

EDITORIAL

We are delighted to present the 4th issue of **Ambiente e Sociedade** [Environment and Society] for 2013. It was only possible to make this publication a quarterly journal thanks to the dedication of our editorial board and the academic experts who have contributed with advice, suggestions and recommendations. This has facilitated the process of publishing all the articles you will find here, and further enhanced the quality of the journal.

This issue of **Ambiente e Sociedade** [Environment and Society] includes eight articles and a review, covering a variety of contemporary and interdisciplinary topics. They reflect on and describe the socio-environmental problems in different regions of Brazil.

We aim to provide the reader with knowledge concerning current conflicts, based on theories and practices which are widely debated and discussed. The articles also provide insights into how to meet present challenges through sustainable practices and social participation whilst simultaneously affirming the value of nature and life.

At the time this issue was being edited, on 8th November 2013, we were faced with the tragedy which devastated the Central Area of the Philippines Archipelago: the Haiyan Hurricane which saw winds of more than 250 km per hour and waves over five meters high. Approximately 4.5 million people were affected, according to government information. Over 660,000 people were forced to leave their homes due to the extreme weather conditions.

There is a growing consensus in organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank that global warming can no longer be denied. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) claims that, by the end of the year, 2013 may be among the ten warmest years ever recorded, continuing the pattern of high temperatures which are a direct result of climate change caused by human activity. Researchers claim that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have reached new thresholds in 2012, resulting in a much warmer future for the planet.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that recently the NGO Germanwatch published the 10th Global Climate Risk Index, confirming the fact that developing countries are more vulnerable to climate changes and measuring the amount of damage this phenomenon has already caused.

According to this NGO, from 1993 to 2012, over 530,000 people lost their lives in approximately 15,000 extreme events, resulting in losses of over US\$ 2.5 trillion. These data show the complexity involved in global environmental governance and the urgent need to correct the Loss and Damage mechanism which was not approved in Doha in 2012. This mechanism determines the payment for those who have suffered damage as a result of climate changes.

The irony is that in November 2013 in Warsaw, during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (CoP), 19 representatives of 190 nations met to seek a global agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This should be signed in 2015 and come into force in 2020.

It is worth remembering that the United Nations established two degrees centigrade as a maximum limit for global warming. Scientists believe that it is possible to control the worst effects of climate change below this level. In order for this objective to be met, countries need to considerably reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by producing cleaner energy than that obtained from fossil fuels.

As part of our editorial conception we believe that it is crucial to contextualize the increase of extreme weather events - through our diverse and multiple approaches we provide our readers with a framework which considers the current complex socio-environmental reality.

In the first article of this issue, “The Impact of Using Compostable Carrier Bags on Consumer Behavior in the city of Belo Horizonte”, Sabrina C. Santos, Caissa Veloso e Sousa, Danilo de Oliveira Sampaio and André Francisco Alcântara Fagundes reflect on consumer behavior in face of a new law in the city of Belo Horizonte which is pioneering an initiative for substituting conventional for compostable carrier bags. This is a growing concern of consumers and the article recognizes the importance of green marketing as an awareness tool. The quantitative field study made use of a questionnaire for gathering data which was applied by means of an e-survey.

In the second article “Sustainability from “*cradle to grave*”: the widespread use of input-output models for USW and ASW in retail” Valny Giacomelli Sobrinho looks at sustainable businesses which are responsible for collecting waste resulting from the production of goods and services along the consumption chain, the ultimate aim being to reduce the amount of waste in the supply chain. The study assesses by means of hybrid input-output models how much waste is necessary in order to generate a monetary unit of product or economic income. Thus, it is possible to determine the environmental cost (or benefit) of this economic activity.

In the third article “Criteria for analyzing environmental zoning as an instrument in land use and spatial planning”, Mariana Rodrigues Ribeiro dos Santos and Victor Eduardo Lima Ranieri propose criteria for analyzing Environmental Zoning as an instrument for planning and land use within the context of the Brazilian National Environmental Policy (NEP), notwithstanding the fact that this instrument was regulated under the name Ecologic-Economic Zoning in 2002. Three case studies are analyzed and, according to the authors, Environmental Zoning studies do not always attain their objectives. However, they do serve as a basis for systematized information on the environment and contribute toward achieving the objectives of the NEP.

In the fourth article “Tourism, Nature and Culture: disputes for ‘Heritage Sites’ in ‘Participative Debates’ in Ilha Grande, State of Rio de Janeiro”, Helena Catão Henriques Ferreira provides an important insight into the participative forums in Ilha Grande which were re-activated and restructured in 2007. These forums play a role in debates and disputes in which different conceptions of the conservation of nature and culture are at

stake. Tourism, one of the main local economic activities and an important socio-cultural phenomenon on the island, has resulted in countless transformations in the region. It is one of the main topics debated in these forums. Within this context, a discourse on heritage is employed to create attractions and tourism products and routes, as well as being used in planning. The aim of this article is to reflect on the relationship between tourism on Ilha Grande and the concepts of heritage discussed in these forums. The article is based on ethnographic work conducted via field research which took place between 2007 and 2010. It involved participating in and observing forum meetings, as well as interviews with the social actors involved.

In the fifth article, “Environmental Justice, latent and manifest conflicts: a case study of the artisanal fishermen in the northern region of the state of Rio de Janeiro”, Giuliana Franco Leal presents a case study of artisanal fishermen who work in Lagoa de Carapebus. This is a coastal lagoon partially located within a National Park which was created in 1998 in a region in the northern part of the state of Rio de Janeiro which for the last three decades has pursued an economic model based on oil exploration. Employing a theoretical-methodological approach based on political ecology and the theory of recognition, the socio-environmental conflicts experienced by the fishermen are identified. These conflicts relate to changes in the socio-economic models and the implementation of a conservation unit. The article addresses the motives and conditions which explain why conflicts emerge in a latent or manifest form, in relation to the monitoring and punitive actions of state authorities or disagreements concerning the rules of work among the fishermen themselves.

In the sixth article, “Nature and ecological imagination: The God of ecology within the imaginative horizon of environmentalism” Isabel Cristina de Moura Carvalho and Carlos Alberto Steil consider expectations of happiness and moral elevation attributed to nature in the current secular context, as well as the implications for environmental education practices based on direct contact with natural environments. The authors locate the origins of the moral value of nature as pristine wilderness in the conservationist ideals of the 19th century in the United States. They argue that the conservationist-moral subject of wilderness, associated to the 19th century liberal democratic context, concurs with current notions of nature as beautiful and good, seen as a place of authenticity and transcendence. However, this does not mean a simple reiteration of 19th century ideals. Contemporary ideals of ecological virtue impact on and transform this notion of nature, applying some of this 19th century inspiration to new arrangements in the transcendental and secular axis from the perspective of immanent types of spiritualities such as New Age.

In the seventh article “The precautionary principle and the management of environmental risks: contributions and limitations of economic models” Vasco Barroso Gonçalves reflects on the most useful models developed to carry out economic analyses on the principle of precaution. He looks at their application and seeks to understand the contribution they make to the debate on precaution, as well as evaluating their relevance to the public decision-making process. Both their potentialities and limitations are examined. Proposed actions geared toward overcoming present limitations are also identified. The concept of precaution plays an important role in the environmental regulation of

many countries. However, legislation concerning the application of the precautionary principle for decision-making in the management of environmental risk is still vague. For this reason, the need to establish regulatory frameworks in order to effectively implement this principle has been widely flagged up. This would have the effect of clarifying concepts and procedures pertaining to environmental risks.

In the final article “The construction of the Belo Monte Hydro-electric Power Station: environmental conflicts and the dilemma of development” Lorena Cândido Fleury and Jalcione Almeida present an analysis of recent economic growth and political stability in the Brazilian context. This has brought the idea of development back to the center of the debate, usually in terms of the transformation of “natural resources”. However, though this notion is of central importance there is no consensus in terms of its meaning - on the contrary there are many social groups who question which type of development should be encouraged, or even the need to develop at all, thus bringing into central focus the relationship between nature and development. The authors conducted field research on the environmental conflicts surrounding the construction of what purports to be the third largest power station in the world, Belo Monte. They subsequently evaluated the relations between society and nature as key to interpreting development processes in terms of defining who should be the subjects qualified to affect the direction of these processes.

This edition includes a review: “Pegada Hídrica: visões e reflexões sobre sua aplicação” [Water Footprint: visions and reflections on its application] by Renata de Souza Leão about the book “Pegada Hídrica – Inovação, corresponsabilização e os desafios de sua aplicação” [Water Footprint: Innovation, co-responsibility and the challenges of its application], edited by Vanessa Empinotti and Pedro Roberto Jacobi and published by Editora Annablume in 2012. The book was the result of an international seminar “Water Footprint and its applicability in the public and private sector” held in São Paulo in 2011. Brazilian and foreign authors from a wide range of academic areas such as sociology, economics, engineering, environmental management and political science were given the opportunity of presenting different visions and reflections on the issue of Water Footprints.

Ambiente e Sociedade [Environment and Society] is a quarterly journal published by ANPPAS - Brazilian Association of Post-Graduation and Research in the Environment and Society, which contributes with knowledge resulting from the interdisciplinary interface between issues affecting Environment and Society.

We hope you enjoy this final edition of 2013 and we look forward to bringing you the first edition of 2014 in the New Year.

Pedro Roberto Jacobi and Silvana Audrá Cutolo