

# RESEARCH SEMINARS 2019

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### MANAGING THE ANTHROPOCENE: SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

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**21<sup>st</sup> June 2019**

**11h**

Sala de Professores Convidados

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**Abstract:** The concept of the Anthropocene is now well established in both mainstream natural and social sciences (Biermann, Bai, Bondre, Broadgate, Chen, Dube, Erisman, Glaser, van der Hel, Lemos, Seitzinger and Seto, 2016; Hamilton, Bonneuil, and Gemenne, 2015; Latour, 2015). In 2000, Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer proposed that the impact of human beings' organized activities on Earth is so significant that the current geological epoch can be called the Anthropocene: the age of humans (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000). The challenges of the human-induced global environmental change have been extensively debated for decades (e.g., Carson, 1962; Meadows et al., 1972; Georgescu-Roegen, 1975) but the scale of human agency on Earth systems and related processes are now more evident and quantifiable (Andonova and Mitchell, 2010; Liu et al., 2015). The concept of the Anthropocene universalizes social, material, ecological and geological realities into one common environment: planet Earth. While the notion of the Anthropocene may be typical of totalizing narratives (see Lyotard, 1979; Parker, 1995), it plays the significant discursive role of promoting global awareness and collective responsibility for unfolding multi-scalar ecological crises. In addition, the notion spurs reflection on contemporary axiologies, ontologies, and epistemologies (Cunha et al., 2008; Hoffman and Jennings, 2015; Heikkurinen et al., 2016). Latour (2014a), for example, argues for consideration of the so-called metamorphic zone in which natural and material forces amalgamate and act, including Earth itself. From this perspective, all forms of agency inhabit a *flat ontology* in which human actors and the networks of activities in which they are engaged have no *a priori* theoretical privilege as actors *per se* (Pickering, 1995; Latour, 1999a and 1999b; Collinge, 2006; Latour, 2009). Given this context, the paper reflects on what is to be done.

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His research has been published in journals such as Human Relations, Theory and Society Theory, Culture and Society, Journal of Organizational Change, Organization, Organization Studies, Organization Science, Administrative Science Quarterly, among others. He published or edited about 50 books, including The Handbook of Power (with Mark Haugaard, Sage 2009), Handbook of Macro-Organization Behaviour (with Cary Cooper, Sage 2009), and Handbook of Organization Studies (with Cynthia Hardy, Walter Nord and Tom Lawrence, Sage 2006).