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Editorial

The 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris (COP21), December 2015, reached a consensus to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, including by "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change" (UN 2015: 22). The agreement has to pave the way for rules, modalities, and procedures and all Parties have to "recognize the importance of integrated, holistic and balanced non-market approaches being available to Parties to assist in the implementation of their nationally determined contribution, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in a coordinated and effective manner, including through, inter alia, mitigation adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building, as appropriate" (UN 2015: 24). Of interest to note is that sustainable development and poverty eradication seem to be presented as two sides of the same coin.

Two years earlier, the World Social Science Report 2013 on Changing Global Environments was published. Rightly the question was raised – recognizing that the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is inextricably linked with human behavior – of how to direct human behavior and societal practices away "from a well-established development model and lifestyle that continues to add to global greenhouse gas emissions. Transforming emissions from industry is one thing, and by no means simple, but caging an entire nation's lifestyle is another. Perhaps before this question can be answered, social scientists must first ask why human behaviours which add to greenhouse gas emissions are so resistant to change" (Shisana 2013: 9). The Report explains how social scientists (including also economists and jurists) are divided and lack sufficient consensus about conceptual frameworks to analyse this question in a more orchestrated way. This prevents a holistic approach which could guide comprehensive research. For operationalization of the consensus reached in Paris, December 2015, the academic world too is in need of a transformative change.

That was the rationale of the Manifesto on climate change, published in November 2015, initiated by the International Association on Social Quality (van der Maesen et al. 2015). It says "We, academics from all parts of the world, invite all state leaders to stimulate and support their universities to address the severe challenge of increasing unsustainability of living conditions on our planet." One of the proposals is that "to enable universities and academics to cross disciplinary, bureaucratic and other conventional boundaries, the world needs orchestrated common academic efforts to invent new conceptual and methodological frameworks that draw connections between the huge diversity of studies related to sustainability. Such efforts should be aimed at creating a comprehensive understanding of sustainability suitable for

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addressing multidimensional problems, thus offering alternatives to overly top-down approaches promoted by many governments and business-players." This Manifesto was signed by nearly 300 scientists from all over the world, connecting widely different academic traditions and practices. In addition the International Social Science Council supported the Manifesto. Its Executive Committee sent a letter to strongly support this initiative: "We live in a world where environmental change, poverty, inequality in its countless forms, corruption and social discontent are intricately linked; they cannot be disentangled or addressed in isolation. Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge we now face is to secure the transition of societies to global sustainability. This requires us to integrate respect for the Earth's resources with the need for human security and global social equity" (Martinelli 2015).

This issue of the *International Journal of Social Quality* contains studies which are in one or other way related to the questions raised in the World Social Science Report 2013, on transitions to sustainability of societies and of the world as a whole and on the intellectual transformations required to support this.

In the opening study, Johannes Waldmüller first discusses mainstream ideas about the nature of and connection between human development, human rights and environmental governance. His experiences with current governmental policies and social experiments in Ecuador underpin his critique of the dominant interpretations of human rights and human development. According to Waldmüller, these interpretations reflect liberal political philosophies based on an individualistic interpretation of "the human," and remain largely anthropocentric. We should change our focus from human (individual) well-being into human/nature well-being. He argues that in the former perspective the ontological linkages drawn between human development, human rights and nature – which need to be understood as interlocking ecosystems and actors – remain superficial and too little explored. In Ecuador the realization of human and nature rights has become part of the declared raison d'être of its state, which refers to respect for the Earth. Therefore human development is understood in an "ecosystematic and intergenerational" way. Recognizing intergenerational relationships between humans and nature is key to developing better policies in state planning, with regard to fulfilment of human rights obligations and to achieve sustainability in a holistic sense. It implies "eco-related" indicators to adequately conceive human development policies, far more widely than the traditional human development ideas and practices. According to Waldmüller, experiences in Ecuador lead towards a relational, reciprocal, and complementary perspective on human rights, which cannot neglect the dialectics of structure-agency inherent to the human condition. This perspective is part of a "biocentrism" as new paradigm which changes our focus from human lives to "life as such," thus life in all its plurality and multitude. Biocentrism does so by focusing on the relations between structures of interdependency of humans and natural conditions, on the one hand, and human agency, on the other hand. The case of Ecuador illustrates a paradigm shift away from an anthropocentric human rights assessment and towards a more dynamic and holistic understanding of rights linked to development. The challenge left is how to cope with the increasing disjunction between the domains of critical understanding and of developmental action as led "by managers of development who are our new priests.

They apply a 'can do' mode of market, efficiency, and outcome universally to all situations of action" (Giri and Quarles van Ufford 2015: 11).

In the second study, William Darrow introduces different discourses on public health and their consequences for public health practices since the beginning of the 20th century in the United States. He notes in particular the current failure to control the spread of HIV disease in that country because of the dominance of the biomedical model of public health. This model ignores "the social" as understood in social quality theory. Earlier public health thinking had more affinity with present-day social quality theory, but lost out in terms of power, prestige and financing to technology-based medicine. According to Darrow, the latter's reductionism minimizes the role of societal, behavioural, and environmental factors in the therapeutic physician-patient relationship. In line with social quality theory, Darrow holds that human people are not isolated atoms as was often supposed in Thatcherism and Reaganism. They are "social beings," where the social is the outcome of the dialectic between processes of people's self-realization and the formation of collective identities. This has some affinity with the above quoted "dialectic of structure-agency" as presented in the case of Ecuador. Darrow connects the asocial perspective on people with the biomedical oriented interpretation of public health. He argues that unfortunately very little if anything contained in President Obama's National HIV/AIDs strategy fits with the architecture of social quality theory. Notwithstanding the National Action Plan, the incidence of HIV infection in the United States is not decreasing. In Florida the number of reported HIV cases increased by twenty-three percent during the first six months of 2015. Yet the sturdy walls of the HIV/AIDs silo erected by biomedical scientists and their political allies remain intact. The recent pleas in the United States for change in the "art of public health" can be underpinned in theoretical terms by the ideas mentioned above regarding structure-agency dialectic. Proponents of these pleas recognise and seek to address the structural barriers of marginalization, stigmatization, and criminalization of key populations, and to provide people at high risk of HIV with access to consumer-friendly information and intensive community-based interventions. Far more engagement of communities and the society as a whole is essential. This should also be the case in poverty eradication efforts in the United States, where the inequality between lower-income and higher-income classes and with regard to people's life expectancy has increased markedly.

Leonie van der Maesen and Tim Cadman – drawing on decades of activity in the defense of the last parts of the Western Australian old growth Karri, Jarrah, Marri, Tuart and Tinge forests – present in the third article how since the 1990s diverse actors have engaged in the deforestation or defence of these forests. They open with the issue – relatively out of the limelight in the Paris conference of December 2015 – that current forest degradation and land use (especially agriculture) now account for around twenty-four per cent of total global emissions. It has been calculated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2015 that around thirty per cent of global forest cover has been completely cleared and a further twenty per cent had been degraded (IUCN 2015). Due in major part to the actions of palm oil business groups immense parts of the forests in Sumatra burned down in 2015 and are still burning in 2016. The actors in the Western Australian case are representatives from international business

organizations (economic dimension), the Western Australian Government (socio-political dimension), community groups, and local NGOs (socio-cultural dimension), who all refer in different ways to the ecological aspects (environmental dimension). This study grows out of work from the University of Utrecht to support community groups and NGOs in Western Australia in their defense of the last parts of these old forests. Their research on forest management in Southwest Australia demonstrated that it was ecologically unsustainable. The article illustrates how independent research by universities is needed to support environmental groups and local communities, providing expertise such as in remote sensing, field surveys and other data gathering. Van der Maesen and Cadman note how at the same time the scientific institutes depend on financial resources and support from the key players in the economic and socio-political dimensions. Especially, these key players must allow the academy to play its own research-driven role in balancing the interests of business and society. It illustrates one theme in the social quality perspective: how to strengthen the position of citizens, their "social empowerment." The Western Australian case indicates how citizens need to understand the information provided by various sources on carbon pollution from forest management activities. The information provided by business and often by government is selective and often seriously misleading, and contributes to violations of the precautionary principle. The dominant discourses on climate change concentrate on carbon emissions as caused by especially the production of energy. Deforestation as considered by van der Maesen and Cadman also plays a very major role. Properly recognizing this aspect of overall sustainability requires support to communities to play a responsible and constructive role in positive environmental strategies.

The fourth study, by Huub Lenders, addresses the issue – arising from the increasing consciousness of the challenges of overall sustainability – that societal costs must not be ignored any more in determining the prices of commodities. More or less in the same vein as Adam Smith, he defines societal costs as everything that the production really costs. As expressed long back by Anwar Shaikh, "the relation of people to nature must be reproduced if society is to be reproduced. Moreover, the relation of people to nature exists only in and through definite relations of people to people" (Shaikh 1981: 269). This anticipated a central argument in social quality theory, as well as in the policies of the present Ecuadorian state discussed in the first article in this issue. Lenders argues that today's economy under capitalistic production systems and relations neglects many costs in the natural sphere and in the broadest sense of acquisition. The loss of biodiversity, global warming, and the inequalities in allocations of wealth, welfare, and health were often neglected in many past Marxist debates too. The question he raises is how to determine societal costs, including in relation to sustainability. The Best Practice Price (BPP) approach is an endeavor to establish parameters in order to make better decisions. Socio-political, socio-cultural, economic and environmental data form the inputs of the model in order to calculate the BPP of main production factors and processes. Using the BPP concept, argues Lenders, the producer can build the societal cost of basic production factors into the pricing process. His study both indicates the nature of the Best Practice Price approach and argues for its functionality in contributing practically towards overall sustainability. It provides the basis for an important subsequent dialogue.

The fifth article, by Hagen Henrÿ, opens with the report that the four hundred richest families earn as much as half of the world population and that five hundred of the largest companies contribute 47% to the world's gross domestic product. These imbalances make meaningful democratic participation and social justice impossible. This fundamentally undermines sustainable development of the living conditions on earth. It is a strong argument to go beyond a focus on just greenhouse gas emissions (or even just carbon emissions) as the main cause of climate change. Our challenges go far deeper than that issue. Henrÿ continues, that without social justice political stability and peace cannot be had. Without political stability there is no economic security. Without economic security, people living in unjustified and unjustifiable societal conditions have a right to refuse to participate in deliberations on the preservation of the biosphere. Yet the biosphere is global by nature and its preservation requires global cooperation. Globalization primarily refers currently to the "de-localization" of capital and labor which transform production relations and processes. According to Henrÿ, this has consequences for the domain of state law as an expression of democratic participation. This domain is shrinking because economic globalization dissolves the unity of the socio-economic and socio-political dimensions. A second point is the increasing role of "knowledge production" which decreases the significance of capital and labor as means of production. The positive effects of conflict between capital and labor as expressed in the past two centuries will decrease. This causes problems for modern labor and social protection laws and reduces the representativeness of organized labor. Henrÿ develops a tentative answer for coping with the new relationships. It concerns making corporate responsibility for societal relationships into a legal obligation. The suggestion here is to complement these efforts by linking the legal obligations of enterprises to the aspect of sustainable development. Henrÿ takes cooperatives as an example, and rejects the common assumption that equates all enterprises with capitalistic enterprises. That equation does not correspond to the new variety of types and numbers of enterprises as recognized in most jurisdictions, and that have emerged as response to the variety of needs and choices of people. The diversity of enterprise types is a source of development, indeed of sustainable development. Henrÿ argues that we have been moving from what he calls an anthropocentric world view, favoring collective entities, to an egocentric world view favoring connective orders. Therefore we need new organization forms that center on solidarity, like cooperatives, and which should be taken better into account in legislation. Law must counterbalance the atomization of our lives. Besides being *homini oeconomici* we are *homini cooperativi*. We need to be incited by law to behave as *homini cooperans*, *homini participans*. But following this form of reasoning Henrÿ raises the question: who is in fact making the law? The state? Regional, international, or transnational organizations? Private entities? We are moving towards a multitude of legal sources. What is missing is an adequate global governance structure in line with the global character of the pursuit of the sustainable development aims.

To conclude, the Paris Conference on climate change of 2015 presented a framework for how to address global climate change. The World Social Science Report 2013 explored some of the necessary conditions for moving in such a direction, with regard to sustainability more broadly. In the five articles of this issue aspects of these

necessary conditions have come under the spotlight. Implicitly the authors show the lack of consensus about the encompassing "problematique" of the sustainability of human existence on earth. Amongst national governments, the Ecuadorian State is almost alone in stressing in its Constitution the inevitable dialectic between societal relationships and ecological circumstances of human life. This non-individualistic orientation, a main condition for realizing the Paris objectives, is ignored in the policy area of public health in the USA, resulting in the failure of the Obama Administration to cope well with HIV questions. In Western Australia, despite all the evidence, its government allows business groups to continue the deforestation of its oldest forests on behalf of the paper industry. The inevitable dialectic is ignored. Globally we are confronted with a lack of knowledge concerning how to determine the "real price" of commodities in the context of this necessary dialectic, giving due weight to all costs. Proposals are presented in this issue as an input to debate on "the best practice price". The final article addresses what should be the legal obligations for large business groups in regard to the dialectic between societal relationships and ecological circumstances of human life. Such legal obligations are non-existent presently but are likely to be a *conditio sine qua non* for fulfilling the Paris Conference objectives. With all this in mind, the proposals articulated in the IASQ Manifesto on climate change (see above) to increase orchestration of research and education for sustainability, in and across universities in all regions of the world, and to engage more seriously with student populations, seem essential.

Each of the studies in this set is an invitation to deep further work, towards an integrated approach to overall sustainability. We hope that readers will be stimulated and provoked to follow up these and related lines of exploration.

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