



SWEDISH
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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Session: Re-visioning Social Sustainability: Challenging Hegemonies and Emerging Alternatives I

Session Convener(s): George Odysseus Tsobanoglou, University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Lesvos; Kiran Prasad, Sri Padmavati Mahila University, Tirupati

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Comments: This session is organized by ISA RC 26

I) *Local Politics and New Model of Governance in Western Countries*

Gloria Pirzio, Sapienza University of Rome

II) *Democratic Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction; 'Kudumbasree' Initiative in Kerala*

P.P. Balan, Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh

III) *On Governing the Weak Ties in Networked Economics - Greece in the EU and the Issue of Local Institution Capacity Building*

George Odysseus Tsobanoglou, University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Lesvos

IV) *Sustainable Mechanism and Innovation for Education and Work: Informal Institutions – A Case from Delhi, India*

Prachi Kaul, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and Shastry Indo-Canadian Institute, New Delhi

V) *What India Can Teach Us: Vedic Culture and Social Sustainability*

Valentina Grassi, University of Naples "Parthenope"

ABSTRACT

Session description

The session wishes to comparatively reflect on both the Eastern and Western perspectives on social sustainability and how both traditions are rethinking hegemonic traditions to allow the emergence of more equitable cultural models and lifestyles towards social sustainability. The theme can also look at what kinds of transcultural flows are expressed by social movements? How does the grass root politics grapple with sustainability as defined by western development paradigms? What are the politics of the 'glocal', if any in each perspective?

How does grass root sustainable efforts negotiate with a general/global model for sustainable communities? Participation and Empowerment in communities and the associated cooperative work models are essential modes related with such politics and such policies and are to be explored here as well.

Papers

I) *Local Politics and New Model of Governance in Western Countries*

Gloria Pirzio, Sapienza University of Rome

In the last decades a deep change is involving the main Western paradigms; decentralisation, federalism, public private partnership (PPP) are emerging as new models of governance at national and local level. Several and interwoven are the reasons of this re-organisational process, and consist of a few items recurring in the legal and political debate.

In this context local politics become the center of a wider process of negotiation of meanings which redefines the boundaries between Public and Private, Market and State, Global and Local. In Italy for instance we assisted to the passage from the State enterprises system to a local one, the so called "Municipality capitalism" as a consequence of a strong campaign of public companies privatisation, without strong market liberalisation. In this way the role of the State was replaced by the local autonomies.

Local authority enterprises monopolize the public utilities sector and supply services to local authorities; they are characterised by a huge spoil system, sometimes a patronage one, which supported the construction of political consensus and the relationship between legality and legitimacy. In this new scenario, the border between market and politics is turning more and more indeterminate, creating the need for new scientific categories of analysis and interpretation.

The paper will focus on:

1. New models of governance at local level
2. Public/Private paradigm in the Western debate
Market and Politics in local autonomies: the case of "Municipality capitalism"

II) *Democratic Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction; 'Kudumbasree' Initiative in Kerala*

P.P. Balan, Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh

Despite over five decades of rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation programmes, around 350 million persons in India are considered to be below the poverty line. The current scenario calls for a closer examination of the pitfalls in the centralized planning process with regard to poverty reduction. For surmounting the turbulence in the process of development, social protection is required for underprivileged and marginalized groups. At the same

time, social protection cannot be divorced from economic and social policies affecting the rate and distribution of economic growth and human capital formation. Developing a good local governance system is one of the strategies of India for sustainable human development. Kerala legislated the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act 1994 (for local bodies in rural areas) and the Kerala Municipality Act 1994 (for the local bodies in urban areas), and transferred powers, functions and finance to these bodies to act as institutions of self-governance. The objective of this paper is to provide background information for reflecting on the ongoing scheme, *Kudumbasree* (welfare of the family) for the development of the poor and marginalized groups within the framework of decentralisation in Kerala.

III) *On Governing the Weak Ties in Networked Economics - Greece in the EU and the Issue of Local Institution Capacity Building*
George Odysseus Tsobanoglou, University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Lesvos

Local Institutional Capacity Building remains a local prerogative during the development process and is determined by two sources. The first concerns the problem of institutional supply. Countries which have been dramatically moved towards state regulated market mechanisms (China, Vietnam, Russia, Brazil, South Africa and India) have adapted to a global economy and have become major players. New “market institutions” have been formed in order to regulate labour reproduction and capital accumulation by a state territorial steering of exchange mechanisms. New mediation regimes for information based accounting practices (for inflation) and distribution networks have been necessary in order to develop a new “organisational” regime that has been based on new forms of exchange. Countries such as Greece, having experienced patronage politics, and long periods of dictatorial rule, may seem to lack the required “state institutions” and civil society organisations to coordinate socio-economic exchanges and enhance the value chain in the EU monetary system.

The other issue concerns the already embedded institutions which may be an obstacle to the new ones. The way external and internal actors are articulated, in a usually asymmetrical political relationship, may define the future of “redundant” institutions. Usually developing regimes define a legal plateau whereby the nominal and the effective are not only referring to law but to regulation and administration. Informal practices and the distance between the deontic and the factual constitute the very capacity to form policy, a key absence in such regimes. When this distance is considerable, a dual system is established with no common rules creating bifurcations, a common occurrence in such regimes.

This paper will focus on the Greek polity and its organisational status in an advanced European Union’s Monetary Union. Capacity building for labour forms will be a test case for the weak constitution of social market mechanisms in Europe (Greece) and the subsequent conclusions to be drawn for the weak capacity of the European Union’s Institutions to establish social institutions in its periphery.

IV) *Sustainable Mechanism and Innovation for Education and Work: Informal Institutions – A Case from Delhi, India*
Prachi Kaul, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and Shastry Indo-Canadian Institute, New Delhi

Alternative mechanism for sustainable development is seen as an objective throughout the world. Nevertheless, Asian countries so as India continues to strive to shift and transit their development pattern to sustainable production and consumption which still remains as primary challenge and a daunting task. Present paper discusses educational enterprises ‘sustainable in nature’ and ‘educational consumption’ for livelihood and sustainability in developing urban spheres in Delhi, the national capital of India. Study based on primary data collected from 254 student and 36 institutes is a twofold effort; first to reflect on potential of Informal sector of education as an

alternative to non-formal and formal provisions of education and second to analyze the outcome of education and skills imparted by these educational setups.

Skill for work in changing macro-economic environments is important issue in the community of education and work. The policy interest in the scope of skills development in form of technical, vocational education and training to provide increased options for work in employment or self-employment has grown but in very few countries but has sharpened worldwide with economic recession. The ambitions for using skills development for social mobility and economic transformation have been enormous in India and confirmed by present research.

The accessibility, relevance, governance and accountability remain as major concern of education in India. Whereas few reformative measures have been initiated, the results are still awaited to reflect. It is argued here that basic education and skill training is specifically associated with the informal sector of education and advocates that literacy and basic education provisions are important to improve the livelihoods and sustainable practices of people. More so in absence of formal-state endeavours, such establishments can be seen as alternative provision to access life skill education for lower economic rung of society.

V) *What India Can Teach Us: Vedic Culture and Social Sustainability*

Valentina Grassi, University of Naples "Parthenope"

Sustainability is a continuous process, which needs to combine the three fundamental and inseparable dimensions of "development": Environmental, Economic and Social. *Social Sustainability* can be defined as the ability to guarantee conditions of human well-being (safety, health, education), equally distributed by class and gender. In a territorial system, Social Sustainability is the ability of individuals to act effectively together, according to the same conception of the project of life, encouraged by a consultation between the various institutional levels. We need to remember that the economy exists within a society and both exist in the environment.

In globalization era, we need to set up a project of culture based on a perspective of Sustainable Development that will benefit all the peoples of the world, present and future, and that integrate the protection of a social balance, such as the fight against poverty, human rights, health, with conservation needs of natural resources and ecosystems finding mutual support.

To do this, many suggestions can be drawn in a *multicultural perspective*. for example, we can find interesting ideas in the *Vedic culture* that can be translated into collective social practices for Sustainability. The basis of Vedic culture is the Vedas: they are an ancient collection of sacred texts in Sanskrit Vedic of Aryan peoples who invaded around the twentieth century BC northern India, from which the Vedic religious culture was born. They are of primary importance in the different set of doctrines and religious beliefs that goes by the name of Hinduism.

In this paper, we analyze some of these items, putting them in correlation with the projects of Social Sustainability also in Western contexts. Among these, for example, the question of "five debts" that, in the Vedic tradition, a man contracts at the time of his birth: the debt to the divinities that pays for itself by means of *worship* and *sacrifice*; the debt to the ancient sages, that pays for itself by the *study*; the debt to the ancestors, that pays for itself by the *procreation*, and to their masters that pays for itself by the *donations*; debt to humanity that pays for itself by the duty of *hospitality*; the debt to all beings that pays for itself by *giving animals the remains of meals*.