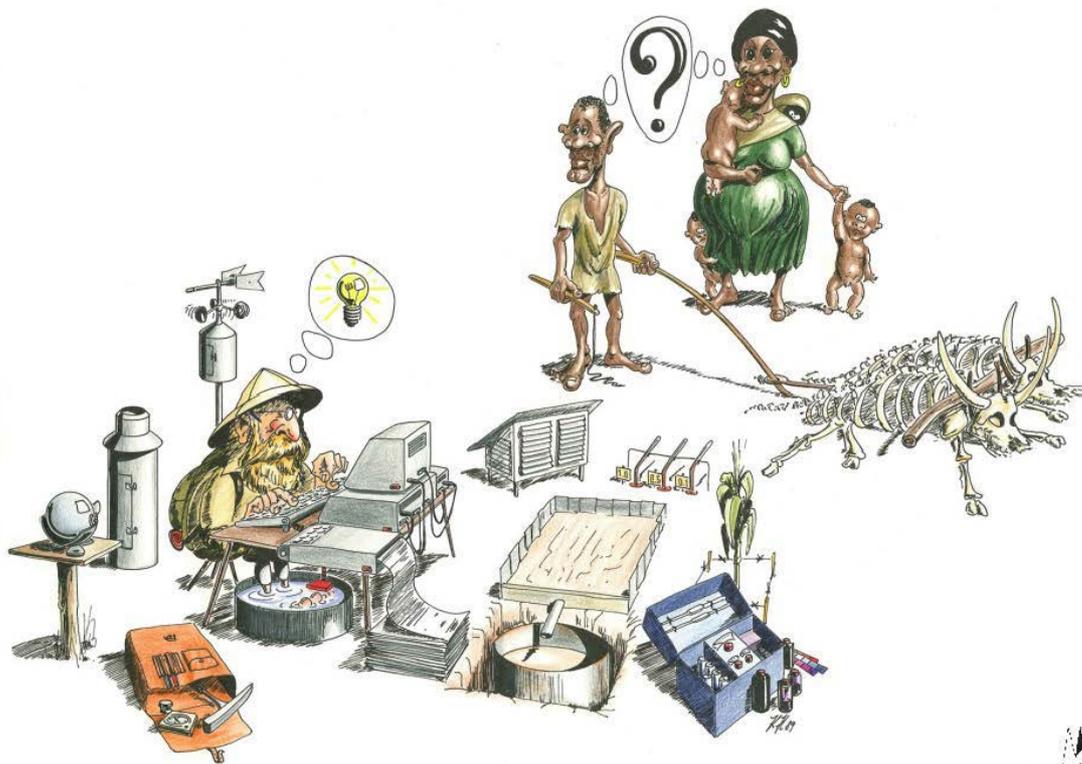u^b

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Paradigm Change or Old Wine in New Bottles?
Debating and Reformulating SDGs – An Experiment

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Illustration: by Karl Herweg, CDE

1) Introduction

This paper contains the results of an experiment conducted at the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Bern, Switzerland, in a participatory seminar during the autumn semester of 2016. The seminar invited students in social anthropology and human geography (BA students from semester 5 onwards, as well as MA students) to reflect on the formulation of the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their respective targets. The overall aim was to analyse the concepts by examining literature regarding issues of sustainable development in the fields of social anthropology and human geography (see literature list at the end of the paper). Inputs were gathered from more recent studies concerning the ways in which the SDGs mirror actual debates and issues regarding social-ecological relations in these disciplines. A particular question concerned whether SDGs, understood from a largely qualitative research perspective and based on concrete case studies, represent a real paradigm shift that is congruent with local realities, or if instead SDGs may be considered "old wine in new bottles?" as phrased in the title of the seminar.

The almost 30 students participated actively in the seminar and offered important contributions as part of nine working groups. They presented case studies based on new literature related to sustainable development in social anthropology and human geography and discussed on this basis the most relevant related SDGs and SDG sub-targets. This report is derived from these presentations and the discussion concluding the seminar, in which the working groups also proposed re-formulations of the selected SGD sub-targets. Thus, all of the students participated in the creation of this paper and so all are co-authors, as intended by the seminar. The literature was selected by the main author (the organiser of the seminar) but the students were free to substitute and include other literature as desired. The seminar represented a challenge because the literature selected can be considered just the tip of the iceberg, but we believe that the papers and case studies selected highlighted at least some of the critical reflections concerning the issues targeted by the SDGs.

In the fields of social anthropology and human geography, the literature concerning development and environmental issues is vast, discussing different ways of interacting with the environment, whether in terms of hunter-gatherer, pastoral and peasant or farming societies, or a combination. In addition, more and more industrial and post-industrial societies are being studied in European as well as non-European contexts with a more or less urban or peri-urban background. Furthermore, all so-called "traditional societies" are confronted with global change and some are more affected than others by the colonial and post-colonial expansion of Europe and other centres of globalisation. Nevertheless, these changes must be analysed using a cultural as well as historical lens, including political economy, ecology and institutional approaches. This will enable us to identify changes in the interaction between powerful and less powerful regions and actors that have been shaping this relationship for the last 500 years. In terms of SDGs, two elements are paramount. One is the notion of development and the question who has the power to define the term. Considerable literature critically analyses this concept, viewing the post-industrial world in Europe and the United States of America (USA), and to a lesser extent the former Soviet Union (USSR) and China, as leading players. Important scholars include Arturo Escobar (1995) and James Ferguson (1990), who are just two voices questioning whether development is first shared by all and second facilitates improvements at the local scale. Both authors claim that we must review hegemony in terms of what is and who defines development. Indeed, especially in his early work, Ferguson argues that the development discourse hides the power-specific control interests of the state, or the ways in which governments think about and attempt to control their people (Ferguson 199, see also James Scott 1985).

The second is the notion of the environment. Indeed, the way in which we perceive the environment appears to be extremely narrow, considering the diversity of ways in which this may be seen globally by different societies. Nevertheless, one can empirically demonstrate that they differ from our general conceptualisations. In numerous societies, what we deem to constitute the environment is a combination of a living and strategically acting being with which humans must interact. Some authors such as Fikret Berkes (1999) have term this a spiritual relationship, but for local actors, the social anthropological literature indicates that there is often an additional notion that humans are not the only players, and that one must interact with other forces. Diverse totemistic and animistic belief systems including shamanistic societies incorporate this basic idea. It is not the argument that such belief systems stimulate a more sustainable way of living and that we can see a ritual human-environment homeostatic regulation (see Rappaport 1984). Rather, the argument is that people need to care for their surroundings and realise that their actions can trigger reactions within the spiritual world that are manifested in the "material" world (see Haller 2007 for a summary, but also look at the extensive debate on Roy Rappaport's work and reactions to ritual environment-human regulations). Consequently, one also needs to understand that the environment does not just incorporate the interaction of living and non-living matter, but that all other neighbouring human societies constitute a political environment to which one must adapt. Such interactions help shape the way in which the environment is perceived and how its "natural" components are used.

Third is what Fairhead and Leach have called a misreading of nature. Powerful actors who have expanded their power over the last 400 years argue that the rest of the world is pure nature, unaffected by humans from Western nations, but endangered by local people. During the colonial period, this was considered justification for expelling local people from their land. However, this perspective is misleading because few landscapes have not been transformed by humans. Indeed, even managers of national parks must admit that human use is important to protecting the composition and interaction of ecosystems (see for example Yellowstone Park or the Serengeti and the issue of fire). Certainly, Fairhead and Leach (1996) demonstrate that small forests in Western Africa are not merely the remains of full forest coverage, but rather are culturally shaped agro-forest patches, based on much more human involvement than the adjacent savannahs, the opposite of what had been argued by colonial forestry administrators. This is not just a historical curiosity, but a basic issue, as it links to notions and ideologies of ownership. Today, states in Africa still market their environment as being pure nature, instead of highlighting how these landscapes are culturally shaped and maintained. Indeed, the former argument is seen as a way of expelling local people from their land and resources.

This third element leads to another argument: if the environment had constituted "perfect nature" in the time when colonial powers first occupied the Global South, we are thus challenged by the puzzle that all of these areas were inhabited and often used intensively BEFORE colonial times, and did not show signs of overuse but seem to have been well managed by local people. It is therefore difficult to understand why we have any legitimacy to "teach" these people the "right" way of using and preserving the environment. Planting forests and using fire, moving cattle and maintaining and reproducing a diversified agricultural system have for centuries represented sustainable means of creating what we term here cultural landscape ecosystems. Therefore, as much as gardeners can be considered the creators of botanical gardens, local groups need to be seen as creators of landscape ecosystems. Such creation and maintenance forces us to take another step in the analysis: behind such landscapes are not mere techniques, but also management rules and regulations (institutions). In terms of the typology of resources, we primarily consider what Elinor Ostrom and others labelled common-pool resources (CPRs) such as pasture, wildlife, fisheries, forestry, veldt products, land and water. These are resources

for which defence is expensive, but possible by individuals who do cooperate, and that are also subtractable (what has been taken will have to be renewed as it is not currently available) (see Becker and Ostrom 1995). The underlying debate regarding the institutions that "own" these resources had for a long time been rooted in Garrett Hardin's "tragedy of the commons" (1968), which claimed that the common property of common-pool resources would lead to overuse because common property means open access.

The basic issue here is not only that evidence exists of cultural landscapes where scientific and environmental discourse highlights pure nature, but also that cultural landscapes have never been open access, and have instead generally comprised common property or a combination of property regimes. These common property institutions, which did regulate and coordinate resource use, were often based on local knowledge and adapted to seasonal and inter-seasonal changes. They were central to the management of numerous local groups who had used the resources for centuries. It is important to note here that these systems had always been changing and transforming, especially given that global trade networks existed even prior to colonial times, for example in African countries (see slave trade and trade of other goods as shown in the work of Eric Wolf, 1984). However, in all regions of the Global South, basic institutional change from colonial times comprised the transformation from local systems of communal property to state property, and subsequent adoption by post-colonial (so-called independent states) that are part of the capitalist system. This transformation went hand in hand with legal pluralism because colonial and postcolonial states institutionally separated interrelated cultural landscape ecosystems into different legal spheres (separate departments for resources, the legal systems of which were often poorly adapted). This resulted in chaotic management systems in which local people lost a sense of ownership, while elites were able to justify resource- and land-grabbing processes as investments in idle land. While state institutions should, as argued by Hardin, be able to manage common pool resources in a sustainable way, this became impossible as states increasingly encountered financial problems (true of many African states in terms of the payment of debts) and were no longer able to manage their resources (see Haller 2010, 2013). This led to either *de facto* open access or to privatisation by more powerful groups, and in conjunction with development were or still create many of the problems to which the SDGs are related.

However, as we will highlight, such underlying issues are not tackled in the SDGs, including in that related to so-called strong institutions. An associated issue is that the dismantling of communal rights to common-pool resources and the right to continue using and maintaining cultural landscapes has disconnected people from the land, while jobs have not been made available (see Haller 2010, 2016, Li 2010). Thus, the change has created so-called surplus people who are today unable to negotiate their problems (see also Ferguson 2015). Therefore, the basic assumption that many people in the Global South need to be educated and given opportunities misses the point that resource- and land-grabbing is occurring, resulting in commons-grabbing as well as the seizing of other options to building capacity and resilience. This in turn implicates SDGs such as food security, sustainable resource use, pollution and biodiversity loss, and especially those closely related to the undermining of local management institutions (Haller 2010, Haller et al 2013). Moreover, top-down approaches have been proven ineffective and excessively expensive, and in cases even harmful, as the debate on conservation indicates (Galvin and Haller 2008, Brockington et al 2008, Haller and Galvin 2011, Haller, Acciaioli and Rist 2016).

These basic reflections were further discussed by the participants during three sessions. Indeed, we focused on issues of: a) constrictions of development debates; b) new theoretical reflections on the issue of distribution; and c) possible alternatives or innovations that have recently been developed. These three topics were discussed based on the idea that they could serve as a sort of preamble for critical discussion regarding the SDGs.

2) Preambles for SGDs Target Debate

The team discussed three debates regarding the discourse on development, labelled as constructions (Preamble 1), distribution (Preamble 2) and innovation (Preamble 3). These then led to the formulation of three preambles to be proposed and understood, before the SDGs were discussed.

Preamble 1: Issues of the construction of development

Social anthropology is a discipline that critically examines the ways in which development is conceptualised, not just from our perspective but also from those of other societies with different cultures. This acts as a mirror to which our view of development is reflected and refers to the issue of how development is normatively constructed. Therefore, in this first step we focused on the work of James Ferguson (the concept of development as an Anti-Politics Machine, see Ferguson 1990) and especially Arturo Escobar, whose seminal book, *Encountering Development*, is central to our discipline (1995). Escobar refers to the hidden political notion of Western-like definitions of development, and how these hide notions of how the interests of more powerful actors (and especially those related to a specific state) are perceived. Development is then a normative positive label by which the interests of the state are pushed and justified. This work draws heavily upon Ferguson (1990) who, by describing the development discourse in Lesotho during apartheid in South Africa, shows that development goals in a country that was completely dependent on the South African government were not established for local people, but rather were constructed to reinforce the interests of the government. Thus, political issues, central to development issues, were hidden.

The Anti-Politics Machine is a metaphor that argues that development acted as a mechanism that failed to address the underlying political problems faced in Lesotho. In using this concept, Escobar goes one step further by indicating that the normative way in which development is conceptualised – what development means – not only stems from a Western cultural construct but is itself a construct. This, Escobar argues, is rarely based on a deep analysis of historical change through colonialisation, but rather on naturalising constellations in which local actors are described as being underdeveloped. This may not simply accord with foreign norms but also the general view that they are lacking behind, which is often either implicitly or explicitly perceived by advocates of development as their "own mistake". Developing countries are either unable or still seeking a route out of poverty. Escobar then illustrates in some topical cases how problems are constructed such that the problem of hunger (for instance) becomes naturalised rather than being considered an outcome of unequal power relations and enduring colonial and post-colonial power relations, as discussed in political ecology.

The issue is not simply that problems are misread, but that some individuals or groups have the power to construct something as real, affecting how it can be addressed. We subsequently discussed a core quantitative tool in development debates: measurement of gross domestic product (GDP) as a proxy for a state's level of development. In *Poor Numbers*, Jerven (2014) demonstrates that GDP and other data are often of very poor quality in African countries, distorting or even fabricating economic development, to the extent that the data can be considered constructions. One important element is the fact that African states do not generally have the means to gather sufficient acceptable quantitative data to make any claims regarding economic development. Indeed, data is often lacking or distorted. Different data baselines are thus mere constructions, but become 'real' because they are used and quantified by governments and donor agencies in planning and policy-making. For example, Jerven indicates that the three major database sets used worldwide rank African countries according to their GDP in a completely different way. Organisations such as the World Bank construct missing data of African countries in order to present a "best guess series of data", which no one can control and assess, but which

becomes reality for the sake of policy considerations. If we cannot even trust GDP data for a continent that is the main focus of development debates, we must question how we are to assess development problems that require different types of quantitative data. This constitutes an enormous challenge for the academic community.

Moreover, we have not even yet discussed whether the variables selected are also shared by local people. Even more disturbing is the fact that statistical mistakes and distortions will in an aggregated way increase the overall distortion of the results. For example, if one tries to calculate economic growth from an incorrect baseline, the errors will continue to increase. One case in point is the traditional underestimation of informal and subsistence economies in African countries, as these countries are generally deemed as having very low growth at first, but very high growth later. In discussing these issues, the team formulated a first preamble for the SDGs as follows:

P1: Tackling discourses of environment and development: **Being conscious of the fact that discourses of development can contribute to the continuation of colonial and post-colonial relations between countries and peoples, the United Nations and their member states call for the rejection of the differentiation of developed countries and countries on the way to development. Local knowledge and problem-oriented concept strategies for development, be these handed over from so-called tradition or be these newly developed, are from now on recognised adequately in order to maintain healthy and diverse ecosystems (or better cultural landscapes ecosystems, see below), protect human rights and eliminate what is locally perceived as poverty. In order to have guidelines on the ways in which development contexts are to be evaluated, it is problematic to assess development based on SDGs alone, as these might be misleading and often represent constructions of economic factors and others, and thus distort development dynamics by acting as Anti-Politics Machines. With the objective of a) maintaining and recreating the planet as a place of life, based on locally created cultural landscape ecosystems and accepting communal and private property in these landscapes, b) enabling a rightful share to the social, political and economic life of all humans and to connect communities in peripheries and centres in a just and productive environmental relationship, by c) levelling power asymmetries in a way that respects local concepts of life as long as they do not undermine d) basic elements of human rights and sustainability, the UN should promote participatory development goals.**

Preamble 2: Issues of power asymmetries and justice stimulated discussion on the issue of distribution.

The following points represented central reflections based on the literature: First sustainable use of natural resource demand, as many debates conclude, some sense of ownership on resources as basic institutions. These can range from common to private property. But how are land and related resources distributed? This is a key question that is often poorly addressed, and especially not in an historical manner. It is difficult to provide a precise global overview on this issue, but some key publications in this debate indicate two major aspects: A) areas without notions of property do not exist (such as idle land); and B) the worldwide many forms of historical land and resource grabbing processes since the colonial period, left many social groups and individuals without property (Ellen 1982, Fairhead and Leach 1996; Galvin and Haller 2008).

In spite of the fact that the notion of property is a Western concept, it is widely acknowledged that there are many non-Western forms of relatedness of people to the land and its resources, such as indigenous concepts of relatedness or connectedness to the land, often embedded in spiritual belief systems (see Berkes 1999, Chanock 2005, Haller 2007, 2010, 2016). One issue is that locally, people may have very different perceptions regarding the land and related resources,

while ownership as such may not exist. The latter is the discourse used by the more powerful to claim ownership over resources and thus violate local notions of use and management rights. Unfolding the numerous meanings of land and how land is related to other common-pool resources (water, pasture, forest, wildlife, fisheries, veldt and non-timber forest products) represents an important contribution from social anthropology and human geography. They reveal actually existing expertise in dealing with sustainable resources. It might be that indigenous and other cultures' ways of perceiving resources comprise a means of acting more sustainably with resources, or provide the basis to finding new means of coping with resource challenges. Nevertheless, in order to have the capacity to experiment, it is of greater pertinence to address the fact that many peoples and groups have lost their basic options to experiment as their basic rights to land and resources are being removed. Harvey (2003) calls this accumulation by dispossession, which is supported by Li (2009) in her work, in which she shows how global enclosures lead to dispossession.

This so-called agrarian transformation has left many people in the Global South without land and resources, while no jobs are provided as well. This stands in contrast to the situation promised by transition promoters from the World Bank, development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and nation-states: jobs have not materialised as a substitute for land loss. Li argues that what we are facing today is not a very large number of a "proletarian army", but rather a large crowd of so-called "surplus people" who are uprooted and excluded from any means of survival and (quite reasonably) do not care for issues of sustainability. Regarding the economic development processes taking place in Europe and the USA, economists such as Thomas Piketty and colleagues (2005) are also alarmed, highlighting not the economic development of states but the increasing disparity in growth rates. This trend represents a considerable danger, as very few individuals or interest groups control any significant parts of the world's economy, leading to the development of a small minority of holders of global capital. This contributes to arguments on economic distribution processes, not just from the perspective of justice, but also from the perspective of economic processes. Indeed, where the growth of the few wealthy exceeds global economic growth, economists fear the manifestation of considerable global distortions. Fiscal and other redistribution techniques are not only being debated in leftist circles.

However, the question remains how to be able to install and enforce a new fiscal distributional system? As James Ferguson (2015) argues in *New Politics of Distribution*, there is a global need, especially for nation-states, to stimulate a new process of redistribution. Promises of development have not been met, but rather have created both dispossession and a lack of jobs. This might lead to a global economic crisis as the capitalist process does not create jobs; in fact, quite the contrary. By increasing capital gains via reducing jobs (capital) and increasing investment in machinery (constant capital), capitalists cut costs and create gains, a process that had been discussed in the nineteenth century by Karl Marx. Programmes have often attempted to reach the most vulnerable people, but they have faced high transaction costs. Based on empirical findings in South Africa, Ferguson argues that direct unconditional payments from states to citizens rather than development programmes may constitute a more effective means of mitigating poverty at low expense. Regarding the argument that this will make people more dependent and that such a process is just a "gift" to the poor, rendering them even more dependent, he uses the argument of the Russian economist Peter Kropotkin to highlight that everyone living in a state has in one way or another contributed to its construction and functioning, and so receiving money is not a gift; rather, it is a rightful share (as will be outlined below). We thus summarised the second preamble as follows:

P2: Reduction of accumulation by dispossession and capital concentration while pushing for a rightful share (new politics of distribution): There is a growing demand for a new politics of distribution as an answer to the increasingly accelerated development disparities regarding land, private property and capital. Indeed, these are increasingly in the hands of the few (including elites and state leaders), boosting their income while a growing number of people in rural as well as urban areas of the world live without possession or access to land and land-related common-pool resources, especially in the Global South. The high number of expelled people cannot be absorbed, as capital gains are invested to mechanise work processes and thus reduce jobs via new technologies. As a result, many people become unable to feed themselves. Thus, the question is not whether people can be fed, but whether they have the means to feed themselves.

Policies under current development do not constitute a remedy, but in fact reinforce the process and lead to even more surplus people, as the demand to reduce "the state" is pushed at every level in the context of neoliberal strategies. This process started during colonial times but continues even today, as elites in the Global North via their investments, and states in the Global South via processes of expropriation, must be considered significant factors explaining the existence of poverty and resource pressure in the environment (see Li 2010). This process also leads to increased disparities in global capital ownership and income growth. Higher properties generate growing average rents, hence the growth of unevenly owned capital may augment gains more than global economic growth. This further entrenches the concentration of capital and puts worldwide economic processes and developments in danger.

These processes must be countered by the increasingly progressive taxation of the very rich (Piketty). This might also constitute an effective strategy because the Global North's high level of access to the Global South's resources may be linked to such investments by a small number of owners of large capital. The two processes of disparity (large numbers of people without access and small numbers with extremely high capital wealth) and their negative impacts might be levelled by a new politics of distribution, which James Ferguson calls a rightful share, whereby the wealth of a nation and region shall be distributed more widely than merely by capital owners. In general, a new politics of redistribution does not simply constitute an issue of human rights, but one of sustainable development. Therefore, redistribution and halting huge capital accumulation is not just a development goal, but additionally one of sustainable development as a whole.

However, although these larger global dynamics need to be addressed, a question remains regarding alternatives to development via new innovations focusing on sustainable development. The following section explores this question and outlines a third and final preamble.

Preamble 3: Recognising potential and pitfalls through new innovations, extractivism and gender
Historically, numerous ideas regarding alternatives to development have been discussed, designed and tested. Mainstream development goals oriented along "the bigger the better" view (take-off industrialisation in the view of Rostow's modernisation approach in the 1960s) have been challenged by ideas such as "the small is beautiful" approach (see Schumacher), as well as decoupling ideas and strategies of "self-reliance", often combined with local version of socialism (African cases include Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Zambia between the 1970s and 1980s). All of these experiments became victims of the Cold War and post-colonial interests. They also suffered from a lack of active participation, being imposed by intellectual elites. Perhaps the case of Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara would need to be studied again carefully, as it displayed a higher level of participation and an orientation towards curtailing elites and elite capture, but at the same time being at war with neo-traditional authorities.

Unfortunately, the murder of Sankara ended this experiment rather abruptly (see the work of Jean Ziegler). The way in which alternatives in Latin America and Asia have been discussed also suffered from intellectual elites and local versions of Marxism, and also faced troubles addressing a more participatory approach owing to Cold War-era geostrategic issues (such as in Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Zapatista movement in Mexico, China, Vietnam and North Korea). The situation in Asia is difficult to assess: China's path is a strange but successful combination of top-down socialist capitalism on an enormous scale, with substantial state presence and social control, partially echoed by other socialist countries. However, we do not intend to provide an overview of any alternative, but to focus on two central developments in the past: one at the state level after an indigenous revolution, and the other as a more local-oriented approach. The first is the Vivir Bien or Bien Vivir approach enacted in Bolivia after indigenous organisations brought Eva Morales to power. The government in Ecuador, although not indigenous, was sympathetic to the Bolivian approach.

The approach of the "Good Life" is based on the highland's indigenous spiritual concepts of so-called Mother Earth (pachamama). It aimed to stimulate a process enabling the "Good Life" for everyone, based on respect for Mother Earth. Thus, there exists a state philosophy, which on first view deviates from development and growth-driven strategies and that in basic terms promotes unsustainable practices to boost the economy via extraction and industrial agriculture, harming nature and indigenous people simultaneously. A wide body of literature emphasises environmental and human rights problems related to oil and mining industries (see Haller et al 2007, Niederberger et al 2016 for summaries and comparisons). On the other hand, there is an argument and practice in Bolivia and Ecuador that in order to be able to reach the "Good Life" in terms of the distribution of goods and services, mineral use and extractivism is essential. Thus, a Good Life without initial extractivism and cash from these sectors appears to be impossible. The governments of these countries justify this interpretation of the "Good Life" approach by arguing that they can obtain a superior deal (a better share) by dealing with transnational companies upon which they must exert pressure to pay taxes and royalties. However, the same problems undermining sustainability and creating environmental and human rights violations, especially for lowland indigenous peoples in the Amazon, remain a pressing and contradictory issue, and clearly conflicts with the notion of the "Good Life". Therefore, these strategies in practice create and maintain the problems they aimed to solve in the first place (see also Gudynas 2016). The same is true for agricultural strategies, which in Bolivia focus on genetically modified monoculture soy production (ibid). This alternative, which is by no means an alternative, contradicts several SDGs, such as SDG 10: 'Reduce inequality within and among countries'; and SDG 15 'Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Therefore, for preamble 3, we addressed the question of there being no real alternatives, and focused a renewed and serious debate on which development goals exist for whom and how should they be discussed in the context of path-dependent developments. One important approach that emerged through our discussions in the seminar was the following formula, which stems less from a spiritual than from a political feminist ecology and institutional perspective, addressing issues of who might enable gender-sensitive platforms for locally alternative developments. Such alternatives can be seen in the eco-village approach, which are experiments conducted by local, communally driven developments at the village level (and potentially also extended to urban areas) that based on the local use of resources and collective production attempt to create a local sphere of working and living. Considerable research still needs to be undertaken in order to attain positive lessons out of numerous failures in this approach. Indeed, it is too early to draw conclusions. What is important to note at this stage is that external conditions render it extremely difficult to establish a successful experiment, and that poor people in the Global South, who gain more security through livelihoods in ecovillages, seem to be much more motivated than actors in the Global North who try to engage themselves in ecovillages. Having

enjoyed materially far superior backgrounds, they have suffered from the contradictions they face in practice. Nevertheless, the approach is very interesting and needs to be studied carefully (see also Veteto and Lockyer, 2015). Preamble 3 thus reads as follows:

P3: Fostering alternatives, creating room for local participatory experiments: Being convinced that there is no such thing as the single right way (similar to the claim of Elinor Ostrom regarding No Panaceas), that development concepts and ideas must be locally defined by all actors (and hence gender- and minority-sensitive), and that scholars and elites are unjustified in deciding what is best in any specific case, we think that academics can help compare and discuss elements of the ways in which problems are solved in specific contexts. One result from global overviews and exploratory cases studies is that governments and elites should provide enough liberty in their interests for control to enable the space for local debate and experimentation. At the same time, it is important to work towards multiple democratic ways in limiting global economic and politically negative impacts. One interesting and locally driven initiative is the development of ecovillages, which merit further research in order to understand the conditions for working cases and to address the challenges of capitalist and monetary as well as individualistic contexts.

The following section of this report is focused on the discussion of our debates regarding the SDGs as well as possible reformulations that came as a result. If is first important to state that we were not discussing SDGs by numbers, but by scientific orientations and topics, as reflected in social anthropology and human geography regarding the commons, land-grabbing/large-scale land acquisition, climate change, distributional justice, new institutional politics of distribution, local initiatives and participation as well as a final conclusion.

- **The question of the commons debate**
  We first regroup the SDGs that are most intimately related to the debate on the commons. We discuss two aspects, the first dealing with water, oceans and ecosystems (SDGs 6 'Clean Water and Sanitation' and 14 'Life Below Water'), and the second looking at soil, desertification, biodiversity and forests (SDGs 7 'Affordable and Clean Energy' (here the first two sub-targets on the question of energy is related to use and destruction within commons (for example forests via fuel wood and extractivism generally) and 15 'Life on Land').

- **The land-grab/large-scale land acquisition debate**
  This debate focuses on studies of cases of LSLS from global as well as local investors and related SDGs on questions regarding energy, economic growth, industrialisation and infrastructure: SDGs 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)

- **The climate change debate**
  This debate encompasses more than is typical, and we propose a discussion of consumption and urbanisation related to climate change issues, as well as climate change per se, is required. We therefore do not only discuss SDG 13 (Climate Action), but also SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), as we are convinced that the interrelationships between these topics are central in order to a) understand and b) reflect on the issue for policy recommendations regarding climate change.

- **The distributional justice debate**
  We combine the SDGs pertaining to poverty, hunger and health as they are all related to debates in social anthropology and human geography concerning food security, resilience and strategies to cope with challenges of health and sickness and local perceptions of these issues. It seems obvious that poverty leads to hunger and health issues, yet the aspiration of "ending these problems", which often comes in a top-down way and misreads the causes of these issues, is seldom discussed. We thus focus on related institutional issues regarding access and distribution from the levels of gender, generation and household up to the regional, national and international scales. Therefore, SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) were fused and additionally included SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equity).
- **New institutional politics of distribution debate**
  The debate on fair access, peace and strong formal institutions comprises a policy-related follow-up of debate D. We discuss these elements based on the institutional approach used in social anthropology and human geography, related to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and strong institutions). We argued that local resource ownership systems and new developments of local institutions are central and that the acceptance and defence of these institutions at a higher level (state and international law) is crucial.
- **The local initiatives and participation debate**
  In this section we reflect on SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which we claim as being one of the single most important SDG. Indeed, most of the issues related to SDGs and the various sub-targets generally comprise a participatory dimension, to which policies should pay attention. However, participatory approaches are challenging owing to related issues of power, inclusion and exclusion, as well as ideologies (discourses of being local or not, and so forth). In addition, this SDG is affected by who defines the rules of participation and how one must deal with related power issues. We focused on literature analysing local collective processes of crafting institutions for the management of common-pool resources under situations of asymmetric power constellations and means of ensuring a fair, bottom-up process of participation.
- **Synthesis and final conclusions**
  Finally, in this section we conclude by summarising the most important claims for reformulation, which lie exactly in the realm of participation and challenge the role of states, development NGOs and transnational companies.

Each chapter provides a short summary of the literature discussed, followed by a more general discussion section, and then the original formulation and reformulation of the respective SDG sub-goals. We must stress that owing to time constraints in the seminar, we were not able to discuss all of the sub-targets. Nevertheless, we think that we can contribute to an overall debate because the central issues affect other sub-targets.

3) The question of the commons debate:

The basis of this chapter comprised literature on the commons, in which more structural and rather apolitical approaches of collective action (see Ostrom 1990) were combined with a new institutionalist (Ensminger 1992) and political ecology approach (Escobar, Blaikie, Zimmerer) to form a New Institutional Political Ecology (Haller 2010, 2013, 2017, Haller et al 2013). This suggests that we must analyse external factors, which change the value of a resource or region both economically and politically (changes in relative prices). Moreover, this influences the bargaining power of local actors, their selection of existing institutional designs (norms, rules, laws and property rights) based on legitimising ideologies (discourses and narratives), and also structures their organisations accordingly. The way in which common-pool resource ownership and management has undergone an institutional change is at the heart of the reflections. One basic change in many parts of the Global South is that before the expansion of European common-pool resources (such as water, pasture, forests, fisheries and forestry), they were managed in common property institutions (in combination with local notions of the "family or household property"). During and following colonialization, CPRs were transformed into state property as well as private property or open access, often following a commodification of such resources (see Haller 2010, 2016). Bakker (2011) highlights how this commodification developed, with actors gaining greater power in market constellations and thus profiting from this institutional change, pursuing a more intensive use of CPRs as their value rose, while at the same time excluding former commoners. Mansfield (2011) provides evidence from privatisation processes in the international fisheries following a process of overcapitalisation, often based on subsidies, instigating overuse and ultimately harming local industries and the biodiversity of fisheries. The clue here is that capital concentration processes and increases in ship size led to a) pushing smaller producers to the side, while b) increasing overall extraction. Last but not least, the big vessels do not just cause overfishing, reacting to increasing market prices and lower catches, but are stimulated to continue as their investment in technology demands greater returns in order to pay debts and higher interest rates. Downsizing would thus mean reducing pressure while by maintaining small scale fisheries, more jobs and more salaries could be created. Regarding water management on the land, two papers discussed in the seminar, one based in Bangladesh (Afroz et al 2016) and the other in Spain (Ruiz-Ballesteros 2014), reveal interesting results regarding how local solutions may help tackle issues of water distribution and usage, often *because* the state did not take any interest. There is of course a wide literature on water use and irrigation (see Ostrom 1990; Rogers and Hall 2003), but these two papers are of central interest because they offer insights into social processes that are important for local institutions facing issues of water management.

Finally, we discussed research in African floodplain areas arguing that water and other CPRs are highly interrelated and can provide a basis of considerable diversity in these water-driven cultural landscape ecosystems, which can only be understood by long-term local uses and regulations. This use of resources were based on local actors' risk reduction and other local strategies, but with the consequence of developing the diversity of plants and animals as well as differences in soil conditions (Haller 2016). We selected two sub-targets of SDG 14 (4 and 6) and one of SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation Management). A major aspect of our discussion was placed on the issue of the disrespect of institutions and local knowledge and the excessive focus on natural science and state interests and regulations. All of the papers highlighted the issue of mistakes related to focusing on natural science and state-related data alone, hence the popular call for the incorporation of local knowledge (see also Berkes 1999). We thus looked at 14:4 and reformulated this as follows:

SDG 14. 4: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yields as determined by their biological characteristics.

SDG 14.4: Reformulated: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, ~~unreported and unregulated fishing~~ and destructive fishing practices and implement a science-based management plans, ~~science~~ **including social and cultural science and local ecological knowledge** in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yields as determined by their biological characteristics

Following the issue discussed by Mansfield, the question focused on how to deal with the growth of the industrial fishery sector and how to strengthen the small-scale fisheries. We found that the issue of "certain forms of fisheries" was too unclear as a formulation and that large-scale fisheries needed to be addressed as follows. In addition, a country's focus is often not according to the interests of local, small-scale fisheries, hence we erased the part on World Trade Organization (WTO) arrangements, as the basic problem is not countries' but industrial fishery strategies and technologies. In addition, countries in the South will always suffer from inferior bargaining power and therefore special and differentiated treatments will act as anti-politics machines hiding power differences.

SDG 14.6: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognising that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and less developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.

We reformulated as follows:

SDG 14.6: By 2020, prohibit ~~certain~~ **all forms of fisheries subsidies related to industrial fisheries** ~~which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation~~ **and support small scale fisheries and promote a discussion among local small-scale fishery industry on how to manage the fisheries and discuss plans of how to incorporate workers of the industrial fishery fleet to provide them with alternative employment opportunities.**

We had a long and intensive debate on the issue of water management and were inspired by the two cases studied that we read. We thus only focused on a key sub-target of SDG 6, pertaining to participation in water projects. We believed that this offered a key insight regarding the sustainable use of water in general. This goal is a general sub-goal and is not numbered. It refers to participators' issues, and we discussed the centrality of the issue of local empowerment,

strategies and institutions because otherwise participation does not take place and is not perceived locally as such. It is also not (and again we refer to the issue of local knowledge) embedded in local ways of managing water. Thus, the original SDG 6

> SDG 6: sub-target: support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management, was rewritten as follows:

> SDG 6: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities **by empowering and embedding traditional** water and sanitation management strategies **and institutions**.

The second commons debate focused on issues of desertification, soil and biodiversity on land. In this section we mostly concentrated on SDG 15 (Life on Land) focusing on terrestrial ecosystems in order to protect, restore and foster their sustainable use, as well as the sustainable use of forests, contesting the desertification and degradation of soils, and halting soil biodiversity loss. To a lesser extent we discussed (but did not reformulate) the sub-goals of SDG 7. We read and discussed considerable literature regarding this issue. We started with the input paper by Mortimer (2003), who addressed the issue that (similar to the debate on fisheries) local knowledge is not recognized, while (and especially in African countries) a general threat to pure nature caused by the local people is narrated. Although Mortimer focuses on the African continent, one could argue that similar narratives exist in Latin America and Asia as well (see Brockington et al 2008, Haller and Galvin 2011). For example, Mortimer argues that in the Sahel area, people were incredibly resilient to the challenging local ecology and soil, as well as climatic conditions in the pre-colonial era. They sought efficiency in an unpredictable environment, pursuing a mini-max strategy (minimising maximal losses), conserving resources (such as fallow periods, diversification and soil conservation methods) and utilising long-term planning (not just the season but beyond via organising reserves and so forth). Mortimer also focuses on local institutions, including land tenure systems and related systems of cooperation that buffer risks (from common property to reciprocal labour arrangements).

The second point is key, as Mortimer and others (see Haller 2016) argue that these institutions, including land and land-related CPRs, are central to solving the problems highlighted by the SDGs: the sustainable, highly coordinated and enduring management of these renewable resources. It also needs to be reflect if and how these problems of the SDGs ascribed to local people are also discourses and narratives stemming from misreading soil erosion, desertification and degradation of forests since colonial times.

Regarding forests, Fairhead and Leach (1996) have already highlighted that forest islands in Central Guinea (Africa) are *not* remains of deforestation, but rather human-created forests in a savannah environment. Thus, the authors argue that most ecosystems are cultural landscapes. Fairhead and Scoones (2005) claim that the natural sciences do not sufficiently recognise local knowledge on spoils and their dynamics and view problems in a way that conflicts with local perspectives, echoing Mortimer's (2003) arguments regarding the discourse of environmentally sound development interventions.

On desertification, a new edited volume by Behnke and Mortimer (2016) declares that the notion of desertification was created by natural scientists, and that newer data contradict the idea that desertification is occurring in Africa. As regards the problem of unsustainable rangeland management, Haller et al (2013) show in a comparative paper from Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia that pastoral actors suffer from institutional changes in landscapes by which they lose regular access to pasture. Former access was regulated often by common property institutions and flexible arrangements with sedentary people, including also access to water and dry seasons pastures important to buffer risks of drought under changing climate conditions. Signs of the

overuse of pastures can be observed, but these stem from institutional changes from common to state property and subsequent open access or privatisation, hindering the coordination of mobility, a position that is also discussed by Abink et al (2014), Haller et al (2013) and Haller and van Dijk (2016). These papers additionally discuss how pastoralists are hindered in their mobility, with Haller et al highlighting the ways in which the building of new institutions from below may help in the management of drylands perceived as being vulnerable cultural landscape ecosystems. Haller (2013) and Stump (2010) argue that one needs to look at historical changes in the conservation of soils and the construction of ecosystems, and study the conditions under which the sustainable, long-term use of soils for agriculture has developed.

This not only enhances soils, but also crop biodiversity and mosaic landscapes. Common here is the fact that these are not top-down but bottom-up approaches, developed in a specific political context during a specific period. Thus, awareness of the history of a landscape is crucial in order to understand its dynamics and rebuild it after degradation. Cooperation with local actors is also crucial, drawing on their perspectives and interests, as Chabwela and Haller show in a study on participatory wildlife conservation in Southern Province, Zambia. Indeed, state and NGO projects for the co-management of wildlife (for example those initiated by the WWF) failed because local people could not share their views and knowledge, were marginally compensated and ultimately lost a sense of ownership. Thus, what was once their common property was transferred into state or private property with touristic inclinations. Similar examples from other parts in Africa indicate that if local people call wildlife "government animals", one cannot expect them to contribute to participatory conservation (see Gibson 1999, Jones and Murphree 2001, Haller 2013). Thus, it might be preferable to kill all of the animals in order that a local area does not appear attractive as a potential conservation site (ibid). In contrast to such a perception leading to negative impacts, examples from forestry resource management show that local people's perspectives differ, and lead to more sustainable strategies if they perceive the resource as their own. Certainly, the literature suggests that in Africa (Fairhead and Leach 1996) and Latin America (see DiGiano 2013), traditional and modern notions of communal tenure systems result in higher levels of diversity in communal than in private or state forests. The main reason for this is that the diversity of collectively accepted bundles of rights and obligations reduces market forces otherwise leading individual actors to free-ride due to *de facto* open-access constellations following failed state property right enforcement.

From these background papers we re-discussed the following sub-targets of SDG 15 as follows. We fielded general comments on the overall SDG, which claims to: "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt diversity loss". Our reformulation focuses on the issue of a) perceiving ecosystems as cultural landscape ecosystems containing b) common-pool resources that are often managed by common property institutions and on c) the issue that more powerful actors causing destructions have to be held responsible and pay. The potential for destruction often stems from institutional changes from common to state property as well as open access in states incapable of monitoring and sanctioning their institutions while undermining local institutions or privatisation, both oriented towards pure market goals. On the other hand, states and science were quick to blame local actors for degradation without any proof (see for example the work of Brockington 2002). We also argue that the local institutions and local knowledge that helped create these landscapes and their maintenance must be acknowledged, rewarded and supported. The SDG 15 is therefore reformulated as follows:

SDG 15: Protect, restore and remedy the sustainable use of terrestrial **cultural landscape ecosystems and their land and interrelated common-pool resources, and recognise that**

these have been managed by local common property institutions while acknowledging property rights' change and loss of access for local actors. **This should be achieved by recognising scientific and local ecological knowledge, by cross-checking and securing degradation history and by charging responsible actors (especially state and powerful market-oriented actors) for processes of unsustainable land use.** Halt and reverse degradation and halt diversity loss by creating **new locally participatory developed institutions and technologies to generate collective ownership** and more sustainable land use.

15.1 was then rewritten as follows in order to stress the importance of recognising the investments made by local people with regard to landscapes and institutions, and indicating that participation is required for the management of complex ecosystems in the form of common property institutions, while international agreements on conservation excluding local views, ownership and participation shall be critically discussed, as seen in the case of the UN:

> SDG 15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services **in understanding them as cultural landscapes of local and indigenous communities and groups that have been managed by their institutions. Conservation would mean enabling them to participatory device institutions and legal systems (commons) to manage** particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands **by incorporating their local ecological knowledge and perceptions,** ~~in line with obligations under international agreements.~~ International obligations have to be critically re-discussed (see i.e. special rapporteur of the UN on Biodiversity Conservation and Human Rights.

Sub-target 15.2 would then connect the sustainable management of forests to locally involved processes of institution-building for a fair and sustainable distribution of gains. If these are not perceived as being in line with local interests and have the potential to be undermined (see discussions on extractivism in Bolivia), the goal is threatened. Thus, the sustainable use of complex ecosystems must strike a balance between fortress conservation and extraction, rendering the future for local actors very uncertain. There is also a danger that this sub-target can be used by governments to evict people from their forests while acting in the noble cause of sustainable development, and hence representing an anti-politics machine (Ferguson 1990): This, however, additionally requires that all different groups involved are recognised in order to avoid the grabbing of such processes by internal elites. At present, 15.2 reads:

> SDG 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

It shall thus be revised as:

> SDG 15.2: By 2020, **promote the local discussion and implementation of bottom-up institution-building, including local property rights for the** ~~sustainable~~ management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally **based on the fair distribution of costs and benefits without being used by governments and NGOs for conservation and to blame and evict local people.**

Sub-target 3 was also revised in order to incorporate local knowledge and local views:

SDG 15.3: By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

This was rewritten as:

SDG 15.3: By 2030, combat desertification; restore degraded soil, **which encompasses all of the physical components of the term as well as all local knowledge and socially constructed aspects, including areas affected by** desertification, drought and flood. Strive to achieve adequate productivity with regard to local people and the environment, and evenness in combining land use and restoration.

Sub-targets 4, 5, 6 and 8 were changed to enhance local views and participation and by leading to a paradigm change from "pure nature" or "natural habitats" of cultural landscape ecosystems:

SDG 15.4: By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development **by evaluating the impact of large-scale tourism and participatory measures to reduce negative impacts**.

SDG 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of ~~natural habitats~~ **cultural landscape ecosystems,** halt the loss of **culturally coproduced** biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

SDG 15.6: Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources **often based on local management of the cultural landscape as well as cultivation practices as indigenous intellectual collective property rights, and promote appropriate control, ownership and access to such resources** ~~as internationally agreed~~. **TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) agreements shall be re-discussed and revised based on acknowledging the role that farmers, peasants and indigenous people play in the development and conservation of genetic diversity.**

SDG 15.8: By 2020, introduce **participatory (with local groups) developed** measures to prevent the introduction of or significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.

Sub-target 9 dealing with ecosystem values is formulated as follows:

SDG 9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

The reformulations discussed read:

SDG 9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values, **integrating the ecological knowledge and spiritual view of groups living nearby as well as knowledge from scientists as an important means of avoiding bias towards flag-species,** into national, local and global planning, development processes, poverty-**reducing** strategies and accounts. **All factors mentioned above should be defined by a committee combining locals and scientists, to ensure benefits for areas to which a programme should be applied.**

SDG 15 also has three further major sub-targets (a, b and c), which focus on the financial means for biodiversity, forest and protected species conservation and protection. If the issue of who will obtain access to these financial resources is not discussed, it is possible that governments and NGOs will acquire this money and either evict or marginalise local people in the name of conservation in the form of an anti-politics machine while performing what is called "green grabbing" (see Fairhead et al 2012). This is often hidden in participatory forms, which are not bottom-up but hidden top-down strategies (Haller and Galvin 2011, Chabwela and Haller 2010). Therefore the targets should be reformulated as follows:

15.a: Mobilise and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems. **However, this must respect processes of participation and the human rights of local people, and should not lead to green grabbing.**

15.b: Mobilise significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance ~~sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation~~ **the return to common property arrangements as a basis and to facilitate a local bottom-up institutional process for the management of the commons of forest and biodiversity.**

15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to ~~combat poaching and trafficking~~ **discuss local needs and related problems of protected species and protected areas**, including by increasing the capacity of local communities **to craft their own resource management institutions in order to pursue** sustainable livelihood opportunities.

4) The land-grab/large-scale land acquisition debate:

In this section, we examined papers linking SDGs 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) with the debate on large-scale- land acquisitions or land-grabbing. We began with a debate on the basic demand of SDG 7 regarding affordable and clean energy. This is related to the question, who defines reliable and clean energy and its possible social and environmental costs, which are externalised if one does not pay attention to formulations. Similarly, a clear focus on economic growth mechanisms is required, which investors put at the forefront of their investment justifications. This is similar to the discourse arguing that countries should attract successful industry via a reduction in taxes and promises of high gains from their operations in order to receive appropriate innovations and

infrastructure. It appeared that all of these claims and demands are regularly linked to large-scale projects, which can combine all the mentioned development services. Indeed, large-scale investments in land can be used to produce energy via mining or commercial agriculture for biofuel production, while these same investments are legitimised in order to provide adequate jobs and economic growth to these governments, as well as infrastructure for mobility and communications.

We critically discussed newer publications on the so-called large-scale land acquisition with all of these discursive claims. It was astonishing to see how well these SDGs could have been used by all of the enterprises in the literature presented to justify status quo investments without basic violations of the SDGs. Certainly, the companies described in the papers by White et al (2012) gave a general overview of investments as new enclosures, while Marfurt et al (2016) focused on a Swiss case of a company called ADDAX in Sierra Leone. Both are examples of literature that indicate how well sustainable energy production is argued to be at the same time providing economic growth for the countries and local people as well as providing job opportunities and infrastructure and still be labelled to be ecologically and socially sustainable.

One of the central problems with the SDGs in this context is that they do not discuss negative repercussions or externalised costs related to these investments. On the other hand, they pursue a crisis ideology, arguing that the world must be sustainably fed while at the same time local peoples' options to produce for their own benefit is removed through an institutional transformation of the commons to state or private property (see While et al 2012, Marfurt et al 2016).

These authors also reveal that there are six basic mechanisms at work with a basis in the crisis discourse:

A) *Global anticipation of food insecurity:* This argues that the world has to be fed and that smallholders are unable to do so, instigating a rush for land in order to secure strategic aspects of food security in specific countries, while at the same time claiming that other countries have idle land available for investment. This is a basic ideological discourse legitimising evictions and land-grabbing processes.

B) *Global energy deficiency.* Linked to the aforementioned discourse is the panic regarding food and energy scarcity, which requires each country to have energy investments at home and abroad, leading to biofuel projects, which are often subverted by governments and international agencies. This investment idea contains a double-edged strategy in order to be a) independent from the Middle East's oil-producing countries and b) at the same time be able to produce renewable and sustainable energy. These two categories begin to blur the boundaries of food, feed and fuel in vertically integrated, large agro-businesses (see White et al 2012).

C) *New environmental imperatives and tools as green grabbing.* This links nicely to the third issue, which is the discourse to define the way in which production shall be achieved in a sustainable way, based on regrowth and sound criteria of production regarding climate change issues and followed by governments and intergovernmental agencies. The European Union (EU) as well as NGOs and investors have envisioned a field of action as well as a market for their involvement.

D) *Extensive infrastructure corridors and Special Economic Zones:* Such zones are proposed in order to link economic growth and innovations with investments so as to create special areas of appeal, as these initiatives need to secure profit from the global rush from the side of the provider of land. This means that investments shall profit from low taxes (if any) from special zones with special infrastructure funded by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Banks, international monetary fund (IMF), Chinese investors and other international investments. Interestingly, it is argued that these developments can benefit local countries in the long run, without reducing insecure investments, for which the risk is placed on donors and local

governments, but not on the investors. Under the argument of economic growth and sustainable development, costs and risks for investors are substantially reduced. What is not secured is a cash flow to local people and local governments. Neither hospitals and clinics nor roads or water and sanitation networks are constructed for local people; these merely exist for qualified workers and local elites, as is true of numerous oil and mining companies (see Haller et al 2007, Niederberger et al 2016). In addition, we discussed two cases that demonstrated how road and dam constructions are linked to the issue of infrastructure (Granada 2012) and energy production (Abbink 2012), instigating land-grabbing activities.

E) *Creation of new financial instruments.* Crucially, these investments have to be secured and financed. Increasing pension funds from which everyone in Europe and the Americas contributes and profits from these investment contexts, meaning that we all in the Global North are indirectly participating in this process for our own livelihoods in old age. Decisions regarding investments via these funds are not taken by local people, but by experts. Interestingly, not all experts are considered accountable if the investment fails. We would argue that this is redistribution from the bottom to the top and not vice versa. Furthermore, local people are not alone in suffering from enclosures accompanying these developments; average people in the Global North will also suffer if the pension money is not sustainably invested and thus we can see another global anti-politics machine.

F) *Set of rules, regulations and incentives provided by the international community:* White et al. (2012) illustrate several examples whereby the processes described above take place through the IMF and World Bank, which often fail to address issues of access to land and related resources, especially water. In fact, they often provide unlimited access to companies and powerful elites. Moreover, the SDGs must be checked if they are not part of such developments. SDGs might also correspond with this way of thinking and can be tapped through these discourses (White et al 2012). Many of these points are additionally illustrated by the case study of Marfurt et al. (2016) on the ADDAX company in Switzerland. This investment in a sugar cane plantation in Sierra Leone had been celebrated at the international scale for bringing green development (biofuel), jobs and infrastructure, and hence development for all. However, although some compensation was provided for local elites (so-called land owners), many land-users were forced to leave to make space for sugar cane investments, which do not bring many jobs. Thus, numerous people lost access to the land and land-related common-pool resources such as water and fruit trees. Many people in this country, which only recently came out of a civil war, gained hope due to the promise of company jobs. However, they are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that they have gained little benefit from the company, while they are encountering huge losses in access to the commons such as water, land and veldt products important for food and cash generation (Marfurt et al 2016). The example illustrates how the three aforementioned SDGs are linked with the land-grabbing issue. Similarly, energy companies in the mining industries (Niederberger et al 2016, see for example Howald and Boscan, 2016,) use the same discourse regarding sustainable development while producing huge externalised costs.

Such processes also trigger reactions: Hall et al (2012) as well as Marfurt et al (2016) provide us with interesting findings regarding local resistance strategies, which seem to emerge as the impacts of these developments increasingly become unsustainable in the view of local people. The basic issue in this discussion is that externalised costs on local people and their landscapes are considerable, while the authority to challenge the driving forces remains extremely low. Nevertheless, local collective action to regain resource rights and claims for higher benefits and reducing impacts are taking place. Interestingly in such cases as in Sierra Leone local people who are excluded from the former commons make use of a combination of customary law and

national as well as international law as a strategy of multiple institution shopping from below (see Marfurt 2017). From this perspective, reformulating SDGs can serve to highlight a political ecology and new institutionalism perspective by including local views from below. These are challenging state and company powers in large-scale investment contexts, which is of central importance. Perhaps a new form of alliance between smallholders of capital in the North and smallholders in the South should be considered.

Based on these reflections, this section's targets and sub-targets are discussed alongside one another as follows:

SDG 7 is described as: `Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all`.

There is an unclear definition as to what affordable means and who defines affordability, as well as who defines what is sustainable and what is modern in this context. We thus propose as participatory processes and the challenging of decision power and cost externalisation constellations as a basic issue by which SDG 7 should be reformulated as follows:

SDG 7: Ensure access to energy and the reliability thereof for all, and based on participatory processes so that more powerful actors (transnational companies and states) are not able to externalise costs.

This formulation reflects the problems related to the issue of who decides on which energy to be used and provided. The issue to be tackled here is also related to the type of energy used and who makes the payments for it. So-called renewable energy such as biofuel can be highly problematic, hence the EU has now stopped funding it, yet extensions to water and solar energy on a large scale suffer from similar land-grabbing problems (see Ryser forthcoming). The problem is also that the different sectors are increasingly placed in price competition with each other, encouraging more large-scale solutions rather than environmentally and user-friendly small-scale solutions. Thus, there is a need to push for more decentralised and democratic energy use systems, which, however, still have to be set up in a participatory way. We thus also opt for the reformulation of sub-target 7.2, which claims to increase the global part of renewable energy in the global energy mix. We therefore propose that the sub-target shall be changed as follows:

SDG 7.2: Until 2030 the share of the global fossil energy produced shall be reduced to 1/5 and renewable energies that have a large-scale negative impact on local people and smallholders shall be ceased. A critical and transparent participatory social and environmental impact assessment is required for the evaluation of such processes.

We discussed the importance of substantially reducing fossil fuel usage, including uranium as a long-term energy. We also deliberated over who is empowered to decide on the renewable energy combination and how decentralised energy provision can be facilitated. In all cases, we argue, a sustainable cost-benefit analysis is required. Mitigating issues related to increasing energy demand was also a subject of conversation, requiring greater efficiency.

SDG 7.3: thus proposes: Until 2030 to double the worldwide rate of energy efficiency

We discussed the notion that everyone must do something to reduce energy consumption. However, whether such a reduction would bring considerable new energy-efficient technology

can be contested. Indeed, it is more likely that if the majority of official or commercial buildings were to be heated by a superior energy-saving system, the gains would be greater than for smallholders shifting to non-fossil fuel heating. Thus, we propose to reformulate the sub-target:

SDG 7.3: Until 2030 to double the worldwide rate energy efficiency **of primarily commercially used large-scale buildings (energy consumers)**

SDG 8: then asks to:

Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

This was reformulated as:

SDG 8: Promote sustainable **economic wellbeing to reduce unemployment and degrading work.**

We are critical of the question of growth not only owing to the critique of economic growth per se but also because it seems to create too many losers. We argued that continued growth often means growth of capital accumulation (as we have indicated in the preamble) and that this is at odds with the ecological as well as social criteria of sustainability. It would mean that we try to promote work conditions, which reduce the exploitation of the workforce and resources. The quality of work is important in the Global North, where more and more people want to work part-time, while there is a lack of jobs in the Global South, which is also threatened by mechanization processes. Therefore, if the global division of labour did not provide work for all but promoted greater land- and resource-grabbing as well as "resilience grabbing", then stopping and banning enclosures should be a basic principle as land and related CPRs remain the only asset people have. Furthermore, and in line with the work of Escobar and Ferguson, research shows that subsistence production might be sufficient to a certain degree if combined with a system of redistribution as Ferguson has outlined (2015).
In addition, it can be shown that common-pool resources do provide sustainable cash generation options if access rights, collective ownership and related local management institutions exist in local hands, and if local elites are challenged in their will to generate a larger offtake. It also seems that common-pool resources provide more robust access to local cash need than the few jobs and low compensations paid from investments. Furthermore, the proposed market-company logic does not seem to be resilient: Companies also fail and go bankrupt, which then erodes any final hope for long enduring cash gains (see cases in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Ghana from researchers linked to several research projects at the University of Bern, Switzerland). An important notion to promoting well-being would be that mining or oil companies ensure that locally demanded social and environmental criteria are met and that gains are shared with locals, considering gender and other groups as well as class power asymmetries. Tax payments should cover at least 50% of the gains and enable the financing of public services (see also Ferguson 2015). The Vivir Bien approach is a step in this direction, but relies too heavily on extractivism. If there is local disagreement to extractivism, it should be stopped. This debate is related to the debate on SDG 8, especially sub-targets 1 and 2, the first of which reads:

SDG 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the

least developed countries.

Reformulated based on our discussions it reads:

SDG 8.1: Sustain an economic wellbeing in accordance with national circumstances and based on variables that are relevant to local contexts.

This is a critical and central reformulation based on the preamble, as well as fact that per capita economic growth is in an African context – and possibly also in other regional contexts - a highly misleading construction because the quality of data is so at odds and hides real local level values, as we have seen with the land as a commons-grabbing issue. Thus, investments might create strong GDP growth, while hiding the loss of local value from the land and related commons and leaving behind high levels of poverty based on enclosure and eviction processes. Moreover, the promise of long-term employment may not materialise, as demonstrated in numerous case studies and what is needed is a fair payment for basic work and provision of raw materials. This refers to Sub-target 8.2 which related to this issue reads:

SDG 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.

Based on the above-mentioned arguments, we propose the following formulation:

SDG 8.2. Achieve more balanced payment and compensation for work done and by locally adapted diversifications as well as innovations that allow sustainable part-time jobs, without merely providing cheap labour and raw materials for middlemen organisations, large retailers and the global market.

This sub-goal has been reformulated to additionally address the needs of the Global South, but it will work both ways. In the contemporary Global South, work is worth literally nothing, whereas in the Global North it is too expensive, especially for services such as retailing. These, as well as economic profit expectations, are far too high compared to the real productivity processes of so-called raw materials and manufacturing. If highly valued in the Global South, high costs of manufacturing in the Global North will be reduced and rebalance the global division of labour. In addition, producers of agrarian products are not well-compensated in either hemisphere, and for achieving sustainable development, middlemen who profit from large gains on the value chain shall be restricted, as gains are to be shared between producers and consumers.

Furthermore, sub-target 3 caught our attention, which reads:

SDG 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

The promotion of small enterprises is an option in itself, but it needs to be recognised that many people who have lost their land or who need cash are already engaged in this sector, stimulated by the land- and resource-grabbing processes we have described. Thus, supporting

entrepreneurship must first be understood in terms of its meaning and conditions for development. Furthermore, a participatory process is required in order to develop locally adapted support systems. Access to financial services without any differentiation will only lead to small entrepreneurs becoming indebted, as one-size-fits-all solutions result in the overproduction of one sector (for example, too many small shops, too many service providers, etc.). The reformulation thus reads:

SDG 8.3: Engage in a process of fact-finding and participatory research on entrepreneurship, as well as a process of how to support such systems by promoting the diversity of cash-generating activities and financial support that will not lead to debts.

The next sub-target encapsulates the debate on the decoupling of economic development growth and environmental issues, and thus reads as follows:

SDG 8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10- year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

This is based on a complete misunderstanding. Economic growth cannot be decoupled as it is always linked, and talking of decoupling is again one of the major anti-politics machine at stake. It is not about efficiency; rather, it is about exploitation and the economic interests of powerful retailors and companies. Once again, sustainable consumption and production in developing countries constitute the wrong focus, as prices for raw materials are too low and prices for services in the value chains are too unevenly distributed. This is related to power issues in the institutional process of retail companies and multinationals in the field, rather than with "wrong" consumption. We would argue that consumers have too little bargaining power to change this situation. Of course, one is able to consume goods that are said to be produced in a more just way. However, studies on, for example, coffee and cacao, show that the price paid to local producers for Fairtrade coffee and chocolate is still too low, because more powerful actors in the chain demand a higher share (see Ludi et al. 2011). The higher price for Fairtrade products is added onto the consumer price, and no company is willing to accept a fairer share of the gains (see the example of Coop). We thus propose the following re-formulation:

SDG 8.4. Promote economic truth of costs and benefits of produced raw materials and stop externalising costs. So-called developed countries have to take the lead by controlling large food and chemical companies and large retailing companies.

The overall SDG 9 is related to SDGs 7 and 8 as it also focuses on large-scale development and the way in which impacts should be handled. Infrastructure does not merely bring communication and foster trade; it also has major repercussions as it uses large tracts of land and land-related resources, and has a huge impact on property rights at the local level. It additionally transforms the market value of land adjacent to the an area before and after the construction and it is related to land alienation and "grabbing" processes, given that it often places the overall right of mobility or energy production higher up than local level people's rights to a decent lievelihood. In addition, included in this SDG is the huge complex of industrialisation, through which the building of large industries is reflected, which are said to be sustainable and

also bring innovation. Again, we can observe anti-politics-style contradictions, which reads as follows:

> SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Our critique focused on several levels regarding this SDG: Grandia (2011) and Abbink (2012) illustrate the problem of roads and dams, indicating that both types of infrastructure face serious challenges in becoming sustainable. Land is often removed by force from locals and if compensated, losses are not in relation to costs. The benefits are minimal, as such infrastructure is not shared locally while it is argued that it is for the common good of a nation. The more obvious impacts emerge for example in the context of oil and gas pipelines as well as with mining and oil infrastructure (see also literature and comparative work by Haller et al 2007, Niederberger et al 2016). Impacts range from expulsion from land to larger-scale pollution of waterways and land by leaks as well as by fire (flaring). Pollution pertains to land-related common pool resource (for example drinking water and fish), which become dangerous for local consumption. In many cases such costs are externalised and are only internalised if local actors are in alliance with international organisations and the public in the media react. The state also often encounters resistance, resulting in countless acts of brutal suppression and human rights violations, especially in the Global South and often against companies that have their headquarters in the North. Haller et al (2007) and Niederberger et al (2016) summarise a total of 42 such cases across two volumes, indicating that newer conflicts occur related to extractive industries. Even in countries in Latin America such as Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, whose governments have openly supported indigenous people's interests, such a destructive path of development has been pursued. In this respect, the discourse followed by governments is to endeavour to reduce damage socially and economically; in contrast, the exctractivist development is considered too pressurising, undermining basic human and local land rights.

Even worse, the discourse that such large-scale impacts will be sustainable reduces the critical aspects of such development and helps governments under the worst-case scenario in finding an environmentally sound excuse for such developments. However, it is difficult to claim such operations are sustainable. While Abbink indicates a newer case in terms of dams, flooding and upstream and downstream issues, Grandia (2011) highlights the hidden and more subtle impacts of road infrastructure in a case study of the impacts of large road networks on the Mayan people in Guatemala. Indeed, she highlights the effects of the Puebla to Panama Plan (PPP) road network, arguing that large-scale road networks can accelerate land concentration (via changes in relative prices for land) in order to render Mesoamerica more 'legible' to the outside, such as in terms of free trade arrangements, land administration and other forms of state control (see Scott 1995). This leads to the privatisation and alienation of land and society. She additionally considers small-scale, participatory approaches to developing road network, which she perceives as less harmful and more sustainable (Grandia 2011).

Abbink (2012) also describes the impacts of a dam project in Ethiopia, claiming that smaller dams might have fewer negative impacts than their larger counterparts while also storing sufficient amounts of water. Large-scale road infrastructure does not simply dispossess smallholders, but also produces what she calls the "projectization" of civil society, uninvolved in the decision-making process (Abbink 2012). This is not to suggest that no roads should be constructed, but that a more participatory and slower form of infrastructure-building is critical, given the anticipated and unanticipated effects. This element also needs to be considered by the private sector and is a basic issue of infrastructure, leading to the following new formulation of SDG 9

and related sub-goals:

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation as long as it does not harm residents. In order to achieve this aim, greater participation in decision-making is required to preclude land-grabbing by the state or national or international companies.

Developmentalists would argue that for the sake of development as a wider and broader social objective, it is not feasible for all stakeholders to always be asked or included. However, it is fair to say that for many infrastructure projects, in Europe and especially in Switzerland, local involvement and recognition is demanded. If this is key to European policies, no reasons exist for why this should not apply to the rest of the world.

5) The Climate change debate:

In this part we regrouped the SDG directly related to climate issues, whilst additionally linking it to SDG 11 (on cities) and 12 (on consumption), as directly related themes. We discussed several of these issues based on the literature dealing with cities and their emissions, consumption and food systems for SDG 12 and climate change initiatives such as REDD and REDD+. In the case of Africa, Wisner et al. (2015) convincingly argue that many issues related to climate change and the participatory development of smaller and peri-urban areas can mitigate sustainable urbanisation. This in turn reduces mobility and creates working-living spaces required for a reduction in emissions. Using case studies from Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, they propound the potential of small cities in creating dense infrastructure and serving "as catalysts of climate-smart development in their hinterlands". They suggest that small cities face financial challenges but that such issues can also be mitigated through local participatory measures. However, more research on good cases of peri-urban climate change development is required in order to draw conclusions on local development options and to learn from innovations. The relevant measures draw on elements of "smart cities", as these also connect with their hinterlands. In addition, in such cases, administrative actors often interconnect more closely than is true in larger cities. However, there is also the possibility that climate smart cities will provide local elites with the means of exploiting the hinterland to a greater extent. This is why wider and broader participation from rural areas is important.

We then focused on the sub-target 11.3., which reads:

SDG 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

We reformulated it as follows:

SDG 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and the capacity for **local participatory**, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries **in order to generate local environments that are liveable and empower local decision-making.**

SDG 12, focusing on sustainable consumption and production, was selected as an indirect

element of the climate change issue, yet the report of Vermeulen et al (2012) presents us with a peculiar challenge: while the dominant climate change and development discourse treats local agricultural techniques of shifting cultivation or swidden/slash-and-burn agriculture as an additional important driver of climate change, the paper argues that large-scale agro-industrial production creates even greater emissions and destroys more forests (and thus potential carbon storage) than local agricultural techniques. This finding is significant and highlights how what may be officially promoted as the path of development does not necessarily correspond with the issue of sustainability. It also demonstrates how local actors are blamed for a situation that is actually created by the promoters of development and the most powerful actors in the capitalist system. This can additionally include pre-production, post-production and consumption. Incorporating these calculations, large-scale producers with considerable climate emissions in the pre- and post-production process, increases their impact on global climate change, yet global warming may have the most severe impact on smallholders by way of extreme weather events, rising water levels, droughts, floods and storms.

Although sub-target 12.1 addresses all countries, we opted for particular changes in light of the discussion regarding Vermeulen et al's paper. SDG 12.1 thus reads:

> SDG 12.1: Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries.

This was reframed as follows. First, we propose a closer partnership between the countries and not just the issue of leadership. Second, the emphasis must be placed on large-scale producers in the pre- and post-production process, strengthening smallholders and stimulating food crop industries to consider their share of climate emissions seriously, or alternatively include states and local actors in the monitoring process:

> SDG 12.1: Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action~~, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries,~~ **working in partnership together and ensuring equal possibilities of bargaining power for all countries and strict use of the principle that actors producing the highest impact shall also take a larger share in mitigating climate change's influencing factors.**

Moving onto the main SDG 13 on climate change, we focused on the issue of national policies, such as REDD and REED+. Nevertheless, we did not consider the vast literature on climate change and the International Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) debate, but rather emphasised the disjuncture in policies due to ignoring local contexts. Indeed, Sikor and Cam (2016) on Vietnam and Marquardt and Pain (2016) on Nepal highlight how states' measures to reduce climate emissions in the form of REDD and REDD+ can create strange conditions owing to a failure to involve local actors. In Vietnam, state administrators referring to the programme created a situation whereby a territory is proposed for protection, and is thus used as compensation in the REDD+ philosophy, consisting of a rocky area without forest. This had the aim of meeting REDD administrative criteria rather than climate mitigation goals. The forest area that local people sought for protection was ignored by state officials. A similar issue occurred in Nepal, where local knowledge would have facilitated better climate protection measures and forest protection.

In addition, Haller's (2015) comparative study of pro-poor climate change cases indicates that the capacity of climate change resilience is not profoundly driven by state measures but by the diversity and strength of local institutions such as land tenure, rights of access to commons and a relatively high degree of bargaining power among actors to use local resources and create rules as to its use. On the one hand, this could be enhanced by more participatory measures in governance and through securing communal resource rights. On the other hand, if climate change has a more severe impact, it is due to institutional change that has occurred BEFORE climate change and has already lowered local bargaining power in access to buffer resources and thus weakened local resilience capacity.

Therefore, sub-target 2 was reformulated by adding the demand of a local form of government and local-level participation and decision-making options based on local robust institutions:

> SDG 12.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, and integrate climate change measures into national policies, via a participatory process of developing strategies and planning procedures **at all governmental levels, but especially in local forms of government and locally developed institutions and ecological knowledge.**

6) The distributional justice debate:

This section combines SDGs that comprised part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that are interconnected. For instance, extreme poverty can lead to hunger and affect health issues, especially for mothers and babies, children and elderly people. Consequently, ending poverty as a means of additionally tackling hunger and health problems is vital. While the perceived success of MDGs is mixed, and development is increasingly seen as requiring an environment orientation (see Sachs 2012), we consider the ways in which these goals may be interlinked. We again focus both generally as well as on case study examples. In considering the literature, the starting point must be Escobar's seminal work (1995), which highlights how hunger is not just a fact but a constructed fact. In the fourth chapter of his book, entitled "Dispersion of power: Tales of food and hunger", Escobar dares to ask who talks about hunger and in what context. The point is not to contest that hunger as a problem exists. Rather, it questions its magnitude and its construction and discursive emergence as a label imposed by the Global North on the Global South, and especially African countries (see also Ferguson's *Global Shadows 2006*). Sachs argues that large international organisations create such terms as a means of exercising control and authority, as well as to legitimise their actions and interventions. Yet, the concept neglects issues such as the ways in which local groups cope with issues of poverty, hunger and health. While hunger is central to his reflections, his observations are of additional interest when connected with discourses of poverty and health.

Sachs argues that the type of hunger is often ignored because actors prefer instrumentalizing this label both politically and strategically. The result is that 'hunger' represents an option for governments to intervene in a specific way and to become engaged with the donor community. Hunger is often linked to political manoeuvrings and the political positioning of actors. Indeed, hunger sells and hunger leads to actions that can be justified. Stated briefly, chronic hunger in certain contexts occurs but is ignored, while the reasons for hunger in specific contexts are overlooked. The reasons may include the fact that poverty is often an outcome of resource-grabbing, while poor health services render people susceptible to health risks, especially when

they are malnourished. However, in order to appreciate this argument, we need to consider more deeply the ways in which poverty is configured and intertwined with hunger and health. Sachs argues that poverty is additionally a question related to the perspective on what is labelled as poor and what is poverty to local standards for the whole range of society. Many pre-industrial societies were subjected to multiple reciprocal and redistributive mechanisms that buffered poverty in the sense of levelling differences, which can be seen throughout the field of economic anthropology, discussing the classical topic of the discipline on redistributive festivals and gift-giving (see Wilk and Cliggett 2007). In addition, one can recognise the presence of institutions and mechanisms at different social levels in order to reduce risk (see Lipton 1985, Netting 1990, Haller 2003, Haller 2010, 2013, Haller et al. 2013).

An illustrative case of how poverty develops with reference to changing property rights comprises pastoral and peasant societies, in which colonial and post-colonial states introduced encompassing private property rights that excluded numerous people. This process can be seen with issues of land and land-related common-pool resources, as well as the privatisation and uncontrolled sale of animals, which come to be lacked in times of crisis, leading to impoverishment (Haller 2013). Similarly, the introduction of cash requirements puts subsistence households at the edge of being able to gain cash with their activities as these are also expanded and social relations are monetized (see Haller 2017).

In this context, giving out credits will not help poor people recover, but rather only further impoverish them. In particular, women will attempt to access credits, but they will find it hard to hide their money from men and may face difficulties in paying back the credit received. Therefore, it would be advisable to redistribute some cash per household or at a similar level (for example individuals as evaluated in concrete contexts). This is argued by James Ferguson (2015), who refers to experiences of unconditional payments in South Africa from taxation and other sources (Ferguson 2015). This is also in line with findings from several research projects on poverty reduction, which show that what poor people need is a release in daily stress in order to access cash gains. This perspective is based on the argument of reducing transaction costs to relieve programmes, coupled with a popular viewpoint that poor people know best how to allocate money. Reduced pressure, argues Ferguson in line with other literature from social anthropology, would allow people to develop mechanisms to reactivate mini-max strategies, rendering them much more resilient to external changes and internal shocks.

We discussed several papers, which provide ample contextualisation of the dynamics that lead to poverty, and which are related to distributional justice and the way that poverty, hunger and health are intertwined. Merten and Haller (2008) argue that in Zambia (Kafue Flats in the Southern Province), ambiguous property rights and processes of *de facto* open access, as well as partial privatisation, could be used by the most powerful actors led to reduce levels of food security and child nutrition, as poorer households lose access to former commons. During the food crisis of 2002-2003, less powerful households, especially those headed by women, lost access to fish and other resources, while more powerful external actors and households profited from both open access and privatisation. This led to an average 50% lower annual food intake, with considerable inequalities between villages and households. The paper shows that households with reduced access to the common-pool resources (see Haller 2013) also experienced reduced food intake and cash income-generating activities, and more children with impaired growth. The paper recommends discussion of differences in property rights in order to address issues of poverty, hunger and health. Furthermore, on the need to adopt a gender focus, Jones and Chant (2009) indicate that gender-specific contextualisation is central to hunger and poverty. Certainly, research in Gambia and Ghana on the crisis of female youth in relation to education disparities and social life has revealed that women are most vulnerable to education

and career dynamics, which become reserved to young males. However, it is not simply the case that more education is required, but that due to additionally care and reproductive work obligations, young women find it much harder to enter and remain in school and university and hence escape poverty. The authors argue that one needs to:

(…) explore key gender dimensions of work and education among low-income urban youth noting that despite on- going efforts to increase young women's enrolment in schools and access to employment, gender inequalities have been far from eradicated. Our field interviews reveal how social expectations that women should perform the bulk of reproductive labour in their youth as well as in adulthood and constraints placed on young women's personal freedom in respect of their social relationships reduce time dedicated to education and establish fewer contacts relevant to securing paid employment (Jones and Chant 2008:184).

It is thus more a question of tackling inequalities *within* the educational system than a matter of best practices regarding poverty, hunger and health per se, as these are based on institutional contexts that limit or prohibit access to resources in many forms. Therefore, we tried to reformulate some of the SDGs in this section including a genuine gender focus (see Meinzen-Dick et al 2014) as follows.

SDG 1: End poverty everywhere in all its forms

Here we extended and amended sub-target 1.4 as follows:

SDG 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all ~~men and women~~ **people**, in particular the poor and the vulnerable – among them often women -, as additionally **defined using local concepts of poverty,** have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, **including unconditional cash payments, thereby respecting already existing regulations and specific contexts in order not to disturb functioning mechanisms by imposing Western or other ideas, norms and values. In addition, previous and newly debated access to common-pool resources should be guaranteed to local people, especially women and girls, to provide access to vital resources such as food, cash and education. However, access does not suffice, as continued institutionalised use and support for women's bargaining power is required to guarantee that this will endure. Respecting institutionalised and enduring access, based on more balanced common property rights, has positive impacts on nutrition and health, especially for women and children.**

Target 1.5 then deals with the issue of resilience in the context of climate change and other economic shocks. As we have outlined, we see this as the outcome of institutional change and external economic processes, reducing resilience capacity. Therefore, we would completely reformulate the passage, which currently reads:

SDG 1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

We would replace it by paying attention to a collaborative research process on the ways in which local institutions for the management of the commons are undermined:

> SDG 1.5: By 2030 scrutinise economic, political, social and environmental processes in a participatory way, which undermine local livelihood and crisis management strategies and thus the resilience of people in vulnerable situations so as to react to marginalising developments. Reviving, readapting, reconfiguring and strengthening locally developed institutions (especially communal resource rights) and strategies in order to create long-term and inclusive measures, lowering vulnerability and inequities among gender, age and wealth groups shall be achieved.

Similarly, SDG 2: to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" should be completely rewritten, especially part 3, which reads:

> SDG 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

We have seen in the literature on poverty that low food production per se is *not* a variable; rather, *institutionalized access* to food production assets and the right to use these assets as well as the failure of markets to bring food to those who need it are key causes leading to hunger. In the Sahel and other pastoral areas, pastoralists were traders who brought food to villages (see Fuchs 1974, Haller et al 2013). However, this was necessarily be based on fluid institutions of mobility, which have become severely curtailed both today and in the past (ibid). Thus, it is a matter of controlling markets and helping local trade networks and production to provide subsistence, cash and tradable goods, adapted and controlled under local conditions, rather than simply producing more food.

We therefore reformulate 2.3:

> SDG 2.3. Consider and alter economic, political, social and environmental processes that render small-scale food producers' access to resources insecure and unequal. There is a need to develop transparent, reliable and inclusive institutions in participatory ways in order to provide more equal and controlled access to resources so as to rebuild and strengthen local people's flexible livelihood strategies and thus adaptability to a constantly changing environment.

7) The New institutional politics of distribution debate:

SDG 10 deals with inequalities. These are not the same as causes of poverty, but they are related. We discussed the economic approaches of Picketty and colleagues (2014, 2015), as well as Oxfam (2016), and discussed the ways in which SDGs were formulated, and why they fail to consider the alleviation of basic elements of inequalities, which are also the basis for undermining peace and again require strong, state-centred institutions. The starting point is that wealth inequalities are increasing enormously, as Picketty outlines in his work "The Capital in the 21th Century", in which he states that we have now reached the inequalities of the nineteenth century, but with the tendency that inherited wealth by far exceeds the economic growth potential of nation-states (Picketty 2015). This means that inequality has increased immensely and that the few wealthy

owners of capital ameliorate their gains by investing their capital, without really being obligated to redistribute these profits in order to stimulate a sustainable economy. In contrast, investments seek to reduce variable capital (employment) by fixed capital (technology), leading to less work and the decreased bargaining power of workers and employees, as well as a shortage of available employment opportunities (see Li 2010, Ferguson 2015). These developments have led to what can be termed "The World of 1%", meaning that 1% of the population in the world own more than 99% of the wealth. Viewed differently, this means that 60 people own more than the 50% of the lowest income segment in the world. The income of these 60 people rose by 45% between 2010 and 2015. These figures from Credit Suisse and calculated by Oxfam (2016) underline what Picketty (2015) argues in his historic comparison between Europe and the USA, and in which he and others outline the importance of identifying a type of redistribution using the tax systems. Oxfam argue that there is an economically imminent need to close tax havens. Furthermore, Piketty and colleagues outline how the continued accumulation of wealth in the hands of very few people might lead to a basic economic crisis, as growth rates of private wealth exceed the growth rates of GDP (Alvaredo et al 2013, Piketty 2015, Oxfam 2016). These data only reinforce the claim by Sexsmith and McMichael (2015) that SDGs should be shaped towards a more cause-driven analysis formulation that transcends the state level, as capital is moved across borders and its owners act globally. This has engendered an argument that these issues have to be tackled at a global level and that nationalising the debate will not yield the solutions required. The authors claim that they have:

(…) emphasized the importance of exchanging methodological nationalism for a new, transnational model of accountability for regulating capital, nurturing ecosystems and protecting land-user and labour rights. We have also signalled the need to conceptualize rural livelihoods as meaningful, and the right to land as fundamental rather than simply as a transitional stage in an inevitable urbanization process. Finally, we have argued for complementing (or perhaps even replacing) universal global targets with locally owned, democratically developed plans for envisioning and implementing transformative social change (Sexsmith and McMichael 2015:592).

The desired means of protecting vital rights will not be achieved via methodological nationalism, from which capital owners can easily escape. Rather, protecting these rights, including the critical integration of customary rights, represents the only means for these actors to withstand conditions of extreme concentrations of wealth. We examined some of the sub-targets and proposed changes based on the discussion mentioned above. Our insights are not reflected in various sub-targets, such as targets 10.1, 2 and 6:

We thus propose the following reformulations, which now read:

SDG 10.1 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion **and participation of all,** irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, **in consideration of the respectively given local context, to be achieved via local platforms.**

SDG 10.2 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, **including customary and indigenous laws where local actors view these as appropriate,** policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

SDG 10.6 Ensure ~~enhanced~~ **unconditional** representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.

We also reviewed 10a and 10b, upon which we had reservations regarding problematic issues of definition, as discussed by Escobar: The issue of so-called least developed countries and the issue of the differential treatment deserved requires a degree of questioning on the definition of least developed countries and regarding who has the autonomy to define special and differential treatment. 10a now reads:

SDG 10a: Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements.

Again, a more locally driven agenda would help. The sub-target should then be completely reformulated as follows:

SDG 10a: Countries in the Global South and their populations should, via a participatory process, define major development targets, and such discussions should be upscaled regarding several of the key countries involved in a particular region in the South regarding trade agreements in dialogue with the World Trade Organization.

10b then deals with issues of investment. This should consider with seriousness some of the issues related to the land-grabbing discussion. Reformulation should read as:

SDG 10b: Encourage **debate regarding** official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to states where the need is greatest, **but halt it where negative impacts on communal land and resource ownership, local livelihoods, human rights and the environment can and do occur.** Particular emphasis should be placed on the least developed countries, including African countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries, ~~in accordance with their national plans and programmes~~ **based on a participatory process of understanding and incorporating local grassroot demands rather than merely elite and state demands.**

This final paragraph refers to the question of strong institutions governing sustainable use of resources. SDG 16 reads:

SDG 16: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

This goal implies the strengthening of control mechanisms over national institutions, in particular in developing countries, through international cooperation to address the problems prioritised in the Western world. Thus, the discourse on "international cooperation" can be interpreted as

Western hegemony, which will change little in the countries discussed. We thus propose the reformulation as follows:

> SDG 16: Strengthen relevant national institutions (including indigenous and local institutions) to build institutional capacity at the national and international levels to address problems of crime and violence.

8) The local initiatives and participation debate:

SDG 17 is one of the most essential SDGs. However, on closer inspection, it demonstrates numerous deficiencies related to understandings of local initiatives and participation: Sub-target 17.15 reads that we should

> SDG 17.15: [r]espect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Thus, yet again the SDGs emphasise the excessively national focus of policies, where we would argue that what is required is a nation functioning as the umbrella for local initiatives and processes, encouraging the nationalisation of community processes and not vice versa. Therefore, we would prefer to speak of adaptive policies than the mere establishment of a country's policies. Principally, the literature on this issue (Bodley, 2011, Burke and Aronja 2015, Baker 2015, Weston and Bollier 2013) suggests that all SDGs should encourage bottom-up initiatives and local participations at all scales. Thus, they should implement various types of partnerships, not just a generic one. In so doing, more research into stakeholder engagement should be generated. In focusing on adaptive policies on the basis that most small nations have experienced examples of good resource management, small-scale (see Bodley 2011) and decentralised political power must be facilitated to permit sustainable development. Therefore, a new architecture of law and policy has to be discussed, which includes the juristic voice from below. There are, as we have seen in preamble 3, challenges faced in innovating, with both the Vivir Bien (or Bien Vivir) and ecovillage approaches revealing deficiencies. With Vivir Bien, a spiritual focus disguises its basis in capitalist technologies and economics related to the rules of the world market. With the ecovillage, the issue concerning how best to survive within a capitalist system with its own contradictions remains. Becker and Burke (2015) and Aronjy (2015) in different ways highlight how ecovillages in affluent European environments are challenging, as the problem of making a difference in a highly monetised neighborhood without personal capital is unrealistic. In the Global South, however, once people are provided with land and common pool resources a way to a ecovillage seems to be feasible, despite cash needs. This is related to the issue of obtaining capital for starting up, which limits ecovillages in Europe to the richer segments of society, while in the Global South fair access to land and a new politics of distribution of cash and resources would help mitigate many problems.

In addition, a very important issue is not so much providing answers but being able to enable participatory processes for find solutions, as Haller, Acciaioli and Rist (2016) outline in their approach, which they term constitutionality. Through four case studies in Zambia, Mali, Bolivia and Indonesia, they describe how a participatory, bottom-up process of crafting local institutions is successful if local actors, who often demonstrate asymmetric power relations, can engage in a way that gives them a sense of ownership. Constitutionality is related to Foucault's notion of governmentality – the embodiment of government rules and becoming subjects – as well as

Agarwal's notion of environmentality: the ecological embodiment of state rules and becoming an ecologically sound subject. The authors argue that the strategic nature of local actors is not well-understood in these approaches, and that what tends to happen instead is a process of local bottom-up institutions becoming successful, creating a self-owned institutional setting, and establishing and embodying a feeling of ownership of this process as part of a local actor's own constitution, hence the term constitutionality (see Haller et al 2016, 2018). Further research on this topic is required in order to elucidate the vital processes to enabling constitutionality. Haller et al. have offered six necessary elements based on empirical work, and this is supported by further work on the issue (see Haller, Belsky and Rist 2018). These elements include:

(a) Internal or emic perception for the requirement to create new institutions;
(b) Capacity for engaging participatory processes that address and do not ignore power asymmetries;
(c) Pre-existing institutions for collective action;
(d) Outside catalysing agents;
(e) Recognition of local knowledge and innovations;
(f) Higher-level state recognition and support (Haller et al 2016).

We thus propose new formulations for SDG 17's overall goal, which reads: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. It contains global partnerships including international solidarity; transfer of technology and more fair tax and trade policies. It should cut across all SDGs and enable the concretisation of the other SDGs. However, the SDG 17 as currently phrased fails to incorporate lessons from successful bottom-up participatory processes that have helped create a sense of ownership. We discussed how all sustainable development goals must principally encourage bottom-up initiatives and local participations at all scales. Thus, they should implement various types of partnerships, not just a generic one. In so doing, further details on the engagement of stakeholders should be generated. With a focus on adaptive policies and on the basis that most small nations have experienced examples of good resource management, the small-scale, decentralised organisation of political power must be supported to facilitate sustainable development. Therefore, a new architecture of law and policy has to be discussed that includes the juristic voice of nature.

We thus reformulated the overall SDG goal 17 as follows:

SDG 17: Strengthen local bottom-up capacities and initiatives in all SDGs to create the conditions for real participatory processes and innovations regarding the governance of resources, and paying attention to local plural needs and enabling the capacity of all interest groups to address their views, needs and knowledge by being open to fusing old and new rules in the crafting process, as well as acknowledging what has been developed at the state and international level. Thus, the role for states and NGOs is to enable such processes and gain back trust for partnerships. Small nations and effective systems of decentralisation might provide ideas as to such a process.

More concretely, we discussed issues of 17.10 and 17.11 related to trade and exports. We were offered an example of an employed coffee buyer for a Fairtrade label, who had experienced through engaging with local people in Latin America that gains are far too low in the value chain, even with Fairtrade. This then stimulated him to set up a new, more participatory cacao trade and chocolate production, providing producers with sufficient gains and reducing discrepancies in the value chain, which are also linked to issues of power relations and unfair distribution

institutions. Thus, the SDGs should reflect and incorporate an analysis of value chains and address these, as we reformulated in sub-goals 10 and 11:

SDG 17.10 Promote and enable an individual, bottom-up, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system in a co-working, interdisciplinary as well as transdisciplinary process, including civil society, citizens, the science community and engineers, as well as national and local governments. International trade rules must be discussed and exploitative value gains need to be focused on a fair distribution of gains.

17.11 To not merely increase the exports of developing countries but to empower them in a co-working process, and to receive help from local as well as national experts in order to increase the value of their exports.

Furthermore, SDG 17.6 focuses on technology transfer, which is one concrete example for partnerships. It reads:

SDG 17.6: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism

It was reformulated as follows:

SDG 17.6: Enhance employment and appreciation of local knowledge and local technologies, including in North-South, South-South and triangular international cooperation. Enhance participatory research and knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved global mechanisms, whereby developing countries and non-governmental actors are given a greater voice.

9) Synthesis and final conclusions:

In the final discussion, we returned to the preambles and reflected on them in light of the literature discussed for the reformulations. The key issue was that a new politics of distribution is required because:

a) it reduces poverty more effectively than any development and social help programme, as well as reducing the transaction costs of such distributions;

b) it reduces disparities according to gender, wealth and education, as everybody would receive the same amount unconditionally;

c) there is reduced stigma of rich and poor, as everyone receives a rightful share of the wealth (Ferguson 2015); and

d) it would reduce the problem of the double pressure of the poor overusing the resources owing to poverty and the rich overusing the resources due to their desire for high-gain investments

(Haller and team discussion 2016).

The overall justification of such a new politics of distribution is the main argument by the philosopher Kropotkin, who stated that it is ultimately very difficult to show who has exactly contributed what element to the global wealth existent on the planet (see Ferguson 2015).

What we generally propose are the following elements based on research, which should be incorporated into the SDGs:

- **First,** basic processes of inequalities at all levels must be reduced. As stated above, this means not merely paying lip service to **redistribution,** but undertaking concrete debates regarding how this can be achieved. It is interesting to state that this is not just a left-wing and Marxist postulation, since global equality has reached a dimension that endangers basic economic, political and environmental processes upon which we are all dependent.
- **Second,** we require better information on these processes. The excessively strong and hegemonic orientation on quantitative data such as GDP as well as other variables fails to represent local and global processes. More locally based research is required, in addition to the more effective use of qualitative and mixed-methods research in a participatory way, with the objective of working towards a **process of shared research** in order to avoid a Northern hegemonic research bias so as the SGDs remain a mechanism of an Anti-Politics Machine. This also necessitates the incorporation of local knowledge and processes of co-research. This cannot be achieved via universities, and instead requires a more inter- and transdisciplinary critical focus.
- **Third,** participatory processes of bottom-up institution-building in a decentralised but subsidiary context are required. Not everything can be achieved at the local level, but the local level needs to be involved in a way that is not naïve. This means paying attention to local as well as national and global power asymmetries. In this way, new forms of sustainable lifestyle as well as participatory and **locally owned processes of institution-building** can emerge to access and use resources. Moreover, interactions can become securely defined, providing a feeling of self-governance and security. These represent, as research has demonstrated, the key ingredients for sustainable development in a "glocal" world.

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