



At the expense of others?

participant's booklet

KAUZ – Laboratory for Climate, Work and Future is an ERASMUS+ project co-funded by the European Commission under the project number: **2020-1-DE02-KA204-007671**.

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Common Future e.V.- Germany

Universität Siegen – Germany

Periskop - Kollektiv für solidarischen und ökologischen Wandel – Austria

Libera Università di Bolzano – Italy

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This booklet was edited by Eliza Zimmermann on the behalf of KAUZ.

In this workshop, we shed light on the modern, often invisible structures of exploitation that constitute an essential part of Middle European prosperity and well-being. To do so, we work with the concept of the Imperial Mode of Living (Wissen/Brand, 2017) which provides an explanatory approach for this contradictory observation above.

Although there is an increasing knowledge about the climate crisis and social inequality, both are coming to a head.

How is this possible, and why does change take so long?

The objectives of this workshop are:

- To offer a system-critical perspective on social and ecological problems by introducing the concept of the Imperial Mode of Living
- To reflect and discuss one's entanglements in the Imperial Mode of Living
- To identify opportunities to oppose the Imperial Mode of Living

We explore these questions by using the example of car mobility, which the KAUZ-video about the Imperial Mode of Living outlines. Based on this video, we discuss the key messages of the concept. In a second step, we link the concept to our daily life experiences and ask the crucial question of how we are involved in the Imperial Mode of Living and where we can oppose it. The workshop consists of a mix of audio-visual input, discussion, reflection and group exercises.

Activities

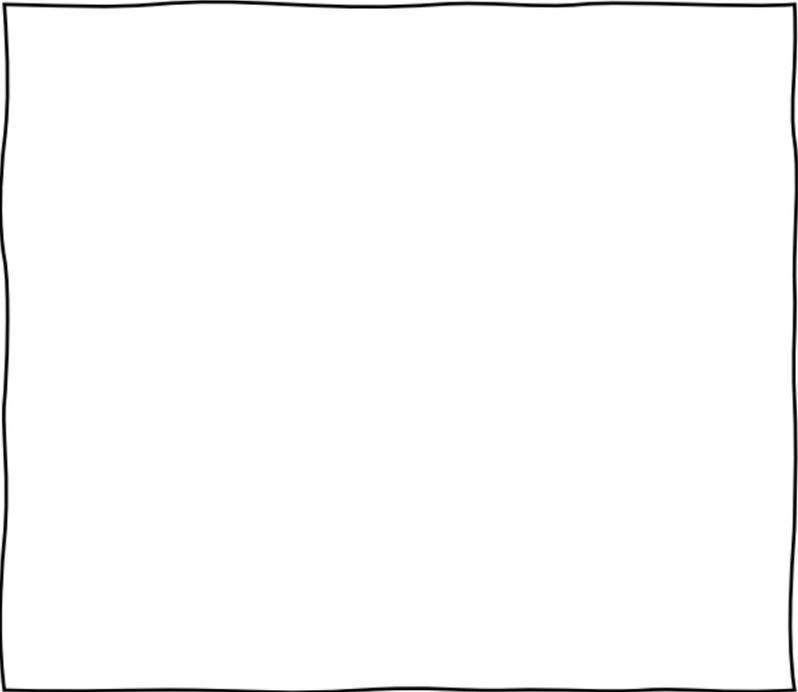
Welcome	<i>9:00-9:10</i>	<i>10'</i>
A reason for hope	<i>9:10-9:25</i>	<i>15'</i>
Introduction to the concept of the Imperial Mode of Living	<i>9:25-10:10</i>	<i>15'</i>
Break	<i>10:10-10:20</i>	<i>10'</i>
Conversation café	<i>10:20-11:00</i>	<i>40'</i>
Unlearning routines	<i>11:00-11:05</i>	<i>5'</i>
The Imperial Mode of Living in my daily life	<i>11:05-11:50</i>	<i>45'</i>
Wrap up	<i>11:50-12:00</i>	<i>10'</i>

1 A reason for hope

What is your name and pronoun?

How are you today?

What was the last thing/event/situation that gave me hope for a future based on solidarity?



2 Imperial Mode of Living



Conceptual introduction with a video

A. While watching the video, take notes focusing on the following two questions:

1. What are the key messages about the Imperial Mode of Living you got from the video?
2. What questions or discussion points do you have?

After the video you'll discuss your ideas in pairs and together collect three points for question 1. and two for question 2.

Your notes:

B. Together with your seat neighbour create three statements about the key messages of the video. Write down each on **separate index card of the same colour**.

C. Together with your seat neighbour chose two questions or discussion points you find the most interesting. Use the two index cards of the second colour to write these down.

Further readings on the Imperial Mode of Living:

Brand, Ulrich and Wissen, Marcus (2017): The Imperial Mode of Living. Everyday Life and the Ecological Crisis of Capitalism. Verso.

Brand, Ulrich and Wissen, Marcus (2017): The Imperial Mode of Living. In book: Routledge Handbook of Ecological Economics (pp.152-161)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316717147_The_Imperial_Mode_of_Living

I.L.A.-Kollektiv (2018): At the expense of others. oekom.

<https://www.oekom.de/buch/at-the-expense-of-others-9783962381561>

3 Conversation Café

A. Let's have a look together on the clusters of question cards. Do you have any suggestions for regrouping the discussion points?

B. Gather around the topic cluster that you are the most interested to discuss. Form groups of three or four.

C. Find the structure of the Conversation Café on the next two pages.

A conversation cafe takes place in several rounds and lasts precisely 22 minutes. It follows a specific structure, which ensures that each person gets the chance to speak during the exercise. Make sure that you talk in the same order during rounds 2, 3 and 5.

Don't forget to designate a **timekeeper** in your group! The timekeeper is entitled to intervene if group members run overtime.

After the 22 minutes are over come back to gather as the entire group to share the primary outcomes of your group's café.

Round	Task/ guiding question	Mode	Time for groups of 3 (in min.)	Time for groups of 4 (in min.)
1	Individual reflection on the question	In silence	3	2
2	What is the first thing that comes to my mind when I think about this question?	1 min. / person	3	4
3	What do I think after the others have spoken?	1 min. / person	3	4
4	Open discussion	Whoever wants to speak can speak	10	8
5	Each person shares what they take away from the conversation	1 min. / person	3	4
			22	22

4 Unlearning routines

- let your arms hang relaxed at the sides of your body
- cross your arms
- take a look at the back of your hands to see which one is on top
- let your arms hang relaxed again at the sides of your body
- cross your arms
- take a look at the back of your hands to see which one is on top

Did you have the same hand on top twice?

"Almost all participants had the same hand on top twice. That makes sense - we usually cross our arms when we need to focus on other things. Once we find a position where our arms are good, we do it always the same way - after all, it would be a big waste of our brainpower to question how I cross my arms every time. Such routines are effective and allow us to focus on other things. As long as behaviours turn out to be effective, there is no reason to question them. However, in the context of the major crises of our time, our social routines do no longer fit. Developing new routines is an important step towards a solidary mode of living. That's why we're now practising breaking our routines."

- now cross you arms the other way around

Doing this usually feels unfamiliar and a little strange.

See, it is possible to change our habitual everyday actions? It might take a bit of thinking and possibly a few failed attempts before you get the hang of it; it may also feel unfamiliar and irritating at first; but it is absolutely possible, it is worth trying.

Detailed instructions to the exercise are on page 14 in "The system thinking playbook for climate change" (2017). URL: <http://klimamediathek.de/wp-content/uploads/giz2011-0588en-playbook-climate-change.pdf>

5 The Imperial Mode of Living in my daily life

A. Walk around in the room in silence, read and think about the questions on the paper sheets, and write your thoughts onto them. Feel free to react in written form to statements of other participants and in this way, start short written dialogues.

B. After 20 minutes, stop writing and go around to read all what is written.

C. Gather as the entire group and share your ideas in an open discussion.

The 6 questions:

Where do I benefit from the Imperial mode of Living in my life?

Where do I suffer from the Imperial mode of Living in my life?

What makes me stick to the Imperial Mode of Living? Inside myself (doctrines, convictions etc.)

What makes me stick to the Imperial Mode of Living? From the outside (external expectations, structures etc.)

Where do I already oppose the Imperial Mode of Living?

Where do I already experience elements of a solidary mode of living in my life?

Space for extra notes

