

CALL FOR PAPERS

Paradigms, Models, Scenarios and Practices for strong sustainability

University of Clermont Auvergne (UCA)
Jean Monnet Excellence Center on Sustainability (ERASME)

4 - 5 - 6 December 2019, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme,
4 rue Ledru, Clermont-Ferrand, France



Backdrop: While the notion of sustainability continues to be associated with the Brundtland Report (1987) and the concept of sustainable development, it is increasingly seeking to emancipate itself in order to provide a representation of the world that is consistent with the aspirations of the moment. Everything must be sustainable; agriculture, food, natural resources, biodiversity, water, energy, cities, territories, tourism... At the risk of falling into overkill and excess, our social model must be part of a strong sustainability and refuse any compromise with possible cover-ups (we can mention here green growth, green washing, decoupling or even the latest creation, sustainable innovation).

This enthusiasm and its expectations for more sustainability go beyond the environmental framework. Indeed, if reducing our ecological footprint is a necessity, it is associated with other objectives (the famous SDGs) that claim a certain legitimacy. The eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities, access for all to education, electricity and water, the development of 100% renewable energy... are part of a political discourse, targets of major international institutions, but also demands from the world's citizens. The recent events in France, the movement of yellow vests, is an excellent illustration of this. Motivated by the increase in the domestic consumption tax on energy products, this movement has gradually been extended to other social demands (increase in purchasing power, maintenance of public services, improvement of democracy, etc.), and then spread to a large number of countries (Germany, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, United Kingdom, etc.).

This call for papers intends to use these facts and expectations to question the paradigms, models, scenarios and practices that embody this thirst for sustainability. As curious as it may seem, subjects such as renewable energies, participatory democracy, organic farming and eco-cities did not wait to be driven by the wave of sustainability to claim certain practices or propose alternative representations. As a result, one may wonder what meaning should be given to the very idea of sustainability and the representations it conveys.

Themes: *The organizers of the symposium intend to focus on strong sustainability papers and the following themes, however, any proposal that raises debate or questions about sustainability will be carefully considered:*

1° How do the different sciences approach the question of sustainability, are there important differences between the Social Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Life and Earth Sciences? Do the Social Sciences have a unanimous and universal vision of sustainability or should we distinguish Economics (and their approach in terms of weak and strong sustainability) from the Communication Sciences or other Social Sciences (geography, sociology, anthropology...). This first theme aims to propose a collection of representations on sustainability and to initiate debates around an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach to sustainability.

2° What are the dimensions and themes that embody or on the contrary escape the discourse on sustainability. This second theme also raises the question of new fields of sustainability (urban agriculture, sustainable cities, education for sustainability, sustainable mobility, gender, etc.) or measures reflecting a certain idea of sustainability (universal income, complementary currency, zero unemployment territories, etc.).

3° What are the paradigms that embody today the very idea of strong sustainability? By paradigm, we mean here a representation of the world or a way of seeing things based on a disciplinary matrix, a theoretical model, a current of thought, or even a set of so-called citizen practices. Should we position strong sustainability at the level of so-called alternative paradigms, such as Social and Solidarity Economy, Collaborative Economy, Economy of sharing, Ecodevelopment, Degrowth, Complexity's theory, Buen vivir, Ecological Economics, Political Ecology, Industrial Ecology, Bioeconomy, Bio-biased Economy... or is it rather the simple return of utopias to the ideology of growth and technological progress?

4° What are the models, methods and scientific tools that leave in off space for strong sustainability? The latter refers to the modelling of complex and dynamic systems. System thinking or system dynamics are often presented as appropriate methods to address system complexity (feedback loops, time effects and timelines) and sustainability at the global level (within the boundaries of the system under study). Tools such as Life Cycle Analysis, Material Flow Analysis Input-Output Analysis, Circles of Sustainability are also used in engineering and social sciences to define the notion of sustainability. Finally, some model such as World Model and Integrated Assessment Models (IAM) or propose to integrate energy, economic, climate and environmental issues (air quality, biodiversity, etc.) in order to suggest mitigation/adaptation strategies to policy makers or long term scenarios (population, food, agriculture, natural resources). How do these models fit (or not) into a strong sustainability framework?

5° Which scenarios by 2025, 2050 or 2100 most embody the idea of strong sustainability? Should scenarios such as green growth, steady state, degrowth or collapse be seen as ways of thinking (or not) about sustainability? What place should we give to the so-called utopian scenarios (100% renewable energies) and describing what we would like for the future in the face of the so-called pragmatic scenarios (the energy mix) and embodying an energy transition? Doesn't the idea of transition finally move us away from a strong sustainability scheme? It could even be seen as an abuse of weakness, distilled by lobbies that are not ready to make the radical changes necessary to move towards a better life society.

6° How to finance this sustainability? If governments and major international institutions are investing in renewable energies, organic farming, positive energy buildings and sustainable mobility, the question arises today as to how to finance these actions and strategies. Taxes and subsidies (and more generally taxation), public

spending (at national or European level), the reform of financial markets... or the implementation of an active monetary policy could all be tools that commit our societies to greater sustainability.

7° How to assess sustainability? The latter is often put in tension, between scientific discourse, political debates and field practices. A sustainability assessment raises a set of questions and issues: What can be assessed (in terms of sustainability objectives)? Who can evaluate (in the sense of expertise)? How to evaluate (in terms of procedures, methods and indicators)?

Practical information

Proposals for papers in English or French should include:

- a title,
- a 300-500 word abstract,
- the names of the authors, their institutions, and their e-mail addresses,
- the choice between an oral presentation or a poster.

Proposals must be submitted on the platform: <https://sustainability.sciencesconf.org> **before July 15th, 2019**. The final texts and posters must be sent by 15 November 2019. A publication of papers is possible via two journals (Revue Francophone du développement durable and European Review on Sustainability and Degrowth), as well as in a collective book that will gather impressions and discussions from symposium.

Three prizes will be awarded at the end of the Symposium:

- 1) *The Jean Monnet Prize for Sustainability* for an expert researcher,
- 2) *The Donella Meadows Prize for Sustainability* for a young female researcher, and
- 3) *The ERASME Poster Prize* for the audience and participants' favourite poster.

Researchers who wish to candidate for the first two prizes must send their final paper **before September 15th, 2019** to arnaud.diemer@uca.fr. For the winners, travel and conference accommodations will be taken in charge. Besides, they will receive an invitation for a 15-day stay at the Jean Monnet Excellence Center for Sustainability (ERASME).

The conference will include various opportunities for communication and discussion of sustainability research and practices, including keynote speeches, oral paper presentation sessions, poster pitch talk tours, roundtable discussions, a sustainability concert, and a sustainability poetry slam. Optionally, participants can join a social/sporty activity Saturday after the conference to explore the beautiful volcanic surroundings of Clermont-Ferrand.

The conference is labelled Erasmus+, it is part of the activities of the Jean Monnet Excellence Center on Sustainability (ERASME), located at the UCA (Polytech Clermont Ferrand).

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Information and registration: <https://sustainability.sciencesconf.org>

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