

Editorial

Planetary Boundaries and Governance Mechanisms in the Transition to the Anthropocene – a special issue of REPATS.

Compelling evidences are leading to the conclusion that anthropogenic action is playing a key role in triggering changes of great magnitude in the environment we live in and whose consequences entail significant rearrangements in the Earth's stability or, in other words, in the adequate functioning of some essential system processes upon which we depend on to survive and thrive in this communal space, such as the biospheric, atmospheric, geologic and hydrologic ones.

As a corollary of this scenario, global community is increasingly agreeing with scientific-based inferences that point out to the fact that humankind has entered into a new geologic time period, the Anthropocene, an epoch precisely defined by the recognition of anthropic influence as a driving force capable of jeopardizing the planet resilience as never seen before, a turning point that puts all humanity in a brand-new context of challenges, uncertainties and unpredictable consequences.

Amongst the priorities to be dealt with in the Anthropocene, related to human-induced changes to the environment, there are the so-called Planetary Boundaries, limits that, if exceeded from a certain point, have the potential to put at risk the human existence. This conceptual framework presents a set of nine processes/systems intrinsically connected to the stability and resilience of the Earth System, namely: 1) Stratospheric ozone depletion; 2) Loss of biosphere integrity (biodiversity loss and extinctions); 3) Chemical pollution and the release of novel entities; 4) Climate Change; 5) Ocean acidification; 6) Freshwater consumption and the global hydrological cycle; 7) Land system change; 8) Nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans and; 9) Atmospheric aerosol loading. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that four of them, including the “core boundaries” - climate change and biosphere integrity - have already been dangerously crossed.¹

Therefore, the efforts undertaken to foster collaborative actions through mechanisms of governance - here understood as a multi-layered and multi-scale process of accommodation of consensus and, also, of conflicts and divergences by a combination of participatory dynamics based on a culture of dialogue - within the community of scientists and policymakers are more than necessary. These endeavors are also an overwhelming warning about the risks of generating large-scale or irreversible changes by crossing these boundaries since the resulting externalities

¹ Source: <http://www.anthropocene.info/planetary-boundaries.php>

could seriously imperil the conditions needed for achieving a viable and sustainable future for the generations to come.

Aimed at contributing to the emerging debate of such a paradigmatic issue, the Journal of Studies and Advanced Researches on Third Sector (REPATS) is pleased to bring this peer-reviewed special issue on **Planetary Boundaries and Governance Mechanisms in the Transition to the Anthropocene**. By gathering distinguished scholars from all over the world, we hope that the resulting innovative, informative and provoking set of high-level contributions, stemming from several epistemological perspectives, be a welcome invitation for an inclusive and collaborative dialogue over the broad-ranging impacts of the anthropic actions in our planet, in our lives, in the future we want.

Last but not least, we are immensely grateful to all the contributing authors for accepting the challenge of being part of this project, for their passionate dedication and enthusiastic cooperation in making this very special issue possible.

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