

Editorial

By Gabriela Litre, Melissa Curi, José Augusto Drummond e Marcel Bursztyn

On the eve of completing five years of existence and of publishing its 12th issue, we at Sustainability in Debate - SeD decided to include in this issue a report about the traffic of submitted texts and their respective evaluations. This report on our performance was based on the examination of figures collected from the Sistema Eletrônico de Editoração de Revistas (SEER), the system adopted by the Journal Portal of the Universidade de Brasília (Brazil), in which SeD is hosted.

Of all texts submitted to SeD between 2013 and 2014, our editors rejected 28 percent (desk rejection), because they did not fit the required criteria. The remaining texts were sent out to be evaluated by reviewers, following the procedures of double blind peer review. Reviewers recommended the acceptance of 40 percent of evaluated manuscripts. This means that SeD published 30 percent of all submitted texts.

In SeD's first eleven issues, this procedure translated into 93 published scientific articles. Also published were 37 book reviews and 34 other types of texts (essays, interviews, debates), which, although subject to in-house revision and editing, do not go through the peer review process. Those eleven issues contained a total of 164 items.

By the current count, each text published in SeD (articles, interviews, essays) has been downloaded an average of 663 times, or 5.8 downloads per week. The international profile of our authors and readers is indicated by (i) the publication of good scientific texts in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese) and (ii) by the fact that readers have accessed the journal from about 100 countries (as recorded by the "Visitors Map" inserted in our site).

The joint efforts of the editorial team, authors and reviewers allowed us to achieve a rather swift average time of publication (135 days) of submitted texts, counted from the date of submission via our website to the date of publication. It is important to stress that the great majority of final decisions about publication were made in much shorter periods. However, there were cases in which the average time was considerable higher. This was almost always due to belated reviews, but another factor was authors' delays in responding to suggested changes in their texts. We plan to reduce this average time, establishing shorter deadlines for reviewers and authors. We intend to reach the first decision (about desk rejection or forwarding to reviewers) on each manuscript within two weeks after submission. We consider 16 weeks (after the editorial staff's decision) to be the ideal maximum period for reviewers to draft their evaluations.

More details about the figures related to the first five years of SeD are found in the text "Sustainability in Debate: Five Years in Numbers" ("Sustentabilidade em Debate: Cinco anos em números"), written by Flávio Eiró (SeD Communications editor) and Raquel Lopes S. C. Grando (SeD Book Review editor).

Proceeding in our mission to present interdisciplinary texts on the several dimensions of sustainability, this issue of SeD contains nine articles that deal with topics that go from sustainable farming to environmental laws and preservation.

Pertaining to the field of agriculture, and with a focus on markets, the article “Traditional Product Rating in Gastronomic Circuits: Lessons from the Cerrado” (“Valorização de produtos tradicionais no circuito gastronômico: lições do Cerrado”), written by Tainá Bacelar Zaneti e Moisés Villamil Balestro, uses concepts from economic sociology to examine the valorization of traditional gastronomical products generated by the Cerrado biome. They focus on two social actors who have a central role in the shaping of this market – chefs and farmers.

Alexandre Feil, Dusan Schreiber and José Galizia Tundisi, in “The Complexity of Environmental and Human Systems and their Relation with Sustainability” (“A complexidade do sistema ambiental e humano e sua relação com a sustentabilidade”), review the literature on the matter of the complexity of the interactions between environmental systems (soils, water, atmosphere, plants, animals etc.) and human societies. They seek to compare and analyze this complexity using the perspective of sustainability.

“Family Farming in the Federal District: the search for sustainable production” (“Agricultura Familiar no Distrito Federal: A busca por uma produção sustentável”), written by Maria Neuza Oliveira, Magda Wehrmann and Sergio Sauer, presents an overview of the status of family farming in Brazil’s Federal District, paying special attention to technical assistance and extension initiatives aimed at strengthening family farming and agroecological practices.

The article “Sustainability of Melon Cultivation in São Romão Settlement in Mossoró/RN: determination of indicators by the MESMIS Methodology” (“O Cultivo do melão no assentamento São Romão em Mossoró-RN: determinação dos indicadores de sustentabilidade através da metodologia MESMIS”), by Ivanildo Formiga Jr., Gesinaldo Cândido and Viviane do Amaral, evaluates the sustainability of irrigated melon plantations in the Brazilian Northeast region. It uses a methodology with the acronym MESMIS, which includes several indicators of sustainability. The positive and negative aspects of those plantations are identified and proposals are made to increase the level of their sustainability.

Dealing with conservation, the article “The socio-environmental problematic in Conservation Units: conflicts and discourses for the use and access to natural resources” (“A problemática socioambiental nas unidades de conservação: conflitos e discursos pelo uso e acesso dos recursos naturais”), written by Ana Clara Giraldo Costa, reviews the literature concerning socioenvironmental conflicts that occur in fully protected areas. It maps the major positions about these conflicts, namely the divergent stances of socioenvironmentalists and conservationists.

“An Evaluation Model of Reinforcement Structures of Small Mass Movement” (“Modelo de avaliação de obras de contenção de pequenos movimentos de massa”), by Gustavo Piazza and co-authors, evaluates the performance of a construction effort that tried to stabilize a hill slope that experienced a severe mudslide during a 2008 flooding incident in the Itajaí River valley, in the state of Santa Catarina. The authors propose a simple model for the evaluation of the stability of small construction efforts.

Focusing on environmental legislation and public policies, “Integrated Management of Climate and Urban Policies: A Proposal for Legal Evaluation in Municipalities of the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo” (“Gestão integrada de políticas climáticas e urbanas: uma proposta de avaliação legislativa em municípios da Região Metropolitana de São Paulo”), written by Paula Campos, Arlindo Philippi Jr. and Paula Santana, evaluates regulations set by urban and climate policies. They use the examples of such regulations as formulated in six municipalities of the metropolitan area of the city of São Paulo - Caieiras, Embu, Guarulhos, Osasco, Ribeirão Pires and São Paulo.

The article entitled “Technical Innovations and their Relations with Social and Institutional In the North of Minas: Experiences with Family Farmers in Rio Pardo de Minas, MG” (“Inovações técnicas e suas relações com inovações sociais e institucionais no Norte de Minas: experiências com agricultores familiares em Rio Pardo de Minas, MG”), by João Roberto Correia and Herbert Cavalcante de Lima, examines some aspects of the relationship between technical, social and institutional innovations in communities of family farmers on the state of Minas Gerais. The authors use the concept of innovation, understood as the adoption of new ways of doing things by a significant number of farmers in a certain region. Innovation may be a new combination of existing means of production or the adoption of new techniques, new knowledge or new organizational resources.

Finally, Alvaro Boson Faria examines some of the potentials of agrarian and forestry legislation in “Valuation of Environmental Services by Agricultural and Forestry Law” (“Valoração de serviços ambientais pela legislação agrária e florestal”). The author proposes that landowners be paid by governments in return for relevant environmental services supplied to society at large and presents the outline of a method to compute the values to be paid to them. Using the contingent valuation method, the author uses a hypothetical model that takes into account the ecological quality of the vegetation preserved in private properties.

This twelfth issue of SeD contains also nine book reviews. Valeria Gentil de Almeida and Adolfo Pereira deal with books about consumers’ behavior and waste production in contemporary societies, evaluating government policies, market strategies and cultural values involved in these matters.

Silvia Borges and Carolina Gouzy evaluate books about climate change. Borges’ review focuses on new scenarios and opportunities for governance; the book reviewed by Gouzy studies climate changes in the context of agroecology techniques.

Fernanda Benevides reports on a book that describes a successful animal species conservation project conducted in Brazil – the saving of the native black lion marmoset, a primate species threatened with extinction.

Raissa Osório reviews the new edition of Hans Bellen’s book on indicators of sustainability, discussing his new ideas about the construction and the application of this type of analytical tool.

Mara Moscoso writes about a book dedicated to the subject of environmental law. The ideas of the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos, as critically discussed in a book by Antônio C. R. Moraes, are the subject of the review written by David Velez. Special attention

is given to the evolution of the concept of territory in Santos' extensive intellectual production. Mônica Nogueira reports on a book of essays about the subjects of indigenous peoples' health and ethnobiology.

The gallery included in this issue of SeD celebrates the beauty and the mysteries of the natural features of the Brazilian Cerrado biome, by giving space to a perhaps underrated approach in the context of the accelerated development of digital recording and communication of images. A short text, written by Professor Marcos A. Santos-Silva, of the Scientific Illustration Group of the Universidade de Brasília, recalls the historical role of scientific illustration or sketching in the pre-photography era of scientific and artistic expeditions to natural areas. It also argues that it continues to play the same role today, even in the era of digital photography: It helps scientists to communicate with their peers and with the general public. The text is followed by a selection of beautiful colored illustrations of plants and animals from the Cerrado biome, drawn by Professor Santos-Silva and collaborators.

Good reading to all!

The Editors

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