 LIMITS ON GROWTH

* (Social) inequality
* Monetary system
* Advertisement
* Dehumanization
* Large infrastructures

We analyzed the more how our modern society works, then what exactly the limits are. Somewhere in the heart of our system is the social inequality. We did not really differentiate social from general inequality.

Capitalism, as other social systems in the past, not only (re)produces social inequality, but is also (re)produced by social inequality. The effects of social inequality are linking the individual psyche with processes in society. Social differences motivate people to strive for a higher status or at least to defend their status. That leads as well to the need of consumption of status symbols, and in especially in capitalism, to a high motivation for increasing the productivity and the keeping up the growth of products and capital.

The privatization and unequal distribution of capital goods makes the majority depend on markets. Due to the concentration of capital goods people are dependent on landlords, banks, or wage labor. They have to work more then they actually need to survive, to pay off their tenancies, rents and/of loans with interest. In the case of wage labour, the production is in function of the profit of the owners. Consumers/workers, independents and little firms find themselves sometimes in an unequal power relationship with big firms which products they consume or for who they produce. Especially when those firms dominate the market. But also in more equal market situation, competition between workers and firms stimulates the motivation to be more productive.

The monetary system is the oil or the blood of the system. The interactions on the markets or mostly done with money. How the monetary system is shaped and works, reflects and strengthens the social inequality in the capitalist system and its need to higher the productivity.

The aim for a higher production, is not just a a question of survival on a competitive market. and People wanted to work more and/or gather more capital cause then they can make social promotion and buy more status symbols; or at least defend their position. This is motivated by the relative social mobility in the reality and myths of our society. Also the call for collective social promotion was eventually not so much attempted by the pragmatic Left and the mainstream labour movement, through redistribution of capital but through more growth. If the cake became bigger, then there was more to divide, and also the smallest pieces became then big enough. The tricky thing is that how richer certain parts of the lower classes are, and how more status symbols they can reach, how more they loose their value for the elite, and how more they are looking for other symbols to maintain their higher position.

We are not only external motivated to work and consume more; this aim for material growth, for all more higher production and consumption, and for competition is planted in our souls; we internalized our capitalist system. In our group we identified “Advertisement” as mean to trigger desire and to program consumerist attitudes. But we can also identify other kinds of socialization, like school education with its focus on production and competition and its hierarchical structures, or comsumption attitudes learned in the family.

We identified “dehumanization” more as an effect of our unequal capitalist system. People are alienated from each other and themselves by unequal relationships. They cannot freely develop themselves as balanced persons. Those who have work, most spend a much of their time and enery in it, that they is not much time to develop other parts of their personality that have nothing to do with their professional specialization. The so-called unemployed don’t get enough opportunities to professionalize, and therefore develop certain personal, or are not appreciated for their activities. The frustration of employed and unemployed, leads to a need for compensation in higher consumption, that only stills the desire for a short while. In that way, “dehumanization” is not only an effect of capitalism, but also reproduces it.

About "large infrastructures” we identify what as well production, transport and distribution infrastructures as well as social infrastructures (f.e. social security). On the one hand leads mass production and consumption in our society leads to bigger infrastructures. On the other hand leads the construction and maintenance of bigger infrastructures also to a high level of production and consumption. Big infrastructures are also leading to power concentration and are of a to high impact on the environment.

A key in the limit of growth, is somewhere in the dehumanization and social inequality an the level of frustration that it brings. Although our economy is growing, the level of happiness is stagnation or going even back. Competition and hierarchy may be also natural features of humans, but cooperation and equality are that too. If the balance goes to much in one direction, the call for the other will rise.