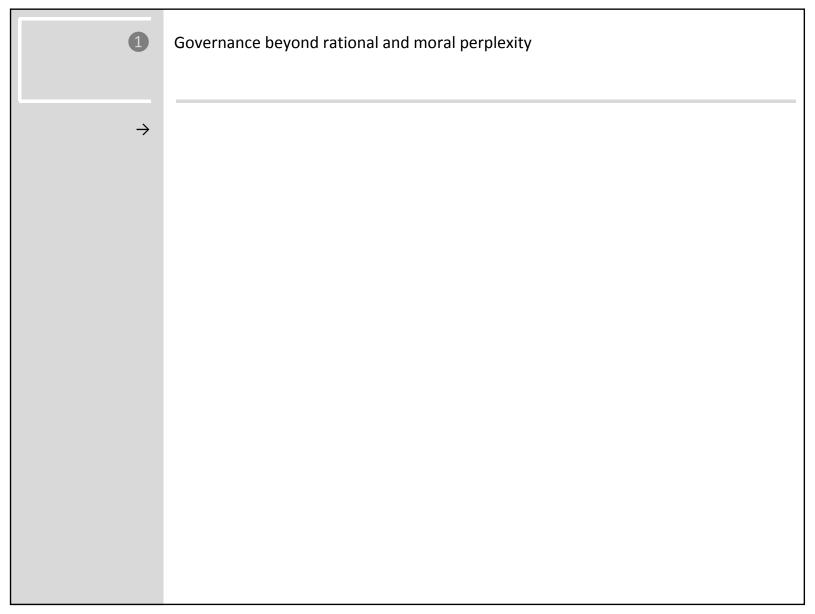
	When Poetry becomes Suspicious On the need for philosophical activism for global governance
1 2 3 4 5	Governance beyond rational and moral perplexity In search of (support for) the qualities of governance The deadlocks of detached political pragmatism  The possibility of global governance  Philosophical activism for global governance
6	A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)





### Governance beyond rational and moral perplexity

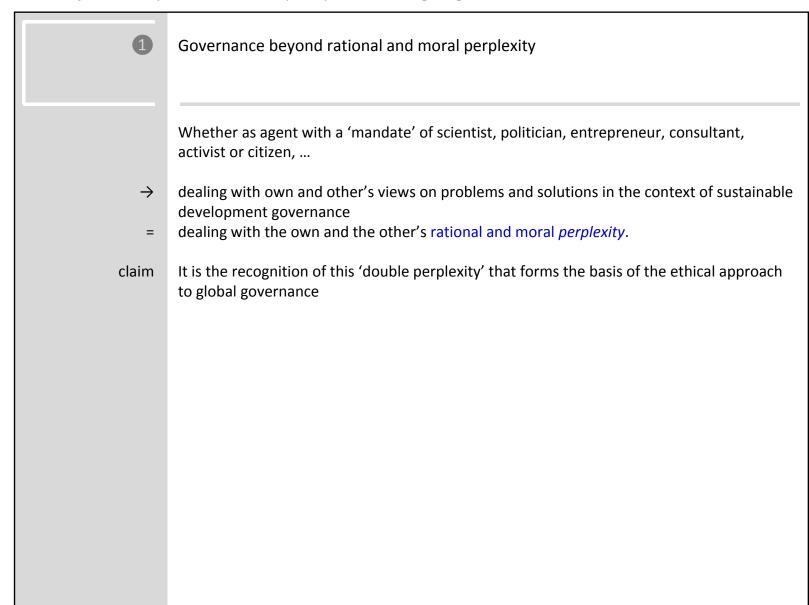
- → Fair and effective sustainable development governance essentially concerns a fair and effective organisation of our human socio-economic interactions
- = An 'exercise' in coordinating complex systems of interlinked socio-economic processes in a dynamic of increasing globalisation ...
  - ... troubled by the difficulty of negotiating consensus that integrates and balances reasonable but often incommensurable and conflicting interests.
- = (in philosophical terms) an exercise troubled by

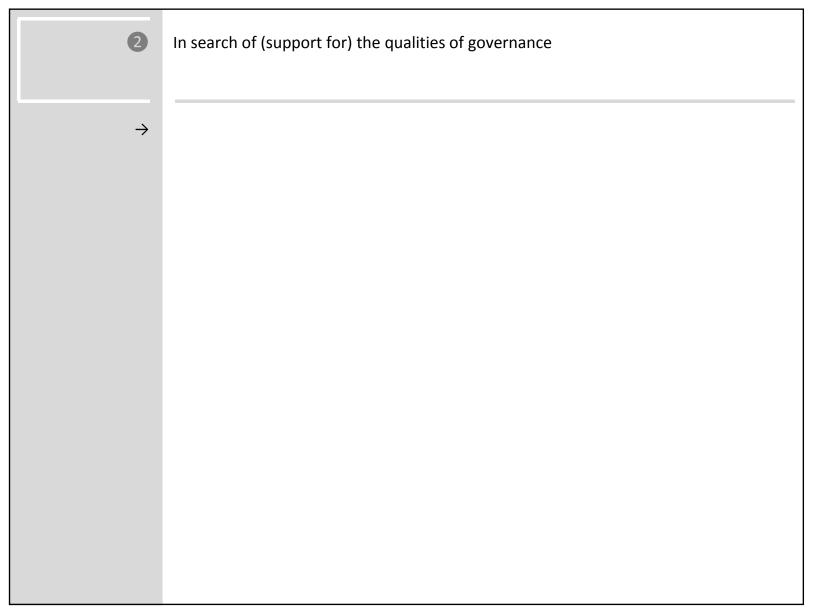
'systemic' 'ontological' 'cognitive complexity' (the complexity of acquiring knowledge)

about the functioning of these complex systems ('causality', scientific foresight) enhanced by the many uncertainties, unknowns and unknowables related to the natural, technical and social phenomena that figure in them

even if we could and would all agree on the 'descriptive' knowledge base to asses a specific problem, then opinions could still differ about the acceptability of proposed solutions

- science is needed to describe options, but it cannot clarify the choices to make
- values may inspire or highlight options, they cannot enforce the choices to make







## In search of (support for) the qualities of governance

### in theory $\rightarrow$

there is a motivation for a more qualitative and just approach to the use of knowledge and value-based reference in global governance, which translates as

- policy supportive knowledge generation that, by spirit and method, is transdisciplinary and inclusive and
- governance that, by spirit and method, is inclusive and process-oriented, and that also methodologically enables and enforces transparency with regard to actors' intentions and interests.

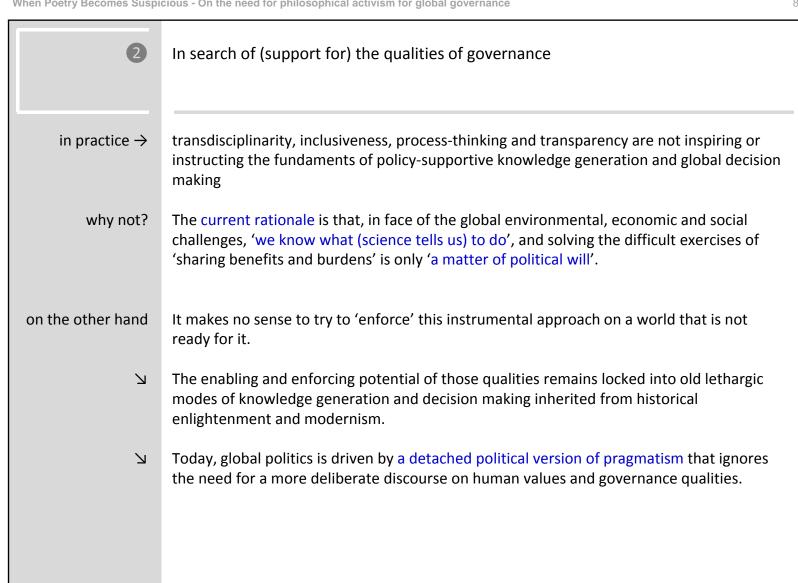
#### why

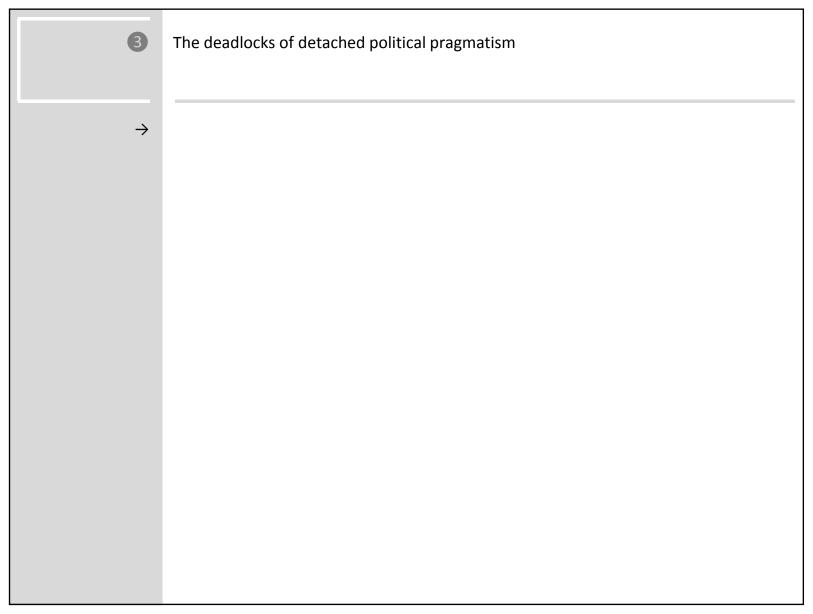
is this vision valuable?

## [my formulation]

This is the only form of governance that, by the character of its method, can generate intra-generational trust (because its method cares for intra-generational accountability and solidarity) and

- intergenerational forward oriented responsibility and mutual understanding (with mutual in the sense of forward and backward oriented)
- Accountability: not (only / in the first place) by organising confrontation wrt the implications of our deeds, but by organising confrontation wrt our own rationales. 'when the stakes are high, also metaphors need to be deliberated'
- The self-critical and inviting character will make it fair, and its fairness will render it effective. Its effectiveness will be in the fact that actors will trust the policies and measures proposed as they trust the method in which they were assessed and negotiated.

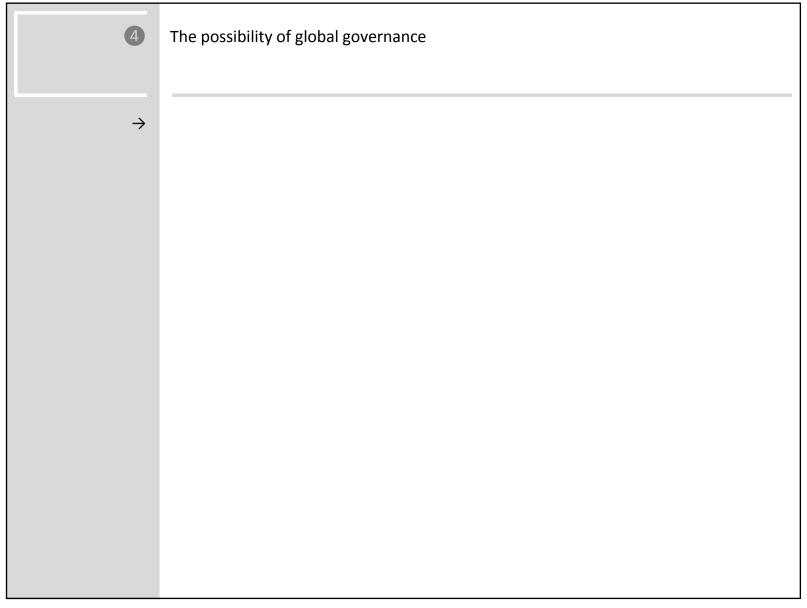






# The deadlocks of detached political pragmatism

- → In its most pertinent forms, that detached political pragmatism manifests as
- an obsession with systems thinking and 'evidence-based' decision making, too often informed by thin managerial interpretations of holism and by positivist-instrumental and business-minded science practices ('the knowledge economy');
- a narrow conception of the idea democracy, sticking to divides over obsolete political identities and strategically supported by the excuse that there are 'unavoidable practical limitations' to public participation;
- nation state 'positionism' justified on the basis of the 'absolute' but, in light of the global problems, principally irrelevant value of state sovereignty;
- the fixation on 'economic growth' as the prime quality criterion for a prosperous society and, in conspiracy with the private sector, pretending that only economic impact should be corrected, not its growth;
- a tendency to relegate 'responsible action' to transnational green(washed) market economy dynamics that, at the same time, leaves nation state positionisms unaffected;
- a strategic cultural tolerance 'in support of multiculturalisms' that primarily serves to protect and defend the integrity of own cultural, political or religious identities, rather than to accept those of others.





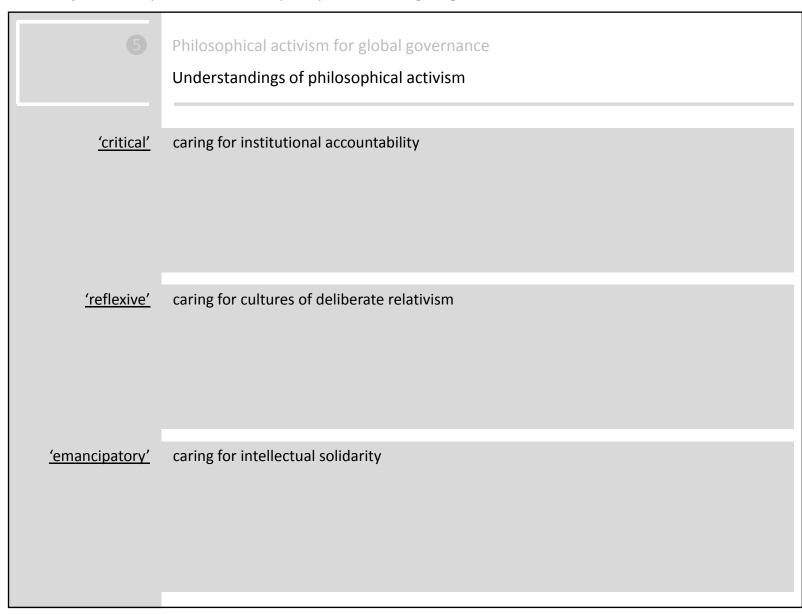
### The possibility of global governance

- → The world is not ready to implement the proposed qualities of governance because the normative framework to make this approach come true is in itself fragmented and subject of strategic mediation.
- It is pointless to attempt to implement transdisciplinarity, inclusiveness, process-thinking and transparency in regimes of science and politics if these regimes are not 'bottom-up' inspired in themselves by a culture
  - that embraces rational and moral perplexity as advanced enlightened human stances instead of as weak, defeatist or cynical positions and
- that sees the spirit of 'deliberate relativism' as a spirit that can strengthen a society instead of undermining it.
- In a culture of deliberate relativism, the central attitude for each involved 'agent' is not responsibility but reflexivity.

More specific, it is reflexivity as both an intellectual skill and a moral stance that will make people to be prepared to develop and engage in settings for knowledge generation and deliberation that comply with the qualities of governance.

In dealing with complex issues in a political context, reflexivity as intellectual skill and as moral stance thus acknowledges the importance of intellectual solidarity.

5	Philosophical activism for global governance



5	Philosophical activism for global governance Understandings of philosophical activism
<u>'critical'</u>	caring for institutional accountability
by way of in practice	hard confrontation of rationales that aim to justify 'power and profit' analytic and 'objective' institutional critique
danger	detached 'cheap' critique
<u>'reflexive'</u>	caring for cultures of deliberate relativism
by way of	mild ('compassionate') confrontation of how we rationalise our stakes in the totality
in practice	developing 'advanced ways of looking at the world and at ourselves' seeking confrontation (also 'in the field') and organising rapprochement
<u>'emancipatory'</u>	caring for intellectual solidarity
by way of	advancing the human right to intellectual development, deliberation and resignation
in practice	arguing for and organising 'enabling structures' for intellectual solidarity in education, research and political deliberation
danger	'becoming political', paternalist



### Philosophical activism for global governance

### The field of

'critical' philosophical activism, caring for institutional accountability

→ From confronting socio-political 'lethargies' around plain miserable situations ...







source: movie "Hell for leather: the toxic trade in leather from Bangladesh to the EU" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A6siB9B4Ak

- ... to confronting the poetry of 'detached political pragmatisms'
- 'a holistic approach',
- 'we have to act together' / 'we have shared but differentiated responsibilities'
- 'inclusive decision making'
- 'green growth'
- '... to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion ...' (Lisbon Council, March 2000).



Philosophical activism for global governance

#### The field of

'reflexive' philosophical activism, caring for cultures of deliberate relativism

 $\rightarrow$ 

"Advanced ways of looking at the world and at ourselves"

ativicm

#### how we (can) reason about 'social systems'

relativism

The earth-society system is not a neutral given 'out there' but subject of interpretation in itself. What are synergies for the one may be conflicts for the other, which makes it impossible to come to a joint holistic view on the earth-society system in the interest of sustainable development governance.

relativism

### how we (can) reason about 'the benefits and burdens of civilisation'

Civilisation <u>implies</u> technological *risk*, environmental *occupation*, economic *profit*, labour *instrumentalisation*, market *dependency*, information *mediation*, heritage *depletion*, transgenerational *burden*. But reasoning about these 'artefacts of civilisation' is troubled by cognitive complexity and moral pluralism.

Therefore, an 'acceptable' risk, occupation, profit, ... is what an informed democratic society determines as acceptable.

relativism

## how we (can) reason about 'collective identities'

Rationales on social, national, cultural and religious identities cannot be used as boundary conditions for fair and effective global governance.

The only relevant normative concept of human identity is that of the human individual.

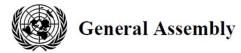


### A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)



**United Nations** 

A/RES/66/288\*



Distr.: General 11 September 2012

Sixty-sixth session Agenda item 19

### Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/66/L.56)]

#### 66/288. The future we want

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009, in which it decided to organize, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the highest possible level, as well as its resolution 66/197 of 22 December 2011,

- 1. Expresses its profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Brazil for hosting the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro from 20 to 22 June 2012, and for providing all the necessary support;
- Endorses the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", annexed to the present resolution.

123rd plenary meeting 27 July 2012



drafting a

A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

People's Treaty on Human Rights for Sustainable Development

part of

a global civil society initiative for Rio+20 (see <a href="http://sustainabilitytreaties.org/">http://sustainabilitytreaties.org/</a>)





A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

People's Treaty on Human Rights for Sustainable Development

### my approach

call for an awareness of the insight that a full implementation of human rights would not automatically lead to sustainable development

... acknowledging and implementing rights for sustainability requires a short term and a long term view. It requires tackling current ecological and humanitarian crises now as well as a foresight on enabling long-term bottom-up possibilities for citizens to give them influence as actor in the socio-economic dynamic and to organise confrontation and critical pressure on policy themselves. In other words: the survival of humanity is as much about saving it now as it is about providing it with capacities to take care of itself in the future.

- initial focus on advancing the human right to intellectual development and to have access to political deliberation instead of on institutional critique and 'economic solidarity'
- "the human right to be responsible"

Sent: di 2012-05-22 0:53



drafting a

A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

People's Treaty on Human Rights for Sustainable Development

my approach

caused a lot of discussion (and friction) among the 'traditional' environmental and social justice oriented NGO's

From:
To: gaston Meskens; rights-for-sustainability@googlegroups.com
Cc:
Subject: Re: [R4S] Fwd: Input requested in a second round of comments on the zero draft of the 'Rights for Sustainability Treaty'

Dear Gaston, sorry I thought I had responded.

You wrote a well researched social science draft, but I agree with Paul sustainability is no longer a question of theory and philosophy.

It is a question of the very survival of humanity and most life, from global warming and climate change now impacting on top of other ongoing global environmental damages. (UNEP GEO4, GEO5)

Our right to survive is being ignored by the worst crime against humanity ever.

The central reality and context for all rights today is impending global climate catastrophe.

Governments are working to keep this monumental crime out of the Rio 20, so they can say that they take sustainable development and all it entails (human rights for present populations and future generations) seriously.

We have to force governments to act to sustain our very survival and the survival of almost all life- by making them face what their denial of the global climate planetary emergency is doing. We have to do this now.

They are protecting the suicidal biocidal economy and global banking and fossil fuel corporations that control this economy of death and are still openly conspiring to sabotage any measures to save us. They are doing so as Earth is dying from their heartless plunder.

These governments and corporations must at least be held accountable for destroying our living Mother Earth in order to squeeze a few more years of massive money profits flowing to the global few who have all the money. They have to held accountable now.

6	A case from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
drafting a	People's Treaty on Human Rights for Sustainable Development
was a way	to meaningfully approach the following discussion points among civil society
1	the meaning of the right to have equal access to basic needs (water, food, energy, shelter,)
tension	solidary social support ←→ the dynamic of an open and fair market
2	the meaning of the 'rights of nature' and the relation with human rights
tension tension	idea of 'rights of nature' <b>dilutes ↔ strengthens</b> human rights connecting rights to responsibilities
$\rightarrow$	'it is meaningless to speak of the rights of nature because it is even so meaningless to speak of the responsibilities of nature'
3	the meaning of the rights of future generations
tension	protecting future generations $\leftrightarrow$ enabling future generations to take of themselves
	I did not introduce the idea of resignation as a part of intellectual solidarity here