

EDITORIAL

Social conflicts and environmental injustices explored through interdisciplinary studies have been a recurring theme in previous issues of *Ambiente & Sociedade/Environment & Society*. In volume n. 16-2 we develop this theme in a critical analysis of socio-environmental contexts, conflicts of interest and the diverging views which are inherent to the management of environmental resources. We look at the processes social actors employ in dealing with environmental issues which determine their quality of life. Our approach is characterized by taking a critical and participative perspective of threatened subjects within contexts where hegemonic and developmentist expectations prevail.

There has been criticism both on the part of society and academics in response to asymmetrical conflicts inherent to the “over-development” of modernity, that is, in relation to the capacity of modernity to optimize and exploit resources and make profit while concomitantly heightening social inequalities and environmental injustice, as well as generating and exacerbating risk. This response allows for the delineation of aspects inherent to reflexive modernization. Thus, it can be observed that threats arising out of modernization lead to a process of self-confrontation in relation to the certainties of industrial society.

As a means for disseminating academic production in the promotion of a fairer society *Ambiente & Sociedade/Environment & Society*, and more specifically this issue, provides the opportunity to debate issues which range from socio-environmental problematization to conceptions for advancing a reflexive society, within the perspective of In face of these risks - the collateral effects of modernity - there is a need for critical control in how academic knowledge provides support to industrial society, for example, in substantiating policy decisions for development plans. This critical control appears to be particularly important in order to set standards of pre-emptive conduct in which social actors, recognizing the limits of science, are able to mediate conflicts and decisions in situations where both levels of uncertainties and stakes are high, and from which groups in power (the elites) generally benefit. It should also take into account situations which may emerge, such as large ruptures of the socio-environmental system, disasters, etc. Thus, the first group of articles debate socio-environmental contexts, conflicts of interest and aspects inherent to the management of environmental resources. The article by Jeroen Warner, Antoinette Sebastian and Vanessa Empinotti explores events situated between the global and the local in the context of two African countries, in terms of geopolitical pressures and the responses of each country in claiming and maintaining access to their rights to land and virtual water.

Juliana Sampaio Farinaci, Leila da Costa Ferreira and Mateus Batistella study the case of eucalyptus cultivation as a way of analyzing ecological modernization in relation to the debate on forest transition. This article reveals the role played by societal pressure and highlights the importance of deepening our knowledge in terms of the significance of monoculture forests.

In a contribution towards the study of environmental conflicts and their legal dimension, Eliana Spadoni analyzes the role of ombudsmen in the context of Latin American constitutional reforms over the last decade. She does so by conducting a case study of a water basin which encompasses the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires.

The second group of articles in this volume relate to the role of social actors as threatened subjects, employing a critical and participative perspective in face of socio-environmental contexts. Maiza Ferreira de Andrade and Luiz Robert Santos Moraes critically analyze decades of academic production on lead contamination in a city in the State of Bahia. They reveal the late and comparatively insignificant role of the Social Sciences in relation to this issue. The article also points to the inadequate involvement of both society and local government in addressing the risks inherent to exposure.

Monica Truninger analyzes the bases for trust in food, which has both “systemic” and “interpersonal” characteristics. She addresses this by looking at organic food consumption in the city of Lisbon.

Marcia Faria Westphal, Juan Carlos Aneiros Fernandez, Pablo Robert Nascimento and other collaborators focus on local processes for implementing social agendas in the Southeast of Brazil - Healthy Cities and Agenda 21. The authors show that values such as participation, collective drafting of policies, sustainability and empowerment have become part of the conceptions and experiences of actors directly involved in promoting health and standards of living.

The article by Antonio Waldimir Leopoldino da Silva, Andrea Valéria Steil and Pablo Maurício Selig addresses learning in organizations as a result of environmental assessment processes. Their work shows how environmental assessment provides the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge between scientists and social actors.

Finally, Livia Garcez de Oliveira Padilha and Jorge Renato de Souza Verschoore argue that governance of collective action for local sustainable development is a challenge for both managers and researchers. Their paper is based on a study about participative forums in municipalities in the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

As well as bringing together an opportune and cogent collection of current and relevant topics, *Ambiente & Sociedade/the Journal of Environment & Society* continues to make important editorial innovations during 2013, reinforcing its international outlook by featuring authors and editors from other countries. Another move in this direction is our bilingual publication which contributes to fostering greater access and dissemination among readers at an international level. We continue to be highly motivated to publish a journal that promotes academic production on this topic to an ever wider public.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Pedro Roberto Jacobi and Leandro Giatti