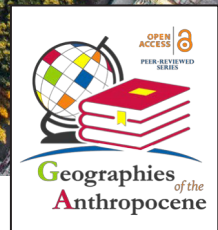


GLOBAL THREATS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: FROM COVID-19 TO THE FUTURE

Leonardo Mercatanti - Stefano Montes (Editors)

Foreword by Paul Stoller

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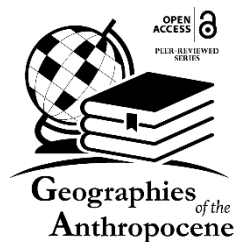


Global threats in the Anthropocene: from COVID-19 to the future

Leonardo Mercatanti

Stefano Montes

Editors



IL Sileno
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Leonardo Mercatanti, Stefano Montes (Eds.)

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The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” edited by Association for Scientific Promotion “Il Sileno” (Il Sileno Edizioni) will discuss the new processes of the Anthropocene epoch through the various worldviews of geoscientists and humanists, intersecting disciplines of Geosciences,

Geography, Geoethics, Philosophy, Socio-Anthropology, Sociology of Environment and Territory, Psychology, Economics, Environmental Humanities and cognate disciplines.

Geoethics focuses on how scientists (natural and social), arts and humanities scholars working in tandem can become more aware of their ethical responsibilities to guide society on matters related to public safety in the face of natural hazards, sustainable use of resources, climate change and protection of the environment. Furthermore, the integrated and multiple perspectives of the Environmental Humanities, can help to more fully understand the cultures of, and the cultures which frame the Anthropocene. Indeed, the focus of Geoethics and Environmental Humanities research, that is, the analysis of the way humans think and act for the purpose of advising and suggesting appropriate behaviors where human activities interact with the geosphere, is dialectically linked to the complex concept of Anthropocene.

The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” publishes online volumes, both collective volumes and monographs, which are set in the perspective of providing reflections, work materials and experimentation in the fields of research and education about the new geographies of the Anthropocene.

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The volume proposals can be presented in English, Italian, French or Spanish.

The choice of digital Open Access format is coherent with the flexible structure of the series, in order to facilitate the direct accessibility and usability by both authors and readers.

CONTENTS

Foreword <i>Paul Stoller</i>	8
---------------------------------	---

La società resiliente <i>Stefano Montes</i>	12
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Esperienza pandemica e settori di attività (Italian and English languages) <i>Leonardo Mercatanti</i>	27
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Section I

The Resilient Society

1. Temps, espace et situations limites : quelques jalons pour penser la pandémie <i>Christine Bonardi</i>	36
2. « L’invitation à être » <i>Charlie Galibert</i>	52
3. Società resilienti alle future pandemie: governare la crisi nei nuovi scenari globali <i>Barbara Lucini</i>	72
4. Estrazione petrolifera e resistenza: la proposta-risposta dei Sarayaku, comunità kichwa dell’Amazzonia ecuadoriana <i>Federica Falancia</i>	91
5. Turismo sportivo e pandemia: il caso del Tor des Géants <i>Anna Maria Pioletti, Daniele Di Tommaso</i>	117
6. Chirurgia e COVID-19: riorganizzazione, insegnamenti e prospettive future <i>Teresa Perra</i>	134
7. L’Antropocene in questione <i>Francesco Caudullo</i>	151

Section II

Pandemic experience and activity sectors

8. Citizen, Geoscientist and Associated Terra-former <i>Martin Bohle</i>	169
9. La storia, lo spazio e la pandemia ai tempi di Google Maps. Risorgimento e brigantaggio nelle attività didattiche <i>Giuseppe Ferraro</i>	187
10. Gli itinerari culturali europei come modello di sviluppo ecosistemico per i territori marginali <i>Giuseppe Reina</i>	207
11. Italian agriculture in the shade of a pandemic. New and old dilemmas <i>Giorgia Iovino</i>	230
12. Il COVID-19 e la sua dimensione pedagogica nel mondo giuridico <i>Livio Perra</i>	255
13. Tradition and innovation: the controversial relationship between religion and pandemics <i>Giuseppe Terranova</i>	272
14. Geopolitica del Covid-19. La pandemia e i suoi riflessi su piani multipli e transcalari <i>Andrea Perrone</i>	287
<i>The Authors</i>	303

Esperienza pandemica e settori di attività

Leonardo Mercatanti¹

Ai cambiamenti che negli ultimi decenni hanno coinvolto vari settori di attività economica, oltre al mondo della ricerca scientifica, è stata impressa una nuova e inaspettata accelerazione a causa dell'esperienza pandemica. Nei vari campi del sapere la ridefinizione dei modelli organizzativi, degli strumenti tradizionali di ricerca e della didattica e perfino della base epistemologica di partenza hanno determinato un'inedita sfida per tutti i soggetti che in varia misura ne rappresentano le professionalità. Oggi più che mai appare urgente ridefinire il ruolo, il senso e il metodo delle varie branche del sapere.

Sulla base di queste parziali riflessioni è incentrata la seconda parte di questo volume, composta da sette saggi, dal titolo "Esperienza pandemica e settori di attività". Un filo rosso sembra legare tutti i contributi e cioè che l'esperienza pandemica ha messo in moto nuovi percorsi, anche creativi, di azione all'interno di ciascun contesto disciplinare con esiti che sicuramente influenzeranno il futuro dei settori di attività economica e, in generale, delle scienze (Morri, 2020). La pandemia insomma ha rappresentato per certi versi un importante periodo di rottura che ha obbligato i vari operatori a trovare soluzioni per garantire un determinato livello di rinnovata efficienza ed efficacia.

Il saggio di Martin Bohle (*Citizen, Geoscientist and Associated Terraformer*) affronta il tema della scienza responsabile, intesa come bene pubblico, e della conseguente responsabilità sociale dei geoscienti, sapienti esploratori del mondo abiotico grazie non solo alla ricerca sul campo, ma anche alle analisi di laboratorio che restituiscono risultati fondamentali per una visione più completa e complessa delle minacce globali nell'Antropocene. Le azioni concrete da intraprendere per superare le criticità individuate dalla geoscienza sono certamente argomento di altre discipline appartenenti alle scienze sociali e umanistiche. Ecco che l'esperienza pandemica ha suggellato la necessità di un approccio multidisciplinare alla risoluzione dei problemi. Nonostante ciò, oggi, i geoscienti hanno a disposizione uno strumento specifico come la geoetica e sono, dunque, più responsabili della diffusione del relativo manifesto ai

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cittadini: essi sono, secondo le parole dell'autore *assistant terra-formers* (Bohle, infra).

L'esigenza di non avere una soluzione di continuità nella didattica durante il periodo pandemico, ha consentito la diffusione dell'uso di piattaforme didattiche e di nuovi strumenti di apprendimento. Ha anche motivato i docenti più reticenti a compiere un indispensabile sforzo per adeguarsi alle nuove necessità della formazione. Alcune di queste nuove competenze saranno utili anche in tempi di normalità. Giuseppe Ferraro, con il contributo *La storia, lo spazio e la pandemia ai tempi di google maps. Risorgimento e brigantaggio nelle attività didattiche*, effettua un ragionamento sull'alterazione dell'equilibrio tra lezioni frontali e attività laboratoriali. Nel caso specifico, riguardante le scuole secondarie di secondo grado, l'autore illustra gli esiti di alcune pratiche didattiche innovative adottate durante la pandemia, facendo emergere l'importanza di un inedito percorso di riflessione sull'apprendimento che ha coinvolto i docenti di varie discipline.

Uno dei settori di attività più colpiti durante il periodo pandemico è stato certamente il turismo (Rossi, 2020). Giuseppe Reina, con il contributo *Gli itinerari culturali europei come modello di sviluppo ecosistemico per i territori marginali*, propone il caso studio riguardante il progetto dell'Itinerario dei monasteri italo-greci del Valdemone, promosso dai comuni del distretto turistico *TaorminaEtna*, utile per riflettere, ad una scala geografica molto più ampia, sulla necessità di operare una ormai necessaria riqualificazione del paesaggio ordinario puntando sul turismo culturale, inteso come strategia di compensazione territoriale che valorizza le particolarità ambientali e culturali delle aree interne e marginali, riducendo il carico nei territori costieri e avviando virtuosi percorsi di destagionalizzazione.

Il settore dell'agricoltura, con le sue varie forme, sempre più evolute, di coltivazione e di produzione, se da un lato non ha subito una vera crisi durante l'emergenza pandemica, dall'altro, tuttavia, si è posto come strumento strategico che, anzi, ha permesso di superare determinate preoccupazioni, come la garanzia dell'approvvigionamento di generi alimentari, una delle prime e più inquietanti paure della popolazione in lockdown.

Giorgia Iovino, con il contributo *Italian agriculture in the shade of a pandemic. New and old*, pone l'accento sul fatto che tutto ciò non debba far dimenticare le vulnerabilità del settore in Italia. Le criticità relative al tema sono diversificate: in alcuni contesti, infatti, vi è la costante riduzione della superficie agricola utilizzata, con lo sviluppo di pratiche di iperproduzione

poco sostenibili o con l'aumento della dipendenza alimentare dall'estero, in altri, invece, si assiste alla concentrazione e all'accaparramento dei terreni. È necessaria una regolamentazione globale che conduca ad una transizione ecologica.

Livio Perra, con lo studio *Il COVID-19 e la sua dimensione pedagogica nel mondo giuridico* ha invece focalizzato l'attenzione sulle risposte che i vari Stati hanno messo in campo per fronteggiare le minacce di un virus invisibile e poco noto. Ciò è avvenuto attraverso l'azione giuridica affidata alle ordinanze contingibili e urgenti, il cui utilizzo talvolta eccessivo è stato giustificato dal diritto alla vita e dal bene supremo della salute dei cittadini, monitorata giornalmente e, proprio per questo, causa di provvedimenti *extra ordinem*.

Giuseppe Terranova è l'autore del saggio *Tradition and innovation: the controversial relationship between religion and pandemics*. Qui si propone uno studio sulla risposta alle sfide poste dalla pandemia da parte delle comunità religiose internazionali, con un approfondimento sulle realtà brasiliane e coreane che in sostanza hanno negato l'esistenza di un virus rifiutando di richiedere ai fedeli i noti sacrifici legati alla pandemia. Si indagano, in particolare, i diversi equilibri interni ai due Stati tra religione, scienza e politica.

L'ultimo saggio, di Andrea Perrone, è intitolato *Geopolitica del Covid-19. La pandemia e i suoi riflessi su piani multipli e transcolari*. Qui si analizzano le ripercussioni geopolitiche ed economiche della pandemia. Si parte dalla crisi (temporanea) della globalizzazione alla riflessione che proprio dalla consapevolezza dei rischi a cui l'umanità può essere sottoposta potrebbero essere portate avanti con efficacia alcune iniziative di portata globale (Green New Deal) e una presa di posizione più seria e condivisa sui temi ambientali.

Non rimane che concludere questa introduzione citando Angelo Turco che ha efficacemente definito la pandemia come un "ambiente di apprendimento" (Turco, 2020, p. 5).

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Pandemic experience and activity sectors

Leonardo Mercatanti¹

The changes that in recent decades have involved various sectors of economic activity, in addition to the world of scientific research, have been given a new and unexpected acceleration due to the pandemic experience. In the various fields of knowledge, the redefinition of organizational models, of traditional research and teaching tools, and even of the initial epistemological basis has represented an unprecedented challenge for all those who represent the human resources of these areas in varying degrees. Today, more than ever, it seems urgent to redefine the role, meaning and method of the various branches of knowledge.

The second part of this volume called “Pandemic experience and activity sectors” is based on these partial reflections and consists of seven essays. A common thread which links all the contributions is that the pandemic experience has set in motion new paths, even creative ones, of action within each disciplinary context, with outcomes that will surely influence the future of the sectors of economic activity and of sciences in general (Morri, 2020). In short, in some ways the pandemic has represented an important period of rupture that has forced the various operators to find solutions to ensure a certain level of renewed efficiency and effectiveness.

The essay by Martin Bohle (*Citizen, Geoscientist and Associated Terra-former*) addresses the theme of responsible science, understood as a public good, and the consequent social responsibility of geoscientists, wise explorers of the abiotic world thanks not only to field research, but also to laboratory analyses that give fundamental results for a more complete and complex vision of global threats in the Anthropocene. The concrete actions to be undertaken to overcome the criticalities identified by geoscience are certainly the subject of other disciplines belonging to the social sciences and humanities. Here the pandemic experience has sealed the need for a multidisciplinary approach to solving problems. Despite this, he argues that today geoscientists have at their disposal a specific tool, that of geoethics, and are therefore more responsible for disseminating the relevant manifesto to citizens: they are, in the words of the author, *assistant terra-formers* (Bohle, *infra*).

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The need to not interrupt the continuity in teaching during the pandemic period has allowed for the spread of the use of educational platforms and new learning tools. It has also motivated the most reticent teachers to make a necessary effort to adapt to the new needs in education. Some of these new skills will also be useful in times of normalcy. Giuseppe Ferraro, with his contribution *History, space and the pandemic at the time of google maps. Risorgimento and brigandage in teaching activities*, makes an argument for the alteration of the balance between lecture style lessons and laboratory activities. In the specific case, concerning second grade secondary schools, the author illustrates the results of some innovative teaching practices adopted during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of an unprecedented path of didactic reflection that involved teachers of various disciplines.

One of the sectors of activity most affected during the pandemic period was certainly tourism (Rossi, 2020). Giuseppe Reina, with his contribution *European cultural itineraries as a model of ecosystem development for marginal territories*, proposes a case study concerning the project of the Itinerary of the Italo-Greek monasteries of Valdemone, promoted by the municipalities of the TaorminaEtna tourist district. This is useful as a means for reflecting, on a much broader geographical scale, on the need to carry out a now necessary requalification of the ordinary landscape by focusing on cultural tourism, understood as a territorial compensation strategy that enhances the environmental and cultural peculiarities of inland and marginal areas, reducing the load on the coast and starting virtuous paths of seasonal adjustment.

If on the one hand the agricultural sector, with its various increasingly evolved forms of cultivation and production, did not suffer a real crisis during the pandemic emergency, on the other hand, however, it has set itself as a strategic tool that indeed made it possible to overcome certain critical issues, such as the guarantee of food supply, one of the first and most worrying fears of the population in lockdown. Giorgia Iovino, with her contribution *Italian agriculture in the shade of a pandemic. New and old*, emphasizes that all this must not make us forget the vulnerabilities of this sector in Italy. In some contexts, in fact, there is a constant reduction in the agricultural area used, with the development of unsustainable overproduction practices or with an increase in food dependence from abroad, in others, on the other hand, there is concentration and land grabbing. Global regulation is needed to bring about an ecological transition.

Livio Perra, with the study *COVID-19 and its pedagogical dimension in the legal world*, has instead focused attention on the responses that the various states have put in place to face the threats of an invisible and, at first, little-known virus. These responses took place through the legal action entrusted to contingent and urgent ordinances, the sometimes-excessive use of which was justified by the right to life and the supreme good of citizens' health, monitored daily and, precisely for this reason, the cause of extraordinary measures.

Giuseppe Terranova is the author of the essay *Tradition and innovation: the controversial relationship between religion and pandemics*. Here he proposes a study on the response to the challenges posed by the pandemic on the part of international religious communities, with an in-depth study of the Brazilian and Korean realities that essentially denied the existence of a virus by refusing to ask the faithful for the sacrifices needed to face the pandemic. In particular, the different internal balances of the two states are investigated, between religion, science and politics.

The last essay, by Andrea Perrone, is titled *Geopolitical implications of the Covid-19. The pandemic and its effects on multiple and transcalar levels*. Here there is an analysis of the geopolitical and economic repercussions of the pandemic. It starts from the (temporary) crisis of globalization to the reflection that precisely from the awareness of the risks to which humanity can be subjected, some global initiatives (Green New Deal) and a more serious and shared stance could be effectively carried out on environmental issues.

All that remains is to conclude this introduction by quoting Angelo Turco who effectively defined the pandemic as a “learning environment” (Turco, 2020, p.5).

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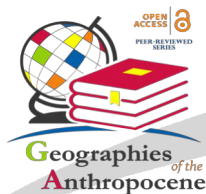
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The COVID-19 pandemic offers food for thought and an opportunity for humanities and science scholars who research our global condition to collaborate. The 21st century society is facing an unprecedented challenge right now: what can we learn from this challenge? Will everything really return to what we used to define as 'normal' at the end of the emergency? Probably not. Structural changes from political, economic, social, and environmental perspectives are already occurring, and impacting the fields of health, education, commerce, governance and travel. Concepts of social space are being redefined and rethought at various scales. Our society, unprepared for a global health emergency of this scale, has been engaged only partially in practices of mitigation and sustainability and we now realize the fragility of our planetary existence. This volume collects 14 original chapters which analyse the new scenarios that could lie ahead in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis in an interdisciplinary context.

Leonardo Mercatanti teaches Geography of Cultural Heritage at the Department of Cultures and Society of the University of Palermo (Italy). Author of over 100 scientific publications, he is the Editor-in-Chief of "Geography, Culture and Society" book series (Nuova Trauben publisher, Turin). He is a member of several editorial and scientific committees of various scientific journals and series. He deals with environmental risk, the enlargement of the European Union, trade and American cultural geography. He was a member of the Steering Committee of the Association of Italian Geographers (A.Ge.I.).

Stefano Montes teaches Anthropology of language, Anthropology of migration and Anthropology of food at the University of Palermo in Italy. In the past, he taught in Catania, Tartu, Tallinn e and at Ciph (Collège International de Philosophie de Paris). He was the main investigator and director of a French-Estonian team in Tartu and, afterwards, in Tallinn. He publishes in several national and international journals. His work explores relationships between languages and cultures as well as between literary and ethnographic forms. Recently, his research has come to focus on migration and on daily life in a perspective linking together cognitive and agentive practices. More generally, strongly influenced by both semiotics and anthropological postmodernism, he investigates possible interconnections between these fields and disciplines. He is editor of the book series "Spaction" for the publishing house Aracne.



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