

Preface

There is no doubt that the past decade was very difficult in terms of contemporary environmental issues. It began in the aftermath of a profound economic crisis, the 2007-2008 Financial Crisis caused by the collapse of the subprime mortgage market in the United States, which shook to varying degrees the economy of many countries around the world. To make matters worse, the decade closed under the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic, the largest in history and which continues to threaten us with new waves of contagion. As a major report from 2021¹ explains, pandemics are social and economic; the temporal and spatial dimensions of our response play a significant role in countering the effects of disease; relationships, lives, livelihoods and their interconnections are critical to overcoming them. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed not only how the spread of the coronavirus was the result of an environmentally violent and inconsequential model of living, but also the fragility of the economic, social, political, environmental, and public health structures on which our civilisation is founded.

Nevertheless, over the past decade, we also witnessed important actions regarding the environment. The city of Rio de Janeiro once again hosted a major environmental conference, twenty years after Eco-92: the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, which took place between 13th and 22nd June 2012. Aiming to discuss the legacy of Eco-92, mainly regarding the implementation of the proposals set forth in the Rio Declaration², in Agenda 21³, the Framework Convention on Climate Change⁴ and the Convention on Biological Diversity⁵, Rio+20 left as its legacy the *Rio Charter*, called *The Future We Want*⁶. If this conference reinforced the importance of sustainable development, it also presented a more economic bias with the use of the term *Green Economy*, which directly refers to the understanding of natural resources as merchandise and a more epidermic adjustment of the current predominant development model.

Just three years after Rio+20, the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development took place between 25th and 27th September 2015 in New York, where a new agenda called *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*⁷ was officially approved, including the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (17 SDGs). If the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are presented as potential drivers of beneficial socio-environmental actions,

¹ *The British Academy. Shaping the COVID Decade: Addressing the long-term societal impacts of COVID-19, 2021. <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3239/Shaping-COVID-decade-addressing-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf>.*

² Declaração do Rio de Janeiro. *Estudos Avançados*, São Paulo, v. 6, n. 15, p. 153-159, agosto de 1992.

³ *Agenda 21*. Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento. Brasília: Senado Federal, Subsecretaria de Edições Técnicas, 1996.

⁴ *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, Rio de Janeiro, United Nations, 5th June 1992.

⁵ *Convention on Biological Diversity*, Rio de Janeiro, United Nations, 5 June 1992.

⁶ *The Future We Want*. Rio+20 (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20th-22nd June 2012.

⁷ *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/70/1), 25th September 2015.

envisaging that they are a set of universal policies for all UN member states is, to say the least, exceedingly utopian.

Thus, some important reflections have to be made:

- It is urgent to create political, economic, social, legal and cultural models, structures, and mechanisms to contain development in all its unlimited and devastating forms, through the inextricable association between the current production model, contemporary lifestyles and the resulting profound ecological impacts, on their multiple scales;
- Sustainable development (and also green economy) is a terminology instituted in important international studies and world conferences on the environment, whose role is precisely to mitigate the model of unbridled, environmentally destructive economic development with an ecological adjustment, based on environmental conservation and preservation formulas;
- With so many political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental disparities among the countries of the world, terms such as sustainable development have become too elastic, permissive and malleable. The term sustainable development, once aimed at the present and future satisfaction of needs⁸, is increasingly confused with corporate sustainability, linked to business interests and to the primacy of understanding the environment as an important and profitable business;
- For this reason, it becomes imperative to think about sustainability(ies), as well as environmental (or socio-environmental) justice and the political ecology of development. It is not about a mere terminological replacement or adjustment of the conceptual lexicon of environmental policies. It is rather a requirement for improvement with a focus on positive experiences of nature protection, collective and democratic possibilities of qualitative changes in the environment and in the connections among different realities throughout the world, with a view to building a more environmentally just society.

Grandes Problemáticas do Espaço Europeu: Do Desenvolvimento Sustentável à Sustentabilidade (Overarching Issues of the European Space: From Sustainable Development to Sustainability) has this goal. It brings together the efforts of researchers from Europe and other parts of the world. With diverse themes, but with special attention to geographical science, *Overarching Issues of the European Space* is divided into five parts, named thus: Part I – Economy and Spatial Development; Part II – Cultural Heritage and Development; Part III – Spatial Policies and Sustainable Development; Part IV – Society, Education and Culture; and Part V – Environment and Sustainability.

Part I – Economy and Spatial Development, begins with the chapter *El cultivo de olivar en la Europa Mediterránea: dinámicas y desafíos territoriales en el contexto de la globalización (Olive cultivation in Mediterranean Europe: spatial dynamics and challenges in the context of globalisation)*, by José Domingo Sánchez Martínez. This is a study dedicated to the analysis of

⁸ BRUNDTLAND, Gro Harlem. Comissão Mundial sobre Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento – 1988. *Nosso Futuro Comum* (Relatório Brundtland) [*Our Common Future* (Brundtland Report)]. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1988.

the challenges and competitive strategies of the olive sector in the different Mediterranean regions of Western Europe. According to the author, the cultural values of producers must become a source of inspiration to face the challenges of globalisation and sustainability.

Digitalização, sustentabilidade e inovação inclusiva na Europa rural: oportunidades e desafios para o setor agroalimentar (Digitalisation, sustainability and inclusive innovation in rural Europe: opportunities and challenges for the agri-food sector), by Iván G. Peyré Tartaruga and Fernanda Q. Sperotto, examines the deployment of new digital technologies in rural areas of the European Union, highlighting the important role of recent EU sustainable policies, based on a spatial analysis of economic and environmental data. In turn, *Opportunities for mobility in the context of European employment policy*, by Tatyana Dimitrova, deals with the challenges posed to the free movement of workers in the European Union, which are not always simple and straightforward; in times of the transnationalisation of production and global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, new challenges emerge for political leaderships.

Helena Pina, Felisbela Martins and Lúcio Carramillo author two joint chapters. The first, *Longroiva, um exemplo das conexões cidade-campo (Longroiva, an example of city-countryside connections)*, analyses the economic expansion of thermal activities – from a specifically medicinal activity to a space for leisure and well-being – in the parish of Longroiva, located in the municipality of Mêda. The second chapter, *Águas subterrâneas. Águas de nascente e águas minerais naturais. O caso de Pedras Salgadas (Groundwater. Spring waters and natural mineral waters. The case of Pedras Salgadas)*, reflects on the importance and impacts of industrial action in the present, albeit based on an important historical substrate, with the consequent revitalisation of the local heritage and the tourist development of this Portuguese village.

Part II – Cultural Heritage and Development, opens with *Development of the Ruse Region as a destination for apitourism*, by Lyubomir Lyubenov and Slavi Dimitrov. It is a study dedicated to beekeeping tourism (or apitourism), which has developed strongly in countries such as Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Slovenia, and which is capable of fostering not only economic development related to the activity of beekeeping, but also to rural, wellness, cultural and gastronomic tourism.

The article *O Porto retratado por estrangeiros em livros e guias de viagem nas épocas moderna e contemporânea – plano de Investigação (Porto portrayed by foreigners in books and travel guides in the modern and contemporary eras – research plan)*, by José Luís Braga, aims to understand the historical evolution of the tourist image of Porto in the 19th and 20th centuries, recognising traveller typologies and the evolution of tourism advertising. Next, *Vinho e tabernas da Região do Vinho Verde (século XVIII) (Wine and taverns of the Vinho Verde Region (18th century))*, by António Barros Cardoso, presents the spaces of sociability and consumption of *vinho verde* (literally, ‘green’ wine) in municipalities such as Monção, Melgaço, Viana do Castelo, Ponte de Lima, and Penafiel. The aim is to take us a historical journey through the consumption, wine prices and practices that still persist in these cities and towns. In the same perspective, *Rota turística e cervejeira do Rio de Janeiro (Brasil): leitura geo-económica de um fenómeno produtivo-espacial (Tourist and brewery route in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil): geo-economic reading of a*

productive-spatial phenomenon), by Leandro Dias de Oliveira, is an analytical effort to understand the remarkable growth of craft beer producers in the Serrana Region of Rio de Janeiro. The corresponding repercussions have not only increased the production sector, but have also expanded the cultural-gastronomic tourism of the cities involved.

Authored by Regina Cohen Barros, Gabrielle Evangelista da Silva, Karine Bueno Vargas, Andrea Carmo Sampaio, Maria Cristina Lorenzon and Maria Veronica Leite Pereira Moura, *O Jardim das Amoreiras e o resgate da memória de Seropédica/RJ no fio da seda: um projeto de extensão no Jardim Botânico da UFRRJ (Jardim das Amoreiras and the recovery of the silk thread memory of Seropédica/RJ: an outreach project in the Botanical Garden of UFRRJ)*, presents the results of a project to recover the memory of the city of Seropédica (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), whose origins go back to sericulture, an economic activity of silk production that combines silkworm breeding and the cultivation of mulberry trees for their sustenance.

The New Eurasian Land Bridge: elements to think geopolitics and China-Europe cooperation, by Jonathan Christian Dias dos Santos, André Santos da Rocha and Pablo Ibanez, begins Part III – Spatial Policies and Sustainable Development. In this paper, important elements and territorialisation actions by the Chinese on the European continent are investigated, with emphasis on the New Eurasian Land Bridge, a railway corridor from China that reaches the ports of Rotterdam, in the Netherlands, and Antwerp, in Belgium.

The globalization of political processes. The geographical view, by Atanas Dermendzhiev and Martin Doykov, is a study dedicated to the geographical understanding of globalisation. They analyse a scenario in which distances are shortened, there is greater political, economic, and cultural integration and the absolute sovereignty of the nation state is affected, with the development and consolidation of the UN, NATO, the IMF, and the World Bank as major international actors. In *A política alemã de cooperação internacional no setor energético (The German policy of international cooperation in the energy sector)*, Ana Isabel Gouveia Boura highlights Germany's important role in increasing international environmental policies in the energy sector, proposed in documents such as Agenda 21, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, based on actions regarding access to energy, the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Next, coordinated by Glória Teixeira and co-authored by António Graça Moura, Leonor Castro, Lucas Oliveira, Matilde Andrade, Afonso Correia, Valéria Azevedo, *A despesa em Portugal: escolhas e conflitos (Expenditure in Portugal: choices and conflicts)* analyses the evolution and future challenges of public and private expenditure in Portugal, especially considering the need to address an ageing population and maintain budgetary discipline.

Access to water and basic sanitation in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is the subject of two chapters. The first, *Políticas públicas de saneamento básico, redes e o território na Baixada Fluminense, RJ (Brasil) (Public policies on basic sanitation, networks and territory in Baixada Fluminense, RJ (Brazil))*, by André Santos da Rocha and Cleber Marques de Castro, portrays the historical and spatial injustices in access to basic sanitation networks in *Baixada Fluminense*. The second chapter, *Injustiças espaciais da água privatizada: o caso da PROLAGOS-RJ (Spatial injustices of privatised water: the case of PROLAGOS-RJ)*, fruit of Damaris Alencar de Farias'

Master's dissertation, focuses on the analysis of the spatial management of a private water management company. The author points out that, behind the positive images disseminated by the company's advertising department, there remain historical injustices in access to water in the poorest areas.

In *A importância da competência intercultural em agências europeias do domínio da justiça e dos assuntos internos (The importance of intercultural competence in European agencies in the field of justice and home affairs)*, Natália Ramos and João José Silva Cabaço reinforce the importance of European agencies' intervention in many international situations, related to multiculturalism, migration, refugees, political or otherwise, and the investigation of human trafficking. The intention, ultimately, is the constant search for a multicultural Europe endowed with security, freedom and opportunity.

In Part IV – Society, Education and Culture, *Mobilidades e territórios de espera. Aeroportos – algumas notas geográficas (Mobilities and waiting territories. Airports - Some Geographical Notes)*, by João Luís J. Fernandes, is an analysis of international airports, which are fundamental objects in the world order of globalisation. As strategic infrastructures and nodes of international networks, airports have also become de facto spaces of insecurity and confinement in times of various restrictions on free movement. Following on, *Le partage judiciaire suite à un procès de pénalités pour la non-exécution d'une décision civile (Judicial sharing following a penalty trial for non-execution of a civil decision)* is an analytical effort by Ileana Constantinescu and Adriana Motatu, based on the study of a real case in Bucharest, Romania, where it was possible to avoid convictions and judicial fines based on false documentation.

In *Tecnologias digitais na comunicação e na integração educacional e intercultural: desafios globais contemporâneos (Digital technologies in communication and in educational and intercultural integration: contemporary global challenges)*, Maria Natália Ramos and Ana Cristina Lopes assess the positive outcomes of incorporating communication and information technologies in education in times of pandemic, bringing together teachers and students who were physically separated by the need for social distancing. There is no doubt that some changes will remain and will require adaptations in teacher training, in classrooms and in the teaching model itself. Also focusing on teaching tools and methods, from the perspective of the Bulgarian school educational reforms, *Didactic application of the educational technology of the geographical maze in geography and economics training*, by Stella Dermendzhieva and Tamara Draganova, aims to reflect on the methodological use of the geographical maze, an important tool for testing students' knowledge, skills and competences in geography.

The chapter called *As perspetivas sobre os caminhos do (in)sucesso escolar (Perspectives on the paths to success (failure) at school)*, by Silvia Alexandra Oliveira, Diogo Miguel da Silva Pinto and Helena Pina, is a review of the peremptorily quantitative mode of measuring student success-failure. Based on the "Projeto de Vida" ("Life Project"), a questionnaire was applied to understand the aspirations of the students in more detail. In this context, the authors reinforce how fundamental it is to consider the diversity of learning models,

socio-economic and cultural characteristics, as well as the ambitions, motivations, and desires of the students.

Also in this part, *A avaliação de desempenho e a motivação dos colaboradores nas IPSS do concelho da Trofa (Performance review and employee motivation in IPSSs (Private Institutions of Social Solidarity) in the Trofa municipality)*, by Sérgio Monteiro, José António Oliveira and Maria João Polidoro, aims to analyse the implementation and impacts of performance reviews on the employees of non-profit organisations and if in fact such practices are a motivating factor for human resources. *O contexto filosófico do pensamento de Barney Glaser (The philosophical context of Barney Glaser's thought)*, by José Luís Braga, investigates the work of the American sociologist Barney Glaser (1930-2022) – one of the founders of *Grounded Theory* – intending to reflect on the principles, beliefs, and philosophical assumptions of this methodological approach. *A geografia de Milton Santos: notas sobre a atualidade do seu pensamento em tempos pandémicos (Milton Santos' Geography: notes on the relevance of his thought in pandemic times)*, by Ariane Melchior Nunes da Horta and Guilherme Chalo, reveals that the work of the most prominent Brazilian geographer (1926-2001) is capable of offering fundamental elements for understanding the world today in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, whether based on the theory of globalisation and geographical environments, or based on urban-metropolitan rationales and the upper and lower circuits of the economy.

Part V – Environment and Sustainability, the last segment of the book, begins with the chapter *Is the land half empty or half full of forest? Biocentric conservation versus socio-ecological land use in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest*, by Scott William Hoefle. It is a critique of the full adoption of the North American conservation model in Brazil, because it discriminates, marginalises, and replaces small producers by converting their properties into conservation units, summer houses and farms for leisure and tourism. *Spatial evolution and archaeological contextualization through Holocene Edapho-sedimentary deposits: Areoso Island (NW Spain)*, by Daniel Cajade-Pascual, Manuela Costa-Casais and Ramón Blanco-Chao, analyses the geomorphological heritage of the small island located in the Ria de Arousa, with emphasis on granitic formations and edaphic-sedimentary deposits. This is an invaluable heritage currently threatened by the rising sea level, which requires environmental management strategies for its preservation.

Risco e percepção: o caso de Bom Jardim e o “Mega desastre da Região Serrana do Rio de Janeiro” (Risk and perception: the case of Bom Jardim and the “Mega disaster in the Serrana Region of Rio de Janeiro”), by Andréa Carmo Sampaio and Gabrielle dos Santos Costa, focuses on the neighbourhood of Jardim Ornellas. The authors analyse the option of many inhabitants to remain in the municipality of Bom Jardim, even after the severe landslides and floods that hit seven cities in Rio de Janeiro in 2011, with major economic impacts and human losses. Next, *Perfil geoecológico: interrelações físico-geográficas presentes na Floresta Nacional Mário Xavier – Seropédica (RJ) (Geo-ecological Profile: physical-geographic interrelations present in the Mário Xavier National Forest – Seropédica (RJ))*, by Luanna de Oliveira Moreira, Karine Bueno Vargas, Claudio Lucas Capeche, Enio Fraga da Silva, José Ronaldo de Macedo and Regina Cohen Barros, is a study focused on a preservation area located in the municipality of Seropédica (Rio

de Janeiro, Brazil). The authors' main objectives are to characterise the physical-geographic aspects in the structuring of the landscape and to understand the interrelations between soil and vegetation.

Risco à Leishmaniose Tegumentar Americana na Baixada Verde: a vulnerabilidade ambiental do Município de Seropédica, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (Risk to American Tegumentary Leishmaniasis in the Baixada Verde: the environmental vulnerability of the Municipality of Seropédica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), by Fernanda Karla Bezerra da Silva and Heitor Soares de Farias, focuses on a disease that persistently occurs in poor areas, with precarious housing, lack of access to basic sanitation and degraded environments. Based on data from the Tourism Board of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which sees potential for tourism in the region, the authors not only warn about the risks of contamination but also reaffirm the need to improve the social conditions of the region. Closing the book, *Causses du Quercy: construcción de una identidad ligada a la Protección de la Natureza (Causses du Quercy: building an identity linked to Nature Protection)*, by Daniel del Río Franqueira and Jose Antonio Aldrey Vázquez, studies the environmental protection model that aims to include, rather than exclude or ignore, the inhabitants of green areas, through collaborative management processes, the construction of a common identity and the creation of a clear strategy for sustainable development.

It is hoped that the diverse range of reflections contained in *Grandes Problemáticas do Espaço Europeu: Do Desenvolvimento Sustentável à Sustentabilidade (Overarching Issues of the European Space: From Sustainable Development to Sustainability)*, with chapters by authors from several countries, such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and Brazil, will stimulate debate on a fairer, more egalitarian and democratic society. Each line herein is also a unique effort, the result of much dedication, to disseminate and to raise awareness from the perspective of geography and other fields of knowledge, highlighting the problems and challenges that are mounting in a scenario that is still one of pandemic, after an unimaginable period of hardship.

Paulo Freire (1921-1997), the most important educator in Brazilian history, taught us that “change is difficult, but it is possible”⁹. According to the same master, it is important above all to “hope”!

Porto, May 2021
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⁹ FREIRE, Paulo. *A Educação na Cidade*. São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1991.