

Editorial

Saúde & Sociedade hosts in this edition articles that discuss public policies' management and evaluation. Agenda 21, that established the commitment of nations present at the by the United Nations' Conference on Environment and development (Rio-92), proposes as a strategy for action "to think globally and to act locally", indicating clearly that cities and counties should have a preponderant role in protecting the environment and improving living conditions of their communities. The ensemble of papers of this edition tries to encourage a critical debate about the experiences that rise from applied researches; it also contributes to a better understanding of an interdisciplinary approach of themes traditionally presented in a fragmented form. It is relevant, in Brazilian context, the role of towns' administrative stances as an arena for decision procedures that strengthen the principles of sustainable development. This edition presents 10 articles that approach questions related to the environment, health and sustainability in the local management.

The first of them, "Assessment of environmental policies: challenges and perspectives", debate is set on the introduction of assessment procedures in the cycle of environmental policies in Brazil. The perspectives indicate that assessment is part of an ampler concept of improvement in public management and of constant improvement of public policies and of government. It introduces the challenge of policies' assessment.

The second manuscript, "Of Large Urban Projects Management Practices", brings examples of the previous conceptual discussion alongside with a presentation of the specificities of Brazilian urban context that contribute to the conceptual outline and the establishment of relations with models and practices of urban management spotted through the analysis of the last four decades.

The third paper - "The environment system in Brazil: advances and challenges" - searches to characterize and contextualize environment municipal systems, discussing their strategic role in governance, which potentiates the decision-making

process taking place regarding local development for sustainability.

The article "The performance of environment councils in local environmental management" reinforces the premises of social control of environment management at the local level, discussing the example of Town Council for Management and Environmental sanitation in Santo André. The paper highlights that participation through the councils goes beyond the idea of decision making as a isolated moment. Councils are considered an educational instance for building up citizenship, and the authors identify advances and opportunities for improving this performance.

The paper "Sectorial Councils: profile of the councilors and their influence on decision-making" analyzes the composition of four municipal sectorial councils, with the objective of understanding positive or negative influences of these profiles on their representativeness.

"Integration of environmental aspects in town politics: a case study of urban public policies in Santo André - São Paulo" analyzes the integration of environmental aspects in the decisions taken by the Urban Policies Town Council and discusses the still incipient integration of environmental aspects in the decision processes at this council, presenting also contributions for its advance.

Complementarily to the previous article, "Housing and environmental management in spring areas: the case of Santo André - SP" brings an analysis and discussion of the municipal political and institutional capacity regarding environment issues of housing in spring areas.

"Environment perception as an instrument of support to management and formulation of environmental public policies" approaches the image spread in society as a tool to help municipal managers and as subsidies to a participative process of shared direction between public power and society.

"Governance towards territoriality and sustainability: the construction of a regionalism sense" presents a debate about political relations between the members of a Regional Development Council

from the point of view of governance and territoriality and the concept of administrative sustainability. It discusses the relationship between the regional administrative structure, established in the estate of Santa Catarina, and the counties that are part of it.

This thematic edition closes with an article that proposes, from the analysis of municipal contexts and participative experiences, a “Methodology for strategic evaluation of environment municipal management”, with a strategic approach, applied to participative processes that are promoted at the municipal level.

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This research group and its editors hope you have excellent and profitable reading.

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