

Duality of Anthropocene

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The concept of Anthropocene was coined by Stoermer and Crutzen in 2000 to mark a change from a world where Nature was dominating to a world where humans are an ecological force. The term was adopted quickly in various disciplines. The currently unfolding discourse on the Anthropocene represents a convergence of natural sciences and social sciences. In natural sciences the definition of the start of the Anthropocene period has become a hot topic. In social sciences the use of the term has varied from the implications of humans as an ecological force to the understanding of what constitutes societies and societal change (e.g. Moore 2015).

In the humanities, Anthropocene has come to denote an experiential change both on an individual and a collective level: paradoxically, Anthropocene is an epoch of total human planetary impact and a historical moment of awakening to a loss of control over our environment (e.g. Latour 2011). Therefore the concept of Anthropocene is supported by people of very different ideological persuasions. One advocates for business-as-usual driven by technological breakthroughs (e.g., saying the Anthropocene reveals that humanity is facing a never-seen-before predicament. The solution? Use more, and better, technologies, in order to better control nature.), another calls for a total transformation of humanity's relationship with nature (e.g. Bruno Latour (2011) uses the term—and the reality of human involvement in the climate—as a launching point to discuss the new politics required), yet another suggests that it signifies that we need to put our differences aside, and face this challenge together, as one (e.g., that the ongoing changes affect the rich and the poor, and we should distribute wealth to increase resilience). In this presentation we review these different uses of Anthropocene and offer insights on the implications that the different uses of the term will have.

References:

- Moore, J. 2015. *Capitalism in the Web of Life*. London: Verso.
Latour, B. 2011. *Waiting for Gaia*. Composing the common world through arts and politics.
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