

# **(Re)productivity as the crucial guideline for a Green New Deal**

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# Outline

- Introduction
- (re-)productivity (Biesecker and Hofmeister )
- Post-Keynesians and the environment
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# Introduction

- This paper argues that green Keynesian stimulus packages do not transform economies in an environmentally sound direction if based on productivity in a strict and traditional capitalist sense. Instead, they need a new understanding of (re)productivity “... in the sense that they contribute towards the sustenance of life and of biodiversity on the planet earth” (Le Monde Diplomatique).

# Introduction

- The packages initiated in 2008 by the USA, Germany and France contained only 12%, 13% and 18% of investments targeted towards a low carbon economy, whilst China and South Korea channelled 34 % and 79 % of their stimulus packages towards enhancing the sustainability of their economies (UNED, Update for G20 Summit, Pittsburgh 2009).



# (re-)productivity

- Biesecker and Hofmeister's arguments are based on a critical review of the history of economic thought.
- They conclude: the modern mainstream has systematically excluded female and natural productive contributions to economic development.
- However, a side line exists (the Physiocrats and Institutional to Ecological Economics) which provides an alternative notion of productivity.

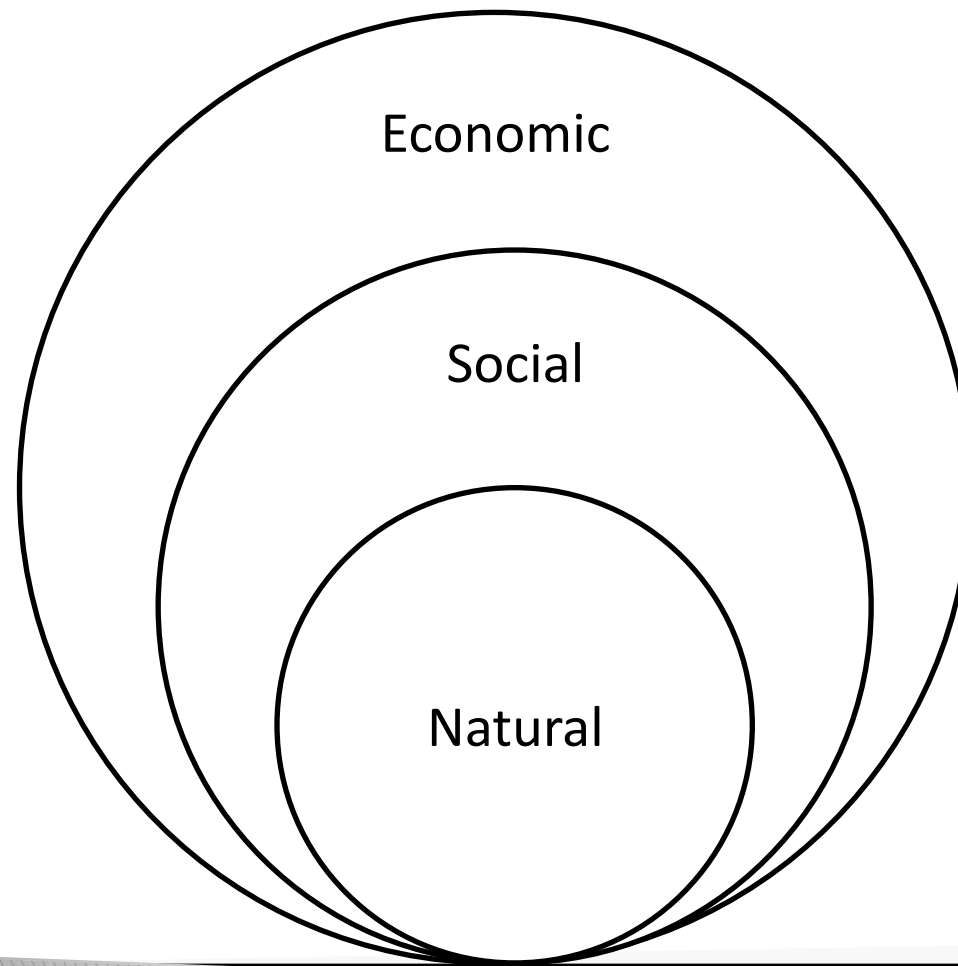
# (re-)productivity

- Biesecker and Hofmeister define (re) productivity as a concept encompassing the “whole” of productivity. Based on democratic evaluation procedures it includes all productive processes and does not separate, shut out, devalue or take for granted social reproductive care activities mostly provided by women or the ecological productivity of nature.

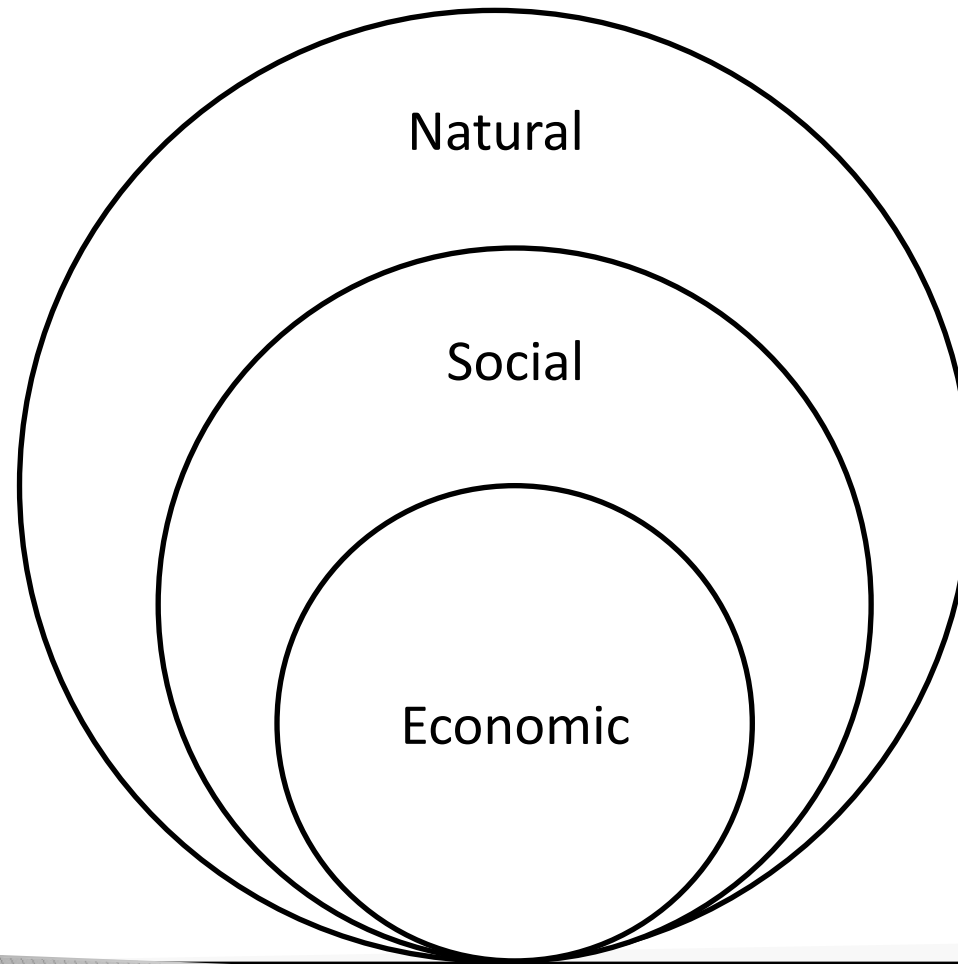
# (re-)productivity

- The economic system is embedded in the social and natural system(s). Markets have functioning families and communities and resilient ecosystems as their foundation and aim. Critique of “social and natural capital”.
- Linkages between the three systems are characterized by negative and positive feedback loops.

# Traditional view



# (Re-)productivity view



# (re-)evaluation process

- To evaluate economic activity one needs to develop quantitative as well as qualitative criteria in democratic discourse processes:
- -> a transformation process on three levels of evaluation: 1. material-technical, 2. social-cultural and 3. cultural-symbolic.
- 1. primacy of the physical dimension of production over its monetary dimension.

# (re-)evaluation process

- The aim is to reduce energy and material throughput. Closed product cycles are much more important than revenue.
- 2. Social costs and costs to ecosystems' resilience trump profits or supposed consumer surplus.
- 3. Change in production and consumption attitudes as well as gender identities based on fairness and equity.

# (re-)productivity - amendments

- Some notion of the productivity of housework in Marshall, therefore it is a “slippery term”.
- Evolutionary thinking, take biology as a model.
- According to Folbre productive contribution of the family survived longer in national statistics than in economic theory.



# (re-)evaluation process - amendments

- To conceptualize the process of social and cultural transformation, reference to:
- Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and cultural capital could be useful.
- Even more so Judith Butler's concept of changing gender norms through citation and translation in public discourse.
- And Nancy Folbre's structures of constraints.

# Post-Keynesians & Environment

- four reasons for the neglect of environmental problems:
  1. preoccupation attacking the mainstream
  2. motivated primarily by social concerns
  3. environment of lesser importance
  4. absence of value theory

Mearman : “Post-Keynesians need to embrace the environment”.

# Post-Keynesians & Environment

- Four methodological reasons why they have the capacity and potential to do so:
  1. notion of real uncertainty leads to complex open systems and the precautionary principle.
  2. focus on distribution links to the green economic concern with environmental justice.
  3. heterogeneity of capital view is congruent with critique of natural capital.

# Post-Keynesians & Environment

4. A social value theory emerges which links to approaches like Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA). These in turn include democratic discourse processes.

# Conclusion

- A number (four) of theoretical links and conceptual agreement between sustainability oriented Post Keynesians and Ecological Economists in general and with Biesecker and Hofmeister's approach in particular do exist.
- Further research: develop more detailed criteria for green stimulus based on (re-)productivity.

# Conclusion

- Critical review and empirical analysis of what is regarded as “green stimulus” in the current debate. There is quite a lot of research going on already in UNEP, ILO, OECD and national research units like the DIW.
- Unfortunately all of them define green jobs and green stimulus exclusively as wage work and are so far almost gender blind.

# Conclusion

- **UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC** (2008) Report (huge, 376 pages!): “Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world”.
- Def.: Jobs in “... areas from renewable energy generation up to energy efficiency projects at the household and industrial level” (p. VII).

# Conclusion

- “... green jobs are those that contribute appreciably to maintaining or restoring environmental quality and avoiding future damage to the Earth’s ecosystems” (p. 35/36).
- The study has an industry focus: energy supply alternatives, buildings, transportation, basic industry (steel, aluminium, cement, paper, recycling), food and agriculture and forestry.



# Conclusion

- No gendered notion of the service sector (retail), no unpaid work mentioned!
- Emphasis on: “*Decent Work*”. Minimal lip service paid to gender equality.
- Transformative demand stimulus is not amongst policy options (the study is pre-crisis!).
- Similar impression from reading other UNEP, ILO, OECD and DIW material.

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