

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

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The principal aim of this thesis is to investigate the role of universities in the development of a sustainable society. In order to combat climate change, ecosystem degradation and resource depletion radical rethinking of society's consumption and production processes is needed. The current environmental problems grow faster than society's ability to find and implement sustainable solutions.

Figure 1. The Earth as conceived by science – the human-nature relationship and scientific reflection



Therefore society needs to be reorganized in such a way that environmental performance becomes an integrated part of the system<sup>1</sup>. According to environmental research carried through during the past 30 years there is strong evidence of climate change. However, although progress has already been made, no university can be said to be sustainable, since in general neither study programs nor the level of maintenance of universities correspond to the efforts needed to be done according to climate research. In the thesis it is analyzed how the concept of sustainable universities has developed internationally. This is done through the analysis of declarations on sustainability in higher education, green campus alliances, monitoring tools and audit schemes. The study of the international development within the field of sustainable universities is related to a Danish context in which technical, political, economic and organizational dynamics and rationalities that shape planning and plan solutions in practice are emphasized. The thesis analyzes strategies on how to bridge the gap between sustainability and “the production of nature” in research and study programs and maintenance of the campus in order to develop a comprehensive strategy of green campus areas.

The methodological approach is based on thematic analysis, dialectical materialism and critical realism.

**Keywords:** Sustainable University, Sustainability in Higher Education Declarations, Green Campus Alliance, Sustainability efforts at Danish Universities, Postmodern Ecological Ideals of Science, Sustainable Research

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<sup>1</sup>For instance the level of greenhouse gasses we emit into the atmosphere continues to grow. The latest UNEP Emission Gap Report finds :” that emission levels of approximately 44 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) (range: 39-44 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e\*) in 2020 would be consistent with a “likely” chance of limiting global warming to 2° C.– Under business-as-usual projections, global emissions could reach 56 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e (range: 54-60 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2020, leaving a gap of 12 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e. (UNEP 2010:4).