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A background paper for a ' manifesto on sustainability' directed to all state leaders participating in the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, November 28 - December 12, 2015

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1 Introduction

1.1 The rationale of the paper

In December 2015 the French Government will host the United Nations Climate Change (COP21) Summit in Paris of representatives of 196 countries. The objective is to reach an agreement with all participating nations to reduce carbon emissions as the most important cause of climate change.[2] Its importance is self-evident, although it would also need to incorporate the highly questionable topic of nuclear energy production and other sources of climate pollution. Nevertheless it will not be a conference designing a comprehensive approach for stimulating development toward (overall) sustainability. This background paper argues that the carbon emissions and the resulting climate change are currently treated as a

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[1] This paper is underlined by studies of Des Gasper, Alan Walker, Tim Cadman, Andrew Crabtree, Ian Gough, Ka Lin, Dave Gordon, Peter Herrmann, Marco Ricceri. Vyacheslav Bobkov
[2] United Nations Climate Change Conference (2015) (http://en.wikipedia-org/wiki/2015_United_Nations_Climate_c).

stand-alone aspect, whereas these should be incorporated in comprehensive policies to defend overall sustainability as central challenge for all people.

Climate change will not cease if we are unable to reach agreement on politics and policies addressing all aspects of overall sustainability. There are several explanations for this. First, the current dominant way of life demands high energy use and does and will lead - next to carbon emissions – to many other forms of pollution (a socio-cultural argument). Second, the United Nations' rightly support for the average improvement of living conditions worldwide including those of the growing world population will without such agreement inevitably add to the effects of all these forms of pollution (a socio-cultural argument as well). Third, under current trends this will also lead to an irreversible pollution of oceans and an exhaustion of resources, including severe deforestation (a socio-environmental argument). Fourth, current forms of global oriented governance are inadequate to face the new challenges concerning overall sustainability, also due to increasing political contradictions expressed in serious conflicts and an independent space for financial-economic interests, ignoring human dignity, social justice, solidarity and equal value of people all over the world (a socio-political argument).[3] Fifth, this will pave the way for a reinforcement socio-economic disparities and related migration-flows (a socio-economic argument) and as causes of ew conflicts (a socio-political argument).[4] These issues transcend the consequences of the current energy production systems and will function in their turn as drivers of climate change as well. On the eve of the Rio+20 Conference on sustainability in June 2012, Gro Harlem Brundtland criticized therefore national governments all over the world for "*refusing to make the transformative changes needed to resolve the global sustainability crisis (…) [A] transition to a safe and prosperous future is possible, but will require the full use of humanity's extraordinary capacity for innovation and creativity*".[5]

Argued is from the side of the International Social Science Council, the UNESCO and the OECD (see sixth section) that the development toward sustainability requires a fundamental change of societal processes which underlie current institutions and structures, human conventions, preferences and behaviours.[6] This paper stresses therefore the need to

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[3] This refers to the four normative points of departure of the social quality approach, see; W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A.C. Walker (eds) (2001), *'Social Quality: A Vision for Europe* ' (The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International).
[4] T. Cadman (2011), ' *Quality and Legitimacy of Global Governance; Case Lessons from Forestry'*, (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan), and: T. Cadman (2012), 'Evaluating the Quality and Legitimacy of Global Governance: A Theoretical and Analytical Approach', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 4-24.
[5] G. H. Brundtland (2012), 'Earth Agonistes', *International Herald Tribune*, June 19:8.
[6] International Social Science Council (ISSC), UNESCO and OECD (2013*), 'World Social Science Report 2013; Changing Global Environments'*, (Paris: ISSC/UNESCO/OECD).

broaden our attention on the environmental dimensions to also include the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions. The objective is to research their **interconnection** and to understand the **interrelationships** of the multiple processes in and between these four dimensions which are essential to enable overall sustainability. This will imply also the constitution of indicators which are applicable to all four dimensions in order to understand the interrelationships. In general sense this is missing today. Since in the near future around 75% of the earth's population will be living in an **urban context**, this interconnectedness will especially take place in this context as the main space of the production and reproduction relationships of people. Again in general sense the role of the urban context in sustainability discourses is underdeveloped as well. But politics aiming at 'sustainable urban development' - including those regarding employment, housing, securing living conditions and livelihoods, public health, education, the position of migrants, older people etc. and new information and communications technologies [7] - are crucial for 'development toward overall sustainability. This will also imply a fundamental change of perspective. Thus far all these policy areas are usually approached as entities sui generis. But a change of education., security systems, employment etc should be understood as pillars of sustainable urban development as an main aspect of the development toward sustainability.

This paper aims to lead to a **manifesto** inviting state leaders participating in the Paris conference to support the academic world in elaborating new forms of cross-disciplinary approaches transcending current fragmentation and stagnation. Preliminary arguments were formulated by a Dutch think tank – supported by an international audience – in a document on behalf of the Rio+20 conference on sustainability in June 2012.[8] Innovative approaches are needed for a more rigorous and comprehensive analyses of the interrelationships of processes determining the 'development toward sustainability', to build up a globally carried approach that is complementary to the accent on the environmentally research carried out so far. As will be explained many arguments for this can implicitly be derived from the 'World Science Report 2013' by the International Social Sciences Council, the UNESCO and the OECD

1.2   *The content of the paper*

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[7] C. Wallace (2012), 'Can Information and Communications Technology Enhance Social Quality', *International Journal of Social Quality,* Vol. 2 (2), pp. 98-117.
[8] J. van Renswoude, L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann et all (2012), ' *Development toward Sustainability: The Need for a comprehensive Conceptual and Methodological Framework for new Politics and Policies: a Social Quality Perspective',* (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, Working Paper Series nr. 11, www.socialquality.org).

Section two of this paper refers to some relevant path-breaking outcomes of the International Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) fifth Report [9] and connects these with the Brundtland comment in 2012. Also the need to incorporate the urban surrounding is stressed. Furthermore the paper summarises a number of new pathways to reduce carbon emissions as a result of current negotiations between the USA and China. The world's top two emitters have finally stepped up, announcing concrete climate commitments in a joint statement. This is an important and stimulating happening. Finally, this exploration will demonstrate the need for new governance standards at global level, broadening the perspective to include the interconnections of the environmental, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions.

Thanks to the inspiring ICCP fifth Report, the paper's third section is dedicated to various environmental issues as point of prior reference. These issues may function as arguments to focus on complex societal processes caused by human interferences. It presents - by referring to the research of a manifold of globally operating institutes - a short overview of the effects of global warming, the rate of sea-level rising, marine biodiversity and ocean pollution, the ongoing process of deforestation and the ecological footprint, arguing that the current production and reproduction relationships also lead to an increase of carbon emissions.

The fourth section is dedicated to the urban context which is, as said above, relatively neglected in much of the sustainability and climate change discourses. The paper refers to the global work by the Italian Aldo Della Rocca Foundation, the UN-Habitat, UNEP and UNDP-China. It also discusses recent outcomes of China-EU research about models for citizens' empowerment underpinning environmental protection[10] This section demonstrates that this neglect is contra-productive for understanding processes leading to overall sustainability since the urban context is the main source of climate change. The specific attention for China is justified by its influencing role in the world.

Section five of this paper refers to reflections about the dominant economic discourse, mostly disregarding 'the world around' and thus also leading to a neglect of the urban context in the sustainability debate. Especially the current economic discourse often refers to undefined and

thus empty concepts as the 'social dimension' and to individualistically conceived concepts as 'quality of life' or 'social capital'. The 'social dimension' remains an unopened black-box, a ragbag of everything that is not economic or environmental. A more careful consideration is required including at least a heuristic distinction between the socio-political and a socio-cultural dimension as alternative of the so-called 'social dimension'. The section discusses also a main topic in the world of European banks , the recent speech of the President of the Bank of England and studies by the World Bank, the UNDP and the International Monetary Fund for underpinning its argument for a paradigm shift for contribution to the development of sustainability.

Section six is dedicated to arguments presented in the 'World Social Science Report 2013 (see note-6) with which to underpin the paper's plea for focussing on the interconnectedness of the four main dimensions. This will – in connection with the fifth section – pave the way for the following section.

Section seventh argued is that we need a 'point of Archimedes' to understand the problematique of sustainability. [11] Therefore the question is raised which conceptual framework and related methodological framework 'as point' are adequate for analysing the interconnectedness of the four dimensions and how the human security and social quality approaches may contribute to the constitution of both frameworks. In other words what is the significance of this attempt to accomplish global consensus on the essence of sustainability, regarding climate change as merely an aspect of it.

The eight section will be dedicated to proposals for a complementary approach to ongoing environmental studies as summarized by the IPCC and the ISSC. The specific theme of the previous section is not raised in the IPCC's fifth Report and the ISSC's 2013 Report. The proposals concern a n extra effort for the orchestration with a real 'point of Archimedes' of a manifold of separate studies in order to assist the contribution toward the development of the overall sustainability. In other words to stimulate the academic world to take on board the challenge of sustainability as the most important issue of mankind in the coming decades. It is a plea to upgrade the ambition to be as adequate as possible for the future of mankind.

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[11] This question is discussed in; L.J.G. van der Maesen and A.C. Walker, eds (2012), '*Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators'*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), Chapter-11.This book is based on the contribution by sixteen academics from fourteen Member States of the EU, collaborating in the European Network on Social Quality Indicators, financed by the European Commission (DG Research) and the herewith engaged universities (www.socialquality.org).