APPLYING POPPERIAN THOUGHTS TO TODAY'S POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. A PLEA FOR MORE INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Looking back to the latest somehow epochal political developments, be it the retirement of the European Commission in 1999, the Iraq war conducted without the desirable backing from the UN Security Council, bankruptcy cases in international financial markets, evident political failures in implementing more sustainable pension or health schemes, or the unexpected coming to power of the Spanish Socialist Party, these developments all seem to have a common denominator: *Political failure due to lack of intellectual or political responsibility with more or less severe consequences for sustainable development in the various areas.*

The paper argues that, generally speaking, the political approach should be rethought. Political science and politics ought to critically question their methodological and ethical framework. The answer could be found in applying Popperian thoughts: Besides the overarching methodology of Popper's critical rationalism, we would in particular like to highlight the quest for more intellectual and political responsibility, both at the firm and at the State level, or even European- or world-wide, for more democracy — not only the goal is of importance, also the path thither —, and for a more promising perception of truth and its implications for the political level — e.g. the implementation of the principle of full cost pricing meaning the internalization of external costs, both at the microeconomic as well as at the macroeconomic level. Several examples are brought forward, such as market distortions due to the non-integration of environmental costs in the transport sector, or the neglect of health costs and of depletion of natural resources in national accounting. It is further discussed, whether the lack of a certain political will or political responsibility and the overpoliticization of governmental or intergovernmental institutions would equally have to be regarded as substantial hindering factors for sustainable development.

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