



Grounding Economies
During Uncertain Times

York University | Oct 11-13

1. Conflicting perspectives on ecosystem conservation in a cultivated floodplain: The role of science and the challenge of pluralism in decision-making in Lac Saint-Pierre (Québec, Canada)

Ann Lévesque, Jean-François Bissonnette,
Aaron Vansintjan, & Jérôme Dupras

2. The dual nature of sustainability
Perin Ruttonsha

3. People-oriented, reflexive models for change: Proposing (analog) games and game design as core tools in the ecological economist's toolkit
Geoff Hill

GROUP 6

OCT 12, 13:15 ET

**Research
PRESENTATIONS**

**Resilience &
RECOVERY
Systemic
DEVELOPMENT**

The Dual Nature of Sustainability

Perin Ruttonsha

Sustainability as a problem domain is not only complex, rather could be characterised through numerous dualities, which are notably difficult to reconcile. For example, some of these include **(a)** managing short-term targets for sustainable development and climate action, along with long-term visions by which to repattern broader human ecologies; **(b)** protecting ecosystems against human intervention, while attempting to establish reconnection between nature and culture; **(c)** maintaining one's socioeconomic status, while facilitating fundamental institutional reform; and, **(d)** enabling quality of life for diverse populations, while minimising the ecological footprint of industrialised development. Arguably, these dualities also imply a need for more than one phase of transition—a fast and slow, or short and long, track for systems change.

Abstract

One of the most significant paradoxes with which we contend in sustainability research is the discontinuity that has arisen between nature and culture—or rather, how the development and expansion of social, economic, political, and technological systems has resulted in negative impacts for the planetary web on which they depend, along with the human populations they intend to support. This tension was at the heart of the Brundtland Commission's overview of key challenges for sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987).

Their critique highlighted how economic development was occurring at the expense of environmental decline, without realising its promise of prosperity and equality for all nations (Gibson et al., 2005). Sustainability as a problem domain is not only complex, rather could be characterised through numerous dualities, which are notably difficult to reconcile. For example, some of these include **(a)** managing short-term targets for sustainable development and climate action, along with long-term visions by which to repattern broader human ecologies; **(b)** protecting ecosystems against human intervention, while attempting to establish reconnection between nature and culture; **(c)** maintaining one's socioeconomic status, while facilitating fundamental institutional reform; and, **(d)** enabling quality of life for diverse populations, while minimising the ecological footprint of industrialised development. Arguably, these dualities also imply a need for two, or more, phases of transition—the first to arrive at a baseline for sustainable development, and the second to reembed socioeconomic within ecological systems—a fast and slow, or short and long, track for systems change.

Works Cited

- Brundtland, G. H. (1987). *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. UN-Dokument A/42/427. <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-ov.htm>
- Gibson, R., Hassan, S., Holtz, S., Tansey, J., & Whitelaw, G. (2005). *Sustainability assessment: Criteria and processes*. Earthscan.