
Foreword

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The *International Journal of Environment, Workplace, and Employment* (IJEWE) provides a refereed international forum to discuss and analyse the impact that achieving ecological sustainability will have on unemployment and the nature of the workplace, industry structure, and future job types. There are three main reasons why a journal such as IJEWE is needed. First, it is clear that many of the policy prescriptions being put forward to reduce unemployment or, better still, to achieve full employment, stand in stark contrast to the majority of policy initiatives being promoted to achieve ecological sustainability. On the one hand, there are people most concerned with humankind's supposed path to ecological destruction who are yelling loud and clear for reductions in the rate at which the economies of the world are growing. Indeed, the majority of these people are convinced that we must make the inevitable transition to a steady-state or non-growing economy. On the other hand, there are people who are putting forward growth-based policy initiatives in the belief that they are necessary to eliminate unemployment.

Second, in spite of this policy conflict, very little effort is being expended to reconcile these two crucial policy objectives. Third, while there are many academic journals that focus on employment and labour market issues, and a great deal more that deal with environmental matters, there is no journal primarily devoted to reconciling the potential conflict between the sustainability and full employment goals. With the advent of IJEWE, it is hoped that this policy dilemma can receive the attention it deserves and thus lead to viable policy solutions.

The general flavour of IJEWE is captured by the papers included in this Inaugural Issue. The first paper is an introductory essay that outlines, in some detail, why the potential conflict between the sustainability and full employment goals has emerged. In doing so, it lays the foundation upon which the editorial policy of the journal is based. Also teased out are the various issues and policy areas that need to be addressed in order to achieve both full employment and ecological sustainability (see the subject coverage on the inside of the front cover).

The second paper by Lintott explores the relationship between ecological, consumption, and employment issues. In view of the ecological limits to continuing growth, Lintott believes full employment – in the sense of 35 plus hours of work per week – must be reconsidered and redefined. Lintott argues that reducing the number of hours a person works in a week is not only beneficial to the environment, it is beneficial to human well-being. As such, Lintott demonstrates that the redistribution of desirable forms of employment across the labour force need not involve a falsely perceived compromise between the environment and human development.

In the third paper, Forstater argues that modern capitalism not only fails to achieve full employment, it does not ensure ecological sustainability or a sufficient number of high quality jobs. To achieve all three objectives, Forstater outlines a Public Sector Employment program based on the principles of functional finance. In this sense, Forstater's paper is somewhat different to the first two papers in that it outlines a specific public policy initiative to deal with the core issue addressed by IJEWE.

The fourth paper by Lawn also outlines some potential policy initiatives to reconcile the conflict between the sustainability and full employment objectives. Some of the measures discussed include:

- policies specifically aimed at severing the institutionalised GDP-employment link
- ecological tax reform – a revenue-neutral tax package involving a reduction in taxes on 'goods' such as labour, income, wages, and profits and an increase in taxes and charges on such 'bads' as resource depletion and pollution
- a Basic Income to encourage workers to reduce their hours of employment and/or exit the labour force altogether
- a government-financed Job Guarantee to absorb all remaining unemployed workers (i.e., employer of last resort).

These policy measures are considered in the light of a standard macroeconomic model that includes an 'environmental equilibrium' (EE) curve. Serving as an ecological Plimsoll Line for the economy, the EE curve reveals the limits placed on policy makers in achieving full employment once sustainability concerns are taken on board. Resolving both goals requires a range of well-crafted and coordinated policy measures.

Making the transition to ecological sustainability will undoubtedly require a structural shift in the various resource types used to fuel the economic process. Of course, it is the potential employment effect of the shift in resource type reliance that is of great concern to some observers. Although it matters most what happens to employment levels at the macroeconomic level, Diesendorf's paper suggests, at least in Australia, that net job losses ought not to result from a shift away from coal-generated electricity to wind-generated electricity. To the contrary, Diesendorf's study indicates that total employment should rise. What's more, new wind-generated electricity projects can boost employment in regions traditionally dominated by coal-based activities where, for some time in Australia, significant job losses have been occurring. Diesendorf's paper is an example of how one small element of the transition to a sustainable economy can boost employment levels and assist in a nation's regional development process.

The following paper by Manresa and Sancho involves the estimation of sectoral energy intensities and CO₂ emissions for the Catalonian economy (Spain). By simulating a 10% improvement in efficiency, Manresa and Sancho show that the total emissions of CO₂ generated by the Catalonian economy would dramatically fall. Despite limitations associated with the exercise conducted – which are outlined by the authors – it is quite evident that a significantly improved environmental performance can be achieved without causing serious economic harm. While this paper does not directly deal with the employment issue, it is clear from Manresa and Sancho's paper, that important first steps towards achieving ecological sustainability need not automatically result in a net loss of employment.

In the last paper, Rosenbluth and Victor employ a simple Keynesian macroeconomic model to show that a non-growing Canadian economy – primarily designed to avoid environmental damage – can be achieved along with full employment, no poverty, and no government deficit. Rosenbluth and Victor point out that the implementation of the necessary policies to achieve this profoundly more desirable outcome are likely to encounter severe socio-political obstacles that will need to be overcome if the dual objectives of ecological sustainability and full employment are to be achieved.

As one can probably gather from this Foreword, the papers in this Inaugural Issue constitute a small sample of the policy matters I hope to see addressed in IJEWE. While upcoming issues of IJEWE will be set aside to deal with specific policy matters, I look forward to the receipt of papers that shed new light on how the sustainability and full employment objectives can be reconciled. I cordially invite all people interested in resolving this policy dilemma to become engaged in the discussion and to join me and the Editorial Board on this new and fruitful journey.