



Activity summary of CIAS research fellow in Budapest

Grant category: junior senior non-resident senior

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Name: Mladen Domazet

Home institute (name, position, country): Institute for Political Ecology, research director, Zagreb, Croatia; Institute for Philosophy, research associate, Zagreb, Croatia

Academic Year / Semester: 2022/23 / Fall 22 and Spring 23

Duration: 10 months

Project title: A systems vision for socio-ecological transition in Central Europe

Project description*:

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Using the experience of innovative doughnut visualization development at the Institute for Political Ecology, this project interrogates the socio-ecological boundaries and thresholds that can inform vision based foundations of scenario modelling. The critical focus is on the integrated perspective of central European societies, like Hungary, thereby reversing what Doreen Massey calls the linearity of modernity. The project brings together critical thinking from humanities, political ecology, social research and ecological economics, while at the same time putting different national contexts and perspectives together within the same framework.

The project lays the foundations for a systems view epistemology for socio-ecological transition in Central Europe, including the case of Hungary. The core aim is to improve the applicability of doughnut visualizations for sustainability transition modelling in Central Europe. Through database research, access to data from Hungarian national research, and transdisciplinary consultations with international researchers, this project will contribute to the development of comprehensive methodology for tools that enable the envisioning of alternative transition pathways.

I have, with various research teams, over the recent years been developing the fully principle-theory informed doughnut visualisations, which avoid the nature-society dichotomy beset by environmental efficiency assumption. This work is the foundational stone of the research conducted here and the explorative cooperation of this fellowship with researchers at CIAS and Horizon Europe projects I participate in. With original training in the analytical philosophy of physics, I have been developing the understanding of methodological and explanatory benefits of principle and constructive theories dichotomy in the philosophy of quantum physics in my early career. Quantum physics still remains a revolutionary field of metaphysics and a challenging conceptual framework to unite with common sense and popular realism, as well as an intellectual inspiration for novel philosophical reconceptualisations of action, identity, and energy and material flows. The latter are crucial conceptual elements of a systemic understanding of the socio-ecological transformation motivated by avoidance of catastrophic climate collapse and constrained by sober socio-technical feasibility and justice.

Achieved result(s)*:

The final term of the fellowship was building on the achievements of the opening term, as well as the final settling into the patterns of the home institution. Unfortunately, its prime achievements had been cut short by a devastating accident, a near-death experience and a home fire that beset me when on a short visit to Zagreb. The crowning completion of some collaborative publications had to be postponed to a later date due to lower work performance, and some public and collaboration meetings had to be cancelled as well. I hope to return to full swing by the fall

semester and am grateful to colleagues for their support and understanding in this horrendous experience. Throughout the semester my main activities included development of two papers through collaboration with colleagues from the Institute for Decision Sciences at Corvinus University, commencement of a Horizon Europe research project “Towards a sustainable wellbeing economy: integrated policies and transformative indicators” and preparation of Horizon Europe project application “Broadening policy options for alternative socio-economic futures”, as well as various public presentations and guest lectures. A constant and prominent feature of this term’s achievements had been the leadership role in the preparation of the 9th International Degrowth Conference, taking place in Zagreb in August this year and developed in collaboration with colleagues from Corvinus University as well. The conference programme has now been completed and published, together with a rich programme of invited lectures and debates and can be found at https://zagreb.degrowth.net/en/9_int_dg_conf/public/timeline. It is now explicitly linked to the very successful Brussels conference “Beyond Growth” held at the European Parliament 15th to 17th May 2023.

The research tasks that started in September included preparation and execution of philosophical discussions of integrated vision of nature-society-economy-policy; the database for development of holistic doughnut visualisations for Hungary; and the methodological preparation of a wider systems mapping research for degrowth transitions. Initial consultations led to the establishment of a core team consisting of Dr Alexandra Köves, Mate Fischer (PhD candidate) and myself. This has led to a submission of a joint publication, a public research seminar during the Corvinus Research Week and a joint conference presentations to be delivered in later summer. The conceptual collaboration on the physical metaphors in managing social transformation will now be first presented as a conference contribution, to be submitted as a research paper in the next academic year.

Collaborations with international colleagues outside these main projects had continued and resulted in further publications submissions relevant to this fellowship, and drawing on the main conceptual research behind the systems visions for socio-ecological transitions, most notably the use of degrowth doughnut visualisations. Sustainability attitudes and conceptual challenges of sustainability teaching were also topics of research papers under development, slightly stalled by the unfortunate events. Finally, new collaborations with colleagues from CIAS have been proposed for next year.

Connected publications*

1.

Title: Use of principle theory models to analyze the sustainability and resilience potential of nations

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: 26th June 2023

Journal: Journal of Political Ecology

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

Status: accepted/published in progress planned

2.

Title: Mental models for understanding resilience of societies threatened by socio-ecological collapse: lessons from COVID-19 pandemic

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: 23rd June 2023

Journal: Sustainability

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

3.

Title: Is Sustainability Science Reality Blind?

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: July 2023

Journal: Sustainability Science

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

Status: accepted/published in progress planned

4.

Title: Doughnuts for Strategies: a tool for an emerging sustainable welfare paradigm

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: 12th May 2023

Journal: European Journal of Social Security

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

Status: accepted/published in progress planned

5.

Title: Physical science metaphors for socio-ecological change

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: November 2023

Journal: Ecological Economics

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

Status: accepted/published in progress planned

6.

Title: Post-growth food systems: lessons from Southeastern Europe

Date of submission/acceptance/publication: November 2023

Journal: Journal of Political Ecology

Journal category (if applicable): Q1 Q2 Q3

Status: accepted/published in progress planned

Professional collaborations, partnerships*

1.

Name: Alexandra Köves

Institution: Corvinus University

Field of research: Ecological Economics, Decision Sciences, Futures Studies

Future plans for joined research: Collaborating on conceptual foundations of degrowth-oriented socio-economic change, future Horizon project collaborations

2.

Name: Aleksandar Matković

Institution: Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade

Field of research: Political Economy, Transformation Theories, Philosophy

Future plans for joined research: visions of transformation and limits to growth in 1970s Yugoslavia, Horizon Europe ToBe project

3.

Name: Tvrtko Vrdoljak

Institution: Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

Field of research: Political theory, Philosophy

Future plans for joined research: theories of transformation, political naturalism, degrowth and post-growth in contemporary societies, Horizon Europe ToBe project

4.

Name: Tvrtko Jolić

Institution: Institute for Philosophy

Field of research: Ethics, Business Ethics, Political Theory, Climate Justice

Future plans for joined research: intergenerational ethics and climate justice, degrowth and ethics

5.

Name: Brannon Andersen

Institution: Furman University, Greenville, SC, USA

Field of research: Sustainability Science, Earth Sciences

Future plans for joined research: social aspects of transformation in sustainability science

6.

Name: Rowan Lubbock

Institution: CIAS, Corvinus University; Queen Mary UL, London, UK

Field of research: Critical development studies, agrarian and food studies

Future plans for joined research: post-growth food regimes in Eastern Europe

Additional activities* (public lectures, presentations, professional meetings, media connections etc.):

1. 25th January 2023: Corvinus Research Week workshop: “Degrowth Doughnut”, E338
2. 26th January 2023: CEU, Vienna seminar: <https://events.ceu.edu/2023-01-26/afternoon-masterclass-degrowth-visions-and-critiques>
3. 13th February 2023: University of Zadar, Croatia, Sociology PhD course: Sustainable development and Degrowth
4. 9th March 2023: Degrowth Doughnut seminar, Cargonomia Cooperative, Budapest
5. 20th – 22nd March 2023: Kick-off meeting of the Horizon Europe project “Towards a sustainable wellbeing economy: integrated policies and transformative indicators”, Tampere, Finland
6. 27th March and 17th April 2023: Doughnut Economics and Degrowth Doughnut seminars, MA in Political Ecology and Degrowth, UAB, Spain
7. 11th and 12th April 2023: Environmental Rights lectures, ERMA in Human Rights, University of Sarajevo and University of Bologna
8. 18th April 2023: completion of Horizon Europe project application “Broadening policy options for alternative socio-economic futures” (consortium application preparation since January 2023)

9. 28th April to 1st May 2023: Annual meeting of Support Group for International Degrowth Conferences, Budapest, Hungary
10. 3rd May 2023: University of Weimar, University of Barcelona research visit: “Degrowth Doughnut”, Zagreb, Croatia
11. 11th May 2023: CIAS 7th workshop: “Doughnuts for Strategies: a tool for an emerging sustainable welfare paradigm”, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
12. 14 to 17th May 2023: “Beyond Growth” conference and accompanying workshops, European Parliament and related institutions, Brussels, Belgium
13. 26th May 2023: Subversive Festival panel “What next for the European Green Deal?”, Zagreb, Croatia

In the night of 26th May 2023 I have experienced a fire in my residence and have narrowly escaped, and have since had work activities severely impaired.

Future plans, planned return (if any):

- I plan to return to Hungary later
- I plan to maintain my professional contacts via e-mail
- Any other comment:

*Please give us a properly detailed summary.

Date: 29th June 2023

Signature:

