
Introduction

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This special issue of the *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development* marks the third time the journal has published selected papers presented at our International Symposium for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development. Individual studies of societal social processes typically focus on just one scale ignoring others, for example on the local or grass roots level, or on industry level processes or government policy making. There is good reason for this. The dynamics of sustainable development is complex, even at a single scale. Nevertheless, multiscale studies do add important insights. For example, Radcliffe and Laurie's (2006) study of how developed world notions of development interact with Andean traditional culture show that local development policies need to be understood in the context of wider 'inflections of culture' (p.240). Similarly, Chowdhury et al. (2011) reveal the scalar dynamics in the evolution of American urban residential landscapes, pointing out how local urban

landscaping choices reflect wider hierarchies of norms, markets, and ecological conditions.

While the six papers here have differing aims, taken together they provide an opportunity to observe processes of stakeholder engagement across differing sites, multiscalar milieux, and overlapping spaces within which sustainable development work takes place. These milieux are also constituted of structures of hierarchical control alongside more fluid networks of cooperation: nation state policy making driving local strategy to influence individual consumer behaviour, and at the same time cooperation among peer institutions, such as between governments, supply chains, and civil society institutions and organisations. This special issue presents research that sheds light on particular features of these milieux. Further, these studies reveal that sustainable development spaces are also sites of resistance (against government policy or corporate interests), drivers of emergent of change, and of tensions derived from attempting to reconcile economic, social, and environmental goals.

Considering the role of individual key stakeholders, we take for granted that the responsibilities of government towards its citizens include ensuring their security, their general social welfare (health, education, welfare support), protection of the environment, and economic development. Following the advent of the UNWCED Brundtland Report (Brundtland et al., 1987) this economic development has been broadened to include sustainable development goals (economic, social, and environmental), though its interpretation and implementation at national, local, and sectoral levels remain challenging. Business – another stakeholder and an institution that rivals government in terms of economic power – is an agent through which a nation's economic development takes place, yet producers and consumers seem locked into a spiral of unsustainable production and consumption. Further, civil society organisations expect businesses to not only make an economic contribution, but to also contribute to social welfare and to protecting the natural environment; a package of corporate obligations commonly described as corporate (social) responsibility. Business is embracing these challenges though not necessarily to the satisfaction of other stakeholders such as consumer groups, investigative media, regulators, and advocacy groups. From this it should be clear that business, through exercising corporate responsibility, performs a critical role in meeting sustainable development goals. Significantly, the envelope of societal expectations continues to expand, shining a spotlight onto the behaviour of all stakeholders.

The ambitions expressed in the Brundtland Report have been enshrined in the mission of numerous multilateral agencies (UN, International Business Leaders Forum, Global Compact), the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and incorporated in government policies and regulations around the world, and continue to inspire initiatives on every continent, some collaborative and others independent and localised. Such hierarchical and multi-scalar structures and processes point to the multi-dimensional character of *responsibility* for sustainable development. In particular, we recognise this responsibility to be: [1] shared among many societal stakeholders (government, producers, consumers, and various civil society organisations including NGOs, charities, advocacy groups); [2] comprehensive in terms of social, environmental, and economic ambition addressed as a whole and not as tradable parts in a zero sum game (like pollution permits); yet [3] differentiated according to the interests and capabilities of each in relation to the demands of a sustainable development agenda; and [4] potentially unlimited, in terms of relations in the present (e.g., through international supply chains) and as obligations toward future generations. The terrain of responsibility for sustainable development is therefore

complex and nuanced, where local policy and business behaviour can generate global consequences (butterfly effect) and vice versa. The terrain also possesses both spatial and temporal dimensions, constituting competing driving forces grounded in differentiated ideological and political commitments to climate change and social justice, and differing economic development priorities. In this terrain stakeholders comprise both formal and informal institutions, and individuals (some as yet unborn). Insofar as there is ongoing correspondence between the local and the global, we need to acknowledge that stakeholder engagement is both direct and indirect, sometimes bridging a range of political governance settings (various forms of democracy, authoritarian regimes, and totalitarianism, urban, rural, tribal). Accordingly, stakeholder engagement strategies must take account multi-scalar and evolutionary processes and structures, and the contextual influence of governance setting.

This special issue provides global insights and diverse industry perspectives, drawing together an interesting mix of empirical studies, case studies, and conceptual papers. These works explore some of the drivers of corporate responsibility and the contribution, or lack thereof, to sustainable development. Each paper engages with issues that seem particularly significant within modern society, including: the alarming rise of obesity especially in developed economies; concerns around protecting the quality of our water; exploring the notion of sustainable organisations, such as businesses; the ever-present danger of human rights of some groups becoming marginalised; and how to resolve the inevitable tensions between stakeholders around the extraction of natural resources. Some of these studies draw on data from Australia, Canada, USA, and UK, whose conclusions have worldwide implications. The papers directly address subjects of global significance, including: the nature of multi-scalar responsibility among societal stakeholders; challenges around tensions between consumer choice, business priorities, and government responsibility; the stewardship of our natural resources; organisational sustainability; and the rights of communities to self-determination and development decisions.

We note that it has been a decade since the publication of Moon's (2007) paper on the contributions by business to sustainable development. He wrote about the increasing interest within industry to act sustainably as part of a growing corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement. Of particular interest is his observation that this growth is a result of 'new drivers' (p.300) of CSR that include: increasing socialisation of markets, with growing interest by consumers in products and services from firms that act sustainably; social drivers such as environmental and human rights activism; governmental drivers related to political platforms supporting sustainability; and globalisation drivers whereby global organisations, driven by their own sustainability imperatives, are able to influence local business to act more sustainably.

The drivers of positive change highlighted by Moon (2007) continue to play a role in influencing industry to act more responsibly and, in doing so, add to the sustainable development of the communities in which they operate and trade. But do these drivers always lead to beneficial outcomes, or do we still find today that conflicts remain within, and between, each driver? For example, a market driver may exist whereby consumers seek to purchase products or services from environmentally responsible firms but to what degree do consumers relegate their preference when another market driver such as lower pricing is seen to be more attractive? Certainly that dilemma exists when it comes to electric vehicles: consumers find attractive the environmental argument for electric vehicles, but their uptake remains low as fossil fuel cars remain comparatively

inexpensive to buy, and moreover, governments are not providing appropriate infrastructure or financial inducements to bring about change in consumer behaviour or attitude. Conflicts also exist between the various drivers. An example is the struggle between market drivers, social drivers, and globalisation when it comes to fast fashion. Globalisation has allowed fashion retailers to source their products from all over the world. Low-cost retailers such as H&M and WalMart are driven by market demand for less expensive clothing and to satisfy that demand they include in their supply chains low wage suppliers operating with poor working conditions based in developing countries. These consumer attitudes to price and the corresponding supply chain practices persist even though socially driven non-governmental organisations (NGOs) actively denounce such arrangements.

Awareness of conflicts within the notion of sustainable development predate Moon's (2007) insights by at least ten years, and making sense of these conflicts and their consequences, along with attempts to characterise and position stakeholders, continue to stimulate critique and theory development, (see for e.g., Ostrom, 2009; Moir and Carter, 2012; Thatcher, 2014; Rayman-Bacchus and Walsh, 2016). A key ongoing assumption seems to be that sustainable development rests on inherent trade-offs between economic, environment, and social factors, as reflected in the ubiquitous overlapping circles representation. In 'The Planner's Triangle', Campbell (1996, 2013) describes how, in an ideal world, urban planners would balance society's sustainable development by planning for economic growth and its equitable distribution without harming the ecosystem in the process. Yet, in reality he suggests there are conflicts around 'property, resource, and development': competing claims on, and the uses of, property; conflicts around resources (resistance by business to resource regulation regarding present needs, but support for regulation to conserve resources for future needs); and in development (meeting social needs for development at the expense of environmental degradation). The challenge he presents is how to reconcile the positions that exist between such competing interests. This issue of compromise has been discussed throughout the stakeholder theory literature (Friedman and Miles, 2002; Frooman and Murrell, 2005; Bundy et al., 2018) and understanding the relative positions of stakeholders, as well as who or what constitutes a stakeholder (Moir and Carter, 2012; Rayman-Bacchus and Walsh, 2016), when it comes to sustainable development is important. How stakeholders reconcile competing positions is a central theme of the special issue and each paper provides some insight into the overlapping space shared by corporate responsibility and a variety of sustainable development scenarios. Grounded within differing contexts, the papers examine how the interdependence of, and interaction between, government, business, numerous civil society stakeholders and advocacy organisations, shape social, economic, and environmental outcomes. There is both an individual and a shared responsibility (albeit differentiated as noted) among stakeholders (through mandate or mission) to ensure, either innovative solutions (technological, forms of organisation, financing) to sustainable development challenges that bypass competing claims, or achieve an appropriate compromise between all stakeholders. Of course, as these papers highlight, the reality is often different, yet they also reveal the possibilities for alternative outcomes.

In their paper, 'Obesity: locating social responsibility in the context of evolving norms', Manning and Kelly examine how over the past 20 years in the UK there has been a normalisation of obesity that has led to ignoring it as a threat to the health and welfare of future generations. They highlight how the principle cause is less the gluttony or sloth of the individual but rather a combination of social and economic factors that influence

individuals in making an informed choice. The introduction of fast food, with large amounts of fat, sugar and salt, was principally a 'guilty pleasure' within western cultures. Periodically, parents or individuals who were tired from long hours of work would take themselves or the family out for a quick, informal, and relatively inexpensive meal. Today, societal pressures around long working hours, the need for both parents to work, and the norm of eating out instead of making meals at home has allowed the fast food industry to grow, and with it the increase of obesity. Industry players compete by exploiting economies of scale to keep fast food costs down and to allow for larger portion sizes that appear to consumers as better value for their money. Unfortunately, this only perpetuates the obesity issue. This phenomenon is not restricted only to developed countries but is now influencing developing nations such as China. Manning and Kelly identify the responsibility of industry, government and consumers in addressing food security and public health and they suggest a number of solutions to help combat the threat that society currently faces.

Of course, the strategic literature (Grant et al., 2015) would suggest that with every threat there is an opportunity, and it is opportunities that entrepreneurs pursue. This leads us to the paper by Swanson and Bruni-Bossio, 'The emergence and devolution of sustainable organisations'. They define the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship and discuss the role that it plays in contributing to the advancement of social, ecological and/or cultural sustainability. In their conceptual model, Swanson and Bruni-Bossio identify three categories of sustainable organisations; sustainable business enterprises, sustainable social enterprises, and sustainable service or advocacy agencies. They are differentiated by the degree of financial self-sufficiency derived from their operations and the degree to which they produce positive sustainable outcomes from their demonstrated operating mission. Putting forward a series of propositions, the model predicts pathways for emerging sustainable organisations that either leads to survival, or to their becoming an unstable business enterprise that ultimately leads to the cessation of their operations. The authors conclude by making recommendations for emerging sustainable organisations.

In 'Change is possible: the effects of a corporate social responsibility course on business student attitudes', Quirk explores the attitudes of senior-level undergraduate business students toward business ethics and corporate social responsibility and how their attitudes changed after taking a business elective on the topic. By using a pre-course and post-course questionnaire with the same group of students, longitudinal data was collected. In addition, this study was replicated over a three year period with three different classes. The findings reveal that students' pre-course attitudes were generally favourable towards business ethics and corporate social responsibility. In addition, the findings suggest that business students' attitudes after completing the course became even more positive towards the long term benefits of sound business ethics and corporate responsibility. This study's originality lies in its novel use of a longitudinal approach to examine the impact of business ethics and CSR education on Canadian business student attitudes. The results of this study provide some reassurance for business schools that educating students on these topics can realise more positive attitudes towards making ethical decisions and leading organisations in a socially responsible way.

Two former mining practitioners and now academics, Walsh and Ferro, in their paper 'Developing a framework for sustainable development in extractive industries: a Latin America perspective', present a conceptual framework for State (government) and Non-State (industry, non-governmental agencies) bodies that can help them evaluate the

sustainability of communities impacted by extractive industries. The framework is comprised of two parts; the first being the need for answers to questions related to the engagement of stakeholders, and the second part comprising established principles, goals, and standards that promote sustainable development. Using the case of Latin America, the authors explore the historical development of the legal structure that defines how mineral and petroleum resources are owned and extracted. They identify a number of actions that are important to stakeholder engagement that include forming alliances and partnerships among stakeholders with a common purpose, the establishment of consistently interpreted and enforced rules and regulations, and a general commitment by all stakeholders to pursuing a sustainable future for the impacted communities. The framework is intended to guide extractive sector firms in Latin America towards developing local sustainable initiatives even in the face of a limited civil society foundation for sustainable development. Furthermore, Ferro and Walsh suggest that all stakeholders can employ the framework to determine what actions they must pursue given the manner in which firms have addressed these questions and then implemented the specific standards.

The extractive sector theme continues with Pearce's paper, 'An application of the 'foundational principles' of the second pillar of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to the Ranger mine, in the Northern Territory of Australia'. In this case study of Rio Tinto's Ranger Mine in Australia, Pearce employs the United Nation's guiding principles (UNGP) to examine the efficacy of this instrument as a tool for sustainable development. He provides us with some background as to the mine itself and the local indigenous communities affected by that operation. The paper discusses the theoretical underpinnings of human rights and proposes a tripartite approach to human rights that encourages different perspectives to co-exist and the role that the UNGPs have in promoting discourse in this area. In his comprehensive review of principles 11 through 15, and his subsequent application of these principles to the operations of the Ranger mine, Pearce has found that mining companies will continue to find difficulty in adopting these UNGPs. Nevertheless, they represent a starting point for corporate accountability and the facilitation of discussion regarding human rights. The UNGPs have made an impact on the development of other sustainability standards, and in the case of Rio Tinto there appears to be a clear acceptance, although as Pearce has found there is yet to be any meaningful change at the Ranger Mine.

The sustainable development of resources is not limited to minerals and petroleum. With the impact of climate change and related droughts, water has become a non-renewable resource in certain parts of the world. But even in places such as Canada, with its abundance of fresh water resources, the responsibility for its long term health now sits with a number of stakeholders. In 'Water quality protection of the Canada-US great lakes: examining the emerging state/nonstate governance approach', Martin and Webb highlight the independent development and implementation of non-state governance initiatives that apply to the protection of the world's largest surface area of fresh water; the North American Great Lakes. This approach contrasts with the conventional state-centred approaches (e.g., command and control regulatory regimes) and state-controlled or orchestrated governance approaches (e.g., Areas of Concern). Accordingly, the authors find a lack of cooperative dynamic and a more competitive check and balance element to the development and implementation of sustainable practices. Their observations align with Webb's previously published sustainable governance model, which suggests that a complex, multi-actor, system of 'instruments, institutions, and processes' can improve the

likelihood of dealing with an environmental issue whereby when one actor or instrument falters (e.g., government, through underfunding of its enforcement activities), other actors with other instruments, institutions, and processes may have the capability to intervene. Martin and Webb conclude by proposing that a similar sustainable governance approach might have global application in a variety of environmental, social and economic contexts.

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