

EDITORIAL

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Scholars from different disciplines confirm that our planet has recently entered into a new epoch in its history: the “Anthropocene” period. It refers to a new geological era characterized by the action of humans, for the first time having the capability of modifying and conditioning the morphology of the globe and therefore its ecology in an increasingly significant way. Such a transformation has not occurred without pain. From the middle of the 20th century, industrial growth and expansion, the accelerating rhythm of energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and unprecedented population growth have consumed two thirds of the globe’s ecosystems: a situation of mounting unsustainability.

This condition is a threat for the globe and for the very survival of humankind. Is it possible to avert such a tendency and to reestablish a new global equilibrium? Can strategies be conceived to encourage a more equitable and sustainable relationship between humans and the planet?

The essays appearing in this issue address and develop the reflections surrounding these types of questions. Some of these frame the gravity of the situation from a theoretical standpoint. On one hand, the blind faith in progress (a behavior that still has not disappeared today) is analyzed as a carrier of a “denaturalization” of nature itself; on the other hand, what is highlighted is the possibility of understanding the problem of the Anthropocene not as the end of life, but as the end of the world.

Beyond these possible general theoretical outlooks, the essays *Reflecting on Local Reality: Tensions and Challenges of Sustainable development in Contexts of Urban Poverty* and *The Social Construction of Water scarcity: an Exploratory Study Along the “Bharathapuzha” in Kerala* are dedicated to the investigation of two case studies. In the first case, the reflection focuses on the implica-

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tions that are derived from the relationship between the practices and the social representations of the people living in conditions of extreme urban poverty in the shanty towns of the periphery of La Plata and the paradigm of sustainable development at the base of the environmental politics and the denial of the Argentine government. In the second case, the problem of water scarcity is confronted. Water scarcity characterizes the territory situated along the river basin of the Bharathapuzha River in Kerala. The causes to be researched are man's actions.

Even from different perspectives, what emerges without a doubt from each of the contributions is the need to profoundly reflect on the relationship between humanity and the globe on which we live. As is highlighted in the articles, *Issues, Concepts and Applications for Sustainability and Policy in the Anthropocene*, what is most needed seems to be a reflection on the concept of sustainable development in its economic, environmental and social dimensions, and thus the search for collaborative policies that allow the involvement of numerous and diversified actors in decision-making processes.

