

Cosmopolis

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Presentation

In an important interdisciplinary study, **John P. Abraham** and a team of American and Australian climate scientists find evidence that the science of global warming sceptics, otherwise described as revisionists, is less robust than the mainstream scientific community, which supports the central tenets of anthropogenic climate change. Contrary to major contrarian views and corresponding feelings in public opinion and in some media, the authors show that scientific expertise has been increasing, reinforcing the main premises of the anthropogenic global warming (AGW) consensus.

Roderick Lawrence and colleagues consider the complex dimensions of environmental issues and the failure to deal with them effectively since the 1970s. Because such issues cross conventional disciplinary knowledge and professional expertise, the authors argue that a holistic or systemic conceptual framework should be applied, which includes multiple geo-political scales and time frames. Neither scientific subjects nor political objectives, such issues should be addressed by actors from both the private and public sectors through transdisciplinary initiatives generating public debate to overcome the current deadlock.

In his work on the long-term history of climate change, **Jacques Vicari** emphasises that, since domestication of fire 400 000 years ago, man has reshaped natural order, and finally inverted it 3000 years before the common era as a consequence of deforestation, slash-and-burn farming, as well as a more sedentary lifestyle. The transition from the paleolithic to the neolithic era gave rise to the « combustion era », a sharp increase in CO₂ in the atmosphere and disrupted the energy balance of the ecosystems.

Joël Ruet comments on a world in which Asia has emerged, the Arab Spring has given hope, then disappointment, and has discovered an Africa whose elites have never ignored it. He upholds the argument that the global economic crisis has generated not so much economic convergence than common issues. Now that the conventional distinction between East and West has come to an end, the author deals first with the renewed debate on the function of the intellectual, second with the methodology for examining their potential tools to address large sets of common objects of thinking viewed from different contexts.

Manickam Nadarajah explores the many trajectories of development in Asia, often followed with a sense of triumph and achievement but at a tremendous cost to humans, but also to nature and the environment. He examines sustainability in a spiritual sense, with references to Muslim, Buddhist, Shintoist, Catholic and Hindu spiritual writings, even since globalization and capitalistic economies have become the norm. He also points to some of the major factors that have eroded sustainable traditions and cultures in Asia and makes an insightful thesis that spirituality and sustainability are two sides of a single reality.

The prospect of sustainable development as addressed by **Dominique Kerouedan** is based on the Millennium Development Goals negotiated by both the states and civil society, which include such issues as education, water and health are prominent. The global and comprehensive view of the future may entail serious risks, the author says, because it does not

prioritize health development in poorer regions of the world, in particular for children and pregnant women, nor preventive strategies to curb the spread and impact of endemic diseases.

Ratan Lal Basu looks at the ancient Indian political treatises, Kautilya's Arthashastra and Munismriti, to examine the role of the state in reestablishing order in human society. His article discusses the prescriptions in these major treatises, which emphasize that the proper functioning of the state lies in the application of danda - the rod of punishment - and depends on the qualities of the king, considering monarchy as the best form of governance, and therefore prescribing methods to make ideal monarchs, which to some extent remind us of modern leadership qualities prescribed in modern democracies.

In the « Debates » section, **John Abraham** returns to the recent cross-disciplinary HANDY (Human And Natural Dynamics) study, based on a model involving the creation of a human population dynamics resulting in social changes, with the prospect of a final collapse of civilisation in coming decades due to unsustainable resource exploitation. He also highlights the interdependency of both wealthy and poorer human societies, and threats implied by increasingly unequal wealth distribution.

Elly Hermon observes that the scientific data indicate a strong correlation between climate evolution and human activities involving incremental emissions of GHG since the industrial revolution. This is increasingly referred to as a new "Anthropocene" era. The irreversibility of either anthropogenic or natural factors, however, should not exclude public debate and a social response to implement both prevention and adaptation measures in the short run as well as in a longer-term perspective.