

The Role of Work in a Sustainable Society

Laura Lanzoni

**Master dissertation in Human Ecology
and Contemporary Social Problems**

May 2020

Versão corrigida e melhorada após defesa pública

Dissertation submitted to fulfill the requirements necessary to obtain the degree of
Master in Human Ecology and Contemporary Social Problems, conducted under the
scientific guidance of Iva Miranda Pires and Miguel Almeida Chaves

Dedicated to my Mother, my Father and my Sister, who, for years, have tirelessly listened to my opinions and concerns regarding the subject of work, and have always encouraged and supported my search for alternatives.

ABSTRACT: Work – intended as paid employment – is the fundamental cornerstone of contemporary society and, at the same time, it's greatest problem. An internalized cultural dogma; a moral and socio-economic obsession, mainly existing in Western society, necessary to humans in order to garner social acceptance, dignity, and as a way to develop one's identity. The work dogma's existence and legitimacy is due to its essential nature to the function and survival of the capitalist process, which lets this unsustainable paradigm exist, creating a hectic chain of production and consumption, with infinite growth as it's unattainable goal. It follows that a life devoted to work and production is the only possibility in dominant thinking, despite the already proved repercussions for the social-ecological society. In fact, this dominant paradigm is the most important cause of the planet's destruction, as scientists have shown with the publication *The limits to growth*, 1972. It also represents the developing of an individualist social fabric; competitive and materialistic, where the meaning of community, free time and contemplation have lost their important role.

A societal change towards sustainability cannot succeed without a transformation of work and the society based around work, thus it becomes extremely important, fundamental in fact, to reconsider the current social-economic system in order to create a path that can lead to a sustainable society, where people and nature can collaborate to find their own spaces, their own times and to listen to each other's needs, in an equal and mutual way. Inside this societal model, what would be the role of work? Would it continue to be a dogma and a moral duty, as it is in the contemporary society, or would it become a mere completion of the self – sufficiency practices and a realization of what is necessary to do for the common good? Will it be individualist and competitive work, or will it be mainly community labour? Will it be salaried, and will it be considered work?

An ethnographic research was developed in an eco-community located in Alentejo, Portugal, with the aim to observe and understand if and how work has been reconceptualized. It's necessary to be reminded that the Case Study community analyzed is an insert in a global contest based on the capitalist paradigm and for these reasons they won't be completely representative of what could be the role of work in a society completely based on a sustainable paradigm.

KEY WORDS: Reconceptualization of Work – Work in Eco-Communities – Human Ecology Complex Problem - Work and Degrowth – Work Dogma – Work in a Sustainable Society

ACRONYMS:

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GEN - Global Ecovillage Network

GEN Europe - Global Ecovillage Network Europe

GNP - Gross National Product

GNI - Gross National Income

JG – Job Guarantee

UBI – Unconditional Basic Income

INDEX

Abstract.....	4
Keywords.....	4
Acronyms.....	5
Chapter I – Introduction.....	10
I. 1. Purposes and research questions.....	10
I. 2. Scientific significance and contribution.....	13
I. 3. Dissertation structure.....	14
Chapter II – Theoretical framework.....	14
II. 1. Definition of the main subjects.....	16
II. 2. Context and problematization.....	17
II. 3. The growth paradigm.....	20
II. 3.1. Foundation of the growth paradigm.....	20
II.3.1.1. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP).....	21
II. 3.2. Ecological consequences of the growth paradigm.....	22
II. 3.2.1. Inadequacy of Sustainable Development.....	23
II. 3.2.2. The Ivan Illich "Snail".....	24
II. 3.3. Decolonize the dominant collective imaginary.....	25
II. 3.3.1. Individuals inhabited by the collective imaginary.....	26
II. 4. The work dogma.....	27
II. 4.1. Invention of work and its role in the growth paradigm.....	27
II. 4.1.2. The "Protestant work ethic".....	28
II. 4.2. Socio-ecological implication of modern-day work.....	30
II. 4.2.1. Concerns regarding the impact of work.....	31
II. 5. Re-thinking work in a Degrowth perspective.....	35
II. 5.1. What is degrowth?.....	36
II. 5.2. Reconceptualization of work in theory.....	39
II. 5.2.1. Reducing work hours.....	41

II. 5.2.2. UBI; JG; Work sharing.....	42
II. 5.2.3. Work values.....	43
II.5.3. Contextualizing eco-communities role in the reconceptualization of work.....	45
II. 6. Summary and implications.....	48
Chapter III – Research Design.....	49
III. 1. Methodology and research design.....	49
III. 2. Case Study selection.....	50
III. 3. Instruments.....	55
III. 3.1. Participant observations.....	55
III. 3.2. In-depth interviews.....	56
III. 3.3. Questionnaire.....	59
III. 3.4. Informal conversations and document analysis.....	59
III.4. Participants.....	61
III.5. Procedure and time-line.....	61
III.6. Limitations.....	62
Chapter IV. – Immerging in the Case Study Community.....	63
IV. 1. Territory, objectives, organization and infrastructures.....	64
IV. 2. Members, guests and collective experiences.....	73
IV. 3. The complex theme of admission: access modes and motivations.....	73
Chapter V. – Reconceptualize work with 'Joy': a main objective of the community.....	76
V. 1. Work, a collective theme?.....	76
V. 2. A well known connection: modern-day work and environmental degradation.....	78
V. 3. Re-thinking work is a "learning process".....	80
V. 3.1. Deprogram "working for money".....	80
V. 3.2. Dealing with the freedom of schedule.....	83
V. 4. Deepening the community members work.....	87
IIII. 4.1. A meaningful porpose: "contribute to the change".....	88
IIII. 4.2. Work satisfaction.....	89
V. 5. Problems and controversial issues.....	91
V. 6. Imagine the future of work in a sustainable society.....	93
IIII. 6.1. Projection of community member ongoing work in the future.....	93
IIII. 6.2. How work would be in a fully sustainable society?.....	94

Conclusions.....96

Bibliography.....98

Appendix.....103

"Suppose that from the bottom of the ocean a thinking shell emerged for the first time to break the surface and open its valves to the light; suppose it knew that it could remain only for a few moments in the presence of the immense and colourful universe, and that it must eventually return to the dark and mysterious abyss of the sea forever. How could one justify the assertion that it's not only a brute necessity, but a moral duty for this shell to dedicate those few moments to work? How could one argue that the very essence of this spiritual and thinking entity does not demand that it be devoted to contemplating the grandiose spectacle that only faces it for a moment? And how could one applaud plaudits and moral approval and conceive of a spirituality superior to that shell if the brief moment is dedicated to work and not to contemplation? Man is nothing more than that shell emerging but for a moment upon the surface of life and that, in an instant, it will disappear into the abyss."

Giuseppe Rensi¹

¹ Rensi, Giuseppe. 2012. *Contro il Lavoro. Saggio sull'attività più odiata dall'uomo*. Gwynplaine edizioni – Camerano(AN). Original 1923. Translated by me from italian.

Chapter I – Introduction

In this introduction chapter I will briefly explain the focal points of this thesis and the logical thread that will lead the development of the whole study, which will then be analysed in depth in the second chapter, constructing the theoretical framework (II. Chap). It will be essential to immediately present the purpose of this research, so that it can facilitate the understanding of the logic on which the study is based and the main objective to be achieved. To make the proposal even clearer I will also list the questions underlying the research, who pushed and kept the lens in focus during the study, theoretical and empirical. The goal of finding answers to the initial questions was very important throughout the research process (I. 1. Chap.). After clarifying this important point, I will move on to the topic concerning the contribution that this thesis can make on a scientific level, also evaluating possible cues for subsequent research (I. 2. Chap.). This introductory chapter will conclude with a description of the development of the thesis in practical terms, that is the subdivision of the chapters (I. 3. Chap.).

I. 1. Purposes and research questions

The aim of this research, in Lehman's terms, is to analyse and offer possible answers to a contemporary social problem, strongly linked to an environmental one. This profound link between the social and the ecological sphere makes this a complex problem of Human Ecology. "Although humans are part of the ecosystem, it is useful to think of human-environment interaction as interaction between the human social system and the rest of the ecosystem (Figure 1). The social system is everything about people, their population and the psychology and social organization that shape their behaviour. The social system is a central concept in human ecology because human activities that impact on ecosystems are strongly influenced by the society in which people live. Values and knowledge, which together form our world-view as individuals and as a society, shape the way that we process and interpret information and translate it into action. Technology defines our repertoire of possible actions. Social organization, and the social institutions that specify socially acceptable behaviour, shape the possibilities into what we actually do. Like ecosystems, social systems can be on any scale - from a family to the entire human population of the planet." (Marten, 2001, 1-2).

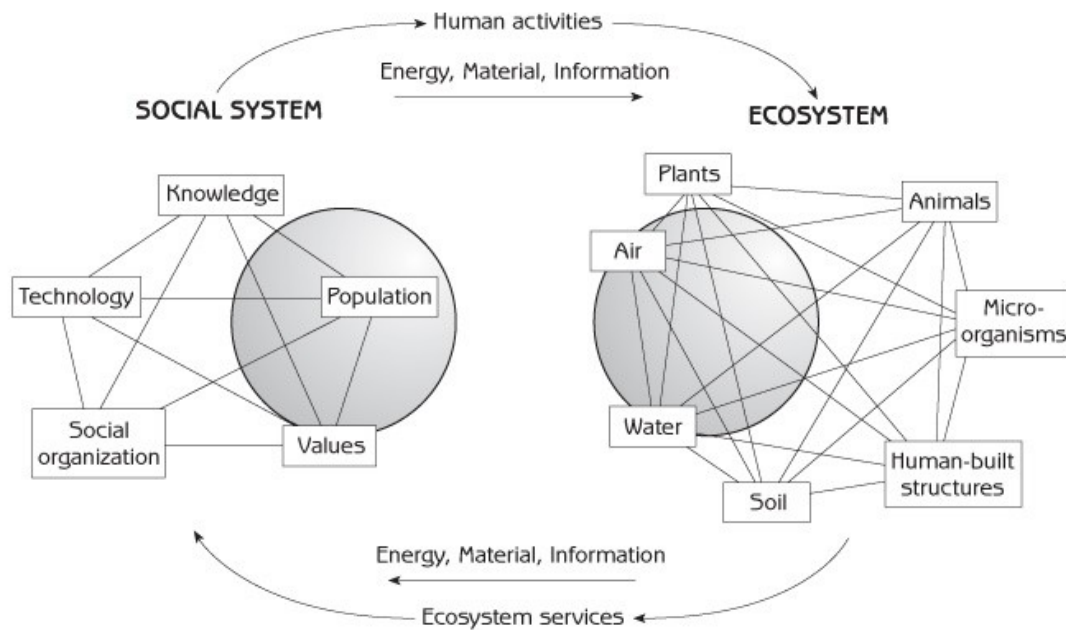


Figure 1. Source: (Marten, 2001, 1-2) Interaction of the human social system with the ecosystem.

On a more specific level, the purpose of this research is to highlight the connection between the growth paradigm (social sphere) and environmental destruction (ecological sphere). Since this is a theme and a problem of gigantic proportions it will not be possible to develop in this thesis an analysis of all the dimensions related to the growth paradigm, so I opted to select only one dimension to be analysed in depth. This text does not want to be a study of all the aspects that contribute to global pollution, already widely discussed. Instead, my purpose is to highlight an analysis centred on one of the points less taken into consideration as the cause of climate change and environmental impact, but which is, in reality, at the base of all the other points already dealt with in literature: the work dogma. Based on the study I carried out in the theoretical section, work is a key point in the cause and resolution of environmental problems linked to the growth paradigm. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to find out if there are currently re-conceptualizations of work and, through the results of this theoretical and empirical research, imagine how work and the role of work could be in a sustainable society. As we will see in the II. 3. Chap. eco-communities provide insights as to how a de-growth society might look (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015), for these reasons I considered eco-communities an appropriate context in which to observe the re-conceptualization of work. Therefore, the central purposes of this thesis will be:

- affirm the unsustainability of the growth paradigm and of modern-day work (definition of work in depth in Chap. II), within the growth paradigm, based on existing studies;
- analyse theoretical alternatives to the growth paradigm and theoretical re-conceptualizations of work, based on already existing studies;
- analyse practices of work re-conceptualization in an eco-community field research and elaborate, starting from these theoretical and empirical bases, a theory on how work could be and what its role could be in a future sustainable society.

It can thus be understood that the problem guiding this research is undoubtedly the concern of today's heavy and growing environmental impact due to the industrialized contemporary society, based on the combination of production and consumption.

The guide problem of this thesis is therefore the environmental impact of contemporary society in relation to growth paradigm and modern-day work and will be explained and proved, through a detailed literature review, followed by a research on the field to analyse what and if work could play a role in a sustainable society. But a more complex problematization will be developed later (II. 1. Chap.). For the moment, another important point to discuss in order to proceed with the study concerns the research questions. The questions behind the study must be answered at the end of the research and have been formulated on the basis of the aims of the research, they will guide the study both in the theoretical and empirical part and will prove to be fundamental for gathering useful data and keeping the research objective in focus. Three questions have been designed and formulated to guide this research and they have the characteristic of being conceptual and practical. It is therefore necessary to answer the following questions:

- Q1 - How will work in a sustainable society be and what will be its main characteristics?
- Q2 - How present is the awareness of the link between modern-day work and environmental degradation and how central is the theme of the re-conceptualization of work in the case study community?
- Q3 - Is there, in the *Case Study* community, a practical re-conceptualization of work? If yes, how is it organized and what are the characteristics and values of the work performed by the members?

Answering these questions requires the use of a methodology; qualitative methodology has been selected for this research. Specifically, it was considered appropriate to opt for the qualitative ethnographic methodology, which is suitable for a study based mainly on observation of social interaction. In this specific research the collection of data on the ground was developed through: 1) participant observation; 2) in-depth interviews; 3) questionnaire; 4) collection of documents and informal conversations. A detailed explanation of the methodology used will be found in the chapter dedicated to the research design (3. Chap.).

I. 2. Scientific significance and contribution

An important part of a research is its ability to provide scientific significance, its contribution and ideas for subsequent research, where it will be possible to investigate gaps, widen, confirm or contrast the results already obtained.

With regard to the theoretical conception of this dissertation it can be stated that the theme of sustainability and the theme of work are already discussed topics, but the interesting aspect of this study is that the implications of modern-day work as a factor of unsustainability are rarely taken into consideration. Not all the studies on sustainability have a critical approach to the modern-day work production-consumption aspect, instead they focus on the use of technologies and green jobs to solve environmental problems, which we will discover in the theoretical framework (2. Chap.), not actually being enough and effective. The analysis presented in this thesis, and therefore the analysis of work and its socio-environmental implications, are mainly present in the texts where the growth paradigm is questioned, thus it is connected to the de-growth theory.

For what concerns the observation of the re-conceptualization of work in eco-communities and the development of theories about the future of work in a sustainable society, this could be the first study of a much larger research. In fact, what has been developed in this thesis on a small scale, could be broadened to a large scale, selecting more eco-communities for the empirical research, based on different characteristics such as their location; the number of members; their level of self-sustainability and so on. Combining the results of several ground researches in different eco-communities could give birth to a set of variables to theoretically define the bases of the re-conceptualization of work in eco-communities, for example at national, European or world level. This would probably create sufficient material also to create a theoretical basis about the role of work and its characteristics in a future, sustainable society.

I. 3. Dissertation structure

The dissertation is logically divided and developed into three main parts.

The first part (II. Chap.) concerns the theoretical framework and it is of fundamental importance to fully understand the problem underlying the study and the objectives to be achieved in order to solve the problem. The theoretical framework is also fundamental to realize the complexity of the problem analysed, which develops on a social, ecological and economic level. In this section the problematization and the context within which the research is inserted will be deepened and developed. This is fundamental for contextualizing and for perceiving the depth of the problem and the topic that will be dealt with. The theme of the growth paradigm will be studied starting from its foundations, to then pass to its ecological implications, to the collective imaginary present within the growth paradigm and the role of work within this paradigm. Equally in depth, the theme of the work will be developed: the invention of this concept, its ecological and social repercussions, the analysis of existing studies regarding the future of work in the growth paradigm. Finally, the concept of the re-conceptualization of work in theory will be introduced, as well as a contextualization of the role of eco-communities in the practical re-conceptualization of work.

The second part (III. Chap.) will be dedicated to the research design, with an exhaustive explanation of the methodology chosen to develop the study, a presentation of the selected *Case Study* community, together with the reasons for this choice, a Time-line table and the limitations of this research design.

The last part (IV. Chap.), the heart of this research, will be dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the results obtained in the ground research. Conclusions will follow.

Chapter II - Theoretical framework

The purpose of this chapter is to delve into the weaknesses and strengths of existing research creating relevant theoretical frameworks based on already established studies, which will serve as the foundation of this research and will allow us to narrow down the field of analysis, which otherwise would be too vast. This theoretical framework is connecting the themes of ecology, work and society, with an holistic vision, which brings together three very distinct themes, but which are deeply linked and interrelated.

In fact, studies have shown that the dominant paradigm has become unsustainable for the earth and for our society, with serious repercussions on the latter, some already in place, recorded

by numerous studies and scientific research (II.3.2 Chap.). This means that a paradigm shift must occur and a change in the growth paradigm (current dominant paradigm), is equivalent to a global change not only economic, but also and above all societal. The dominant system is not a paradigm that feeds on economy alone, what therefore holds and legitimizes the existence of the dominant paradigm is also the social sphere (II.3.3 Chap.). To make the transition possible, to a sustainable society out of the growth paradigm, it will therefore be necessary to distort values and the collective imagination that has been created since the dawn of capitalism, up to the present, where we can find individuals with internalized values, to the point of becoming dogmas. On the study and the deepening of one of these dogmas this thesis will develop.

I will analyse the theme of work (work dogma) in contemporary society (II.4.1 Chap), intended as "abstract work as employment in the labour market" (Hoffmann 2017), starting from the theoretical framework based on existent analysis that "indispensable profound societal change towards sustainability cannot succeed without a transformation of work and work society" (Hoffmann, 2017). Thinking about the transformation of work I will try to understand, thanks to a theoretical and field research, how work would be in a sustainable society and what would be its main characteristics (Q1). In order to understand and find an answer I will have to clarify what is meant by sustainable society (II.1 Chap), thus understanding that a sustainable society can only be achieved through a process of de-growth (II.5.1 Chap.).

Starting from this point it will be important to analyse how a re-conceptualization of work could take place in theory (II.5.2 Chap.) and find a way to be able to analyse it in practice, thus succeeding in increasing the knowledge on the subject also from an empirical point of view. After selecting an eco-community as a Case Study for theoretical and methodological reasons (II.5.3; 3.3 Chap.) it will be possible to deepen the research by discovering how present the awareness is of the link between work and environmental degradation and how central the theme of the re-conceptualization of work is within the case study community (Q2). Also if, in the case study community, there is a practical re-conceptualization of work and if yes, how is it organized and what are the characteristics and values of the work performed by the members (Q3).

This research is based on the conviction that sustainability cannot exist within the capitalist paradigm and that the idea of development has lost its meaning, as well as the concept of sustainable development. Sustainability cannot exist within the growth paradigm, consequently a re-conceptualization of work cannot exist if it is based on the principles of sustainable development, such as green jobs, since it is part of a vision of development and therefore of growth. Effective sustainable alternatives will be sought and imagined outside the dominant paradigm. These main

and recurring themes, now only introduced, will be developed in depth in this chapter dedicated to the theoretical framework.

II. 1. Definition of the main subjects

This thesis, as can be seen from the title, is based on the study of work and sustainability, specifically, on the study of the role of work in a sustainable society. Obviously, work and sustainability in their entirety, are excessively vast and complex topics to be treated at 360° in this dissertation, consequently I will study these themes in relation to the focus of this research. The theme of work will be mainly studied in a perspective of analysis of the concept of 'work dogma', from a social and environmental point of view. Then, in the field research part, in a perspective of re-conceptualization of this abstract concept. The theme of sustainability will be dealt with mainly through the aim of defining the unsustainability of the dominant economic-social model, the inability of sustainable development as a response to environmental problems in the Anthropocene phase, and as a means for achieving a 'sustainable society' through 'de-growth'.

Clarifying this, I can define what is meant specifically with the term 'work' in this text and for a clear understanding I decided to report this definition, in line with my personal perception of how contemporary society considers 'work': "Work as purposeful activity that everyone should most of their adult life diligently engage in to 'earn a living' and (ideally) develop their human potential, which today we assume as 'natural' and universal"¹. Precisely because we can affirm that today we accept work as a natural and universal activity we can speak of 'work dogma', where the word dogma defines a principle that is accepted without discussion or critical examination.

To describe the concepts of 'degrowth' and 'sustainable society', I have chosen to use the words of Serge Latouche, one of the leading exponents of the degrowth, which he described as "a complex alternative project, with undeniable analytical and political significance. It is about first escaping from consumption society and then building - here we can find the definition of sustainable society- a durable society of prosperity without growth or frugal abundance"²

The transformation, to build a degrowth society, can be implemented thanks to 8 interdependent changes, which reinforce each other. This is a virtuous circle of the 8 R: Re-evaluate - Reconceptualize - Restructure - Redistribute - Relocalize – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle (Latouche,

¹ Conze, 1972, cited in Hoffmann, Maja. 2017. *Change put at work. A degrowth perspective on unsustainable work, post work alternatives and politics*. Master thesis, Lund University Centre of Sustainability Studies.

² Latouche, Serge. 2018. The Path to Degrowth for a Sustainable Society. In: Lehmann H. (eds) *Factor X. Eco - Efficiency in Industry and Science*, vol 32. Springer, Cham

2006). In this research I will mainly focus on the first two points, Re-evaluate and Reconceptualize. The first point recalls the ethical sphere and the second the sphere of metaphysics and epistemology (Borgna, 2010), together they represent what Latouche means by "decolonizing the imaginary". Starting from this theoretical conception I will talk about the Reconceptualization of work, which will start from a Re-evaluation of its role in the society.

II. 2. Context and problematization

The theme of work in contemporary society and its social and environmental implications occupies an important place in every person from our very first years of life, through culture and teaching. Because of this, the 'work dogma' is deeply internalized and it is hard to question it, despite being the key to the destructive functioning of the dominant paradigm, namely the capitalist paradigm. Our spirits, as Latouche asserts, were 'colonized' so to change paradigms, a total challenge of the system is necessary, de-legitimizing values and the dominant ideology (Latouche, 2006).

In order to better understand the problem that this dissertation wants to highlight, and therefore the affirmations of the previous lines, I have decided to report in this chapter two clear examples of how and why the work dogma and its morals are deeply internalized today.

The grasshopper and the ant is a fable that every child born in the West has probably heard and will be taken here as an example of how childhood literature plays an important role in the internalization and acceptance of contemporary society dogmas. This story belongs to a very ancient collection, Aesop's Fables, written between 620 and 564 BCE by Aesop, a tongue-tied slave who miraculously received the power of speech, and they have become one of the most enduring traditions of European culture (Gibbs, 2002). At first, before the era of the work dogma, this was a fable to criticize laziness and to enhance the importance of planning for the future but, subsequently, especially with the revised and corrected version of *La Fontaine*, 1668, this fable became important to convey to children the importance of the virtue of hard work:

*"A Grasshopper gay
Sang the summer away,
And found herself poor
By the winter's first roar.*

*Of meat or of bread,
Not a morsel she had!
So a begging she went,
To her neighbour the ant,
For the loan of some wheat,
Which would serve her to eat,
Till the season came round.
'I will pay you,' she saith,
'On an animal's faith,
Double weight in the pound
Ere the harvest be bound.'
The ant is a friend
(And here she might mend)
Little given to lend.
'How spent you the summer?'
Quoth she, looking shame
At the borrowing dame.
'Night and day to each comer
I sang, if you please.'
'You sang! I'm at ease;
For 'tis plain at a glance,
Now, ma'am, you must dance.'³*

It contains values of duty, competition, individualism and, in some more recent revisits, we can also find the value of forgiveness, as long as the grasshopper recognizes that he was wrong by not working. As Latouche affirms, the colonization of our spirit today comes mainly through

³ La Fontaine, Jean. 1882. *The Fables of La Fontaine*. A New Edition, With Notes By J. W. M. Gibbs. Translated from French by Elizur Wright. E-Book <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7241/7241-h/7241-h.htm>

traditional education, while education should provide the means to resist attempts at mental colonization (Latouche 2007, 145).

Rare are the revisits of the story that completely eliminate the concept of hard work as a value, between them one of the most famous is the one of Gianni Rodari, an Italian writer, who wrote a short poem called *To the ant*, which highlights a revolutionary moral: generosity:

*"Chiedo scusa alla favola antica,
se non mi piace l'avara formica.
Io sto dalla parte della cicala,
che il più bel canto non vende,
regala"⁴*

Critics of the fable, in the past non-existent or rare, today are increasing. Recently, Gusmeroli has published a book of social science, with the title, translated to English, *I'm with the grasshopper. Because the ant is turbo capitalist*. This text presents an alternative and an updated view of the fable, showing the ant as the emblem of selfishness and greed, responsible for environmental degradation and the grasshopper as an example for its human and immaterial values (Gusmeroli, 2013). I interpret the new following example as a consequence of the first one. In fact, this example will help us to understand the consequences of the indoctrination, as the inability, in most cases, to question the contemporary social dogmas, even in the face of a global collapse.

In 1972-1973 Sicco Mansholt was President of the European Commission and European Commissioner for Agriculture (1958-1972). Believing that Europe should become self-sufficient, from the food standpoint, the main element of the 'Mansholt Plan' for the Common Agricultural Policy was to encourage agricultural productivity and modernization by creating systems which would guarantee farmers a certain minimum price for their products and encourage them to produce more (European Commission). Mansholt suddenly and radically changed his thinking, in favour of "zero growth", stating that Europe should not aim at Gross Domestic Product but Gross Domestic Happiness (Joan Martinez-Alier, 2014). He affirmed, in an interview reported in the book *Ecologia/caso de vida ou de morte*, that he was shocked when he read the report of the *System Dynamic Group, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1971* ("MIT

⁴ Rodari, Gianni. 1980. *"Alla formica". Filastrocche in cielo e in terra*. Turin: Einaudi. English translation: I apologize to the ancient fable, But I do not care for the stingy ant. I am partial to the grasshopper Whose lovely song is a present for all.

report" published by the Club of Rome) and he realized that it is not possible to live here by adaptations because it is the whole of our system that needs to be revised and that necessary need to radically change its philosophy (Mansholt, 1972). Mansholt argues that the curves drawn by computers are clear and that population growth, pollution, depletion of natural resources, and industrial production inevitably lead to collapse and he suggests a series of changes, such as reducing economic growth, reducing demographic change, production and consumption (Mansholt 1972, 9). The journalist next question to this statement was:

"And do you think that these restrictions of consumption, these production losses, which will certainly have repercussions on the labour market and on the very notion of profit, can be accepted by employers and workers?"⁵

Reflection arises naturally: is it possible that, faced with this scenario of total collapse of humanity and the ecosystem, we continue to worry about defending profit and labour? "We should admit and recognize that work, as a central social relation of modern societies is a key issue for an effective socio-ecological transformation" (Hoffmann, 2017 pag.3) and for this reason the theme deserves attention and a deep study, because it becomes fundamental to reconsider the current social-economic system, in order to create a path that can lead to a sustainable society, impossible to realise without a critique of the work dogma.

II. 3. The growth paradigm

In capitalist societies, public policy seems to be founded and guided by the certainty that sustained economic growth will bring a life of material abundance for all. (Purdey, 2010). This growth society is critically defined by Latouche as a society dominated by the growth economy that is absorbed by this economy and that creates a vicious circle, based on unlimited accumulation. The results being that, if the growth stops, the whole society goes into crisis and to avoid this crisis growth becomes the sole purpose of life (Latouche 2006, 31-33).

II. 3.1. Foundation of growth paradigm

Barro, in his book in collaboration with Martin, with the title *Economic Growth*, affirm that

⁵ Mansholt, Marcuse, Morin e outros. 1972. Ecologia/caso de vida ou de morte. Tradução de Maria de Madre De Deus Pimenta De Souza. Moraes editores, Lisboa. Pag.21. Answer of Mansholt: *"Yes, because the priorities will not be these ... What we will lose in the plan of gross consumption, we will win it in welfare, in rest, in free time. If the gross domestic product is no longer a goal, if materialism is no longer the guide, the search for a high social position is no longer necessary. A man who wanted to do a simple job - or even not work - can be perfectly respectable. Why do we have to work? Why everyone, obligatorily, and not just who wants? Believe me, there are many values to review"*.

economists have always known that growth is important, even if the study of economic growth languished mainly after the 1960s and became vigorous again, after a lapse of two decades, in the mid-1980s, with models of determination of long-run growth, called endogenous growth theory. Before this, Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, Ramsey, Young, Knight and Shumpeter, between 1776 and 1934, provided the base of the modern theories of economic growth that included the ideas of "competitive behaviour and equilibrium dynamics, the role of diminishing returns and its relation to the accumulation of physical and human capital, the interplay between per capita income and the growth rate of population, the effects of technological progress in the forms of increased specialization of labour and discoveries of new goods and methods of production, and the role of monopoly power as an incentive for technological advance" (Barro, Martin, 1995, page 9).

Marshall articulated the neoclassical economics, upon which national wealth is now calculated and conceptualized. He argued that utility, rather than tangibility, was the real standard of production and wealth, so the economic significance of a thing is not in its nature or on how much labour went into its creation, but in its market price. Neoclassical economics, based on these assumptions, intends to show that an economy as a whole can and should continue growing indefinitely (Alexander, 2012).

II. 3.1.1. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an indicator of the economic growth, that measures the value of all good and service produced within a particular country and it does not matter whether the individuals or companies profiting from this production are national or foreign (Willis, 2005, pag. 5). Kuznets was the developer of the statistical concept behind GDP, in the 1930s, and he warned against using it as a measure of a country and citizen progress, because one of its crucial problems is that positive and negative aspects of development are contributing to the total (Norgard, 2001). There are also other indicators which are important to mention if we want to tackle the issue of economic growth and, in particular, of development, a theme that is often linked to the concept of modernity, which in turn is used to describe particular forms of economy and society based on the experiences of Western Europe and the USA. The Gross National Product (GNP), or Gross National Income (GNI, as the World Bank name it), measure the value of all goods and services claimed by residents of a particular country regardless of where the production took place. Is it so the GDP plus the income accruing from abroad minus the income claimed by people overseas (Willis, 2005).

According to this conventional view, there is a direct and positive correlation between

consumption expenditure and human well-being (Alexander, 2012). Wealth measure to represent development is regarded as appropriate because it is assumed that wealth brings other benefits, such as improved health, education and quality of life (Willis, 2005). By essentially conflating economic and social well-being, growth in GDP per capita becomes a measure not just of economic success but of a nation's social progress (Alexander, 2012). In fact, "up to a certain level, growth in GDP per capita does seem to increase happiness and satisfaction, although with diminishing returns. Above a level around \$10.000 dollars per year, satisfaction increases very little, if at all, with continued increase in GDP per capita (NEF, 2009) although GDP and associated environmental pressures continue to increase" (Norgard, 2011). This indicators could be used in conjunction with other indicators that should highlight non-economic dimension of 'development', more related to well-being, like the Human Development Index (HDI), mainly used by the UNDP to divide the countries of the world into very high, high, middle and low human development. Nevertheless, the problem is that these measures of national status do not consider inequalities (spatial and social) and personal definition of development (Willis, 2005). A measure able to define income inequality and inequality in consumption between individuals, households or groups is the Gini coefficient, named after an Italian statistician who formulated it in 1912 (UNDP, 2009). This coefficient shows inequality in the Global North as in the Global South, demonstrating that high economic development does not necessarily mean good equality and does not avoid marginalization, poverty and disadvantage (Willis, 2005). Despite this, the economic growth is conventionally defined as a rise of GDP (independently of other measurements), so a well-being of a society is approximately proportional to the size of its economy, and represent the growth model of progress (Alexander, 2012), that is today the dominant model, clearly evidenced by the fact that growing the economy is the central objective of all the world governments and the primary measure of policy and institutional success (Purdey, 2010). It follows that, with this point of view, the answer to almost all problems (social, political, economic, etc.) is more economic growth (Beckerman, 2002). As affirmed by Norgard, economic growth is *not a law of nature*, it is actually just the results of political decisions. So, it is possible take new political decisions and replace economic growth with life satisfaction and free time, also because there are physical limitations to growth and, in economics, competition is justified to increase the GDP and so to increase ecological pressure (Norgard, 2011)

II. 3.2. Ecological consequences of growth paradigm

Scientific studies have shown that the human economy is degrading the planet's

ecosystems, like the Club of Rome, known for having published *The Limits of Growth* study in 1972, made it clear that growth could entail the destruction of the environment and global resources such as water, soil and forest reserves within this century. This study has been much criticized since its publication, but recent studies by the University of Melbourne, 2014, confirm the predictions.⁶ "This vision of abundance treats Earth as a limitless resource to be exploited for human purposes and it promotes a materialistic attitude to life, by assuming that human well-being consists in satisfying ever-more consumer desires through market transactions" (Alexander 2012). As the research in *The Limits to Growth* explains, economic growth cannot continue without causing disasters, because it is not possible to have a system of consumption that is constantly accelerating in a slower-renewing world. Population growth brings the demand for goods and this will result in excess pollution and production. The authors of this research wrote this text with the aim of awakening critical attention and enlightening debate throughout the world, provoking in the reader a reflection on the consequences of relating growth to progress (Meadows et al., 1973). An infinite growth cannot be compatible with a finite planet. The finitude of the biosphere is an obstacle to economic overgrowth, which has already surpassed the carrying capacity of the planet Earth (Latouche, 2006).

The environmental pressure is recorded with parameters like CO₂-emission, phosphorous flow, biodiversity (Rockstrom et al, 2009) and *Ecological Footprint* (WWF, 2016). Recently, the *Living Planet Report 2016*, synthesizes the evidence showing that the Earth system is under increasing threat: climate, biodiversity, ocean health, deforestation, the water cycle, the nitrogen cycle, the carbon cycle. "We are entering a new era in Earth's history: the Anthropocene. An era in which humans rather than natural forces are the primary drivers of planetary change. But we can also redefine our relationship with our planet, from a wasteful, unsustainable and predatory one, to one where people and nature can coexist in harmony " (WWF, 2016).

II. 3.2.1. Inadequacy of Sustainable Development

Despite this awareness, the report suggests that, in order to solve these deep problems it is necessary to resort to sustainable development: "The 21st century presents humanity with a dual challenge: to maintain nature in all of its many forms and functions and to create an equitable home for people on a finite planet. This dual challenge is outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The goals for sustainable development combine the economic, social and ecological

⁶ Graham M. Turner. "Is Global Collapse Imminent? An Updated Comparison of The Limits to Growth with Historical Data." Research Paper No. 4 August 2014 .
http://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/MSSI-ResearchPaper-4_Turner_2014.pdf

dimensions necessary to sustain human society through the Anthropocene" (WWF, 2016, pag.108). This important statement confirms that few people are ready to accept the idea that a truly global sustainable society cannot be founded on the growth paradigm. Sustainable development theory means continuing to pursue economic growth while employing science and technology to produce and consume more cleanly and efficiently (Alexander, 2012). To solve environmental problems, solutions related to technology are always proposed, forgetting to take into consideration two important factors, like population size and per-capita consumption (Norgard, 2011). In fact, without political changes directed to limit, or at least slow production, it is hard to imagine any kind of sustainability, this because, with the present obsession with economic growth, the mitigation that we could obtain with technological progress would be immediately reabsorbed with consumption and population growth (Norgard, 2011). Instead, a real solution could be to change policies to obtain more leisure instead of resource and labour productivity (Norgard, 2009). Alexander affirmed that any transition to a just and sustainable world will need to involve the most developed nations transitioning away from the growth model, but very few people, including many environmentalists, seem to quite understand how directly the global situation undermines the legitimacy of continued growth in the richest nations. In fact, he affirmed that degrowth in the rich nations seem to be an absolutely necessary element in any solution of the global problems. The transition away from energy-intensive economies will occur, voluntarily or not but, obviously, a well-planned voluntary transition would be the desired path (Alexander, 2012).

II. 3.2.2. The Ivan Illich "Snail"

The evolution and survival of human society depends on the speed and effectiveness of responses to these challenges and yet only a small part of the world population is committed to solve these problems (Meadows et al., 1973). This small part, although a minority, did not stop criticizing the model of growth and over time developed alternative movements, such as the Slow movement, Voluntary Simplicity, Permaculture, the Degrowth and many more. These global movements challenge the cult of growth, work, money, speed, and consumerism. They criticize contemporary society in the social, economic and ethical spheres, offering ideological and practical alternatives to create a different society. These ideologies are based on the idea that the time has come to change things in favour of a self-limitation, as the analogy of the Ivan Illich snail:

"The snail builds the delicate architecture of its shell by adding spirals each time wider and then stops abruptly and begins to make windings now decreasing, because a single, even wider spiral would give the shell a dimension 16 times larger. Instead of contributing to the welfare of the

animal, it would overburden it after any increase in its productivity would only serve to alleviate the difficulties created by this increase in the size of the shell beyond the limits set for its purpose. The problems of overgrowth multiply in geometric progression, whereas the biological capacity of the snail can only at best follow an arithmetic progression".⁷

These movements have so far failed to become large-scale movements, facing a limit to develop new paradigms: the dominant collective imagination. To advance the discussion it's important to realize what the dominant collective imagination is and what individuals inhabit.

II. 3.3. Decolonize the dominant collective imaginary

The sociology of the imaginary is not a specific field of sociology defined by an object of study, but a point of view on the social that is interested in the imaginary dimension of all human activities. It is a complex science that attempts to reach the deep motivations that underlie and animate human societies (Legros et al., 2007). The social imaginary is a set of imaginary relations that forms the affective-social memory of a culture, an ideological substrate of a community and a collective production of memories that the family and the groups gather from their contacts with everyday life (De Moraes 1997). Maffesoli defines the imaginary as something that surpasses the individual, which permeates the collective, or part of the collective, and establishes a bond. It is the state of mind of a group, a country or a community and can not be individual. It is like a social cement (Maffesoli 2001). In the imaginary, societies sketch their identities, goals, aspirations, fears and hopes, detect the enemies, organize the past the present and the future. The social imaginary is expressed through ideologies, utopias, symbols, rituals and myths that change the world's views and lifestyles (Bronisław 1984). The current of the anthropology of the imaginary affirms that the imaginary is the product of the mythical thought, considering that the mythical thought is not inferior to the rational thought. The mythical thought is therefore concrete, it works on the principle of analogy and is expressed through symbolic images. The analogy determines the material and institutional constructions, the ideologies, the knowledge, the collective behaviours and perceptions of space and time (Legros et al, 2007). Durand (Durand 1997) worked at the confluence of the Romantic literary tradition and anthropology, writing *The anthropological structures of the imaginary*, indicating that the real is driven by the efficacy of the imaginary (Maffesoli 2001). For De Carvalho, the imaginary is the support on which the social representations are constituted. It is the imaginary that relates individuals, guaranteeing a common identity, which can be inferred through social representations (De Carvalho 2002). Serbena affirms that social representation

⁷ Illich, Ivan. 1973. *Libertar o futuro*. Tradução Cardigos dos Reis, Publicações Dom Quixote.

guides individuals in daily life by placing themselves between the world of technical and scientific concepts and realized perceptions, "a sociological form of social psychology.". Social representation manipulates known elements, wanting to fill in the gaps with elements from other fields, often changing the original meaning. It binds the unfamiliar element to a recognizable reference (by comparing classification and categorization) by including it in the known universe and assigning it a value making it familiar. Thus, stereotypes and clichés are used to understand the reality that become increasingly common until they are perceived as natural and social realities (Serbena 2003).

The imaginary has a social and political function because, in the legitimisation of a political regime, it is through the imaginary that people are effectively mobilized. Thus, the field of the imaginary can be defined as a field of political struggle and struggle for power, where ideologies and social groups intersect. Configuring the imaginary from a specific objective, to favour the interests of a social group can be called "symbolic power" (Serbena 2003). Bourdieu also speaks of a "symbolic violence" and considers art, religion and languages as symbolic systems that can play the legitimation of domination, serving interests only of specific groups of society. There is one symbolic struggle between the different social groups to impose the vision of the world more suited to their interests (Bourdieu 1974). Capitalism encompasses macro and micro-powers that define the collective imaginary (De Moraes 1997). Even in our society, which is crossed by the class struggle, the dominant values are generally similar for all. Leaving the dominant imaginary is very difficult because we cannot decide to change our imaginary and simultaneously the one of the others (Latouche 2006).

II. 3.3.1. Individuals inhabited by the collective imaginary

Erich Fromm, has developed a very broad research and in the book *The Fear of Freedom* allows us to perceive who are the individuals that the collective imaginary inhabits.

The end of the Middle Ages created a huge change in the structure of society and in the personalities of Men. Men have lost the security and the type of relationship characteristic of medieval society, they have become freer but more individualistic. Human relations were poisoned by the struggle of life and death and by the maintenance of wealth and power. Other individuals have become "objects" to be manipulated, used or destroyed, for the personal ends of each. The individual was totally absorbed by egocentrism (Fromm, 1960). We live in a society based on old values such as honesty, service to the state, and transmission of knowledge, work well done, but the bottom line is cash pocketing (Latouche, 2006). Fromm states that the idea of efficiency has

become one of the highest moral virtues and the desire for wealth and material success has become man's greatest passion. Thus, the arts and sciences were set aside for the sake of manual labour (Fromm 1960, 57). The colonization of the imaginary by the economic, says Latouche, is manifested by the consideration of economics as a fundamental function to guarantee the humanity (Latouche, 2006). The birth of the individual, as we know it today, began in the late period of the Middle Ages, at the beginning of the capitalist period. Restlessness began to be a part of life in the late Middle Ages. The concept of time was developed in the modern sense and the minutes became valuable, so that could not be spent on any activity that was not useful, thus becoming the work of supreme value. Competition also became a very important factor, although it was not completely absent in the Middle Ages. The feudal economic system was based on cooperation and was regulated, but with the arrival of capitalism, these principles of cooperation gave way to the individualist initiative, where each one must *swim or sink*. The other individuals became their competitors and the alternative became either to destroy them or to be destroyed (Fromm, 1960, 56-59). At the end of the Middle Ages the tolerance of commercial activities gives way to an understanding of them as virtuous activities and the desire for enrichment, previously condemned, happens to be celebrated. In this context, wage labour becomes omnipresent because it contributes to the increase of a nation's wealth and the creation of economic value (Meda, 2010, 63-65).

Illich states that the exhaustion and pollution of the Earth's resources is, above all, the result of a corruption in the self-image of man and a regression in his consciousness, a mutation in the collective consciousness that leads to the conception of man as an organism dependent on institutions and not on nature or other individuals. Efforts to find a new equilibrium in the global environment depend on the deinstitutionalization of these values (Illich, 1977, 181).

II. 4. The work dogma

As we have seen, work has become a supreme value (Fromm 1960), in the dominant collective imaginary of a world shaped by colonisation and industrialisation, where endless work and endless industry were considered necessary to satisfy endless needs (Hoffmann, 2017).

The next chapter will be devoted entirely to the analysis of the work dogma, from an historical and current point of view.

II. 4.1. Invention of work and its role in the growth paradigm

Modern-day work is a cultural exception, unprecedented in history, and based on a genuinely new rationality that has little in common with those activities that have always been necessary to reproduce life and livelihoods (Hoffmann, 2017). In fact, work within the capitalist system and work of the ancient world present completely different aspects: the first is done in the public sphere and the second in the family sphere (Gorz, 1989). Pre-Capitalist societies did not have an economy (Latouche, 2005) and productive activities were rooted in non-economic motivations, life followed biological rhythms and social relations were based on principles of solidarity (Gorz, 1985, 49). All this began to change substantially in early modernity with a new conception of work (Hoffmann, 2017). It was not until the late Middle Ages that foreign trade began to boost economic life, before which trade and markets were almost non-existent (Latouche 2005, 15). Economic science invented the concept of work, the capitalist mode of production introduced a rupture in the history of humanity, being the first labour society that transformed the human being into a commodity. Work has become the new social relationship that structures society, and individuals alienate their time in exchange for a salary (Meda, 2010). Gorz describes modern-day work as "The activity carried out: for others; in exchange for a salary; according to forms and times established by the person paying the salary; and for a purpose that is not chosen by the worker"⁸, carried out intensively, in a productivist and competitive logic.

In the last one hundred and fifty years the common dogma has been established that work is the natural destiny of men and social theories. Political currents have been dominated by this idea, but it was not the will that most men continued to produce for anonymous markets, but because, with absolutism, individuals had to "make money", not for themselves, but for the militarized state of early modernity: for new firearms, logistics and state bureaucracies (Krisis Group, 1999, 27-28-46). Economics and labour are historical inventions (Latouche, 2005), but anyone who today wonders what the meaning and purpose of his work is causes madness or becomes a disturbing factor in the social machine (Krisis Group, 1999, 28-29).

II. 4.1.2. The "Protestant work ethic"

Capitalist society is the first labour society, and Protestant ethics played a key role in the arrival of capitalist society, recognizing work as a universal value and helping the institution of work in the social imagination (Latouche 2005, p. 74-76), but this is a frightening prospect because it means that this society also considers the process of production-consumption as a core value (Benatti 2012, Godard Interview). Protestant work ethic was a Weber's topic, who focused his study

⁸ Gorz, André. 1982. *Farewell to the Working Class*. An essay on Post-Industrial Socialism. Londres. Pluto Press.

on the shift from the "traditional work ethic," dominant in the pre-industrial era, to the "protestant work ethic" that his vision accompanied and hastened capitalist industrial development. In traditional work ethic, work was seen as a "necessary drudgery" "to be avoided as soon as customary and constant economic needs were met"(Weber 2002[1904-1905]; cited in Foster, 2017). Work, according to this new ethic, was not something to be sought in times of scarcity and abandoned in times of plenty, it was a real vocation, a calling and the meaning of life itself (Foster, 2017). Weber, with the book *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, originated interest in work centrality, where work plays a central role in employees' lives.

The modern system of commodity production, with its autotelic purpose of permanently transforming human energy into money, has created this particular domain, separated from all other social relations and abstracted from any content. In this sphere, separated from life, time ceases to be lived and lived time, it becomes simple raw material that has to be optimized: "time is money" (Krisis Group, 1999, 32).

In fact, this change in the conception of work was paralleled by a change in relation to time. The perception of time, traditionally, was related to natural rhythms, was task-oriented and working habits were irregular. From the 14th century on, clocks started to spread, together with time-discipline, enforced through a process of education, popular customs, and means of subsistence, until people had accepted certain premises and would fight "not against time, but about it". Leisure and enjoyment became morally reprehensible, persistent industriousness and work were taught to be the sole purpose of life and earning money and goods through work was explicitly favourable. Surplus was to be reinvested and not wasted. Work ethic has over time become secularised and its 'spirit' adopted in general morality (Thompson, 1967, Conze, 1972, Weber, 1992, cited in Hoffmann, 2017). This situation did not change even after "leisure and enjoyment" ceased to be "morally reprehensible" and became commodities that needed "more work" to be obtained.

Bertrand Russell, in the book *Elogio dell'ozio*, 1963, explains that the idea that the poor had free time has always been shocking for the rich. At the beginning of the 19th century, in England, sometimes people worked twelve hours a day, and when someone suggested that perhaps it was an exaggerated time, he was told that it was a way to keep people away from drinking and children away from marginalization (Russell, 1963). The imaginary promoted by the bourgeoisie is that of homo faber and the free craftsman, who actually contrasts with real alienation, whether it leads to wage labour (Latouche, 2005, 64). The classical labour movement developed a hyper identification with what seemed inevitable to it: instead of criticizing the transformation of human energy into

money, he interpreted the appreciation of capital as a positive fact and the unhappiness of work was converted into worker pride (Krisis Group, 53-54). The fact is that moving bodies, even if it is partly necessary, is not at all one of the aims of human life and we have been deceived in this regard (Russell, 1963).

"Some people say that while some leisure is pleasurable, men would not know how to fill their days if they had only four hours of work in their twenty-four hours a day. To consider this truth in the modern world is a condemnation of our civilization; things have never been this way. There was previously a capacity for carelessness and amusement that was somewhat inhibited by the cult of efficiency. Modern man thinks that everything must be done for the sake of something else, and never for its own sake. The notion that desirable activities are those that bring profit is a reversal of the order of things.'⁹

Despite the decline of religious influence on Western economic life, the cultural virtue of work continues today, through businesses influencing youngsters, education, sports, advertisement and other ways (Beder, 2000). "The capitalistic economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live" (Weber, 2001, pag.19).

II. 4.2. Socio-ecological implication of modern-day work

Although there are texts on this subject, it is necessary to agree with Hoffmann that this is not a topic commonly dealt with and taken into account in any scientific texts concerning sustainability. In her analysis named *A degrowth perspective on unsustainable work, postwork alternatives and politics*, which ends with the statement that "*the indispensable profound societal change towards sustainability cannot succeed without a transformation of work and work society*", she highlights how modern-day work brings inevitable and tangible social and environmental concerns, being directly linked to the production and consumption process (Hoffmann, 2017, page. 3). After all, this theme has been discussed for some time, for example by the philosopher Godard, who has extracted a book from the themes of work and its relationship with environmental destruction, entitled *Contro il Lavoro*. In this text, the philosopher states that any kind of work is inevitably impacting on an ecological level, due to its nature of "changing matter" (Godard). Speaking of the relationship between work and the environment we must consider that work justifies until the destruction of natural resources (Krisis Group, 14) and Godard states that modern soft ecologists, believing that technology can save us from the polluted world, are deluded and that

⁹ Russell, Bertrand. 1963. *Elogio dell'ozio*. Traduzione Elisa Marpicati. TEA Milano.

it is necessary to value human things that realize the deep connection between humans and nature (Benatti 2012, Godard Interview).

"Nature is not something reactionary, something from the past, but an essential part of the human being, where we can abolish relations of domination, we can abolish machismo, the domination of one sex over another, of adults over children. In order to do all this we have to abandon the ideology of work, because at work there is the opposite of that: there is domination, there is a hierarchy, there is the idea that we must produce and then consume and destroy the things we did before. Work is our time that capital steals from us. And also an entire ideology that goes against our lives simply."¹⁰

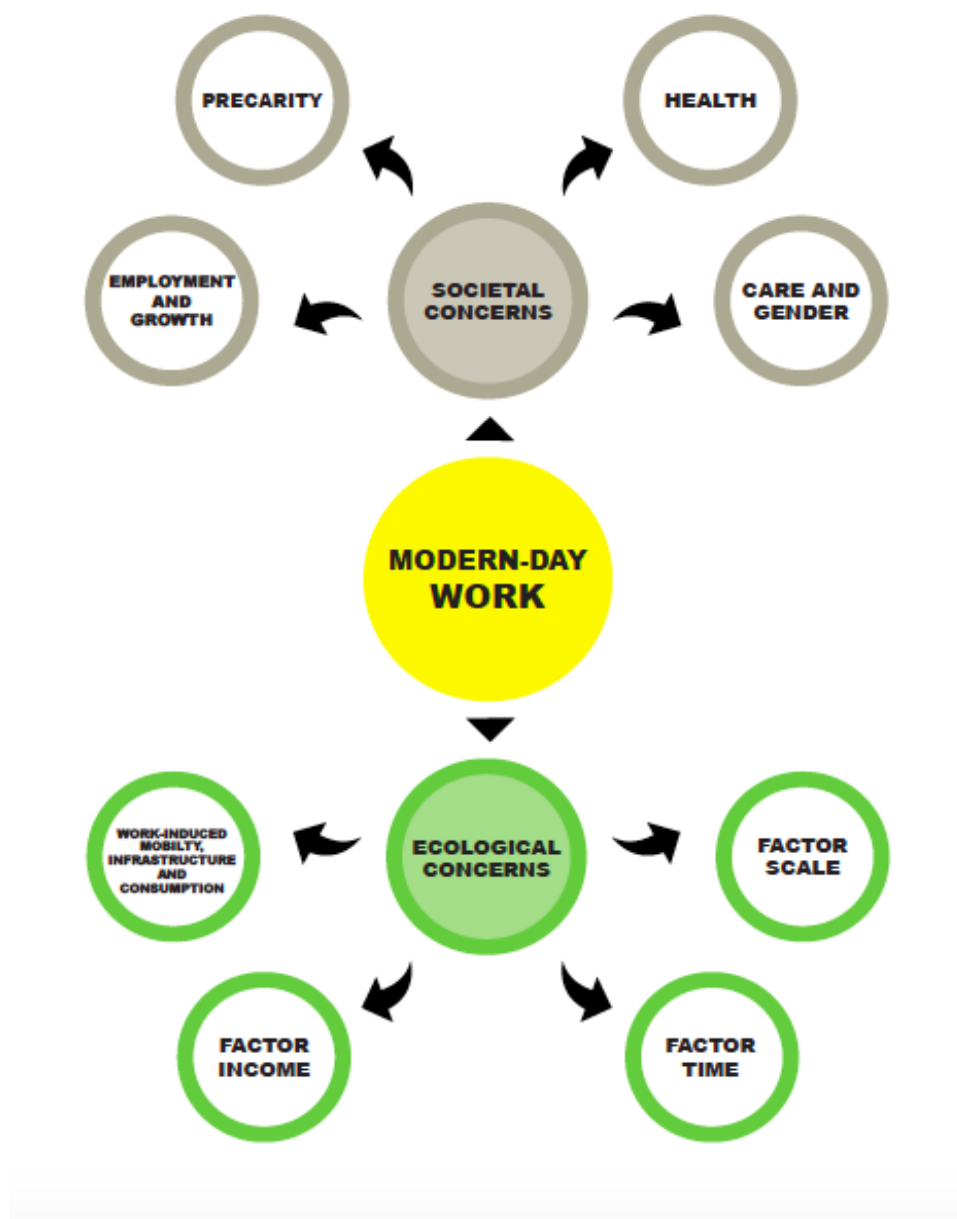
The input of work to the economy plays an essential role in the papers of options for reducing ecological sacrifices. People that are conscious about the human pressure in the environment typically think to reduce wasteful physical consumption, but often we forget to consider also the reduction to our contribution to the production of goods and services through the work we do. Reducing consumption and paid work time can help to improve people's well-being and mitigate the environmental problems (Norgard, 2011).

With reference to the social repercussions of work we can say that private and family life is depleted and degraded because work requires total sacrifice, full mobility and complete availability of time (Krisis Group, 42). Russell states that the pleasures of individuals have become mostly passive pleasures, such as watching movies, watching football, listening to the radio, and that is because active energies are totally spent at work and if we had more leisure time we could enjoy pleasures again (Russell, 1963). Work keeps us from having rich and articulate relationships and keeps us from doing so many different activities and doing them simply because they seem fair to us and not because we should (Benatti 2012, Godard Interview).

II. 4.2.1. Concerns regarding the impact of work

In Hoffmann's perspective, work, as a central social relation of modern societies and its structural link to production and consumption, is unsustainable and accordingly a key issue for an effective and desirable socio-ecological transformation. It is therefore a common desire for change and collective self-limitation. Her focus on ecological and societal concerns about work is resumed in a figure I created based on her study (Figure 2).

¹⁰ Benatti, Claudia. Terra Nuova – Il Mensile. *Entrevista a Philippe Godard*. Terra Nuova Edizioni, Luglio-Agosto 2012 Digital pdf: http://www.terranuovalibri.it/fascicolo_ebook/dettaglio/terra-nuova-luglio-agosto-2012-digitale-pdf-P12/07-235698.html



Source: Figure 1, created by the author, from the text of Hoffmann, 2017.

As we can see from the figure, four main concerns develop for each sphere, ecological and societal, and I will briefly report a small summary for each of these points. Societal concerns arise with regards to (Hoffman, 2017):

- Precarity: "Long-term 'structural' unemployment, that implies exclusion, loss of recognition, and existential risk for the person affected. Associated phenomena are extreme social inequality, forms of modern slavery and a "refeudalisation" of society" (Hoffman, 2017).
- Health: "The connection between the demands of modern-day working life and the dramatic increase in mental exhaustion, psychological disorders, anxiety disorders, burnout, depression and psychosomatic ailments is regarded as scientifically ascertained". (Graefe 2014, Fergen, 2014, cited in (Hoffman, 2017).
- Care and Gender: "As work in its historical industrial-capitalist form is only marketised employment, care, i.e. activities that care for and to reproduce life in interpersonal relationships which are often not marketised and unpaid, is not recognized as valuable activity. This is not only historically unprecedented and problematic in itself but additionally marked by a discriminatory, gendered division of labour and economic divisions of the sexes as care is predominantly the domain of women." (Biesecker and Hofmeister, 2013; Biesecker and Winterfeld, 2000; Illich, 1980, cited in (Hoffman, 2017).
- Employment and Growth: "With modern work societies being entirely based on consumptive systems of external supply, work as principal source of income fulfils the existential function of providing livelihoods and social security (Paech, 2012; Biesecker & Winterfeld, 2000,). Moreover, as central societal institution wage work secures social integration, identity and stability, personal freedom and participation, social peace, and crucial state revenues (Senghaas-Knobloch, 1999). Following from that, the importance of generating or preserving jobs constitutes the standard argument for sustained economic growth"(Hoffman, 2017).

Ecological concerns are found regarding four distinct factors (Hoffman, 2017) :

- Scale: "The greater the amount of work, the more 'inputs' are required and the more 'outputs' generated (...) Obviously, there are important qualitative differences between concrete workplaces or industries, their respective destructive potentials and ecological impacts (...) Overall, while small-scale, isolated acts of production/destruction would usually not pose any problems, the socially organised, systematically and continuously advanced amount of work and the

corresponding unprecedented scale of production has grown beyond sustainable limits (Hoffman, 2017).

- Time: "Less available time encourages more consumption of 'time-saving' products and activities which usually are more energy-intensive and environmentally harmful, while vice versa eco-friendly activities usually are rather time-intensive and thus conflict with long hours of work (Knight et al, 2013; Nässén & Larsson, 2015; Hayden & Shandra, 2009). Plus modern, constantly expanding and accelerating 24/7 global production within the single, universalised and "invariable time of clocks and money" (Adam, 2013) is effectively decoupled from the manifold ecological temporalities, and so short-dated, efficient, and fast-paced that pollution and depletion are caused too rapidly for natural processes of absorption and regeneration that may involve time spans of decades, centuries or millennia, unless fundamentally disturbed or irreversibly destroyed."(Hoffman, 2017).

- Income: "More hours of work generate more income, which usually translates into increased expenditure and consumption, inducing higher pressures on the environment (Nässén & Larsson, 2015; Knight et al, 2013; Pullinger, 2013). This strong link between levels of income and environmentally problematic consumption is well studied and established (UBA, 2016; Brand & Wissen; 2013; EEA, 2005)."(Hoffman, 2017).

- Work-induced mobility, Infrastructure and Consumption: "Work-induced mobility comprises phenomena such as commuter traffic or business travel (usually by company cars or airplane)—mobility that only exists because work necessitates it. Work-induced infrastructure includes built infrastructure such as office buildings, factories, warehouses, business parks and industrial estates (including their water, power and heating/cooling supply), ancillary power plants, roads, tracks and parking sites to reach them, as well as technical infrastructure (computer and telecommunications hardware, data and server centres, office equipment), or supportive service infrastructure that is built and maintained only for the purpose of abstract work to 'take place', which from an ecological perspective is particularly problematic due to its land consumption. Work-induced consumption, finally, entails purchases of goods and services like work clothing, takeaway coffee, eating out, cleaning services, fitness studios, second cars, daycare centres, and the like—consumption that would be considerably less needed if work did not exist. It also includes so-called compensatory consumption to recompense for the frustration of stressful, unsatisfying, dull, meaningless, alienating work (Gronemeyer, 2012)" (Hoffman, 2017).

Existing literature about the future of work covers a wide range of topics, most of which focused on technological innovations and inequality, with fewer studies looking into the impact of demographics and environmental changes (Ballestier, 2018). One of the most recent researches about the future of work, *The Future of Work: A Literature Review*, is based on 255 studies and has focused on different drivers that will impact the future of work. Climate change is also discussed and is likely to foster employment in green jobs - particularly within the renewable energy sector (Balliester, 2018). In other research, *The future of work in a changing natural environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability*, two important trends relevant for the future of work emerge from understanding the economy, and the world of work, as a subsystem of the global ecosystem: 1) environmental degradation, in some cases irreversible, is a fact and will likely continue; and 2) the economy will need to change to reduce its impact on the global environment and advance towards sustainability. "Largely insufficient and misleading, however, are proposals of 'decent' or 'sustainable' work as 'green jobs' for 'green growth' in a 'green economy', as often promoted in contexts endorsing sustainable development, markets and technology to increase efficiency and competitiveness. Their underlying logic and reasoning as well as their long-term goals and visions are at odds with a change in direction towards sustainable trajectories: they are usually only concerned with a closed, one-dimensional future of perpetuating employment, growth and industrial development, take these as unquestioned givens, and only focus on 'green' sectors ('win-win') while largely ignoring those that need to be abandoned without substitution" (Fischer-Kowalski, 2014; Hoffmann, 2017). The role of work regarding ecological pressures and climate impacts must be brought to the fore and also, the meaning and reasonableness of work as such should be radically questioned (Hoffman, 2017, pag.35)

II. 5. Re-thinking work in a Degrowth perspective

By 1963 Russell had already hypothesized a world in which no one had to work more than four hours a day, by claiming that the labour moral is the slave moral and that the world does not need slavery. Modern technology already made it possible to reduce the amount of work needed to meet vital needs for all and to make leisure possible, not as the prerogative of a small privileged class, but distributed throughout the community. He states that the wise use of leisure must be granted, as a product of civilization and education and working four hours a day would

"Above all, there will be happiness and joy in living, rather than frayed nerves, fatigue and poor digestion. The work required will be sufficient to make leisure enjoyable but not sufficient to cause exhaustion. Since men will not be tired in their free time, they will not only require passive

and monotonous amusements. The taste for war will disappear, partly for this reason, and partly because it would involve long and hard work for all. Good character is of all qualities the world needs most, and good character is the result of safety and well-being, not a life of strenuous struggle."¹¹

A drastic reduction in working time is essential to leaving labour society, but it must also be accompanied by a change in its content. It must then be the consequence of a cultural revolution (Latouche, 2007, 113-114). Godard states that those we consider “wild” live in societies of abundance, devoting food to three to five hours a day and the rest of the time is for relationships. Our contemporary society has created poverty on a large scale, internalizing to such an extent the work of no longer being able to question it, except by questioning the very meaning of life (Benatti 2012, Godard Interview). Labour criticism can create a social movement that is a practice against labour, but it has to be formulated rigorously and accompanied by theoretical debate (Krisis Group, 1999). Engaging less in waged labour can have several positive impacts on our social lives—empowerment, more time and ability to participate in political debates, recognition, etc, finding a holistic concept of work, where paid and unpaid work are equally important. The better recognition of care work could help us to decolonize our imaginary and shift our lifestyles towards a more cooperative and sustainable society (Jackson, 2009: 91).

When we think about the theoretical reconceptualization of work the possibilities seem innumerable, but they are not. In fact, starting from the idea that there cannot be a sustainable future for the planet within the paradigm of growth, visions and theories are clearly reduced. Sustainable work cannot exist within an unsustainable paradigm, so there can be no reconceptualization of work without questioning the dominant paradigm. Reconceptualization of work is, first of all, a choice of the society (Latouche, 2006, page 215), this is why a cultural change is at the base of the reconceptualization of work, and that's also why, in this chapter, the reconceptualization of work will be discussed according to degrowth theories.

II. 5.1. What is degrowth?

Degrowth is a very rich and complex concept, it is a frame constituted by a large array of concerns, goals, strategies and actions (Demaria et al, 2013), which is why, in this thesis, only the main underlying thoughts will be explained in order to then deepen the theme of work within a degrowth project.

¹¹ Russuelli, Bertrand. 1963. *Elogio dell'ozio*. Traduzione Elisa Marpicati. TEA Milano.

Degrowth was launched in the beginning of the 21st century as a project of voluntary societal shrinking of production and consumption aimed at social and ecological sustainability (Demaria et al, 2013). From a theoretical point of view, degrowth is linked to the thought of Georgescu-Roegen, to the sociology of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, to the anthropology of Karl Polanyi and Marshall Sahlins, to the psychoanalysis of Eric Fromm and Gregory Bateson (Borgna, 2010). "Unlike sustainable development, degrowth does not aspire to be adopted as a common goal by the United Nations, the OECD or the European Commission. It is a criticism of the belief in ecological modernisation which claims that new technologies and efficiency improvements are key solutions to the ecological crisis and so challenges the ideas of 'green growth' or 'green economy' and the associated belief in economic growth as a desirable path in political agendas. While technological innovation is a source of debate in degrowth, all degrowth actors question the capacity of technological innovation to overcome biophysical limits and sustain infinite economic growth. Degrowth dwells on many 'non-technical' proposals for reducing material and energy flows outside the modernisation approach which tends to discard the option of setting some limits to technologies" (Demaria et al., 2013). It is a matrix of alternatives that opens the human adventure to a plurality of destinies and space for creativity, removing the economic totalitarianism and offers a general framework that provides meaning to many sectoral initiatives or local resistances favouring strategic compromises and tactical alliances to avoid the collapse of human society in the future (Latouche, 2018). The idea of degrowth, was born as a proposal for radical change and it is an attempt to re-politicise the debate on the much-needed socio-ecological transformation, affirming dissidence with the current world representations and searching for alternative ones. Degrowth is not just an economic concept, it has now become a confluence point where streams of critical ideas and political action converge. On one side, degrowth is the reduction of energy and material throughput necessary in order to face the existing biophysical constraints (in terms of natural resources and ecosystem's assimilative capacity). On the other side, degrowth is an attempt to challenge the omnipresence of market-based relations in society and the growth-based roots of the imaginary replacing them by the idea of frugal abundance. Finally, degrowth implies an equitable redistribution of wealth within and across the Global North and South, as well as between present and future generations. Degrowth actors are thus 'signifying agents' engaged in the production of alternative and contentious meanings which differ from the ones defended by the mainstream. Degrowth is rich in its meanings and does not embrace one single philosophical current. It is placed at the junction of several sources or streams of thought. Six sources have been identified:

- Ecology
- Critiques of development and praise for anti-utilitarianism
- Meaning of life and well-being
- Bioeconomics
- Democracy
- Justice.

(Demaria et al. 2013).

It brings with itself fixed points, the transition, the implementation and the achievement of a sustainable society can take place in infinite ways according to local needs and resources, linked to the territory and to the population. A sustainable society in Europe will probably manifest in a completely different way from how it will be achieved in Africa or anywhere else in the world, though this does not imply a limit. Adaptation to the local context is the key to the implementation and to the success of the development of a sustainable society with a view to degrowth (Latouche, 2006). "The movement has an urgent pending task: to elaborate a transition, better called a transformation, path in rich societies from the actual crisis of economic growth to socially accepted degrowth." (Demaria, et al., 2013). Degrowth demands the Repoliticisation of questions of principal importance to social coexistence; the Autonomy, as the ability of a society to determine, question and change its laws, norms and institutions and, notably, to be explicitly aware of this 'self-institution', the Conviviality that signifies sustainable and meaningful ways of 'living together' and 'being-in-common' (Hoffmann, 2017). It is following a list of the values claimed by Latouche, which are very useful to understanding what underlies this philosophical theory of degrowth (Borgna, 2010, 173):

- altruism vs. individualistic selfishness;
- collaboration vs. competition;
- leisure pleasure vs. work obsession;
- realization in social relations vs. realization through the possession of material goods;
- quality of life vs accumulation of material wealth;

- local vs global;
- autonomy vs. heteronomy;
- reasonable vs. rational
- handsome vs. efficient
- harmonious insertion in the natural world vs. faith in the domain of nature.

The transformation, to build a degrowth society, can be implemented thanks to 8 interdependent changes, which reinforce each other. This is a virtuous circle of the 8 R: Re-evaluate - Reconceptualize - Restructure - Redistribute - Relocalization – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle (Latouche, 2006). Starting from this theoretical conception I will talk about the Reconceptualization of work, which will start from a Re-evaluation of its role in the society.

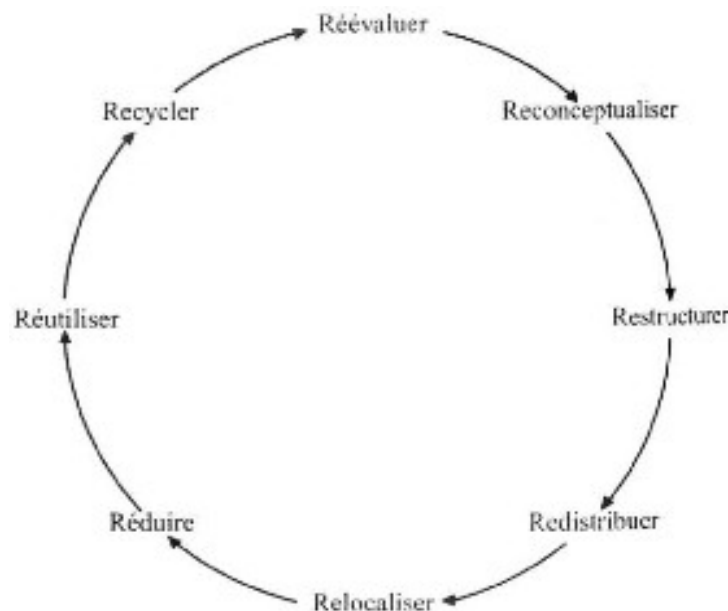


Figure2 ; Source: (Latouche 2006, Pag.142) *O desafio do decrescimento*

II. 5.2. Reconceptualization of work in theory

Karen Foster, a sociologist interested in work and degrowth, in her research in the sociology of work and rural sociology discovered that the protestant work ethic finds opposition across contemporary societies. She interviewed a diverse sample of 52 people, mostly from urban areas of Ontario and Nova Scotia, Canada, from a range of occupations, life stages, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, about work. She asked why they do it, how they feel about it, and how they make sense of changes in the world of work since they started working. The results found that a good proportion of the people she interviewed were adamant about the importance of "being productive", no matter the social value of the productivity, but the other proportion were very critical of work-for-work's sake and growth-for-growth's sake. Most people in these interviews believed in the need for balance between work and non-work and would have traded more leisure time for a raise. In most cases, only structural circumstances the culture of their workplaces, the unexpected job loss of a spouse, and/or the lack of options in their work arrangements put them in the position of having to trade leisure for money. Many business owners and craftspeople in Nova Scotia and the other Atlantic Provinces work on a seasonal basis, running their shops and producing handicrafts in concert with the rhythms of the tourist season. Rather than looking for ways to increase exports and online sales in order to keep their operations running consistently through the winter, many choose to shut down and take a break from paid work from January to April (Foster, 2017). Meanwhile, we still are in a work centred culture that continues to normalise work through socialisation and schooling that teach time discipline, the moral viciousness of laziness and early rising, industry and efficiency as laudable and vital for professional success in the labour market as the central purpose in life. Another fundamental constraint is, not unexpectedly, the calculable strong resistance of presently powerful political and economic interests and actors, including trade unions. To create a sustainable society, it is no longer necessary to accept false compromises of 'green jobs' and sustainable development. With UBI-advocates, career refusers, degrowth scholars and climate activists around the world there is already certain potential for such mobilisation (Hoffmann, 2017). "In our society, there is not any public control over the fundamental decisions that shape our lives, whether it is *what* work is done, *how* work is done or who we will work with. Many degrowth advocates believe that the high levels of work effort of the full-employment era are no longer attainable; and besides, they are ecologically unsustainable. The alternative is to provide public goods, basic income, and access to inexpensive, but high-quality, goods and services so that working less is a freely chosen lifestyle" (D'Alisa et al.). In a degrowth economy we need to reduce

our consumption, but of course also our production (Norgard, 2011). Any "critique of development" automatically entails changes to the way people work to make a living and secure their survival (Foster, 637). As the Krisis Group states in the book *Manifesto against work*: "It's not about freeing work, it's about freeing ourselves from work." Innovative ways of meeting people's needs include public or collective provisioning of basic services such as housing, energy, and transportation. Internet-enabled peer-to-peer sharing schemes in which people rent, share, or give access to lodging, vehicles, consumer goods, and space, are growing. Urban gardening, barter schemes, time trading, and community currencies are also expanding. These more time-intensive ways of living are only possible when hours of work are not onerous. The degrowth movement envisions that the transition to shorter hours will also lead to new patterns of producing and consuming goods and services (D'Alisa et al.). Work as debated in the degrowth literature organization implies a: Repoliticisation of work, that implies the opening of public, political debates about the spirit and purpose of work and how could be organised to be social ecologically sustainable. Reduction of work, both in amount/time and in societal importance. Selectively reduced, the remaining work should be redistributed and shared. The reduction of work is not an end in itself, but a necessary first step to tackle the problems with work and enable an alternative social order. Reducing work only means reducing paid, marketized, employed work, so modern work. Repoliticisation and reduction of work together could liberate time for post work alternatives, where post work practices consist of a diversity of decommodified, autonomous modes of community production and according to diverse ways of life, concerned with income and consumption, substituting local/regional self-sufficiency and self-production mostly for use and for free, less for trade, not for profit (Hoffmann, 2017).

II. 5.2.1. Reducing work hours

As Norgard write, reducing work hours in the professional economy would affect energy consumption and environmental impact in many ways, for example the energy consumption at the workplace; the reducing of consumption thanks to a reduced of income. Of course the leisure time could require more energy but that would depend on how leisure would be spent; the time dedicated to amateur economy could produce low energy output in sectors like transport, food and care, instead of higher energy outputs coming from professional economy. With work time reduced at 10-0 h per week in professional economy there will be leisure time to spend in amateur economy, enjoying meaningful activity as an outlet for the protestant work ethic (Norgard, 2011). The major idea being that if less time is spent on formal work and consumption, more time can be dedicated to

other activities which are fundamental to one's well-being, such as social relations, political participation, physical exercise, spirituality and contemplation. Such a shift will potentially be less environmentally harmful. All actors together challenge the hegemony, with barricades or words, while imagining and building alternative socio-environmental futures (Demaria, et al., 2013). Working time policy is important to a sustainable economy for two reasons. Firstly, the number of hours that people work bears an important relation output, secondly, reduced working hours have been sought for their own sake for various reasons. One of these, ironically, was the belief that it would increase labour productivity. When people work shorter hours they are more productive during those hours because they are better rested, more alert and fitter. Specific policies to reduce working hours and improve the work-life balance could include: greater flexibility for employees on working time; measures to combat discrimination against part-time work as regards to grading, promotion, training, security of employment and rate of pay; better incentives to employees for family time, parental leave and sabbatical breaks (Jackson 2009).

II. 5.2.2. UBI; JG; Work sharing

UBI - " There is considerable variety in forms of Basic Income, the core idea is that every person living permanently in a nation would receive from the state a periodic payment, and this payment would be sufficient for an individual to live at a minimal, though dignified, standard of economic security. Advocates typically argue that a Basic Income payment should be guaranteed by the state, unconditional on the performance of any labour, and universal. Within a fully developed Basic Income system, some advocates argue that other state transfers could be abolished – such as unemployment benefits, family allowances, pensions, etc. – since the Basic Income grant would be sufficient to provide everyone with a decent, though minimal, subsistence. Could also include non-monetary benefits, such as free health care, or direct provision of food, clothes, and accommodation to those in need. Basic Income system would also mean that people did not have to accept alienating, exploitative, or degrading jobs just to survive. Basic Income would also effectively acknowledge the worth of unpaid work and other forms of social contribution, thereby extending economic citizenship beyond participants in the traditional labour market or 'formal economy'. For these reasons a Basic Income would produce far more democratic and egalitarian societies than any capitalist society ever could, which is why it receives support from many advocates of degrowth" (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015).

JG - "A job guarantee is a policy proposal calling on government to promise a job to any qualifying person seeking employment. Most proposals also call for a decentralized administration

of the program, relying on local governments, non-profits, and community organizations to propose and oversee JG projects. The wage and benefit package is set by the national government and serves as a floor for wages throughout the economy. With respect to degrowth for example, the JG might initiate a four-day workweek, pressuring private employers to follow suit and it relates to issues of social and economic justice. In the longer term, a JG may offer a transitional path away from existing, environmentally and socially destructive forms of production based on money profits, and toward a system organized around meeting fundamental social and ecological needs. Workers under a JG can be employed doing anything democratically deemed to be of social value, potentially broadening our conception of work to include things like: raising children, caring for the elderly and infirm, education, habitat restoration, community gardening, the arts etc. JG is an open ended policy tool that might serve to complement, support, or incorporate any number of other proposed measures for degrowth" (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015).

Work-sharing: "with intentional degrowth, work is to be shared by reducing the schedules of all workers, thereby avoiding unemployment for some. This is called work sharing. Conventional work sharing entails the use of unemployment insurance to replace at least part of workers' lost wages. Replacing income is important in order to retain popular support for declines in yearly hours of work, especially for lower-paid workers. Reducing hours at a constant pay rate raises hourly wages and could lead to lower labour demand by employers. Another approach is voluntary trading of income for time, through four-day workweeks, permanent part-time and job sharing. Research on wealthy OECD countries shows that those with shorter hours of work have significantly lower carbon emissions and lower ecological footprints. Countries with shorter hours are producing less than their full production capacity, which means their pollution levels are lower, and when households have more free time they are able to live more sustainable lifestyles, because low impact activities are often more time-consuming. Another benefit of work sharing is the value of free time itself. Short working hours are essential for robust participation in democratic governance, and degrowth, a key challenge is to transform underemployment and part-time work into a desirable way of living" (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015).

II. 5.2.3. Work values

Work values, as debated in the degrowth literature, are conviviality, cooperation, compassion, enjoyment of life, mutual relatedness including all living beings, it entails an orientation towards care (Hoffmann, 2017).

"Working for a wage reduces work's purpose to an empty and abstract monetary reward. Work done for its own sake is fundamentally different. Defined by the person doing it, deemed good and necessary on its social and/or ecological merits, un-waged work fulfills and confirms a multidimensional sensibility, providing a whole range of feelings and experiences beyond the narrow instrumentalism of work for money. Work that is not coerced through the need to make money is always more satisfying to do, when the reason and reward for your work is not the ultimately empty abstraction of money, but comes from the multiple, complex intimate connections that we maintain and create through our work, our creative activity. The quality is "better" too, because everyone does their best work when determining their own purpose and pace" (Carlsson, 2010).

To effectively reduce the overall scale of production/destruction, not only employed work but also productive activity in general needs to diminish, pleasurable inaction, laziness, should be part of a conception of post work life (Hoffmann, 2017).

Various criticisms have been made of both the concept of degrowth and the reconceptualization of work within degrowth. Van den Bergh, in the article *A criticism of "degrowth" and a plea for "a-growth"*, argues that the attractiveness of interpreting and striving for degrowth in terms of less work hours is threefold: 1) working hours is a very concrete, one-dimensional aim and its reduction is easily interpretable; 2) in rich countries there are certain direct welfare benefits associated with working less beyond a sufficiently high, threshold income per capita; 3) worktime degrowth will reduce both the push (production capacity) and pull (spending power) factors of consumption growth, so that represents a more effective strategy to reduce consumption and associated environmental pressure than directly trying to reduce the quantity of consumption. Degrowth of working hours will reduce income and thus spending power which in turn will limit consumption rebound effects. But Van den Bergh finally argues that a centralized regulation of worktime does not make sense because, even though a shorter working week may reduce consumption effectively, it will not serve as a very effective, efficient and directed tool for reducing environmental pressure associated with consumption. Also it does not guarantee more reduction of "dirty" than of "cleaner" consumption, and it may lead to substitution of labour by machines with an uncertain impact on pollution and resource use and it is not certain that working less will make everyone really happier because many people get a sense of fulfilment from work. According to Van den Bergh, a moral suasion strategy by governments aimed at changing work-time norms as well as stimulating people to make a deliberate choice about working hours rather than following the existing norms would seem useful (van den Bergh, 2010). It is therefore

important to have a common desire for change and collective self-limitation (Hoffmann, 2017).

The main promoters of degrowth are grass-root activists engaged in opposition and practitioners developing alternatives. Some actors call for a complete overhaul of the existing institutions and others call for their transformation or partial conservation at local and higher levels. Practitioners promote local, decentralised, small scale and participatory alternatives such as cycling, reuse, vegetarianism or veganism, co-housing, agro-ecology, eco-villages, solidarity economy, consumer cooperatives, alternative banks or credit cooperatives, decentralised renewable energy cooperatives. Some actors working on the development of alternatives argue that the change of individual values and behaviour should be the main target of degrowth. This manifests in the lifestyles of people who practice voluntary simplicity, living better with less downshifting and slowing down life's pace (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2015).

II. 5.3. Contextualizing eco-communities role in the reconceptualization of work

In the text *Degrowth; A vocabulary for a new era*, a brief but complete description is given of what an eco-community is and what its distinctive features are. "Eco-communities are specifically planned and set up for people to come and live together with the goal of living and working according to ecological principles by promoting a degree of sharing and pursuing well-being through more sustainable life-styles, direct democracy and a degree of autonomy." (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015). An eco-community is a place in which residents illustrate a concern for the social, economic and environmental needs of each other and nature, and where there is collaborative, collective and communal housing and living (Pickerill 2015). Eco-communities include eco-villages and, although eco-villages represent the most common form, eco-communities can also be established in isolated buildings or within cities, for example in forms of co-housing, and are generally characterized by their relatively small size – below or around one hundred people - and by the develop practices of voluntary simplicity (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015). Ecovillages can offer a change to mainstream perspective as compared to mainstream society their socio-ecological practices and institutions are around self-sufficiency, communality and solidarity are rather niche phenomena and can be seen as system innovators creating resilient, self-sufficient communities (Kunze et al. 2014) and their heir inhabitants are described as pioneers of work and time (Lambing, 2014). Among secular communities, the inspiration is typically based on bold visions of creating a new social and economic order—establishing replicable models that will lead to the peaceful and ecological salvation of the planet. In some cases, however, secular groups may opt for isolation, seeking to escape the problems of the rest of the world by creating instead a life of

self-sufficiency, simplicity, and serenity (Kozeny, 1995 page 20). Connection is encouraged in many eco-communities through the design of spaces of conviviality and communal space where residents would regularly encounter others. However, the benefits of sharing are complicated by the need to negotiate and compromise and the most successful systems of sharing demonstrate clear agreements for how tools, food and space are shared. Just as there is a need for common space, so too is there a need for retreat and private space and there is a general move towards co-housing which provides privacy for residents in small efficient houses, but still encourages communal activities and sharing. Yet the commons in eco-communities are about much more than simple spatial strategy to create spaces of interaction. It is not simply about ensuring that there is as much communal space as there is private. The building of the commons and practices of communing are multi-layered processes. They involve the shared emotional support required to take risks in trying new approaches, the listening and dialogue needed to involve diverse viewpoints and diversity into a community, and the time and patience to reach democratic decisions. The physical structures are crucial in enabling these more social materialities of communing to be practised (Pickerill 2015). The scope of their primary values is equally broad, including ecology, equality, appropriate technology, self-sufficiency, right livelihood, humanist psychology, creativity, spirituality, meditation, yoga, and the pursuit of global peace. However, even among groups that base their philosophy on “achieving a holistic view of the world,” it would be quite surprising to discover a community that has achieved “perfection” amidst the fast-paced chaos of modern life (Kozeny, 1995 19). There are urban and ‘rurban’ projects, yet the majority of eco-communities are located in rural areas where access to natural means of production is easier and rent and property cheaper. Participants practice small-scale organic agriculture and permaculture, craft and workshop production, self-construction and renewable energies. It is apparent that people—dissatisfied with the gap between their ideals and reality—will keep trying out new approaches until they find lifestyles that solve most of the problems they see in the dominant culture, today’s intentional communities movement's members are actively seeking to identify problems, working to find solutions, and trying to implement new insights in their daily lives (Kozeny 1995, 23). Various criteria have been used to characterise them, most cited are the following seven:

1. *No bonds by familial relationships only;*
2. *A minimum of three to five adult members;*
3. *Members join voluntarily;*
4. *Geographical and psychological separation from mainstream society;*

5. *A common ideology that is adhered to by all members;*
6. *Sharing of (a part of) one's property;*
7. *The interest of the group prevails over individual interests* (Meijering, L. Huigen, P. Van Hoven, B. 2007.page 42).

"Eco-communities can be considered as both material and immaterial commons because they manage land and physical resources communally while, at the same time, set norms, beliefs, institutions and processes that empower a common identity which in turn contributes to the preservation and reproduction of the community. The movement originated in the 1960s, and, in 1994, the Global Ecovillage Network was constituted. Utopian values are manifest in the creation of a group identity, in the sharing of certain cultural, political or spiritual ideals and in the establishment of organizational practices that might include anything from simple residential living to developing a common life project. There is a lot of variation among communities with respect to the relevance of the individual sphere within the community and degrees of autonomy from the rest of society. These constitute challenging issues in the development of every eco-community project. Normally, horizontal decision-making and deliberative non-representative processes characterize eco-communities, while some adopt consensus rather than majority decision rules. Money does not play a primary role, it is simply a means to satisfy necessities. Eco-communities prevent accumulation because the community guarantees the maintenance of a certain level of welfare to all its members. The type of economic model varies a lot among communities. Some share all money among members, others maintain a strong individual economic sphere. In general, principles of cooperative self-management prevail and the eco-community collectively produces commodities that can be sold in place or off-site, for instance at market-fairs. Any realization of utopian intentions depends on a strong willingness and a pragmatism that might clash with original ideals. In the start-up phases, relevant for the beginning of a societal transition, getting things done is the priority. In such difficult circumstances, self-imposed austerity and self-exploitation of members often occur. Through self-organized processes, an eco-community chooses to live independent from society at large, participants choose to become protagonists of their lives and foment a degrowth imaginary by conferring to the community the source of economic and socio-political authority normally found in capitalist markets and in the state apparatus. If the community survives this initial phase, then a degrowth practice made of sound ecological performance and social conviviality is likely to emerge" (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015). While many advocate that eco-communities are the best way to build a sustainable society, they are also problematic in their homogeneity, in

their use of lifestyle strategies as a way to change the world, and their reliance on consumption of green commodities and green technologies, which perpetuates green capitalism. This is not to deny the achievements of eco-communities, but to avoid an uncritical assessment (Pickerill 2015). "Communities draw their membership from society at large, and those members bring with them generations of social conditioning. The attitudes, behaviours, and institutions prevalent in the broader society—including the very things we seek alternatives to—are a significant part of our upbringing. Merely identifying a problem and expressing a desire to overcome it does not mean that we presently have the perspective or skills needed to transcend it, but, more often than not, people who consciously choose to live in an intentional community also have parallel interests in ecology, personal growth, cooperation, and peaceful social transformation—pursuing the work necessary to change destructive attitudes and behaviours often taken for granted in the prevailing culture" (Kozeny, 1995, 19). "The enduring economic and ecological crisis might be an opportunity to foment more eco-communities and create a social phenomenon that will go beyond the countercultural movement that preceded it and eco-communities can provide insights as to how a degrowth society might look" (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2015) For these reasons I considered eco-communities an especially suitable context to observe the reconceptualization of work.

Plus, Foster's evidence shows that the traditional work ethic survives and perhaps is being revived in rural areas where "neo-rurals" choose to abandon city life for a slower, more family-and community-oriented pace in the country (Cortes-Vazquez, 2014:505 cited in Foster, 2017). These rural settlers emphasize that becoming or staying rural entails a struggle, that you have to strive to do this, through occupational pluralism and self-provisioning, through informal exchanges of gifts and favours between neighbours, baby, pet and house sitting, sharing food and leftovers and giving rides, but that these are not just struggles but also convivial acts, and that they are precisely the point of choosing to live outside the industrial production centres (Foster, 2017). "That this mentality exists should be a source of great hope for us. That it can be studied, documented and analyzed in the ethnographic tradition should alert us to a greater role for anthropological and sociological research" (Foster, 2017).

II. 6. Summary and implications

We have addressed and analysed in depth the theoretical framework, thanks to an in-depth research based on studies, analyses, articles and literary texts on the subject. The controversial and complex themes of the growth paradigm and its ecological consequences, the collective dominant

imaginary and the need to destroy it, in order to change the paradigm, have been addressed. These themes have led us to the need to analyse in depth the subject of the invention of work and its role in society, of its ecological and social repercussions and of the necessities of its reconceptualization, on the theoretical basis of degrowth.

We can summarily affirm that this theoretical framework allows us to respond partially and theoretically to the questions that guide the study, but ethnographic field research it is absolutely necessary to understand if work in an eco-community is really being reconceptualized, and in what terms, both representational and practical. Only this way, thanks to the union of theoretical and empirical data, will we be able to respond exhaustively to the questions underlying the research.

Chapter III – Research Design

In this part will be explained the methodological process used in order to develop this study and to accomplish the objectives of the research. At first will be explained the methodology and the research design, followed by a section dedicated to the Case Study selection, the participants section, the instruments and the time-line. The last part of this chapter will be centred on the limits

III. 1. Methodology and research design

The qualitative research includes the use of different information collection techniques: participant observation, interviews, not forgetting the importance of bibliographic research, online and in libraries, plus the analysis of the documents found in the field.

Qualitative methodologies favour the analysis of micro-processes through the study of individual and social groups actions. By conducting an intensive examination of the data, qualitative methods treat the social units investigated as a whole, and the basic concern of the social scientist is to open up to social reality, in order to better understand it. Qualitative methods are characterized by flexibility, especially in data collection techniques (Souza Martins 2004). When using a qualitative research we cannot ignore the criticisms and the restrictions that it may entail (Souza Martins 2004). First, the lack of representativity: this methodology privileges the *case studies* (the individual, the community, the group, the institution) and the biggest problem, according to the critics, lies in the choice of the case. To what extent can it be representative of the set of component cases of a society? Second, the lack of objectivity: to be able to carry out the research it is necessary that those who are researched accept the researcher, especially when using

the participant observation method. This introduction of the researcher requires an approach based on sympathy, trust, and so on. For the positivists, this reference to feelings may lead to doubts about the scientific character of the research. Finally, the technical problems related to the collection and processing of data: there may be difficulties in collecting information (because they depend on the trust between the researched and the researcher) and can cause a great investment of time and personnel when obtaining, organizing and analysing data.

Speaking specifically about this study, qualitative research and the data collection took place for three months (although not full-time, as we will see later), using the following strategies and instruments to gather information:

- in-depth interviews;
- informal interviews;
- participant observation;
- short questionnaire;
- document analysis.

The ethnographic method, in most cases, is based on the collection of data with participant observation (Serra 2008), so we can affirm that we used a qualitative ethnographic methodology, but, in this study, with an intensive focus on in-depth interviews. Ethnography has three dimensions: 1) involvement with and participation in the topic being studied; 2) attention to the social context of data collection; 3) sensitivity to how the subjects are represented in the research text. This type of qualitative research is based on two contradictory activities, participating and observing and literally means to write about people or cultures, from the Greek words *ethnos* (people) and *graphei* (to write). As a practical approach to do ethnographic research we can list the following steps (Marvasati, 2004) : formulating research questions; choosing a research site; deciding whom to observe, when and where; gaining access; establishing rapport; choosing a field role; dealing with informants; recording observations; conducting ethnographic interviews.

III. 2. Case Study selection

As we have seen in the previous section, formulating research questions is, as in other

methods, the first step to carry out ethnographic research. For this study three main questions were formulated. To proceed with the research I had to choose a site to develop field research, deciding who to observe, how, where and when. This selection process was not easy and lasted several months, a period in which I tried to understand, through the theoretical framework, which could be the most suitable place and situation to observe the phenomenon of work reconceptualization (in connection with other group's activities), to be able to record it, and to be somehow representative of this phenomenon. The theoretical basis that helped me tighten the research circle of the case study, was to have found information that asserted that eco-communities are places where changes of the dominant paradigm structure are developed and implemented, from a social, economic and ecological point of view.

As we have seen previously, in the theoretical framework of this study (Chap. II. 5.3), we start from the hypothesis that the eco-communities are providing insights as to how a degrowth society might look, and they are as models of lived sustainability, so they could provide some solutions for the global ecological crisis. In other words, I've postulated that the reconceptualisation of work, as a key to overcoming environmental problems and to provide a change on the the growth paradigm, could therefore be observed in eco-communities. So I started an on-line internet research concerning ecological communities at European level, trying to find information to understand if the theme of the reconceptualization of work was, actually, a topic of great importance within these realities. In general, I can affirm that was not easy to find communities with clear references on the website to this theme, with few exceptions.

Speaking of a hypothetical future research based on this study, it would be interesting to understand why many communities do not talk about this key theme in their project of cultural change, addressing the issue only from a general point of view linked to the whole economic sphere, that they claim they want to change. Could it be considered an underestimated factor to favor the implementation of a cultural change and a paradigm shift? I will return to this topic in Chap. IV.

After obtaining this first general overview, I considered my possibilities of displacement and time to develop the ground research and so I again narrowed the circle of the Case Study possibility to the country of Portugal. To deepen my research on eco-communities in Portugal I used the GEN-Europe on-line portal (*Global Ecovillage Network- Europe*), to get an idea of the communities in the area and to understand the main features, descriptions and activities. I used the GEN-Europe portal, but there is also the GEN-Global portal. GEN is composed of 5 regional networks, spanning the globe. The network is made up of approximately 10,000 communities and related projects where

people are living together in greater ecological harmony. "*The Global Ecovillage Network* envisions a world of empowered citizens and communities, designing and implementing their own pathways to a sustainable future, and building “bridges of hope and international solidarity”, with the mission to innovate, catalyze, educate and advocate in global partnership with ecovillages and all those dedicated to the shift to a regenerative world." The main goals of GEN are: 1) advance the education of individuals from all walks of life by sharing the experience and best practices gained from the networks of ecovillages and sustainable communities worldwide; 2) advance human rights, conflict resolution, and reconciliation by empowering local communities to interact globally, while promoting a culture of mutual acceptance and respect, effective communications, and cross-cultural outreach; 3) advance environmental protection globally by serving as a think tank, incubator, international partner organization, and catalyst for projects that expedite the shift to sustainable and resilient lifestyles; 4) advance citizen and community participation in local decision-making, influencing policy-makers, and educating the public, to accelerate the transition to sustainable living. "*The Global Ecovillage Network* catalyzes communities for a regenerative world and is a growing network of regenerative communities and initiatives that bridge cultures, countries, and continents. building bridges between policy-makers, governments, NGOs, academics, entrepreneurs, activists, community networks and ecologically-minded individuals across the globe in order to develop strategies for a global transition to resilient communities and culture." For all these reasons I thought I would find the right community for this research within the GEN members.

To the three communities based in Portugal, registered as full members in the website of GEN-Europe (visible in the map), I sent an email trying to explain the research project, in order to understand who the players are and how much of what I wanted to know takes place there (Marvasati, 2004).

One of these communities is located in the north of Portugal, and the other two communities are located in the Alentejo, in the area of Odemira. The three communities responded and we started an exchange of information via email. The community situated in the north of Portugal is described in the website as a bold, contemporary experiment in the evolution of consciousness and culture. The Project has since flowered into a growing network of co-creators and communities dedicated to an evolving vision of manifesting the spiritual truth of unity in this world. "The spiritual vision and philosophy of the Project reaches for the realization and fulfillment of our human potential as integral expressions of the Divine Reality.' Through the Project's progressive, practical and integral approach to spiritual awakening and evolution, sincere participants are transcending limiting

psychological and cultural identities, patterns and motivations. The result is human beings coming together in a profound trust that transcends the fears and desires of the separate ego and, through that communion, finding new ways to communicate and co-create a new culture." Considering their role in the cultural change, this community could have been the object of my study, but I did not find in the website material or clear reference to the reconceptualization of work. The second community is located in Alentejo and is composed of about two hundred members. The purpose of this community is to "Empower people around the world to build a regenerative, nonviolent culture by: researching the ethical, social, sexual, ecological, technological and economic foundations, and creating a replicable model in the community; training and supporting those committed to the Healing Biotopes Plan; building a planetary community and sharing our vision of Terra Nova." Also in this community I did not find clear references on the website about the reconceptualization of work, but nevertheless it could have been the object of my study thanks to its declared purpose of creating a new culture.

The last community does not have a website, so I could not find the information in this way, but their response to my email came with two documents in the annex, 1) "Constitution of the Community," 2) "Welcome to the Community". Both documents became fundamental for its choice as the *Case Study*, because both of them contained clear references to the theme of work and its reconceptualization. The first document is an important text which presents the aims and the organization model of the community. In this document there is a clear reference to the subject of work and the need to rethink it and live it in a new and different form, as expressed in three points of the Constitution:

- 12. Constitution point : "We want to create a joyful attitude to work";
- 13. Constitution point : "We trust that every one gives in his/her best";
- 14. Constitution point : "We wish that all our community work is done in joy".

In the second document, "Welcome to the Community", there is an explanation dedicated to their conception of work, I quote the short section: "WORKING: We are trying to undo the prevailing cultural myth that work is something unpleasant that one has to do. So our rule is: Enjoy what you do! Otherwise find something you like to do. There are special sub-groups dealing with

gardening, building, cooking, cleaning etc. Please ask your host who you should speak to about the activities that interest you."

Considering this explicit and important references to the subject of work, this community has become theoretically my first choice to develop this research. At this point it was necessary to consider the practical possibility of access to the communities, in order to carry out the participant observation and interviews, because in ethnographic research we must consider how difficult is to enter a particular setting, what the emotional and financial cost would be and so what is and is not practically possible (Marvasati, 2004). To understand and evaluate the possibility of access, I went to Alentejo for 3 days, collecting information about the two communities located there, creating contacts and trying to have informal conversations with members and guests of the both communities. During this time I did not sleep in the communities and I only visited the space of the largest community and started conversations with members and guests of the two communities. On this occasion, I had the opportunity to have an organized "Introduction Tour" to the community where I didn't do the most important part of the study, with many other participants (a group of around twenty people), participating also in an evening fundraising event. In this visit I came to understand that it would be possible to carry out interviews, but it would not be possible to carry out the participant observation period, except by participating in a paid course offered by the community, to which would be added the costs of stay. Moreover, having a reduced time available, about twenty days for field research, it would have been difficult to frame the internal organization of a community of about two hundred people. Although I did not choose this community as a case study, I still did an interview with a member of the community when there was an opportunity, to have clarifications regarding the objectives of the community and their connection with the subject of work. The results of this interview will not be reported in this study because I will focus only on the community where the study was developed. This community was immediately available to welcome me for the project, in the form of a Guest, so I was able to spend 13 days there, offering a contribution of 10 euros a day, which includes food and lodging. Summarizing, the Case Study community was finally selected according to the following criteria:

- full member of GEN- Europe;
- located in Portugal;
- relation and interest in the subject of reconceptualization of work;
- possibility to stay in the community for a participant observation;

- willingness to give interviews.

I approached the Case Study community simply by telling them that I was there to learn about them, this can be an effective way in ethnographic research to overcome anxieties, making clear that I was there to develop a research and that I was a student. In ethnography it is also possible to tell people about yourself without overdoing it (Marvasti, 2004), and this is what I did, I found it was a natural way to create contact and build a common trust.

III. 3. Instruments

In this chapter, I will deepen the explanation of the tools used, which as I mentioned earlier in the research design chapter, were: 1) participant observation; 2) in-depth interviews; 3) short questionnaire; 4) informal conversations; 5) document analysis. For each of these instruments I will develop a sub-chapter.

III. 3.1. Participant Observations

Participant observation within the community became essential to be able to answer the initial questions of this research. The observation took place living within the community for 13 days, specifically two weekends of three days each in July and a whole week in October. Plus 3 initial days in May, spent in the surrounding areas, gathering general information on the community through contact with people. In the days spent within the community I participated in almost all the activities that took place, including assemblies, division and performance of daily tasks, work in the vegetable garden, baby sitting etc. During the entire period of stay, informal conversations were developed, during meals, during the performance of tasks and at any other time of the day. Communication with members and observation has always been very active. I shared with the members also different moments of life outside the community, for example during the weekend, participating together in days at the lake, at the local market, at the sea, etc. and this has contributed greatly to building mutual trust. In total I participated and observed:

- 28 communal meals, breakfast, lunch, dinner (lunch is the main moment of condivision in the community);
- 10 nights sleeping in a private "van" of the community, just a bed inside, access to

the communal kitchen and communal compost toilet outside;

- 3 participation in weekly meetings (Byron Katie evening; Sharing circle; Practical meeting);
- 2 official shift cleaning after communal lunch and dinner;
- 1 participation at the *community action*;
- various situations where I helped and collaborated in the garden, in the kitchen and with kids;
- 2/3 days of sharing with members activities outside the community;
- various walks in the land of the community and in the area;
- various informal conversations with guests and members;
- 5 in-depth interviews.

The participant observation for this research was guided by the research questions and was always recorded with field notes, following the guidelines that suggest to jot down key phrases, concepts and information that will help stimulate the memory of the event and later fill the details, but also not be consumed by note taking to the degree that it annoyed people around, or that events were missed (Marvasti, 2004). The technique of participant observation has the advantage that the researcher is in contact with the empirical reality by which, through the analysis of the data, allows validating the hypotheses and the theoretical framework continuously.

III. 3.2. In-depth interviews

Interviews are popular qualitative data collection tools as they allow the access of “people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (Punch, 2005 pag. 168). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews allow planned and standardised questions but leave room for other questions or direction of answers to unfold. The method of data collection was based mainly on participant observation and interviews. The interview is an investigation technique that makes it possible to collect information and data with verbal communication.

As an operational tool for constructing questions, the "TAP" paradigm will be used (Foddy 1997). It is an acronym thought by the anthropologist and sociologist William Foddy, useful to

researchers to remember three main concerns in constructing the questions for questionnaires and interviews:

- Topic: should be clear and defined, so that the respondents understand what it is about;
- Applicability: Respondents should not provide information they do not have;
- Perspective: the perspective to be adopted to answer the questions should be clear for the respondents.

It was also important to test the questions by performing a pre-test, to prevent the difficulties of interviewer / respondent interaction, and to verify if the respondent interprets the questions as intended (Foddy, 1997).

What ethnographers do in face-to-face questioning of respondent can be described as unstructured interviewing, but ethnography is a site-specific data collection method, faithful to the social context and its influence on how people express themselves. It's required to be an "active" or "reflexive" listener, able to develop the questions as the research and the interview proceed, considering the social context and bringing it into the interview (Marvasti, 2004). Considering all this, in the present research all the five interviews were face to face, and lasted one hour / one hour and a half and I consider the interviews I did in-depth ethnographic interviews. This kind of interviews are based on the notion that delving into the subject's 'deeper self' produces more authentic data, helping to see the point of view of the respondent and they can be and should be mutually beneficial, for the subject and the researcher. Plus, this kind of interview should provide a multi-perspective understanding of the topic (Marvasti, 2004).

Three interviews took place within the community land and two outside, at a time of common aggregation out of the boundaries of the land. All the interviews were conducted in English. The method I used to record the interviews was audio-taping, starting from the knowledge that tape recorders can be effective in capturing the nuance of conversation, but it was also necessary to take notes. The problem with the audio-taping is that the recorder could have rational

fears about how the material will be used. Because of this, the informed consent protocol that explains the purpose of the research is essential for the respondent (Marvasti, 2004). For this reason I asked the respondents to sign the "Informed, clarified and free consent for participation in research" document, before each interview and questionnaire. It is possible to find the document in the appendix, therefore I will only briefly explain its content, divided into five main sections: Study Title; Framework (explaining what these interviews will be used for, in this case for the writing of the thesis) ; Explanation of the study; Confidentiality and anonymity; Identification of the researcher.

I also repeated, at the beginning of each recording and interview, that the data will be used only for this research and that they will remain anonymous. Later, out of the field, the interviews were fully transcribed. Both the community and the members will have a pseudonyms in this text, the members will be called M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 and the community Case Study community.

The interviews were conducted on the basis of an interview guide, where the questions have been divided into different dimensions. These dimensions have subsequently allowed me to find answers to the initial research questions. Below is a list of the main dimensions analyzed in the interviews:

- Main topics addressed by the Case Study community;
- Importance of work topic in the community;
- Importance of work topic for the single members of the community;
- Work as a key issue in finding a sustainable way of life;
- Re-thinking work in a context regarding sustainable communities;
- Problems and contradiction;
- Imagine work in a sustainable society.

The initial questions have always been general questions about the community, to break the possible initial discomfort and to slowly enter the heart of the research. The interview guide can be found in the annexed section.

III. 3.3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created as an additional tool to be able to more effectively obtain demographic data and general information on the interviewed community members. This short questionnaire allowed to develop interviews directly with questions related to the community and the subject of work. The questionnaire is in the annexes and was developed to obtain personal data concerning the interviewed members, data regarding the relationship with the community where they live, data on the work they do, and data on parents and their work. The questionnaire consists of 22 questions.

III. 3.4. Informal conversations and document analysis

Another tool used in this research was that of informal conversations, some relating exactly to the theme of work and its reconceptualization and others more generic, linked to a vision of community life. During the participant observation days, I had the opportunity to speak with all members of the community and also with the guests, of short or long duration. Conversations took place in various situations and times of the day, for example during work in the garden, in the kitchen in the preparation of meals and at the table. In the evenings dedicated to scheduled meetings and out of the community grounds. All the members have always been very available and one of the main characteristics of this community is the dedication of its members to devote time to conversation. Communication is the basis of the community and everything is discussed. The exchange of information, feelings, sensations, knowledge is considered not marginal, but rather central in community life. Even with me, a person outside the community, this profound interaction was not lacking.

The analysis of the documents was particularly important in this study. Although the community does not have a website, I was given very relevant information from the first moment I came into contact with the community and this information was provided to me via documents that were sent to me via email. As we have seen in the section dedicated to case study selection (Chap. 3.2) I received two documents: 1) "Constitution of the Community," 2) "Welcome to the Community". The "Constitution of the Community," is divided into seven sections, each section includes several points within it. The sections concern:

- Vision and aims;

- Decision-making and governance;
- How to become a core group member;
- Leaving the core group;
- Expulsion of a member from the core group;
- Hospitality;
- Private accommodation.

The second document, "Welcome to the Community", is an explanation of the practical organization of the community, which briefly discusses the following points:

- Host
- Language
- Meetings
- Water
- Fire risk
- Cooking and kitchen organization
- Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs
- Sacred valley and meditation
- Rubbish and recycling
- Working
- Tools
- Some helpful information
- Your financial contribution
- Guest book and contact

The two documents are in the annex. It was important to thoroughly analyze these

documents, especially the constitution, to focus on the community's goal, the interest related to the re-conceptualization of work and to highlight possible contradictory and critical points, which were then deepened during the course of interviews. The constitution also served as a basis for creating an interview guide.

III. 4. Participants

In an ethnographic research another important task is deciding what people to observe, in what context and when, remembering that research settings are made up of participants who perform different tasks, have diverse backgrounds and they can be divided by their gender, race, social class, social position or professional role in the setting (Marvasati, 2004). At the time of my first and second visit, the Case Study community had about 10 adults members and 5 childrens, but not all the adults were present at that time. Some were traveling in Portugal, some were away on weekends and others were not in Portugal. In my first and second visits, that lasted in total 6 days, I crossed with around 8 adults members, but not everybody was available to give an interview, so I created my "sample" selecting members willing to give interviews trying to include several variables, such as age, origin, gender, time spent in the community and their role within the group. Finally I managed to get 5 in-depth interviews. The general characteristics of the 5 participants are as follows:

- They all come from different countries, this means they represent different cultures views;
- They have different ages, from 43 to 65;
- They have different roles in the community, new members and founder;
- They are in the community from different time;
- They are three women and two men;
- Some of them work in exchange of money and for free in the community, some other just for free in the community.

III. 5. Procedure and Time-line

The research took place over a period of about twelve months. About six- seven months have been devoted to theoretical research, as it is a complex subject due to its connection with the

social and environmental sphere. The first part of the research was carried out in Greece, where I carried out my Erasmus project, and then continued in Portugal. During this time I also looked for information and made contacts with various European communities in order to focus on what could be the most suitable case study for my research, which turned out to be (for the reasons mentioned in the Chap. III.2) a community in Portugal, Alentejo. During the month of May, July and October I carried out my field research and at the same time I started analyzing the data, obtained from the different data collection techniques, to then finish the research in the month of November. Below is possible to see a cronogram of project development to summarize the evolution of the study.

Cronogram of project development	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
	c	o	e	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	u	e	c	o
	t	v	c	n	b	r	r	y	n	l	g	p	t	v
	o	e	e	u	r	c	i		e	y	s	m	b	m
	b	m	m	a	u	h	l				t	b	e	b
	e	b	b	r	a									
	r	e	e	y	r						e	b	e	
	r	r		y							r		r	
Bibliographic Research														
Case Study search														
Research on the field: participant observation; interviews, collect material, testimony and stories														
Datas analysis														
Ultimating and defending the thesis														

Table.1 Source: author

III. 6. Limitations

The limits of this research are mainly two. The first is the period of research in the field, which could have been longer, but the timing of the research and my work compromises did not allow me to extend the observation period. Second, the number of interviews. In spite of this, I tried to remedy these limits, in the first case by distributing the days available for participant observation in a period as dilated as possible, in order to observe the community at different times and in different situations. In the second case, I have instead tried to mitigate this limit by conducting in-

depth interviews and many informal conversations with all members of the community. In this case, the limits of this sampling, has also been positive and led to a really deep analysis of the subject of study.

In addition to this, we should consider a final limit: the representativity. As we saw on the qualitative method description (3.1), representativity can be a problem in this kind of research, due to the uniqueness of the objects of study, especially if it is a small niche group. This limit is well explained by Kozeny: "Intentional communities - (and eco-community are considered a kind of intentional community) - , are like people, you can categorize them based on certain distinguishing characteristics, but no two are ever identical. Differences among them, whether obvious or subtle, can be attributed to variations in philosophy, in mission or project emphasis, in behavioral norms, or in the personality and style of the leaders (if the group has identified leaders), and the individual members. Each group is somehow unique." (Kozeny pag 1(18). Considering this point we will have to realize that the results of this study cannot totally be applied to all the eco-communities, for this reason it would be very interesting and fundamental to achieve generalizable results and to mitigate the limit of representativeness, carry out this study on different Portuguese, European or world eco-communities.

Chapter IV – Immerging in the Case Study Community

In this chapter, the heart of this study will be developed, and the data collected during field research will be reported and analysed. The methodology used consists in the selection of the data considered most relevant in order to answer the questions underlying this study, coming from all the collection techniques used. The data selected as the most relevant were grouped into dimensions, which represent the key themes of this study. The variables and characteristics found within these dimensions will form the theory of this thesis. I will describe the dimensions to already have a clear picture of how the structure of the analyses will develop.

First of all, I will discuss the Case Study community (Chap. IV. 1.), with dimensions mainly related to Q2 and Q3, concerning the territory, the objectives, the organization, the infrastructures, the guests and the communitarian experience, deepening the members access the community and the motivations. Subsequently, I will discuss the reconceptualization of work (Chap. IV. 2.), also with dimensions mainly related to Q2 and Q3, like the importance of work topic for the community and for single members, the modern-day work connection with environmental problems, the reconceptualization of work in the community and the currently work characteristic

of members, analysing possible problems and controversial issues. Finally, I will try to define how work in a sustainable society could be (Chap. IV. 3.), with dimensions mainly related to Q1, concerning the projection of community member ongoing work in the future and picturing how would work be in a fully sustainable society.

IV. 1. Territory, objectives, organization and infrastructures

The Case Study community it's a community born about 10 years ago and is located in Alentejo, Portugal. "The revolution of 1974 had originated in the Alentejo region, where communist ideas had been bred and spread amongst the cork workers. Ever since, the region of Alentejo is referred as Portugal's 'revolutionary breeding ground'. Today, the region of Alentejo harbour various alternative sustainability projects and communities. This is part of a broader sustainability and alternative social movement in Portugal, which includes a movement of the so-called 'neo-rurais' ('neo-rural people'): people who are moving from the city back in to the rural areas" (Campos et al. Forthcoming, Kunze and Avelino, 2015). The land of the community is about 7 hectares, and was bought in common form, without private ownership of individuals, it is therefore owned by the association, founded to be able to share the property.

[...] consciously we didn't buy the land privately... on nobody's name we did an association, the land belongs to the association and not to somebody private, because this creates trouble, then the one's who own the land are ruling the community, and that's what we didn't want [...] each one gives a share to the association and if you leave you get it back [M.5]

The Core Group, which I will explain later who it is composed of, will maintain the association as the legal entity to own the land non-privately. The land extends over two hills, in the centre there is a valley. Part of the land is intentionally uncontaminated and left as a natural forest, while the other part is reserved for hosting infrastructures and small private houses.

What makes this community special is that it wants to keep a certain size, to keep a very close relationship between the people. The reason we chose this is that it gives still enough freedom to individuals, this is what I like. It's a perfect balance between community involvement and personal freedom [M.2].

Freedom to individuals that try to be "communitarian being",

[...] It's a permanent try to be a communitarian being, for everybody I think. [...] and one important part, beside learning about love, is having a home... giving a home to people was my

wish, was my first vision about it, and this does not mean that everybody has to live here, but the ones who live here can offer a home also for visitors, for travellers, for lost souls, whatever... this is my wish [M.5],

and, in the community vision, as it is written in the constitution, land and buildings shall be used for the well-being of all beings.

It is not easy to define the objectives of this community in a few words, because they range widely from social issues to environmental issues, and about the main goal they say:

It is not officially defined, we made many many attempts to define it and at the end it comes out that it is really learning about love, and about living together in peace, and also in peace with the environment. I mean living in peace is a big word, it means also to take care for nature, for animals, for plants, for the water, for the planet in general, it's about living more ecological, to make a contribution for a new culture. Also, a contribution for a new social organism, to get out of the system of small family [...] to give children a new way to grow up, for me one of the future possibilities to save the planet is to live more tribal or big family way [M.5]

I think it's creating a home that is as harmonious and is true to whom we are, as possible, and that includes coming back - you know if we lived in what we call the outside world, the Babylon - coming back to what's important to us, and living through that and realizing what would be joyful for us to be doing and doing that, and connecting to the earth because that's part of whom we are, and living with that, living more from the heart I guess, as authentically as we can, which includes personal development [...] the goal is to simplify life... not to simplify, but to make life easier and more fun, more joyful, and this might mean that we have to go into conflicts, not to hide from them, which initially might be less joyful and less simple [M.1]

We can see that the community aims for practical and social sustainability, to develop a sustainable society and a cultural change, that differs from the dominant capitalist ideology.

The main goal I would say is to live out of the capitalist system, to start a new culture, or to encourage a new culture to come, it's living in this way of respecting the earth, respecting the beings, respecting the children and living in a more ecological and sustainable way. Very simple. It's a simple community [M.3]

To achieve this, the members carry out ecological and social practices, such as sustainable agriculture, restoration of wildlife, sustainable economy, and I noticed that the social aspect is really important and developed in the community.

[...] one of the topics is to raise children together, parenthood is a topic that is present now because there are families, it's a new movement in the community [...] another main topic is personal development, it's growing together as human beings, and learning how to live in a peaceful way, and understanding each other, understanding about ourselves [M.3]

They aim for a trustful, open-hearted ambiance in mutual support,

[...] it's a place for living together in harmony, in honesty, in personal development. Yeah, really, also healing many old conditions, old wounds, for me it's great to be an open hearted man [M.2]

and the social dimension can be considered one of the main goals of the community, as expressed here:

[...] our community is quite intensely focused on the quality of the relationship between us. We hope, and we want it to be good and to get better [...] what is common I would say, to nearly all of us, is this interest in developing our selves, so that we can have very good quality relationship, which is actually a lot of hard work because we bring with us a lot of problems [...] I think is fair to say is the main goal, it is certainly the goal that is most sought by this group, in that sense it is the main goal. To me it is almost the most important thing because growing food organically, without harming the earth, or getting free solar energy, this kind of technical problems are more or less solved, but how to live with your neighbours without killing him, or her (Laughing), has not been solved yet, so... this is very important to me, this aspect [M.4]

They also commit to work in the issues around love, they support those who wish to practise free sexuality and they aim for social and spiritual development as individuals and as a group. On the ecological level they aim to:

[...] in general sustainability, and all that that implies, which means growing our own food if is possible [...], to use our water, to recycle, to use waste water, recycling everything, from cardboard to "human waste", to also enrich the land. Luckily our land... this part was well productive (showing me a particular area), but slowly we are increasing this area of fertile land, and we also have a vision, particularly M.5 has a vision to restore the forest, that has declined a bit. This is common in Alentejo, the water situation is critical [M.4].

Despite this, some members think that ecological motivation could be more central within the community, referring to the community's main goals.

[...] it's not so much the ecological which I regret [...] the people who chose this come from

the city, they don't have a real relationship to the nature, they have to learn [...] there is some attempt, it could be much, we still produce a lot of garbage, we drive a lot of cars, yeah, all this kind of things... the consciousness is here, but the practical consequence no, we are working on it [M.5]

The community want to step out of hierarchical patterns and support each other's full empowerment and potential, for this they work with changing leadership. Decisions are taken by mutual agreement, made by consent of the whole Core-Group, through the expression of one's own idea regarding a particular topic (provisionally when someone is absent) and they wish the decision-making process to be as open and as transparent as possible, so they are written. The Core-Group assumes the full governance of the community, aims for transparency in its financial governance and in the personal financial situation of each member. All Core Group members have a voice and they vote in all the decisions. People who want to join the Core Group must apply, living with the community for one year continuously (probationary member). After having found a mutual "yes", the person will be accepted as a Core Group member, and will contribute to the capital financing of the community, as decided by the group. Every member and probationary member is expected to contribute a monthly amount, to cover running cost of the community and the association, as agreed by all members.

Community members commit to a minimum of two weekly meetings, one for practical topics and one for social topics. Any type of idea can be proposed during the practical meeting and is discussed, as well as the moods regarding situations or people are discussed in the group. They also commit to install one or two intensive times a year to deepen trust, celebrate and to find deeper decision. During this time the Core Group is open to review the constitution with the whole community and has the power to change the constitution. Community members commit also to communicate about their personal and interpersonal issues, to listen and consider feedback. Finally, they also commit to take part in the communal work, that they wish can be done with joy, like dishwashing, garden, cleaning etc, so the community is based on a division of voluntary tasks, generally on a weekly basis. During the Practical meeting, which takes place every Wednesday morning, each member and even the guests, can place their name in a table, choosing the space corresponding to the task they want to perform in the coming week. In general, each person takes on about two weekly tasks. These tasks include cooking at lunch for the whole community, cleaning the common area after lunch, cleaning the common area after dinner, cleaning compost toilets and bathrooms, etc. Support to the person in charge is often voluntary help from the other members or from the guests, to be able to reach the goal without overloading a single person.

Creating income fitting to the aims of the community is welcome, private and communal

and they want to create a joyful attitude to work, trusting that everyone gives his/her best.

To leave the Core Group one needs only to communicate that wish and will get back the capital contribution, within two years and has no claim to any other contributions, assets or income of the community. The Core Group may expel a member, in case of prolonged failure to work together in harmony, by consensus minus the person concerned and will use this procedure only after getting the help of an external mediator to solve the disharmony. The expelled member will get the contribution back as any other leaving member.

The food, mostly self-produced, is organized and held in a space called storage room, or in glass jars in the kitchen if it is tea, jams, honey, etc. The food prepared in the common kitchen is always vegetarian and often vegan, the presence of meat in common meals is not allowed. The community has only a few hens, to produce eggs, and a small dog, there are no other animals. What is needed and is not produced in the community is bought, preferably artisanal, biological and local.

[...] if that is not possible (to produce food by their own), try to buy locally produced food, or at least organic food, try to not travel too far to get it, if it does come from another continent try to buy fair trade stuff [M.4]

Sometimes not basic products from *Babylon* arrive (as the outside world is called by some members), and all together, rarely, enjoy these extra products, such as chocolate, biscuits, cheese etc. When using packaged products the packaging is recycled if possible, such as glass jars and writing paper, the rest is divided into separate waste collection.

The vegetable garden is one of the main ecological practices of the community. The garden is common, biological and experimental. All interested members can take advantage and take care of the garden and, at every meal, the products of their land are never missing. The type of cultivation of the garden follows the guidelines of permaculture and the seeds often come from neighbours or sellers of organic seeds. Two greenhouses, a third under construction, serve to support the garden, as a nursery and as a space for growing plants that would not withstand the Alentejo winter, experimenting with the plantation of different types of seeds and plants. In addition to the vegetable garden area, many plants and seeds are planted a little in all areas of the community land, in order to understand, by observing their growth, where a certain type of plant finds the best conditions to thrive.

Alentejo is a particularly arid region, so, to compensate for the lack of water, many practices are implemented from the community such as the construction of a lake and the construction of swales, where rainwater will concentrate, to flow slowly into the subsoil. A permaculture swale is

a shallow ditch, dug into the land, with the highest downward side, created with the ground. All points along the ditch have exactly the same height above sea level. In the vicinity of these swales trees, plants and bushes are also planted, suitable for the regeneration of the soil, which over time will thus become more fertile.

Community members may build private accommodation only on conditions agreed by the Core Group and must follow the buildings guidelines set by the community which, based on my observation, can be a wooden mobile home, a yurt, a caravan, a van etc. It can be equipped with a private kitchen or can only be made up of a sleeping area. The bathrooms are all external to the houses, they are common and are dry toilet, compost toilets, so water is not used to drain. There are also two common showers. Electricity is generated by two large solar panels, plus another small support panel. The water, which is a scarce resource, comes from the land reserves, but also from the aqueduct.

Passing on of private accommodation when a member is leaving it can be done only with the agreement of the Core Group and to avoid the problem for the community, of finding a buyer for an expensive hut, community sets a maximum recoverable value. The member must be prepared to accept this maximum recoverable value when leaving.

The main infrastructures present in the community are the following:

- one communal kitchen;
- the wooden house;
- members houses;
- guest "houses";
- two showers;
- three toilets;
- two greenhouses (they are building a third one);
- one lake;
- hort;
- three workshop space;
- a wooden shed;

- a food dryer;
- a solar cooker;
- solar panels;
- a chicken coop.

IV. 2. Members, guests and collective experiences

At the beginning of my ethnographic research and then of my participant observation, the adult members present in the community were about nine, plus five children. Since then the community has expanded. The members belong to many different countries, including non-European countries, but there is also a Portuguese presence. English is the common language of the community. Compared to the area, mainly inhabited by Portuguese and Germans, the observed community is quite heterogeneous in terms of origin. Also, with regard to age, the community appears to be very heterogeneous, with members over sixty-five, but also underage children (from three years upwards). In terms of sex, the presence of men and women seems to be balanced. Family units are present, with one or two parents plus children, but individual units are also present.

The community aim to maintain a spirit of hospitality, for this, in addition to the structures mentioned above, there are the facilities dedicated to guests, such as caravans, vans, a dormitory and support houses. All members can invite guests, but this must have common consent from the other members, and the community can host guests, as in my case, always with common consent of the members. Relatives, lovers and close friends of the Core Group are always welcome. Every guest has a community member as a host who explains the practical things and answers any possible questions. Guests are required to pay a contribution of 10 euros per day which includes food, lodging and the possibility to use the infrastructure, as well as members who pay a contribution of 5 euros per day. All the guests are invited to join the Practical meeting in the wooden house, where they can have a space to talk about things they want to share with the community.

The Main moments of sharing take place in two structures: the kitchen and the wooden house. The latter is a large wooden structure, warm and welcoming, equipped with sofas and mattresses on the ground to sit, lay down and relax, hold weekly meetings, sharing circles, ceremonies, parties, etc. The kitchen is instead inserted in a typical Alentejo building, it is equipped with a large table, large enough to gather all the members. All members and guests are warmly invited to participate in the communal lunch, because this is one of the main moments of aggregation. Lunch is

around 13h and there is a lunch bell (a metal ring with a hammer), three rings means lunch is ready. Breakfast and dinner are completely free and can be consumed in private spaces. For those who want to share breakfast and dinner with other members, the kitchen and food are always available. In my observation period, almost all the members came to share also breakfast and dinner.

In the wooden house other important moments of sharing take place (including the two weekly meetings that the members undertake to participate) not obligatory, but organized on a regular weekly basis:

- Monday: *Byron Katie night*, where they practice a method to questioning and deal with stressful thoughts. It is a meeting open also to people outside the community.
- Tuesday: *Experimental space*, where they practice non-violent communication, sharing circles and many other practices, depending on who is organizing the meeting.
- Wednesday: *Practical meeting*, where they organize practical things of community-life and where guests can get a space to talk about things they want to share with the community.
- Thursday: *Forum*, it is a space reserved only for members of the community, probationary and long term guests, to address various issues.
- Friday: *Party-Ceremony*, it is a moment of celebration shared by everyone, members, guests and children.

In my observation period I attended and observed all of these practices and meetings, except the *Forum*, as this is a meeting reserved for members and long term guests, and the *Party-Ceremony*, because I was doing my voluntary weekly shift, cleaning the common kitchen after dinner. These meetings are not only moments of aggregation, but some of them can be considered as social activities, social work, aimed at the well-being of the members and the community as a whole. They are meetings to develop personal and group resolution skills, non-violent communication, introspection and practices to make group decisions.

To conclude this chapter, I thought to highlight the most characteristic aspects of the Case Study community in the two following Table and Figure:

Categories	<i>Case Study</i> Community
Founded	2009
Inhabitants	Around 20
Formality	GEN-Member
Orientation	Eco - community
Region	Alentejo
Location	Rural area
Legal form of organization	Association
Decision-making structure	Non hierarchical model

Table 2, source: author, based on participant observation, interviews, documents.



Figure 3, source: author, based on participant observation, interviews, documents.

IV. 3. The complex theme of admission: access modes and motivations

I decided to dedicate a deepening to the topic of the motivation of the members to enter in the community and to the theme of the access of the members in the community, because I found, during my research, a link between these two topics and the subject of work.

Regarding access we can say that has always been restricted by certain rules, but there have been some changes over time,

There were a number of founding members who provided money to by the place, but not all of those could live here and in fact the first people living here were just four and they clearly

needed people to come and help, so they started looking around, finding people in other communities... an interesting thing about this community is that it never advertises, we don't have a web page, so people have to do personal contact, they would come and say 'hey!' [...] I was in other community and the founder M.5 saw me and invited me to visit here, and after two weeks I fell in love with this place and I asked to join. Those days there was no structure about this, just 'Yes we would like you to join' [...] three months later I arrived with my suitcase [M4]

The situation about the access has changed slightly, now there is a probationary year which all the aspiring members must complete.

[...] I meet the community from the holy moment when I moved to Alentejo, and it was a process until I could join the community... now I'm here [M.3]

The process includes a probationary year which is very important in understanding if new members can have personalities compatible with those of the members already in the community and also important for the aspiring members, to see if the community can be the right place for their needs.

[...] first they want you to experience the community, and they ask to stay long term, so it can vary, depend on what people ask to stay... my process was short, because I really wanted come to the community, so I had one month as a guest, then the next step... the protocol says that after being a guest you can ask to become a probationer; this means that is one year period to really dive into the life of the community, so after one year the probationary can evaluate and the community also evaluate, and then we decide if we want to continue together [M.3]

In addition to this, from the very beginning, in order to enter as a member of the community, a financial contribution is requested.

[...] after being a probationer I asked to become a member; to become a member everybody should pay a fee. This is a kind of internal economy that helps to pay the loans because, at the beginning, the land was bought by someone, there was a group of people helping and giving some money, so all this money is given back [M.3]

With regard to this we inevitably connect with the subject of work that, in many cases, becomes a tool to enter the community.

The financial model is that each member has asked to contribute to the capital financing. The capital of the place, divided by the number of people, was seventeen thousand euros, so when I was joining, everybody gave seventeen thousand... I needed to work a bit more [...] since then, we

are more relaxed about the amount of money, we can say ok, it is ok if you pay that, maybe it doesn't have to be as much as seventeen thousand. That was what I was asked for to join. Then there is a day to day financial for gas, food, it cost 150 euro a month per person [M.4]

[...] the fee I pay will be given back to me one day if I decide to leave the community, it's a loan [M.3]

This point gives rise to a reflection, which seems to be linked to a contradiction in the ideology of the community. In order to enter in the community (entrance fee), and therefore be part of a group that wants to achieve a cultural change opposed to the capitalist system, it is necessary to be part, albeit temporarily, of this capitalist system (modern-day work). In fact, modern-day work conditions was, for many members, a motivation for moving to the community, as we can understand from the following statements:

People want to live a life out of the normal way, you know, the hamster wheel people in the outside world are in: expenses are getting higher and higher and they need to work more and more to cover all expenses. This is basically just a race in a hamster wheel between earning and spending money. I wanted to get out of that, coming here to a place where we consciously try to keep the cost of living low by having lots of symbioses between you know like yeah, just bulk buying and stuff, saves a lot of money. And growing a bit of our own food. So, it's consciously done that we make it easy on us, so you have less of a need to earn money and encourage ourselves also to help each other to find the ways to earn the bit of money we need. And yeah, there is no need really to over earn [M.2].

From field research, it has in fact emerged that, all respondents worked before joining the community and for three interviewed of five members, the work experience prior to community life is partially linked to the decision to go to live in the community. Among the motivations there was the dissatisfaction of working for others, receiving a very low salary, and having no time or energy to devote to their-self. On a more global level they mentioned the will to get out of the capitalist system, *not selling my soul for money [M.5]* and the will to create a new culture and a new economy.

With regard to the members who did not find a relationship between work experience and the decision to go to live in the community, it emerged that they were already self-employed or working in a collective *without a boss [M.4]*, in charity sectors and remote works. Therefore, the lack of autonomy in work, the lack of free time and a worthy salary, together with others, were reasons that led some members to the partial break with the dominant system and the decision to

want to move to live in an eco-community. It will be necessary to deepen this argument to understand what is the point of view of the members about it, and if they are aware of this possible ideological contradiction. In particular the points 12 and 37 of the constitution will be discussed with the members.

In addition to these motivations related to working conditions, many other reasons related to other areas, for some members even more important, have also emerged. The strong interest in community life turned out to be a very important motivation, as well as the desire to have a more sustainable lifestyle.

I was born in a Kibbutz, which is a community in Israel, so for me living together in a kind of communal scenario is really familiar, and really home, and really nourishing and apart from that there is also the ideology, or the belief, very very strong belief that we are not really meant to be individualized nuclear families, separately living from each other, and not interacting and not helping each other. And of course in any village in the world scenario, you might have that happening, where different families connect themselves, but they wouldn't have regular time when they meet, they wouldn't have an agreement to do stuff together necessarily and to work on their issues and difficulties like we are doing in a community like this one [M.1]

I grow up in the city, near Lisbon, [...] there was a moment of my life where I studied permaculture and I wanted to experience the life in the countryside, create a possibility that my life is more sustainable, for me and for my children, so this is why I moved to the country [M.3].

Chapter V – Reconceptualize work with 'Joy': a main objective of the community

From this research the theoretical importance of the theme of the reconceptualization of work emerged and an evident practical effort also emerged from the community, to be able to put into practice the theoretical convictions related to this subject. A strong desire to reconceptualize work and an awareness of the importance of the topic, but only a partial ability to put the theory into practice emerged from the study. The work is, in fact, for few members still tied to the capitalist system. It can therefore be said that, in this transitional period, what I observed in my field research is the reconceptualization of work as a fusion between the capitalist system and a sustainable system, with a strong propensity to abandon the former.

V. 1. Work, a collective theme?

From the interviews a strong interest emerged regarding the theme of work and the need to reconceptualize it.

This is a thing of the old culture, goes back to the Biblical book [...] we did bad thing and now we must work as a punishment. Really, I'm convinced that people would enjoy a gift to express their skills [...] I reject that work is something unpleasant [M.4]

I'm a little bit old fashion on this and I see that the young people are different, I grow up with very high working ethics, in Switzerland, also my parents from countryside, working was always important and I still find working important for self development... not in the capitalist way, but in the way to express oneself [M.5]

During the interviews I asked members if the topic of work is a much discussed topic in the community and if they think they are giving this theme the right attention.

It's an agreement that is done. Is it something that we feel everyday? Absolutely, because we feel the lack of pressure, we feel the sense that we are more free to decide, we are more autonomous about our own time, super important to me, it would be really hard for me to live in place where I didn't have an autonomy on my time, so I feel it every day but is not something I have to agree on again and again and again [M.1]

I'm thinking of who has strongly participated in a long discussion about it [...] and when I think to those people it is important [...] I think we are giving it the right amount of attention, there was almost a moment back asking guest to work, because two or three people who came treated this place like a campsite [...] There was a moment in which community was not so sure of this policy, thinking maybe we should change this, because someone was telling that for guest is difficult stay without doing anything, so they want to work. And I and others strongly resisted this, because we guess is really valuable not to demand work for person, such a wonderful thing can be learned from this [...] sometimes come just from inside the person, they come, and they constantly clean everything around the kitchen, and you know is not because they love it, but because they feel guilty, they put pressure on their self, and we have this opportunity, we have this place to tell them "Hey, look at what are you doing, you don't have to do this when you are here". I think this is very valuable part of our community, so I fight very strong to keeping this [M.4]

In reality this theme seems to be mainly important at an individual level, rather than a

collective one. For example, it has never been mentioned as the main goal of the community in the interviews, perhaps because it was already included in the idea of a change in culture and exit from capitalism, but it is clearly mentioned in the constitution.

It is a topic here, and is not yet where we want it to be, because as a community we are not making money together, which would be possible, and I'm still hoping that one day it will happen, some people find whatever project to make money, like food and festivals, whatever is possible in Portugal. We use very few money here, but we still need some money, and people have to bring some money [...] for me anyway working is an important topic for new culture, because we came from a capitalist culture, we have a strange relation to work, it's not healthy, and this is also something what we want to change in the community life, that work get a new quality, that work and free time is not so much separated, we don't need a weekend to relax from hard work [...] but when people come from capitalist system they have a damage from school and working for money, this has to be first made a transformation, in the personal level [M.5]

At the personal level the theoretical and practical re-conceptualization of work is at the base of their ideology of rejection of the capitalist system.

It is very present for me at the moment [...] because I have this old habit from the outside world to overload myself with tasks and only focus on getting things done, done, done, done, and forgetting my family, using work as an escape sometimes, what I did in the outside world, it's still there. As an escape probably from myself, not to listen inside, just to distract me... oh, I have to do this! [...] my gut is telling me something else but I don't want to hear it. You know, whatever it is, it's an old habit, so it's really present for me, I'm working too much still. I want to do even more, my family and my community are in my way, they block me from doing all these things that are useless actually, in the bigger picture, but I have this mindset. And I want to learn it, I want to get out of this, I want to stay healthy and get to know myself more, and yeah, be also happier I think. Not that I have an awful life, but I'm sometimes a bit on autopilot, unconscious, in work, and I would like to change that and find more balance, more free time, more time with my daughter [M.2].

The theme of the reconceptualization of work at the community level is perhaps not completely developed, as instead are other community themes, and perhaps this could create limits to the development of a completely sustainable society, even only within the community.

The reality now is that we are still finding our own individual way of making money, but for me I can say that is important that in the future we think about more local, internal way of economy, but I don't think it is so important for some people, I can not talk for the group [M.3]

V. 2. A well known connection: modern-day work and environmental degradation

From the interviews emerged almost a total agreement about the topic that modern work is connected to environmental problems. The perception of the connection between the two topics is really high and they explain it in this way:

[...] for a lot of people they have not so much choice to the place they work [...] and then you can just easily be asked to use environmentally bad products, but which has something marketing like Eco. I think that the kind of work that our capitalistic system make available is very often environmentally harmful [M.4].

The work is therefore seen as a cause of environmental degradation, mainly concerning the use of harmful products, but also concerning the consumption, where the conscious use of money can be a way to not amplify environmental degradation.

In the last years I was more ethical about the jobs I took on [...] I mean, my field is mostly electrical engineering and software engineering. So the impact on the environment is more indirect, energy consumption or...[...] I think for me it's not work but where I spend my money, I try to be more conscious, which is the result of the work. How do I spend the money, because this has a bigger influence and I think how I earn it, at least in my case, I don't even know where the money is actually coming from. I can't see that, it's invisible, I can't see what was destroyed with this money beforehand. But I can at least see a bit in the other direction, what do I do with the money I'm earning, that's more visible for me. The rest is just not visible [M.2].

Most of the interviewed members also affirm that a societal change towards sustainability can not succeed without a transformation of work and society based around work.

That's not possible, not possible. To exploit resources and to exploit human beings, can not be for a new culture, for a new environment care-take [M.5]

[...] as far as I know, directors of companies are still required by law to make a return of their money, so generally the main point of the capitalist system is to make a profit, and if that is the priority, then the environment will suffer, humans suffer and everything else, so I think there are some companies that voluntarily try to include other values as part of financial profit of the company, but maybe we need a transformation in the law [M.4]

[...] not possible without rethinking this, because the majority of the societal difficulties is chasing money, that's my perception, we are chasing money I think the only way is possible is each

person individually awakening from this nightmare, the fear based agreement that society has, because then we can move back from the running after the money [M.1]

[...] all the destruction is because people are forced into jobs to survive and put under so much pressure that they can't even think, or see the impact they are doing. And this is a general problem that can be solved by helping people not to need money so much. I think it's a society's illness that we have. Nowadays without money you can't survive. While 200 years ago it was completely different. So what changed? People were able to survive [...] and now that's impossible! So this is something that can be taught in schools in a different way, that we can have different ways, it's education [...] and not just ways people to be a work horse in an economy [M.1]

V. 3. Re-thinking work is a learning process

Here comes the core of this research, where I will explain if and how the community has re-conceptualized work. By analysing all the information collected on the field research, regarding work in the *Case Study* community, I will be able to highlight the main features of the reconceptualized work, ideologically and practically, and from this I will imagine how could be work in a sustainable society.

V. 3.1. Deprogram 'working for money'

First of all I will deal with the theme of the reconceptualization of work in the community starting from the theoretical base of the members and the community. All interviewed members believe that a re-conceptualization of work is possible.

Yes, but it is a learning process, we have to deprogram working for money and time is money, to... to a new program, that work is life, is taking care for... the earth [M.5].

If there would be a different way in the education of children, it would already be very different in empowering even more and more to do things they like doing rather than be obedient workers who are able to work in factories. This is how people are based in the normal education [...] and it's a sickness! It's completely disconnected from the heart, from passion, the human core of us, it makes us machines functioning in a system driven by fear. And the people charge who have the power, who want to keep the power cause more fear. It's just spread everywhere, this is how we function, this is how the education system works, how it seeps into families, into work life, everywhere, it's only fear. And then you stop feeling your heart and think like yeah, for the environment

and your fellow human beings around, and animals and everything it's just, you're basically in the survival mode, and this mode can justify any action which is destructive. And if this wouldn't be the case then yeah, people would stop many things they are doing now, I think [M.2].

I can highlight the fact that all the five members interviewed, when I asked the question "Do you work?", answered yes. Not everyone, however, receives money in exchange for their commitment, in fact only three of the five interviewed members have a paid work (together with other unpaid work that they do inside the community), which means that within the community the conception of work is extended to the informal sphere (unpaid), but is recognized as a formal commitment. Within the community, a work, to be defined as such, does not necessarily have to be paid and therefore extends to all occupations of care and art, which are generally not considered real work in the dominant system. It emerges that the work is defined according to the level of commitment in that sector and not according to the money received in return. Thus, the first characteristic of the *Case Study* community work is that it is recognized as commitment based.

We use the word work, I'm personally very interested to uplift this word! Took it in a positive feeling about earning the word work [M.5]

'The description of the work could be using my body, the energy of my body to move something, to produce something, to make something happen! And to me it also mean, if I think about working, it means to do it with joy, it means to do something that i really like to do, not because I'm forced, because I have bills to pay, or I have super boring boss, you know, this concept of working I don't want it any more in my life. So if I think about work I want to work, I want to be in service for something that really gives me joy and I'm believing that I'm contributing for something really good in the world [M.3]

This means that work must have a purpose, a purpose that is for the common good and for oneself. It was clearly stated by the community, in their constitution and in their presentation document, that they want to create a joyful attitude to work, and that a person must enjoy what they are doing.

[...] means that I don't have any feeling of being used [...], I feel happy in the work that I do, nobody is pressuring me for something, or asking for something in exchange,[...] I'm joyful and I'm free in what I'm doing [M.3]

So, work should be based mainly on the pleasure of doing it because you feel pleasure and the joy of doing it.

[...] Let's see if we can create a kind of environment that actually is a joy, so that people

don't have the sense of work as something negative, that work is a joyful thing. I have discovered is possible, even things that normally are not supposed to be nice interesting jobs, like cleaning dishes, or cleaning floor, you can actually get joy of doing these things, and I'm not so interested in sustainability if it is going to be boring, I'd rather set fire to the planet and have a great party, than a sustainable planet that lives a billion years and everybody is really bored [M.4]

Another important aspect I was able to discover during the interviews was the rejection of forced work, that is, the idea of having to forcibly perform a task.

I think this community proves about the work can be joyful (...) we don't ask guests to work, as many communities do, all of them, they ask for money, and they ask for 4 hours work. Here we specifically tell 'you don't have to work', just there is lot to do, and we are very happy if you join in, and because they are free 99.9% of our guest want to do something, and they enjoy taking part. For me this proves that if work doesn't have this feeling that you are forced to do it, this is a step one to make it enjoyable. There are other steps, but is possible make work joyful, and it can also be sustainable, as an extra bonus [M.4]

Work within the community takes place only on the basis of trust, in the belief that everyone will give their best. This makes us understand the importance of autonomy at work.

We don't have schedule, we have the lunch, really important bonding things, we take shifts, a different person is cooking, sometimes we even organize a community action, we focus on particular task, like this apple harvesting, and there is not demand that everybody needs to do it, because it would not fit with our philosophy, but there is a kind of encouragement, a strong invitation, because it is nicer to work together, if you do it with someone you can have nice conversation and turn things around completely, so picking apples can be joyful. Se we don't organize too much, we have a sentence in the constitution that is "we trust people do the best they can", for the community, in accordance with the own needs, so someone is working a lot, but we don't count hours here [M.4]

This autonomy, that is based on trust, means that there are no hours of work and the members are not forced to perform a task when they do not feel it, or when it is not the right moment for them, but everything is based on common sense.

Yes, there are things to do, if you don't pick the apples when they are ready, they fall on the ground and rot, so you could say I don't feel like doing it, but can be difficult. Cleaning dishes. You do things to have a result that you like, even if you don't like the process, you like the result so, even if I don't feel like getting out of bed to harvest, there is a balance [M.4]

Based on common sense, in a context where profit does not count (or in any case, is not the goal of work), it means that work, for common sense, is done to achieve the common good. And it is to achieve this "common sense" that all members of the community carry out important work on themselves, to succeed in having a collective conscience, which then leads them to desire the common good, deeply. For this reason in the community is developed a lot of social work.

[...] maintaining and developing this community, this is work, because this community has a lot of good social relationship, sometimes I'm joking telling that I was doing social work with these two members, help solve a conflict [M.4]

To use the example of the M.4, the apples are harvested for the common good, in order then to enjoy apple juice, and not for profit. This means reversing the purpose of the work, which from a means of accumulation turns into a medium for sharing. But it also means that conscious individuals will choose conscious works, therefore aimed at the preservation of the social and ecological sphere, and only then the economic one. This is well explained by the following example: despite the monetary contribution, guests are seen not so much as an economic resource, but rather as a human resource, bearer of stimuli, new energies, but also of strong impact. In certain periods of the year, in fact, the community suspends the reception of guests, simply because they do not want to receive this type of human and social input, thus giving up monetary income to protect their inner well-being. This explains how psychological, social well-being is a priority for the community, over economic well-being. In fact, for the *Case Study* community, work does not have to be productive, and even non-productive work is important, due to its social value.

I also come from a society of making money, working for making money, this was quite hard for me this topic, I always have to find niche, how to work something I don't sell my soul, that was not so easy, but I managed to do it more or less [M.5]

Actually I love working, my body wants to work, I like to work fiscally mainly, I'm a gardener and then an artist, and working is totally important for me, if I can not work I feel I have problem with my self. I recently was one year sick, I couldn't work for one year, and it was very very hard, and it was also a good experience to see how much I'm still in this functioning... and I want to get out of that. I love work, but I have to get out of the idea that functioning is the most important thing [M.5]

V. 3.2. Dealing with the freedom of schedule

Payed work and not payed work, is carried out by all members of the community,

[...] right now what happens is that we have different situations, we have people living from the retirements and other people still work outside the community, I have a job outside and some people have savings, so there are different situations in the group [M.3]

Work can be divided into social work and ecological work. The two spheres actually often intersect, so we can speak more generally of care work, care of the environment and care of people, which influence each other positively.

[...] part of the work is not just the practical work of garden and infrastructure, is also social work, and this is where I fit in, and I do it without money of course, just like the gardeners and the people that take care of the infrastructures, and it is really my joy to support the community in this way, to help resolve conflicts, to give people a safe space for empathy so that they don't feel quite so charged when they go and talk to other people, this aspect is also work and I absolutely do it with joy, I love doing this, is what I feel comfortable with [M.1]

Formal, paid work is only performed by some members, who need to generate a small income to contribute to community expenses and for personal needs. Also, in these cases it is often work in line with ideals, or in any case a work that can offer the possibility of having free time to dedicate to something else. In some cases, it is occasional work and in other cases it is continuous work. Unpaid work, on the other hand, is continuous, because care cannot exist intermittently. Not having as objective the accumulation of a salary, never runs out, but must rather be continuous, in small doses and redistributed, so that everyone can take care of people and things and so that everyone can enjoy their free time. Care work creates mainly social and ecological works.

[...] we have also this network here, it is new and it's growing, to exchange material and exchange work, exchange capacities, talents, I think this will be the future, so we will use less and less money, but we will exchange work and material stuff [M.5]

In practice, the work is organized independently,

We have lots of freedom. No one would come to me and say hey, you should work either less, or more, or do something different. No one would do that. And I like that. You know, we don't want to be in each others' businesses. If I say, hey, guys, I have a problem, I need help then everybody would be there [...] The work for the community, there are certain tasks to be done and people choose what they want to do. You know, it's free, and no one would judge anyone who's doing more or less. You know, it's really what people like doing. And when everyone knows each other they really love doing things for each other, for the place. It's very personal, while in a big city you wouldn't see what you're doing it for for whom, you don't get the feedback, you don't get heart con-

nection. It's much easier in a small coop. So this is already one thing. Personal work for money, is also different, you don't work so much and so we have more choice doing things we actually like. And this makes a big difference. And yeah, we are also just really kind to each other, we really try to solve conflicts which normally happen of course everywhere-- but we really try to make a conscious improvement in our relationships. We are trying to create a place where people feel good, healthy, welcomed, loved, accepted, listened to, appreciated. And then, from that something else can rise. You're not so much in fear mode. It still happens sometimes, of course, but it's much less. And something else happens, we do things with more joy, we think I really want to do this? And the good thing is, we don't have to, all the time you have a choice. If we want to give, it is a choice, and then choose wisely the things that we like, and this is what we do [M.2]

There are no schedules or schemes of any kind, there is no organization for working hours.

[...] we have big discussion about that, oh my god!(Laughs). Because guest come, and they fell helpless, how should I work? They are confused, and they are coming from another system and I think some feel lost and then some of us wanted to make a little frame for the guest and also for the community people who feel lost also a little bit, because you have so much freedom, we are not used to it, it's also something to learn, and it goes together with the work topic, how to deal with the total freedom of schedule" (M.5).

In the community one of the main things that is really different to everything I have known before, even in communities, is that there is no set amount, non in advance need to be consistently fulfilled every week amount of hours that every individual has to give to the community, to have a right to be there. There is a general agreement that people do what they do because it is their joy, and that's very different. And does it work? Some people are frustrated with the amount of work not been done, specially around the garden and infrastructure, like things need to be renewed, so there is a level of frustration, but for the most part, I think, what really need to get done ends up getting done. People really feel the need of it and then they come together and do it [M. 1]

Finally, analysing all the data, I can say that the work within the community has been partially re-conceptualized. I say partially and not totally because there is still a dependence on the capitalist system,

[...] for sure people still need money, [...] we pay a loan, and we also pay a monthly fee and with this payment we pay the infrastructure, like water from company, we have internet, we have maintenance of the solar panels, we have tools to buy to work on the lands, so all of this still needs money, and we have to buy food. So, we grow the most of the food that we eat, mainly veggie, but

still we still depend on some outside shopping, so for this we need money, naturally we have to get this money somewhere [M.3]

We need to find individual solutions [...] to cover the basic costs and all the expenses. Ideally, I would love to live in a new society where these things are not important. But it's not living in reality, the reality is that it is important to take responsibility for your expenses [M.2]

We need to make our money, so then the rest of the time obviously goes to our variant different effort to earn money for our day-to-day life, and to pay the daily contribution and all of that, but it is so much cheaper than in the outside world, that shows it is possible, at least in my experience, to work less than in the outside world and still maintain a very good life style [M. 1]

Despite a partial dependence on the capitalist system it is clear that, theoretically, the approach to work has been reconceptualized, and in the community there are plans and future goals to be able to reconceptualize the work in a more complete form,

[...] we are really aiming to find a way that we can live from the projects of the community. We are still far away, but actually, for example we harvest olives, and we produce our own olive oil, so this is already one way to save money, so we don't buy olive oil from the outside, this is just one example. We also produce soaps, and we were selling soaps in the market. So this kind of little things that we can transform with the food and the products that we have in the land, we can... I would not say self-sustainable but at least part of the income can come from here, but we are not doing it yet, it's an idea to organize it like this [M.3]

Moreover, the works carried out from the members in exchange for money, still linked to the capitalist system, are works that present characteristics much closer to those of the theoretically reconceptualized work, rather than to modern day-work, such as, for example, the amount of free time, the passion for it, the level of creativity and autonomy. We will see this in detail in the next chapter.

VARIABLES	MODERN-DAY WORK	RECONCEPTUALIZED WORK
Recognition base of work	Salary	Commitment
Motivation	Moral and Economic Duty	Pleasure and Common good
Organization	Hours of work & Hierarchic	Autonomous & Non-hierarchic
Purpose	Profit	Socio-Ecological Care

Work as a tool for	Accumulation	Sharing
Value	Competition	Collaboration
Exchange	Money	Services
Access	Titles	Experience

Table 3; Source: author

V. 4. Deepening the community members work

In this part of the research I am discussing the characteristics of the current work of the members, developing an analysis of the main characteristics of work and introducing the theoretical basis related to work values.

In the field of Social Psychology, the values of work can be conceptualized in two different groups, intrinsic values and extrinsic values. This subdivision takes its origin from the classic of Herzberg *et al.* (1959) *The Motivation to Work*. The two types of values have different characteristics. The intrinsic values are related to the characteristic aspects of the activity, which serve as motivation and are under the control of the subject, such as the rewards obtained from their activity, recognition, respect, realization, interesting work, autonomy etc. (Caetano 2003, 430-431, cited in Chaves 2010). From field research, it emerged that intrinsic values are very present in the work of members, mainly we talk about the value of autonomy, personal fulfillment, joy in doing work and interesting and meaningful work:

I'm a life coach, and I work mainly one-to-one with people to help them get more clarity and maybe upgrade their experience in life and relationships. That's my passion, it's my joy, I really love to talk to people, I really love to hear deeply what's alive in them and then finding the words so they find their own truth [M.1]

The extrinsic values are independent of the work that is carried out but are related to the consequences that manifest themselves due to the fact of working. The work therefore becomes a tool to achieve certain goals, such as the value of a pleasant human environment, security, good salary, good working hours etc. (Caetano 2003, 430-431, cited in Chaves 2010). In the works carried out by the members of the community, extrinsic values were also found, especially related to the paid work that some of them carry out. In particular, the importance of being able to carry out work in a pleasant and remote human environment, which allows flexible working hours, has emerged:

I got an offer from an old friend from Ireland to work in my field of software engineering

again, which I can do also from home, remotely [...] one reason why I said yes to this job was because he promised me flexibility, that I can take a few hours off per day and work in my own rhythm and schedule and take a few days off here and there when I need to. And now I asked to work only half-time, which is still enough for me for living and I can, I don't know, in a week work 20 hours somehow. And the rest of the time I can spend with the family, with the projects I like, in the community, there's so much to do. And this is what we want to get to. To a definition of work, this is what I would still consider as work. Everything else, it's all my to do list, I don't consider this work because I put the things on there because I want to, and it's mostly fun stuff. I love building things, doing something with my hands, finding solutions for problems [M.2]

In reality, however, it is difficult to circumscribe the categories only extrinsically and intrinsically, so it will be necessary to broaden the typology of factors valued in the work. In fact, for example, the value of a pleasant human environment, previously classified as an extrinsic value, is actually easier than it belongs to intrinsic values, because a pleasant human environment allows the person to obtain intrinsic gratifications. There are also other values that are difficult to locate, such as the set of values socio-oriented, "altruistic rewards" (Johnson 2002, cited in Chaves 2010), which are oriented for the benefit of others. Another value that cannot be placed in the previous categories is the value linked to the ability to reconcile work with other spheres of activity, for example social activities outside work (Chaves 2010). These values, oriented for the benefit of others and to social activities, are particularly important and felt in the community, as we can understand from the statements of the members about their work.

V. 4.1. A meaningful purpose: 'contribute to the change'

An intrinsic value is predominant in the characteristics of work in the community: a meaningful purpose. In this regard, we can see that this aspect, this value, lies at the basis of the choice to work, together with the joy of doing it.

I have two means of income, I work in a kindergarten as part-time job, and then what I do as my art project is sewing, I do pads for menstruation, it's a product that I actually believe can change the world, it can help at least for women to not make pollution with the plastic pads for menstruation. So it is already an ecological way of thinking about our cycle, about our waste, what we put in the earth [...] and I also make some money with it because I sell it, with internet, they are produced at home, they are reusable, you wash them again and use it for many years [...] I also do many works in the community that is not paid, I mean I'm doing jam, I cook, I plant, so it's also

work and the reason why I do this is because it's for me and for the community, and then the work where I receive money I do it because I believe [...] the kindergarten and the moon pads I really believe in this, this is what move me every day to continue [M.3]

Intrinsic values, such as recognition and respect, come together in practice with altruistic rewards, such as growing vegetables in the garden, caring for olive trees and creating products that can be consumed by others.

I still try to find out how much do I work because I have some restlessness inside my soul... do I work really for a practical outcome, like producing vegetables in the garden, I maintain olive trees for having a good harvest, that's for the well-being of all... that sounds very good, but how much I do it because I need it for my self... to feel my self a sense of life, importance, part of the community... it's all mixed! [...] I have a kind of personal rule that I want to love what I'm doing, we have it also in the community, love what you do... means even dish washing, and if you are angry to do it, don't do it, don't dish wash angry. Ask somebody else to do it for you, this is kind of unspoken role we have [M.5]

One of the purpose is receive money, yes, one aspect, and the other aspect is one way to contribute to the change [M.3]

V. 4.2. Work satisfaction

In this chapter we will mainly analyze the aspects related to the extrinsic values of work. For example, we will address the issue of satisfaction with the amount of money (or the absence of money), received in exchange of work, satisfaction with the value of free time, career and creativity.

However, these extrinsic values will intersect with intrinsic values, such as autonomy linked to working hours, and personal fulfillment linked to career.

With regard to free time I have found a high satisfaction of the members in this regard, because they can take time off in most cases whenever they want.

[...] my work is my free time, and the other way around [M.5]

Even paid jobs often enjoy this feature. This leads them to feel no lack of time for themselves. In some cases, managing to manage leisure time and the sense of guilt has been a process,

I worked on this topic, very hard, I always felt guilt, we grow up like that, if you don't work

you have to feel guilty, this was a strong thing in my family, but now it's almost gone, this guilt, this feeling [M.5]

I also found in some members a need and desire to be productive,

I have the feeling that I have to be productive, mainly because my inner being is calling every time for activity and to do interesting things. So I'm not the type of people sitting there and waiting for things to come [M.3]

This needing to be productive is related to the need to do the "things that have to be done" , to the need to do activities, but also because of the cultural background,

Still, I feel to be productive, I would like to have less this productivity call inside me, it's also still education and society, back-door capitalism. [M.5]

With regard to the career, some interviewed members claimed to have work ambitions and career plans but they do not see an important goal in their careers. For others, career is not at all an objective.

No, I'm quite satisfied with the life I have, it's more about fulfilling a curiosity. Of course it's also about making money, but I'm blessed that I don't have so much need for money. I have some savings and I'm not desperately looking for money. Is more about satisfaction and to create a product that I believe and I can give it to people that also believe in that [M.3]

I don't work on any kind of career, so it's not a topic for me [...] I'm actually really happy just not having a career (Laughs) [...] I try to keep myself up-to-date in my software engineering area but I don't want to get higher, better, earn more. Nada. [M.2]

The work that the members carry out within the community has turned out to be completely non-hierarchical, some jobs carried out outside the community in exchange for money are instead hierarchical, but not all.

It's just a small start up company where I'm really at an eye to eye level with the founder. He's a friend I played soccer with for many years. So I don't feel like I'm really under him, and there's no one below me anyway [M.2]

Competitiveness is generally not felt, except in some cases, and the members themselves see these behaviours as ridiculous.

Yes, my garden colleague and me we have a kind of competition I would say, I find it ridiculous, but if you ask so... (laughs) [M.5]

With regards to the subject of money, all the members proved to be fully satisfied with what they receive, even the members who do not work for money. They claim to be lucky and do not need to work for money, so they are happy not to receive a salary. This shows us that their reality is not aimed at accumulation, but rather at having enough to have a "good life".

Creativity is not always expressed in the work they do, but it is nevertheless present and possible to develop if they feel the need.

The gardening has many routine, not so creative, I could make it creative but... (laughs), [...] also seasonal rules, so there is a creative part of it but also routine, and the painting I could be more creative, I'm creative but I could be more [M.5]

The members described their work, paid and unpaid, with these words: joy, hope, self-development, ecology and sustainability, female connection, transformation, senseful, satisfying, routine (has to be done), solution finding, quality, functioning, transformative, deep, nourishing.

In the theoretical framework, efficiency, material success, time linked to productivity ('time is money'), competition, and work as a moral virtue emerged as the main features of modern-day work. The works carried out by the members of the Case Study community, paid and unpaid, instead present different characteristics. The work carried out by the members are devoid of a sense of moral duty, of connection with the objective of accumulation and also from a deep competition. It seems rather that the work is done for the common good, for the environment, to improve oneself, to encourage cultural change and still, for some, for money, even if they would like to free themselves from this. For this reason, although work still depends in some cases on a capitalist economy, we can nevertheless say that a reconceptualization of work is underway.

V. 5. Problems and controversial issues

Even if the effort is big, problems and controversial issues are not missing inside the community. Here I will list some that I could observe or understand from the interviews and the documented research.

About the fee of access in the community I asked the members if they think that this goes against the community ideology and everyone responded that they don't think it's a contradiction.

No, I think even it's very important that everybody makes financial effort to enter... because they come out of capitalism gives it a value. When people are putting money in, then they are really serious, 'I want to commit with this project', is connected with commitment money. I mean I would

not make for everybody the same amount, sure, I would make it variable, but that everybody brings money I find important [M.5]

No, I don't feel bad with that because we are all super conscious about that, it's like ok, we know about the capitalism, we know that we want to stop it, but we also accept that the reality we have in the world, it's not just like clicking your fingers that we will change it, so it's a process, until we can really get read of it. For now that's the reality we have, our consciousness is clean about that, of course is not the ideal yes, but we are super aware that we want to change something in the future, and we are realistic that it takes time, until the transformation can happen. I can say for all that we are good in the reality we have now [M.3]

Not at all. Because it is basically honouring all the work that others have put in over the years, which I just use. All the infrastructure which is in place I use. I like that people honour it, they don't take it for granted. It was done by hands, doing all the work, putting in the money themselves somehow. Buying the place, buying all the things I use.[...] I don't see it as an accountant... ok, this is what I put in [making a small gesture with the hands], this is what I can get [making a big gesture with the arms], great deal![M.2]

Regarding the income, I asked the members if they know where the money come from and if this created conflict in them.

I'm aware that we are still depending on the system, also buying gasoline, everything, is not yet that we are out of it, and I think is even not possible. So I do not have inner problem with that [M.5]

My salary... is coming mostly from this one German Internet satellite company. And their customers are either big boats, or big tankers or I don't know even who books these Internet services. There might be some bad guys, I don't know [...] they provide Internet for these petrol stations [...] I don't like this but at the same time I have a car, I need petrol [M.2]

We live in the world that we live in, and even do we want to shift it towards less dependency on the banks and less dependency on office jobs and the rat race, it's a gradual process, and what I do feels like it helps people make that transition more organically, because they connect to their soul which can guide them towards the best way for them to do this, but I don't expect them to be already there, and give me their money from their local product, if they do it, great! We still need money, so I don't have a fight with reality there [M.1]

The problems can also concern the materials used for the job,

[...] at the moment I'm buying a product on the other side of the world and this is not really my final choice, I still struggle with this, because it's a bio, it's an ecological material, but still there is a footprint of the plane, the travel to come to Portugal, because I can not find this product in Portugal [M.3]

Finally, what we can understand from these problems and controversial issues of difficult resolution is that, even if this community is trying in daily life a lot of different ways to organize society in small scale, it is facing problems to their interdependence with the dominant society. We are in a transition moment, where it is possible to experiment with new paths, but still we are walking partially on the old one. It comes to my mind the sentence about utopia: “A utopia está lá no horizonte. Me aproximo dois passos, ela se afasta dois passos. Caminho dez passos e o horizonte corre dez passos. Por mais que eu caminhe, jamais alcançarei. Para que serve a utopia? Serve para isso: para que eu não deixe de caminhar.” Fernando Birri, citado por Eduardo Galeano in ‘Las palabras andantes?’ de Eduardo Galeano."

It is fundamental to experiment, to think about a different future, try to reach it step by step, it is important imagine how could it be. For this the next chapter will be about how the members imagine the work in the future, in a completely sustainable society.

V. 6. Imagine the future of work in a sustainable society

In this chapter I will deal with the subject of work in a sustainable society, imagining if there could be and how they could change the work of community members and then how work in a sustainable society could be.

V. 6.1. Projection of community member about ongoing work in the future

I asked the interviewed members if they think they could do their work in a completely sustainable society and how this could change.

The kindergarten for sure, it doesn't demand any product or something that we have to buy with money, it's about a service and it's about education. The other work, I still have to buy material and the material comes from something, but I chose to work with organic materials and fair trade materials [...], I'm talking about fabrics, because I work with bio cotton, bamboo, as much as possible I try to get products that are sustainable and respecting the nature and the economy. I could improve it even more [...] so, for this reason I would say that it can be even more

ecological [M.3]

Yes, absolutely. I think it would be more working if we would have to live from our land we would have to work more, if we would not buy stuff [M.5]

I think... yes... It's just in general software. I think there are millions of different users for software nowadays, which can even help the environment. In general this kind of job that I'm doing, it could be very well part of a very sustainable society, yeah, totally [...] The customers might change. [M.2]

Absolutely, but especially in the transition, there is something about doing this at the time of transition that just... it gives it purpose! In this imagined reality it feels less crucial [M.1]

V. 6.2. How work would be in a fully sustainable society?

I asked the interviewed members to describe how work in a sustainable society could be and these were their answers: sustainable; local; aimed at self-production; joyful; an exchange, giving and taking in a loving way; passion; fulfillment, local bartering, heart based, happily swapping, necessities for living get simplified.

As we have seen in the theoretical framework of this thesis, according to Illich, regression in the consciousness of human beings is closely linked to today's environmental problems (Illich, 1977), which is why work in a sustainable society must also be dedicated to restoring individual and collective consciousness, which will be the basis of a new culture that will bring humans to act in an ecological way, with environmental protection works. As we have seen, this is partially already happening in the studied community.

Starting from the definition of Gorz of modern-day work (Chap. II), I will review this definition adapting it to how we can imagine work in a sustainable society. The activity carried out: for the community (common good); in exchange of a '*good living*' (services); according to forms and times established by the person who does the work (autonomous); and for a purpose that is chosen by the worker consciousness (socio-ecological care).

Considering the descriptions that the members gave about the work in a sustainable society, the projection of community member ongoing work in the future, the reconceptualization of work in the Case Study community and the theoretical frame, I thought how work in a sustainable society could be an "Infinite work of care".

This research shows that the work could undergo a transformation, already underway in the

reality of ecological communities. A reconceptualization that would lead human beings to desire their own expression but also, but not only, through work. However, a fundamental basic condition is the reconceptualization of work, as we have seen previously, outside the growth paradigm.

I imagined the work in a sustainable society, infinite, where this word implies a value linked to sustainability. This means that the work would have, as its main characteristic, an infinite sustainability, in other words a resilient work (Figure 4).

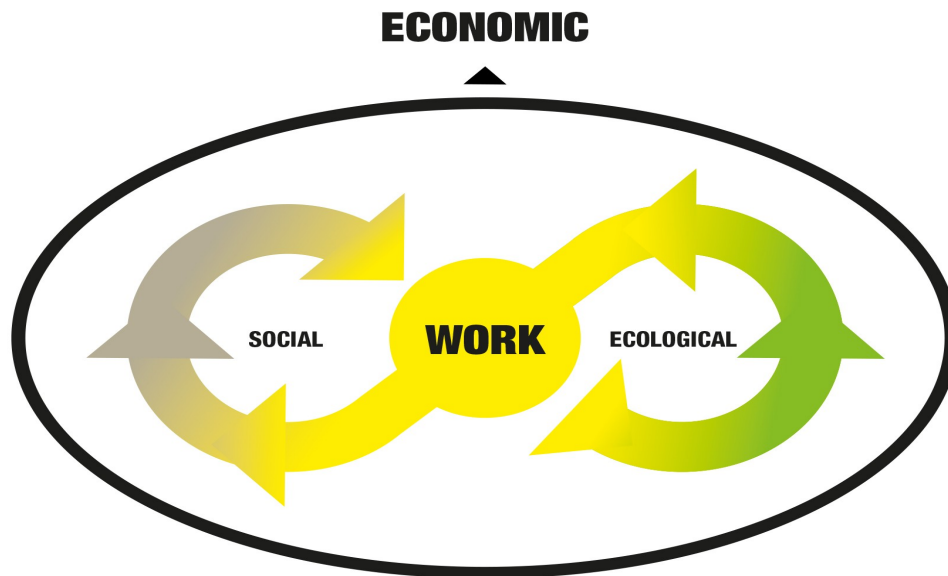


Figure 4; Source: Author.

To be infinite and resilient it must be inserted into a spiral of interactions between two important spheres, the fundamental spheres in a sustainable society that are the social and the ecological ones.

As I was able to see during the field research, all the work carried out within the Case Study community, and partly even those carried out outside the community (retribute), were works of care, completely. Care for the people around them, care for themselves, care for the environment, care for the present and the future. All these works in the Case Study community belong mainly to the social and ecological sphere and only partially to the economic sphere. That belonging to the economic sphere exists only because it is not yet a completely sustainable society, otherwise it would not be necessary.

This allows us to imagine that, in a sustainable society, the economic sphere could be out-

side the work system. Or rather, only consequently to this interaction and belonging of work with the social sphere and the ecological sphere, would the interaction with the economic sphere exist. So, the main difference is that the economic sphere is no longer, as in the paradigm of growth, the main dimension of interaction, but is only a dimension that benefits from the consequence of work as its main interactions.

Work, in a sustainable society, will be part of an economic sphere, but it will not be directly linked to it. Work will indeed influence the economic sphere but will not be directly affected. We will not work to respond to a need in the economic sphere, but to respond to a social and environmental need, which will have a positive impact and only as a consequence on the economic sphere, creating an "abundance". The work will instead be directly linked to the social sphere and to the ecological sphere, visible and tangible connection in every concrete work action.

Summarizing, the work will be based on the social sphere, which will focus on the well-being of humans and their consciousness, generating as input the freedom of working expression, understood as Art and ability to modify the material, (but it will not be the only way of human expression, it will only become one of the various forms of human experimentation), as output will instead generate the social need to deal with the environment, recognizing, with an ecological awareness, the interdependence between humans and nature, which is essential for the well-being of society, as well as of the ecosystem. This will generate an input to develop works, with the previous and essential social characteristics, but also sustainable, aimed at environmental protection and sustainability, generating an healthy and sustainable environment as output, a fertile ground where to develop society and its work, in an endless spiral of "Infinite work of care", where work will become a tool to achieve the common good, and this will be its role.

Conclusions

This dissertation proposed and developed a study to observe the reconceptualization of work in an eco-community. As we have seen in the chapter on the theoretical framework a reconceptualization of work is at the basis of a paradigm shift and a change of the dominant paradigm is essential for ecological and social issues. Thanks to field research carried out in a community located in Alentejo, Portugal, I was able to obtain and analyse data that led me to obtain information about the reconceptualization of work in the community and imagine how work could be in a sustainable society.

Finally, I can affirm that the reconceptualization of work within the Case Study community is a present and important theme and there is a considerable effort to reconceptualize work from a theoretical and practical point of view, also because the link between modern work and environmental degradation is recognized. Despite this, it is necessary to highlight that there are no recurrent discussions on the subject within the community and there is not an articulated, systematic and practical community organization of work. The principle of work emerges as a collective and communal "action", inalienable because it is necessary but carried out on the basis of common sense and not of duty. Certain aspects of the dogma of work therefore remain present, more in the individual sphere than in the community sphere, however, this "action" is far from placing work at the centre of life. This is still present, but in a mitigated way and is associated with the idea of joy. The interviewed members speeches on the subject point towards an ideal of liberation from wage labour, although some continue to earn income from work. The individual choice to work for money is not disputed by the community and its members, actually it is even implicitly assumed that access to some sources of finance (and thus to the capitalist system) is necessary, even if provisionally or punctually. In turn, investment in work is oriented towards obtaining "intrinsic rewards", namely "self-realization" arising from good work done, "in the interest of the work itself," the ability to put energy and skills into doing "meaningfull" things, as well as to achieve "altruistic values". In turn, extrinsic rewards - work as a source of money, status, professional and statutory promotion, and concomitantly social mobility - tend to be strongly undervalued. Everything involving uneasiness, suffering, exploitation at work tends to be rejected. In fact, individuals report that such experiences led them to abandon their previous professional activities. The work is also reconceptualized on the interaction of two main spheres, the social and the ecological, mainly as a work of care and it interacts with the economic sphere only for necessity and not for the desire for accumulation. In fact, the interaction with the economic sphere is due to the link still present with the capitalist system. This thought has given rise to the theoretical conception that work in a sustainable society could be based on the interaction of the social sphere and the ecological sphere, with total absence of interaction with the economic sphere. An infinite work of care, where the role of work will be to be a means to achieve common well-being.

Speaking of a hypothetical future research based on this study, it would be important to extend this research to other communities of different kinds and sizes to have a real and deep understanding of the contribution that eco-communities could have in experimenting new ways of reconceptualizing of work. It would be also interesting to develop a research that could compare different kinds of reconceptualization of work in different communities and understand where work

has characteristics more similar to how the work could be in a sustainable society. Plus, it could be interesting to understand why many communities do not talk about this key theme in their project of cultural change, addressing the issue only from a general point of view, linked to the whole economic sphere, that they claim they want to change.

Bibliography

Alcott, B. 2013. Should degrowth embrace the job guarantee? *Journal of Cleaner Production* 38: 56-60.

Alexander, S. 2012. Planned economic contraction: the emerging case for degrowth. *Environmental Politics* 21(3): 349–368.

Balliester T, Elsheikhi, A. 2018. *The Future of Work: A Literature Review*. Working paper n. 29 . University of Leeds. Research Department, International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Barro, R. & Martin, X. 1995. *Economic Growth*. New York. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Beckerman, W. 2002. A poverty reason: Sustainable Development and Economic Growth. Independent Institute. Oakland. CA.

Beder, S. 2000. *Selling the work ethic*. Scribe, Melbourne.

Borgna, Irene. 2010. *Profondo Verde*. Un'etica per l'ambiente tra decrescita e Deep Ecology. *Mimesis*.

Bronisław, Baczko. 1984. *Les imaginaires sociaux. Mémoire et espoirs collectifs*. Paris, Payot.

Carlsson, C. & Manning, F. 2010. *Nowtopia: Strategic Exodus?* Antipode Vol. 42 No. 4 2010 ISSN 0066-4812, pp 924–953

Chaves, Miguel. 2010. *Confrontos com o trabalho entre jovens advogados. As novas configurações da inserção profissional*. Instituto de Ciencias Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa.

Commissao Europeia. *Sicco Mansholt: agricultor, combatente da resistência e um verdadeiro europeu*. https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/sicco_mansholt_pt.pdf

D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis. 2015. *DEGROWTH: A Vocabulary for a New Era* (e-book). file:///C:/Users/Laura/Downloads/Degrowth_AVocabularyforaNewEra_E-Book.pdf

De Carvalho, Joao Eduardo Coin. 2002. "Imaginário e representações sociais." *Revista de Ciências Humanas*, Florianópolis: EDUFSC, Especial Temática, p.25-33. <file:///C:/Users/Laura/Downloads/25811-84218-1-PB.PDF>

Delendi, M.L. 2017. *SUSTAINABLE LIVING MODELS*. Proceedings of the 11th International

Conference on Urban Regeneration and Sustainability (Sustainable City 2016).

<https://www.witpress.com/Secure/ejournals/papers/SDP120417f.pdf>

Demaria, F. Schneider, F. Sekulova, F. Martinez-Alier, J. 2012. *What is Degrowth? From an Activist Slogan to a Social Movement*. Research & Degrowth (R&D) and Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA) https://www.degrowth.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/What_is_Degrowth_FDemia-2013_Env_Values-libre.pdf

De Moraes, Dênis. 1997. *Notas sobre o imaginário social e hegemonia cultural*.

<http://www.contracampo.uff.br/index.php/revista/article/viewFile/364/167>

Durand, G. 1997. *Estruturas Antropológicas do imaginário*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.

Foddy, William. 1997. *Como perguntar. Teoria e Prática da Construção de Perguntas em Entrevistas e Questionários*. Oeiras: Celta.

Foster, Karen. 2017. *Work ethic and degrowth in a changing Atlantic Canada*.

Fromm, Erich. 1960. *O medo a liberdade*. Tradução Octavio Alves Velho. Zahar Editores.

GEN. 2018. *GEN Annual Report 2018*. <file:///C:/Users/Laura/Downloads/2018%20GEN%20Annual%20Report%20-%20web%20resolution.pdf>

Gibbs, Laura. 2002. *Aesop's Fables. A new translation by Laura Gibbs*. Oxford University Press (World's Classics): Oxford.

Godard, P. 2010. *Contro il Lavoro*. Eleuthera.

Gorz, André. 1982. *Farewell to the Working Class*. An essay on Post-Industrial Socialism. Londres e Sidney. Pluto Press.

Gorz, André. 1985. *A Paths to Paradise*. On the Liberation from Work. Londres e Sydney. Pluto Press.

Gorz, André. 1989. *Critique of Economic Reason*. Londres, Verso.

Graham Turner, M. 2014. *"Is Global Collapse Imminent?" An Updated Comparison of The Limits to Growth with Historical Data*. Research Paper No. 4 August 2014.

http://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/MSSI-ResearchPaper-4_Turner_2014.pdf

Grupo Krisis. 1999. *Manifesto contra o trabalho*. Tradução José Paulo Vaz. Antígona.

Gusmeroli, Fausto. 2013. *Io sto con la cicala. Perché la formica è turbocapitalista*. Editore EMI.

Kelly, J.R. *Work and Leisure: A Simplified Paradigm*. *Journal of Leisure Research*. Pages 439-451 | Published online: 13 Dec 2017

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00222216.2009.11950183?needAccess=true>

Kozeny, G. 1995. Intentional Communities: Lifestyles Based on Ideals. In Fellowship for Intentional Communities (Ed.), *Communities Directory: A guide to cooperative living* (18-4 pages) Rutledge, MO: Fellowship for Intentional Community.

Kunze, Iris and Avelino, Flor (2015): Social Innovation and the Global Ecovillage Network. Research Report, TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169

Hoffmann, Maja. 2017. *Change put at work. A degrowth perspective on unsustainable work, postwork alternatives and politics*. Master thesis, Lund University Centre of Sustainability Studies.

Illich, Ivan. 1973. *Libertar o futuro*. Tradução Cardigos dos Reis, Publicações Dom Quixote.

Jackson, T. 2009. *Prosperity without Growth; Economics for a Finite Planet*.
<http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/unga13/prosperity.pdf>

Joan Martinez-Alier. 21 March 2014. . Conference Austerity, Stimulus or Post-Growth for Europe? Revisiting Sicco Mansholt's Vision. European Parliament in Brussels . <http://www.scp-responder.eu/events/conference>

La Fontaine, Jean. 1882. *The Fables of La Fontaine*. A New Edition, With Notes By J. W. M. Gibbs. Translated from French by Elizur Wright. E-Book <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7241/7241-h/7241-h.htm>

Latouche, Serge. 2005. *L'invention de l'économie*. Paris, Albin Michel.

Latouche, Serge. 2006. *O desafio do decrescimento*. Tradução de Antonio Viegas. Instituto Piaget.

Latouche, Serge. 2007. *Pequeno tratado do decrescimento sereno*. Tradução Victor Silva. Grupo Almedina.

Latouche, Serge. 2018. The Path to Degrowth for a Sustainable Society. In: Lehmann H. (eds) Factor X. Eco-Efficiency in Industry and Science, vol 32. Springer, Cham

Legros, Monneyron, Renard e Tacussel. 2007. *Sociologia do Imaginário*. Tradução de Eduardo Portanova Barros. Editora Medidional.

Maffesoli, Michel. 2001. "O imaginário é uma realidade". Entrevista, *Revista FAMECOS*. Porto Alegre nº 15, agosto 2001. <file:///C:/Users/Laura/Downloads/3123-10496-1-PB.pdf>

Mansholt, Marcuse, Morin e outros. 1972. *Ecologia/caso de vida ou de morte*. Tradução de Maria de Madre De Deus Pimenta De Souza. Moraes editores, Lisboa.

Marten, Gerard. 2001. *Human Ecology: Basic Concepts for Sustainable Development*. Earthscan Publications. London.

- Meadows, Donella e Dennis, Jorgen Randers, William W, Behrens III. 1973. Os limites do crescimento. Tradução Jorge Correia Cunha, José Manuel Liberato, Manuel Sebastiao e Maria Helena Cordeiro. Publicações Dom Quixote.
- Mèda, Dominique. 2010. *Le travail: une valeur en voie de disparation?* Paris: Flammarion.
- Meijering, L. Huigen, P. Van Hoven, B. 2007. *INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN RURAL SPACES*. Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie – 2007, Vol. 98, No. 1, pp. 42–52. 2007 by the Royal Dutch Geographical Society KNA. Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA.
- NEF, 2009. The Happy Planet Index 2.0, Why Good Lives Don't Have to Cost an Earth. New Economic Foundation. 3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH, UK. <http://www.neweconomics.org>.
- Nørgård, J.S. 2009. Avoiding rebound through a steady state economy. In: Herring, H., Sorrell, S. (Eds.), Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption. The Rebound Effect. Palgrave Macmillan, UK.
- Noon, M. Blyton, P. Morrell, K. 1997. *The Realities of Work: Experiencing Work and Employment in Contemporary Society*.
- Nørgård, J.S. 2011. Happy degrowth through more amateur economy. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 38: 61-70.
- Pickerill, J.M. 2015. Building the commons in eco-communities. In: Kirwan, S., Dawney, L. and Brigstocke, J., (eds.) Space, Power and the Commons. Routledge , London .
- Purdey, S. 2010. *Economic Growth, the Environment, and the International Relations: The Growth Paradigm*. Routledge. New York.
- Rensi, Giuseppe. 2012. *Contro il lavoro. Saggio sull'attività più odiata dall'uomo*. Gwynplaine edizioni – Camerano(AN).
- Rockstrom, J.et al. 2009. *A safe operating space for humanity*. Nature.
- Rodari, Gianni. 1980. *"Alla formica". Filastrocche in cielo e in terra*.Turin: Einaudi.
- Russuell, Bertrand. 1963. *Elogio dell'ozio*. Traduzione Elisa Marpicati. TEA Milano.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1983. *La conquista della felicità*. Traduzione Giuliana Pozzo Galeazzi. TEA Milano.
- Serra, Helena. 2008. "Orientação metodológica", Serra Helena, Médicos e oder: Transplantação Hepática e Tecnocracias, Lisboa, Fundação Económicas, Almedina, pp. 132-151. https://elearning.fcsh.unl.pt/acient/pluginfile.php/283252/mod_resource/content/3/Serra%2C%20Helena%20-%20Orienta%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20metodol%C3%B3gica.pdf
- Souza Martins, H. 2004. "Metodologia qualitativa de pesquisa". Martins Universidade de São

Paulo. <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/ep/v30n2/v30n2a07/pdf>

UNDP. 2009. *Human Development Report*. www.undp.or

Van den Bergh, J.C.J.M., *Environment versus growth — A criticism of “degrowth” and a plea for “a-growth”*, *Ecol. Econ.* (2010), doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.09.035
https://www.wachstumimwandel.at/wp-content/uploads/van-den-Bergh_2010_Degrowth-versus-a-growth-EcolEcon.pdf

Weber, M. 2001(1930). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. Routledge Classics PDF.

Weeks, K. 2011. *The problem with work: feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics, and postwork imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Willis, K. 2005. "Theories and Practices of Development".
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238357282_Theories_and_Practices_of_Development

WWF. 2016. *Living Planet Report 2016. Risk and resilience in a new era*.
https://www.footprintnetwork.org/content/documents/2016_Living_Planet_Report_Lo.pdf

Appendix

Document n.1

INFORMED, CLARIFIED AND FREE CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Study Title: The Role of Work in a Sustainable Society

Framework: These interviews are being carried out as part of a master's thesis on Human Ecology, which is being developed at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Explanation of the study:

The research, developed with questionnaire and interviews, will be conducted with members of different communities, with the aim of knowing their position about a new conceptualization and organization of work.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher guarantees the confidentiality and exclusive use of the data collected for the present study; promises anonymity (no registration of identification data). The person responsible for the study undertakes to safeguard the information in safety and not to cede the information collected to third parties. By agreeing to participate in this study, you are granting your treatment and use anonymously and aggregated for academic purposes.

Identification of the researcher:

The researcher Laura Lanzoni, student of Human Ecology, e-mail laura.lanzoni85@gmail.com

Signature of the person interviewed

Date

..... / /

Document n. 2

Questionnaire

I would like to thank you for accepting to participate in this interview, which will be realized for writing my master thesis, for the course of Human Ecology. The interviews will be conducted with members of different communities, with the aim of knowing their position about a new conceptualization and organization of work. The questions, even the most controversial ones, were not formulated with the intent to highlight possible contradictions and to raise criticisms, but rather to create a pure in-depth knowledge on the subject. Your name and the name of your community will not be shown in the research.

Questionnaire

- What is your name? _____
- What is your age? _____
- What is your nationality? _____
- What level of education did you complete? _____
- What is the name of your community? _____
- How long have you been living in this community? _____
- Can you confirm that this community aims to develop a sustainable society and a cultural change that differs from the dominant capitalist ideology? o Yes o No
- There is a specific ideology or movement behind the community? o Yes o No

- If yes, which one? _____
- Have you ever lived in any others communities? o Yes o No
- For how long? _____
- What is your role in the community? _____
- Do you work? _____ o Yes o No
- If yes, in exchange of money or other? o Money o Other: _____
- Outside or inside the community? o Outside o Inside
- In a permanent or sporadic way? o Permanent o Sporadic
- Did you ever worked before to join the community? o Yes o No
- If yes, what was your work/works? _____
- Is the experience you had with this work/works related in some how to the decision to move in the community? o Yes o No o Partially
- Why? _____
- Did your parents ever lived in communities? o Yes o No
- What is/was their work? _____

Thank you for your collaboration

Document n. 3

What is "name of the the community"?

- How was your life before the community and why did you decide to live here?
- How did you get access to the community?
- Did you had to pay a fee?
- What is the community's primary goal?
- What do you think are the 3 most important subjects for your community?

The work dogma existence is one of the main needs to the function of the capitalist process. In many academic texts, rethinking work seems to be a crucial point in being able to develop a sustainable society and a sustainable life.

- Is work and a new conceptualization and organization of it a subject in the community?
- How is this topic developed in the community?
(Do you discuss it with other members? The subject is present in formation courses?)
- On a scale of 1 to 10 how important is this subject in your community?
- Do you think that this topic would deserves more attention or less attention?
- For you, how important is this subject in a scale of 1 to 10?
- Why this classification?
- Did you ever consider work as a subject connected to the environmental degradation?
- Why?
- In your opinion, can a societal change towards sustainability succeed without a transformation of work and society based around work?

- Can work be conceptualised and organised in a different way?
- Exist the concept of work in your community and how is it work organized?
- Work in the community is just possible for the members?
- Do you use the word "work" or you define this activity in a different way?
- What is work mean for you?
- What kind of work do you do?
- Why are you working?
- What role has now work in your life and what role work had in your life before to join the community?
- What is the main objective and purpose of your work?
- How would you describe your work with 3 adjectives?

Now, I would like to ask if you are satisfied with the following aspects regardings your work, giving an answer on a scale of 1 to 10.

a) Free time

- Can you explain me your classification?
- Do you ever feel is missing time for your self?
- Do you ever feel a moral guilt when you are not working and taking time for your self?
- Do you feel you need to be productive?

b) Carrer

- Can you explain me your classification?
- Do you feel to have working ambition?
- Carrer is for you an objective?
- Why?
- Is your work hierarchic?
- Do you feel any kind of competition in your work?

c) Money

- Can you explain me your classification?
- How do you sustain your living conditions? Is your work payed?

d) Creativity

- Can you explain me your classification?
- Do you feel you can express your creativity?
- What does your typical working day look like?

Problems and controversial issues

- If you have a salary, where does the money come from?
- Does this create a conflict in you (ideological)? If it does, why?
- Don't you think that a fee to enter in the community, payable after having worked in a capitalist society, goes against the community ideology?

- In the point 12 and 14 of your constitution you mention specifically working with joy. What does this mean, can you elaborate?

- In the point 37 and 38 of your constitution you also mention the necessity to pay fees. How do you manage the obligation of working to pay fees and being able to have a joyful attitude at work at the same time?

We are in a moment of transition where compromising with the dominant society is really hard to avoid, but imagine living in a world without capitalism, in a sustainable society.

- Could the work that you are currently doing exist in a completely sustainable society, without capitalism?

- In this case, what would it change?

- Ideally, how would work be in a fully sustainable society?

(what would the main characteristics be?)

- Can you describe it with 3 adjective?
- Would this still be called work?
- If not, how you would rename it?

Document n.4

Constitution of the Community Version 2

Constitution of the Community

Document History

Version 1 - Read to the first constitution meeting of 11 February 2014

Version 2 - For presentation to the third constitution meeting of 11 July. It incorporates the changes to the VISION AND AIMS agreed at the second constitution meeting in Feb 2014. It includes some glossary and additional sentences (shown by italics)

Glossary: "Community", "We" and "Our" refer to the Core Group (see 22.) and other people living on the community's land who agree with this constitution.

1. VISION AND AIMS

2. The community land and buildings shall be used for the well-being of all beings.
3. The land and buildings shall not be held in private ownership.
4. We are aiming for practical and social sustainability.
5. On the practical level, we go for sustainable agriculture, restoration of wildlife and sustainable economy.
6. On the social level, we aim for a trustful, open-hearted ambiance in mutual support.
7. We want to step out of hierarchical patterns and support each other's full empowerment and potential. (For this we work with changing leadership).
8. We commit to work on the issues around Love.
9. We support those who wish to practise free sexuality.
10. We aim to maintain a spirit of Hospitality.
11. Creating income, private and communal, fitting to the aims of the community is welcome.
12. We want to create a joyful attitude to work.
13. We trust that every one gives in his/her best.
14. We wish that all our community work is done in joy.
15. Collective work is requested from time to time from members and guests etc.
16. We commit to a minimum of 2 weekly meetings - one for practical topics and one for social topics.
17. We commit to install one, or better two, intensive times a year to deepen trust, celebrate, and to find deeper decisions.
18. We aim for social and spiritual development as individuals and as a group.
19. We commit to communicate about our personal and interpersonal issues, and to listen to, and consider, feedback.
20. We commit to take part in the communal work - dishwashing, garden, cleaning etc.
21. DECISION-MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

22. The Core Group assumes the full governance of the community.
23. Decisions are made by consent of the whole core group - provisionally when someone is absent.
24. The Core Group aims for transparency in its financial governance and also in the personal financial situation of each member.
25. We wish the decision making process to be as open and as transparent as possible.
26. Decisions are written down and transparent.
27. All Core Group members have a voice and vote in all decisions.
28. Depending on the issues in hand, the Core Group will seek to include other community members in the decision-making process.
29. The Core Group decides on the different modes of living in the community - visiting, travelling members, professionals, pilgrims, lost souls etc.
30. The Core Group will maintain Associação as the legal entity to own our land nonprivately and to enter into contracts.
31. The Core Group will be open to review the constitution with the whole community during the "intensive" times, and has the power to change the constitution.
32. HOW TO BECOME A CORE GROUP MEMBER.
33. All Core Group members are expected to agree with the constitution.
34. People who want to join the Core Group must apply.
35. You will then be expected to live with the community for one year continuously.
36. After having found a mutual "yes", the probationary member will be accepted as a Core Group member.
37. A new Core Group member is expected to contribute to the capital financing of the community as decided by the group.
38. To cover the running costs of the community and Associacao every member and probationary member is expected to contribute a monthly amount as agreed by all members.
39. LEAVING THE CORE GROUP.
40. To leave the Core Group one needs only to communicate that wish.
41. You will get your capital contribution back as soon as possible, and at least within two years -providing the existence of the community is not endangered.
42. A leaving member has no claim to any other contributions, assets or income of the community.
43. EXPULSION OF A MEMBER FROM THE CORE GROUP.
44. In case of prolonged failure to work together in harmony, the Core Group may expel a member by consensus minus the person concerned.
45. This procedure would be used only after getting the help of an external mediator to solve the disharmony.
46. An expelled member will get their contribution back in the same way as any leaving member.
47. HOSPITALITY
48. We appreciate guests in the spirit of Hospitality.
49. We offer first time guests 3 days accommodation for free.
50. Relatives, lovers and close friends of the Core Group are always welcome.
51. PRIVATE ACCOMODATION

52. Community members may build private accommodation only on conditions agreed by the Core Group and must follow the building guidelines set by the community.
53. Passing on of private accommodation when a member is leaving can be done only with the agreement of the Core Group.
54. To avoid the problem for the community of finding a buyer for an expensive hut the community sets a maximum recoverable value: a member must be prepared to accept only this maximum recoverable value when leaving.

Constitution of the Community Version 2

Document n.5

*** WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY ***

We like to share our space with our guests. Please be aware, that it is our home and not a public place. So we ask you not to bring or invite your friends or other people, unless you got the OK from your host. Please ask if you want to visit a private living place of someone..

HOST

You will get a community member to be your host, who will explain the practical things and answer your questions. Make sure that you have a host.

LANGUAGE

English is the only common language of our community. Please be aware and speak english in the communitarian places.

MEETINGS

We ask our guests to join the practical meeting on wednesdays 17.30 in the wooden house, where we organize practical things of our community life and where you will get a space to talk about things you want to share with the community.

WATER

Water is a scarce resource in Alentejo, please don't waste it. As we use our waste- water for watering the garden we use only natural shampoo and soap. Please keep your shower as short as possible.

FIRE RISK !

Alentejo gets very hot, dry, and windy. Just the smell of smoke will seriously concern our neighbours. Just a small spark from a garden tool can start a fire that rapidly gets out of control – we have experienced it. Sometimes large areas get terribly burnt, and this is a very sad sight.

For these reasons we must insist that you...

- Do not make fires - it's also legally forbidden from April to October (15.10).
- Do not use candles and incense sticks outside for rituals.
- Don't use candles in tents - we know they are lovely but it's not worth the risk...
- Don't walk around with your burning cigarette! Please check twice that it is completely extinguished.

Please also take care by ...

- Tidy up matches & lighters you see lying around - kids do play with them.
- Tidy up glasses or glass bottles you see lying around – they can focus the hot sunlight.
- Take care with the solar cooker (parabolic reflector) – it can ignite wooden handles of pots and dry grass around. Point it downwards when not in use.

COOKING & KITCHEN ORGANISATION

Our kitchen is vegetarian. Please don't bring meat or fish.

Apart from Lunch, there are no organised meals – so just make yourself at home and help yourself.

Lunchtime: If you have volunteered to help cooking, please come to the kitchen at 11.00.

Lunch will be around ± 13:00. We have this meal together.

There is a lunch bell: Two rings of the bell – food will be ready in 10 minutes.

Three rings – please be present in the kitchen, the cooking team will present the food.

Cleaning: If you have volunteered to dishwash – this also includes wiping the surfaces of tables,

cooker and oven. Especially on hot days leftovers will go bad fast; Please put them into the fridge. Also the cats like to lick everything, please cover all outside standing food.

COOKING & KITCHEN ORGANISATION

In general: Please wash all the utensils, plates, glasses you have used, plus 2 more items, as soon as possible and wipe up any mess you have made.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS

We don't encourage the use of drugs. For those who have to smoke we provide two smoking areas. Please smoke only there. We like to drink alcohol or smoke joints only on special occasions like birthdays, party or shabat.

SACRED VALLEY & MEDITATION

A platform invites to meditate in lovely nature. Please don't camp in the valley and respect the silence.

Remember our ban on all fire, incense and candles!

RUBBISH & RECYCLING

We separate our waste in provided containers. Please ask your host.

WORKING

We are trying to undo the prevailing cultural myth that work is something unpleasant that one has to do. So our rule is: Enjoy what you do! Otherwise find something you like to do.

There are special sub groups dealing with gardening, building, cooking, cleaning etc.

Please ask your host who you should speak to about the activities that interest you.

TOOLS:

Please communicate if you want to use tools and bring them always back to their place.

SOME HELPFUL INFORMATION:

- Dormitory: The sound insulation of the dormitory floor is very poor. Normal conversation can be quite clearly heard downstairs. Please try to be as quiet as possible. And sorry about noisy kids below!

Let the cushions, blankets or mattresses inside the dormitory – please do not use them outside.

- Compost toilets – toilet paper should go into toilet – plastic stuff and tampons must go in bucket beside. And please close the lid after use otherwise the air flows not through the compost pile and the process is disturbed.

YOUR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION:

We ask for 10 € per day (7€ for portuguese).

Your host will do the accounting with you. Donations are also always welcome!

GUEST BOOK & CONTACT:

Before you go – leave us your contact details or feedback in the Guest Book.

If you tell people about this community who may want to visit us please ask them to email us first.

Document n.6

Photos I took in the Case Study community



