

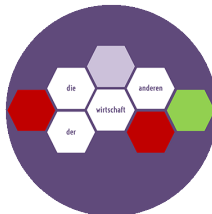
Un-common business sense

Toward a growth-independent transformative management model

5th International Degrowth Conference

Budapest, 31.08.2016

Jana Gebauer



Common business sense?

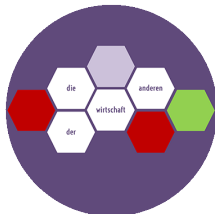
- **One-sided focus on growth**

- Management literature & text books (overview: Liesen et al. 2013)
- Empirical studies on company growth (overview: Gebauer/Sagebiel 2015)
- Public and political perceptions and expectations (see any newspaper)

- **One-sided focus on corporations**

- attention lies on large, publicly traded corporations – a minority by numbers
- the largest proportion (99.x%) are small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- SME are usually manager-owned and significantly less growth ambitious

→ What's “common sense” then?



Common business sense?

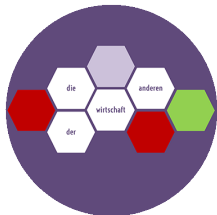
- One-sided focus on growth

~~The successful company is growing strongly.~~

- One-sided focus on corporations

~~The typical company is large and shareholder-driven.~~

→ What's "common sense" then?



Non-Growth Realities & Post-Growth Requirements

- I The larger proportion of SME are non- and slow-growers – e.g. due to market saturation and limited growth ambitions.
- II The multi-faceted ‘limits-to-growth dilemma’ calls for transformative business contributions toward/ within post-growth economies.

→ break-out from growth-focused common sense business imperative

ad I **How can non-/ slow growing companies be managed successfully?**

>> non-expansive, growth-independent, purpose/ qualities-driven, resilient ...

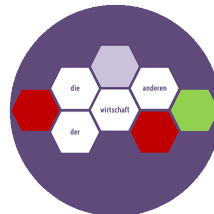
ad II **How can post-growth approaches (sufficiency, solidarity, democracy) be implemented successfully in companies?**

>> ... + social-ecological transformative companies



Review of empirical studies

	Non-/ slow growth companies	Post-growth-oriented companies
Starting points	surprised & intrigued by the phenomenon of proactive growth limitation by businesses	interested in how businesses can break-out from the growth-path and make transformative post-growth contributions
Explanatory goals	Why? How? (descriptive-explorative)	Why not? How then? (explorative-analytical)
Examples	Burlingham 2005, increasing number of articles	Bakker et al. 1999, increasing number of studies
Companies/ actors	SME	SME, alternative/ hybrid entrepreneurial actors
Results	situations & motives, strategies & approaches applied	
Missing	deriving a decision support and action framework for growth-independent, qualities-driven and social-ecologically transformative entrepreneurship	



Rough sketch

preserve room for maneuver by
avoiding/ reducing growth incentives
and growth dependencies

- ▶ e.g. ownership & equity
- ▶ ...
- ▶ ...

direct growth in size and impact
according to social-ecological
objectives

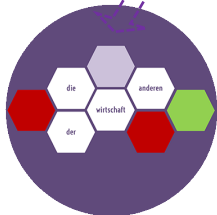
- ▶ e.g. internalization & sufficiency
- ▶ ...
- ▶ ...

reflect limitations of/ for firm growth and
address these proactively

- ▶ e.g. decision on size & growth-path
- ▶ ...
- ▶ ...

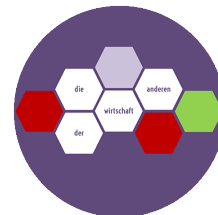
act for a social-ecological transformation &
change practices, regimes, cultures/ values

- ▶ e.g. communication & advocacy
- ▶ ...
- ▶ ...



Outlook: inclusion of alternative/ hybrid entrepreneurial concepts

Alternative actors/ concepts	Relevant aspects (selection)
Associative economy/ religiously founded (economic) entities/ communities	trust & needs-based value chain relationships optimum/ maximum size mission-driven business
Collectives and co-operatives	collective ownership, democratic control participative leadership & responsibility purpose, focus on needs (co-workers, members)
Economy for the common good	Common-good-focused economic purpose Evaluation & reporting of company contribution
Sharing economy	User-inclusive business models (prosuming) Sufficiency-based value creation
Social Entrepreneurship	Innovation and (indirect) scaling for transformative impact Blended social and economic value creation
Solidarity Economy	inclusion and informal economy for empowerment regionalization & decentralization
...	...



Information and publications: www.postwachstumspioniere.de

Köszönöm a figyelmet.

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Projects at the Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW)

- **Project „Growth-neutral Companies“ in 2012**
 - self-financed by IÖW with additional support by

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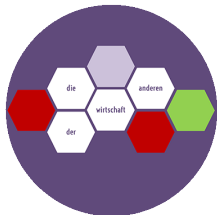


- **Project „Post-Growth Pioneers“ in 2013-2015**

- in cooperation with



- sponsored by



Project-related publications (selection)

- Gebauer, Jana; Lange, Steffen; Posse, Dirk (2017): Wirtschaftspolitik für Postwachstum auf Unternehmensebene. Drei Ansätze zur Gestaltung. In: Schachtschneider, Ulrich; Adler, Frank (Hrsg.): Postwachstumspolitiken, oekom, München (im Erscheinen).
- Gebauer, Jana; Mewes, Heike (2015): Qualität und Suffizienz in stabilitätsorientierten KMU. In: uwf UmweltWirtschaftsForum, Band 23, Heft 1 (2015), S. 33-40 (DOI 10.1007/s00550-015-0352-9).
- Gebauer, Jana; Mewes, Heike; Dietsche, Christian (2015): [Wir sind so frei](#). Elf Unternehmen lösen sich vom Wachstumspfad. Institut für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung, Berlin.
- Gebauer, Jana; Sagebiel, Julian (2015): [Wie wichtig ist Wachstum für KMU?](#) Ergebnisse einer Befragung von kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen, Schriftenreihe des IÖW, Berlin.
- Jorck, Gerrit von; Gebauer, Jana (2015): Wir produzieren Zeitwohlstand. Postwachstumsunternehmen im Zeitalter der Beschleunigung. In: Ökologisches Wirtschaften 4/2015, S. 21-23.
- Liesen, Andrea; Dietsche, Christian; Gebauer, Jana (2014): [Successful Non-Growing Companies](#). SSRN Paper/ Humanistic Management Network Research Paper Series No. 25/15.
- Liesen, Andrea; Dietsche, Christian; Gebauer, Jana (2013): [Wachstumsneutrale Unternehmen](#). Pilotstudie zur Unternehmensperspektive im Postwachstumdiskurs, Schriftenreihe des IÖW, Berlin.
- Mewes, Heike; Gebauer, Jana (2015): Postwachstumsunternehmen und sozial-ökologischer Wandel: Transformative Potenziale von Unternehmen, die nicht wachsen wollen. In: Ökologisches Wirtschaften 3/2015, S. 27-29.

