltwirtschaft meint wirtschaftliche Nachhaltigkeit, dass die Funktionsimperative des Wirtschaftssystems nicht gefährdet werden dürfen. Ihre Protagonisten im Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurs sind Arbeitgeber, Unternehmerverbände, Wirtschaftsflügel. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit meint die andere Seite im Antagonismus der Klassen: Hier positionieren sich weltweit Gewerkschaften und NGOs, die sich der Repräsentanz der Kapitallosen und der Ausgeschlossenen verpflichten. Wenn also, wie in praktisch allen relevanten Nachhaltigkeitsdiskursen, eine Homöostase dieses Dreiecks beschworen wird, dann wird der Klassenantagonismus in die Figur der Nachhaltigkeit eingebaut und gleichzeitig in einen zweiten Antagonismus gespannt, nämlich zur „reinen“ ökologischen Frage. Damit beruht das Dreieck der Nachhaltigkeit auf einem doppelten Widerspruch: zuerst zwischen sozialer und wirtschaftlicher Nachhaltigkeit (Klassenantagonismus) und dann auch noch zwischen diesem Spannungsverhältnis und der ökologischen Nachhaltigkeit im engeren Sinn. Antagonismen oder Ambivalenzen neigen dazu, die Akteure zu lähmen. Eine doppelte Ambivalenz im Drei-Säulen-Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit birgt damit verschärftes Stillstandsrisiko. Am Beispiel der Klimapolitik lässt sich das gut demonstrieren: Gewerkschaften und Regionalpolitiker kämpfen Seite an Seite mit Energiekonzernen für ein Weiterbestehen der fossilen Energieerzeugung durch Braunkohle und gegen Dekarbonisierung. Stephan Lessenich hat das Verwirrungspotenzial der Spätmoderne auf den nachhaltigkeitsrelevanten Begriff der „Externalisierungsgesellschaft“ gebracht. In dieser leben die Leute „nach absoluten Maßstäben (...) über den Verhältnissen anderer“⁵. Klimawandel und Kapitalismus verschmelzen im sozialen Wegschauen. Eine babylonische Verwirrung aus Volkskapitalismus und Volksklimawandel scheint sämtliche Akteure irrelevant zu machen, die dann auch nicht zur Verantwortung gezogen werden. Der Klimawandel im Kapitalismus wird zu einem wunderlichen Narrativ, einer Kulturfigur, die nur als „Ressource der Imagination“ (Hulme 2014, S. 333) noch politisch nutzbar werden kann. Ist der Wandel von der Logik der Externalisierung in eine Logik der Internalisierung, des Sich-ehrlich-Machens überhaupt denkbar, ein Pfad in Richtung „Internalisierungsgesellschaft“ erkennbar?

Hier kann ein Dokument helfen, sowohl das Konzept Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit zu schärfen als auch die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen politischer Klimaschutzmaßnahmen näher zu bestimmen. Es handelt sich um ein Diskussionspapier der „Commission for Social Development“ des Wirtschafts- und Sozialrates der Vereinten Nationen (kurz: ECOSOC⁶) mit dem Titel „Emerging Issues: The Social Drivers of Sustainable Development“ (UN ECOSOC 2014). Dessen Argumentationsschwerpunkt liegt zunächst auf dem organisierten Klassenkompromiss, der sich an der dominanten Wertschätzung von Erwerbsarbeit ausrichtet. Dies entspricht dem Grundimpuls von ECOSOC, der sich in der Dreifach-Konstruktion der UN-Unterorganisation ILO noch zuspitzt (Regierungen-Gewerkschaften-Arbeitgeber). Seit den 1980er-Jahren haben nun nach Auffassung des ECOSOC drei politische Diskurse die alte Lohnarbeitszentrierung aufgeweicht:

1. Der Diskurs um **Frauenarbeit** seit den 1980er-Jahren, der zum einen zeigt, dass gleiche Zahlung für gleiche Leistung ebenso wenig durchgesetzt ist wie eine sichtbare Bewertung der Familien- bzw. Hausarbeit.

4 Abschlusserklärung 1992: <http://www.un.org/Depts/german/conf/agenda21/rio.pdf>; die Erklärung der Stockholm-Konferenz 1972 enthält dies ebenso wenig: <http://www.un-documents.net/aconf48-14r1.pdf>

5 Lessenich 2015, S. 24; ausführlich Lessenich 2016.

6 ECOSOC versteht sich unterdessen als zentrale Plattform für Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurse („the United Nations’ central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development“), sie verantwortet das Monitoring der SDGs (UN ECOSOC 2016): <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml>

2. Die Wahrnehmung und Anerkennung der **informellen Ökonomie** seit den 1990er-Jahren – durch die Selbstartikulation des Globalen Südens und die Relevanzbeobachtung der Subsistenzökonomie; die Diskussion über eine Erweiterung des BIP um nicht-monetäre Wohlfahrtsleistungen gehört ebenfalls hierher.
3. Schließlich seit den 2000er-Jahren aufgrund der Beobachtung von „jobless growth“ und im Anschluss an die Finanzkrise eine Infragestellung von **Wirtschaftswachstum** an sich, dessen ökologische Folgen zunächst eine geringe Rolle spielten.

Das Dreieck der Nachhaltigkeit („the three pillars of sustainable development“) wird zu Beginn des Papiers in spezifischer Formulierung aufgerufen: „sustainable development, enabled by the integration of economic growth, social justice and environmental stewardship“. Die drei Dimensionen sollen gleichrangiger („more equal“) behandelt werden als bisher. Warum? Die Antwort ist einfach: „Indeed, the interpretation of sustainable development has tended to focus on environmental sustainability while neglecting the social dimension.“ Was aber ist diese „social dimension“? Könnte sie mehr oder etwas anderes sein als „social justice“, als der Fokus auf Ungleichheit und deren Behebung? Das ECOSOC-Dokument deutet das an. Als „social drivers for sustainable development“ wird eine bemerkenswerte Reihe von Handlungsfeldern angeführt und kombiniert. Von der Förderung der informellen Ökonomie über eine universalistische Sozialpolitik einschließlich eines Grundeinkommens („transformative social policy“), eine „grüne Ökonomie“, über Partizipation und Empowerment, bis hin zu einer generell sozialen und solidarischen Ökonomie; eine Treiberliste, die noch vor wenigen Jahren im gewerkschaftsbezogenen Kontext undenkbar gewesen wäre.

Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Diskursentwicklung wird der nächste Schritt auf eine Verallgemeinerung von Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit in der internationalen Politik hin nachvollziehbar, wie er mit den SDGs im Jahr 2015 gelang. ECOSOC wurde mit der Überwachung und seine Statistik-Kommission mit der Indikatoren-Entwicklung beauftragt (Opielka 2017, S. 87ff.).

2. Vier Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit

Es erscheint hilfreich, den bislang diffusen Begriff Soziale Nachhaltigkeit klarer zu definieren und ihn seiner Begrenzung auf linke Kapital(ismus)kritik zu entziehen (ohne darauf zu verzichten). Er sollte insbesondere nicht mehr auf den ökonomischen Kontext reduziert werden.⁷ Ratsam wäre darüber hinaus eine sozialwissenschaftlich integrative, zunächst soziologische, im Weiteren transdisziplinäre Perspektive, die vor allem auch an die politische Steuerung (Governance) anschlussfähig ist. Diese Anschlussfähigkeit bietet das in der vergleichenden Wohlfahrtsstaatsforschung verwendete Konzept des „Welfare Regime“, das vor allem durch die Arbeiten von Gøsta Esping-Andersen bekannt wurde.⁸ In jüngster Zeit wurde es auch auf seine Anwendbarkeit in der Umwelt- bzw. Nachhaltig-

⁷ So im Jahrbuch Ökologische Ökonomik 2007. Soziologisch erweitert bereits bei Littig/Grießler 2005, allerdings fehlt ein systematischer Bezug auf Wohlfahrtsstaatlichkeit.

⁸ Esping-Andersen 1990, zur anschließenden Diskussion in der Wohlfahrtsforschung Arts/Gelissen 2002; Esping-Andersen kann sich auf eine Diskussion in der politikwissenschaftlichen Theorie Internationaler Beziehungen stützen (ohne sie explizit zu erwähnen). Die Regimetheorie von Robert O. Keohane und Stephen Krasner – deutsche Vertreter sind unter anderen Volker Rittberger oder Michael Zürn – entstand um 1980 als Weiterentwicklung der Interdependenztheorie. Internationale Regime sind kooperative Institutionen, die durch informelle und formelle, rechtliche und nichtverrechtlichte Strukturen gekennzeichnet sind und Konflikte zwischen Nationalstaaten bearbeiten. Vier Kennzeichen internationaler Regime werden unterschieden: Prinzipien (gemeinsame Grundannahmen), Normen (allgemeine Verhaltensstandards), Regeln (spezifische Verhaltensvorschriften) und Verfahren (konkrete, gemeinsam verabredete Prozeduren) (Hasenclever u.a. 2000). Esping-Andersen übertrug diese Überlegungen auf die Wohlfahrtsstaatsanalyse selbst, sein Regimebegriff gilt nicht überstaatlichen, sondern innerstaatlichen Institutionengeflechten.

keitspolitik überprüft.⁹ Im ersten Differenzierungsschritt werden die regimetheoretischen Überlegungen daher noch zurückhaltend eingesetzt.

Eine diskursanalytische Betrachtung¹⁰ erlaubt die Unterscheidung in vier¹¹ Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit:

1. Ein **enges** Verständnis von Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit als „Soziale Umverteilung“: Hier wird „das Soziale“ als eine von „drei Säulen“ der Nachhaltigkeit konzipiert, als Konfliktreduktion und Umverteilung, antagonistisch zur (eher wirtschaftsliberal gedeuteten) ökonomischen Nachhaltigkeit und als Begleitung der ökologischen Nachhaltigkeit, die im Zentrum dieser Konzeption steht.¹² In dieser Perspektive wird eher von sozialdemokratisch-sozialistischer Politik bzw. einem solchen Regime ausgegangen und damit von der Genese der dritten „sozialen“ Säule als gewerkschaftlich-linkem, politischem Programm gegen eine Dominanz der „wirtschaftlichen“ (Kapital-)Säule. Das diskursive Verständnis von „sozial“ entspricht damit der heutigen Verwendung von „sozial“ im Sinne einer vertikalen Verteilungsgerechtigkeit.¹³
2. Ein **internales** Verständnis von Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit als Nachhaltigkeit des Sozialen: Diese Konzeption hat mit Ökologie und dem heute üblichen Konzept von Nachhaltigkeit (Sustainability) zunächst wenig zu tun. Sie bezieht sich primär auf das Soziale selbst, auf den Erhalt und die Reproduktion der gemeinschaftlichen Kernsysteme einer Gesellschaft. Dieses Verständnis kommt einem konservativen Politik- bzw. Regimeprinzip nahe, wie ihn beispielsweise die ordoliberalen Freiburger Schule der Ökonomie vertrat. Es geht um eine nachhaltige Vermögenskultur, beispielsweise durch die Förderung von Familienunternehmen oder vermehrte Stiftungsgründungen oder um „good governance“, um die langfristige Stabilität von Institutionen. Die Brücke zur Verantwortung gegenüber Natur und Umwelt schlägt diese Konzeption über die Gemeingüter, die sogenannten „Commons“. Luft, Artenvielfalt, Wasser und Naturschönheiten sind durch Egoismen und Kurzzeitdenken bedroht, der Blick auf das Gemeinschaftliche in einer konkreten kleineren Gesellschaft bis hin zur Welt-gesellschaft schließt die ganze Ökologie des Sozialen ein, von der Natur bis zum geistigen Welterbe.¹⁴ In diesen eher konservativen Diskursen wird mit dem Begriff der „Sozialen Nachhaltigkeit“ versucht, eine Transformation von Institutionen oder Umverteilungsprozesse zu vermeiden und stattdessen, ohne die Gesellschaft zu verändern, institutions-immanent, eben internal, die Natur zu schützen.¹⁵
3. Ein **skeptisches** Verständnis von Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit als Nachhaltigkeit ökonomischer Funktionalitäten. Hier geht es – dem internalen Verständnis nahestehend – um Generationengerechtigkeit, beispielsweise in der Verteilung der Finanzierungslasten der Rentenversicherung zwischen Jung und Alt, finanz-

9 Gough 2016, zumindest als Policy-Vergleich Koch/Mont 2016; dazu auch Opielka 2017, S. 74ff..

10 Hier ist auf die enorme Fülle internationaler Veröffentlichungen zu Sustainability Sciences in Fachzeitschriften zu verweisen (Kates et al. 2001, Bettencourt/Kaur 2011).

11 Gegenüber Opielka 2016 wurde das „internale“ Verständnis regimepolitisch in ein marktzentriertes „skeptisches“ (liberales) und ein gemeinschaftszentriertes „internales“ (konservatives) Konzept ausdifferenziert.

12 Exemplarisch: Senghaas-Knobloch 2009, ähnlich auch Jahrbuch 2007, abgeschwächt Littig/Grießler 2005.

13 In einer klassischen Studie hat Eckart Pankoke die deutsche Verwendungsgeschichte und damit auch die Veränderung des Bedeutungsgehaltes von „sozial“ nachgezeichnet (Pankoke 1970).

14 In diese Richtung argumentiert eine Forschergruppe am Umweltforschungszentrum Leipzig (Klauer u.a. 2013) mit einem „Beständekonzept“, das die Dimension „Zeit“ in die Ökonomie holt und dadurch Nachhaltigkeit operationalisiert.

15 Zimmer (2015) geht bis an die äußerste Grenze der Denkmöglichkeiten einer konservativen Partei wie der CDU, wie auch das Vorwort des Fraktionsvorsitzenden Volker Kauder zur Publikation zeigt.

politisch um die Begrenzung von Staatsschulden („schwarze Null“) und auch um die Verhinderung einer wachsenden Nachfrage nach öffentlichen Investitionen in die Förderung von Nachhaltigkeit über die Aufnahme neuer Schulden. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit wird in diesem liberalen Politik- bzw. Regimetyp skeptisch, vielfach mit Abneigung und negativ konzipiert, als positives Konzept ist es in diesen Diskursen kaum zu finden.

4. Schließlich findet sich auch ein **weites** Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit, in dem das „Soziale“, dem englischen Sprachgebrauch folgend, als das „Gesellschaftliche“ verstanden wird: Soziale Nachhaltigkeit wird hier als gesellschaftliches Projekt, als Transformationsprojekt konzipiert. In dieser Arena werden Diskussionen über die Postwachstumsgesellschaft, über „Green Growth“ und „Degrowth“ geführt. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit wird im garantistischen Politik- bzw. Regimetyp als Dachkonzept für die Nachhaltigkeitsdiskussion entwickelt. Der Begriff „Garantismus“ bedarf einer Erläuterung: Die klassischen Politiklegitimationen liberal/sozialistisch/ konservativ - also Mitte/Links/Rechts - wurden in den letzten Jahrzehnten durch eine globale Agenda sozialer Grundrechte herausgefordert, die sich nicht umstandslos dieser Trias unterordnen lässt. Es gibt starke Argumente dafür, dass Demokratien eine evolutionäre Dynamik hin zu sozialen Grundrechten entfalten, die durch geeignete Politikstrukturen (v. a. direkte Demokratie) gestützt werden. Der Regimetyp „Garantismus“ trägt dieser Dynamik Rechnung. Die im Wesentlichen menschenrechtliche Fundierung des garantistischen Regimetyps (Opielka 2008) markiert ein starkes Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit, den Gegenpol zum skeptischen, liberalen Verständnis. Das Tableau der Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) und das Votum für einen „holistischen“¹⁶ Politikwechsel seitens der UN stehen für ein weites Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit.

16 „The SDGs are a universal agenda of sustainable development, calling on all nations to pursue a holistic strategy that combines economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.“ (Bertelsmann/SDSN 2016, S. 8)

In Abbildung 1 werden die vier Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit in die systematische Darstellung der Wohlfahrtsregime eingefügt. Damit ist ausdrücklich noch keine Analyse umweltpolitischer Regime verbunden. Eine solche, formal der Analyse von Wohlfahrtsregimen vergleichbar, liegt noch nicht vor.

	Typen des Wohlfahrtsregimes			
	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>sozialdemo- kratisch</i>	<i>konservativ</i>	<i>garantistisch</i>
Steuerung / Governance: • Markt • Staat • Familie/Gemeinschaft • Menschen-/Grundrechte	zentral marginal marginal mittel-hoch	marginal zentral marginal mittel	marginal subsidiär zentral marginal	mittel subsidiär mittel zentral
Dominante Form sozialstaatlicher Solidarität	Individualis-tisch	lohnarbeits-zentriert	kommunitaris-tisch-etatistisch	Bürgerstatus, universalis-tisch
Vollbeschäftigungsgarantie	Schwach	stark	mittel	mittel
Dominante Form der sozialstaatlichen Steuerung	Markt	Staat	Moral	Ethik
Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit	skeptisch	eng	internal	weit
Empirische Beispiele in der Sozialpolitik	USA	Schweden	Deutschland, Italien	Schweiz („weicher G.“)

Abbildung 1: Typen des Wohlfahrtsregime und Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit¹⁷

Alle vier Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit beinhalten wesentliche und zukunftsfähige Gesichtspunkte. So politisch-normativ sie auch konstruiert sind, sie sind zugleich analytische Konzeptionen zur Untersuchung der Steuerungsleistungen sozialer Systeme.¹⁸ Das **enge** Verständnis legt den Fokus auf jene sozioökonomische Konfliktlage, die Thomas Piketty als Prozess weltweiter Dominanz von Kapitalrenditen über Arbeitnehmerinkommen auslegte (Piketty 2014). Sie inszeniert sich in den Diskussionen um Energiepreise oder Braunkohleabbau, wonach Klimaschutzmaßnahmen sozial ungleich wirken und vorhandene Benachteiligungen zu verschärfen drohen.

Das **internale** Verständnis wiederum zählt schwerpunktmäßig auf gemeinschaftliche Gestaltungsoptionen, auf ein „Transformationsdesign“ (Sommer/Welzer 2014), auf mentale Veränderungen (Verhalten, Konsum) und technische Innovationen (Zimmer

17 Opielka 2008, S. 35, gekürzt und um die Konzeptionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit erweitert.

18 Die empirisch fundierten Theorien zur Entwicklung von Wohlfahrtsstaaten im internationalen Vergleich (Macht-Ressourcen, Funktionalismus, Institutionalismus usw., vgl. Esping-Andersen 1990) auf die Entstehung von Umweltregimen anzuwenden, könnte zu erheblichen Einsichten führen.

2015), institutionelle Veränderungen sind dieser politisch eher konservativen Fraktion unrecht.¹⁹

Das **skeptische** (liberale) Verständnis will gleichfalls institutionelle Änderungen meiden und setzt im Wesentlichen auf technologische Lösungen des Nachhaltigkeitsproblems. Das **weite** (garantistische) Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit schließlich könnte insgesamt zu einem Leitbild des Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurses werden. Indem es das Soziale, das Gesellschaftliche und Institutionelle einer Transformation zu einer nachhaltigeren Gesellschaft betont, ohne sich damit zu begnügen, wird deutlich gemacht, dass eine primär technologische oder ökonomische Strategie den systemischen Charakter der sozial-ökologischen Problemstellung verfehlt.

Ein weites Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit zielt auf eine umfassende Reorganisation von Politik, wie sie im 20. Jahrhundert mit der Idee des Wohlfahrtsstaates und der Etablierung verschiedener Formen eines „Wohlfahrtsregimes“ weltweit erfolgreich gelang.²⁰ Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass es der Nachhaltigkeitsbewegung, wie zuvor der Arbeiterbewegung, gelingt, neue Institutionen zu fordern und zu fördern, die den sozialen Ausgleichsimpuls des Sozialstaats systematisch zu einer Art „Öko-Wohlfahrtsregime“ weiterentwickeln.

Eine Nachhaltigkeitsbewegung benötigt Transformationsnarrative. Psychische Veränderungen erfordern symbolische Repräsentanzen des Ungedachten, des „Noch-Nicht“ (Bohleber 2014). Das gilt auch für soziale Veränderungen. Michael Braungart, der Erfinder des „Cradle-to-Cradle“-Prinzips, kritisiert den Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurs, denn Nachhaltigkeit sei nicht genug, viel wichtiger sei Qualität (Braungart/McDonough 2014). Den Menschen als Naturschädling zu betrachten, nähre zugleich Resignation und Zynismus. Die Tätigkeit des Menschen, seine Sozialität, soll und kann der Welt nützen. Erst durch den Menschen wird die Welt für den Menschen zu einem guten Ort. Die Natur allein, der romantische Traum von einem naturidentischen Leben, wäre ein Alptraum.

3. Vier Themendimensionen Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit

Worum geht es thematisch, wenn von einem **weiten** Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit die Rede ist? Ändert sich die Wahrnehmung von Problemen und, mehr noch, lassen sich durch diese Perspektive analytische Überlegungen für die Forschung entwickeln? Im Folgenden sollen vier systemische Entwicklungsstufen, vier Emergenzniveaus²¹ Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit skizziert werden:

Auf der ersten Ebene geht es um das **Faktische**, um die ökosoziale Frage oder Problem-anzeige – es ist die Ebene der Differenzialdiagnostik. Hier finden wir eine Vielzahl von Themen aus der sozialökologischen Forschung (SÖF)²², aus der breiten internationalen Diskussion um Transition und Transformation zu einer nachhaltigen Gesellschaft.²³ Diese wird erweitert um die Forschung zu Wohlfahrtsstaat und Wohlfahrtsregime. Hierzu

19 Das regimetheoretisch konservative, internale Verständnis hat in seiner „kommunitaristischen“, gemeinschaftlich-empathischen Dimension auch eine linke bzw. linksliberale Ausprägung und Geschichte (Opielka 2006).

20 Opielka 2008, im Anschluss an die Arbeiten von Gøsta Esping-Andersen; zu einer frühen Positionierung der Sozialpolitik im ökologischen Diskurs vgl. Opielka 1985.

21 Die vier Emergenzniveaus entsprechen den vier Reflexionsstufen einer auf Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel und Talcott Parsons aufbauenden Handlungs- und Systemtheorie (Opielka 2006). In der wissenssoziologischen Perspektive von Parsons können zwei gegenläufige Hierarchien unterschieden werden: die energetische Hierarchie von Materie zu Information (Stufe/Level 1 bis 4) und die informationelle Hierarchie von Information (oder Geist) zu Materie (Level 4 bis 1).

22 Das BMBF begann 1999 mit einer Sondierungsphase zur gleichnamigen Forschungslinie (Balzer/Wächter 2003), die unterdessen zumindest in der deutschen Diskussion eine außerordentliche empirische und theoretische Präsenz erreicht hat: <http://www.fona.de/de/19711>; relevant erscheinen die zaghaften, doch zunehmenden Überschneidungen zu gleichfalls BMBF-finanzierten Prozessen der Zukunftsforschung unter der Signatur „Foresight“ (Zweck u.a. 2015).

23 Grin et al. 2010; Scoons et al. 2015.

gehören auch die Entwicklung der SDG-Indikatoren und ihr Monitoring. In zeitlicher Hinsicht ist diese Ebene auch das Terrain der empirischen Zukunftsforschung, die mit Megatrend-Analysen, Szenarien, Roadmaps und Stakeholderpartizipation die materiale Grundlage für alle Transformationsreflexionen legt.²⁴ Die Ebene des Faktischen ist nicht nur selbst durch politisch-kulturelle Diskurse problematisch, die eine „post-faktische“ Welt behaupten oder befürchten. Deren konstruktivistisches Programm bestreitet die Objektivität der Wirklichkeit und selbst die kommunikative Konsensbildung über empirische Tatsachen, insbesondere dann, wenn es sich um zukünftige Tatsachen handelt. Die sozialökologische Forschung befeuert den Zweifel am „Faktischen“, das sich von Fakten überzeugt gibt, die nicht gewiss sind. Ein Beispiel für diesen Alarmismus ist der Band „Zwei Grad mehr in Deutschland. Wie der Klimawandel unseren Alltag verändern wird. Das Szenario 2040“ (Gerstengarbe/Welzer 2013): Ernsthaft bemühen sich die physikalischen Klimaexperten des Potsdam-Instituts für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK) um Simulationsmodelle und deren regionale Auswirkungen: „Die Städte in Bayern, Thüringen, Sachsen, im Saarland und dem südlichen Baden-Württemberg sind durch eine Erwärmung um mehr als 1,5 °C besonders stark betroffen.“ (Grossmann-Clarke/Schubert 2013, S. 192ff.) Aber was bedeutet diese Projektion für die Gesellschaft, vor allem, wenn im Absatz davor berichtet wird, dass bereits jetzt die Städte im Westen Deutschlands eine „um zwei bis vier Grad höhere Jahresmitteltemperatur“ haben als der Bundesdurchschnitt? Aus diesen Tatsachenerwartungen lassen sich nicht nur keine klaren Anhaltspunkte für Extremwetterereignisse ableiten – eine Aufgabe für Meteorologen –, sondern auch kaum Befürchtungen einer merklichen Zunahme von beispielsweise Hitzetoten. Fakten sind mit ihrer Bewertung, Evaluation und Einordnung untrennbar verknüpft. Eine ganzheitliche Forschung zu Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit erfordert Seriosität und Kompetenz, die zumindest der sozialwissenschaftliche Teil jener Alarmschrift vermissen ließ.²⁵

Die zweite Ebene steht für das **Politische**: Themen sind hier die Anwendungs- und Transferorientierung, Reallabore, Translationalität (anwendungsorientierte Grundlagenforschung). In demokratischen Kulturen gehören dazu Partizipation und Diskursivität, bis hin zu Citizen Science. Anwendungsorientierung wird nicht verschmäht, sondern gelobt, aus ganz grundsätzlichen politischen Gründen, denn jedes Gemeinwesen ist politisch. Ähnlich wie in den kulturwissenschaftlich geprägten „Postcolonial Studies“ geht es um eine Wahrnehmung der Stimmen aus dem „Off“ und ihre repräsentative Einbeziehung in dominante Diskurse, um ihre diskursive Inklusion (Lessenich 2015, 2016). Generell fordert ein Forschungsprogramm Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit auf dem Level des Politischen Wertereflexivität: Kein strategisches Interesse rechtfertigt sich ohne Argumente, die seine normative Dimension offenlegen.

Auf der dritten Ebene finden wir das **Organisatorische** der „scientific community“: Die Themen der „Sozialen Nachhaltigkeit“ sind hier Interdisziplinarität sowie vor allem (und zugleich am schwierigsten umzusetzen) Transdisziplinarität und Neodisziplinarität. Das

24 Popp/Zweck 2013; Armin Grunwald hat in der Denktradition von Kant und Popper differenziert begründet, warum über Zukunft nicht im Modus des „Faktischen“ verhandelt werden könne. Sie ist ja noch nicht und damit sind auch die Annahmen über sie nicht falsifizierbar (Grunwald 2009). Epistemisch ist dieser Einwand auf den ersten Blick nicht zu entkräften, auch wenn wir davon überzeugt sind, dass die Zukunft und generell die Zeit nicht nur als lineares Phänomen verstanden werden kann. Für die vorliegende Argumentation mag der Hinweis genügen, dass unter dem „Faktischen“ nur gesellschaftlich handlungs- und systemrelevante Problemanzeigen verstanden werden, hinter denen natürlich Deutungen stehen, deren Genese häufig und teils intentional im Dunkeln bleibt.

25 Dagegen bietet der gewichtige Sammelband „Klimawandel in Deutschland“ (Brasseur et al. 2017) einige sozialwissenschaftlich kenntnisreiche Beiträge (v.a. Renn 2017) auf, auch wenn die wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Implikationen nicht behandelt werden.

Miteinander der disziplinär organisierten Wissenschaft (Interdisziplinarität) genügt bei komplexen Problemfeldern nicht, hier sollen sich die Disziplinen auch erkenntnistheoretisch und strategisch näher kommen (Transdisziplinarität). Und wenn das nicht reicht, so entstehen neue Disziplinen (Neodisziplinarität), wie früher die Soziale Arbeit, die Kommunikationswissenschaften oder die Informationswissenschaften. Auf der Suche nach einer transdisziplinären Forschung für Nachhaltigkeit entstehen deshalb immer weitere neue Disziplinen (Sustainability Sciences).

Die vierte Ebene einer wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit zielt auf das **Epistemische**, auf die Möglichkeitsbedingungen für komplexes, holistisches und systemisches Denken. Themen sind hier die Spannung zwischen Evolution und Emergenz, also Entwicklung und Sprung, die große Frage nach den Bedingungen wissenschaftlicher Paradigmenwechsel.

Die hier skizzierten Themen finden sich auch in neueren Texten zur „transformativen Wissenschaft“²⁶, wenngleich meist in anderer oder ohne analytische Systematisierung. Die Repräsentanz von Wirklichkeit in der Wissenschaft ist mehrdimensional und kann auf jeder Ebene zu Konflikten führen. Geboten sind Heuristiken zu ihrer Unterscheidung, vor allem dann, wenn Wissenschaft zur Zukunftsgestaltung beitragen will und in sozialen Konflikten unvermeidlich Partei ergreift. Der Präsident der DFG, Peter Strohschneider, kritisierte heftig das Konzept der „Transformativen Wissenschaft“ als Entdifferenzierung komplexer Wirklichkeit. Eine „Große Transformation“, im Sinne des hier vertretenen **weiten** Konzepts Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit, sei moralisch überladen und trage zugleich zur Depolitisierung bei, weil nun alles dem expertengetriebenen Nachhaltigkeitsziel unterworfen werde. Armin Grunwald beruhigte, verglich die Entstehung der transformativen Nachhaltigkeitsforschung mit der Genese der Technikwissenschaften, sah Parallelen und zudem keinen Wunsch umzustürzen, sondern eine organisatorische Chance zur Erweiterung des wissenschaftlichen Blicks.²⁷ Ähnlich erkennt auch der Wissenschaftsrat in einem Positionspapier die Notwendigkeit an, „große gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen“ zu adressieren, worunter von wissenschaftspolitischen Akteuren vor allem der Klimawandel, die globale Erwärmung und saubere Energie verstanden würden (Wissenschaftsrat 2015, S. 15). Der Fokus Soziale Nachhaltigkeit erlaubt eine zusätzliche, beruhigende und aufmunternde Parallele: Vermutlich erfüllen die transformative Nachhaltigkeitswissenschaften am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts eine ähnliche Funktion wie die Sozialwissenschaften zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Nicht nur die Soziologie begriff sich damals als Medium der Sozialreform und Antwort auf die soziale Frage als Klassenfrage (Kaufmann 2014). Das Ergebnis war der Wohlfahrtsstaat. Ein gutes Jahrhundert später wird die ökosoziale Frage, wenn es gut geht, mit einem globalen „Öko-Wohlfahrtsregime“ beantwortet.

Zum Abschluss dieser Überlegungen, die sich einer soziologisch fundierten Begriffsbildung widmen und in der These gipfeln, dass nur ein „weites“ Verständnis Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit den gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen angemessen begegnet, soll noch ein kurzer Blick auf alternative Begriffskonzeptionen geworfen werden. Armin Grunwalds Buch *Nachhaltigkeit verstehen*, das diese Arbeit an Begriff und Bedeutung nachhaltiger Entwicklung dokumentiert und diskutiert hat, erleichtert und beschleunigt diesen Blick (Grunwald 2016). Dabei erscheinen zwei Bedeutungslinien hilfreich, auch zur Verortung der eigenen Position. Zum einen die Unterscheidung von „starker“ und „schwacher“ Nachhaltigkeit, zum anderen die Unterscheidung „integrativer“ und „starker“ Nachhaltigkeit.

26 Schneidewind/Singer-Brodowski 2013, Jahn 2013.

27 Strohschneider 2014; Grunwald 2015, 2016.

Unter „starker“ Nachhaltigkeit wird ein Ansatz²⁸ verstanden, der nicht von einer wechselseitigen Ersetzbarkeit von Ressourcen und Kapital ausgeht. Demgegenüber vertreten die Ansätze „schwacher“ Nachhaltigkeit genau diese Substituierbarkeit – Technik kann beispielsweise Natur ersetzen (Grunwald 2016, S. 121ff.). Während die Ansätze schwacher Nachhaltigkeit vor allem in der neoklassischen Ökonomie vertreten sind, sind es eher Philosophen, die sich, an Prinzipien orientiert, auf Rechtfertigungsdiskurse einlassen, und deren starke Nachhaltigkeitsannahmen auch nicht durch Operationalisierungsfragen getrübt werden.

Der Konflikt zwischen „schwachen“ und „starken“ Ansätzen im Nachhaltigkeitsdiskurs lässt sich mit der oben erläuterten Vierertypologie dechiffrieren: Schwache Ansätze entsprechen dem eher skeptischen Verständnis sozialer Nachhaltigkeit. Wer auf Markt und Wirtschaft fokussiert ist, der muss schon aus erkenntnistheoretischen Gründen davon überzeugt sein, dass sich im Grunde alle sozialen Phänomene auf Markt- und damit auf Austauschrelationen reduzieren lassen. Starke Ansätze finden wir bei den drei anderen Konzepten Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit – je nachdem, welche politischen Zusatzannahmen (eher sozialistisch, konservativ oder garantistisch) vorherrschen.

Bemerkenswerter und theoretisch anspruchsvoller ist das „integrative“ Konzept nachhaltiger Entwicklung, das Grunwald selbst bevorzugt. Es besteht aus drei inhaltlichen Elementen: intra- und intergenerative Gerechtigkeit, globale Orientierung und anthropozentrischer Ansatz.²⁹ Alle drei Elemente sind für die vorliegende Konzeption relevant, auch wenn hier mit der Regime-Theorie ein anderer, nämlich historisch-systematischer Zugang gewählt wird: Der hier vertretene Ansatz der Wohlfahrtsregime-Theorie konstituiert sich sowohl steuerungs- wie gerechtigkeits-theoretisch.

Das Problem ist allerdings, dass die drei althergebrachten Regimekonzepte – liberal, sozialistisch, konservativ – für intergenerationale Gerechtigkeitsprobleme nur sehr partikuläre Antworten finden. Liberale denken in Nutzenkalkülen, Sozialisten in Klassenutopien, Konservative in Gemeinschaftspartikularismen. Aus jedem Regimeansatz lässt sich damit nur begrenzt ein intergenerationales Gerechtigkeitsdenken destillieren. Nur der garantistische Ansatz – der den Sustainable Development Goals der UN zugrunde liegt – scheint substanziell universalistisch angelegt. Damit ist auch das Element der globalen Orientierung ausgemacht: Es gelten analoge Kriterien, Nachhaltigkeit muss global gedacht und verfolgt werden. Schließlich der Anthropozentrismus: Das Konzept Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit und damit auch das hier vertretene **weite** Konzept sind schon aus epistemischen Gründen anthropozentrisch, solange jedenfalls Tiere, Bäume oder Steine keine vertragsfähigen Mitglieder von Gesellschaften sind. Vertragsfähig würde bedeuten, dass sie auch Verpflichtungen gegen die Menschen haben und sich entsprechend strafbar machen können. Solange davon nichts ersichtlich ist, sollten wir nur die Menschen und ihre Gesellschaften für Nachhaltigkeit verantwortlich machen.

4. Wie normativ ist Soziale Nachhaltigkeit?

In einem Bericht über aktuelle Versuche, eine „Soziologie der Nachhaltigkeit“ zu fundieren, beobachtet Anna Henkel „die unter Normativitätsgesichtspunkten soziologische Skepsis gegenüber Nachhaltigkeit“ (Henkel 2017, S. 308). Es mag für Nicht-SoziologInnen hilfreich sein zu erfahren, dass diese soziologische Skepsis schon immer auch der Sozialpolitik galt, die als „Sozialreform“, als (katheder-)sozialistisch, jedenfalls – als Wissenschaft – als nicht nur angewandte und darin minderwertige, sondern auch als normativ

28 Häufig bleibt unklar, ob es sich um Theorien, d.h. Wissenschaft, oder um politische u.a. Handlungsperspektiven handelt.

29 Grunwald 2016, S. 94; lesenswert ist aber auch die Herleitung und damit das gesamte Kapitel 4 seines Buches.

geprägte und damit schmutzige kleine Schwester der Soziologie betrachtet wurde, ähnlich wie die Soziale Arbeit. Auch hier hat Max Weber schon vor knapp einem Jahrhundert in seinem Aufsatz über „die ‚Objektivität‘ sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis“ (Weber 1988a) das Nötige gesagt. Normen und Werte können und müssen selbstverständlich selbst Gegenstand soziologischer Forschung sein und zwar nicht nur, wie in der Einstellungsforschung, als Residuen im subjektiven Bewusstsein der Leute, sondern auch als zentrales Element institutioneller Ordnung, wie es die soziologische Bewegung des „Neoinstitutionalismus“ zutreffend markiert (Opielka 2007). Eine soziologische „Skepsis“ gegenüber Sozialer Nachhaltigkeit oder Nachhaltigkeit im Allgemeinen ist daher so wenig angebracht wie gegenüber Wirtschaft, Politik, Europa oder Familie. Das sind alles gesellschaftliche Phänomene, die einen mehr strukturell-institutioneller, die anderen mehr handlungsbezogener Art. Sie können selbstverständlich normativ besetzt werden, man kann zum Beispiel Europa hassen oder lieben, das ändert nichts daran, dass es existiert und sei es als Idee. Ein ganzheitlicher und das heißt immer auch: zugleich handlungs- wie systemtheoretischer, empirischer wie theoretischer Blick auf Soziale Nachhaltigkeit steht gerade der Soziologie nicht nur zu, ohne sie, ohne den soziologischen Fokus, ohne die Expertise einer Disziplin, die stets das Ganze der Gesellschaft denken und verstehen will, verkümmert die Diskussion um Nachhaltigkeit.

Eine Soziologie der Nachhaltigkeit stellt leicht fest, dass eine Entgegensetzung von Normativität und Faktizität noch nie relevant war, vielmehr deren Durchdringung typisch. Gerade die Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) demonstrieren dies vorzüglich, sollen sie doch als Ziele, als Normative steuernd wirken (Kani/Biermann 2017), was angesichts der Komplexität der sozialen und ökologischen Zielsetzungen und ihrer Interaktionen (ICSU 2017) äußerst anspruchsvoll ist. Ob die SDGs ein Governance-Potential besitzen und welche Intentionen politische und andere Akteure leiten, die sich Nachhaltigkeit bzw. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit auf die Fahne schreiben, das bleibt ohne Forschung nicht evident. Die Soziologie hat Nachhaltigkeit als Forschungsthema identifiziert, der Klimawandel wird als gesellschaftliches und nicht mehr primär naturwissenschaftliches Problem erkannt (Dunlap/Brulle 2017). Nun steht an, die originären Forschungsfelder der Soziologie, vor allem die Sozialpolitik, damit bekannt zu machen.

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Democracy vs. Capitalism - The Consequence for Europe

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Democratic welfarism has transformed capitalism. Great parts of the means of production have been socialized or partly socialized. Finally, the latter did not become socialism but democratic capitalism instead of capitalist autocracy (or defective democracy). However, democratic social welfare capitalism has suffered from two problems: secular stagnation and horizontal exclusion. Aggressive neoliberalism, politically and theoretically well prepared, took its chance and changed the direction of the evolution of world society. The last 40 years witnessed a great transformation from full-fledged market-controlling to defected market-conform democracy. Then came the disruption of the greatest world economic crisis since the world economic crisis of 1929. Does democratic socialism and social Europe have an unexpected new chance?

Modern capitalism, as it was described and explained by Marx and Weber (in different, but much more complementary than exclusive versions), is the most productive economy ever invented, whilst at the same time the least sustainable and most catastrophic ever invented by social evolution. My first section is on the partial success of democratic welfarism in overcoming the capitalist system and to make it slightly more sustainable and less catastrophic (I). However, this period only lasted for 40 and 50 years after the end of the Second World War. It came in crisis in the 1970s because of two structural problems that democratic welfarism could not solve quickly enough (II). Therefore, the third chapter is on the neoliberal turn of world society (III). Following this is the hope and the question, could democratic socialism come back and establish an economy that is as productive as capitalism but contrary to capitalism sustainable and less catastrophic? (IV) The question remains open, and the final part is on Europe's constitutional crisis (V).

In the aftermath of the global economic crisis of 1929 and WWII, the nation state became a *democratic social welfare state*. – first in Europe and North-America but then and rapidly, nearly all over the world and especially in the emerging postcolonial world, even if it was implemented very differently, and often it appeared only in constitutional textbooks and not in reality. It was the first successful realization of a politically and socially inclusive democratic regime with a *mixed economy* that was a hybrid between capitalism and socialism.

1. The relations of production were regulated by constitutionally enabled democratic class-struggle.¹ Art. 14 of German Basic Law from 1949 codified private property, but Art. 15 explicitly allowed the socialization of the means of production (codified in Marxist vocabulary: "*Vergesellschaftung der Produktionsmittel*"), and Art. 20 made the social republic a basic goal of the state, and the (liberal or socialist) way of its realization due to democratic will formation alone.² Instead of the dialectical tension between liberalism

1 Korpi, W. (1983) *The Democratic Class Struggle*, Routledge, London; Hoss, D. (1972) *Der institutionalisierte Klassenkampf*, Frankfurt: EVA.

2 Abendroth, W. (1968) Zum Begriff des demokratischen und sozialen Rechtsstaats im Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in: *Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Sozialstaatlichkeit*, ed. Ernst Forsthoff, Darmstadt Wissenschaftliche Buchge-

(Art. 14 GG) and socialism (Art. 15 GG) the EU-Treaties have constitutionalized competition law (Art. 2 EC), and that means the market-conform prevalence of private property over the democratic socialization of the means of production.

2. The re-interpretation of the US-Constitution since the mid-1930's had the same revolutionary result.³ The meaning of the *due process clause* and the *commerce clause* of the constitution were reversed completely. They turned from legal means to stabilize capitalist freedom into an instrument to save the peoples freedom from capitalism. However, since the 1980s, Congress-legislation has watered down many New-Deal advances and Supreme-Court judgments such as *Citizens United* (2010):

3. The one and only form of private property that was established by the French Code Civil Code in 1804 (already mentioned two time in the *Declaration of Civic and Human Rights* from 1789, and was even sacrificed in the last Art. 17) became a borderline case (now § 903 BGB).⁴ It was broken up into hundreds, if not thousands of forms of property between public and private property.⁵

4. Social differences declined. The rich could no longer pay for their palaces in Newport and Long Island, which now are used as schools and universities (because these summer houses are reminiscent of European Castles but were much bigger). The Fordist constellation still consisted of huge class differences. But "with a growing pie, one could give to the poor without taking too much from the rich."⁶ The differences were effectively compensated by mass-consumption and a quickly expanding educational system that allowed much more social mobility than ever before.⁷ The typical worker drove a small car, his boss a big car, both sticking in the same traffic jam, driving to the same holiday coast, sending their kids to the same public school. In the 1960's and 70's social class mobility in the U.S. was relatively high; and required by the expansion of the educational system and shrinking social differences. Today there is no longer such measurable social class mobility. As in 1900 family income alone determines class affiliation.⁸

I

The successful establishment of the social welfare state that in countries like Sweden came close to democratic socialism, has and have impressively demonstrated that there are not only *bureaucratic*, but also *democratic* alternatives to the capitalist mode of production. Even if there is (up to now) no democratic alternative to the functionalist formation of society (*Gesellschaftsformation*) and to a form of life that is based on the great

sellschaft pp. 114-144. In the 1950's, Abendroth's position was eccentric, today it is mainstream in German constitutional law („herrschende Meinung“), see: Möllers, C. (2016) *Staat als Argument*, Munich: Beck.

3 Ackerman, B, Alstott, A. (2001) *Die Stakeholder-Gesellschaft. Ein Modell für mehr Chancengleichheit*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus ; Brunkhorst, H. (2014) *Critical Theory of Legal Revolutions – Evolutionary Perspectives*, New York, London: Bloomsbury.

4 § 903 reads: „Der Eigentümer einer Sache kann, soweit nicht das Gesetz oder Rechte Dritter entgegenstehen, mit der Sache nach Belieben verfahren und andere von jeder Einwirkung ausschließen.“ The law („Gesetz“) and the basic rights of third parties („Rechte Dritter“) then became the mean to leverage the ratchet of private property through legislation and constitutional jurisdiction (the famous „Drittwirkungslehre“ of the German Constitutional Court).

5 Bellomo, M. (1995) *The Common Legal Past of Europe 1000-1800*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press; Denninger, E. (1984) *Von der bürgerlichen Eigentumsgesellschaft zum demokratischen Rechtsstaat*, in: *Funkkolleg Praktische Philosophie/Ethik. Studententexte*, Band 3, herausgegeben von Karl-Otto Apel, Dietrich Böhler und Karl-Heinz Rebel, Weinheim/Basel: Beltz.

6 Herzog, H. (2016) The normative stakes of economic growth. *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 1: 50-62.

7 Rawls argues rightly that the class-differences and the factual power of the elites over the people (see Wright-Mills, C. (1956) *The Power Elite*, Oxford: Oxford University Press) Rawls, J. (2003) *Gerechtigkeit als Fairneß – Ein Neuentwurf* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

8 Wilkinson, R, Pickett, K. (2010) *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, New York: Bloomsbury; Judd, T. (2010) *Ill Fares the Land*, New York: Penguin Books; Nachtwey, O. (2016) *Die Abstiegs-gesellschaft. Über das Aufbegehren in der regressiven Moderne*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.

inventions of the technological revolution such as running water and chemistry), the organizational principle (*Organisationsprinzip*) of capitalist forms of property can be changed.⁹

Since the 1930s's, bourgeois class rule has been constrained by trade union power, technocratic elites, electoral campaigns and majority decisions. Stakeholders prevailed over shareholders. Now it is the other way around. A hundred years of heavy class struggles and struggles over democratic rights in Western societies between 1850 and 1950 were finally successful in civilizing modern capitalism. We had capitalism with a human face for half a century between about 1935 and 1985, at least within the Western hemisphere. In terms of justice this was a "great progress".¹⁰

II

However, during the course of the 1960's it became evident that the solution to the systemic problems of a functionally differentiated capitalist economy by the democratic social welfare state suffered from two *structural problems*. One was economically, the other was both culturally and socially.

First, democratic welfarism came into an *economic* critical situation with the *end of high growth rates* that threatened modern capitalism with *secular stagnation* – a challenge modern capitalism never had to face before. Between 2000 and 2016 *real terms investment* in Germany (one of the biggest winners of globalization and Europeanization) decreased by 20%.¹¹ Secular stagnation is not at all due to the presumably "creative destruction" (Schumpeter) of World War II but, as Robert Gordon has shown:

to the *finalization of the great technological inventions* of electricity, running water, the internal combustion engine, the chemical rearrangements of molecules (pharmacy), and mass-communication already in the year 1940.¹²

Moreover, the critical situation of the world economy was reinforced by the aggressive return to market-radicalism since the late 1970's that led to a *secular increase of inequality*. It is now back to the historical peak of 1900 (Piketty).¹³

The great electronic inventions of the present, the internet, the mobile phone and the personal computer, are all at best *low-growth inventions* with dramatically *negative effects on the future of academic employment* (Collins).¹⁴

The *second* problem was cultural, and a trigger of social and political inequality beyond the sphere of production. The *vertical emancipation* of the lower classes and the working class was not accompanied by the *horizontal emancipation* of oppressed sexes, religious

9 On the distinction see Habermas, J. (1973) *Legitimation Crisis* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

10 Marx was referring to the Jewish emancipation (legal equality and full citizenship) in: Marx, K, Engels, W. (1976) *Bd. 1 (MEW 1)*, Berlin: Dietz.

11 Offe, C. (2016) *"The Dynamic of Secular Stagnation"*, paper presented at a conference on the topic *Jenseits des Kapitalismus* in Wuppertal.

12 Gordon, R. (2017) *Rise and Fall of American Growth: The US Standard of Living since the Civil War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2 New York, Princeton University Press.

13 Piketty, T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

14 Wallerstein, I, et al. (1975) *Does Capitalism have a Future*, 9-36; Herbert Marcuse, *"Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitären Staatsauffassung"*, in: Marcuse, Kultur und Gesellschaft I, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Note: Although there is room for debating that digital technology has had its productivity boom, and if progression is slower now they might be still far from reaching their productivity potential. The scientific community is divided about the point, and sociologists and historians like Gordon and Collins rightly argue that the productivity boom of AI is far beyond that of the industrial age, and they give a couple of further reasons that it is over, and that computerization of everything will lead to (especially academic) mass-unemployment of measures like that of artisans in the 19th century. Many economists object, but even if they have much more precise models with a lot of math their models are by far not complex enough to compete with sociology and history. However, nobody surely knows the future, and prognosis is impossible in a society that evolves as quickly as modern societies.

and sexual orientations, ethnic minorities and people of color.¹⁵ National welfarism was *white, male and heterosexual*. Egalitarian democratic solidarity ended everywhere at the *color line* and the *gender line*, with all social consequences of unpaid work and unequal wages.¹⁶ In the public consciousness of democratic welfarism all that did not matter. It was repressed and silenced. Both, the existing discourse in literature, and academics articulating the latent authoritarianism of affluent democracies were marginalized. Moreover, the exclusion of women, homosexuals, people of color from *public discourses*, and the repression of the colonial past were stabilized by a *public law* that in many respects resembled (and in many places, was) an apartheid regime.

Habermas in the 1960s's rightly made the diagnosis of a "depoliticized" and "desiccated public sphere".¹⁷

However, for a democratic constitutional regime that claims universal "exclusion of inequalities" not only for human rights but also for democracy (Art. 16 *French Declaration*) this becomes a *serious problem of legitimization and motivation* once it is politicized.¹⁸ In terms of justice this was the dark side of democratic welfarism, and its deeply unjust side.

The Re-politicization of the public sphere came in the 1960's, unexpected and unpredictable. Due to consumerism and prolonged adolescence, the hegemony of the achievement principle – the social-psychological cornerstone of "modern capitalism" (Weber) – was successfully challenged for the first time in history since the invention of the protestant ethics.¹⁹

The successful challenge of the achievement principle triggered a *crisis of motivation* in the name of a new utopianism and hedonism (Hippies, Woodstock etc.) The latently authoritarian structure of existing Western democracies triggered a *crisis of legitimization*.²⁰

Latent authoritarianism was revealed with the first sentence of a speech by Mario Savio (the speaker of the protesting students of Berkeley who triggered the global students' movement of the 1960's) on a police car that was blocked by a sit-in on Berkeley campus, October 1, 1964. The two police officers in the car had allowed Savio to take off his shoes and give a speech from the top of their car. His first sentence was: "They're family men, you know. They have a job to do! Like Adolf Eichmann. He had a job to do. He fit into the machinery."²¹ Many sentences, newspaper articles, scientific essays and books pro and con followed together with an entire industry of new and old, rediscovered and newly invented literature on authoritarianism and anti-authoritarianism. A new public discourse was created.

Another, even shorter sentence revealed that the color line was not a problem of African Americans but all Americans and the entire human race, when the boxing champion Muhammed Ali in April 1966 justified his rejection of the official call to Vietnam with the words: "They (the Vietcong) never called me nigger." Suddenly the oppression and sup-

15 The helpful distinction of horizontal and vertical emancipation goes back to the theory of societal disparities by Claus Offe et. al., for an actualized version see: Nachtwey, O. (2016) *Die Abstiegs-gesellschaft. Über das Aufbegehren in der regressiven Moderne*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.

16 Katznelson, K. (2005) *Twentieth-Century America*, New York-London: W.W. Norton, 2005; Gurinder K. Bhabra, G. (2014) "Postcolonial Europe in Crisis" Online resource.

17 Habermas, J. (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Habermas, J. (1989) "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'." In *Jürgen Habermas: On Society and Politics*, edited by Steven Seidman, 237-265. Boston, MA: Beacon.

18 Stichweh, R. (2000) *Die Weltgesellschaft*, Frankfurt aM: Suhrkamp Verlag.

19 Nunner-Winkler, G, Döbert, R. (1975) *Adoleszenzkrise und Identitätsbildung*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

20 Habermas, J. (1973) *Legitimation Crisis* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

21 Rorabaugh, W.J. (1989) *Berkeley at War: The 1960s*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kemp, T. (2012) *Regionale, nationale und globale Aspekte einer Studentenbewegung. Eine qualitative Studie zur Kieler Studentenbewegung 1967-1969*, Master Thesis, Oslo: University of Oslo 32.

pression of the “other heading” came to the fore, and became a problem of justice for the entire society.²² Wearing guns publicly and visibly, the Black Panthers at the same time performed a speech act that referred to the constituent power of the people enshrined in the First and Second Amendment of the US-Constitution, and with this single act they revealed that bearing constituent power was no longer solely a white privilege. There were many other world-disclosing paintings, sentences, poems, movies, actions and happenings like that, opening new perspectives, giving one sphere of silenced and suppressed discourses after the other a voice, and triggering ever new, anarchic, wild, expressive, emotional, and rational public discourses and a great variety of social movements.²³ The lines of color, gender and heterosexuality that divided the West horizontally, came under pressure all over the world, and the new social movements resulted in one of the greatest cultural revolutions ever. In particular, the beginning of women’s emancipation challenged the legitimacy of thousands, and hundred thousand of years of paternalism, and not much different was the emancipation of homosexuals from hegemonic heterosexual repression. Even if we consider that factually repression of homosexuals (and even legal discrimination in concerns of marriage) is far to have come to an end (even in the Western World); in this case, as in the case of women’s lib the cultural revolutionary breach of history is so evident that one could turn the famous aphorism of Nestroy the other way around and say, that progress is greater than it looks like.²⁴

III

However, the national welfare state could not solve the problem of growth alone, and the cultural revolution was transnational from the beginning. The territorial borders of the welfare state became the limits of its efficiency and functionality. National welfarism was not deemed fit for globalization. Neoliberalism was. Neoliberal globalization and reform have *turned the relations of dependency between public power and private money upside down*. Since the 1980’s the *tax state* that legally has taken the money away from the rich was replaced by the *debt state* that is dependent on the generosity of the rich. Since the 1990’s ever more workers lost their right to strike *factually*, and in exchange got *credits unlimited* at the expense of a new form of debt slavery. Finally *state embedded markets* turned into *market embedded states*.²⁵

Within the neoliberal political-economic regime high profit rates can be maintained only at the expense of *growing social differentiation*. However, this has deadly consequences for growth *and* democracy. Growth comes under permanent threat of *under-consumption*, and increasing social inequality causes increasing *political inequality*.²⁶ Democracy runs out of alternatives. Not absolute poverty but relative inequality *discour-*

22 Derrida, J. (1992) *The Other Heading*, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

23 This is a paradigm case of Habermas theory of deliberative democracy, see: Brunkhorst, H. (2016) *Deliberative Demokratie*, in: Peter Koller (ed.) *Kommentar zu Faktizität und Geltung*, Berlin: Akademie.

24 In his comedy “Der Zerrissene” Nestroy wrote that progress looks greater than it is.

25 Streeck, W. (2005) “*Sectoral Specialization: Politics and the Nation State in a Global Economy*” paper presented at the 37 World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm.

26 Schäfers, A. (2015) *Der Verlust politischer Gleichheit; Warum die sinkende Wahlbeteiligung der Demokratie schadet* Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag. On the theory of under-consumption see: Baran, P.A, Sweezy, P.M. (1966) *Monopoly Capital, An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*, New York: Monthly Review Press. Prices are decoupled from markets, profits are stable, their increase rates are predictable and can be planned, the cyclic (sinus curve like) fall and rise of profits suddenly comes to an end, and the profit margins of the 500 biggest US-firms remain consistently high since 2008 – to the horror of Goldman & Sachs (Joe Weisenthal, Goldman & Sachs says it may be forced to fundamentally question how Capitalism is Working. The profit margins debate could lead to an unsettling conclusion, Bloomberg Markets Feb. 3, 2016, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-03/goldman-sachs-says-it-may-be-forced-to-fundamentally-question-how-capitalism-is-working>). At the same time middle and lower classes do not have enough money to buy the most urgent consumer goods. The result is a crisis of under-consumption, as Marx described in *Capital*: “The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit.” Mark, K. (1968) *Das Kapital* Berlin, Dietz.

ages the people, resulting in a new but this time not utopian and hedonistic but a paralyzing and depressing *crisis of motivation* that explains the dramatic decrease of the voter turnout for lower middle and working classes that declined to 30% and less, whereas the turnout for upper classes almost reached 100%.²⁷ The result, leftist parties lose their voters, moving further right from election to election. Finally, we are left with the gloomy alternative between *right wing parties* of market fundamentalism with a culture of political correctness²⁸ and *far right parties* of market fundamentalism plus a neo-conservative cultural background that is nationalist, racist and religiously fundamentalist.²⁹ The fiction in 1979 that there was no alternative, soon became the social reality due to the consequences of the fiction. A paradigmatic case of the Thomas theorem of sociology: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences".³⁰

The disastrous increase of social inequalities also demolished the historical and actual justice of the global cultural and civil rights revolution. For the unemployed, previously convicted and lesbian African American, who lives in the homophobic and misogynist slum area of Baltimore with its racist police officers, the progressive new rights and freedoms *have no fair value* (Rawls). Therefore, they have become privileges, and the same is true with respect of the quickly growing banlieues of Europe.

Neoliberalism not only deconstructed welfarism, it also globalized the neoliberal state together with an ever-denser network of transnational private-law regimes. Private law that since its old Roman days is a law of coordination of the interests of the ruling classes, finally marginalized international public law, and stabilized the unequal relations between the global haves and the global have-nots.³¹ The state was subverted by private-public partnerships, and – together with the turn from the debating and disputing temple of the General Assembly to the executive police of the Security Council – ever more power was transferred from the legislators to transnationally united executive bodies.³² Legal formalism was replaced by legal dynamism, and legally bound formal rule by legally unbound informal rule.³³ The invention of the Eurogroup at the end of this period is paradigmatic. At the height of the Greek crisis the Group decided to expel the Greek minister of finance from an ongoing session. The minister asked for legal legitimation, the chief of the Group called for his lawyers. They told him that the Group did not exist in terms of European procedural law. Therefore, everything they did within the limits of the criminal code was legal.³⁴

Again, this trend is stabilized by the constitutional treaties and the institutional structure of the European Union. Macroeconomic decisions are determined in advance by the treaties.³⁵ Price stability trumps full employment, labor market access trumps democratic

27 Schäfers, A. (2015) *Der Verlust politischer Gleichheit; Warum die sinkende Wahlbeteiligung der Demokratie schadet* Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag.

28 From Clinton's Democrats and Blair's Labor Party over Schröder's social democrats and Merkel's Christian Democrats to Hollande's socialists.

29 AfD, Le Pen, G.O.P. British Brexit coalitions etc..

30 Thomas, W.I. (1928) *The Methodology of Behavior Study*, New York: Knopf.

31 George, E. (2016) *"Transnational Commercial Arbitration and arbitrators: Institutions, Actors, Dynamics, Transnational Law"* panel contribution at Summer Institute, London: Kings College, Poon School of Law.

32 Koskeniemi, M. (2002) *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, Cambridge: University Press.

33 Ibid.

34 The Greek finance minister gave the following report about what happened after the Eurogroup had excluded him: "I asked for legal advice, from the secretariat, on whether a Eurogroup statement can be issued without the conventional unanimity and whether the President of the Eurogroup can convene a meeting without inviting the finance minister of a Eurozone member-state. I received the following extraordinary answer: "The Eurogroup is an informal group. Thus it is not bound by Treaties or written regulations. While unanimity is conventionally adhered to, the Eurogroup President is not bound to explicit rules." (Yanis Varoufakis, "As It Happened – Yanis Varoufakis' Intervention during the 27th June Eurogroup Meeting" 2015, <https://yanisvaroufakis.eu/2015/06/28/as-it-happened-yanis-varoufakis-intervention-during-the-27thjune-2015-eurogroup-meeting> (28.03.2017).

35 Dawson, M, de Witte, F. (2015) "From Balance to Conflict: A new Constitution for the EU", *European Law Journal* 21.

class struggle, financial conditionality trumps solidarity, austerity trumps Keynesian solutions, market imperatives trump democratic decisions, and competitiveness trumps everything. Competitiveness is the “hidden curriculum” of the constitutional law of Europe.³⁶ This hidden curriculum has transformed democratic class struggle into a struggle of nations over the generosity of investors.

Thus, if in European macroeconomic choices “are taken in an institutional setting that provides near-perfect protection against the interference of input-oriented political processes and of democratic accountability in the constituencies affected.”³⁷ The final touch of this institutional setting is, as Jelena von Achenbach has shown, the Trilog procedure that precedes the ordinary legislative procedure of the three European powers of Parliament, Commission and Council, and allows the leaders of these institutions to bypass the parliamentary public and the constitutional law of the parliament, depriving en passant parliamentary minorities from any influence.³⁸

If there is a future of global capitalism with market-embedded states, the likelihood is extremely high that it will be a *new formation of authoritarian liberalism*.³⁹ We are already approaching a hypermodern dual state with a social separation of labour between authoritarian prerogatives and rule of law.⁴⁰ Ernst Fraenkel’s and Franz Neumann’s studies from the late 1930’s are of gloomy actuality again. The new dual state consists of a strong tendency towards legal over-integration of the ruling classes and under-integration of lower classes and excluded populations. Whereas the former appears only as plaintiffs in court, the latter appear only as accused.⁴¹ Prerogative law and the declared or undeclared state of siege are normalized. Paradigmatic is the emergence of smart and flexible border regimes, which are repealing all citizens living in the border region from most of their constitutional rights. In the US, these are already two third of the entire population (Coast Region and Great Lakes).⁴² AfD, Front National, Victor Orban, Donald Trump, Stephen Bannon and Boris Johnson are the *logical consequence of market fundamentalism in permanent crisis*. “In case of doubt send the marines” (Tom Lerner) – or the bankers as in the Troika-rule over the Greek colony of the Eurozone. “The state is back in. But the state does not represent democracy at all.”⁴³

The only alternative to authoritarian liberalism is democratic socialism. My thesis is that any *democratic* solution to the five major crises of the functionally differentiated, capitalist world society – the crises of growth, social inequality, societal exclusion, environmental devastation and functional globalization – at least must take a large step in the direction of a *socialization of the means of production*. However, democratic socialism can be successful only if it solves all five crises at once, which today shake world society. This is not impossible but close to being impossible. The following classification of crises and solutions, which are compatible with democracies presupposes a theory of complex and

36 Offe, C. (2003) “The European model of ›social‹ capitalism: Can it survive European integration?”, in: *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 11/4 pp. 437-469.

37 Scharpf, F. (2013) “*Political Legitimacy in a Non-optimal Currency Area*” Cologne: MPIfG.

38 Von Achenbach, J. (2016) „*Verfassungswandel durch Selbstorganisation: Trilogie im Europäischen Gesetzgebungsverfahren*“, in: *Der Staat* 55 pp. 1-39.

39 Heller, H. (2015) Authoritarian Liberalism, *European Law Journal* 3 pp. 295-301; Wallerstein, I, et al. (1975) *Does Capitalism have a Future*, 9-36; Herbert Marcuse, “*Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitären Staatsauffassung*“, in: *Marcuse, Kultur und Gesellschaft I*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

40 The dual state is a mix of (inclusive) norm-state (or *Rechtsstaat*) and (exclusive) prerogative state (or police-state), and there are more formations of the double state than pre-war fascist regimes, on the paradigm case of the latter see: Fraenkel, E. (1969) *The Dual State*, New York: Octagon.

41 Neves, G. (1999) ‘Zwischen Subintegration und Überintegration: Bürgerrechte nicht ernstgenommen’, *Kritische Justiz* 4 pp. 557-577.

42 Shachar, A. “New Border and Citizenship Constellations: Implications for Law and Justice”, paper presented at the WZB Workshop ‘Critical Theory and Constitutionalism’, Berlin 11.12.2015.

43 Klug, H. (2016) “*Transnational Commercial Arbitration and arbitrators: Institutions, Actors, Dynamics*”, *Transnational Law Summer Institute*, London: Kings College, Poon School of Law.

divergent differentiation, and – as in Marx' political economy – the structural differences are the critical points where crisis emerges. All critical tendencies of globalized capitalism are related to *basic clusters of differentiation* in modern society.

The increasing *social difference* causes – as already described – a *crisis of motivation and legitimization*, and enhances the threat of *secular stagnation*. Thus, to save growth and democracy, *massive redistribution* of wealth to the lower and middle classes is the only realistic perspective, just because only these classes buy masses of consumer goods. Massive redistribution would kill two birds with one stone, the threat of *economic collapse* through stagnation, and the threat of *democratic collapse* through political inequality. Unfortunately, there are many more birds in the air over Bodega Bay.

The crisis of societal exclusion (that undermines functional differentiation⁴⁴) has transformed the structural difference of *center and periphery* into the social difference between *included* and *excluded* populations. National exclusion rates increased since 2000 between 22% and 40%.⁴⁵ Whereas the degraded middle and lower classes have lost any chance to change their inferior social position, excluded populations are excluded from access to all social systems (as the homo-sacer or the outlaw in old-European stratified societies).⁴⁶ The only promising cure is *massive investment in educational and socialization agencies together with a basic income*, high enough, for example, to pay tuition and the entire costs of study in the United States.⁴⁷

The difference of *system and environment* causes ecological devastation. The only solution for the environmental problems (if there is any) is *green growth*. The enormous proportions of the problem come to the fore once we take into account only CO₂-reduction through Carbon capture and storage, because this is possible only with far reaching infringements of land ownership worldwide.⁴⁸

In principle, all that is feasible by parliamentary legislation on the national level, even if it needs therefore coordinated intergovernmental action, which is highly implausible. However, for the last problem no intergovernmental solution is available any longer.

Functional differentiation went global, and if we only take the most dangerous system of capitalist world economy in account, there seems to be no other effective mean against the blackmailing power of global capital than the transference of real power – still called with an outdated term 'sovereignty' – to *democratically legitimated and controlled transnational governmental structures* on regional and global levels.

This latest problem cannot be solved by national and intergovernmental means any longer. Therefore, what it needs, is democratic government on continental and – to a certain extend - also on the global level.

Any solution to the five crises of differentiation that is only approximate, would transform capitalism so radically that a system that is highly productive at the cost of unsustainability and catastrophes in its societal and natural environment, would become sustainable and, by the way, much more democratic than any previous democracy. Such a system still could be called democratic capitalism (in the meaning of democratically controlled capitalism), and it still would rely on the informative capacity of markets (that was Hayek's strong point). However, it would no longer resemble capitalism as we know it,

44 Brunkhorst, H. (2005) *Solidarity* Cambridge, MIT Press.

45 Offe, C. (2016) 'The Dynamic of Secular Stagnation', paper presented at a conference on the topic Jenseits des Kapitalismus in Wuppertal.

46 Luhmann, N. (1997) *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

47 Here are well calculated models available: Ackerman, B, Alstott, A. (2001) *Die Stakeholder-Gesellschaft. Ein Modell für mehr Chancengleichheit*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus; Grözinger, G. Maschke, M, Offe, C. (2006) *Die Teilhabegesellschaft. Modell eines neuen Wohlfahrtsstaates*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus.

48 Edenhofer, O. (2014) 'Die Gretchenfrage des Klimawandels, 'Nun sag, wie hast Du es mit dem Eigentum?''

and therefore might become the first working formation of democratic socialism, which for the first time in history would unite horizontal with vertical emancipation.

IV

At least one major step on the road to global democratic socialism could be taken by the European Union. What is good about the European Union is that there is already the unique invention of a democratically elected transnational Parliament. Articles 9-12 of the Treaty of Lisbon constitutionalize the by far most advanced democracy of an international organization.⁴⁹ The Treaty already contains nearly everything needed for a (partial) continental solution of the five crises. The *ordinary legislative procedure* that binds the three European powers, the Parliament, the Commission and the Council together comes, as Jürgen Bast has shown, very close to a full-fledged *constitutionalization of European democracy*, because, as Franzius and Habermas have shown, it represents both, the *national peoples* and the *citizens of the Union*.⁵⁰

Unfortunately, at present under Art. 9-12, even the parliamentary elections and the legislative procedure are constitutional 'kitsch' (Koskenniemi). The last elections were a caricature of democracy, Junker said, 'I prefer p', and Schulz contradicted, 'No, I am strongly against it, I prefer p, and therefore I call q.' The Monty Python Show. The agencies of the legislative procedure (Parliament, Council, Commission) are the true European legislator but half-informal and completely informal groups like the European Council and the Eurogroup. Since the so called Greek crisis the perfect protection of the united executive bodies of Europe is under public attack, from the right and from the left.

With every further day of crisis, it becomes ever more evident that the only way out is the *derogation of the Treaties*, the abolishment of the European Council and the Eurogroup, and a *new constitutional foundation of a Union of the Eurozone*, equipped with a legislative procedure that has comprehensive jurisdiction (Allzuständigkeit) on the federal level, and sufficient administrative power to enforce it.

The European Parliament needs the same *budgetary competencies* as the American Congress, and that includes the *right to impose taxes*. The slogan of the American Revolution is also true the other way around, "There is no representation without taxation". Taxation is a necessary (although not a sufficient) condition for any public law that is egalitarian and anti-hierarchical.⁵¹ Moreover, the Union needs full competence in *foreign affairs* and a *European army*, or at least the command for all interventions beyond Europe's borders. This is even more important in times of an American government that is retreating from its European and NATO commitments. A model of federal foreign policies in Europe could be the German Empire of 1870, which still had autonomous foreign policies and armies on the state-level.⁵² Most of the rest then can be taken away from Brussels and done by the national states and on subnational, regional levels, and it needs a possibility to increase and decrease the value of the common currency for member states and

49 von Bogdandy, A. (2012) The European Lesson for International Democracy: The Significance of Articles 9–12 EU Treaty for International Organizations *European Journal of International Law* 23: 315–34.

50 Bast, J. (2011) "Europäische Gesetzgebung – Fünf Stationen in der Verfassungsentwicklung der EU." In *Strukturfragen der Europäischen Union*, edited by Claudio Franzius, Franz C. Meyer and Neyer M., 173–180. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag; Franzius, C. (2014) *Recht und Politik in der Transnationalen Konstellation*. Frankfurt: Campus; Habermas, J. (2012) *The Crisis of the European Union*, Oxford: Polity.

51 On the internal relation of egalitarianism and its anti-hierarchical direction in constitutional law see: MacKinnon, C. (2016) "Substantive Equality: *Hierarchy in Canada and the World*", paper presented at ICON Conference Berlin; and in the evolutionary prehistory and history of constitutional law see: Boehm, C. (2001) *Hierarchy in the Forest. The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press; Portela, F, Almeida, L. (2014) "The emergence of constitutionalism as an evolutionary adaptation", in: Cardozo Pub. Law, Policy and Ethics 1: pp. 1–96; Brunkhorst, H. (2016) "Sociological Constitutionalism – An Evolutionary Approach", forthcoming in: Paul Blokker and Chris Thornhill (Ed.): *Sociological Constitutionalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

52 Fassbender, B. (2007) *Der offene Bundesstaat. Studien zur auswärtigen Gewalt und zur Völkerrechtssubjektivität bundesstaatlicher Teilstaaten in Europa* Tübingen: Mohr.

regions under certain conditions of emergency, regulated by the European legislative procedure.

Nothing less powerful than a European federal regime with full budgetary, taxation and foreign policy competencies will be able to cope with the blackmailing power of global economy, and in addition to the military threats from regimes like Putin's Russia (or Trump and Bannon's America), and to solve the coming migration problems in accordance with human rights and democracy. The present way of solving the problem through the unconstitutional rule that in case of doubt security trumps human rights has led to a deep crisis of human rights in Europe, which are now coming close to Indian or Chinese standards.⁵³

As empirical research shows, a majority of European citizens favor a federal union that gives the choice over political, economic and social alternatives back to the people.⁵⁴ People distrust political elites, and rightly so, but they trust each other beyond all borders. There are surprisingly large majorities even in favor of a transfer-union and a European social welfare state. More than 70% of the Germans would support such a union – even if they would lose money.⁵⁵

However, because the institutional setting of the EU provides a near-perfect protection against any movement of input-democracy, the option for a European democracy with real choices literally has become utopian, and the commodified, now totally privatized old mass-media have desensitized themselves for everything that does not fit to the existing political system. Therefore, I know that I prefer social Europe but my neighbors do not, although many of my neighbors have the same feeling. However, legitimization crisis now begins to break the spiral of silence. The Far-Right winners of the European elections and Brexit have at least *one* democratic achievement, to present the European power-elites with the choice, either to watch passively their own agony, and to lose the majority in one parliament after the other, and to adapt and convert to authoritarian liberalism, or to take the bull by the horns and let the people decide themselves. The sooner the better are the chances of democratic growth and enlargement, and even if they decide against Europe – it would at least be their own deliberative and democratic choice.

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53 Baer, S. (2016) *"Inequalities that matter"*, paper ICON Conference Berlin.

54 Eurostat (2015); Simms, B, Zeeb, B. (2016) Europa an Abgrund, München: Beck; Eigmüller, M. (2016) *Der Zusammenhalt Europas, Vortrag Akademie für Politische Bildung* Tuzing 24; Eigmüller, M. (2016) *Face in European Project* Reviving 116.

55 Gerhards, J, Lengfeld, H. (2013) "European Integration, Equality Rights and People's Beliefs: Evidence from Germany." *European Sociological Review* 29; Gerhards, J, Lengfeld, H. (2013) *Wir, ein europäisches Volk? Sozialintegration Europas und die Idee der Gleichheit aller europäischen Bürger*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS; Eigmüller, M. (2016) *Der Zusammenhalt Europas, Vortrag Akademie für Politische Bildung* Tuzing 24.

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Europe as a Green Leader? A Brief Evaluation of both the European Union's Climate and Energy Policy and Common Agricultural Policy

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Keywords: Climate and Energy Policy, Common Agricultural Policy, European Union, Leadership, Sustainable Development

The European Union aspires to be a frontrunner in the field of sustainability and environmental protection, often referred to as being a green leader. However, this self-description is being challenged by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and scholars who question the sustainability of European policies. Based on the climate and energy policy, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy, this paper evaluates whether the EU meets the requirements for sustainable development, meaning avoidance of a destructive exploitation of resources. This literature-based appraisal considers both an analysis of sustainability related policies as well as explanations for the recent developments in both fields. The analysis reveals that by means of developing these policies, the European Union continues at aiming to lead the way as a green frontrunner. At the same time, the Union falls short of fulfilling its role as a green leader when considering its self-imposed aims and goals, namely its policies to achieve these targets.

1. Introduction

In the political arena, the understanding of sustainability is still based on the Brundtland Commission's report from 1987 that defined sustainable development as a development that "seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" (WCED 1987, ch. 1, point 49). Though various economic and social issues are increasingly being discussed under the heading of sustainability as well (see for instance, Neckel in this issue), the concept centres around its normative claim to avoid the "overuse" of resources and ecosystems, i.e. using them only to the extent that does not exceed their natural capacity of regeneration. For many years, the European Union (EU) has been committed to sustainable development and claims to be at the international forefront combatting global warming and fostering environmental protection. Just in November 2016, the European Commission declared in a communication concerning the EU's actions to promote sustainability: "Sustainable development has long been at the heart of the European project" (European Commission 2016A: 2). And further "sustainability is a European brand" (ibid.: 17). This self-description of the EU as a "green leader" has been widely echoed in academic literature (Oberthür & Kelly 2008; Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007; Volger 2005). More recently, however, the EU's leadership role in green politics has become disputed. Especially in the field of climate and energy,

Europe's portrayal as a frontrunner has been challenged by non-governmental organizations (NGOs; see Bals et al. 2013) and scholars (Kilian & Elgström 2010; Aykut 2016)

This article assesses two core policy fields of the EU with regard to sustainable development and environmental protection: the EU's climate and energy policy as well as its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the so-called Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, mitigation of anthropogenic climate change lies at the centre of the international sustainability agenda. Preventing "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate" (UNFCCC, Art. 2) can only be achieved by a total decarbonisation of the global energy supply (WBGU 2011). Modern agriculture contributes to many of today's most severe environmental crises, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, deforestation, soil degradation, water pollution and shortages etc. (UNEP 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that climate and energy as well as agricultural policies can be regarded as crucial for benchmarking a polity's efforts to promote sustainable development.

The second part of this paper roughly outlines the EU's climate and energy policies and its key institutions. Additionally, the EU's recent role in the field of UN climate diplomacy is described. Afterwards, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, as well as the latest CAP reform 2014-2020 are introduced. Both sections end with a literature-based evaluation of these policies concerning the question of if these reforms are sufficient in order to meet the requirements for sustainable development, respectively to reach the EU's self-set policy goals in both fields. The final section of this paper aims at providing some explanations for the EU's present performances in the field of climate and energy policy as well as agricultural policy.

2. The EU a Global Leader on Climate Policies?

2.1 EU climate and energy policies

Political Leadership can be demonstrated in various ways (Gupta & Grubb 2000): In the field of climate and energy policies, the EU aimed at showing *leadership by example*. For years, the EU has unilaterally been committed to binding domestic emission reduction and energy targets (Aykut 2016: 4; Andresen et al. 2016: 190; Schreurs 2016: 219). In 2008, the EU agreed on the so-called 20-20-20 targets, including (1) cutting GHG emissions by 20% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, (2) obtaining 20% of EU energy consumption from renewable resources by 2020, and (3) reducing 20% in primary energy use (compared with projected levels), by improving energy efficiency (European Commission 2010A). This "climate and energy package" became law in 2009. Targets and policies for 2020 were just seen as the first step towards defining long-term goals. In 2009, in advance of UN climate summit in Copenhagen (COP 15), the EU also announced the goal of reducing GHG emissions between 80% and 95% by 2050 against 1990 levels (Andresen et al. 2016: 190).

In order to meet its targets, the EU has taken several actions. Already in 2005, the EU launched the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). Emissions trading (or cap and trade) is a market-based approach to reducing emissions: Polluters are required to hold permits for their emissions that are allocated or sold by a governmental authority. If polluters increase their emissions, they must buy additional permits. In theory, this mechanism provides an economic incentive for reducing emissions, for instance, by investing in clean technologies. The EU ETS covers around 45% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions and is the world's largest carbon market to date (Andresen et al. 2016: 192). However, the EU ETS has struggled with a carbon price that has been too low to provide strong incentives to a low-carbon transformation (ibid). Despite a structural reform of the EU ETS and the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015, the European carbon price remained low or even dropped further (ibid).

In October 2014, the EU countries agreed on a new framework for climate and energy, including EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2020 and 2030. The targets for 2030 include (1) a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels, (2) at least a 27% share of renewable energy consumption, and (3) at least 27% energy savings compared to projected energy consumption (European Commission 2014A). To meet these targets, the European Commission has proposed various policies, including a reform of EU ETS (see above). When the 2030 framework for climate and energy was negotiated, more determined member states (such as Germany) and the European Parliament were pushing for more ambitious targets. However, Poland opposed these ambitions, arguing that Europe was taking on too much of the global climate burden and that its coal-dominated economy would be threatened by the changes" (Schreurs 2016: 220). In contrast to the 20-20-20 target from 2008, this time also no agreement has been reached on how responsibility for achieving these targets can be distributed on a country-by-country basis (ibid).

2.2 The EU's climate diplomacy and the Paris Agreement

The EU's own binding climate and energy targets have been underpinning the EU's persistent support of an international climate agreement. This sustained engagement in UN climate diplomacy constitutes a second realm of EU leadership in the field of climate policy (Groen et al 2012). Since the EU speaks with one voice in international climate negotiations, its influence has traditionally been comparatively strong (Aykut 2016: 3). The most significant instance of EU leadership in the field of climate diplomacy "is arguably its decision to move forward with ratification of the Kyoto Protocol after President George W. Bush made clear on March 28, 2001 that his intention was to withdraw the US from the agreement" (Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007: 20). History repeated itself when US president Donald J. Trump announced on June 1, 2017 that the US would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the post-Kyoto climate treaty. In response, the president of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, declared that the EU would "step up" its climate leadership, this time in close collaboration with countries of the African Union and China (European Commission 2017). However, in 2009, at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen (COP 15), the EU's aspiration to perform leadership in the realm of international climate negotiations suffered a severe setback. At Copenhagen, a post-Kyoto international climate agreement was supposed to be negotiated. In the course of the conference the EU found itself excluded from the core negotiations, and the US and with the so-called BASIC countries (Brazil, South-Africa, India and China) agreed on the so-called Copenhagen Accord, a legally not binding document without determination.

In Paris, 6 years later, when an international climate agreement for the post Kyoto period could finally be reached, the EU played again a much more important role: Despite initial attempts of Poland's right-wing government to torpedo negotiations, the EU managed to maintain a considerable political unity throughout the Paris Conference, helping to build a 'high-ambition coalition' that proved instrumental in achieving a dynamic agreement with all big emitters on board (Andresen et al. 2016: 191). Poland could be pleased when references to 'phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies' were deleted from the Paris Agreement (ibid.). Additionally, French diplomacy – France's foreign minister Laurent Fabius hosted the conference – gained much international recognition for facilitating the treaty.

The Paris agreement aims at maintaining the global temperature rise to "well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels" (Paris Agreement). The Paris Agreement can be described as legally binding *and* voluntary at the same time (Schreurs 2016: 220). It obliges all parties "to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts" (Paris Agreement) and to

become more progressive over time. However, what kind of effort can be decided independently by each participating party. The agreement only expects signatory states to “prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions” (ibid.). These so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are to be communicated every five years and may later be adjusted “with a view to enhancing its level of ambition” (ibid.). The 40% emission reductions of the 2030 target (see 2.1) served as the EU’s NDC. The great achievement of the Paris Agreement is that it can be regarded as universal: almost 200 countries have communicated their climate targets. Existing pledges do not, however, appear to go far enough to remain within the goal of international climate politics, the 2°C target. Assessments suggest that the countries’ pledged NDCs will most likely keep temperature rises only at between 2.6 °C and 3.1 °C by 2100 (Schreurs 2016: 219). The EU ratified the Paris Agreement on 5 October 2016.

2.3 The EU’s contribution to combat climate change

Without political climate action, the global mean temperature in the 21st century might rise by up to 4.8 °C compared to the late 20th century (IPCC 2014: 60). In the field of international climate governance, sustainability translates into the widely accepted threshold to limit global temperature rise below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. This target has been confirmed at various international climate summits and is quoted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; goal 13).

The 2°C target was already adopted by the EU Council in 1996 (Hulme 2012: 122). So how can the EU’s actions to reach this target be evaluated? According to the “Climate Action Tracker” (CAT), an independent scientific analysis produced by Climate Analytics, Ecofys, and The New Climate Institute, the target of 40% emissions reduction by 2030 is “significantly behind what is achievable and necessary by the EU” (CAT 2017). “Between 1990 and 2015 the EU’s emissions decreased by 24%, or approximately 1.1% per year. As a result, from now until 2030, emissions only need to decrease by about 1.2% annually to achieve the 2030 emissions reduction goal. A continuation of this trend would lead to emissions reduction by around 64% below 1990 levels” (ibid.). In other words, the EU’s 2030 target represents a slowdown in ambition compared to the preceding 25 years. However, the 2°C target would require the opposite, an acceleration of climate actions „to at least three times the historical rate of reduction—for decarbonisation by mid-century to be achieved” (ibid.). The aspirational goal mentioned in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming at 1.5 °C compared to preindustrial level even widened the gap between the Paris outcome and EU targets, policies, and position, which are based on the 2.0°C goal (Andresen et al. 2016: 191). In March 2016, the Commission published its Communication “The Road from Paris” (European Commission 2016B) and confirmed that 2020 and 2030 targets were to remain unchanged. The EU just committed to consider more ambitious action beyond 2030 (Andresen et al. 2016: 191). In other words, the level of climate action, which is necessary to reach the EU’s self-set targets, is postponed to future decision makers, hoping that they will find the necessary majorities to promote them.

What else can so far be said about the outcome of the EU climate and energy policies? Currently, the EU (EU 28) is responsible for approximately 10 % of all global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Relatively, this is significantly less than in 1990 when the EU caused roughly 17% of global emissions and was the second largest emitter after the US. Of course, this relative decrease of the EU’s share in global total emission is due to increasing emissions of emerging economies, especially from China, which today accounts for 30% of the global GHG emissions and is the single largest contributor to anthropogenic climate change (PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency 2015). However, by 2015, absolute EU GHG emissions were also 23% below 1990 levels. On the first sight,

these numbers look impressive. However, experts agree that this reduction is largely not a result of related climate policies. Rather it was caused by the breakdown of industries in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, the offshoring of production sites outside the EU (Aldy/Stavins 2009), and more recently, the activity-dampening effects of the economic crisis (Andresen et al. 2016: 190).

A direct outcome of the climate and energy policies – not only for the EU itself but of various of its member states too – is the enormous diffusion of renewable energies: Just ten years ago more than 80% of set up capacities for generating power in the EU were invested in fossil fuels (Aykut 2016: 11). This changed fundamentally. Today, 72% of newly installed energy capacities are renewables (ibid). However, the situation within the EU and its various member states differ fundamentally. For instance, in Germany, which triggered investments in renewable energies technologies by guaranteed feed-in tariffs, the share of renewables for generating electricity increased from 6% in 2000 to 30% in 2015 (ibid). In contrast, “nearly 90% of Poland’s electricity is produced by mainly indigenous coal that feeds 53 coal-fired plants, with a dozen new ones expected to come on-line before 2020” (Andresen et al. 2016: 191). These examples seem to show that up to now and in its current shape, policies on the level of the national state appear to show more impact than general EU policies (such as the EU ETS).

3. Towards Sustainable Agriculture in Europe?

3.1 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): Origin and Background

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU is a globally distinct and comparatively stable policy which formation by the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1962 had a significant impact on Europe’s agricultural production and consumption as well as on the environment. Only one decade after its implementation, the CAP regulated more than 90% of the community agriculture, remaining to date a policy with one of the highest budgets in the EU (Tekin 2013). The CAP, as characterized by the European Union itself, functions as “a partnership between Europe and its farmers” (European Commission 2014B: 1), emphasizing the importance of the rural and agricultural space in Europe. This characterization can directly be related to the objectives of the CAP which, as laid down in the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Article 39, refer to an increase in agricultural productivity, a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, the stabilization of the markets, the availability of supplies and the access of consumers to these supplies at reasonable prices. These objectives, with a focus on ensuring food supply, have been maintained since their introduction in 1962 but have gradually been shifted towards an increased recognition of the fact that agriculture is embedded into wider social, cultural and environmental interactions, rather than solely the production of food (European Commission 2014B; Weingarten 2010).

Economically and environmentally, agriculture remains a significant sector where in 2013 10.8 million farmers worked on utilized agricultural land (UAA) of 174.4 million hectares, representing 40% of the total land area of the EU (Eurostat 2016: 32). These numbers indicate that agricultural production goes beyond its main policy objective of food production, playing a central role in social and ecological terms. The coherence of the EU’s agriculture and the environment have appropriately been described by Weizsäcker et al. (2010), stating that it is “ironical that the impacts of the climate change on the agricultural production are raised by the agricultural production itself” (p.160 *own translation*). Although declining over the past decades, the agricultural sector remains with 10.35% of total GHG emissions (Eurostat 2016: 128; *data from 2012*) one of the major branches responsible for the emissions, while also being responsible for 93.3% of total ammonia

emissions of the EU (Eurostat 2016: 134; *data from 2013*). Additionally, European agriculture causes a diversity of other environmental problems such as biodiversity loss due to habitat degradation and the spread of monoculture practices; deterioration of the soils through, amongst others, loss of fertility, erosion and salinization; pollution of the water and the air due to pesticides and fertilizers as well as fossil fuel use; and change in the natural scenery (Commission of the EC 2000; Nilsson 2004; Weizsäcker et al. 2010).

It is also for this reason that the European agricultural policy has undergone several significant reforms since its establishment. In its early years, the CAP has been the main driving force behind agricultural intensification and specialization, leading eventually to negative impacts on the environment and “production beyond consumption” (McAdam 2005: 19). This production-oriented policy has been reformed over the years where since the mid-1980s emphasis has increasingly been given to a greening of the CAP, including inter alia considerations in form of cross-compliance as well as agri-environmental measures to encourage farmers to enhance and protect the environment on their farming land. The measures have been implemented to promote environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, integrating environmental concerns and priorities into the CAP (Commission of the EC 2000; DG Agri 2005). The introduction of such measures have altered the balanced weight of the objectives and goals of the CAP where a general shift towards sustainability and environmental considerations can be identified (Drăgoi & Bâlgăr 2013; Weingarten 2010).

3.2 The CAP Reform 2014-2020

The CAP has continuously been a subject of review where critics argue that the set of measures are highly protectionist, while at the same time being resistant to change (Burrell 2010). This resistance to change can especially be applied to the fact that the key objectives of the CAP have remained relatively stable over the years where the reforms followed a “consistent reform trajectory” (Burrell 2010: 6). The CAP reform 2014-2020 can be argued to be no exception to this consistency, since the adoption of a new set of regulations in 2013 resulted only in minor regenerations of the general objectives and instruments, especially regarding environmental considerations (Erjavec et al. 2015; Garske 2016; Hoffmann 2016)

In response to the debates on the future of the CAP, the European Commission published the Communication ‘The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future’ in November 2010. The Communication identified the main challenges and objectives for the CAP, framing the debates around the CAP reform ahead. The Commission pictured a future CAP that “should contain a *greener* and more equitably distributed first pillar and a second pillar focussing more on competitiveness and innovation, *climate change* and the *environment*” (European Commission 2010B: 3; *emphasizes customized*) with a focus on an environmentally and territorially balanced agriculture. This picturing of the Commission was termed the ‘greening of the CAP’ as widely acknowledged by politicians and academics (Erjavec et al. 2015).

Following the wording of the Commission, the final reform agreement offers a “more holistic and integrated approach to policy support” (European Commission 2013: 1) based on a strengthened link between the two persisting pillars of direct payments and market-related expenditures (pillar 1) and of rural development (pillar 2). First and foremost, the agreement implies readjustments of the direct payment in the first pillar of the CAP which also inherit the highly discussed greening element (Hiß 2013). The main greening elements of the CAP reform can be narrowed down to the implementation of the green payments, which are defined as decoupled payments for agricultural practices, being beneficial for the climate and the environment. The green payments form 30% of the total direct CAP payments and are devoted to the compliance with environmental

standards, which only those farmers who fulfil the environmental requirements receive. As laid down in Art. 43(2) of Regulation 1307/2013, these agricultural practices are identified as crop diversification, maintaining existing permanent grassland and having ecological focus areas (EFAs) on the agricultural area. A farmer satisfying these requirements of agricultural practice is entitled to receive the 'green' payment which takes form of annual payments per hectare (Anania & D'Andrea 2015). Farmers practicing organic agriculture are standardly considered to fulfil the requirements and therefore automatically receive the green payment. This is also the case for farming in natural constraint areas, Natura 2000 areas as well as forestry measures and investments (European Commission 2013). These direct greening payments indicate that environmental considerations have been incorporated into the scheme of the CAP reform. However, the final regulations on these decoupled payments contain a variety of loopholes and implementation decision to the member states that dilute the environmental specifications. By leaving slightly more than half of the direct payments schemes to voluntary decisions of the member states, the direct reform effects are therefore restricted. It is for this reason that civil society actors as well as a significant number of scientists have criticized the CAP reform as being watered down and greenwashed (Erjavec et al. 2015; Greer 2014).

3.3 Sustainability of the CAP

The EU has acknowledged that agricultural practices and thus the regulations of the CAP must comply with environmental standards and sustainable farming methods. Amongst others, this comes to the fore in the Communication 'Indicators for the Integration of Environmental Concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy' (Commission of the EC 2000) where it is conceded that the development of modern agricultural practices have increased the pressure on the environment, threatening the natural habitat. The EU therefore aspired to implement "sustainable agriculture" (p.6) within the CAP by means of introducing environmental measures through reforms. The above mentioned cross-compliance scheme, as well as the agri-environmental measures, indicate two major provisions to integrate environmental concerns into the CAP. But although the course of the CAP history indicates an increased recognition of targeting environmental concerns, agricultural practices within the EU can nevertheless be argued to continue to be restricted in terms of ecological sustainability.

Agricultural practices within the EU remain predominantly conventional and intensive, implying that environmental pressure due to farming methods is still persisting. This can be based on a variety of indicators: Firstly, the total organic area comprises only 5.9% of total EU UAA (Eurostat 2016: 103; data from 2014) although it is recognized as a practice beneficial for agricultural and environmental development. Secondly, pesticide usage remains one of the highest within the EU as compared to other regions of the world (De et al. 2014; Storck et al. 2016). Therefore, as research by Storck et al. (2016) proposes, the pesticide policy of the European Union is in an emerging need to change its legislation in favor of agricultural practices that do not harm the environment. Thirdly, related to the dominant agricultural practices, a sharp decline of biodiversity within the EU's farmland over the last decades can be detected. The European bird population, where a decline in the common farmland bird population has been verified, is one of the major examples of biodiversity loss. Between 1990 and 2013, an overall decline of 45% of the common farmland bird population has been detected where the intensification of crop rotation patterns as well as the usage of pesticides have been named as main causes (Eurostat 2016: 139). Similar developments can be detected concerning insects including bees that play a vital role for pollination.

Based on the CAP Reform 2014-2020, Garske (2016) as well as Hoffmann (2016) analyzed the CAP regarding its greening elements and its overall sustainability. Both studies on the reform documents conclude that its impact on the overall sustainability and effectiveness for protecting the environment remains limited. The introduction of the greening elements “have the potential to support the transition towards a more sustainable agriculture in Europe” (Garske 2016: 43; *own translation*) but only have a minor direct and implicit affect due to the persisting discourse of food security. This is also concluded by Erjavec & Erjavec (2015), arguing that the CAP remains dominated by a “productivist discourse” that is focused on guaranteeing food supply rather than sustainability. Therefore, on an overall scale, it can be argued that environmental aspects have only subordinately been included into the CAP, where the food demand remains the leading policy concern.

4. Discussion and Outlook

In *The Metamorphosis of the World*, published posthumously, Ulrich Beck (2016) argues that the anticipated catastrophe of climate change could lead to the development of new and strengthening of existing cosmopolitan institutions, in order to address this inherently global problem: „Perhaps the topos of climate change is even a form of mobilization thus far unknown in human history that breaks open a sanctimonious national autistic world with the vision of the impending apocalypse? Could it be, then, that the global climate risk, far from being an apocalyptic catastrophe, can be changed by active (cultural) work and cooperative politics of many actors into a kind of ‘emancipatory catastrophe’?” (ibid: 117). To support his reasoning, Beck refers to the experiences and horrors of World War II which “has led to a series of cosmopolitan institutions, such as the UN, the IMF, the World Bank and, most significantly, the European Union” (ibid: 115). And indeed, in March 2014, Donald Tusk as president of the European Council, suggested a deepening of vertical European integration by proposing a so-called European “Energy Union”. In February 2015, the European Commission launched the Energy Union Strategy, “an initiative to enhance coordination on energy policy among the EU Member States focusing on five policy areas: supply security, an integrated internal energy market, energy efficiency, climate change, and research and innovation for low carbon technologies” (Schreurs 2016: 220). However, this project can only partly be seen as the result of the “emancipatory catastrophe” of climate change. Mainly, it was enabled due to rising tensions with Russia related to the annexation of Crimea and the following Ukrainian crisis. The EU – the world’s single largest importer of energy – rather strives for energy security and seeks to reduce its related dependencies from Russia than finding a common ground for fighting anthropogenic climate change (Aykut 2016: 12; Schreurs 2016: 220). Especially Poland and a group of Central and Eastern European countries dependent on coal do not favour the EU’s long-term climate targets (Andresen et al. 2016: 190). In recent years, they have managed to push for a slowdown of the European ambitions in climate change mitigation. But also “model students” in climate and energy policies – such as Germany with its announced *Energiewende* – have undermined the EU’s ambition to reduce GHG emissions. For instance, the German government has repeatedly blocked EU plans on limiting emissions from new cars in order to protect its automotive industry including luxury marques with relatively high emissions. Diverging interests also exist between the energy-intensive industries that argue for a level playing field between the EU and major competitors, and the electric power industry shielded from competition outside Europe (ibid). In sum, this leads to a paradoxical situation, in which the EU supports relatively ambitious long-term goals – such as the 2°C targets or even the Paris agreement that aims at keeping global temperature “well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels” – but so far fails to deliver the short-term targets and policies that would be necessary to achieve these goals.

In the field of agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy a similar gap between claims and reality can be witnessed. The outcomes of the 2014-2020 reform underline that the CAP is moving in the direction of environmental considerations but that the changes are made within the existing system, which ultimately slows down the process of implementing and prioritizing environmental sustainability. Food security by means of the EU's food demand remains the dominant discourse in the CAP and hampers the development towards solid environmental commitments that the EU's agriculture must follow. The course of the CAP reforms indicate that the CAP is increasingly incorporating sustainability and the protection of the environment. However, the agricultural policy field comprises a broad range of interests and strong lobby groups, such as the food industry, who remain to have a tremendous influence on the CAP development and its greening. By means of interest mediation, environmental standards are therefore only slowly being targeted.

Coming back to the main question of this paper whether the EU can (still) be regarded as a green leader. Leadership is a relative concept. The preceding analysis for the field of climate and energy policies showed that – compared to other major emitters (such as the US or China) – the EU has been able to act as a “leader” for many years. More recently, this role became challenged by China and the US, which also pushed the Paris Agreement (for instance, both countries jointly ratified the agreement one month before the EU). Additionally, concerning investments in clean energy, China and the US showed high dynamics in recent years while green investments in the EU largely stagnated (PEW 2014). In total numbers, China surpasses EU investments in clean energies, while the US invests on the same level in clean energies as the EU (ibid). With the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States, this situation could, however, change again. Trump already announced that the US will withdraw from the Paris Agreement, and made several decisions supporting the fossil fuel industries. Therefore, Europe could regain or defend its position as a green leader. Ironically, this would happen at a moment when the EU slowed down its own ambitions (compared to last two decades). This constitutes a kind of leadership that can best be summarized with idiom “In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king”.

How can the EU's weakened ambition in green politics be explained? Above, several tensions and frictions between member states concerning environmental policies have been named. However, these cannot function as ultimate explanation since these tensions could already be witnessed at the beginning of the century when the EU still strived for more rigorous goals. So, what has changed? In recent years, the political situation has been more difficult for climate action commitments and environmental politics in general. The resurgence of nationalist and far right parties as well as populism in Europe has generally weakened support for European policies and further integration. Most of these right-wing and populist parties – such as the Le Pen's National Front in France or the German AfD – also deny the findings of climate science and oppose participation in the Paris Agreement. In some Central and Eastern European countries, respective parties have come to power and succeeded in torpedoing Europe's environmental agenda (see above).

Additionally, worries about the economic situation after the financial crisis – with parts of Southern Europe still struggling – marginalised environmental concerns in Europe and shifted to political focus on issues such as economic competitiveness and growth, job creation etc. (Andresen et al. 2016: 193). This does not only hold true for official politics and political decision makers. A strong level of public concern has been identified as one of the factors that explain why the EU has been at the forefront of global efforts to tackle environmental problems such as climate change (Schreurs 2016: 220). However, data

from the World Values Survey for eight European countries suggests that in recent years the preferences in public opinion have partly shifted from environmental protection towards economic growth and job creation (see Figure 1).

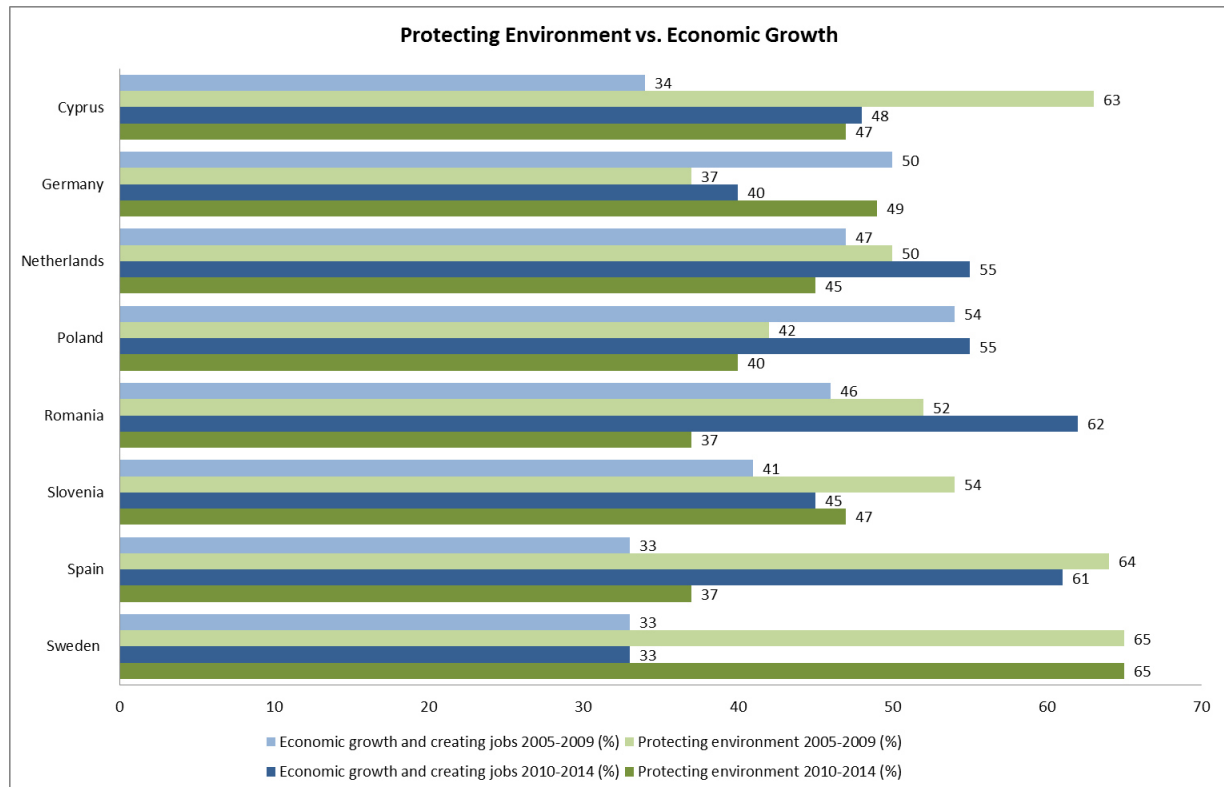


Figure 1: Economic growth and creating jobs vs. protecting the environment. Findings from 8 European countries. Source: WORLD VALUES SURVEY WVS-5 & WVS-6. World Values Survey Association (www.worldvaluessurvey.org); own calculation ($n = 10.881$).

It is striking that only in Germany, which has not been hit by a long-lasting economic depression, the situation is reverse. Additionally, there are countries (Slovenia and Sweden) that constantly favour environmental protection, or Poland that constantly favours economic development. These results hint to a structural dilemma: It seems that economic growth, which itself can be identified as one of the main drivers of environmental degradation (Jackson 2009), is a prerequisite for public support of strong environmental policies. If this is the case, the current political and economic outlook will make it challenging for the EU to become a “green leader” that is not only leading because other international actors perform even worse or fall behind.

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The Sustainability Society: A Sociological Perspective

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Keywords: Sustainability, Capitalism, Sociology, Modernisation, Postcapitalism

Sustainability has become a central theme in the public sphere and a key concept in social change. Numerous institutions, businesses, organisations and public entities invoke sustainability as a core value and as a guiding principle for their actions. The notion of sustainability has diversified in many directions and has been cited to support quite contradictory social agendas. Therefore, sociology should not regard sustainability as the long-sought solution to every environmental and societal problem. On the contrary, sustainability needs to be approached as itself a problem, one that societies of the present day must tackle and for which they will require solutions. Hence, the sociological approach presented in this paper addresses sustainability not as a normative guiding principle that designates something desirable per se. Instead, it takes up a problem-oriented and reflexive stance towards sustainability that does justice to sustainability's contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes. It is part and parcel of this reflexive perspective not to approach sustainability as something detached from the social conditions under which sustainable development can be implemented. Those conditions are essentially the structures of global capitalism that not only define the economic prerequisites of sustainability, but also constitute a cultural form of life that profoundly shapes everyday practices and self-relations.

Sustainability has an indisputably relevant place in society, and its significance and genesis have long been a distinct research object for the social sciences. Since the concept gained public currency with the *Report for the Club of Rome* in the 1970s, it has been used to respond to experiences of crisis and global risks that entered general awareness during the final quarter of the twentieth century (Meadows et al. 1972; Beck 1992). These risks arise pre-eminently from contemporary societies' confrontation with the destructive exploitation of resources that are essential to their survival – whether the natural resources of the ecosystem, the economic resources of societal prosperity, the social resources of welfare and solidarity, or the subjective resources of work performance and the conduct of private life, which today seem no less exhausted than the planet's fossil fuels.

1. Sustainability as a key concept in social change

Against the background of these dramatic processes, sustainability has become a central theme in the public sphere and a ubiquitous ideal for societal change, as well in the early industrialized countries of the global North as in some of the emerging economies of the South. This is exemplified by the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations in 2016. Alongside environmental issues, economic and social problems are increasingly being discussed under the heading of sustainability as well. The public discourse revolves around the possibilities of transforming social practices such as diet, consumption (Stengel 2011), or mobility (Knaut 2015), the debate on an economic order that is structurally dependent on growth (Binswanger 2009; Latouche 2009; Miegel

2011), and notions of justice specifically associated with sustainability. All these come together in the normative idea that the needs of the present must not be realised at the expense of those who will wish to realise their own needs in the future (see Birnbacher 1988). This guiding principle was set out as early as 1987, in the definition of sustainability proposed by the Brundtland Commission's report: "Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" (WCED 1987, ch. 1, point 49). What becomes obvious in this formulation is that sustainability has a particular temporality: it is a future-oriented model that is to take effect in the present. Sustainability stands for a societal *developmental goal* that aspires to provide for the future by reaching an equilibrium between the consumption of resources and their conservation. In the time horizon of the present, sustainability is understood as a *mode of action* by means of which the overexploitation of resources can be curbed and the developmental goal of resources security achieved.

From a sociological point of view, it is hardly surprising that the concept of sustainability has been appropriated by a wide diversity of actor groups during the process of its proliferation and increasing public visibility. Today, sustainability makes itself felt everywhere in societal discourses. Numerous institutions, businesses, organisations and public entities invoke sustainability as a core value and as a guiding principle for their actions. What is understood by "sustainability" in any one case has not remained stable in the course of this development; the notion has diversified in many directions and been enriched by different motivations, perspectives and interests. Sometimes, one and the same idea of sustainability has been cited to support quite contradictory social agendas. Advocates of a "green economy" and "smart" growth programmes (Fücks 2013), for example, regard sustainability as a vital precondition for future economic growth (Jänicke 2012), whereas proponents of the degrowth movement or convivialism (Adloff and Heins 2015; Les Convivialistes n.d.) see that very focus on economic growth as a serious obstacle to sustainable development (see Muraca 2014; Paech 2014; Fatheuer, Fuhr, and Unmüßig 2015; Brand and Wissen 2017).

1. Sustainability as a problem, not a solution

If only because of this multiplicity of meanings, for sociologists there can be no question of regarding sustainability as the long-sought solution to every environmental and societal problem. On the contrary, sustainability needs to be approached as itself a problem, one that societies of the present day must tackle and for which they will require solutions. A sociological approach, therefore, will address sustainability not as a normative guiding principle that designates something desirable per se, or something that can be investigated simply in terms of the societal conditions and functional requirements for its implementation – the procedure most often followed by current sustainability research (see the overview at www.futureearth.org). Instead, it will take up a problem-oriented and reflexive stance towards sustainability, a perspective that does justice to sustainability's contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes.

Sustainability should not, in other words, be sociologically investigated from the position of participants in society, but should serve as an observational category capable of offering us insights into the socioeconomic transformations that are under way, the novel lines of conflict that are emerging, the inequalities and hierarchies that are taking shape, the practices and new forms of justification for the social order (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) that can be identified as contemporary societies increasingly integrate sustainability-related criteria into their institutions and cultural value patterns. Attentive enquiry in sociological research on sustainability should, above all, be able to discover how sustainability interlocks with social relations of power. How sustainability is defined, and who

makes the decisions on sustainability, is a question of social hierarchies – just as the societal consequences of sustainability give rise to problems of social inequality. Before it can become binding, what is to be considered “sustainable” must be named as such, authorised, and ultimately implemented. Within these definition processes, different actor groups have differing degrees of the “power to *name*” (Bourdieu 1985, 729), the power to designate circumstances in the world according to their own categories. Who stands to gain from sustainability and who will bear its costs, who can expect sustainability to bring benefits and who will experience restrictions, is unequally distributed between different social milieus and life patterns. Sustainability thus becomes a socially embattled category, the conflictual negotiations of which present an object of special interest for sociology.

Although a reflexive and critical perspective insists that sociology keep its distance from its object, this does not necessarily stand in contradiction to the normative claims that are currently associated with sustainability. In general, we may say that in modern contemporary societies, only those value patterns will be justifiable in the long run that do not posit themselves absolutely, but remain open to public discourse and dissent, allowing themselves to be criticised and rethought. This is just as true of the value pattern of sustainability, which requires critical reflexivity if it is to avoid becoming ossified in terms of worldviews or special interests and thus losing legitimacy.

2. Sustainability as an element of capitalist modernisation

It is part and parcel of this reflexive perspective not to approach sustainability as something detached from the social conditions under which sustainable development can be implemented. Those conditions are essentially the structures of global capitalism, structures that not only define the economic prerequisites of sustainability and have multifarious social and political repercussions, but also constitute a cultural form of life that profoundly shapes everyday practices and self-relations in the present day (see Neckel 2008; Sachweh and Münnich 2016). The relationship of tension between sustainability and capitalism, the question of whether sustainability can be turned to profit or necessitates exit from the growth economy, and the ways in which global economies are changing due to sustainability – all these are crucial fields of enquiry for a sustainability research programme informed by a theory of capitalism.

The points of reference for such research today will inevitably be global ones, given that in the Anthropocene ecological crises such as climate change, marine pollution, non-renewable resource use and soil contamination have worldwide dimensions. These crises do not of course affect the different regions of the world in equal measure. Certainly, the postcolonial advances of countries such as China or India are now contributing substantially to trends such as the continuing increase in fossil fuel use – but as a whole, the poorer regions of the world, especially in the global South, are considerably more severely exposed to the impact of these ecological processes. Their greater vulnerability derives from the fact that the poorer countries of the South are far more dependent on their local conditions of existence and resource flows than are the richer societies of the North, which have access to global value chains as well as the power to externalise the negative consequences of their own economy and lifestyle by displacing them into the global South (see Lessenich 2016). One consequence of capitalism’s global triumph is the proliferation of an “imperial lifestyle” (Brand and Wissen 2017) that has, in a comparatively short period, universalised the economy of rapid resource consumption and long-term environmental damage.

It is not least due to these global crisis configurations that sustainability is becoming the next step in an inescapable, but internally contested, modernisation of contemporary capitalism. As with modernisation, sustainability serves to rejuvenate the capitalist econ-

omy and adapt it to changed framework conditions, especially with respect to ecology. The key problems of social reproduction that a sustainable modernisation of capitalism seeks to overcome are, firstly, the need to safeguard the renewability of the ecological, economic, social and subjective resources that social institutions require for their survival and must utilise for their own further development. It is becoming increasingly urgent to find ways of deploying and distributing resources that will not consume those resources completely in the application but are renewable – which is why the antithesis of the regenerative principle of sustainability is destructive exploitation. This ties in with sustainability's second problem of social reproduction: the need to ensure the potentiality of future development opportunities, which must not be destroyed or substantially circumscribed by the resource problems of the present. In this case, sustainability serves to safeguard a future inventory of opportunities for action, a store that must not continue to be run down by present-day societies. Its antithesis is determination, in the sense of open futures being transformed into closed ones. In both of these dimensions, sustainability constitutes an attempt to correct a capitalist logic of value generation that, because of its compulsion to increase profit, is unsustainable in and of itself.

At the same time, ecological modernisation regards itself as a socio-political strategy that undertakes to enlist the institutions of modern society, and especially its economy, for the purposes of an ecologically defined reorganisation. Existing structures of modern society in politics and the economy, such as liberal democracy and the capitalist market economy – as well as key elements of modern life conduct such as individualism, consumption, aspirations to affluence, and mobility – are to be not fundamentally transformed, but adapted to meet ecological constraints. In this view, markets and competition are not impediments blocking the turn to sustainability, but economic institutions that enhance efficiency and can be put to use for sustainable practices. This is epitomised by emissions trading, a well-known market-based “solution” to problems of sustainability (Engels 2006). Financial markets are considered efficient instruments to boost demand for investment in sustainably run enterprises, and the “financialisation of sustainability” (Feist and Fuchs 2014) has found expression in financial market products such as green bonds or impact investing. Models such as “green growth” or a “Green New Deal”, too, assume that technological progress will enable economic growth to be decoupled from resource consumption and the corresponding emissions. In recent years, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD 2011), the United Nations (UNEP 2011), the World Bank (Hallegatte et al. 2011) and the European Union (European Commission 2010) have all proclaimed green growth strategies to be the path of their future development.

3. Sustainability: The new spirit of green capitalism

Closely connected with the sustainable modernisation of capitalism is the gradual emergence of sustainability as a new justification pattern in the order and organisation of society. In Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello's study of the “new spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), capitalism renews and reproduces itself by “recuperating” and internalising whichever critique of capitalism is socially relevant at any one time (ibid., 441–7). A central pattern in the critique of capitalism today is the concept of sustainability, which is used to charge the capitalist growth economy with damaging the ecosphere and depleting essential natural resources. Contemporary processes of transformation clustering around “green capitalism” may be attributed not least to the critique pattern of sustainability being internalised, making it a new form of justification for modern capitalism. One circumstance supporting this interpretation is the generalisation of sustainability to become a normative criterion of social organisation. This process of generalisa-

tion can be identified everywhere to the degree that sustainability fans out from ecology to other domains of society. Regarded as a pattern of justification, sustainability could equip the “green capitalism” of the future with a new faith in progress, based on the alleged capacity of the modern economic and social order to learn and change.

Every regime of justification contains particular essential principles that define the intrinsic value of practices, objects and actors. Thus, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, connectivity is a superordinate value in the project-based justification regime of network capitalism (*ibid.*, 130–2). In the justification regime of sustainability, it will probably be the two principles of renewability and potentiality that form such values – raising the question of how the social orders of the present will change when they establish the justification pattern of sustainability.

Initial hints of an answer to this may be found in the tendency to subjectivise sustainability, something currently to be observed in all quarters. With its rigorous prioritisation of market success and competition, neoliberalism has given rise to the subjective ideal of the “entrepreneurial self”, characterised by an ethos of efficiency and optimisation. Among other things, the high public profile of crisis phenomena such as stress, burnout and depression marks a change in the cultural programmes of self-management, which are increasingly typified by maxims such as mindfulness, empathy, resilience and work–life balance. In the public sphere, these and similar topoi are regarded as indicators of a “subjective sustainability” assumed to enhance the renewability and potentiality of the individual’s resources.

4. Sustainability as transformation: Postcapitalism

The investigation of sustainability as a next stage in capitalist modernisation will attend primarily to the processes by which sustainability is integrated by and made utilisable for present-day capitalism. However, the debates around sustainability also offer numerous entry points for exploring the possibilities of societal transformations that transcend capitalism and its order of growth and competition. Sustainability is now seen not solely as a mode of renewing capitalism but, in many social discourses and practices, as an instrument to vanquish capitalism (see Sommer and Welzer 2014; Kaven 2015; Wright 2010). As a pivotal concept in thinking on “postcapitalism” (Mason 2015), sustainability articulates a desire to test out new forms of communal, cooperative or eco-sufficient economies and ways of life. The transformative potential of such practices – and the question of whether the new anticapitalist tendencies will generate spaces of freedom for a “democratic experimentalism” (Brunkhorst 2015) that may result in a rupture with the economic habitus of capitalism – forms a particularly interesting research domain in the sociological study of sustainability. Faced with capitalism’s internalisation of the sustainability pattern of critique, for example, transformative social movements are responding with a critique of sustainability itself, objecting to its conceptual narrowness and political instrumentality (see Blühdorn 2016). In the wake of such criticisms, conceptual alternatives to sustainability have become established in the political currents and debates of postcapitalism: the economy for the common good (Felber 2015), the commons (Bollier and Helfrich 2012), or, borrowing Karl Polanyi’s term, the “great transformation” (WBGU 2011).

Because such transformative discourses and practices ask not only how contemporary capitalism is changing, but also what is capable of transforming capitalism itself, they may become the constitutive object of a transcapitalist sociology that takes a new kind of interest in social forms beyond market competition and profit orientation. What do post-capitalist organisational forms mean for economic practices, modern lifestyles and contemporary self-relations? Empirically, these are far-reaching questions for a transcapitalist sociology. Conceptually, they offer the opportunity to rethink sociology itself from a

new vantage point. If there has hitherto been general agreement that sociology is a child of capitalism and took epistemic shape on the basis of capitalism's problems – that, in other words, capitalist modernity and modern sociology were constituted reciprocally – the tendencies of a postcapitalist society open up the prospect of conducting sociology beyond the capitalist era.

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