# Editorial Preface

# Inaugural Issue

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The International Journal of Public and Private Perspectives on Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment (IJPPPHCE) is a new Journal, but it is built on the foundation of successful academic cooperation that has produced a steady output of research publications published by IGI International.

That experience has taught that there is a need for a truly International Journal with an innovative and interdisciplinary approach to issues of Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment. It is particularly these issues that have proved to be at the core of social transformation of modern societies and areas where there are very strong linkages between different issue areas. The Journal also bears the dichotomy of 'Public and Private Perspectives' to indicate an openness to analyze social and cultural phenomena from the point of view of different actors and stakeholders. Public policy remains important but it is important to be able to bring all the relevant perspectives to the analysis. Meanwhile, the global approach in this journal means that we are serious about inviting scholars from all parts to the world to contribute fresh and original research that in many different ways may well turn out to challenge the borders of our disciplines and many other borders and limitations that still exist in the world.

Our experience has been that Healthcare, Welfare and Environment are probably the most important and contested issue areas in international discourses concerning the public and private spheres. It is exactly these areas where the modern state as well as civil society and individuals are facing the biggest challenges to adjust to new realities, in terms of politics, culture, economy or ethics. These areas are often overlapping and in many countries there are already scholars working in some of these interdisciplinary fields and there surely is a need to encourage better communication across cultural and disciplinary borders.

**Healthcare:** According to Aristotle, the court physician and a son of a physician, proper balance or proportion makes for health, lack of it for disease. Too much food, or too much exercise, are bad for health, just as too little food or exercise are. The same holds, in particular, in ethical matters. The Doctrine of the Mean can't be used as the theoretical foundation of every scholarly thesis, but it certainly makes clear that 'health' as a concept has a long history of having been seen intricately entangled with a plethora of human activities. Healthcare as a system is directly connected with politics, administration, education, ethics, religion, culture and economy. Healthcare has significantly improved our quality of life and it is no wonder that its role in societies keeps growing. In short, health care is not only an industry directly covering more than ten percent of GDP in most industrialized countries, even without even starting to discuss the close relationship between health and welfare. This Journal will give some of the answers what healthcare and welfare are all about and where they are moving.

**Culture:** While 'health' easily leads us to analyze from within the framework of social sciences and natural/ medical sciences 'culture' is more elusive and requires a good understanding of philosophy and humanities. However, in our global society cultural differences and socially and culturally based forms of understanding/ construction are central to social analysis. Including "Culture" and

encouraging research on the topic opens the discussion to cultural differences concerning the public and private as well as the "culture" and cultural understanding itself and their relevance to policy and society. In short, "Culture" is included to encourage new kinds of innovative articles both in terms of developing the theory and paying attention to cultural diversity and the importance of culture in every society, as well as to the historical roots of social issues and forms of understanding in different societies. The Journal will publish special editions devoted to different issue areas and approaches and by covering these different issue areas it will make new fresh contributions to international research and theory within its interdisciplinary field.

**Environment** is the physical and cultural setting of human endeavors and the stage where everything else happens. In this era of our reflexive relationship with the threatened and beleaguered natural environment it is clear that the sheer survival of all living things is at stake and that their health, culture and everything they hold important is closely connected to the environment. In many of the articles there will be references to several of the keywords of this journal and in others the connections are left open for others to define.

In this inaugural issue there are four articles covering issues of healthcare, culture and environment from many different perspectives, focusing on very parts of Asia. However, the issues discussed are surely relevant to many other areas of the world.

Paul Howard in his article looks from a comparative point of view at India's and Cambodia's sanitation development and the relationship between that development and the evolving political narrative and political economy of the respective states. Both have had among the lowest levels of sanitation development in the world and both have great disparities in terms of sanitation access, particularly in rural-urban terms. Sanitation development became a major issue in India during the 2014 election that saw the BJP under Narendra Modi, sweep to power. In Cambodia, sanitation development has not seen such explicit public political focus and yet, Cambodia's levels of sanitation access have improved relatively rapidly over recent years. However, in the early 1990s, direct UN intervention in Cambodia's troubled political economy provided a fertile environment for civil society to flourish. Paul Howards shows how politics and economy are closely related to sanitation development in India and Cambodia. Issues of health, culture and environment are all relevant factors in sanitation development.

Mitsuko Hasegawa in her article makes use of oral history as a method to studying effective measures to eradicate Schistosomiasis Japonica and focuses on the case of the Chikugo River Basin in Kyûshû, Japan. The successful eradication of this disease in Japan clearly stands as an opportunity to learn about its social and cultural background. To collect further relevant historical evidence interviews with local people were performed. All qualitative data was analyzed by creating a fishbone diagram. As a result, new information was acquired on such issues as education methods and active community participation. Furthermore, there was a correspondence with the key elements of the global strategic framework of Integrated Vector Management by the WHO. Some measures were identified that could possibly be adapted to conditions in current disease-endemic areas in other countries.

Eiji Ôkawa in his article analyses the land and soil in the religious culture of Kôyasan in Medieval and Early Modern Japan. This article literally studies the environment and links with the society, culture and ethics/ religion of Japan. Religion is a very influential part of every society and culture and to understand its symbolic meanings as well as political and social significance it is important to know the history. Ôkawa points out that in traditional worldviews, the natural environment was replete with sacred powers. With a holistic worldview, people interacted with nature and sacred manifestations through ritual practices, and organized their lives in spaces suffused with supranormal beings. Nowhere is this more evident than in the religious cultures that developed at sacred mountains. Yet due partly to the sway of the normative analytical model that privileges doctrinal and ideological dimensions of religious phenomena, little attempt has been made to explore the rich relationships between nature and the sacred in the religious cultures of sacred mountains. By examining legendary narratives, rituals, and the landscape of Kôyasan Buddhist monastery in Japan, the article investigates

how elements of nature, in particular land and soil, were infused with symbolic meanings, and played vital roles in the production of a local political space and trans-local religious culture in the medieval and early modern periods.

Catherine Burns, Kumiko Katayama and Robin Roberts in their article analyze the consumer co-operatives and perceptions of food safety shaping markets in post-Fukushima Japan particularly their members' perceptions of food safety. Japan is an ideal place to study given it is undoubtedly the 'best example of a successful consumer co-operative sector in the postwar period' while the Fukushima catastrophe has global significance, in Japan is it closely related to a new understanding of food safety issues. The article introduces the varied landscape of co-operatives in Japan. While some co-operatives have evolved into a considerable political force, not all consumer co-operatives are as large or as politically active. This study qualitatively explores the views of the members of two small, less politically active co-operatives in Tokushima, Shikoku. Of particular relevance are the types of produce being consumed by members, and why (and how) purchasing behavior has been shaped by food safety concerns, post-Fukushima. Among the main findings is that the consumer-producer, face-to-face relationship marketing strategy has had an effective impact on purchasing decisions, particularly in an environment of heighted concerns about food safety and security. In this study, most interviewees expressed reluctance, but did not rule out the possibility of buying imported products from other countries (consumer ethnocentrism), however a few expressed strong animosity towards, and even an adamant refusal to buy, Chinese products following a range of food safety scandals that in Japan have tarnished the image of Chinese agricultural products.

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