



THIRTEEN

Having, Doing, Loving, Being

Sustainable Well-Being for a Post-Growth Society

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In the long term—if there is to be one—an awareness of the delicacy of the biosphere must go hand in hand with any feasible commitment to the optimisation of needs-satisfaction.

—Len Doyal and Ian Gough, *A Theory of Human Need*

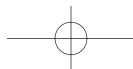
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The opponents of degrowth share the view that it will be impossible to maintain let alone improve well-being without GDP growth. Degrowth research has usually responded to these concerns with optimistic statements about how equitable downscaling of production and consumption will increase well-being (Schneider, Kallis, and Martínez-Alier 2010, 512) and how redistribution of income and investments in public services can have greater impacts on well-being than generalized growth can (Kallis, Kerschner, and Martínez-Alier 2012, 174; see also Büchs and Koch 2017, 67–73). It has also been assured that well-being will lie at the heart of the degrowth transformation¹ (e.g., Andreoni and Galmarini 2014). However, the main argument of the degrowth research—that ultimately human well-being can only be guaranteed by abandoning business as usual and by a shift towards a new kind of economy (e.g., Kallis, Kerschner, and Martínez-Alier 2012; Asara et al. 2015)—has not been very apt at convincing those wary towards the whole idea of degrowth.

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Admittedly, the degrowth discussion has partly skipped over the magnitude of policy level challenges and has perhaps therefore underestimated the tasks ahead for the welfare states whose institutions have been developed side by side with capitalist accumulation and economic



growth. Social policy has been a faithful servant of the growth paradigm and a useful catalyst for capitalist reproduction (e.g. Büchs and Koch 2017; Kloo 2015). Welfare states have combined competitive and growth-oriented economies with a high level of social protection and education (Kangas and Palme 2009), which in part explains why the public support for welfare states has been so strong in many countries. Emphasis on the beneficial outcomes of welfare state development has, however, until these days made it possible for the citizens of these countries to close their eyes to the downside of this development—namely, that the ecological footprint of the affluent welfare states exceeds a sustainable level and that the high standard of living has been achieved at the expense of future generations, other species, and the global poor. This contradiction generates a challenging starting point for building sustainable welfare systems independent of economic growth.

For the degrowth transformation to be successful, the question of what welfare, well-being, and sustainable well-being actually mean is essential. Even though unanimity on the meaning of these concepts may never be reached, *well-being* can be understood as a positive personal experience or, more broadly, as “a positive and sustainable state that allows individuals, groups or nations to thrive and flourish” (Huppert, Baylis, and Keverne 2004, 1331), whereas *welfare* refers to collective measures for promoting social security. The concept of welfare has also been reduced to refer primarily to material “well-being” (McGregor and Pouw 2017, 1134). The two concepts are, however, commonly used as synonyms, and in public and policy discourse, well-being is also often narrowly interpreted in economic terms (Hämäläinen and Michaelson 2014). This confusion between well-being and the standard of living or consumption is a major explanation of why it is so difficult, if not impossible, for the protagonists of growth to come to terms with the idea that well-being without growth could be an option. Another problem of the mainstream discussion is an insufficient comprehension of well-being as the gratification of a variety of human needs. Alternatively, the concept of needs can be routinely used either without much thought given to its meaning or with the focus almost entirely on material needs (Gough 2017, 56). This economic bias is turning out to be catastrophic for the natural world and human well-being in the long run. Clearly, it is urgent to adopt a broader understanding of well-being.

Along with many other scholars (e.g., Rauschmayer, Omann, and Frühmann 2011; O’Neill 2011; Koch 2013; Koch, Buch-Hansen, and Fritz 2017; Gough 2015, 2017), we argue that the ongoing debate about degrowth and sustainable well-being could greatly benefit from need theories. We propose a broad, relational, holistic, and needs-based approach to well-being—namely, the Having-Doing-Loving-Being approach. Since both needs and well-being are “essentially contested concepts” (Gallie 1955–1956), we first explain why needs matter especially in the transfor-

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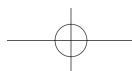
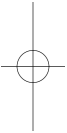
mation towards post-growth societies and why our approach to well-being is based on needs. Second, we argue why a positive, holistic, and relational outlook on well-being could promote the degrowth transformation. Third, we present our approach to well-being, with a specific focus on its potential benefits in the degrowth context. Fourth, we briefly discuss how our approach could be helpful in envisioning ecosocial policies for post-growth societies.

[13.6] WHY NEEDS MATTER IN THE DEGROWTH TRANSFORMATION

[13.7] The concept of need is a contested one (see Gasper 2007; Doyal and Gough 1991). It is contested particularly by mainstream economists, who often do not even include the notion in their vocabulary. Others may use the concept but in an unclear fashion. Major befuddlement arises when the difference between needs and their satisfiers (Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn 1991) is not comprehended, for instance, when food or social security is called a need and not a satisfier of need, or when the difference between needs and wants or desires is not realized. Careless use of language can be found even in degrowth literature. For example, Andreoni and Galmarini (2014, 78–79) rightly criticize neoclassical economics for reducing well-being to income and GDP, and they emphasize the wider understanding of well-being in degrowth theories. However, they also argue that in degrowth theories, well-being is determined by both “satisfaction of basic human needs, generally quantified by objective indicators”, and by “satisfaction of desires strictly related to individual preferences”. Since the satisfaction of desires is a major cause of ecological devastation, the statement is unfortunate.

[13.8] These misunderstandings give cause for an overview of what need theories have to say about needs,² why needs matter specifically in the degrowth context, and why they provide the natural starting point for our own approach. First, need theories separate needs from wants (or necessities from luxuries), thus refuting the emphasis on preferences and wants that dominates mainstream economics and economic thinking (Jackson 2005; Jackson, Jager, and Stagl 2004). This is most befitting in the context of sustainable well-being and degrowth transformation, as meeting needs will arguably have less harmful environmental impacts than meeting unfettered consumer preferences (Gough 2017, 13).

[13.9] An often heard assertion is that the distinction between needs and wants may be difficult to make in practice. There are, however, guidelines for coping with the task. Needs are the ultimate reasons for actions that require no explanation. In other words, they are goals in their own right (Doyal and Gough 1991, 40) and purposes or ends that are always considered good (Allardt and Uusitalo 1972, 11). According to Doyal and Gough (1991, 42), needs are extensional, because their existence is not



dependent on the workings of one's mind: a person can need something without knowing it. Wants, in contrast, are intentional as they refer to something one tries to get. Needs can therefore be distinguished from wants by emphasizing that they are innate and objective, whereas wants are externally imposed and subjective.³ Not satisfying one's wants therefore causes no harm, unless feeling frustrated can be counted as such, whereas serious harm follows if one cannot gratify one's needs. The existence of needs thus establishes a strong normative claim for meeting them (see Gasper 2007, 55).

Second, needs are universal and non-substitutable. This means that they come with claims of justice and equity in tow (Gough 2017, 3). In a situation where the economy shrinks, the issue of just distribution is particularly relevant, and a needs approach might assist in resolving it because it is related to a principle of sufficiency: the ethics of enough (Gough 2017, 60; see Barry 2012).

Third, needs are plural: some are tangible and material, some less so. As mentioned above, this plurality is often ignored due to the domination of economic thinking in capitalist societies. One might add that already Abraham Maslow ([1971] 1993, 310), an influential theorist of human needs, criticized economics for representing "the skilled, exact, technological application of a totally false theory of human needs and values, a theory which recognizes only the existence of lower needs or material needs". As we will show, the wide scale of needs is of primary importance for furthering the degrowth agenda.

Fourth, contrary to the capitalist tenet of endless satisfaction of wants, need theories claim that (material) needs are satiable (e.g. Gough 2017, 46). Once a need for adequate nutrition, for example, has been sufficiently satisfied, no further gains in this respect are possible (Lamb and Steinberger 2017, 7). Furthermore, the satiability of material needs means that it is possible to identify thresholds for sustainable consumption, that is, for reducing consumption that does not contribute to need satisfaction.

Fifth, the above-mentioned distinction between needs and needs satisfiers (Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn 1991; Doyal and Gough 1991) that is emphasized in need theories is crucial specifically in the degrowth context. Human needs always remain the same, but the ways of meeting them vary over time and in different cultures and societies. On the journey to post-growth societies, it will be necessary to change the satisfiers of needs and not needs as such (which would be impossible anyway). Even though needs are non-substitutable, unsustainable satisfiers can be replaced with better alternatives. Meat, for example, can be substituted with plant-based protein sources, or private cars can give way to collaborative car sharing (see, e.g., Jackson and Marks 1999, 428; Cruz 2011, 115).

The distinction between needs and their satisfiers highlights that different ways of actualizing needs have different social and ecological consequences. Needs can be gratified in a way that either increases or mini-

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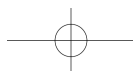
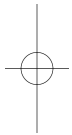
mizes harmful social and environmental impacts. Distinguishing between needs and satisfiers could also help in clarifying what kinds of roles different institutions, goods, and services play in society and how these roles relate to needs and well-being. Need theories thus serve the normative task of structuring and rationalizing policy prioritization (Gasper 2007, 66).

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Sixth, need theories are (or should be) based on a relational foundation that acknowledges the insurmountable neediness and dependency of human existence: the well-being of individuals is inextricably linked to the well-being of other humans, other species, and the social-ecological system. Hence, in line with the degrowth approach (see Barca, Chertkovskaya, and Paulsson, this volume), the concept of needs is in stark opposition to the dominant conception of the human being as *homo economicus*, in which humans are perceived as mainly rational and self-interested creatures and in which the fundamental human dependency on nature is overlooked. This widespread conception is one of the root causes of the ecological destruction that now threatens the earth and all living organisms. It also “increases policy support for GDP growth at the societal level, income growth at the individual level, and profit maximization at the organizational level” (Pirson 2017, 13), thereby reproducing the false identification of material wealth with well-being. By contrast, the needs approach entails abandoning the idea of *homo economicus* in favour of a conception of “*homo iunctus*” (Helne and Hirvilammi 2017), a holistic view of the human being in a harmonious relationship with both the outer and the inner world (i.e., in touch with his or her needs). Need theories thus have a role in critiquing income measures as utterly insufficient and misleading, “humanizing” policy prioritization and extending evaluative repertoires beyond economic criteria (Gasper 2007, 66–67). Needs are also relational in the sense that they are cross-generational: the needs of the future generations will be the same as those of present ones (Gough 2017, 46). The relationality of needs thus demonstrates the nature and seriousness of the ethical obligations we owe to the current and future generations, as well as to the non-human world (see O’Neill 2011).

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Seventh, because needs can be seen as the drivers of human action (e.g., Maslow 1954), they are related to agency, one of the critical factors in the degrowth transformation. Ultimately, we trust that it will be the necessity to safeguard the fulfilment of our needs that will make us rise in opposition to the current politico-economic system, oriented more towards economic growth than to protecting our fragile planet and all it has to offer to us.





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TOWARDS A RELATIONAL AND EMPOWERING
THEORY OF WELL-BEING

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The theories of human need are usually associated with the eudaimonic strand of well-being research. They take their distance from radical hedonic accounts of well-being in which well-being is equated with maximum pleasure and the satisfaction of any desire one may have (Jackson and Marks 1999, 426; Fromm [1976] 1997, 2–5). The hedonist notion sits well with the strivings of the growth economy in which the good life is synonymous with material affluence. From the perspective of sustainability, the hedonic approach is, by contrast, clearly problematic (Brand-Correa and Steinberger 2017; Lamb and Steinberger 2017). First, the approach rejects universal values and needs and instead promotes a relativistic view on human well-being (Ryan and Deci 2001). Consequently, the approach will likely not have much to say about the well-being of future generations (see O’Neill 2006). Second, the idea of a society in which individuals maximize their own happiness is the opposite of the relational idea that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as individual well-being: “my” well-being always depends on other beings and the natural world. Third, the hedonic approach is also problematic from an environmental perspective, because wants are always relative and insatiable (Büchs and Koch 2017, 60).

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To sum up, there are strong reasons for adopting the eudaimonic approach instead of the hedonic approach (see also Kjell 2011; Helne and Hirvilammi 2017). Drawing on Aristotelian thought, the eudaimonic theories of well-being view well-being as “doing and living well” and living in truth to one’s daimon, or the true self (Forgeard et al. 2011; Aristotle 2016). This is usually most gratifying and also beneficial to one’s health (Ryff and Singer 2008). In this “perfectionist” (Haybron 2007) vision, attaining the highest well-being means realizing one’s potential to the fullest. Eudaimonic well-being thus equals flourishing and happiness, and in its utmost form, it will also mean “transcending the prison of one’s isolated ego” (see Fromm [1976] 1997, 72).

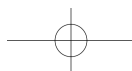
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However, not all need theories contain such a sweeping vision. In their *Theory of Human Need*, Doyal and Gough (1991, 170–71) define the universal goal of human action as “avoidance of serious harm”, by which they refer to “fundamental and sustained impairment of social participation”. They argue that there are two kinds of “basic needs”, physical survival and personal autonomy, that “must be satisfied to some degree before actors can effectively participate in their form of life to achieve any other valued goals” (ibid., 54).

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The Doyal-Gough theory has recently been topical in the sustainability and the degrowth literature (Koch and Buch-Hansen 2016; Büchs and Koch 2017; Koch, Buch-Hansen, and Fritz 2017; Gough 2017; O’Neill et al. 2018). Our approach differs in some respects from this theory.⁴ We be-

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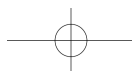
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lieve, first of all, that the degrowth transformation could be better fuelled by a positive, empowering, and forward-looking vision of well-being than by mere avoidance of “serious harm”. The transformation could find sources of inspiration in theories in which the universal goal of human existence is defined with positive concepts like flourishing, balanced living, or prosperity, and in which the scale of human needs is wider and deeper than in the Doyal-Gough theory (see also Soper 1993, 119).

[13.22] In the tradition of humanist psychology—notably, the writings of Maslow (e.g., [1962] 2011)—being, becoming, or self-actualization (the concepts are largely synonymous) are considered to be essential, innate human needs and the ultimate goal of human development. This approach is highly relevant for degrowth, because it shifts the focus from maximal economic growth to personal growth, paving way for the liberation from the yoke of capitalism towards enlightened living. Maslow also distinguishes “growth needs” from “deficiency needs”. At the level of the former, the concept of gratification is transcended because satisfactions can be endless (Maslow [1971] 1993, 324). The logical and encouraging conclusion is that even though the level of material need satisfaction will have to be reduced to attain sustainability, overall well-being can be enhanced by fostering the fulfilment of growth needs.

[13.23] Our approach includes an idea of a “relational self” constituted by relations and connections. Akin to Naess’s (1995) “ecological self”, the concept refers to a broadened experience of a self no longer confused with the narrow ego, a self that can identify with all living beings. When speaking about self-actualization, we are referring to this big self. We therefore do not think that the concept of autonomy fully covers the scale of self-actualization. We also tend to think that the aim of individual autonomy is not totally congruent with sustainability and relationality (e.g., Gergen 2009). How can an individual be autonomous in the full meaning of the word if the principle of interconnectedness is seriously acknowledged? Are there even such things as “individuals”? (The word itself derives from *indivisible*). It is also appropriate to add that our conception of relationality differs essentially from Ian Gough’s (2017, 40) interpretation, since he associates the perspective of relational well-being with post-modernism, post-colonialism, and post-structuralism and their vision of human well-being as “discursively constructed, local and incomparable”.

[13.24] The degrowth transformation requires taking distance from the predominant “human exemptionalism” paradigm that views humans as separated from nature and superior to other species (Catton and Dunlap 1980; Hirvilammi and Helne 2014). Our relational approach is thus less anthropocentric than the Doyal-Gough theory, which does not acknowledge relationships with animals and the intrinsic value of nature (see Gough 2014; Gough 2017, 57–58).



Doyal and Gough (1991, 157–58) separate “basic needs” from “intermediate needs”, such as protective housing, healthcare, and education. However, we see intermediate needs as *satisfiers* of needs (as Doyal and Gough also do when stating that “intermediate needs” refer to “universal satisfiers”). “Intermediate needs” thus refer more to provisioning systems or the context of well-being than to needs as such. Moreover, we find no grounds for setting up hierarchies between different kinds of needs, because fulfilling all needs to some extent is a precondition for well-being. In consequence we do not use the concept “basic needs”; if something is a need, it is by definition “basic”.

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An often posed question in degrowth and post-growth discussions is to what extent other things over and above the “basic needs” can be provided for in the future if the economy is to be embedded into the environment (Koch, Buch-Hansen, and Fritz 2017, 80). Milena Büchs and Max Koch (2017, 106, 119), for example, find it “unlikely that ‘wellbeing’ for all and for future generations can for the time being mean much more than the satisfaction of basic human needs”.⁵ What about the deep-seated urge to love and to be loved, or the need for self-actualization? The view that the degrowth transformation will jeopardize the fulfilment of some human needs is not very attractive. This is true also due to “loss aversion”: people tend to respond more strongly to losses than to gains (Büchs and Koch 2017, 74). We therefore propose an alternative view involving infinite potentials for human flourishing.

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FOUR CATEGORIES OF NEEDS: HAVING, DOING, LOVING, AND BEING

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Our conceptualization of well-being (Helne, Hirvilammi, and Laatu 2012; Hirvilammi and Helne 2014; Helne and Hirvilammi 2015; Helne and Hirvilammi 2017; Helne 2019) has its inspiration in the well-being theory of the Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt. He was one of the pioneering figures calling for a reorientation of social science research due to the substantial impact human activities have had on the living environment and the earth system and in turn on humankind. Allardt was, consequently, a forerunner in advocating a new, broader content for “welfare” that includes environmental concerns (1990, 9–10). He also demanded considerably increased co-operation between natural and social scientists (*ibid.*).

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Allardt (1993, 89) emphasized that there are both material and non-material needs and that both types of need have to be considered when gauging the level of welfare in a society. He defined human well-being by dividing it into dimensions that describe the existential qualities of different needs, conceptualizing “the central necessary conditions of human development and existence” with three catchwords: Having, Loving, and Being (Allardt 1993, 89).⁶ Allardt (1976, 231) originally defined

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Having as “needs related to material and impersonal resources”, Loving as “needs related to love, companionship and solidarity” and Being as “needs denoting self-actualization and the obverse of alienation”.

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Allardt’s theory was elaborated in the context of a comparative Scandinavian welfare study (see Allardt 1976). Although Allardt (1990, 13) himself later wrote that the study was one of the first of its kind to consider environmental factors and needs related to them in the assessment of a society’s level of welfare, he also expressed his criticism of how this was done. As if anticipating the currently topical research on thresholds and planetary boundaries (e.g., Steffen et al. 2015; O’Neill et al. 2018), he then introduced indicators for biological and physical environments for describing the level of human welfare in a society (e.g., the amount of sulfur dioxide in the air) and discussed limits that “polluting compounds” should not transgress (Allardt 1990, 16). Allardt (1993, 91) also revised his definition of Being to stand for “the need for integration into society and to live in harmony with nature”. The indicators of the latter aspect of Being included the “opportunities to enjoy nature, either by contemplation or through activities such as walking, gardening and fishing” (Allardt 1993, 91; cf. Allardt 1976, 232).

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In his theory, Allardt (1993, 91) mentions Doing, but he defines it narrowly as “opportunities for leisure-time activities” and places it in the category of Being. For us, Doing is a much wider concept that comprises all kinds of human doings. Because of this and the significant social and ecological impacts of human activities, as well as the central role of agency in human existence, we find Doing worthy of being elevated into the position of a fourth dimension of well-being.

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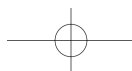
Accordingly, our approach comprises four categories of needs: Having, Doing, Loving, and Being. When defining these dimensions, we continue from where Allardt left off and embed these dimensions in their ecological foundation, which makes our approach relational not only in a social but also in an ecological sense. This is also the main difference between our conceptualization and most other ways of depicting the dimensions of well-being (e.g., Diener and Seligman 2004; Ryff 1989), and what we count among the most important contributions of our approach. With this strongly relational—or non-dualist (Helne 2019)—approach, we wish to avoid the anthropocentric bias that dominates most well-being theories.

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For us, the ecological embeddedness of well-being means that the dimension of Having—the need for basic sustenance—is firmly anchored in the material resources provided by ecosystems. This “existential having” has to be distinguished from “excessive having”, or having as hoarding. The latter relates to wants, whereas the former refers to the requirement to **have, keep, take care of, and use certain things in order to survive** (Fromm [1976] 1997, 69–70).

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Since our approach has to do with sustainable well-being, Doing does not refer to any kind of activities. After all, the blame for the deplorable state of the world in the Anthropocene lies with human actions. Consequently, in our framework, the conception of Doing denotes ethically sustainable activities and responsibility towards other beings and to future generations. Since we agree with the view that human beings have an inherent sense of morality and “a sense of sustainability” (Holden et al. 2018), we assume that responsible Doing will also bring meaning to one’s life—that is, ethically sustainable Doing will be meaningful Doing. Next, due to the ecological embeddedness of our approach, the conception of Loving includes connective and compassionate relations not only with other humans but also with non-human animals and nature. The latter two types of relationships are often disregarded in well-being research, but they form an integral part of our approach. Last but not least, Being may be characterized with concepts such as presence, wholeness, a sense of interconnectedness, and self-actualization in its largest sense, even though all words fail before the experience itself.

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Although we speak of four dimensions, this is but an analytical convenience. In practice, needs overlap. Many activities satisfy several needs simultaneously; one can then speak of “synergic satisfiers” (Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn 1991, 30). Human needs thus constitute a relational system in which needs are interconnected and interactive. At the same time, needs are non-substitutable in the sense that well-being requires the actualization of each of these needs to some extent. With the exception of the need to remain alive, there is no rigid order of precedence for this (Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn 1991; Max-Neef 2010; see also Ryan and Sapp 2007). Put another way, the dimensions depict the totality that is necessary for well-being. Ideally, well-being manifests itself as a balanced and synergic relationship between the fulfilment of different needs (Sirgy and Wu 2007; Fisher 2011; Gough 2017, 98).

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Highlighting this balance is of pivotal importance in the degrowth transformation, because the ecological devastation on our planet is a direct consequence of the obsession of Having, or the “*influenza*” (Hamilton and Denniss 2005). The Having-Doing-Loving-Being approach consequently falls into the category of needs-based critiques of consumerist society (e.g., Jackson, Jager, and Stagl 2004; Soper 2017).

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One of the obvious benefits of this multidimensional approach is that it weakens the present emphasis on Having, which, together with the tenet that people cannot and must not ever be satisfied, forms the core element of materialism (e.g., Saunders and Munro 2000). A life excessively oriented to Having and material wants is bound to be a dissatisfied life, always failing to bring about individual and social well-being—a fact also demonstrated by solid empirical evidence (e.g., Kashdan and Breen 2007; Kasser 2002). By shifting the focus of human attention and activities from Having to the less material-intensive Doing, Loving and Being can

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thus have significant socioecological consequences. Importantly, the Having-Loving-Doing-Being approach illuminates that economic growth is not a precondition of well-being, because it highlights the fact that income and material resources cannot act as a proxy for the other dimensions of well-being.

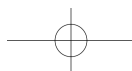
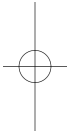
[13.38] Minimizing the harmful impacts of needs-satisfaction is an overarching target in the shift towards sustainability. Not only technology but also well-being should be eco-efficient (see Dietz, Rosa, and York 2009), which means that human needs should be met with a minimal load on the environment. This does not, however, rule out the many positive changes the degrowth transformation will bring about.

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MEETING NEEDS IN THE POST-GROWTH SOCIETY

[13.40] Conceptualizing well-being in its relational and multidimensional sense and setting well-being as the primary goal of economic activities constitute a crucial step in distancing welfare states from the growth paradigm. The broader conceptualization of well-being that we propose could help to liberate our imagination to envision more holistic ecosocial policies for post-growth societies. It might also provide a widely acceptable overarching goal for designing a new kind of economy and new kinds of welfare institutions and give coherence to the numerous initiatives for building a post-growth society introduced in the degrowth research (e.g., Kallis et al. 2013; Mellor 2012; Dietz and O'Neill 2013; D'Alisa et al. 2015; Koch and Mont 2016; Gough 2017; see also Hirvilammi and Helne 2014; Helne and Salonen 2016). It could do this by showing in what way the proposed policies could address the totality of human needs. To name but one example, basic income could fulfil not only the need of subsistence (Having), but also provide opportunities for childcare or informal care (Loving and Doing) and other meaningful activities (Doing and Being).

[13.41] The concept of limits often emerges in the degrowth discussion, and rightly so. We would, however, like to remind that limits and restrictions should refer to modifying need satisfiers, not needs as such. From now on, needs will have to be satisfied by using less material throughput. This requirement does not concern only the satisfiers related to the Having dimension. It is important to realize that various goods and services are also satisfiers of Doing, Loving, and Being. Flying to meet one's relatives, for example, is a resource-demanding satisfier of the need of Loving. We are not demanding that trips like this be forbidden but pointing out that the aim of reducing environmental impacts requires policy solutions, such as the aviation tax recently introduced in Sweden, that can touch upon all categories of needs in various ways.





When the focus is on Having, the main question of the sustainability transformation is How much? or How much is enough?, whereas for Doing, Loving, and Being, the issue is How? – that is, in what manner are these needs to be actualized? The task is to avoid the following: “pseudo-satisfiers”, which generate a false sense of satisfaction; “inhibiting satisfiers”, which while satisfying one need curtail the satisfaction of other needs; and “violators”, which actually impair the satisfaction of needs (Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn 1991, 30, 34). This task is evidently gargantuan and closely connected to one of the core reasons of the current ecologically, socially, and psychologically unsustainable way of life: people living in the capitalist and growth-obsessed societies have been led to engage in futile attempts to satisfy their needs of Doing, Loving, and Being by consumption and by continuous efforts to gain monetary or other rewards.

[13.42]

As far as the actual needs of Doing, Loving, and Being are concerned, the notion of “limits” does not really apply. On the contrary, ecosocial policies should enhance the possibilities of actualizing these needs. The aim to balance the realization of the four categories of needs thus leads to differentiated policies: some would aim at cutting overconsumption (while securing a decent level of Having), whereas other policies would aim at higher levels of need satisfaction and more balanced well-being. Focusing the limelight on the policies that aim to increase well-being may help in mustering support for the degrowth transformation. This might (but *just* might) make it possible for those who fear that this leap is only about restrictions to discern that the question is actually about gains. It could likewise help to refute the claim that subjective well-being should be deprioritized in degrowth research (see Koch, Buch-Hansen, and Fritz 2017, 80).

[13.43]

All of us will be winners if the degrowth transformation can be successfully combined with a balanced way of actualizing needs. The most significant gain will certainly be saving the planet for our offspring. Moreover, limiting the overconsumption of the world’s richest people in order to enable a good life within planetary boundaries for all (O’Neill et al. 2018), is surely a small price to pay compared with the devastating effects of climate change and biodiversity loss.

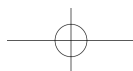
[13.44]

CONCLUSIONS

[13.45]

Until now humankind has excelled at forgetting that all human activities are subordinate to the laws of thermodynamics and ecological processes (see Daly 1996; Daly and Farley 2010), which in the end set the limits for social institutions (including economy) and for human well-being, that is, the balanced actualization of needs. In this chapter, we have presented an approach to well-being that takes these ecological limitations seriously.

[13.46]





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Having, Doing, Loving, Being

Only after truly recognizing the ecological embeddedness of human well-being will societies be able to design sustainable welfare institutions and an economy that serves human needs (instead of preferences and wants) and the needs of other living beings within planetary boundaries. Future generations will also need to have, do, love, and be. To ensure this, it will be necessary to adjust the balance of these dimensions of existence and to substitute unsustainable need satisfiers with satisfiers that better respect planetary boundaries and that can be accessed by all.

[13.47]

Since the goal of endless economic growth is an integral part of capitalism, the likelihood of the degrowth transformation may not seem very high. In the Nordic countries, for example, all political parties and labour unions support economic growth and justify this with the need to maintain a high level of welfare and employment. This setting forms a true challenge for a paradigm change. Citizens on whose minds this line of argumentation has been inculcated may not be able to fathom how the growth paradigm could be abandoned: surely, they believe, GDP growth is a precondition for well-being. We hope that with the support of a more holistic view of well-being, such fears will dissipate. We have, to this effect, presented the Having-Doing-Loving-Being approach, proposing a change of perspective from negativity and deprivation to positivity and plenitude. Our overall goal is to contribute to the degrowth transformation by offering a hopefully inspiring vision of how living in harmony with one's deepest needs (one's true nature) can also be harmonious with the nature around us. It remains to be seen whether humanity has the time to begin to actualize visions like this before the "ultimate serious harm" (Gough 2017, 205) caused by an ecological crisis dashes these intentions.

[13.48]

Even many degrowth authors are not convinced of the prospects of a paradigm shift. They hence pin their hopes on the possibility that "at some point, enough people will become sufficiently discontent with the existing economic system and push for something radically different", suggesting that this disenchantment could be prompted by the system's failure to satisfy human needs (Buch-Hansen 2018, 157, 161). For this to happen, people will have to have an idea of what these needs are. It is here that the intuitively understandable Having-Loving-Doing-Being framework could come into play.

[13.49]

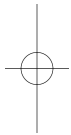
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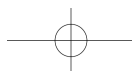
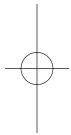
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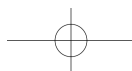
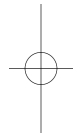
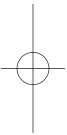
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[13.128]

NOTES

- [13n1] 1. We use the word *post-growth* to denote the goal and the word *degrowth* as the path towards it (see also Gough 2017, 171).
- [13n2] 2. Because we are discussing needs in the context of degrowth transformation, the overview is quite rough, and we do not pretend to cover the different modes of needs discourse (see Gasper 2007).
- [13n3] 3. Needs and wants can, however, coincide. One can need what one wants or want what one needs (Doyal and Gough 1991, 42).
- [13n4] 4. We are very much aware that within the limits of this chapter, we cannot do justice to the many insights and merits of the Doyal-Gough theory.
- [13n5] 5. Büchs and Koch's understanding of basic needs is based on the Doyal-Gough theory.
- [13n6] 6. This classification of needs roughly corresponds to Maslow's need theory (Al-lardt and Uusitalo 1972, 12).

