



Multidimensionale Risks in the XXI Century

Online Conference, 20-21 OCTOBER 2021

Sociology of Risk and Pandemic Era.

Sociological analysis of the “nocturnal re-enchantment of the world”

Risk – Invisible – Re-enchantment – Science – COVID-19

Never as in this time of pandemic the sociology of risk can show its usefulness in the understanding of otherwise inscrutable phenomena. The public debate has highlighted all the huge ambivalences typical of late modernity. The constant short circuit between science, society, politics, media, has revealed the impossibility of analyzing the social relationship with the virus using only modern categories (Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994).

First of all, it became clear to everyone how much science has lost the legitimacy it had in modern times. This is due to an aspect that, despite being a basic concept of the sociology of risk, is instead ignored by most: science cannot be asked to predict what “cannot-be-known” (Beck 2009). On this fundamental paradigmatic misunderstanding the public debate and, not infrequently, also the specialist debate has often run aground.

Another decisive dimension of the pandemic phenomenon - obviously just from the perspective of sociological reflection - and in my opinion very underestimated, is that the virus has forced humans to deal with an *invisible* agent that threatened them with death: from the point of view of the imagery, COVID-19 has put some achievements that modernity believed to be definitive, such as those relating to an experience of the world illuminated by reason, in a very deep crisis (Beck 1992). In this sense, it is perhaps possible to say that the pandemic has instead been produced - if we want to use a formula that brings together the theories of Michel Maffesoli (2018) and Gilbert Durand (1999) - a “nocturnal re-enchantment of the world”.

Analyzing this peculiar form of “re-enchantment” using the theoretical tools of the sociology of risk is the goal of this paper.

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