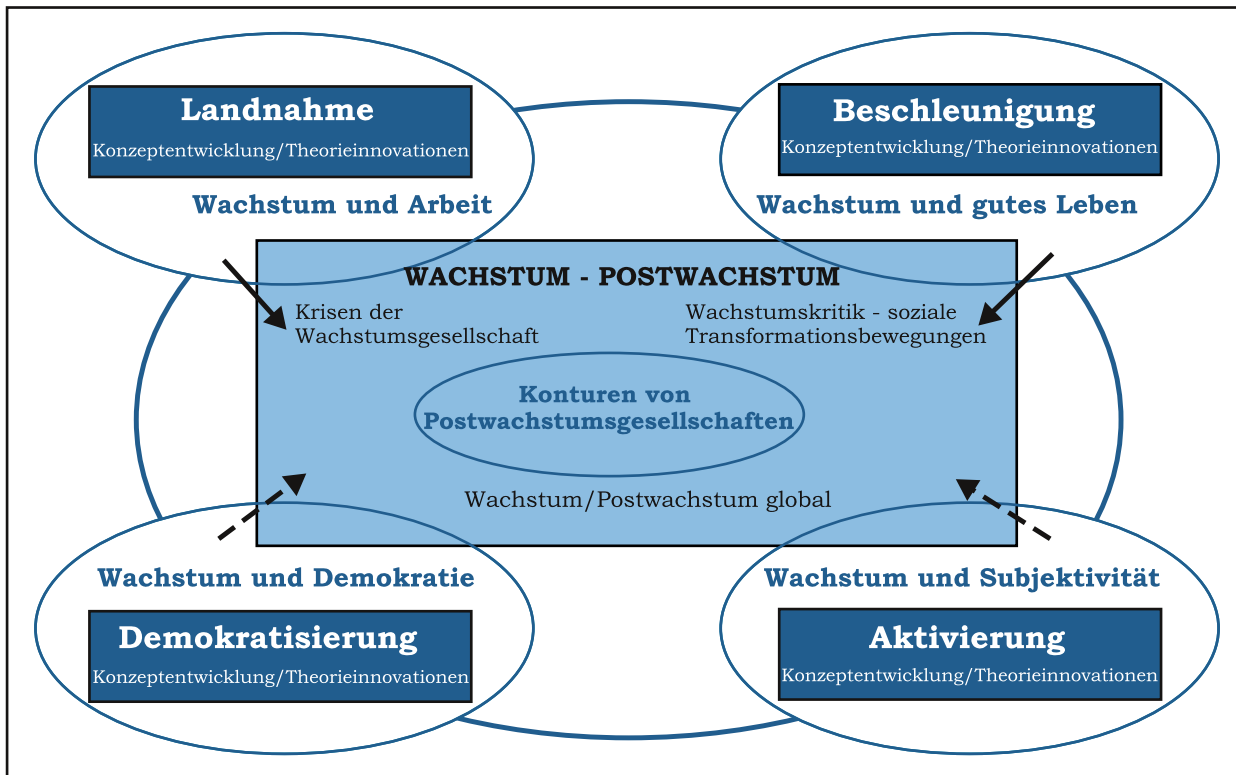


Antrag auf Weiterförderung der Kollegforscher_innengruppe

Landnahme, Beschleunigung, Aktivierung.
Dynamik und (De-)Stabilisierung moderner
Wachstumsgesellschaften

Thematisches Tableau



■ Forschungsstrang 1 ■ Forschungsstrang 2 ○ Themenfeld

Schaubild 1

Struktur der Kollegforscher_innengruppe

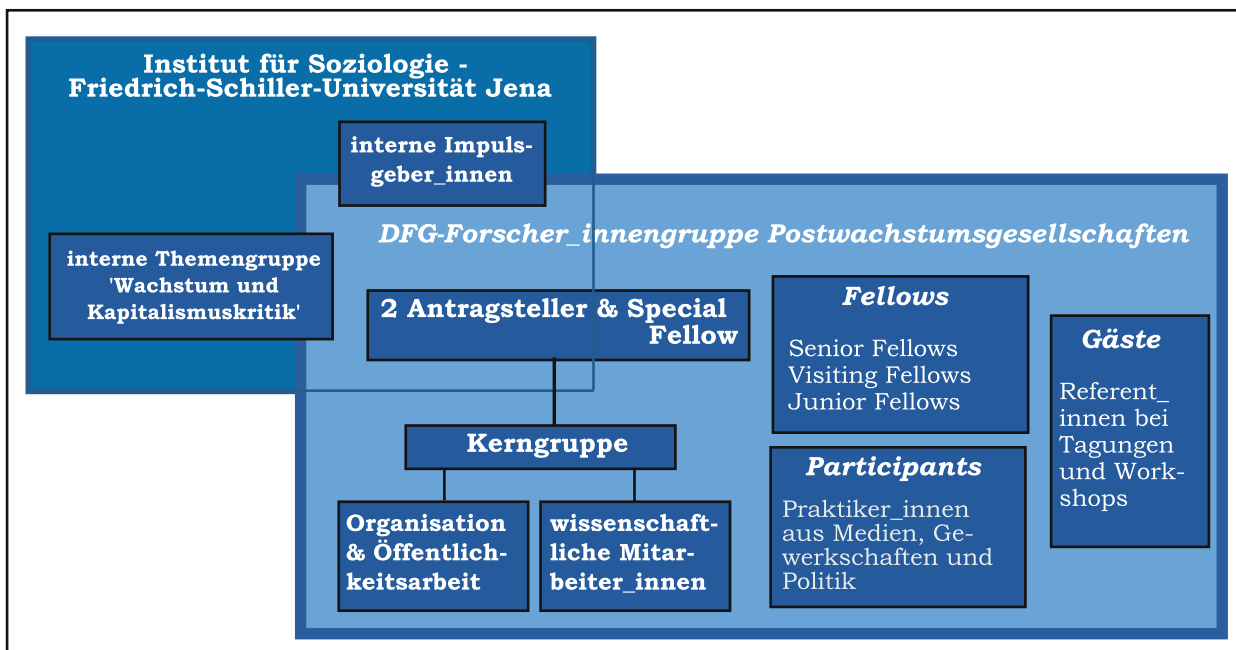


Schaubild 2

Ausgewählte internationale Kooperationen des Kollegs Postwachstumsgesellschaften

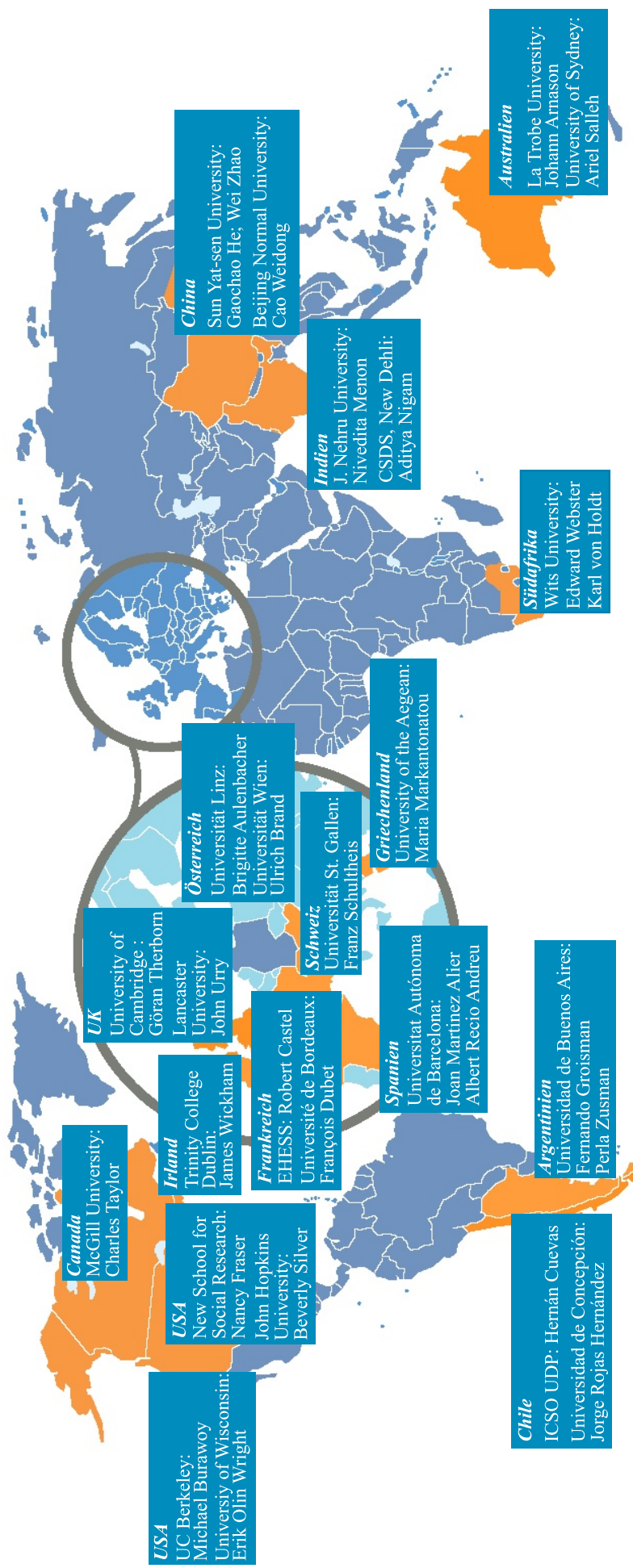


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1 General Description

1.1 Subject matter

Landnahme, Acceleration, Activation, dynamic(s) and (de-)stabilisation of modern growth societies

1.2 Applicants

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2 Abstract

“Modern societies are dynamic growth societies. Irrespective of whether they were capitalist or socialist during their formative stages, their relative stability over numerous periods of crisis rested and continues to rest upon increased economic-technical efficiency and growing material prosperity. However, as has become evident since the appearance of the contemporary economic-ecological double crisis, a break in continuity is looming. A discrepancy is emerging between the increase in growth and that of general prosperity as a whole, technical-economic growth has itself become a driving factor of crisis. For sociology, this raises anew the question of mutual interrelations between dynamic self-stabilisation and the legitimacy principles of modern societies. The applicants consider it to be a real possibility that the politics of increase and escalation of continuous *Landnahmen*, Accelerations and Activations may have already surpassed a certain critical threshold, beyond which capitalist modernity's dynamisation imperatives become subject to (re-)negotiation themselves.”

After three years of work at the research group we consider this thesis, as put forward in our original application, to be more topical than ever. On the one hand, many early industrialised societies, among them some important Eurozone countries, still find themselves in an economic growth crisis, while on the other hand, the criticism of growth models based upon unbridled consumption of fossil fuels continues to grow. Growth-critical impulses have entered into the discourse of international elites, are being incorporated into various North-South debates, are discussed in the context of innovation and digitalisation of production processes and have served as a catalyst for various social movements. Thus far, the colleagues and fellows of the research group have made significant contributions to the ongoing and multifaceted post-growth discourse. The research group has become a site for international debates on the crises of growth capitalism. *Landnahme*, Acceleration and Activation – our categories for depicting the dynamisation imperatives of modern societies – have flowed into sociological debates and even into public-political discourses to varying degrees. We intend to build upon and extend these developments in the second funding period. Following our initial focus on the socio-economic and socio-cultural drivers of growth, we shall now turn our attention to the socio-political engines of growth and possible trajectories of transition to a post-growth constellation. The research group intends to address primarily three research questions:

- (1) What do growth imperatives and blockages as well as new inequalities mean for the constitution and reproduction of „productive subjects“? (Topic „Growth and Subjectivity“)
- (2) How do economic crises and low growth rates relate to the democratic question? (Topic „Growth and Democracy“)
- (3) What contours of a post-growth society are conceivable, desirable and realisable? Are there any identifiable indicators of transitions to such societies? How can such processes of transformation be democratically shaped? (Topic „Contours of Post-Growth Societies“)

We will engage these three question complexes on the basis of a new emphasis on four meta-themes. In this process, we will work closely with the Jena Institute of Sociology. The newly established Professorship for Environmental Sociology (Matthias Groß), the newly acquired Professorship for the Sociology of Knowledge (Tilman Reitz), as well as the Professorship for Micro-Sociology (Sylka Scholz) – the latter of which was awarded with the research group's work in mind – are all institutionally involved in the research group's work. The candidate for another Professorship of Political Sociology will be selected with special attention to the research group's needs. Our internal junior staff receive their own budget. This measure is intended to ensure that the first, input-oriented work phase is now followed by a second, more output-driven phase. The guiding terminology of the first phase will be complemented by new categories (Resilience/Democratisation; Alienation/Resonance,

Externalisation/Redistribution). In an expansion of the objective of our original application, the research group seeks to pursue three goals in the future: the debate on the crisis of growth capitalism (1) is to be embedded more systematically in a North-South context. To this end, (2) cooperation(s) within an international network of faculties and institutes committed to critical Public Sociology shall be cultivated and deepened. This network will (3) contribute to processing the possibilities of transformation towards post-growth societies via a global dialogue. Utilised in this way, the format of the research group (KollegforscherInnengruppe) provides the ideal conditions for innovative thinking. It opens up the chance for us to introduce our sociological expertise into international controversies on the future of modern societies.

3 Work at the research group during the first funding period

The first section of the application provides information on the more than three years of work and research conducted at (and by) the research group. We introduced our underlying basic concept and its further development at the research group (3.1), outline preliminary research findings (3.2, 3.3, 3.4), position them in relation to one another (3.5), assess our work methods and, finally, address some modifications to said methods, which will be taken into consideration in the anticipated second funding period (3.6)

3.1 Underlying principle, knowledge generation, preliminary findings

Our endeavour is guided by the notion that a larger problematic lies behind the controversy surrounding conventional, „fossilist“ economic growth.¹ More precisely, we consider this problematic to be constituted by a specific compulsion of modern capitalist societies relying on dynamic stabilisation by means of continuous *Landnahmen*, Accelerations and Activations. In the view of the applicants, the debates at the research group revolving around the „signal crisis“ of 2008/09 (F: Mahnkopf 2013, Dörre/Lessenich/Rosa 2015) have established that said mode of dynamic social stabilisation has itself become a cause of crisis. In the following we will confine ourselves to those aspects of the problematic which we regard as novel and which shall guide our research during the second work phase. We reference the work of selected fellows and guests of the research group in our brief presentation of research findings.²

The process of knowledge generation

Before we present our preliminary findings, it seems appropriate to give an overview of the process of knowledge generation at the research group (chart 1: table of topic areas). As illustrated in the table, the research conducted during the first funding period can be ascribed to two distinct, mutually referential analytical strands. *Research strand one* includes the concept development which builds upon the analytical categories of *Landnahme*, Acceleration and Activation. *Research strand two* is concerned with embedding these three process categories into theoretical considerations on the crisis-prone growth dynamics of modern societies. Although the grounding, further elaboration and differentiation of the analytical categories central to our research (*Research strand one*) takes place in the form of a critical dialogue, they nevertheless cohere for the most part with the internal theoretical logics contained in each of the categories, respectively. The growth problematic, by contrast, serves as

¹ If not (explicitly) stated otherwise, „growth“ refers to the increase of economic output which despite all criticism is still being measured by the indicators of GDP or GNP.

² Publications by the research group are marked as follows: F=Fellow, G=Guest, N=Junior research group. Research findings that were arrived by method of constructive controversy represent discursive products, i.e. not every argument or interpretation is shared by all members of the research group equally.

a common reference point for an analytical linkage of the three concepts (*Research strand two*). *Landnahme*, Acceleration and Activation represent three analytically distinct process categories addressing the socio-economic, spatio-temporal and socio-political dimensions of the development of modern societies. Yet they also encompass mutually interacting driving and shaping forces of structural change(s) in society, the interconnections of which are analysed in *research strand one*. Democratisation marks another guiding concept we intend to examine during the second funding period, a concept which (in contrast to the other process categories) addresses desired developments. Democratisation will also play a greater role in our research during the last two years of the research group. In this final phase, the joint research strand two (Growth – Post-growth) shall become the fifth and final subject taken on by the research group. In this field we intend to link together all previous processes of knowledge generation and, as we propose, condense them into a social-scientific compass for social transformation.

Various work groups participate in the production and processing of knowledge (Chart 2: structure of the research group). These include, beyond the applicants and the Special Fellow, the other members of the *core group*, i.e. the research group's staff who organise the research process and utilise the results to write their qualifying theses. The *internal topical working group* is composed of staff from the Institute of Sociology and also facilitates the promotion of emerging talent. In addition, professors from the Institute act as *internal instigators*. The *fellows*, i.e. external researchers integrated into the group's research via a range of cooperative arrangements, provide an essential contribution to the studies. We designate as *guests* those researchers who occasionally contribute to the research group's meetings and events. The dialogue with social publics and everyday contexts is pursued via journalists, politicians, artists, etc. who are invited to contribute to the research group's work as *participants*. The *scientific advisory board* includes distinguished colleagues from various disciplines. The issues we will discuss with them will mostly revolve around questions of research strategy and structure formation.

Elaboration of the underlying principle

The process of knowledge generation is structured by a specific, underlying basic principle. According to this principle, the development of modern societies (or at least the early industrialised countries) rests upon relations between socio-economic drivers of growth and basic, foundational social institutions which follow a pattern of dynamic stabilisation. The close coupling of economic growth on the one hand and institutional stability, welfare and democracy on the other is addressed in multiple theoretical and political contexts.³ "The welfare state", as Jürgen Habermas wrote in the mid-1980s, must comply with the stability requirements of capitalist growth "for the very reason that corrective interventions into the distributional patterns of social compensations usually cause no reaction on the part of privileged groups only if the former were paid for by a growth in surplus social product". According to Habermas, without growth the welfare-state's basic institutions would not be capable of fulfilling their "function of limiting and silencing the class conflict" (Habermas 1987: 511). The research group's study takes this fundamental problematic as its point of departure. If, as we originally assumed, high growth rates can no longer be sustained over longer periods of time and the dominant „fossilist“ growth type leads to the overstepping of a planetary tipping point (Rockström et al. 2015), then the early industrialised countries are effectively left with only two options: „One is to make growth sustainable; the other is to make de-growth stable.“ (Jackson 2009: 128) One of our preliminary conclusions concerning research grant application two is that the pointed emphasis we employed in our original application must be replaced by a more complex approach. In order to demonstrate this observation we will present six selected findings, which we label stabilisation without growth (1), growth without democracy (2), growth in spite of ecological boundaries (3), development through

³ Cf. Miegel 2010, Streeck 2014, Wallerstein et al. 2014, Piketty 2014, Lessenich 2013a, 2014c.

growth (4), resilience despite growth crises (5), and stabilisation through informalisation (6).

Important preliminary findings (*Research strand two*, Growth – Post-growth)

Let us begin with a finding that may seem slightly confusing in light of our initial hypothesis: *(1) modern capitalist societies are capable of stabilising basic mechanisms of domination despite economic stagnation or even contraction.* Currently, Japan serves as a prime example of this reality within international political economy (topical working group 2014). The political system and parliamentary democracy in that country have continued to prove remarkably stable despite ongoing stagnation and external shocks (Fukushima) (Koo 2008, 2013). In Europe, a tendency towards stagnation is also emerging, albeit gradually. As our conference „Jenaer Dialog – Arbeit(en) in Europa“ as well as publications resulting from such events (Dörre/Jürgens/Matuschek 2014) have shown, even multi-year economic contraction does not necessarily culminate in a fundamental destabilisation of capitalist structures or the elimination of democratic institutions. In our view, moreover, the cases of Spain (G: Banyuls Llopis/Recio 2014: 197-216), Ireland (G: Wickham 2014: 181-196), and particularly Greece (F: Markantonatou 2014: 217-228) provide conclusive evidence for this hypothesis. As is particularly the case in Greece, where the economy has shrunk for six consecutive years, the majority of the populations in the crisis-ridden countries live under precarious conditions. Despite weak (or even absent) growth, the basic institutions of the capitalist free market have thus far not been called into question, at least not to any meaningful extent. The crisis is one of the Eurozone and the EU, not a systemic crisis of capitalism as a whole.⁴ And because democratic capitalism's mechanisms of domination remain relatively stable, economic growth continues to be regarded as the “silver bullet” for formulating any sort of path forward for the affected societies.

As soon as one looks beyond the European sphere, the North-South context exhibits a different, yet no less vexing, problematic: *(2) dynamic growth is possible even without the welfare state and democracy.* The prime example for this case type in debates at the research group is China. As we have established together with guests and fellows during workshops in Guangzhou, Beijing and Jena, China embodies the continuation of a developmental path which, at least according to one line of interpretation, emerged in the 16th century particularly in Asia (Derluguian 2014: 127; for a differing view: Kocka 2013: 22, 25-31). The diversity of states and world regions notwithstanding, this developmental path (Derluguian 2014: 130, Kocka 2013: 43f.) was marked by state initiative and coercion during the formation of industrial capitalist structures. It has proven extremely successful, in utterly new forms and manifestations, in the process of “catching up” industrially for countries like the former Soviet Union, postcolonial states of the Global South, as well as China in the 1980s. Despite reforms towards a market economy, the Chinese growth model (N: Schmalz 2014, Butollo 2014; F: Zhao Wei 2014; G: Lüthje/Luo/Zhang 2013, ten Brink 2013) depends to this day on a kind of state interventionism, which is however founded upon hybrid combinations of modern and traditional social forms and gets by without parliamentary-democratic legitimation. This state-centred capitalism and its particularistic civil society has proven to be an efficient growth machine irrespective of various known social and ecological dislocations (F: Silver/Lu Zang 2009; N: Butollo 2014).⁵ What may sound like an implicit critique of free market liberalism and the discourse of denationalisation can thus also be understood as a rejection of democratic institutions and procedures. Contemporary admirers of Chinese „growth without democracy“ are to be found even among the elites in the early industrialised countries (G, F: ten Brink 2013: 338, Deppe 2013: 58 ff.). This matches the most recent report to the Club of Rome, which considers China (of all countries!) to be the one country most likely to achieve advances in

⁴ Cf.: Ther 2014, Leschke et al. 2014: 243–272, Karamessini/Rubery 2013. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, even the British Empire managed to get by with low growth rates (Mann 2014: 114). On the significance of a theory of reflexive dynamisation cf. Beck/Rosa 2014.

⁵ As our fellows confidently state, China could learn a lot from Germany with regard to tackling ecological and social problems, yet in terms of efficiently utilising the state in order to promote economic growth, China is meanwhile a good deal ahead of Germany.

combating ecological threats precisely *because* of its political system (Randers 2012). Thus, it is not only dynamic economic growth, but also efficient solutions to ecological problems that seem conceivable without recourse to democracy.

The third finding amends our original hypothesis (social stabilisation through sustainable growth or renunciation of the growth paradigm) with view to the social impact of ecological threats: (3) *planetary boundaries do not appear to be absolute limits to economic growth*. This preliminary finding has been and continues to be the subject of intense debate at the research group. What is undisputed is that the continuing commodification of socially produced nature and the externalisation of ecological risks represent factors in the overstepping of planetary limits. When measured against pre-industrial norms, we have already crossed the “red line” of irreversible damage as far as climate change, biodiversity and the nitrogen cycle are concerned. Acidification of the oceans, ozone depletion, fresh water consumption, land use and atmospheric aerosol loading are all rapidly approaching the limits of planetary tolerance (Rockström et al. 2009, 2015). Destabilisation, however, does not imply that ecological catastrophes necessarily or automatically bring about a “final” crisis of capitalism. There are “endless predictive uncertainties” (Foster et al. 2011: 425) with regard to the complex interactions between humans and the natural world. Obviously, standard values and climate tipping points are always contingent upon competing knowledges and definitions. Skidelsky/Skidelsky (2012: 129) actually contend that “the idea of a catastrophic “tipping point” or “point of no return” is rejected by most serious scientists as lacking sufficient empirical foundation”. But what follows from this? At the research group, readings which emphasise the proximity of overstepping certain tipping points of resource consumption and the already acute potential for catastrophe this development entails are countered with views which conceive of ecological threats rather as the sites of struggle over interpretation, political negotiations and social conflicts (F: Brand/Wissen 2015, 2014; N: Lorenz 2014; G: Görg 2015). As the current fluctuation in oil prices illustrates, the scarcity of natural resources affects purchasing prices only indirectly and only becomes visible as a driver of economic crisis in a mediated way (Harvey 2014: 18f.). When scarcities do become effective economically, this tends to result simply in an increase in high-risk exploration and exploitation of previously unprofitable deposits. Such ambiguities are spurring a debate at the research group that explores potential solutions to the ecological crisis – and in which opposing views continue to coexist. While one side advocates for a decoupling of economic growth from resource consumption and derides the feasibility of counter-positions with pithy quips like „humans cannot fly“ (Fücks 2014: 560), the other side considers the vision of a green capitalism to be a dangerous type of wishful thinking (N: Muraca 2014; F: Welzer 2014). In contrast to both positions, Lessenich and Dörre (2014) address both the neglect of social inequalities in growth-critical appeals for self-deprivation as well as the marginalisation of the redistribution problematic in many scenarios oriented towards green growth. These controversies cannot be resolved at present and shall be productively carried forward throughout the second funding period.

Framed against a global backdrop, the search for solutions to society's growth dilemma leads to another observation: (4) in many countries of the Global South, economic growth also means development. The Global North has an obligation to provide and preserve the South's chances for growth. At the very least, this is a view we came across time and again during our meetings on South Africa, China, India and Latin America. In fact, we already pointed toward a North-South problematic in our original application. A quarter of the world's population, living mainly in the Global North, may currently be consuming three quarters of all resources and producing three quarters of the world's waste, but the major emerging countries, above all China, are rapidly catching up in this race to put the largest possible strain on the planet. Because of their large populations, they are the main producers, in absolute figures, of ecological hazards as far as resource consumption and emissions are concerned. What arises from this is a problematic of fairness, impeding the realisation of ecological sustainability goals (Stern 2007, 2009, Dörre 2011b). From the Northern perspective, sustainability targets cannot be achieved without a re-routing of production and consumption in the major emerging

economies. Our Chinese fellows (Qiu Haixiong, Gaochao He) however, would retort that as long as the North fails to take the lead, we cannot even begin to discuss limiting growth in the South. It is nevertheless the case, as we learned from a whole series of meetings and conferences, that ecological restructuring is a topic of discussion in the Global South as well. In Guangzhou/Pearl River Delta, the catchphrase of „industrial upgrading“ (N: Butollo 2014) also includes the question of indicators of ecological welfare. At the SWOP/Johannesburg we find an ongoing search for alternatives to the dominance of the mining-energy-complex in that country (F: Webster et al. 2008). Similarly, criticism of extractivist growth models continues to gain momentum in South America (F: Brand/Dietz 2014; N: Schmalz 2013: 47-60). Moreover, in India, criticism of the institutional and cultural gravity of „western“ modernisation policies is growing louder. Nevertheless, even radical growth critics from the emerging countries of the Global South argue that strategies of „green growth“ represent „a stepping stone towards more fundamental options in the longer term“ (Pillay 2013: 162).

We initially established that even a radical dismantling of the welfare state does not automatically trigger shocks to growth-capitalist mechanisms of domination, but we must also acknowledge one contrastive finding that may not be overlooked: (5) *Robust social security systems create resilience, they render modern societies relatively crisis-proof*. Despite the fact that the welfare state as „growth state“ (Castel 2000, Lessenich 2013a, 2014c) is itself a driving force of the dynamics of economic increase and escalation, robust security systems simultaneously function as guarantors of social sustainability. Something is only sustainable if it is resilient, i.e. if it provides protection from as well as in socio-economic crises and ecological catastrophes (Grober 2010: 14). It is in this sense that we argue that the welfare-state institutions remaining relatively intact (such as those found in the health or education sectors) have a sustainable effect. States with comparatively robust social security systems thus weathered the crisis of 2008/09 far more smoothly than countries with weak welfare-state institutions (Calhoun 2014, Harvey 2014). This finding is supported by fellows and guests of the research group on the basis of various arguments. In Germany, a partial reversion to a corporatist tradition long regarded as a thing of the past contributed significantly to minimising the rise of unemployment during the crisis (G: Bosch 2014: 91-106, Lehndorff 2014; Dörre 2014a: 25-49). Countries which had relied primarily on external flexibilisation of their labour markets and de-collectivisation of social security systems, however, were hit by the crisis particularly hard (G: Struck 2014: 125-164). The sustainable effect of basic security mechanisms can be observed even in countries with relatively weak welfare-state institutions, such as Ireland. The retention of a minimum wage prevented inequalities among subaltern groups from increasing further, despite the severity of the crisis and its impacts (G: Wickham 2014: 181-196). As the examples of resilience during the crisis suggest, human prosperity is not directly linked to economic growth and levels of personal income. Rather, subjective well-being appears to result from an even balance between short-term pleasure and long-term security (Wilkinson/Pickett 2010, Skidelsky/Skidelsky 2014, Rosa 2012a) – a balance which is hard to achieve without robust security systems and their associated redistributive effects.

Wherever the welfare state is on the retreat or was not able to establish itself in the first place, modern societies develop functional equivalents. An additional finding of ours in this regard is the following: (6) *growth capitalisms lacking robust security systems mitigate the effects of economic stagnation through informalisation*. It is generally the case with differentiated modern societies – each according to its own social-theoretical embedding – that sub-systems (F: Schimank 2012: 172-186), different spheres of life (Rosa 2005), social fields (N: Eversberg 2014a) or tests (Dörre/Scherschel/Booth et al. 2013) are not dominated by growth imperatives to the same extent. In mixed economies one finds small and medium-sized enterprises for whom growth is explicitly not an objective. Due to its relative resistance to rationalisation, the entire range of paid and unpaid care work is not particularly compatible with growth imperatives and commodification policies (F: Aulenbacher et al. 2014, Krenn 2014, Biesecker/von Winterfeld 2014; G: Klinger 2012: 258-272). Activities that are not designed to earn a profit represent a functional Other, without which market economy-based capitalist socialisation would

not be possible (cf. Braudel 1985/86, Calhoun 2014: 164, Dörre/Haubner 2012: 63-106). Under the conditions of crisis and in a context of weak security systems, it is these informal structures and activities that constitute the functional Other (G: Mayer-Ahuja 2012: 289-301; Burchardt et al. 2013). In Greece, basic social provisions can only be ensured by way of self-help (F: Markantonatou 2014; Dörre 2015a, c, Chen 2014: 149-171). The expansion of the informal sector, essentially born out of necessity, has the southern European crisis countries approaching conditions that have existed in the Global South for a long time. The unemployed and informally employed, e.g. in South Africa, constitute half of the labour force potential (F: Webster/Ludwig 2015), in Argentina this figure is still at 33 % (N: Sittel et al. 2015; G: Weinmann 2014: 159-184), and globally, estimates suggest the number to be at about 40 % of the total labour force (ITUC 2014). In the South African platinum mines, for example, informal employment can be found in both formal as well as informal businesses (F: Benya/Webster 2013: 196). Informal forms of employment and processes of exchange may stabilise formal capitalist structures, but they can also generate forms of habitus and conflicts which undermine the stability of social institutions. Our South African partners have termed these types of societies „precarious societies“ (F: von Holdt 2012): societies in which basic social institutions erode despite dynamic economic growth and a formally intact parliamentary-democratic framework (vgl. Calhoun 2014: 195 ff.).

The preliminary findings presented here represent intersections of analyses, the theoretical grounding(s) of which may vary. This brief overview emphasises the multi-layered nature of configurations (stability requirements, dynamisation imperatives, conflicts and crises) comprising the research group's object of inquiry. Keeping in mind the fact that it is impossible to analyse everything simultaneously and with the exact same level of consideration, we consider it to be a great advantage that the applicants approach the described phenomena from different perspectives. For the concept development, the outlined preliminary findings concerning „Growth – Post-growth“ are illuminated from different angles and processed in a specific manner (*Research strand one*). The following sections (3.2, 3.3, 3.4) provide information on the current state of our research.

3.2 Landnahme – Growth and Labour

Having evolved as a theoretical template for the interpretation of empirical findings from research on labour and precarisation, the concept of *Landnahme* seeks to establish a sociologically founded political economy of modern capitalist societies. The objective of the first two years' work was to apply the previously developed approach to the growth problematic and the labour-mediating metabolism between humans and the natural world (Foster et al. 2011). Capitalism is conceived of as a constant movement to surmount obstacles to accumulation and growth, which relies on the continuous annexation and assimilation of a non-capitalist Other. At a micro-social level, this internal-external movement is driven by the compulsion to increase labour productivity and replace human labour power with technical machinery; at a macro-social level, then, this movement is a consequence of the capital-surplus absorption problem (Dörre 2014a, Harvey 2014) which in turn pushes incessantly for market expansion and the occupation of non-capitalist milieus and forms of labour and life. Growth compulsions are never purely economic; they are substantiated ideologically, mediated politically, conveyed with reference to the hegemonic „spirit of capitalism“, institutionalised in the welfare state, and can, through the accumulation of political power vis-a-vis corresponding economic structuring, take on a life of their own (Dörre 2012a).

The multidimensionality of growth drivers represents the starting point for a crisis-theoretical expansion of the *Landnahme* theorem. Disruptions of capital flows can appear at any given time and at every possible stage. In this sense, capitalism actually means crisis-induced dynamic instability (Deutschmann 2014, Minsky 2011). Cyclical crises, however, must of course be distinguished from major crises of capitalist accumulation. Major crises affecting the entire ensemble of social regulations

cause a dynamisation of capital flows due to their attendant economic and political-symbolic cleansing function. Crisis management occurs via mechanisms of self-stabilisation (actor-institution-networks for credit, innovation and social reproduction) which are prioritised to different degrees depending on the specific variety of capitalism in question (Dörre 2014a: 30-33). *Landnahmen* change the relationship(s) between these mechanisms of self-stabilisation, as is in turn manifested in varying causes and trajectories of crisis. If the depression of the mid-1970s was caused by a profit squeeze which elites blamed on the return of worker militancy and the resurgence of trade unions and left-wing political parties, the crisis of 2008/09 evolved out of an entirely different causal complex. Various *Landnahmen* of the social have destroyed the labour-reproduction-nexus of developed capitalisms to such an extent and weakened market-restricting institutions to such a point that structural weakness in demand may soon trigger a renewed „Minsky moment“, i.e. another major financial crisis (Dörre 2015a).

A dynamic of economic escalation, which as a consequence of its processing of existing trouble spots continually generates new crisis potentials, is merging with society's ecological conflict in new ways. Indeed, this merging is what constitutes the historic particularity of this sea-change. Ecological dislocations are crises of the attitude calling for „More of the same!“. They are manifestations of structural disruptions of the human-nature metabolism beginning with the Industrial Revolution and the transition to permanent economic growth. Such structural disruptions are (also) a result of *Landnahmen*, which through ongoing enclosures create an artificial shortage of previously freely available natural resources in order to render them accessible to commercial use (Lauderdale-Paradox, Dörre 2015a). Closely linked to the way in which capitalist actors have externalised the consequences of destructive growth, the progressive commodification of the socially produced natural world transforms the capitalist growth dilemma into an indissoluble tension. „Fossilist“ economic growth, long considered to be an indispensable means for overcoming economic crises, simultaneously destabilises essential ecosystems.

The term intended to capture this specific constellation, the economic-ecological double crisis or pincer-grip crisis (Dörre 2014b: 49-87), corresponds to a pattern of argument that was already constitutive of Ulrich Beck's „Risk Society“. Klaus Dörre, however, rejects the notion that the structure-forming effect of the „logic of ecological risk distribution“ prevails over the „logic of wealth distribution“ (Beck 1986). Competition-driven *Landnahmen* actually lead to the opposite. The pronunciation of class-specific differences, luxury goods consumption alongside simultaneous expansion of urban underclasses, as well as the widespread precarisation of labour and life reduce political room for manoeuvre as far as the possibility for alternative ecological paths is concerned (Dörre 2013a: 112-140). Social and ecological fault lines forge new links and mutually reinforce one another. In order to account for this imbrication, the *Landnahme* theorem breaks with two premises of anti-productivist social theories. Firstly, such approaches retain an optimism vis-a-vis governance that gravely underestimates the economic potential for crisis (Habermas 2013: 75). Secondly, the escalation of economic crises has also brought the ongoing centrality of labour back into public consciousness. Labour, however, is only central in the interconnection between gainful activity and other, unpaid labour capacities, which simultaneously represent an Other of capitalist *Landnahmen*. The dominance of paid work established by capitalist relations of production creates a contested hierarchy of different labour capacities (Dörre/Ehrlich/Haubner 2014: 107-124). Flexibilisation requirements are channelled from the world of work to the reproductive sector, while care work tends to be depreciated. The extensive access to unpaid and previously idle labour capacities means that ever more time and activities must be dedicated to navigational labour (cf. Rosa 2015). The appropriation of unpaid productive activity by capitalist actors (businesses, the state) represents a secondary form of exploitation. It is secondary because – In contrast to Marx' model of exploitation – it is not even formally embedded in an exchange of equivalents, but instead is based on dominance, on sexist or racist devaluation of specific social groups, and thus on unequal exchange.

An expanded understanding of exploitation implies that along with the term „labour“ the term

„accumulation“ is equally in need of redefinition (Dörre 2012e: 488-508). Accumulation includes the amassing of power to define the boundaries between productive and unproductive, paid and unpaid labour are established. In terms of a diagnosis of the times, the *Landnahme* of social capitalism can be described as a metabolism between internal and external markets. By enforcing secondary exploitation, this *Landnahme* „of the second order“ has engendered amalgams of competitive and social capitalist forms of labour. Changes take hold through social tests which open up scopes of influence for subaltern actors. Nevertheless, the logic of increase and escalation of a never-ending competition permanently producing winners and losers becomes felt despite the field-specificity of the tests⁶. As a result, in Germany a society of precarious full-time employment has emerged, which allocates a decreasing volume of paid working hours to a record number of economically active people. In this society, a strong export sector is able to base its excess productivity on the devaluation and precarisation of (paid) care work (Dörre/Ehrlich/Haubner 2014: 114-116). Competitive advantages achieved in this way allow for selective integration internally, which can then be utilised to legitimise a radicalised *Landnahme* of the social in the European crisis countries (Dörre 2015b). This strict austerity regime is shaking the very foundations of the European democracies (Streeck 2013). It is leading to the emergence of „precarious societies“ even in the wealthy countries of the North, creating tensions that feed into an everyday critique of the dominant „Always more and never enough!“ attitude (Dörre/Holst/Matuschek 2014, Rosa 2005, Lessenich 2014f). This critique may be the starting point for a hermeneutics of common sense which is committed, in the sense of a critical public sociology, to the search for hidden caches of transformative knowledge in the interest of making them available for an „improvement of society“ (Eßbach 2014: 33ff.).

„*Landnahme*“ can be used as theoretical template for an analysis of the restructuring of growth capitalism, including its consequences in a North-South comparison. The theorem's potential with view to labour and economic sociology remains underutilised. Though still fragmented (to a certain degree), the *Landnahme* concept has made its way into professional sociological discourse, compendiums and encyclopedias.⁷ A monograph addressing theoretical foundations, drawing an arc from Marx' analysis of so-called primitive accumulation to more recent research and conjoining individual case studies into a coherent whole, will be completed by the end of the first funding period. A second book, planned for the second funding period, will take a closer look at oppositional forces and develop an analytical compass for the transformation of growth capitalism towards economic democracy.

3.3 Acceleration – Growth and the Good Life

In the aspects of our research that build upon the perspective of acceleration theory, the initial focus was on a re-conceptualisation of the relationship between acceleration and growth on the one hand, and on a more precise specification of the critique of acceleration on the other. With regard to the first task, the advancement of knowledge consisted of locating compulsions to accelerate within a comprehensive concept of dynamic stabilisation as a whole. According to this concept, the essential characteristic of modern societies is that they are only capable of stabilising themselves dynamically, i.e. they are structurally dependent on growth, acceleration and increases in innovation in order to reproduce the status quo as far as their socio-economic structures and basic institutions are concerned (Rosa 2013a, 2015). Arising from this reality is a progressive „logic of escalation“ – a logic which causes the promise of cultural progress so closely associated with this complex of increase and

⁶ Labour market: Dörre/Scherschel/Booth et al. 2013, precarity: Dörre 2013b: 125-151, 2014d: 87-117, 2015 c, d; business management: Dörre 2012b: 121-143, 2015b; labour relations: Dörre/Schmalz 2013: 13-38, Dörre 2011b: 267-302; time regimes: Dörre 2011c: 69-93; gender relations: Dörre 2012d: 147-164.

⁷ Lamla et al. 2014: 397-417 (precarity), Dörre in: HKWM8/1 2012: 664-687 (*Landnahme*), Endruweit et al. 2014: 214-219 (capitalism), Nohlen/Grotz 2011: 20-23 (poverty), 494-496 (precarity); on a critical reception: Hedtke 2014: 233 ff., Aulenbacher 2013, Feministische Autorinnengruppe 2013, Backhouse et al. 2013.

escalation to become progressively irrelevant in light of the structural mechanisms of compulsion. Given that time as such cannot be stretched or extended, only compressed, the mechanisms of increase and escalation function as compulsions to accelerate to an ever-increasing degree.

This becomes problematic only (and particularly) where processes of de-synchronisation between faster and slower elements of society are revealed. De-synchronisation represents one of the research group's key concepts for a temporally specific social critique. It rests on the observation that not all social strata or spheres are equally fit for acceleration, that is: capable of being or willing to be accelerated, so that frictions and tensions emerge at certain intersections of accelerating and resistant or resistive areas. From this perspective, the crises of late modern societies rooted in increase and escalation can be understood as crises of de-synchronisation:

(1) The ecological crisis appears as de-synchronisation between natural cycles and the socially produced pace of commodity usage – natural resources reproduce slower than they are consumed by industry, while the emissions of toxic substances occurs too quickly for natural decomposition to compensate. (2) The crisis of democracy, which can be seen particularly (but not only) in the early industrialised countries and manifests itself in lower overall voter turnout, the growth of protest voters and new extra-parliamentary oppositional movements, can be read as the result of de-synchronisation between the time it takes for democratic will formation and decision-making on one side and the market-generated pressure to make political decisions quickly on the other. (3) One explanatory factor for the global financial and economic crisis that has been unfolding since 2008 may be found in the fact that the different velocities of financial markets and commodity markets or, more precisely: of financial market transactions which can be conducted in computerised form within fractions of a second and the production and consumption of goods in the „real economy“, have diverged dramatically. (4) Finally, the psychological crisis of developed societies, which finds expression in widespread diagnoses of burnout and depression as well as a visible increase in symptoms of anxiety and stress, can be interpreted as a consequence of the de-synchronisation of the mind's „own time“ (*Eigenzeit*) and the speed of social processes. In all of these cases we thus seem to be dealing with a temporally specific overburdening of the slower systems.

The search for a social response to acceleration-induced phenomena of de-synchronisation and alienation is unlikely to find answers in a concept of deceleration. Almost all of the culturally efficacious fantasies of deceleration rest on the false assumption that everything could be left the way it is, all that is necessary is to „slow things down“ a bit. However, if our analysis that modern capitalist societies can only stabilise themselves dynamically is correct, then this aforementioned assumption is impossible. Time is not an additional dimension of social life that could render possible a kind of isolated politics of time, time is rather an essential structural category of society itself. Growth, competition and acceleration, moreover, are conceptually and empirically connected to a degree that the latter cannot be decoupled from either of the former. Additionally, slowness does not seem to be an end in itself to us either: neither is acceleration as such „bad“ nor deceleration per se „good“; from no conceivable perspective can deceleration be established as a normative criterion. Therefore, deceleration as an ultimate goal is neither possible nor desirable.

Accordingly, the research group's normatively oriented work, i.e. our work oriented towards the analysis of cultural orientations and the establishment of standards for measuring the quality of life independent of increase, has focused on the development of an alternative indicator of a „successful life“ from the outset. As stated in the original application, Hartmut Rosa's work at the research group during the two years envisaged for this task aims to complete a draft for a sociology of the individual's relation to the world utilising the concepts of resonance and alienation to, firstly, reveal the cultural root of the orientation towards increase and escalation and, secondly, develop an alternative understanding of the „successful life“. The final result of this project will be a book of which roughly two thirds have been completed at the time of writing this application. Work on the conceptual

foundations has already been completed. Said conceptual foundations were developed in the following four steps:

(1) First, the systematic striving to broaden one's „world reach“ was reconstructed as the core of the modern relation to the world. The translation of structural compulsions towards increase and escalation into subjective action orientations is facilitated, on the one hand, by the fear of being left behind in the race for allocation that correlates heavily with competitive situations; yet, on the other hand, by the promise and the desire to individually and collectively increase the availability and accessibility of the world. (2) Drawing upon older critical theory, it was then established that the broadening of (the) world reach is successful only at the cost of an intensification of „mute“ relations to the world: in this, the „falling silent of the world“ is identified as the fundamental fear of the modern culture. (3) Building upon this notion, the basic categories of resonance and alienation were then systematically conceptualised and defined. Both describe forms of relation to the world, whereby the normative core thereof is the idea that a successful life presupposes the ability to adapt to the world – although this ability is only possible in the relational mode of resonance. What became clear, however, was that it was necessary with regard to categorisation to define resonance and alienation not merely as antagonistic opposites, but instead as dialectically mutually referential relational forms. The terminological basis for this clarification was largely established during a major international workshop on the concept of resonance hosted by the research group in May 2014, attended by Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, Rahel Jaeggi and Thomas Fuchs, among others. (4) In a fourth step, capitalist late modern society was subjected to a systematic critique of the relations of resonance. To this end, horizontal (family, friends, politics), diagonal (work, education, sports and consumption) and vertical (religion, art, nature, history) axes of resonance were identified and analysed with view to their potentials for both alienation and resonance.

Since then, a number of publications have resulted from this work (Rosa 2012b, 2013b, 2013c, 2014, Beetz/Corsten/Rosa/Winkler 2014). The concept of resonance has been met with great academic and public interest, and has found its way into the discourse of leading media as well as scientific dictionaries (Rosa 2013d (Die ZEIT), 2014c (Libération), 2014d). The second funding period shall, on the one hand, serve the discursive and dialogical refinement of the concept as well as test its discriminatory, orientational and analytical power. On the other hand, then, following the completion of the *critique of late modern relations of resonance*, the question of the cultural and institutional possibilities as well as forms and limitations of a resonance-oriented, alienation-reducing post-growth society shall move to the centre of our research effort.

3.4 Activation – Growth and Subjectivity

The Activation theorem, which will move to the centre of attention of the research group's work as a topic in its own right during the second funding period, illuminates the political dimension of modern growth societies. Economic growth, or rather its systematic promotion, can be regarded as the central problem of reference of state activity in (the) early industrialised societies (Aglietta 1979, Lipietz 1985a, b, Hirsch/Roth 1986). At the very latest since the world economic crisis of 1929-1932 – and, noticeably, to this day – the programmes and instruments of state intervention have always, via political steering, proactively pursued the goal of contributing to a path of stable national economic growth and creating or recreating favourable conditions for capital investment (i.e. of „business confidence“, Skocpol 1980). During the post-war era, the state thus constituted and reproduced itself as a „growth state“ (Castel 2000), or rather, as a „growth welfare state“ (Lessenich 2013a): functionally referencing the stabilisation and perpetuation of the constellation of economic prosperity found in the „golden age“ of a reconstruction-driven growth capitalism, the interventionist state's political actors were simultaneously able to gain legitimation through an at least partial redistribution of the surpluses generated by economic growth to the benefit of large parts of society. The democratic-capitalist welfare

state was at the heart of a social constellation which for a while – until the sudden end of Soviet-style growth socialism, essentially – appeared to be a „win-win game“ between capital and labour, between the interests of economic profit and claims to social participation (cf. Lessenich 2014a, Dörre 2015b).

The „theory of late capitalism“ as was formulated most significantly by Claus Offe in the late 1960s and early 1970s, is more able than any other – including any later – theoretical proposition to analytically penetrate the constitutive mechanisms and reproductive crises of this historically specific model of a democratic growth capitalism (cf. Streeck 2013, Bochert/Lessenich 2006): its conditions of functionality and legitimation as well as its structural problems and inherent contradictions. Hence, Stephan Lessenich dedicated most of the first funding period to the systematic reconstruction of the theory of „late capitalism“, which Offe himself has never done in a coherent and complete way, in the spirit of theoretical-conceptual groundwork for Lessenich's planned role of topical protagonist in his capacity as a Special Fellow during the second funding period.

Offe's theory presents accumulation and legitimation – the processing of the requirements of an expanded reproduction of capital (that is to say: the processes of capitalist *Landnahme* analysed by Klaus Dörre), on the one hand, and the dynamic of claims to social participation on the other – as constitutive functional attributes of the developed welfare state. What was decisive, then, for our research on „Activation“ as a moment of political dynamisation in late modern growth societies, was the stipulation found in the „theory of late capitalism“ – at the height of the post-war boom – that the democratic-capitalist state's instruments for reconciling economic requirements and social demands were „categorically exhausted“ (Offe 1972): no further or further-reaching economic or socio-political programme to at least temporarily de-problematise the contradictory arrangement between capitalist accumulation and democratic legitimation was conceivable if it went beyond the already developed and tested instruments of regulation of individual capital units, the organisation of total capital or macro-economic global management.

The essence of the Activation hypothesis, which we will continue to sharpen throughout the research group's debates, is that the „theory of late capitalism“ was mistaken in this regard – and that „Activation“ (cf. Lessenich 2008, 2009a, b, 1012a, b) is better understood as indeed a further, historically specific political strategy for the stabilisation and revitalisation of late industrial growth capitalism. The socio-political programme of activation aims at a two-fold praxis of subjectification in the sense of pushing citizens to aspire to economic self-responsibility (as market citizens) as well as the common good (as „social citizens“) in equal measure. The subjectification of economic and social rationality mediated by activation policies seeks to realise new, thus far „hidden“ and thereby „unexploited“ productive potentials (cf. Lessenich 2013b; also Rosa 2013c, 2014a) – and thus appears to provide, at least with regard to its political objective, a range of equally accumulation- and legitimation-sensitive instruments for opening and reinforcing a new („post-Fordist“) growth cycle.

On the basis of these findings and conclusions, Stephan Lessenich's research during the second funding period will concentrate on further elaborating the theorisation and conceptualisation of the social phenomenon of a politically (co-)produced „growth subjectivity“ (cf. Lessenich 2014c, Eversberg 2014b, Santarius 2014, Welzer 2011). These studies are intended to analyse how growth society, to say it with Weber, creates the subjects it requires. Subsequently, the question will be discussed as to which specific conditions prescribe corresponding subjectivities for a transformation of growth society – and vice versa, which forms of subjectification could correspond to the conditions and contours of a post-growth society.

3.5 The research process: connections and interrelations as found in the case of care work

As will have probably become clear, analyses guided by the three categories of dynamisation each allow for separate interpretations of the growth dilemma of modern capitalist societies, respectively.

Disruptions and crises occur in different fields of social action. The corresponding structural and crisis dynamics co-evolve and mutually influence each other's development. As Hartmut Rosa shows, the growth-driven de-synchronisation of entire spheres of life can become a driver of crisis in its own right. However, an inverse correlation can also be observed. A modern society differentiated into – depending on one's respective theoretical position – social fields, tests, or subsystems can process crises bit by bit and thus temporarily defuse them. This is true for socio-economic crises, but also and especially for ecological dangers, which can be relatively easily socially suppressed for a certain amount of time – however, only at the ultimate cost of incurring a boomerang effect (cf. Beck 1986).

The research group sees as its purpose the taking into account and processing of the multi-layered complexity of social development in a process of collective knowledge generation. How, then, is this process structured? So far we have mainly discussed the two strands of research. The research group, however, is made up of different groups of researchers (see chart 2) who each contribute to the research process in their own distinct way. At this point it would be impossible to address each individual contribution. We will confine ourselves to presenting the structure of the research process and to illustrating it based on a specific example. This example will demonstrate how a topic is introduced by one or several fellows, to then become the object of vital debates in our research strand two (Growth – Post-growth), and then is subsequently processed once more into area-specific work in research strand one, as well as in independent analyses by various fellows and staff.

We have selected care and reproductive work as a case example, a topic whose relation to the main theme of the research group may not appear particularly obvious at first glance. Appearances, however, can be deceiving. The impulse to investigate the economic utilisation, political regulation and cultural framing of care and reproductive work originally came from some of our Fellows and guests (Aulenbacher, Biesecker, Krenn, Jürgens, Dölling, von Winterfeld, Klinger, Völker), research group staff and members of the internal topical working group (Haubner, Eversberg, Graefe, van Dyk). They addressed – with varying emphases and distinct references to our core categories – the erosion of the regime of care and reproductive work characteristic of the Fordist era. Concerning the core areas of politically regulated and socially protected wage labour, we concluded that pre-professional schooling and education, extra-professional familial care work, and the socialisation of post-professional old age, respectively, were constituted as sectors of non-, or rather de-commodified modes of life and social orders. The process dynamics and steering logics of post-Fordist growth regimes essentially dissolved this production-reproduction-nexus and reconfigured it by means of *Landnahme*, Acceleration and Activation (research strand one). The reduction in professional training, the economisation of the education system, a (re-)commodification of unemployment benefits and social service work, the discovery of „productive old age“ and the mobilisation of volunteer work all lead to the establishment of qualitatively new arrangements of the reproduction of the social.

The applicants and their research teams have studied segments of this problem using the examples of activating labour market policy (Dörre/Scherschel/Booth et al. 2013), active old age (Denninger/van Dyk/Lessenich/Richter 2014) and civic engagement (Corsten/Kaupfert/Rosa 2008, Beetz/Corsten/Rosa/Winkler 2014). Following the merging of our different research findings and the discursive confrontation thereof by works of Fellows and other members of the research group, it soon became clear that the field of care and reproductive work is not only crucial to an understanding of the crises of growth capitalism, but also to the exploration of possible alternatives. Reproductive activities are unwieldy in the face of *Landnahmen* as well as of the forces of acceleration and activation. Care work, understood here as the totality of non-substitutable work on, with and against the contingency, the becoming and the passing of human life (G: Klinger 2013: 87), is oriented towards the well-being of other people and the quality of social relationships. Even paid care work requires an amount of time and emotional dedication the exact quantification of which is impossible. The forming and shaping of interpersonal relationships is an inherent part of care, upon which we all existentially depend. Paid care activities can be standardised and segmented into specific intervals of time (F: Krenn 2014). They

can be performed with less staff, the corresponding labour can be subject to intensification and it can be performed by precariously employed migrant female workers lacking participation rights. However, all of this will most likely have a negative impact on the quality of services provided. It is simply not possible to work „ever faster or with less and less staff without causing quality to suffer“ (Madörin 2010: 88f., Workshop Themengruppe, different: F: Aulenbacher/Dammayr 2014). As a result of the limited commodifiability of care work, the social provision of these activities constantly oscillates between different organisational types (contractual or volunteer arrangements, paid professional employment in private companies and state institutions, moral commitment to family and domestic work arrangements, civic engagement, unpaid work in self-help groups).

What is decisive in the context of the research group's work, however, is that these activities resist compulsions towards growth and dynamisation, at least to a certain extent. Those discernible attempts to subject them to such compulsions as seamlessly as possible have thus far resulted in paradoxes and contradictions, even in a crisis of reproduction (and indeed continue to do so). They manifest in institutional tensions, temporal de-synchronisations, social conflicts, (secondary) exploitation, exhaustion, as well as a sense of meaninglessness and indignation. Such phenomena render the field of care work interesting both for diagnoses of the times as well as for studies dealing with the question of transitions to modern post-growth societies. Because work in these areas is labour-intensive and comparatively resistant to rationalisation, labour productivity cannot simply be raised at moment's notice. This is one reason why these sectors seem predestined for slow, selective, social growth. In order to retain human labour power and along with it emotional dedication within the field of professional care work, however, suitable institutional arrangements possessing a sustainable financial base will have to be found – an undertaking that may well ultimately depend on fairness in taxation and redistribution. Such arrangements can only be achieved if care and reproductive activities gain an audible and strong-willed voice in the polyphonic concert of democratic decision-making (Tronto 2013).

After having identified this complex as the intersection of the research group's different research strands, the task of processing the resulting follow-up questions and individual issues in the next step is referred back to the research group's individual fellows and staff members. Some examples: fellow Manfred Krenn has inspired the debate at the research group by writing a working paper; Tine Haubner is focussing on exploitation in care work in her doctoral dissertation; Brigitte Aulenbacher is overseeing her own publications as co-author (Aulenbacher/Riegraf/Theobald 2014, Aulenbacher/Dammayr 2014), which also draw on contributions from the research group. The following applies to the entire topic of care and reproductive work, as well as to similar inquiries into vertical inequalities, space and time regimes, precarisation, discourses about the “good life”, etc.: a phase of concentrated debate is followed by the research process, a decentralised production and dissemination of topic-related knowledge, of which specific elements then flow back into the research group's theory development process and which simultaneously generates research questions for further topic areas. To give an example, the „externalisation“ of reproductive work addressed by Biesecker/von Winterfeld provided significant impulses//impetus for the conceptual development in the topic area of „Growth and Subjectivity“ (Lessenich 2015a).

3.6 On our work methods: what has stood the test of praxis, and what has not

The research group aspires to (re-)integrate „thinking big“ into sociological research. Care work demonstrates how this can be achieved. Given that the development of „grand“ theory successively becomes a collective effort, the college research group (KollegforscherInnengruppe) is, as we can meanwhile say with certainty, the adequate format to further develop the dialogical working method which we have come to favour. Over the past years the research group has provided an intellectual environment to its fellows, staff, and the applicants, which has made the sociological study and discussion of „grand“ themes possible in the first place. The research group's facility on

Humboldtstrasse in Jena represents a visible location now known to academics in Berkeley, Cordoba, Johannesburg, Beijing and Delhi. It has hosted many internationally renowned figures such as Brigitte Aulenbacher, Michael Burawoy, Robert Castel, Christoph Deutschmann, François Dubet, Rahel Jaeggi, Joan Martinez-Allier, Claus Offe, Uwe Schimank, Franz Schultheis, Beverly Silver, Charles Taylor, Göran Therborn, Cao Weidong, Eddi Webster and Erik Olin Wright (see appendix). At the same time it offers a forum for rising young academics where they can intervene in the debate on dynamisation imperatives of modern capitalist societies (see appendix) either with their own contributions or in exchange with other experts (appendix).

Our dialogical work method, which is based on the principle of „constructive controversy“ and assigns the applicants the role of protagonist, antagonist or moderator (executive director) in alteration, respectively, has by and large proven to be a success. Nevertheless, the format was new to the applicants as well as the research group's staff. Initially, it led to some frictions. The task at the beginning was to make the research group known. New formats for meetings and conferences had to be tested and a logistical network for the fellows had to be established. The search for appropriate event and meeting formats went forward in a trial-and-error manner. Today we have a better understanding of what actually works and what does not. Stephan Lessenich's relocation to the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and the assumption of post of director at the Max Weber Center in Erfurt by Hartmut Rosa have lead to personnel and structural changes which now find expression in modifications in our application and the organisation as well as work methods of the research group. We will begin by detailing some of the experiences during the first funding period that have prompted us to adjust the original concept (cf. 4.1).

(1) *Launch*: assembling the team of researchers took up the first year of the funding period. During this phase we consciously focussed our work on publicising the research group's existence in the scientific community and the public at large through appropriate events. Fellows pledged their cooperation from the first day of funding. During the start-up phase we held several international conferences, workshops, discussions, as well as numerous presentations. „Kapitalismustheorie und Arbeit“ („Capitalism theory and Labour“, forthcoming), published in 2012, represented the first book that involved collaboration (besides that of two of the applicants) of numerous fellows and staff members. In our view, the public reception of the first round of events was quite good, yet the entire period was extremely taxing for the staff members and applicants involved. Though these efforts resulted in a large amount of content input, it often came to the detriment of the staff members' own research. The core group's positions were not filled until the spring of 2012; the strain on the earlier hired staff members was accordingly intense. This led to delays in some of the staff members' completion of their qualifying theses.

(2) *Leadership/Research Programme*: Given the large number of fellows, guests, events, and publications, the executive director is heavily involved in administrative activities. As we have realised, this is hardly compatible with the role of protagonist, who really should be relieved of such duties. Due to the fact that Stephan Lessenich held the post of dean at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences during the first two research group years as well as being the executive director of the research group for two years, and because Klaus Dörre acted as both the executive director of the research group and director of the Institute of Sociology, not to mention the great effort made by the applicants to work on three monographs that forge the bridge between the SFB 580 („special research area 580“) and the research group, the structure of the itinerary could not be implemented entirely. The topic areas associated with *Landnahme*, Acceleration and Activation were in part processed simultaneously. We consider this unintended mode to be quite advantageous, as the applicants' publication lists surely demonstrate (see appendix). The productive atmosphere at the research group and the intense debates with fellows and staff members have also found expression in English, Spanish and French-language publications – which has undoubtedly contributed to the research group's international visibility. However, it is also undeniable that monographs of a high quality require more

than two years to produce. A time horizon of four to five years seems more realistic.

(3) *Core groups, meta-themes*: The research group's staff members organise the research process and are responsible for public relations. Furthermore, they independently conduct work on their qualifying theses, thereby advancing the discussion at the research group. Generally, this method has proven successful. Barbara Muraca has accepted an appointment at Oregon State University, USA. Hanno Pahl (associated member) has now relocated to the University of Lucerne/Switzerland and has turned in his professorial dissertation at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Jan Sparsam, a member of the core group, was able to successfully complete his dissertation (Sparsam 2015). Dennis Eversberg has been awarded the dissertation prize of the German Sociological Association (DGS) (Eversberg 2014a). The doctoral dissertations of other members of the core group (Dimitri Mader, Tine Haubner) are on track and should be completed by the end of 2015. The members of the core group, as well as those of the internal topical working group, are often present in nationally and internationally visible contexts. These events include, to name just a few, two Polanyi workshops (together with Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi) in Berlin and Paris, respectively, our presence at the congress of the German Sociological Association in Trier and at the conference of the European Sociological Association in Torino, as well as several meetings we hosted at the international Degrowth Conference in Leipzig. In our original application we listed four meta-themes, each of which one member of the core group was to be responsible for. This has been only partially successful. Though members of the core group did in fact contribute significantly to the meta-themes, in retrospect we nevertheless consider it to be more sensible to specify the meta-themes in more detail for the second funding period and to place the responsibility for each on more shoulders.

(4) *Fellows*: the research group has meanwhile, via its fellows, managed to weave a network of academic contacts which, as was suggested by the evaluators, extends far beyond both the European sphere and the Anglophone world (chart 3). In total, the research group has been visited by 53 Senior and Visiting Fellows (28 of them foreign) as well as 16 Junior Fellows (11 of them from abroad). They are joined by 84 Guests who were present at presentations or contributed to conferences or workshops. In sum, the work with the fellows was highly productive. Unfortunately, renowned academics are a) seldom willing to commit to a single research programme and are b) mostly available only for brief stays. These problems are rarely the case with our Junior Fellows. Workshop discussions on the basis of preparatory texts have proven the most productive event format. The conventional form consisting of presentation and discussion may still make sense at times, yet it often lags behind the workshops in terms of inspirational potential. Bearing this experience in mind, it seems advisable to establish a more output-oriented cooperation with the fellows.

(5) *Promotion of emerging talent/topical working group*: the promotion of younger talent has generally been very successful at the research group. This is also and especially true for the internal topical working group (staff members of the Institute of Sociology). Its members have conducted several workshops on the research group's core topics independently (see appendix). The topical working group orientated itself along the research group's dialogical working method, applied it creatively and thereby placed their own, autonomous emphasis. At this point, no less than eight members of the working group have successfully completed their habilitation or at least handed in their habilitation theses (van Dyk, Graefe, Holst, Lamla, Lorenz, Reitz, Scherschel, Schmalz). The finalisation of three of the professorial dissertations is being funded by scholarships from the research group (van Dyk, Scherschel, Schmalz). Of the habilitated members of the working group, four have received appointments to other universities and already accepted them (van Dyk, Holst, Lamla, Scherschel). Junior Professor Tilman Reiz has been promoted to a W2 professorship via a Tenure-Track-Procedure.

(6) *Structure formation*: The research group's international visibility has heightened its structure-forming capacities even in the first funding period. This finds particular expression in new appointments and additionally created professorships at the Jena Institute of Sociology. Through a

common appointment with the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) in Leipzig, it was possible to establish the first chair in environmental sociology. It is occupied by Matthias Groß, who at the same time acts as speaker of the environmental sociology section of the German Sociological Association (DGS). The promotion of Tilman Reiz to a professorship for the sociology of knowledge and social theory means that the Institute of Sociology has received another additional professorship. The positive vote at the faculty was not least determined by the fact that Tilman Reitz' research optimally complements that of the research group, and that he has already made significant contributions to its work. The chair for micro-sociology was swiftly and appropriately filled with the needs of the research group in mind (Sylka Scholz). With view to the W3 professorship (successor to Lessenich), the main criteria for the appointment will be academic excellence and whether the candidate fits in with the research group. The overall positive impact of the research team's work at the Institute of Sociology and in the university environment has exceeded our expectations. The partial appointment of Hartmut Rosa to Erfurt and of Stephan Lessenich to the LMU signify a seal of quality assurance for sociology in Jena, even though their departure represents a challenge for both the research group and the institute. The effective cooperation with the Institute of Sociology shall be deepened further. Appropriate new appointments to the faculty will further advance this process.

(7) *Synergy*: We expect synergies in particular from strategic long-term cooperation with the Max Weber Centre at the University of Erfurt. Due to its structure-forming function in the region, cooperation with the Max Weber Centre, whose first acting director is Hartmut Rosa, is of paramount importance. Hartmut Rosa's appointment in October 2013 was decided with the aim to combine the research capacities of the Centre in Erfurt with those of Jena's Institute of Sociology in order to jointly take on larger projects. One of the first successes of this cooperation is the decision by the federal state of Thuringia to approve the jointly compiled application *Ordnung durch Bewegung* („Order through movement“) in the most recent round of its *Landesexzellenzinitiative* („Federal State Excellence Initiative“), which, among other things, envisages the joint appointment of fellows (Joint Fellowships) to the Post-growth Research group in Jena and the Weber Centre in Erfurt. In the course of this, the topic of the research team 1642 – „Dynamic Stabilisation“ – shall be extended to an historical and a trans-disciplinary perspective. With regard to staff, cooperation will be reinforced by the employment of two former junior Fellows – Dr. Urs Lindner und PD Dr. Christoph Henning – of the Post-growth research group as researchers in Erfurt. Because the Weber Centre is systematically expanding the research and cooperation focus „India“ (funding coming from the Federal Ministry of Research and Education – BMBS), the North-South expansion of Jena's perspective will likewise benefit. As the first joint-project of this cooperation, the international closing conference „Good Life Beyond Growth“ (May 2015) will be jointly organised by both centres.

(8) *Participants/Transfer*: The topics addressed by the research group enjoy a great deal of attention in the print media, radio, film and TV. Contributions of the applicants, staff members and Fellows regularly appear in the media (appendix). The most important knowledge transfer project is the „post-growth atlas“ produced in cooperation with *Le Monde Diplomatique*. A draft version was widely circulated during the De-growth conference in Leipzig, while the full version will be available by June 2015. Not all originally listed participants could be persuaded to contribute actively to the research group's work. However, other, no less prominent journalists, politicians, trade unionists, managers, church representatives, etc. have signed on (appendix). Elisabeth von Thadden (DIE ZEIT) has been a regular Fellow at the research group over the past three years. She has provided important stimuli for the discovery and (re-)conceptualisation of current social developments, for instance in the energy sector or in the exploration of alternative communal ways of life. The exchange of experiences with representatives of „classic“ media (print, radio, TV) concerning forms of knowledge production was actually the subject matter of a workshop (appendix). This transfer of social scientific knowledge to the media, politics and other social publics was expressed in the form of a high-profile Public Sociology Conference at the Post-growth Research group in Jena (January 2015). One product of science transfer

is the special issue of the *WSI-Mitteilungen* on „Grenzen des Wachstums – Grenzen des Kapitalismus?“ (Boundaries of growth – Boundaries of capitalism?) edited by Lessenich/Dörre. The thematic edition of this referenced publication features contributions of staff members and Fellows from the research group; it follows the principle of constructive controversy and thereby facilitates a transfer of knowledge in the direction of trade unions and trade union-related academia – a target group amongst whom post-growth discourse usually enjoys a rather difficult reception.

4 The work of the research group during the second funding period

The experiences and changes described in part 3 prompt several modifications of the topical emphasis, as well as the organisation and the work methods of the research group. Under point 4.1 we will present a brief overview of these modifications. An explanation concerning our topical emphasis follows under points 4.2 to 5.

4.1 Changes to topic content and structure

(1) *Applicants, Research Programme:* the applicants for the second funding period are Klaus Dörre and Hartmut Rosa. As Special Fellow, Stephan Lessenich will process the topic of Activation („Growth and Subjectivity“) during research semesters, during which the research group will finance his temporary replacement at the LMU. The processing of this topic will last three years. The topic of „Growth and Democracy“ will be pulled forward, beginning simultaneously with work on Activation. This will be done not only for reasons of an organisational nature, but also in terms of the content of our studies. Activation and democracy have proven to be interlinked and complementary topics. Moreover, we consider it wise for the research group to make original contributions to the current social-scientific debate on democracy. The research group's main topic during the final two years will be the „contours of post-growth societies“. Moreover, our new topical structure allows for a more intensive treatment of the latter.

Stephan Lessenich's relocation to the LMU and the corresponding change of roles from applicant to Special Fellow raise new challenges for cooperation and internal communication at the research group. One of the future staff members will act as liaison between the research group and the chair in Munich, thereby guaranteeing an ongoing exchange (aside from Lessenich's stays in Jena during research semesters), Apart from that, some of the research group's internal events will take place at the LMU's Department of Sociology. Ideally, this bridge-building can be reinforced with the „instigators“ or permanent fellows assigned to the „Growth and Subjectivity“ topic, who may temporarily reside in Munich outside of Lessenich's research semesters and who can be associated with the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS_LMU) while there.

(2) *Roles:* The rearrangement of the topic areas and changes among the applicants also affect the various roles to be filled at the research group. As far as the topic of Activation is concerned, everything remains unchanged (protagonist: Lessenich; antagonist: Rosa). In the parallel topical area of „Growth and Democracy“, we will proceed, as in the area of „Contours of Post-growth Societies“, with a combination of internal protagonists and external instigators. External instigators are senior fellows who spend an entire semester in Jena (if possible). In the topical area of „Growth and Subjectivity“, the protagonist Lessenich is supported by the instigators Claus Offe and Amparo Serrano Pascual. For the topic area of „Growth and Democracy“, this function is performed by Nancy Fraser and William E. Scheuermann. Either Hartmut Rosa or the professor for political sociology yet to be appointed will serve as our internal protagonist. In the topic area of „Contours of Post-growth Societies“, Tim Jackson and John Urry will act as external instigators, while Klaus Dörre and Hartmut Rosa will be the protagonists. The role of moderator will be replaced with that of executive director.

(3) *Fellows:* work with the fellows takes several requirements into consideration: (a) groups that

cooperate very intensely need to be kept rather small. Accordingly, the applicants and Special Fellow will each name three cooperating partners who will then participate as *Permanent Fellows* for the course of the entire process and will also be present at the research group from time to time explicitly for this purpose. The focus here is on the intensity of cooperation. The persons, who may be (but are not necessarily) identical with the external instigators, are: Brigitte Aulenbacher, Michael Burawoy, Hans-Jürgen Urban (Klaus Dörre); Manuela Boatcă, Ulrich Brand, Claus Offe (Stephan Lessenich); Nancy Fraser, Charles Taylor und Hubertus Buchstein (Hartmut Rosa). (b) A larger circle of fellows shall be approached according to specific topics and invited to collaborate with respect to planned publications. This includes fellows from the first funding period, researchers who were announced for the second funding period in the original application, as well as new fellows who are to be invited due to changes in topic specifications. Some examples of cooperation arrangements we have established so far include: Ulrich Brand/Vienna (Extractivism), Ulrich Bröckling/Freiburg (Subjectivity in Post-growth Societies), Hans-Jürgen Burchardt/Kassel (Extractivism), Sergio Costa/Berlin (Social Conflicts Revolving around Precarity; North-South); Michael Krätke/Lancaster (democracy theory/economic theory), Wilhelm Heitmeyer/Bielefeld (Uprisings in affluent societies), Gaochao He/Guangzhou (as Joint Fellow with the Max Weber Centre for Social Conflicts in China); Sighard Neckel/Frankfurt (Re-feudalisation), Ursula Huws/Hertfordshire (Global Digital Economy and Democracy), Joan Tronto/Minnesota (Democracy and Care) as well as Karl von Holdt (Violent Democracy). (c) The fellows from the first funding period (see appendix) will remain members of the academic network of the research group and will be informed regularly about the progress of our research. If appropriate, we may invite them to collaborate on further events and publications. In addition, we have (d) introduced the status of „Guest“. Should they so desire, guests of the research group are integrated into the research network as well.

(4) *Varieties of Cooperation*: What we aim to achieve with these various forms of cooperation is to account for and accommodate different intellectual requirements and expectations. Intensive research, which includes the common preparation of monographs, must rely on extremely good relationships of cooperation which allow for harsh mutual topical criticisms. In our experience this is only truly possible with long-term partners, who need not necessarily be identical with the most prominent fellows (*Permanent Fellows*). Apart from this group, discussions at the research group also and particularly benefit from those researchers who are renowned in their respective fields and who contribute to the discussion through their presence at the research group, as well as through their own publications (external instigators, *Senior Fellows*, *Junior Fellows*). The importance of the members of the network (Fellows from the first funding period, Guests) arises not least from their role in the public image of the research group and the transfer of knowledge. Additionally, research group staff, members of topical working group and instigators from the research group will also have limited opportunities to invite additional Fellows independently.

(5) *Meta-themes, synergies, promotion of emerging talent*: the meta-themes remain in place in their basic outlines, but their exact content will be specified more precisely and will no longer be the sole responsibility of members of the core group. Matthias Groß (ecological terms and theories of crisis, Groß 2010), Tilman Reitz (crisis of democracy, Reitz 2014) and Sylka Scholz (growth and masculinity, Scholz 2013) shall assume responsibility for new topic areas and intersecting topics, inviting guests and optionally also fellows to this end; their work will be supported with funding for research assistants. Beyond this, Tilman Reitz will continue to act as the research group's contact person for the internal topical working group. Due to the successful academic careers of many of its previous staff members, the core group will necessarily be substantially re-staffed. Its task remains, beyond individual qualification, the organisation of the research process. The internal topical working group also serves the promotion of emerging talent. It has worked splendidly thus far and shall continue to be endowed with its own budget for events and publications.

(6) *Global Dialogue in a North-South Context*: responding to a recommendation by one of the evaluators,

we have stressed the importance of the group's research not being confined to the national or European context. During the first funding period it was possible to establish close cooperation with research centres in countries of the Global South. As a result, Hartmut Rosa, Klaus Dörre, Dennis Eversberg, Stefan Schmalz, and other members of the junior research group have participated in meetings at Sun Yat-sen University/Guangzhou and Beijing Normal University. Stephan Lessenich has forged cooperative ties with Indian and South American researchers. Klaus Dörre has received the status of Senior Researcher at the SWOP/University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg. Stefan Schmalz (topical working group) was a visiting lecturer at Sun Yat-sen University/Guangzhou. Johanna Sittel (core group) conducted research in Córdoba, Argentina. Likewise, the research group has hosted a number of Fellows and Guests from countries in the Global South and continues to do so. Cooperation with research centres in the Global South shall be expanded in the future. Strategic partners within the German-speaking world include the Institute of Latin American Studies Berlin (Sergio Costa, Martina Sproll), the University of Vienna (Ulrich Brand) as well as the Global Labour University (Christoph Scherrer and Hans Jürgen Burchardt, University of Kassel). Our cooperating partners in the South include, apart from those already named, the Institute for the Reform and the Development of the Pearl River Delta/Guangzhou and the various institutes of a Public Sociology Network, of which Michael Burawoy/Berkeley is the acting protagonist.

4.2 Content-related contexts and topic areas

During the second funding period, the initial focus of the research group's research will be on the relations between growth, activation and democracy. As planned, this will shift the focus from the socio-economic and socio-cultural imperatives of dynamisation to those of a socio-political nature. This makes sense, as the relations between socio-economic growth drivers and basic social institutions are ultimately mediated by political intervention. The question of societal alternatives to the current growth constellation, which will be at the centre of the research group's work during the final phase, is already addressed in both the research on Growth and Subjectivity and on Growth and Democracy. Given that the social-scientific debate has progressed in the meantime, and in order to account for the insights garnered during the first funding period, we will shift emphasis to the aforementioned topics when formulating the research programme.

Our original application was based on the assumption that a weakened growth dynamic would inevitably lead to convulsions in welfare-state institutions and democratic politics (on this: Miegel 2010: 59f.). Our preliminary findings, however, suggest that the interplay between economic growth, the welfare state, activation and democracy are far more complex than previously anticipated. Nevertheless, this by no means reduces the challenges to democratic politics – for in the face of declining growth rates and increasing vertical inequalities, the egalitarian promise of democratic institutions is in danger of becoming a purely formal exercise. Around 70 percent of the world's population currently live in countries in which the gap between rich and poor has widened over the past three decades. In 2014, the wealthiest 80 people in the world owned the same volume of assets as the entire poorer half of humanity (about 3.5 billion people; Oxfam 2015). A dramatic concentration of wealth within the top one percent of the world's population stands in contrast to expanding groups of people who appear economically „superfluous“. While the expanding but nonetheless tiny group of „super-rich“ possessors of wealth walls itself off at the top, we find that, even in the affluent societies of the Global North, 10 to 15 percent of the population is dropping out of protected employment and collective social security systems (Mann 2014: 115). Bearing these phenomena in mind, our Fellow Göran Therborn argues in a remarkable contribution that while inequality between states is exhibiting a tendency to decline, class-specific inequalities within nation states are once again on the rise (Therborn 2012: 5-29). Yet comparative data also confirm that vertical inequalities outside of the OECD world continue to be more pronounced than in many early industrialised countries (Boatca 2015, Pries

2008, Weiß/Berger 2008). This suggests entrenched cleavages within the capitalist world system (Korzeniewicz/Moran 2009, Therborn 2013) which no longer run exclusively along a rigid North-South demarcation.

The newly re-ignited social-scientific debate around inequality is relevant to the research group in the sense that it should, and indeed must, be taken into consideration – more systematically than originally intended – in all of the topic areas. Without getting too far ahead on future research, the essence of this debate can be condensed into four main assumptions, to be verified from different respective perspectives in each of the topic areas. Assumption (1) reads as follows: in absence of redistributive measures, low growth rates result in vertical (class-specific) inequalities. Thomas Piketty has proven this connection empirically for a total of 20 countries (cf. Saez/Zucman 2014, Alvaredo et al. 2013, Vermeulen 2014). At the same time, there is every indication that (2) an ongoing concentration of wealth and income polarisation encourage speculative investment in the financial sector, thus heightening the world economy's susceptibility to crisis (Harvey 2014: 58, Calhoun 2014: 169). Moreover, vertical inequalities lower the willingness, even of members of the middle classes, to invest in education, thus triggering growth blockages in and of themselves. Both developments, then, (3) intensify problems of legitimation of democratic politics and the alienation of large parts of the population vis-à-vis democratic institutions. De-privileged groups often lack motivation, power resources and action scopes to successfully participate in democratic processes. Growing voter apathy, particularly among the lower classes, is a clear indicator of this (Crouch 2011; F. Offe 2014; Schäfer 2015). The mobilisation of active citizens in the framework of democratic politics is becoming more difficult. Simultaneously, representation deficits in the political system create „populist gaps“ that can be exploited by all kinds of formations and groups. Weak democracies no longer capable of mitigating social inequalities through redistribution will (4) also encounter great difficulties in implementing ecological sustainability targets. This is particularly true due to the fact that increasing class-specific inequalities promote positional consumption and luxurious lifestyles, the ecological footprint of which is many times the size of that of the lower classes' lifestyles (Jackson 2011: 67, Foster et al. 2011: 370f.).

Whether and how this vicious circle of low growth rates, increasing inequality, problems of legitimation of welfare-state democracies and the imminent danger of marginalising ecological objectives can be broken, shall be the object of study over the next four years. For Stephan Lessenich (protagonist in the topic area of „Growth and Subjectivity“), the decision as to whether the „forced marriage“ of capitalism and democracy will be dissolved or can indeed be revitalised through renewed institutional arrangements and subjectivities (cf. the „Streeck debate“ in: *Blätter f. dts. und internat. Politik* 2013) will be made on the terrain of the socio-political embedding of structural societal change. Hartmut Rosa (candidate for the role of protagonist in the topic area „Growth and Democracy“) conceives the crisis of democratic institutions and politics as a problematic of alienation and seeks to explore the possibilities of a „Democratisation of Democracy“ against this backdrop. In a final step, topic-specific findings from research strand one are merged (topic area „Contours of Post-growth Societies“) in a manner that explores potential trajectories towards a democratic transformation. The following sections provide insight into the more detailed topical focus of the research plan.

4.2.1 Topic area: Growth and Subjectivity (Oct 2015 – Sept 2018)

The work of our Special Fellow Stephan Lessenich is particularly significant for the illumination of the interrelation between economic growth, statehood and subject construction. Our deliberations in this regard build upon the assumption that activation, as the current mode of socio-political intervention by democratic-capitalist welfare states, is aimed at the constitution and reproduction of productive subjects. Yet this politics of subjectification entails more than just new inequalities: the more productivity becomes a socio-politically established norm of the growth society implemented through

individual self-guidance, the more those groups and milieus, needs and spheres of life that do not meet the expectations of the corresponding “normality” are socially marginalised. Moreover, it raises the question about the „cultural meaning“ (*Kulturbedeutung*), in the Weberian sense, of material growth in modern societies – i.e. the question as to which individual and collective horizons of meaning and what self-produced social compulsions were established by the political „normalisation“ of permanent economic growth following World War II (Lessenich 2014c).

In equal accordance with an economic and social rationale, the active citizens mobilised through Activation are supposed to act on formal as well as on informal labour markets and fields of activity as both self-responsible and socially responsible guarantors of the relations of production and reproduction of growth society. Over the past two years, the working group around Stephan Lessenich has compiled a comprehensive empirical survey of these intentions and interventions related to activation policy, examining them in the field of a politics of the „potentials of old age“. Here, a productivity dispositif that breaks with the “providing” state's retirement dispositif and inserts itself into the welfare state's activation-political processes of transformation was identified, which – in the context of the negative scenario of looming problems of economic productivity and social integration associated with demographic shifts – seeks to socialise aging subjects as productive active citizens.

Research during the second funding period building on these findings seeks to, firstly, further develop an understanding of the concept of a productivity dispositif with view to its knowledge-political mechanisms, and to analyse it as a generalised medium of subject constitution in late modern societies (including in such fields as education, health or migration policy) that transcends the mere empirical field of governing old age. The potential „success“ of activation policies relies on a political restructuring of the order of social knowledge. They aim for the constitution and reproduction of subjects pursuing self-rationalisation, self-improvement and self-optimisation, who internalise and reproduce their own contribution to the renewal of economic growth dynamics as their dominant social action orientation. Ideally, people in late capitalism conceive of themselves and behave as „growth subjects“ (Eversberg 2014b): in their daily life praxis they are guided by the socially hegemonic figure of the active and productive self.

Secondly, the focus of our interest – with view to the potential problems of legitimation of activation policy, as well as the contours of a post-growth society – is on the contradictions which emerge from the socio-political project of constituting active citizens, or rather of productive subjects. Such inherent contradictions of growth society – alongside the social opposition(s) that potentially result from them – refer not only to the emergence of new structural patterns of social inequality, namely between the milieus conforming to activity and productivity norms on one side, and those supposedly „inactive“ and „unproductive“ individuals and groups labelled deviant by the active society on the other; they also manifest with respect to the potential disappointment of expectations and promises brought forth by activation policy among „active losers“ (Brauer/Willisch 1997), whose practiced non-conformity does not lead to subjectively perceptible gains of inclusion or recognition. The protagonists of change, however, are hardly the exhausted social elites or social subjects in search of a resonant relation to the world (as is the central point of Rosa's argumentation (2013b, c)). The „Other constituted by activation“, rather, manifests itself in such subjective orientations and practices which simultaneously and autonomously interpret the socio-political imperative of self- and socially responsible life conduct and invest it with their own social sensibility, the latter deviating decidedly from the norm.

Such variants of a break, or at least a deviation between the programme of activation policy and its practice, have already been addressed sporadically in empiricist contexts of the sociology of old age (Dyk/Lessenich 2009a, 2009b, Lessenich 2014d). Within the framework of the research group's handling of this topic, we aim to systematically reflect on the relevant evidence and theorise the newly gained insights concerning the possibilities and limits of a politics of knowledge from a transformative („post-growth society-oriented“) perspective (Lessenich 2014c, 2014e). The actual objective in this

endeavour is the grounding of a subject-oriented sociology of the bodies of knowledge, wealth of experience and structures of expectation generated and stabilised by growth society – which, against the backdrop of the economic-ecological double crisis, increasingly face reproductive difficulties and come under legitimation pressure. Such considerations must be linked to empirically verifiable phenomena of obstinacy, uneasiness (Dyk 2010) and exhaustion (Graefe 2011) structurally generated by growth society's productivity dispositif and which potentially could be, as collective-individual impulses, directed against the growth regime itself. In addition, they are also connectable to considerations, pursued in the form of meta-themes (cf. section 4.4), on the interrelation between the logic of growth and norms of masculinity, or rather between their respective crises.

Finally, and thirdly, the analytical connection between the politics of subjectification of growth society on the one hand, and the concept of „externalisation“ of economic and social problems by late modern growth societies (which is to be further elaborated during the second funding period in the sense of a theoretical innovation) on the other, will be established. The concept of „externalisation“ takes into consideration the widespread idea in public discourses concerning the „limits of growth“, according to which „we“, i.e. all of us in growth society, individually as well as collectively, are „living beyond our means“. According to the basic assumption of a conceptual critique that theorises the relationality of use and effect of terms and phrases in growth society, the construction of a social „we“ as expressed in these semantics obscures crucial questions of distribution throughout national as well as global society. In the context of the research group, then, the question regarding the social relations of distribution (which has been neglected socio-politically and, lately, to some extent even social-scientifically), and, more specifically, of contemporary social relations of exploitation (cf. Sparsam et al. 2014) shall move to the centre of our attention. After all, the new social inequalities found on a global scale are consequences of late capitalism's growth dynamics and crises. A politics of massive global redistribution would at the same time represent the structural condition for a successful transition towards a post-growth constellation. This position, held by the protagonist, of course stands in stark contrast to that of the antagonist Hartmut Rosa, according to whom priority must be placed on overcoming alienated relations to the world and the establishment of resonant relations to the world – from which a widespread readiness for social redistribution results „quasi-automatically“.

For the time being, however, a very different tendency of social development remains dominant. The appeal to refrain from a life „beyond our means“, compatible with the most diverse political-ideological opinions and intentions, subjectifies the functional and legitimation problems of growth society: if one accepts this diagnosis, then changes in individual and collective behaviour represent the preferred means to solve or at least mitigate structural problems of society. Yet at the same time, this diagnosis abstracts from socio-structural differences in the responsibility for growth society's development dynamics as it obscures the fact that, in a global context, it is precisely the living conditions of broad population majorities in other, less „developed“ societies, or rather, the mediation thereof through their instrumental utilisation, that allows the hegemonic way of life in „western“ growth societies to remain sustainable in the first place. The concept of „externalisation“, which is to be further elaborated and differentiated during the second funding period, shall illuminate this mode of problem processing in growth society in more detail – and thereby contribute to once again placing the question of the necessity of intra- and inter-societal programmes and practices of redistribution at the heart of social-scientific debates on social transformation (cf. the „classical“ controversy in Honneth/Fraser 2003). To this end, we intend to intensify the scientific exchange with previous Guests, Fellows and members of the research group staff (Acosta, Aulenbacher, Brand, Biesecker/von Winterfeld, Haubner, Mahnkopf, Muraca), but at the same time to also expand the India focus (represented by Lindner, Nigam, Menon). We are planning a monograph on the „externalisation society“, its structural contradictions and possible social alternatives (scheduled for 2016 and based on Lessenich 2015a).

4.2.2 Topic area: Growth and Democracy (Oct 2015 – Sept 2017)

This topic area addresses the interconnection of economic growth, conflicts (over the distribution of wealth) and democracy. At the heart of the research interest lies the question if and to what extent the existing liberal-representative democracies' actual functional modes rely on economic growth in a constitutive way, as they stabilise themselves through the (re-)distribution of incremental gains and thereby legitimise themselves politically. Other issues include the question as to which forms and institutions of democracy can be sketched out or appear conceivable with view to the contours of a post-growth society, and how the transition from growth to post-growth societies can be successfully conducted as a democratic process.

Though there are also voices that warn against an „apocalyptic crisis rhetoric“ (Hesse et al. 2014: 215), the hypothesis of growing tensions between capitalism and democracy, formulated by authors such as Jürgen Habermas or Claus Offe as early as the 1970s and pursued further by Stephan Lessenich, has received renewed attention in the literature as of late. Authors informed by democracy theory such as Günter Dux locate these tensions in the logic of an economic system determined by capital accumulation that is incompatible with the objective of “creating the possibility of a self-directed life for all through the configuration of social relations” (Dux 2013: 23). On closer inspection however, the contemporary discourse around democracy theory reveals that any alleged evidence for the hypothesis of growing tensions depends on what meaning is ascribed to the concept of democracy itself.

Authors who pursue a modernisation-theoretical argument (1) identify a positive mutual conditionality between economic growth and democracy. It is assumed that – apart from a difficult transitional phase – market-driven growth aided by democratic institutions also gradually reduces social inequality and mitigates distributional conflicts (Kuznets 1953, 1955, North 1990). Such interpretations, which emphasise civil liberties and pluralism in the sense of a liberal democratic tradition, do not yet consider declining growth rates to represent a fundamental threat to the democratic constitution of the body politic as such. Liberal democracy is regarded as the best of all possible constitutional forms, even though “it did not live up to its ideals formulated during the 20th century” (Müller 2012/3: 406). Essentially, not even the absence of economic growth can impact the liberal democracies' fitness for purpose. The followers of a (2) deliberative, rapprochement-oriented concept of democracy are less optimistic about any alleged positive mutual conditionality between economic growth and democratic institutions. Working under the impression left by the democratic transformations in Eastern Europe, in which demands for democratisation coincided with the introduction of capitalist economic forms, they instead stress the intrinsic value of democratic procedures and institutions vis-à-vis the social question (Rödel et al. 1989, Schmalz-Bruns 1995). Oriented around the emancipatory content of communicative action and rational communication, any supposed tensions between capitalism and democracy are regarded as problems of deficient political institutions which, due largely to their national limitation, lag behind the requirements of an increasingly internationalised economy (Habermas 2013, similar: Beck 2013).

The resulting calls for a Europeanisation or internationalisation of democracy are opposed by (3) political-economic and institution-theoretical approaches with a general orientation towards concepts of a social democracy. They respond to the liberal discourse with the argument that „democratic capitalism“ requires an interventionist welfare state and participatory politics in order to be truly democratic. They argue that only this understanding of democracy allows us to decipher the weakening of the welfare state, of organised labour relations and of market-restricting institutions as a post-democratic tendency (Crouch 2008, 2011, Schäfer 2015, Streeck 2013). In contrast to the followers of deliberative concepts, some proponents of a social-corporative model of democracy view the nation state as the last bastion of democratic politics, to be defended tooth and nail against the deregulating

force of international markets (Streeck 2013). Finally, there are those authors (4) who distance themselves from both lines of discourse, conceiving of democracy primarily as an emancipatory project from below. This position is often marked by a radical opposition to representative democratic procedures and institutions. An „insurgent democracy“ would have to be directed explicitly against state power, for democracy must be „anti-statist or [can]not [be] at all“, as e.g. Miguel Abensour argues (2012: 12, similar: Hardt/Negri 2013, more nuanced: Balibar 2012). Other authors, though also considering the strict contraposition of “presentist” and representative democracy to be problematic (Mouffe 2014: 78), also raise the question as to if and how self-organised democratic participation could be combined with representative institutions (Wallerstein et al. 2014: 234) as a component of more comprehensive strategies of democratisation.

Regardless of one's position in this discursive melange, a common problem diagnosis can nevertheless be derived from these different and partially oppositional approaches. The three-fold challenge of declining growth rates, increasing inequality and accumulated ecological threats is hardly likely to be resolved within the framework of the early industrialised countries' existing democratic institutions. Consequently, the established parliamentary democracies of the North may be on the brink of a historical turning point: in the future, the organisation of society should be determined much less by the markets and much more by humans themselves - something which cannot be achieved “through the political system's merely formal democracy and the configuration of power within the capitalist economy”, as Günter Dux (2013: 24) argues. But what exactly does this mean for democracy's present and future?

The research group approaches this question from a variety of directions. Hartmut Rosa locates the cause of a crisis of democracy in the attachment of the political-democratic mode of world appropriation to time-structural conditions which “seem at least threatened under the conditions of late contemporary society, if not completely lost already” (Rosa 2012: 359). According to Rosa, social acceleration allows democratic politics to appear as “too weak, too slow and too unflexible” to be regarded as an adequate means for the realisation of society's interests. (ibid: 360). Democracy is about to “fall prey to the force of velocity” (Rosa 2012: 373). In an ongoing DFG research project („De-synchronised Society? Political Challenges at the Intersections of the Social“) together with Fellow Henning Laux (Bremen University), he examines the challenges, forms of reaction and possible solutions to be derived from the theoretically predicted and empirically studied processes of de-synchronisation, as well as the resulting requirements for re-synchronisation of the institutions of democratic politics. Klaus Dörre, by contrast, considers the alleged sluggishness of democratic institutions and their bulkiness vis-a-vis rapid changes to be an advantage that can provide for resilience („robustness“) in crisis situations (Dörre 2012c: 265-275). Stephan Lessenich reads the crisis of democratic politics as a structural problem of late capitalist societies – a tendency exacerbated as a consequence of growth-oriented activation policies which essentially reduce social participation to questions of market inclusion. In combination with the global social inequalities fuelled by capitalism's growth imperatives, resulting in increasing movements of transnational migration, this leads to new problems of legitimation for the political systems in the Global North.

Current research, in which members of the junior research groups participated, has demonstrated that the majority of precarised and socially excluded groups tend to have difficulty locating themselves within society in the first place. Neither the „underclass“ nor the „precariat“ represent categories on which a positive collective identity could be based. This also explains why such subjects seem to engage in official politics so rarely. (Dörre 2013c: 172, similar: Crouch 2008: 71). In contrast, major social groups still belonging to the relatively secured often practice forms of exclusive solidarity which seek to defend attained social status by deploying resentment against „foreign“, „useless“, and „unproductive“ groups (Dörre/Holst/Matuschek 2013: 222ff., Castel 2005). Moreover, the erosion of organised labour relations leads to a barbarisation of the social class conflict overall. Non-normalised conflicts – hybrid forms of organised and wildcat strikes, occupations of public spaces, riots, uprisings

and revolts – may be one characteristic of a new cycle of protest that is unfolding largely outside of established political organisations, trade unions or institutions of representative democracy (*N*: Schmalz/Liebig 2014: 229-246, Liebig 2014: 271-287; *F*: Nachtwey 2014).

With view to this conflict dynamic, the research group will also review the hypothesis as to whether democracy, in the long run, may only be effective and legitimate if radicalised and extended to social sectors previously closed off from democratic decision-making. If growth compulsions and dynamisation imperatives are to be at least moderated and authoritative interventions to be avoided, then the already frequently invoked „democratisation of democracy“ (Giddens, Beck) may be needed. One aim of the research group's work throughout the second topic area is to full this arguably trite formula with a measure of substance. To this end we will draw on the help of our instigators. Nancy Fraser takes up Polanyi's concept of fictitious commodities, addresses the crisis of reproduction – and therewith a central topic of the first funding period – and explores the possibilities of a democratisation of the care sector (cf. Aulenbacher et al. 2014, Tronto 2013) as well as the chances for a democratisation of questions of justice in a global context. William E. Scheuermann builds upon Hartmut Rosa's theory of acceleration, seeking points of connection for democratic policies which shut down or at least socially correct compulsions to accelerate. Beyond that, we hope for central impulses in the area of democracy theory addressing the question of conceivable institutional reforms as well as the legitimation resources of democratic procedures to come from Hubertus Buchstein (cf. Buchstein 2009: *Demokratiepolitik*). Supported by the Fellows Michael Krätke, Ellen Meiksins Wood, Brigitte Aulenbacher, Joan Tronto and Hans-Jürgen Urban, Klaus Dörre will work on concepts of a new economic democracy that will also be discussed in terms of its gender-political implications. We also wish to integrate Participants and Guests who are working on issues of democratic enterprises (Thomas Sattelberger, Andreas Boes) and on New Economic Democracy into this debate. The European crisis and the barriers to as well as chances for social democratisation contained therein will be addressed with the support of an academic network that seeks out democratic alternatives for the European crisis countries. In order to do so, we will continue to work with, among others, Guests from the first funding period (François Dubet/Bordeaux, Albert Recio/Barcelona, James Wickham/Dublin, Maria Markantonatou/Lesbos). Other deliberative crystallisations have produced starting points for consumer democracy (*G*: Lamla 2012; *N*: Lorenz 2014, Lorenz/Rosa 2009) and discussions around post-national forms of citizenship (*N*: Scherschel 2014; Balibar 2012). One way the North-South perspective will be accounted for is through analyses of the interconnection between growth, inequality and democracy in South Africa. Karl von Holdt (SWOP Johannesburg) is currently conducting research on „Violent Democracy“, i.e. the loss of democracy's legitimation as a result of violent practices. Through such an approach we seek to take the multi-dimensionality of a democratisation project into account, which in differentiated democracies is only conceivable as a co-evolutionary process. Nevertheless, we will keep raising the question of key leverage points for democratisation strategies in all topic areas.

4.2.3 Topic area: The Contours of Post-Growth Societies (Oct 2017 – Sept 2019)

In the period covered by the second application, we will seek to productively utilise the term „post-growth societies“ in the search for societal alternatives. Terms such as De-growth or post-growth have lost their methodological innocence at this point. They constitute a discourse that, all nuanced differences notwithstanding, denotes a more or less clearly identifiable path of social transformation (Diefenbacher et al. 2014a, Lorenz 2014). Post-growth discourse is distinct from the different variants of green growth in its purport – with which we do not entirely agree – of postulating the shrinking of certain branches of industry and thus reducing full-time employment and wage income (Muraca 2014, Paech 2012, Latouche 2010, Seidl/Zahrnt 2010, Mahnkopf 2013). Post-growth society in its currently dominant understanding depicts the transition towards a „restrictive modernity“ that supposedly

stands in contrast to the cultural model of an „expansive modernity“ (Sommer/Welzer 2014: 428f.). In order to make the term post-growth society useful for the research group's research project, however, its content must be re-positioned and re-defined in the context of debates on potential paths of social transformation.

By post growth we do not understand a shrinkage as such of, for instance, economic performance, the power of innovation, or the capacity for efficiency acceleration, but instead a social formation that does not depend on permanent growth and escalation merely to reproduce its own structure and order. Therefore, a post-growth society can by all means – at least in some areas – grow, accelerate and innovate – to promote green technologies, eliminate hunger or combat diseases, for example – but it would not operate according to capitalist modernity's blind compulsion to increase and escalate. In our view, growth and post-growth societies cannot be distinguished primarily by their growth rates per se, but rather by the social or systemic function of growth, and possibly also by specific type and quality of growth (on the discussion about sectoral and selective growth cf. Lorenz 2014). Without a doubt, sustainable post-growth societies *must* be able to grow, accelerate and innovate in order to respond to changing needs and environmental conditions, but they are not forced to do so in order to maintain their socio-economic and political order. ⁸

The future is generally open and for that reason alone hard to predict. Yet historical-sociological comparisons of situations of great upheaval can still serve as a basis for some deliberations on the direction of social developments. If we base ourselves on the preliminary findings presented at the beginning of this paper, then a number of highly diverse scenarios are conceivable, of which we will present three examples.

(1) *Profit without Growth//Re-feudalisation*: one possible variant is the emergence of a social order which is no longer founded upon the compulsion to permanent economic growth and thus increasingly resolves the more acute distributional struggles via authoritarian practices of rule (Collins 2014, Deppe 2013, Crouch 2011). The likelihood of such a transformation increases when economic growth is absent for a longer period of time, downward redistribution is blocked and distributional struggles must be accommodated with already-existing means. In such a case, a finance-capitalist oligarchy could deploy its wealth to maintain an order of exploitation primarily through extra-economic discipline and violence. These developments would probably also find expression in rivalries between nation states around mineral deposits, scarce resources and geopolitical spheres of influence. They would likely reinforce what is already emerging in anti-democratic, even civilisation-threatening escalations – be it in the form of a new East-West conflict (Ukraine), of ethnic nationalism destroying entire states (former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Ukraine), a „tsunami“ of right-wing populism in Europe (such as Marine Le Pen and the Front National), or, quite differently, in the form of fundamentalist-religiously justified terror (the Islamic State). In the social sciences, such a scenario is already being discussed as neo-feudalism or re-feudalisation (Krysmanski 2012; F: Neckel 2013; G: Zinn 2014). This terminology addresses a possible de-dynamisation of capitalism. The structure-forming elements in such a scenario are social ossification and a solidification of relations of extra-economic dominance, which can only be provided for politically via authoritarian mechanisms of rule. In such societies, the elementary dynamisation imperatives of modern capitalist societies as well as their growth compulsions remain institutionally effective, although the requirements for them can no longer be accommodated in the long term. Re-feudalisation, or an authoritarian capitalism (F: Heitmeyer, Deppe) stands for a dystopia – which, from a „complex external position“ (Boltanski 2010: 26), can be questioned and possibly even avoided.

(2) *Green Growth*: visions of a green capitalism promise superior alternatives. They are united in the

⁸ Here, we are following a suggestion by Hartmut Rosa that continues to be the object of internal discussions and which requires topical elaboration. The preliminary working definition, however, implies that growth can and must be redefined. On the discussion about sectoral and selective growth cf. Lorenz 2014

objective to decouple economic growth and resource consumption so as to allow for de-materialised, de-carbonised growth. The goal is to protect societies from destructive growth, to make them resilient and to allow them, via a modified variant of dynamic self-stabilisation, i.e. by means of innovation and green growth, to pull themselves up out of the ecological mess by their own bootstraps. Such decoupling scenarios are envisaged by both neo-Schumpeterian and neo-Keynesian projects alike. A number of decoupling projects have already been outlined, such as the digitalisation of industrial production (Brynjolfson/McAfee 2014), the credo of „intelligent growth“ (Fücks 2013) or the different variants of a Global Deal (Stern 2007) or Green New Deal (Müller/Niebert 2012). The papers and materials of the *Enquete-Kommission* „Growth, Prosperity, Quality of Life“ (Deutscher Bundestag 2013 a, b, c, d) also contain many considerations that essentially amount to green growth. Indeed, there can be little doubt that technical and organisational innovations such as the transition to renewable energies and the improvement of energy efficiency and efficacy are urgently needed to be able to respond to ecological challenges in an even remotely adequate way. Furthermore, we by no means exclude the possibility that the implementation of green growth projects could ultimately lead the way to a revitalisation of capitalism – albeit in a significantly altered appearance (Mann 2014, Calhoun 2014). Despite a broad consensus as far as the necessity of green investment is concerned, little has been done on the ground. During the crisis of 2008/09 only a fraction of state funds was used for investments in a green economy, and the lion's share of innovation(s) occurred in a small number of countries. It seems that without public pressure, not even neo-Schumpeterian versions of an ecological turnaround are realisable. Were they to be realised, we would still face the same fundamental problem that underlies all green investment. Any gains achieved through resource efficiency and efficacy are currently being neutralised by rebound effects. In the capitalist economy, even money earned through ecologically motivated rationalisation must be re-invested as quickly as possible so as to generate new, additional profit. As a consequence, this gradually leads to increased material turnover, rising energy needs and a greater strain on ecosystems. Additionally, green growth scenarios are bound to be tied to specific conditions. The transition to a green capitalism would most likely depend vitally on state intervention, movements of civil society, democratic control of the financial sector, public and cooperative ownership, revaluation of reproductive work, a renewed balance between North and South, egalitarianism and moderate consumption. This inevitably raises the question as to whether a society capable of all this could still be capitalist in the first place.

(3) *Post-Growth Societies*: we may well be at a crossroads of social development, where abundance and over-productivity on one side, and poverty, precarity and blocked life chances on the other undermine the mechanisms of growth-capitalist self-stabilisation. The result could be a destabilising escalation in both directions: overproduction and immiseration increase simultaneously. Marx, Mill and Keynes all already identified tipping points in this regard, beyond which capital and wealth potentially enter into a stationary state (Jackson 2011: 130f., Skidelsky/Skidelsky 2014: 29ff.). In his well-known essay on „Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren“, Keynes described a level of production that would only require three hours of work per day to „satisfy the old Adam in most of us“ (Keynes 1931:372). Relieved of the daily struggle to reproduce, we could “value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful” (ibid.). As Herman Daly stated in his pioneering paper on post-growth, in such a steady state economy a constant stock of physical capital could be maintained with a low rate of material consumption. Generally speaking, then, post-growth societies are social formations that break with systemic compulsions to permanent economic growth and wealth increase. In contrast to other growth-critical authors, the applicants consider it very likely that these formations will no longer be capitalist. Something different will emerge, something new – though not necessarily something better. For the time being, it is unclear what the social forms and relations of such formations will look like. Currently, the post-growth discourse in the stricter sense includes concepts that grasp the desired transformational dynamic primarily as a changing of the hegemonic western way of life (cf. Lessenich 2014c, 2015a). Diefenbacher et al. (2014b: 12f.) identify as common features among these

heterogeneous concepts, inter alia, the complete break with systemic growth compulsions, the shrinking of entire economic sectors, the rejection of the notion of decoupling as well as of the GNP as an index of prosperity, the regionalisation of the economy, redistribution and guarantees of social security through (amongst other measures) an „unconditional basic income“ (*bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen*), a decrease in overall resource consumption via a reduction of individual consumption and increased sufficiency, wage cuts and a reduction of working hours, as well as a revaluation of care work and work dedicated to self-fulfillment.

The applicants as well as the Special Fellow position themselves in contrast to such models, albeit each with their own specific approach. The internal differences between them mainly refer to the degree of importance ascribed to distributional conflicts, the postulate of equality, as well as growth strategies in the old capitalist centres. While Dörre seeks to explore the possibilities of a selective, „robust“ and (economically-)democratically legitimated social growth as a transitional strategy (Dörre/Ehrlich/Haubner 2014, vgl. Lorenz 2014), Rosa tends to sympathise with reductionist scenarios (Rosa 2012a). Lessenich, in turn, deals mainly with the institutional subjective relief from growth compulsions („Right to be lazy“, Lessenich 2014e, 2015b) and the possibilities of global social distributional dynamics in the spirit of global social rights. All differences aside, the applicants and Special Fellow generally agree on the assessment that a social system with an inscribed growth compulsion ultimately collides with the reproductive capacities of a planet with finite resources.

Once again alluding to a figure of argument belonging to Ulrich Beck, the secular crisis of the present, which some commentators are already comparing to the transition to a new geologic era („Anthropocene“, Crutzen 2002), also represents an opportunity for political intervention and systemic transformation. Even the world-system theoreticians, often criticised for being too analytically rigid, have meanwhile begun to see some scope(s) for such a process of transformation. According to Wallerstein, the struggle for a new order will be fought out by various social camps, of which he assigns two the labels of the „Spirit of Davos“ and the „Spirit of Porto Alegre“. One of these camps of subaltern forces („Porto Alegre“) exhibits continuities with the old socialist and labour movements (vertical organisation, struggle for power); the competing camp of libertarian currents and movements places their emphasis on self-organisation (functional decentralisation) and rejects economic growth as an objective of emancipatory politics altogether (Wallerstein 2014: 45). Wallerstein's coordinate system may suffice for an initial approach towards the transformation problematic. However, it does not allow for enough differentiation to accurately classify already ongoing changes or determine political-conceptual fault-lines more precisely. Critique of growth is expressed in all social camps to varying extents, including in those Wallerstein associates with the ruling elites („Spirit of Davos“). They can also be found on the extreme right, with repressive implications (Benoist 2007). We encounter this critique as an orientation of an enlightened conservatism (Miegel 2014) just as we do in social democratic reformist (Schulmeister 2013, Müller/Niebert 2012) or eco-socialist conceptions (Foster et al. 2011, Altvater 2010, Sakar 2009). All these designs and conceptions may be interpreted as „philosophies of political transformation“. With view to the diversity of possibilities and the uncertain outcome of social conflicts and political decision-making processes, we wish to utilise these „philosophies“ as material for a sociologically grounded compass that may help establish analytical capacity and provide for orientation in what will most likely turn out to be very chaotic transitional processes.

4.3 Central innovation

This now points to the central innovation that the applicants and Special Fellow wish to accomplish together (in addition to the individual contributions already mentioned) during the second funding period. The aim is to compile a social-theoretically founded, analytically substantial compass which will help in sounding out the chances for a democratic transformation towards post-growth societies. Our

method in doing so can be guided by the compass that our Fellow Erik O. Wright (2010, 2012) designed in „Envisioning Real Utopias“. On the basis of sources of power organically linked to the market, state and civil society, Wright outlines seven possible paths of social transformation, none of which are mutually exclusive and all of which are at least latently emerging within capitalist structures already. In contrast to Wright, however, we seek to relate our compass to the social dynamisation imperatives and the crises, value orientations and power resources associated with them. This requires a division of labour with individual contributions to be synthesised at the end of the research period. The most important objective during the second funding period is a jointly authored monograph containing a „compass of social transformation“.

This monograph will merge that which will have previously been developed largely autonomously with regard to respective dynamisation imperatives. The compass will include the expert knowledge of Fellows, Guests and junior research teams who will each be consulted for specific topics. In contrast to the work of the Bundestag's *Enquete-Kommission* or various other attempts at identifying alternative growth indicators, the compass addresses strategies for an „improvement of society“ (Eßbach 2014: 33) and social orders that break with growth capitalism's dynamisation compulsions. The synthesising needed for such a compass requires special work methods. It calls for very close cooperation among the authors. At the same time, the authors must be able to avail themselves of the large academic network that has emerged over the course of the research group's work. As a consequence of this planned innovation, the process of knowledge generation and processing at the research group is intensified in an almost funnel-like manner. The broad input from all areas of research is followed by the conflation and condensation of knowledge in a final step in the topic area of „Growth – Post-Growth“.

4.4 Meta-themes

Scientific innovations are not exclusively the task of the applicants and Special Fellow, but will also be pursued independently by our fellows, the core group, the internal topic area working group and our strategic cooperating partners. This work will be based on the meta-themes linking different areas of research. Originally, we proposed four meta-themes: the Sociology of Critique, Varieties of Capitalism/Socialism, Political Sociology/Action Theory and Strategic Choice/Social Bearers/Addressees of a Sociology of Critique. The aforementioned meta-themes will occupy a prominent position at the research group, albeit not as distinct blocks but rather as ongoing, exemplary themes to be engaged with in deliberation with selected Fellows from the research group. Based on our experiences in the process of research and discussion so far, however, we have partially re-tailored them and rendered them more precise and concrete:

(1) The engagement with a Sociology of Critique will be continued in work on a *Public Sociology*. Public Sociology is a concept which has been discussed in the English-speaking world for roughly a decade and is now, after a slight delay, finding its way into the German debate (F: Burawoy 2015). The concept of Public Sociology assumes that an ongoing commodification of knowledge fundamentally calls into question the foundations of knowledge production in the field of the social sciences. From this arises sociologists' interest in cooperating with civil society actors who also find themselves confronted with a „third wave of marketization“ (Burawoy 2008: 359). From an academic standpoint, the task is to productively harness this cooperation in order to make issues that have been obscured from public view visible, using the tools of the academic trade. The most promising way for this to work is to generate transformative knowledge (cf. G: Schneidewind/Singer-Brodowski 2013), which only becomes accessible to researchers if they are able to establish trusting relationships with the social groups and their representatives they study in the first place. Thus, research must occur in close exchange with organisations of civil society. Findings will then be passed back to the practitioners in condensed form – albeit without the researchers involved becoming (political) parties themselves. In this sense, Public Sociology is about making available privileged accesses to hidden bodies of knowledge along with the

everyday critique of relations of domination contained therein, in order to present them to the appropriate publics in a processed, comprehensible form.

Michael Burawoy, who initiated this debate conceptually (Burawoy 2005), is already involved in the research group's work as a Fellow and instigator. An initial working conference was held in January 2015. Both applicants and Fellows have published various pieces on the topic (Lessenich 2014f, Lessenich/Neckel 2012, Dörre 2014e, Urban 2014). A book featuring German translations of essential texts by Michael Burawoy will appear in 2015. As could be expected, the concept is fiercely debated throughout the profession (e.g. Bude 2005, Blau/Smith 2006, Unzicker/Hessler 2012, Scheffer/Schmidt 2013, Greve 2012, Streeck 2012). We nevertheless consider approaches of a critical Public Sociology as appropriate for the basic principle of the research group and its dialogical work method. This is made all the more true by its capacity to accomplish what Jörg Lamla, in a critical case study concerning „Sociology – Capitalism – Critique“ (2014: 459ff.), termed „democratic experimentalism“. The research group is, so to speak, practised „democratic experimentalism“. These experiences in „constructive controversy“ and dialogical work method shall be introduced into a discursive Public Sociology. Among others, Hans Peter Müller, Brigitte Aulenbacher, Michael Burawoy, Michelle Williams, Ute Volkmann, Birgit Riegraf, Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Hans-Jürgen Urban, Elisabeth von Thadden and Jörn Lamla and Stefan Selke will provide impulses as instigators, Fellows or Guests. In this context, one task will be the further development of the concept of a Public Sociology/Social Science through practical experience as such. What is essential is that Public Sociology takes place in a global public in order to create new possibilities for a North-South dialogue.

(2) Discussions concerning Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) will be continued in the debates on *social-scientific terminologies of crisis*. There are mainly two reasons for this. Firstly, the crisis of 2008/09 has shown that although crisis trajectories and effects differ wildly depending on respective institutional configurations (Harvey 2014; G. Lehndorff 2014; Karamessini/Rubery 2013, Becker 2014), they are nevertheless a feature of all varieties of capitalism (Streeck 2013, Dörre 2014a). The globality of the crisis shifts the term “crisis” into a meta-theoretical problem in itself. Despite the fact that sociology conceives of itself as a science of crisis, the term “crisis” features rather marginally in contemporary textbooks. Though this sociological abstinence from crisis may change sooner rather than later (as the 37th Congress of the German Sociological Association in Trier seemed to indicate), a theoretical gap remains for the time being. The question as to how this gap should be filled is the subject of controversial debate at the research group. Irrespective of this controversy, the question also arises as to whether “crisis” is even adequate to depict disruptions of the human-natural world metabolism in the first place (Foster et al. 2011: 401) and whether it can and must also be applied to democracy (Crouch 2011, Fraser 2013). Both of these matters shall be the main focus of the individuals responsible for them at the Institute of Sociology (Matthias Groß for crisis and ecological questions, Tilman Reitz for crisis and questions of democracy).

(3) In the realm of action theory and political sociology, the debates and papers emanating from the research group repeatedly intersected at a perhaps rather unexpected point, namely at the observation of a close, constitutive relation between imperatives of increase and escalation and dynamisation on one side and hegemonic concepts of masculinity on the other (F: Salleh 2013, 1997; N: Gregor 2015). It is not surprising, against this backdrop, that the crisis of growth society seems to be coinciding with a „crisis of masculinity“. We wish to follow up on this issue in the second funding period, for in our view it represents a suitable focal point for discussing and focusing action-theoretical concepts. Therefore, we are currently narrowing this topic down to the question as to whether and to what extent growth imperatives are constructed via gender differences, or rather, are connoted as masculine, and to what extent constructions of masculinity and growth are intrinsically linked. At any rate, the debates in *Men's Studies* suggest that hegemonic masculinity in its current form as „transnational business masculinity“ (Connell 1987, Connell/Messerschmidt 2005) is intimately imbricated with the notion of economic growth (Bourdieu 2005). From this perspective, it seems unsurprising that discussions

around crises of growth found in media and popular-scientific debates for over a decade now have continuously been accompanied by talk of a „crisis of men“ or „crisis of masculinity“ (Meuser 2011: 325-336, Meuser/Scholz 2005, Scholz 2012). Here, shifts in gender relations benefiting women (better access to schooling and higher education, higher rates of participation on the labour market) and the loss of standard relations of employment are interpreted as a destabilisation of masculinity. Such phenomena illustrate that, in the social imaginary of growth-modernity, masculinity is tightly connected to both growth and political rule and seems to be conceivable only in this relation. In this regard, the question arises as to if and how the relationship between masculinity and post growth can be grasped in a positive manner. Which contours of masculinity would a post-growth society have to exhibit? At the Jena Institute of Sociology this problematic is being worked on by Sylka Scholz. The research planned in this area simultaneously contains a large overlap with the topic area of Growth and Subjectivity.

(4) The cross-cutting topic of Strategic Choice/Social Actors will be continued and further substantiated on the basis of a sociological analysis of De-growth movements. This project, which was already launched during the first funding period, allows us to empirically derive the social profile of newly emerging De-growth movements.⁹ The research group has already compiled a unique data set of the participants of the De-growth conference in Leipzig. This data will be thoroughly evaluated and used as the foundation for an independent study. The researchers responsible for this task are Dennis Eversberg (core group) and Matthias Schmelzer (Fellow). A new topic being worked on by researchers at the Max Weber Center in Erfurt is „*Local Politicisation of Global Norms*“ (*Lokale Politisierung globaler Normen*). One area of interest is how critique and protest that build on such norms proceed and how they themselves in turn change norms through their actions. It is assumed that the relevant social mechanisms can be better understood if (in terms of theory design as well as empirical research strategy) how such norms find local expression is investigated. From now on, research findings from Erfurt shall be placed in a joint problem context and thereby (also via the allocation of Joint Fellowships) be made fruitful for the work of both centres.

5 Location, structure of the research group, work method, fellows, structure formation

Because we believe in continuity with regard to the location, staff infrastructure, work method and integration of the Fellows, we will confine ourselves in the following to introducing and explicating only the most important changes and specifications.

5.1 Staff infrastructure, work methods and structure of the research group

Staff infrastructure, task allocation: the number of personnel at the research group has proven to be sufficient, but has also shown to be the minimum required number of staff in order to ensure the successful execution of our sophisticated research programme. For the work on a „post-growth atlas“ and the establishment of a database, we will in fact have to temporarily expand the job pool. For the upcoming funding period we will require the volume of positions originally proposed (two post-graduate students, two post-doc positions, as well as a managing director). However, we also seek to re-define the tasks involved. Scientific and organisational executive management shall be separated from one another. Organisational management will henceforth include Public Relations work as well. One staff position will be reserved for this task alone. Scientific management will be the responsibility of one of the post-doc positions to be newly appointed. The second post-doc position will remain occupied by Dennis Eversberg. For both vacant post-graduate positions we will select candidates whose planned doctoral dissertations substantially address the research group's projected subject matter. One of the

⁹ Whether we are dealing with one or several movements is being controversially discussed; cf. F: Brand 2014, Muraca 2015).

staff positions at the research group will act as liaison to Special Fellow Stephan Lessenich and the LMU in Munich. This new division of labour is based on our experiences during the first funding period and is owed mainly to the following reasons: it is absolutely indispensable to guarantee a smooth handling of Public Relations and the numerous other organisational tasks through the provision of a specific staff position. It is then reasonable to combine this with a set of executive managerial tasks. The scientific executive management, on the other hand, can be more reliably ensured if the corresponding scientist is actually fully involved in the research process itself.

Work method: the research group has – based on previous research – developed a dialogical work method which encourages participating researchers to develop synthesising categories and concepts in a mode of reciprocal criticism. In the process, positional determinations, differences, discussions, controversies and the results thereof are presented in a transparent and comprehensible manner, even to outsiders. The work method is quite demanding and has undergone its ups and downs during the research process. As already anticipated in the original application, such a procedure requires the participating researchers to respect one another's respective approaches, to be open to harsh criticism in terms of content and to be able to learn from this criticism. As we know today, such a process inevitably leads to frictions. Harsh and, on top of that, often polyphonic criticism is not welcome at each and every stage of individual research. Still, during the first funding period the research group has successfully, albeit to differing degrees of intensity, practised a dialogical work method. Four principles are constitutive of the dialogical work method: (a) the fundamental principle of controversy, (b) the safeguarding of findings, if possible via their publication, (c) the synthesising of research findings and (d) the transfer of knowledge. In the first section of the application, we reported on outcomes of this work method. This already illustrated how complex and elaborate the work method really is and that it is rather difficult to maintain alongside day-to-day business at the university. The research group represents an opportunity to consolidate the dialogical method and expand the circle of participants so as to enable discussion and cooperation „on an equal footing“ over longer periods of time. At the same time, however, it produces additional work. The organisational and coordinating activities are much more extensive than we had anticipated beforehand. For this reason, we propose certain changes to the prepared dialogue.

Prepared dialogue: during the second funding period each applicant once again assumes a particular function in each topic area. Each applicant is either protagonist (responsible for hypotheses and a statement of principles), antagonist (responsible for the counter-thesis) or executive director. The roles of protagonist and antagonist are assumed for one topic area each, respectively. Stephan Lessenich will assume, alongside the applicants, the position of protagonist and also contribute to the synthesising work. The protagonists will be supported by external instigators. The position of moderator will be scrapped in favour of the position of executive director. During the first year of work on a topic area, the protagonist's contribution is central. He provides the basic outline that serves as the basis for discussion at the research group. The third semester is then dominated by the antagonist who organises the critical feedback. The fourth semester is reserved for the executive director to bundle the research group's various research and discussion strands in the topic area. He then prepares the research group's central conference on the topic. The protagonist (first and second semester) and antagonist (third semester) are released from teaching obligations for the period in which their activities focus on the research group work. As temporary replacement(s), interim professorships – which should offer opportunities primarily to younger academics in order to further distinguish themselves – will be financed with research group funds. Given that we will be processing a total of three different topic areas over the coming four years, we cannot yet specify exact role allocations. Our intention is to fill the position of professor for Political Sociology with someone who can contribute prominently to the research group.

The executive director shall be partially relieved of his or her duties for the entire duration of his or her time at the research group. This reduction in teaching hours will be compensated for by financing a

staff position. In contradistinction to the original application, we consider another modification to be necessary. In order to be present as lecturers, the applicants volunteered to lecture during their phases of leave and attempted to relate these classes to the research group's work. This appeared to make sense not least because it allowed us to accommodate students' wishes. The instructional forms and programme of the Institute of Sociology were rated as „very good to outstanding“ by the „System Accreditation for Sociological Study Programmes“ in 2014. This standard is to be maintained. Even though this may not be the primary task of the research group, it is nevertheless of course clear that the applicants and all additionally involved scientists at the research group must contribute to this effort. In the future we will therefore consider whether certain funds originally allocated to substituting lecturers can instead be used to balance out teaching load reductions as well as to relieve colleagues at the Institute of Sociology. This approach is to be realised in a cost-neutral manner with respect to the original budget.

Research group structure: members of the research group include, apart from the directly assigned staff, the applicants, instigators and Fellows with differing status, members of the internal junior research groups as well as participants from praxis contexts. In addition, and in part as an alternative to the formats tested so far, two new formats shall be either introduced or prioritised more heavily as output-oriented work forms: (1) From now on, the *internal colloquium* – explicitly prioritised over public lectures – will represent the central locus of scientific communication at the research group. It is here that we discuss texts authored by members and Fellows of the research group. The internal colloquium shall institutionalise the dialogical work method and ensure that a common thread runs through discussions at the research group. Attendance at the roughly 30 appointed research group meetings is obligatory for members of the research team and visiting Fellows. Each Fellow and each member must host at least one discussion per year. (2) *Expert Hearings* on central research topics and/or meta-themes represent the second procedural innovation. For these two- to three-day hearings we will invite Guests and Fellows from whom particular contributions are expected. The outcomes of these hearings shall be published in appropriate form under the supervision of selected Fellows and Instigators. As of this writing, three hearings are already in the planning stage. *Hearing 1:* Ecological Crises and the Future of Capitalism (2016, Matthias Groß). For this hearing, the following researchers have already accepted an invitation to participate: Arthur Mol, Gert Spaargaren, John B. Foster, Andrew Jorgenson, David Sonnenfeld. *Hearing 2:* Growth Crises and Crises of Democratic Representation (2017, Tilman Reitz). Invited participants include: Maria Markantonatou, Dario Azzellini, Ulrich Brand, Dirk Jörke, Lars Gertenbach and Marina Martinez Mateo. *Hearing 3:* Post-Growth and Masculinity – A Paradox? (2018, Sykla Scholz). Invited participants include: Elena Rozdestvenskaja, Monika Szczepaniak, Michael Meuser, Toni Tholen.

5.2 Collaboration with fellows, promotion of emerging talent, knowledge transfer, structure formation

In order to integrate high-quality scientists, the research group requires outstanding, intellectually appealing working conditions that can attract academic heavyweights. To ensure this, the applicants will rely on the following instruments:

(1) *Fellowships:* Each year up to four Fellowships shall be allocated for external instigators and the Special Fellow. The task of these Fellows is – by way of their own contributions – to intervene in the research group debates, to introduce new perspectives and, not least, to produce publications on the wider topic that find recognition in international debates. Temporary substitutes for the invited scientists' home institutions will be funded in full. The same will apply to any other unforeseen cost overruns (accommodation, family relocation, etc.). In the topic area „Contours of Post-Growth Societies“ the Senior Fellows are to support the applicants in the synthesising work associated with the „compass of transformation“. The two applicants must have the opportunity to work continuously with individual

Fellows for longer periods of time over the last year of the research group. Colleagues from the Jena Institute of Sociology will support this as internal instigators.. They will assume responsibility for sub-sections of the research programme and receive support to this end in the form of funding for assistants as well as for hearings and workshops or classroom research.

(2) *Junior Fellowships*: these Fellowships are to be awarded to younger, highly qualified junior researchers (as was the case during the first funding period) who wish to complete a qualifying theses or a high-profile publication in the respective topic area. The junior researchers will participate systematically in the research group's debates. Their tasks include aiding in the preparation of the colloquium. Junior Fellowships shall be remunerated appropriately. Each year, four Junior Fellowships will be awarded via an international application process. Experience has shown that it is not particularly easy to get high-level researchers to commit to a single institution for a longer period of time. In taking this circumstance into account, *Visiting Fellowships* of up to three months will be awarded, allowing for short-term stays at the research group as well as for targeted interventions concerning specific sub-topics that might otherwise be neglected in discussions at the research group. The offer of Visiting Fellowships is open to both established researchers with an international reputation as well as to younger academics who have already distinguished themselves in their respective research fields. The status of *Guests of the Research group* will be awarded to those scientists who occasionally participate in hearings or other events. One aspect of the dialogical method is that research findings – at internationally attended academic forums – are discussed not only among fellow specialists, but also with people from a praxis context. An ongoing relationship between the research group and its Fellows shall be ensured through workshops, hearings and conferences. Since the Fellows are usually not all present at the research group simultaneously, over time the conversation must be held largely via conferences and workshops.

(3) *Emerging talent promotion*: the internal topical working group includes a small number of particularly qualified junior researchers from the Jena Institute of Sociology who work on questions that concern the research group. These members have the opportunity to intervene in the discussion at any time via their own papers and publications. According to preference, the group can in turn support the work of either the protagonist or antagonist. The opportunity to work with high-profile outside academics will be open to all members of the working group. The same is true for the option to complete a topic-specific qualifying theses as part of a Junior Fellowship. For the second funding period, two workshops are devoted to the main topics and meta-themes of the research group: one workshop on the re-organisation and endangerment of democracy under the conditions of a growth crisis or an active renunciation of growth, and another one on unequal distribution of growth benefits and drawbacks in North and South. The members of the topical working group shall be supported in heightening the public awareness of their research at international conferences. For these activities, as well as for planned publications, the group (which must be re-staffed due to fluctuations among the members) will receive its own budget. The members of the group include: Jörg Oberthür, Stefan Schmalz (both speakers), Stefanie Börner, Ulf Bohmann, Florian Butollo, Julia Gabler, Stefanie Graefe, Anja Gregor, Stephan Lorenz, Sophie Ruby, Peter Schulz, Sebastian Sevigani, Jan Sparsam, Stefan Schröder, Andre Stiegler und Marleen Thürling. In addition to these, external members include: Barbara Muraca, Silke van Dyk and Thomas Barth.

(4) *Participants, scientific advisory council*: In the second funding period we seek to extend cooperation with a small number of practitioners from the fields of politics, economy, the trade unions and journalism who are not only relevant with regard to their specific topic area, but who are also capable of discussing issues with scientists „on an equal footing“. The task of the Participants is to support the transfer of research findings from the research group to attract a media public and to insert knowledge from praxis contexts into the scientific debate. This group will in part also have to be re-staffed during the second funding period. So far, we have considered: Andrian Kreye (Review Section, Süddeutsche Zeitung), Matthias Greffrath (journalist), Jakob Augstein (Freitag), Ulrike Herrmann (Die Tageszeitung -

TAZ), Oliver Hollenstein (Die ZEIT), Martin Machowecz, Anne Hähnig (both: Die ZEIT im Osten), Franziska Augstein (Süddeutsche Zeitung), Jürgen Kaube (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung), Gerlinde Sommer (Thüringer Landeszeitung), Emma Watkinson (New Left Review), Albrecht von Lucke (Blätter für dt. u. int. Politik), Shalini Randeria (IWM Wien), Margaret Abraham (ISA), Thomas Sattelberger (former staff manager Telekom), Wolfgang Lemb (executive board, IG Metall). The scientific advisory council shall include: Prof. Wolfgang Seufert (communication studies), Prof. Claudia Hammerschmidt (Romance philology), Prof. Benno Werlen (social geography), Prof. Niels Berkemeyer (education science) und Prof. Verena Krieger (art history).

(5) North-South Dialogue: our cooperations with Chinese, South African, Indian and Latin American scientists have shown that the ecologically motivated restructuring of production models and reproduction regimes is being intensely debated in the Global South as well. In this context we came across some interesting observations which do not fit smoothly into the VoC template. Despite the fact that large emerging countries in particular can be economically successful while lacking the basic institutions of western capitalisms, an approximation between the emerging economies and the early industrialised countries is nevertheless occurring – all other differences notwithstanding, of course. This development, which has been addressed implicitly in various publications emanating from the research group discussions (Lüthje/Zuo/Zhang 2013, Butollo 2014, Schmalz 2014), shall be further pursued throughout the second funding period in the context of research cooperations and independent meetings. The subject matter here shall mainly be the contours of post-growth societies. The following meetings and cooperations are already in the planning stages: (a) a workshop on extractivism (together with the Institute for Latin American Studies Berlin/Sergio Costa and Martina Sproll; University of Vienna/Ulrich Brand; University of Kassel/ Hans-Jürgen Burchardt); (b) a publication and jointly organised workshop on the restructuring of the Chinese production model (with Gaochao He, Boy Lüthje, among others); (c) a research cooperation with the SWOP Johannesburg leading to an exchange of junior researchers.

Desired structure-forming effects

Structure-forming effects concerning the North-South dialogue are expected to result from a four-year DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) sub-project, „Social-ecological contradictions of capitalist Landnahme: The example of the logging industry and water management in southern Chile“, which was successfully applied for by members of the research group. The project is based on the assumption that the global ecological crisis produces distributional conflicts which, in the post-colonial reality of Patagonia, manifest in struggles around identity and cultural belonging. Our cooperating partners include the Universidad Católica de Temuco (Prof. Hernán Cuevas), the Universidad de Concepción (Prof. Jorge Rojas Hernández) and the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Prof. Perla Zusman, Prof. Fernando Groisman).

In the medium term, we expect three structure-forming initiatives to emerge from the research group context: (1) beginning in 2015 the centres in Jena and Erfurt will utilise Joint Fellowships to be financed by a „Pro-Excellence Programme“ of the federal state of Thuringia. Beyond that, we intend to (2) apply for a joint graduate college entitled „Normativity and Social Critique“, in which the research findings, theoretical approaches and work methods of both institutions shall be productively conjoined. Coinciding with the end of the planned second funding period of the Jena research group, (2) preparations for an inter-regional special research area, which shall be applied for in 2020 at the latest, are to be completed. The task at hand in terms of research strategy will be to establish an axis between the two institutions which contributes to consolidating research on „Post-Growth Societies“. The founding of an Institute for research on social-ecological transformation may represent a decisive step in this direction.

The research group's most important findings will be presented in the framework of an international multi-day concluding conference in 2019, which will not least also serve to consolidate the dialogue on social transformation and post-growth via appropriate arrangements and cooperation in a global network. The conference will be hosted together with the International Sociological Association (ISA) and involve as many Fellows and cooperating partners from Germany and from abroad as possible. Furthermore, we intend to test a new event format in which opportunities for network-building take centre stage.

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