

A close-up photograph of green leaves and branches, likely from a tree, filling the left and top portions of the frame. The leaves are vibrant green with visible veins. The background is a bright yellow gradient that sweeps across the bottom right corner.

strong
social
work



be
EU
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Ecosocial work and its challenges

Long session 25/04/2024, 13.45-16.45



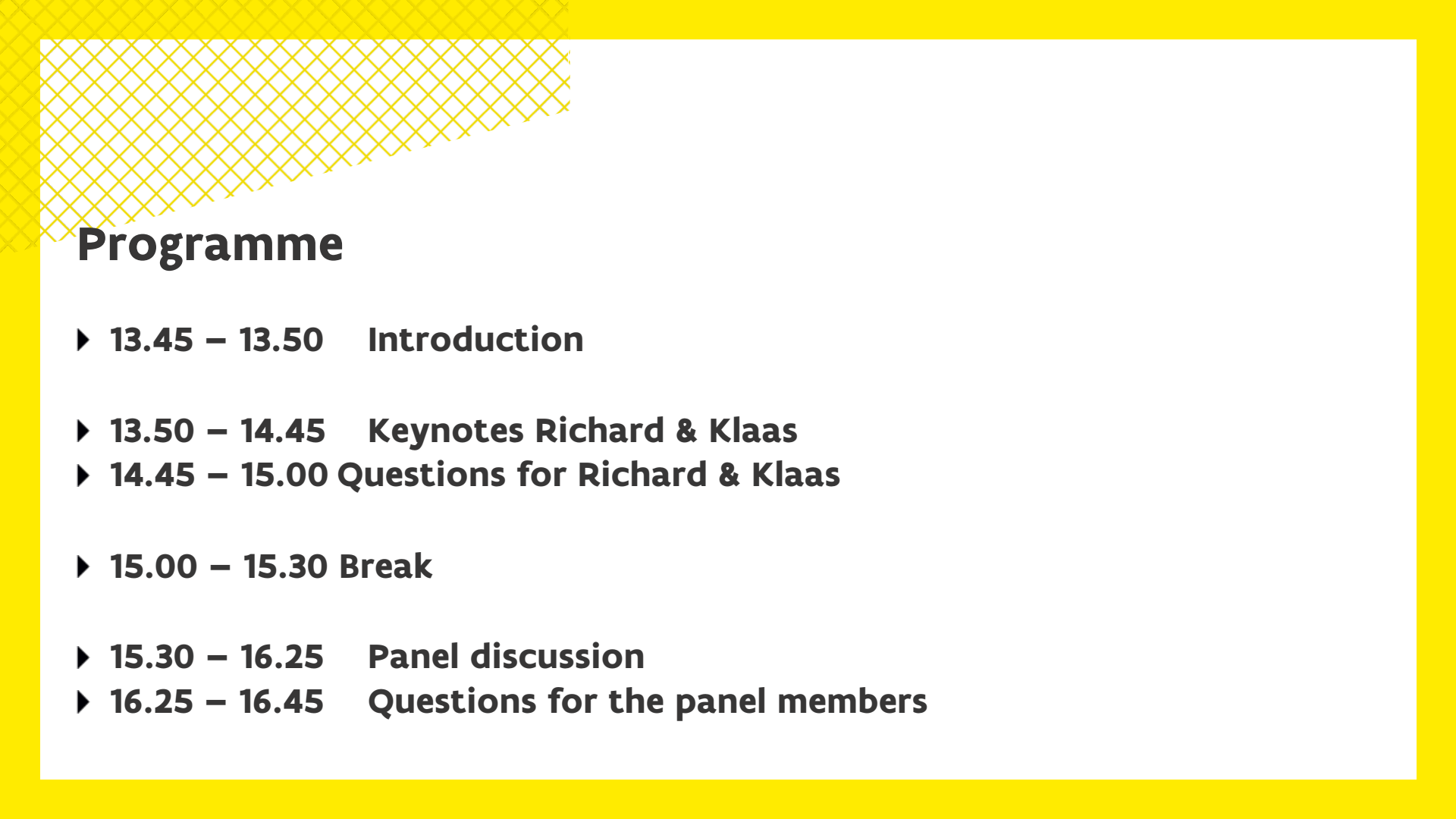
Welcome!

▶ **Speakers: Richard de Brabander (Inholland University of Applied Sciences) & Klaas Poppe (SAM, Steunpunt Mens en Samenleving)**

▶ **Panel members:**

- Baptiste Vasseur (ENSIE)
- Philsan Osman (Avansa Oost-Brabant)
- Inez Louwagie (De Transformisten)

▶ **Strong social work and just transition**



Programme

- ▶ **13.45 – 13.50** Introduction
- ▶ **13.50 – 14.45** Keynotes Richard & Klaas
- ▶ **14.45 – 15.00** Questions for Richard & Klaas
- ▶ **15.00 – 15.30** Break
- ▶ **15.30 – 16.25** Panel discussion
- ▶ **16.25 – 16.45** Questions for the panel members



Ecosocial work in Flanders & Brussels

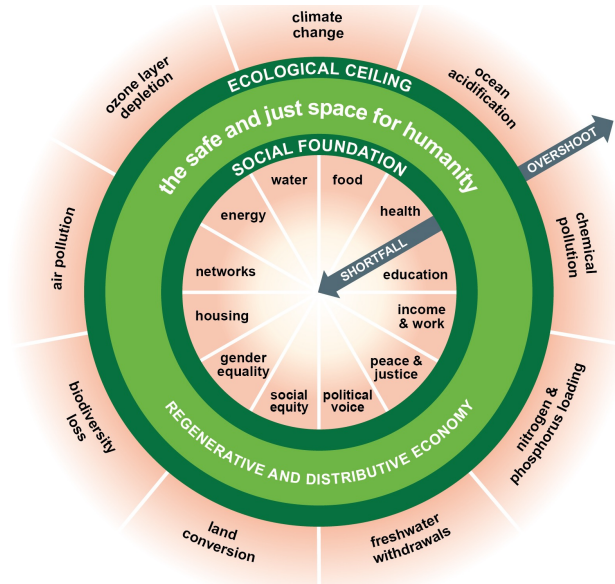
A theoretical framework (in progress)

Klaas Poppe, SAM Steunpunt Mens en Samenleving

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The ecological and social crisis as a challenge for social work

- ▶ Interplay between social and ecological issues
- ▶ Socio-economic fault line (Van Lancker & Otto)
- ▶ Triple P – model and the SDG's



Sustainable development

- ▶ Definition Brundtland report
'Our Common Future'
- ▶ Sustainable development as
'essentially contested concept'
- ▶ Strong and weak sustainability
 - Towards a 'post-growth'
economy
- ▶ Wedding cake model





Environmental justice

- ▶ **Unequal distribution of responsibility for climate change, environmental degradation,...**
- ▶ **Unequal distribution of the impact of the ecological crisis**
 - Exposure
 - Sensitivity
 - Adaptive capacity
- ▶ **The need for a holistic, integrated approach**

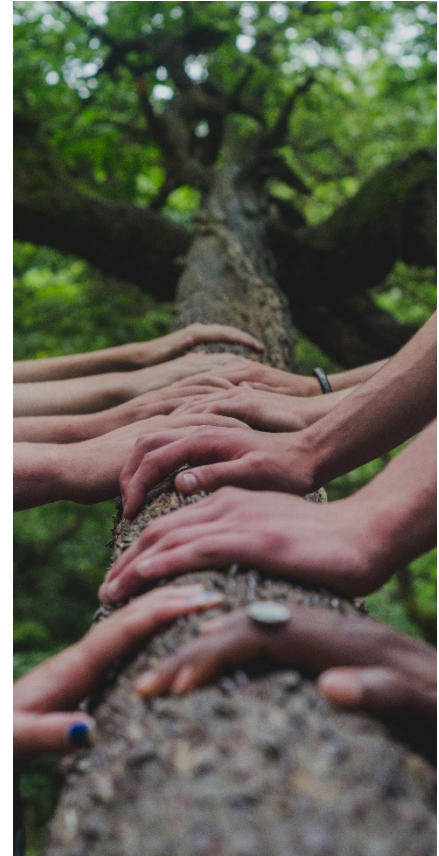


The role of (eco)social work

- ▶ **Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014)**
- ▶ **Social work as a human rights profession**
 - Art. 23 Belgian Constitution: right to a healthy environment
- ▶ **Tradition and transition**
- ▶ **Democracy, participation and politicisation**

Tradition and transition

- ▶ **Contextual approach in social work (Addams & Richmond)**
- ▶ **3 perspectives on social work (Payne)**
 - Therapeutic
 - Social order
 - Transformational
- ▶ **Social work itself has to be in transition**



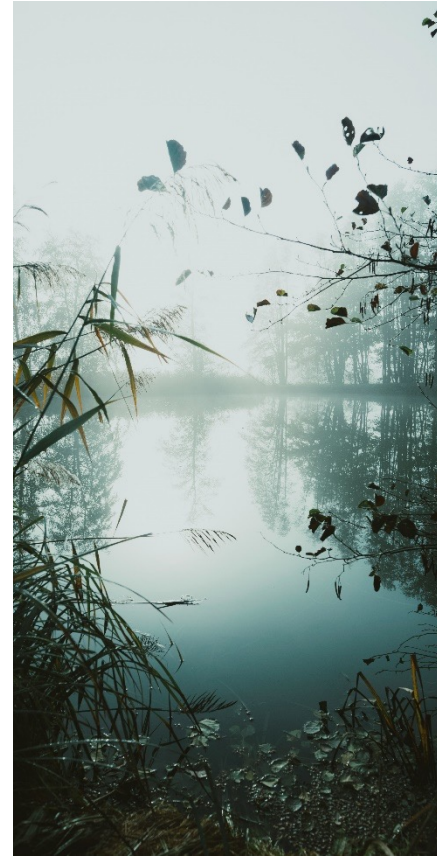
Democracy, participation and politicisation

- ▶ Including vulnerable groups in the social and ecological debate/policies
- ▶ Parity of participation (Fraser)
 - Redistribution
 - Recognition
 - Representation
- ▶ Danger of de-politicisation



Two perspectives on the transition of social work

- ▶ **Same practice, different framing**
 - Strategic benefits
- ▶ **New (integrated) practices**
- ▶ **From adaptation to prevention**
- **Towards an ecosystem of practices**





Towards an Ecology of Justice

Dr. Richard de Brabander, Inholland University of Applied Sciences

Faculty of Health, Sports and Social Work

Research Group Ecosocial work

Our assumptions

climate crisis is a social crisis

acts as a multiplier of inequalities

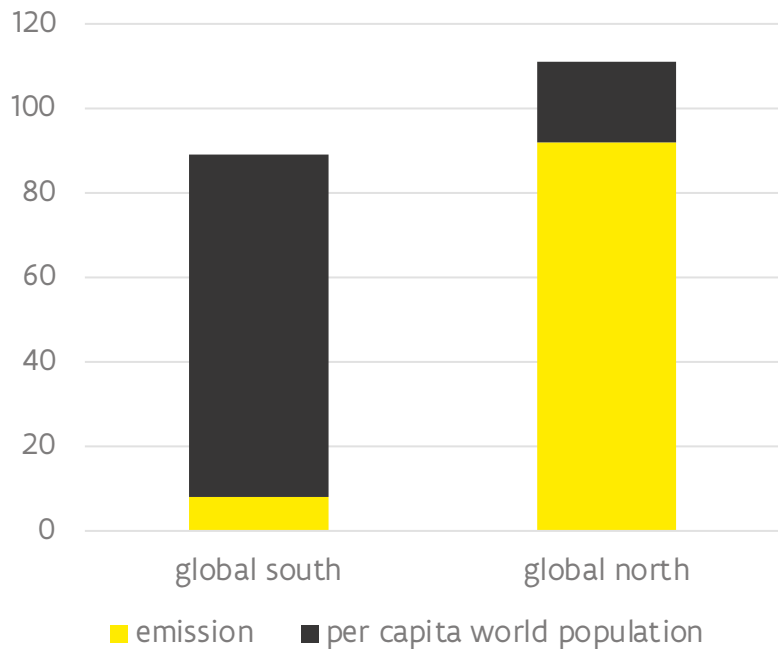
confronts us with major justice
issues

is related to a politicization of
social work

and needs a system change



Climate injustice



- ▶ **‘Perversely, the richest, who have the greatest capacity to adapt and are responsible for and have benefitted from the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions, will be the best placed to cope with climate change, while the poorest, who have contributed the least to emissions and have the least capacity to react, will be the most harmed**
- ▶ (Human Rights Council, 2019, p. 6).
- ▶ < (Hickel, 2021)

Climate injustice encompasses more than just an economic dimension

A twenty-first-century eco-social contract must be fostered through a raft of changes to policies and institutions so that they are democratic, inclusive and promote gender and environmental justice, coupled with alternative economies and transformative social policies.

REPORT

2023

GLOBAL STUDY ON NEW ECO-SOCIAL CONTRACTS



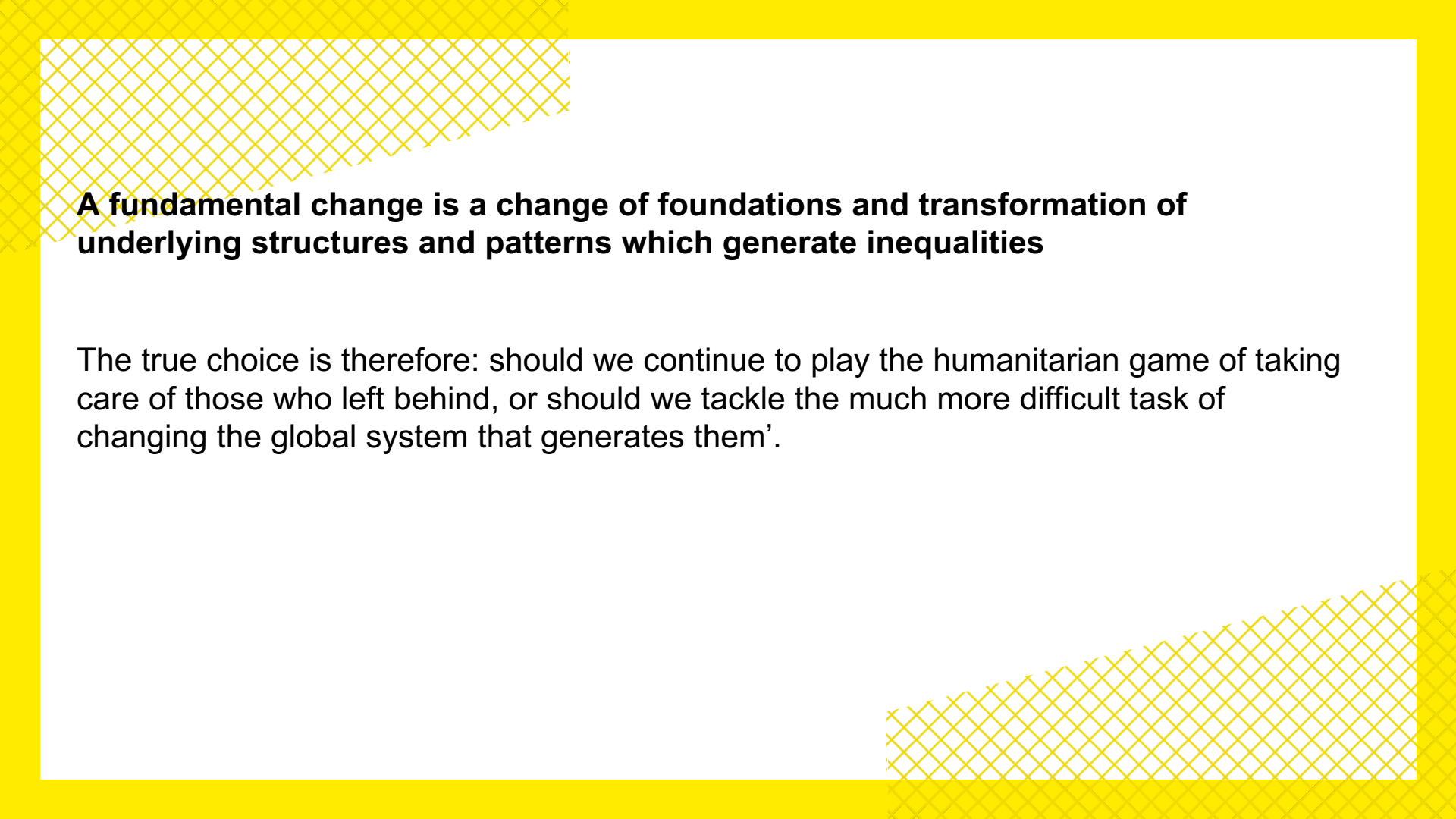
A system change

is 'an existential change in the way humankind lives in and interacts with its social and natural environment''
(Huntjens, 2021)

To really change things, one should accept that nothing can really be changed within the existing system

(Slavoj Zizek).





A fundamental change is a change of foundations and transformation of underlying structures and patterns which generate inequalities

The true choice is therefore: should we continue to play the humanitarian game of taking care of those who left behind, or should we tackle the much more difficult task of changing the global system that generates them'.

Transformation of social work

The global ecological crisis 'is also a crisis of the Western type of social work professionalism (Nähri & Matthies, 2016, 494).

The profession of social work needs to redefine itself in light of this urgent ecological crisis (Powers & Rinkel, 2018, p. 31).

This lens requires us to critically examine and question modern societal structures, values, beliefs, practices, and ways of life [...].(Rambaree, Powers & Smith, 2019)

Levels of transformation

discourse

- way we think, speak and perceive
- values
- epistemology
- belief systems

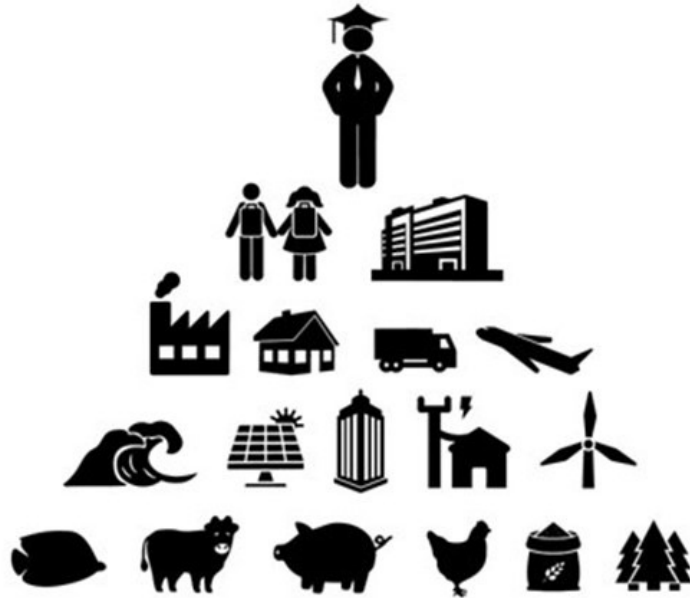
structure

- way we work
- policy
- methods

practice

- way we live
- behaviour
- choices

EGO

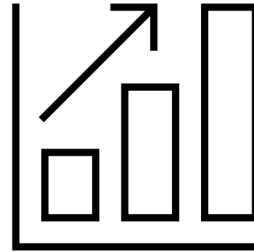


ECO

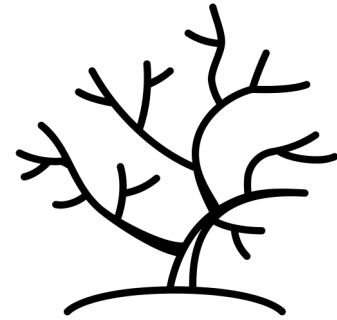
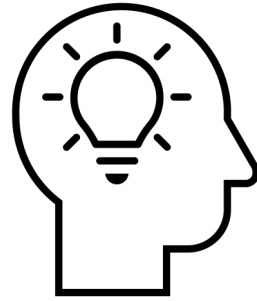


From anthropocentrism to eco-interesse

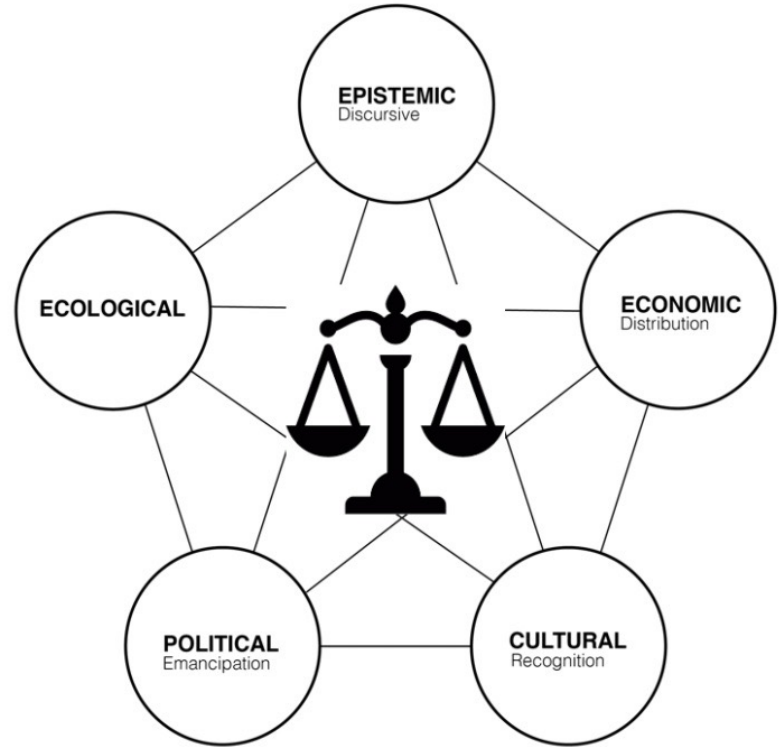
degrowth



ecology of knowledge



ecology of justice



Global Agenda IFSW Leaving no one behind

promoting social and economic equalities

promoting the dignity and worth of all peoples

working toward environmental sustainability

strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships.



Parity of participation (Nancy Fraser)

requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life

is not guided by an utopian ideal but starts from an experience of injustice

transformative remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcome by restructuring or deconstructing the underlying generative (economic, cultural, political, **epistemic and ecological**) patterns.

abnormal justice: there is no shared view of the **what**, the **who** and **how** of justice

eco-social practices

- other ways of working: intuitive, just doing
 - permaculture to permagovernance
 - degrowth, regenerative or ciculaire
 - recognize local knowledge
- do not reduce people to how they are labelled
 - give people voice
- places of being, doing, becoming and belonging



social work agenda

**what needs to be
done?**

1. **We are at the beginning**
2. **Learn from ecosocial practices**
3. **Develop a strong (not a great) narrative**
4. **Broaden our understanding of social work**
5. **Relate issues of climate change to human rights, professional ethics and politicization of social work/social policy**
6. **Transform our curricula**
7. **Transform our research methods**



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Reactions or otherwise please contact

References

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Panel Discussion